VINCENT LINGIARI ART AWARD

OUR COUNTRY – TRUE STORY

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David Frank, *Our Future*, 2016, acrylic on linen, 36cm x 51cm

The Vincent Lingiari Art Award was established in 2016 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the historic Wave Hill Walk Off and 40 years since the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) 1976* was enacted by the Australian Parliament.

On the 23 August 1966, Vincent Lingiari, Gurindji leader and head stockman at Wave Hill Station led workers and their families to walk off the cattle station in protest against unjust working and living conditions. The stockmen and their families relocated to Wattie Creek in a strike that was to last nine years. The Walk Off and strike became much more than a call for equal rights; it soon became a fight for the return of Gurindji Lands. The Walk Off attracted national and international attention to the atrocious treatment of Aboriginal peoples and their campaign for land rights.

After persistent struggle, lobbying and negotiation, the Gurindji secured a lease over a small portion of their traditional lands for residential and cultural purposes. In 1975, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam poured red dirt into the hands of Vincent Lingiari to symbolise the return of what has always been, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

One year later, the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT)* returned Aboriginal reserves and mission land in the Northern Territory to traditional land owners. It established the Central and Northern Land Councils, as well as a process through which their members could secure Aboriginal Freehold Title to their traditional land. Today Aboriginal people own almost half of the land in the Northern Territory.

The Vincent Lingiari Award honours the leadership, courage and strength of Vincent Lingiairi and all those who have fought for their land rights.

The Uluṟu Statement from the Heart

Aṉangu artists (from left) Christine Brumby, Charmaine Kulitja, Rene Kulitja and Happy Reid with the Uluṟu Statement canvas. Image: Clive Scollay.

"WE, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are aliened from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

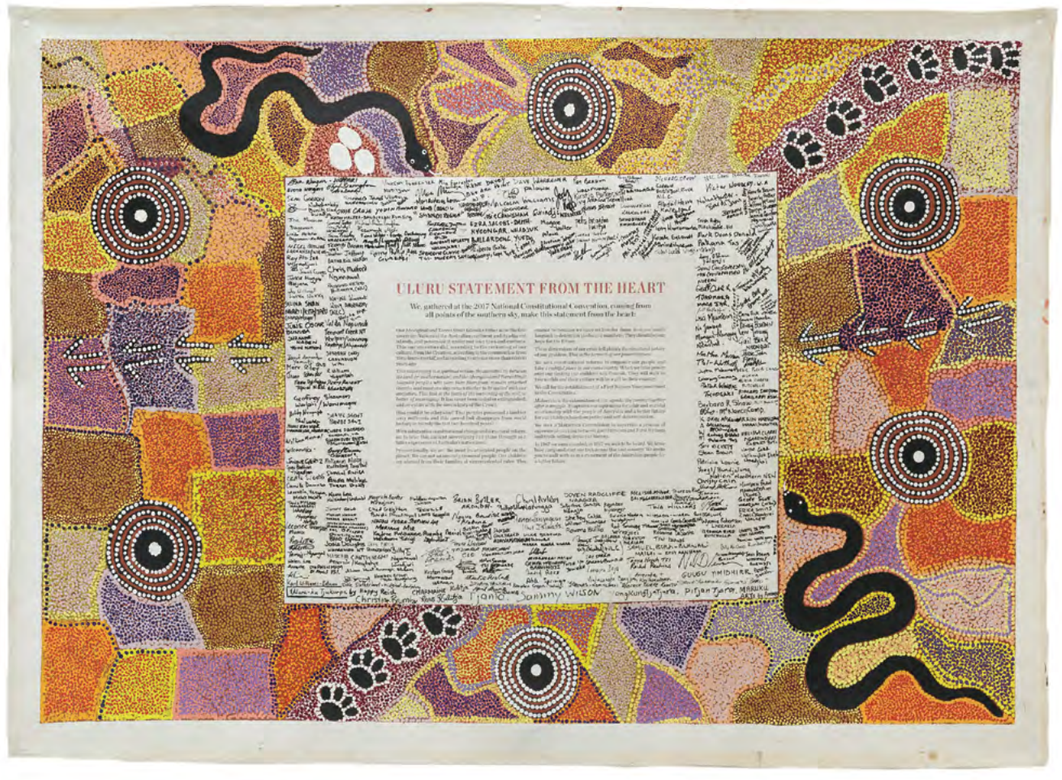
We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

