



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

THE HON KEN WYATT AM MP
Minister for Indigenous Australians

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

2 September 2020

Indigenous Visual Art Action Plan announced: Cultivating Australia's rich Indigenous visual arts sector

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, and Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, have today announced that the Morrison Government will develop an Indigenous Visual Art Action Plan to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, and their cultural and economic interests.

The Morrison Government will also table its response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs' *Report on the Impact of inauthentic art and craft in the style of First Nations peoples*.

Minister Fletcher said the Indigenous Visual Art Action Plan recognises the significant importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture, which dates back 65,000 years.

"Australian Indigenous visual art is highly sought after both in Australia and abroad for its quality, innovation and cultural richness. It also strengthens economic opportunities for communities by providing employment, skills development and income," Minister Fletcher said.

"Until the start of COVID-19, art sales had been growing for almost a decade but the pandemic has dramatically impacted the industry with art centres, galleries and studios closed, and art fairs and events cancelled or postponed, which only strengthens the need for a plan."

Minister Wyatt said that art is central to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander way of life, allowing communities to tell their stories and develop a shared understanding of Australia's history for non-Indigenous Australians and people around the world.

"As part of this consultation we want to hear from stakeholders across the Indigenous visual arts sector — artists, art centre directors and managers, arts workers, art dealers, gallerists, art market professionals, purchasers, collectors, industry bodies or peak bodies representing these groups," Minister Wyatt said.

"I invite all interested stakeholders to have their say to inform an Action Plan that will help the sector recover from COVID-19 and achieve maximum benefit for artists and their communities."

The Plan will be designed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and the visual arts community. Ministers have launched a consultation paper that will be used to support this co-design process. This process will build on important work undertaken through the Inquiry into *Report on the Impact of inauthentic art and craft in the style of First Nations peoples*.

Minister Fletcher said the Government's response to this report outlines activity that is designed to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists' economic, cultural, and intellectual property interests and encourage a fair and ethical marketplace.

"The Government has a number of initiatives underway to better safeguard Indigenous art including a digital labelling trial and additional funding to support the Indigenous Art Code, in collaboration with the states. The plan we are announcing today is part of our response to this report," Minister Fletcher said.

Minister Wyatt said inauthentic Indigenous 'style' products cause deep offence to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, diminish economic opportunities and mislead consumers.

"The Action Plan and tabling of our response to the House of Representatives inquiry comes at a time when the long-term effects of COVID-19 are beginning to emerge so it is timely to think about how we rebuild a vibrant and sustainable Indigenous visual arts sector," Minister Wyatt said.

Consultation closes on 18 December 2020 and the Action Plan is expected to be released in 2021.

To read the Growing the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Consultation Paper and participate in the consultation, and access the *Report on the Impact of inauthentic art and craft in the style of First Nations peoples* visit: www.arts.gov.au/have-your-say/consultation-paper-growing-indigenous-visual-arts-industry.

The *Report on the Impact of inauthentic art and craft in the style of First Nations peoples* is expected to be available later today.

Media contacts:

Minister Fletcher

Rebecca Papillo | 0439 892 771 | Rebecca.Papillo@communications.gov.au

Meg Simes | 0437 699 671 | Margaret.Simes@communications.gov.au

Minister Wyatt

Luke Nayna | [0438 231 687](tel:0438231687) | luke.nayna@ia.pm.gov.au