



Marion Scrymgour
MINISTER FOR ARTS AND MUSEUMS

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Government welcomes Indigenous Arts recommendations

The Northern Territory Government has welcomed the release of recommendations of the Senate Inquiry into the Aboriginal visual arts and crafts sector, Arts Minister Marion Scrymgour said today.

“It will take a few days to absorb much of the detail, but its release should be seen as a watershed in the history of the industry,” said Ms Scrymgour.

“We stated in our submission to the Inquiry that its work—as the first major investigation into the industry in 15 years—would set critical new paths for the Aboriginal visual arts and crafts sector.

“It has certainly done that—especially in its recognition of the vital importance of the industry to the 5,000 plus Aboriginal artists working in the sector, and the flow on effects that has to assisting the economy, from remote and regional areas, through to the national and international tourism and trade.

“Of utmost importance has been strong support given by the Senate Committee to the art centres and their representative bodies such as Desart and ANKAAA, especially in their recommendations for building their capacity and strength.

“This includes fundamental issues such as infrastructure—\$25 million over five years—through to the nuts and bolts of strengthening their governance and reporting systems and their training requirements.

“There is now a real and exciting challenge to the Australian Government to meet the Senate Committee’s well documented case for increased capital and recurrent support to the industry.

“This would complement the Northern Territory’s increased outlays through our Building Stronger Arts Business program.”

Key recommendations put to the Senate Inquiry by the Northern Territory Government have been met, especially in the areas of ethical trading, but more can still be done said Ms Scrymgour.

“Our government’s call for government agencies throughout the nation, and at all levels, to adopt appropriate sections of the National Association of Visual Arts Indigenous Commercial Code of Conduct is welcome, as well as the increased roles contemplated for the ACCC and Customs,” she said.

“It may have been useful to have been more explicit over the potential role of the Australian taxation Office (ATO) to nail carpetbaggers, and for more explicit recommendations over the import of fake and forged Aboriginal art.

“However, the Senate Committee has now publicly set broad benchmarks in ethical trading which gives clear signals to the less ethical players in the market.”