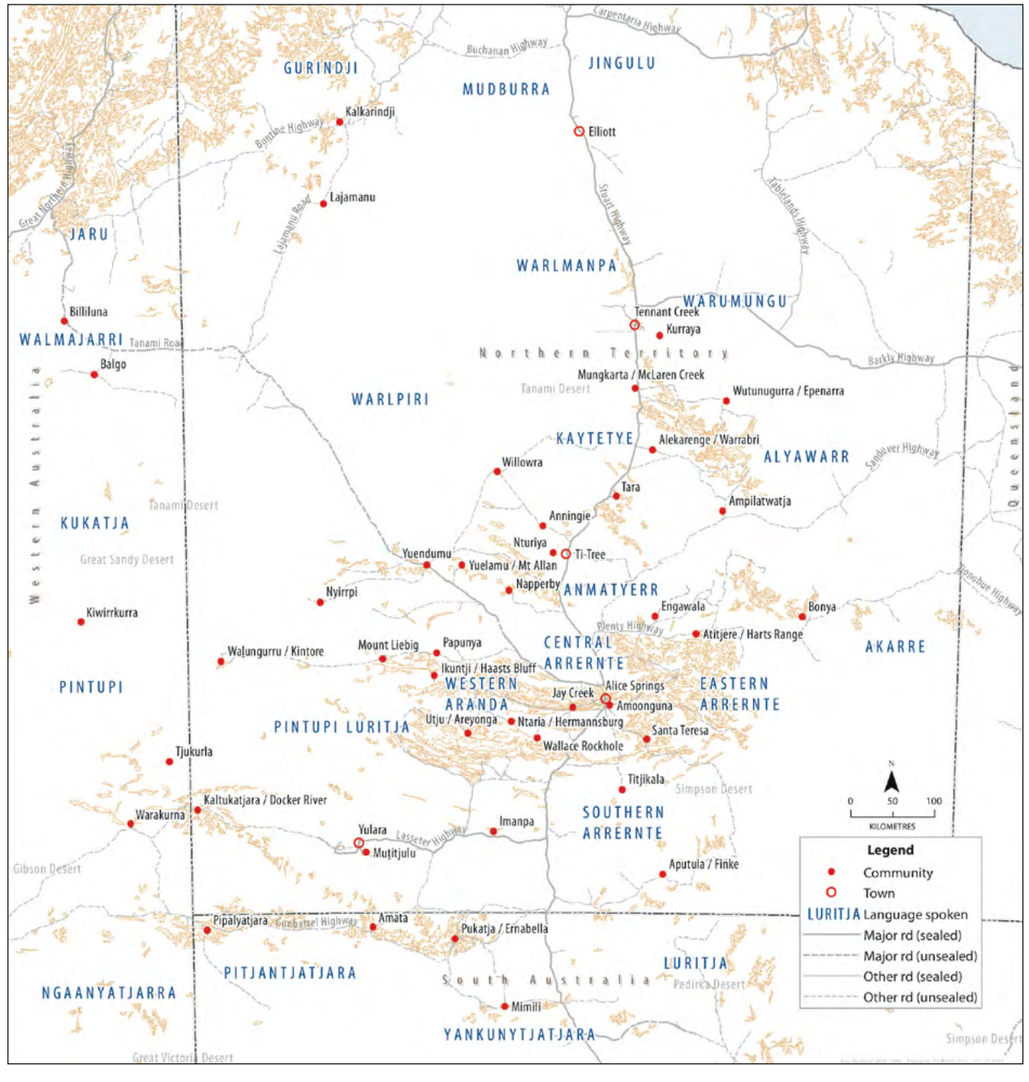
We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future."



