

# Artists backed to

# succeed



THE far north Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts revolution will get a major 'shot in the arm' under a new \$10.73-million program unveiled by the Queensland Government earlier this month.

Arts Minister Rod Welford announced details of the four-year Backing Indigenous Arts initiative (2007-2010) in Cairns on 7 May.

Visual artists such as Lockhart River's Rosalie Namok, Badu Islander Denis Nona and Laura printmaker Arone Meeks have helped focus the national and international spotlight on the region and

the State Government is keen to capitalise on it to assist other talented artists.

"Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait artists from far north Queensland are already making their mark in the art world and Backing Indigenous Arts will help even more talented artists from this region create successful careers in the arts," Mr Welford said.

"We want to see new and emerging artists developing their skills through training and industry partnerships and we want to showcase their work to expose them to new audiences, here and overseas.

The Government will work with key organisations and government agencies to deliver the four platforms of Backing Indigenous Arts:

- Support for the 15 art centres and hubs
- A dedicated printmaking centre in Cairns
- An Indigenous art marketplace also in Cairns
- Projects that help build skills and opportunities

In the first round of funding in 2007-08, nine art centres and arts hubs across far north Queensland will share in \$838,622: Erub (Darnley Island); Giringun Aboriginal Corporation; Hopevale Art Centre; Lockhart River Art Centre; Mornington Island Art and Craft Centre; Wik and Kugu Art and Craft Centre (Aurukun); Cairns Hub; Gab Titui Cultural Centre (Thursday Island); Weipa Hub; and UMI Arts.

"Our Government will also invest an additional \$386,378 in capital works projects, taking the total spend on arts centres and hubs to \$1.225 million in 2007-08," Mr Welford said.

"A further \$805,571 is funding Building Skills and Opportunities projects in 2007-08."



Arts Minister Rod Welford launching the Backing Indigenous Arts initiative in Cairns on 7 May.



Mavis Ngallametta and Dawn Koondumbin at the Wik and Kugu Art Centre, Aurukun. Photo courtesy of Arts Queensland, photographer Michael Marzik

In the first round of funding, 25 projects will help build skills and opportunities, including school holiday workshops in Torres Strait, Cairns, Weipa and the Western Cape; support for artists from the region to participate in the 10th Festival of Pacific Arts; a Hopevale pilot program to build skills and community development; a writing for radio project with the BBC; mentorship of 15 young Indigenous artists to be involved in The Black Arm Band concert as part of the Brisbane Festival; and other Indigenous

dance and music programs.

Expressions of interest will be called for the second round of projects in the next few months.

The Backing Indigenous Arts program is also supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy (VACS), a bilateral agreement with the Queensland and Australian governments. VACS will contribute \$600,000 a year towards Indigenous infrastructure.

For further information, phone Cameron Costello at Arts Queensland (07) 3227 8144.

# Worldwide focus for project

By SOLUA MIDDLETON



THE National Design Centre wants to hear from Indigenous Australian designers interested in submitting their projects for an international program.

The Indigo program which, provides a platform for Indigenous design, was launched in Melbourne recently by Icograda, the world body for professional communication design, in partnership with Australia's National Design Centre.

It will be an ongoing program offering opportunities for Indigenous designers – local and worldwide.

Director of the National Design Centre Kathy Demos told *The Koori Mail* that design work for a single job could happen in many countries, crossing seas seamlessly.

She said Indigo provided a platform for evolving creative expressions that



Untitled: Chanthra Pumarini. Photography, Mimmo Cozzolino. MIX06. Monash University (Australia).

shaped the formation of national cultural identities.

"Indigo seeks to understand what

makes design distinctive to its home, the connections to the place where it is made and for whom it is made," she said.

"To address this, we have set up a network of designers and a series of projects that explore its meaning and interpretation throughout the world."

Ms Demos hoped that it would enable people to 'learn about ourselves, where we live, and our communities'.

One of the Indigo projects is called 'Big Words, and brings attention to issues that affect Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

"What it does as a project is bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous designers to look at big words, and work together to give a visual depiction of that word which gives a suggestion of the origin through the language, and interpreting it the visual way," Ms Demos said.

"Although the visual depiction is extremely important, the other part is the work itself.

"The research and things that the research will start to bring out, perhaps the fact that there are language dying out, the fact that for a lot of people Indigenous language is the first language, and other characteristics of the community that can be brought out through a project like this."

Ms Demos likened it to a visual dictionary preserving language.

Don Ryun Chang, President of Icograda and IDA Lead Chair, said Indigo was a demonstration of the International Design Alliance's (IDA) commitment to foster and promote cultural diversity in today's globalised society.

"Indigo puts Icograda's 'leading creatively' philosophy into action: To use design as a medium for progressive change," he said.

● The program's new website is now live and designers are invited to nominate their own projects for inclusion in the Indigo program via [www.indigodesignnetwork.org](http://www.indigodesignnetwork.org)