Reference No. 9

Responsibility for the preparation of this research summary rests with the authors of the MCEETYA report *Education, Training and Indigenous Futures: CAEPR Policy Research 1990–2007* and not the original author(s) of the summarised material.

Title of Research:
Developing an Indigenous Arts Strategy for the Northern Territory: Issues paper for consultations

Research Publication:
CAEPR Working Paper No. 22/2003

Name of Researcher(s):
J.C. Altman

Time period:
2003

Geographic location:
Northern Territory

Methodology:
This research was part of a broader project to develop an Indigenous Arts Strategy in the Northern Territory. Submissions from arts stakeholders were solicited as part of this consultancy, and this diagnostic paper reviews the content of these submissions, contextualising them against the literature-based and statistical evidence surrounding the arts industry in the Northern Territory.

Aims
This paper aims to assess the state of the Indigenous arts industry in the NT and explore the potential for it to be sustainably and strategically developed in the future.

Selected findings and insights:
There was (in 2003) no policy framework for Indigenous arts. The lack of a preceding strategy makes the development thereof a complex undertaking, because precautions need to be taken that an industry that is developing under its own steam is not undermined by changes.

The diversity of the Indigenous arts sector, its myriad forms of production, audience and funding arrangements, not to mention the lack of clearer definition what this sector entails, render it a complicated proposition for policy processes to address.

The significance of the arts industry in terms of Indigenous employment, particularly in remote areas, is an important consideration. For people living in remote areas or outstations, art and craft production is often the only local option for mainstream market engagement, and the only way to earn income independent of welfare or CDEP.

Access to training for administrative staff and art producers were identified as increasingly necessary in the burgeoning industry. This need is also problematic in so far as the isolation of most art centres militates against the delivery of training, support and follow-up.
Educational implications:

Given the primary role that the arts industry plays in providing employment and income to Indigenous people in remote areas with little or no market engagement, providing increased support and training to develop such enterprises and make them sustainable appears critical. As staffing such businesses is a chronic and ongoing problem, it would appear that increased training of local Indigenous people to take over the administration of arts enterprises is, in the long term viability of the industry, essential. [business enterprise development]

In addition, an increasingly strong Indigenous arts industry suggests an important curriculum avenue for secondary (and primary) schools to pursue as a means of motivating school-age young Indigenous people to attend school as well as developing relevant skills which could lead to increase employment opportunities. Whilst this paper is directed towards the arts industry of the NT, it would appear relevant to other regions and urban situations. [curriculum]

Relevance:

Domain 5: Pathways to training, employment and higher education

Access to post-compulsory schooling, training, employment and higher education

Pathways and strategies for remote locations