Rene Kulitja, Charmaine Kulitja, Christine Brumby and Happy Reid. Photo: Saul Steed.

Our Languages



Statement by Joe Martin-Jard

Our art makes this country truly unique on the world stage. It distinguishes Australia as a rich source of living Aboriginal culture and enterprise of which all Australians can be proud.

It's no coincidence, then, that the Uluṟu Statement from the Heart, which seeks to unite, advance and 'grow up' this nation, is bordered by incredible artwork by Aṉangu women telling creation stories about their country.

Aboriginal art and land rights have evolved together and the two continue to nurture and inspire each other. That's why the Central Land Council and Desart launched the inaugural Vincent Lingiari Art Award in 2016 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and the 50th anniversary of the Wave Hill Walk Off.

Little did the two organisations know that these two milestones would assume new significance in the deliberations that led to the Uluṟu Statement nine months later.

As the 2016 award judge Hetti Perkins, daughter of the CLC's first director, announced that Marlene Rubuntja, daughter of the CLC's first chair, had won the first $15,000 Vincent Lingiari Art Award prize, the mothers and fathers of the Uluṟu Statement were busy devising a process that would build consensus about constitutional change from the ground up.

For this consensus to have legitimacy they had to ensure it was representative of men and women, emerging and established leaders, urban, regional and remote communities and reflected both traditional and contemporary authority. The regional dialogues model they came up with was one of the finest examples of participatory democracy and deliberative polling Australia has ever seen.

At the regional dialogue at Ross River near Alice Springs, one of 12 around the nation, more than a hundred delegates from across Central Australia educated themselves about the constitution with the help of interpreters, legal experts and respected leaders. They elected 10 participants to attend a national constitutional convention at Uluṟu in May 2017.

There, Queensland Aboriginal participant Noel Pearson presented a timeline about the evolution of Aboriginal rights between 1788 and the High Court's Mabo decision, culminating in the convention. The exodus of striking workers and their families from Wave Hill Station that Vincent Lingiari led and the land rights legislation that followed stood out as inspiring examples of Aboriginal leadership and achievement.

As far as milestones go, they were right up there with the 1967 referendum, the Barunga Statement, then Prime Minister Paul Keating's Redfern speech and the apology to the stolen generations. Pearson's reminder of their shared journey helped to galvanise the convention delegates' support for the Uluṟu Statement with its call for a constitutionally enshrined Aboriginal voice to parliament and a Makarrata commission to oversee a process of truth telling and agreement making.

No matter the order of the words 'voice, treaty and truth', as the statement has been summed up for the theme of this year's NAIDOC Day celebrations, many Uluṟu convention delegates said facing the facts of our shared history is essential for healing intergenerational trauma: truth is a prerequisite.

How can we move forward together, they asked, unless we acknowledge how our country was settled? How can we grow together as a nation if we can't speak of the lie of terra nullius, the land grabs, the massacres and the stolen children? If we don't guard against forgetting as other nations with painful histories have done?

It is important that all Australians are made aware of the full extent of the injustices our people were forced to endure. To move forward to a better future and to prevent further injustices, we must all acknowledge and understand our collective history. *Lest we forget* has a much wider meaning for our mob than the wars Australians choose to remember on ANZAC Day.

"We remember those who lost their lives in war every year, in every town around Australia. We have a special public holiday for it and lots of memorials everywhere. What about our fallen loved ones?"

This is a question former CLC chair Francis Kelly posed in August 2018, as the families of the survivors and perpetrators of the state-sanctioned killing sprees known as the Coniston Massacre were telling their truth at Yurrkuru outstation during the 90th anniversary of these 'killing times'.

"Until all Australians know about the crimes committed against our families we can't move forward as one mob, one country," Mr Kelly said.

Former CLC executive member Teddy Long asked the assembled politicians "to build something" at Yurkurru "for Yapa and white families to come along and learn what has happened" and for a national memorial day recognising "massacres not only here but all massacres of Aboriginal people that happened around Australia".

