

# Backing Indigenous Arts

Bringing Far North Queensland Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander arts and cultures to the world



Queensland the Smart State



Queensland Government  
Arts Queensland

## Message from the Premier of Queensland and the Minister for the Arts

Some of Australia's best contemporary art comes from Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait. Artists such as Arone Meeks, Rosella Namok and Dennis Nona are drawing our gaze northwards. Their work, inspired by culture and country, is creating a fascinating window into Far North Queensland, the place and its people.

Many more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists are destined for success. This is why our Government has developed this new initiative, Backing Indigenous Arts.

The four-year program (2007–2010) will invest \$10.73 million into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts industry.

This program is about building a more sustainable industry for our Far North Queensland artists. We want more of these talented artists to create careers in the arts. We want to see new and emerging artists developing their skills through training and

industry partnerships. We want to showcase their work and expose them to new audiences, here and overseas.

Backing Indigenous Arts will tap into all art forms and encourage artists to tell their own stories with traditional techniques and new technologies.

Far North Queensland artists have their own identities and the right to shape their own future. Through its many initiatives and partnerships, Backing Indigenous Arts will help boost this industry and create pathways to take this unique art to the rest of the world.



*Anna Bligh*

Anna Bligh MP  
Premier of Queensland



*Rod Welford*

Rod Welford MP  
Minister for Education  
and Training  
Minister for the Arts



Bentinck Island artist Paula Paul greets Queensland Premier Anna Bligh as fellow artist Dawn Narantjil looks on, Mornington Island Arts and Craft Centre. Photo: Newspix/Peter Wallis

### Backing Indigenous Arts

**\$10.73 million over four years will fund:**

Indigenous Art Centre network and hubs – \$4.42 million

Weipa Hub – \$250,000 over two years

Building Skills and Opportunities – \$3.43 million

Cairns Printmaking Centre – \$1.63 million

Cairns Indigenous Art Marketplace – \$1 million

## Indigenous Art Centre network and hubs

\$4.42 million over four years

\$250,000 over two years for Weipa Hub

Indigenous art centres play a very strong role in Far North Queensland communities. They have a positive, welcoming atmosphere. As well as being a workplace where artists can sell their artwork, they are meeting places for elders to share their knowledge and stories.

Backing Indigenous Arts will help art centres become key contributors to strong and productive communities. This will be done by supporting training and business planning and through the purchase of equipment and accommodation for art centre coordinators.

An arts hub's role is to respond to local needs, supporting a network of art centres through administrative, arts development and exhibition services. Hubs may also coordinate the use of studio space for local artists.

### Art centres

- Erub (Darnley Island)
- Giringun Aboriginal Corporation (Cardwell area)

- Hope Vale Community Learning and Aboriginal Corporation
- Kowanyama
- Kubin Community Council and Mualgul Minnaral Art Centre on Moa Island
- Kuku-Yalangi (Mossman Gorge)
- Lockhart River Art Centre
- Mornington Island Arts and Craft Centre
- Pormpuraaw Art Centre
- Wik and Kugu Art Centre (Aurukun)
- Wujal Wujal
- Yarrabah Arts and Crafts

### Hubs

- Cairns region
- Gab Titui Cultural Centre, Waiben (Thursday Island)
- Weipa – servicing artists in western Cape York. The Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry is leading this initiative in partnership with Arts Queensland.



Mavis Ngallametta and Dawn Koondumbin at the Wik and Kugu Art Centre, Aurukun.  
Photo: Michael Marzik.

*“I find the arts centre up in Lockhart where everyone gets together and it’s like a little gossip place yeah so. Yeah ... just it brings happiness and stories ... brings a lot of elders, young people and we do have a lot of barbecues, just brings the whole community together and help us.”*

**Fiona Omeenyo, artist, Lockhart River**

## Cairns Printmaking Centre

\$1.63 million over four years

Torres Strait Islander artists Alick Tipoti, Billy Missi, Dennis Nona and Brian Robinson are leading an exciting new movement in Indigenous fine art printmaking. Their work has won major awards and national acclaim.

The Printmaking Centre in Cairns will nurture the extraordinary talent of the printmakers in this region. It will be a studio space, a place for learning which fosters excellence in printmaking

and it will also commission new work. Through its teaching practices, the Printmaking Centre will encourage emerging artists to learn from successful and established artists.

A partnership with KickArts Contemporary Arts in Cairns, the centre will build on this organisation's successful history of collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander printmakers.

*“My influences are spiritual beings of my culture, ancestor spirits, voices still talking in my mind about cultural teachings and activities.”*

**Alick Tipoti, artist, Koori Mail, 12 March 2008**



L-R: Zane Saunders, Anna Eglitis, Joey Laifoo, Ian Horn, Arone Meeks and Sasi Victoire.  
Photo: David Campbell Photography



Billy Missi inking a linocut at KickArts Contemporary Arts, Cairns. Photo: David Campbell Photography