Undeterred by lack of response to such requests and the federal government's dismissal of the Uluṟu Statement, the CLC executive agreed to make truth telling the theme of the second Vincent Lingiari Art Award. This year's award theme *Our Country - True Story* is an invitation to artists from across Central Australia to express their truth in the medium of their choice. Their responses show a keen desire to speak up about the past for the sake of the future.

Irrunytju's Noreen Parker reminds us that the fallout of the Maralinga nuclear tests continues to cast a shadow over her family and others, while *Broken Law*, the painting by Malya Teamay from Mutitjulu, depicts some harsh truths about colonisation but also his optimism about reconciliation.

Sometimes the truth comes across all cheerful before it ambushes you. This is true of 2016 winner Marlene Rubuntja's sculpture this year of one of the tin sheds her father got as 'reward' for helping to set up the town camps in Alice Springs, all while raising a family in the bed of the Todd River. The sheds proved unliveable and were left to the emus and kangaroos.

"This sculpture might make you laugh but it makes me sad when I think about my father and those tin sheds," says Ms Rubuntja.

To what is common knowledge about Central Australian Aboriginal mobility, Judith Chambers' entry adds the rarely heard story of Aboriginal people cutting the roads through their country to facilitate that legendary mobility. Armed with just one tractor and axes, her family and others made a new road linking Warburton to Warakurna in remote WA more directly than had roads made by the better known road maker Len Beadell.

With entries like these, who would want to be in the award judges' shoes? Or the shoes of the CLC delegates who will again be picking the winner of the Delegates Choice Award? As we again await their decision, it is worth reminding ourselves that the Vincent Lingiari Art Award would not have seen the light of day if the CLC's long-time director, David Ross, had not championed it from the outset. Mr Ross used his influence in the corporate world to source the first prize money and the funds for the first exhibition catalogue, took great delight in the first exhibition, contributed generously to the evaluation of the whole initiative and then did it all again for this year's award.

My thanks go to the award's main sponsors, the Peter Kittle Motor Company and Newmont Australia, whose continuing support is helping us to establish the Vincent Lingiari Art Award as a much loved and thought provoking highlight on Central Australia's events calendar.

Lastly, I want to thank the family of Vincent Lingiari, whose true story continues to inspire this nation and who have believed in this event from the very beginning.

Joe Martin-Jard
CLC Director

Statement by Sammy Wilson

Our old people have been teaching me the stories of my country since I was 11 years old. True stories, of country around Uluṟu that my family has looked after forever. I've learnt the stories from my grandfather Imalyangu 'Paddy' Uluṟu and from the tjilpis (senior men) through traditional business.

They talked about the intruders who took what was never theirs and got rid of those who stood in their way. My great grandfather Lungkata met William Gosse, the first non-Aṉangu person to visit here in 1873. In 1932, police constable McKinnon shot and killed my grandfather's brother Yukun. My grandfather fled in fear for his life and didn't return for more than 20 years.

As a child, I didn't fully understand how famous the name Uluṟu was. Kids would always tease each other about coming from a different area. I thought it would be easier to take a surname that had nothing to do with country. Little did I know that sharing my stories of country with visitors, tjukurpa stories and history, would become my job.

I've been in tourism for more than two decades now and have chaired the board of joint management of the Uluṟu-Kata Tjuṯa National Park since 2014. World travelling tourists have come to me and I have travelled the world. I sit down with people from overseas and we talk about what they think about government, climate change, everything.

My family and I have shared our stories with many visitors to Patji, my homeland just outside the national park's boundary, because we want them to hear the truth and learn about it straight from us. As we watch the sun set on Uluṟu from Patji we tell them how very important country is to us and what has happened here since white contact. Patji has become a place where we share our truth with the world.

Overseas people love it because often they have lost their indigenous culture and their land is covered in buildings, not trees. Australian tourists tell me they never learned about Aboriginal people in school and they are happy to hear about this history from me. Most have only seen Aboriginal culture and history in museums.

They need to hear the truth from the people who live it. They need to feel what it's like to have open land around them and to be connected to family and others they live side by side in the world with, sharing responsibility for it. Many people in the cities live in tiny blocks far from their family and don't even know who their neighbours are. They need to understand why it is important for us to talk up for our country and culture, what it means to us and why it is more important than money. Many people are lost because they don't know where they are from and who they are.
I want them to learn from us. If they know what they or their ancestors have done in the past around here and how some people are still trying to make us the same as them I think most become sad. They can imagine how it would feel if we did this to them. They can see we still want to live together and respect each other. And they can see that we can't move forward together as a reconciled nation, as much as we want to, until we acknowledge our shared past with honesty.

The Central Land Council has kept our desire for truth telling alive, for example by commemorating the many loved ones we lost in atrocities such as the 1928 Coniston Massacre. The political response to these events has been disappointing. Politicians show up for photo opportunities, place wreaths and give speeches but ignore our calls to improve the school curriculum on the nation's history and to declare a public holiday similar to ANZAC Day where we can remember those we have lost in the frontier wars.

I have learned from my international guests how other nations deal with this. I ask myself: if the South Africans can set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to try and heal the scars of Apartheid and if the Germans can keep both the memory and the lessons of the Holocaust alive why should it be beyond Australians to face up to their colonial history?

Some people still don't think their ancestors did anything wrong when they came to this country. We have to tell the truth otherwise people will still think we are wrong to want our rights. We need the Makarrata the Uluṟu Statement speaks of. It means facing the wrongdoing to make peace again. In my language, Pitjantjatjara, we call this kalypa.

Aṉangu believe that if you don't know your Tjukurpa or Dreaming – your country's stories, songs and ceremonies - you remain a child, no matter how old you get. This is true for people and for nations. You can't grow up without facing the hard things. As a person, you have to keep opening the doors of deeper knowledge. If Australia doesn't open the next door it will be stuck.

The Uluṟu Statement - voice, treaty and truth - is the next door. We believe Australia needs to learn and acknowledge the true stories of all its peoples so that it can finally become a mature and unified country with a constitution which we can all be proud of.

Our art is a key to that door.

'*Our Country – True Story*', the theme of this the second Vincent Lingiari Art Award, is an opportunity for mainstream Australia to learn why truth telling matters so much to us. The works by Central Australian artists chosen for this exhibition are testament to the special capacity of art to express and help heal the wrongs of our past for a better tomorrow.

My sincere thanks to the 25 artists who have submitted their works, to Desart for partnering with us on this Award, to our sponsors the Peter Kittle Motor Company and Newmont Australia, the judge of the main prize, Glenn Iseger-Pilkington and the CLC's elected members who set aside time at their July council meeting to pick the winner of the Delegates' Choice Award.

Sammy Wilson
CLC Chair

Statement by Phillip Watkins

As I write this essay, activities are taking place around the country celebrating NAIDOC week. This year's theme '*Voice. Treaty. Truth. Let's work together*', is also reflected in the theme of the second Vincent Lingiari Art Award, '*Our Country – True Story*'. The acknowledgement of Aboriginal sovereignty and the truth of our colonial history are the fundamental building blocks of a better future for our nation and all its people.

In 2016 the inaugural Vincent Lingiari Art Award, '*Our Land Our Life Our Future*', celebrated two momentus achievements; the 50th anniversary of the Wave Hill Walk Off led by the award's namesake, Gurinjdi leader Vincent Lingiari and; the 40th anniversary of the Land Rights (NT) Act.

One year later in 2017 at a constitutional convention held in the heart of the Australian landscape, over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders met on Anangu land and developed the Uluru Statement from the Heart asking for two reforms; that a First Nations Voice be enshrined in the Constitution and; a Makarrata Commission which would supervise processes of 'agreement-making' and 'truth-telling' between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These reforms would build on the 1967 referendum which changed the Constitution of Australia to allow the Federal Government to make laws for Aboriginal people and to include us in the census. Unfortunately, and surprisingly to many, the Australian Government led by Malcolm Turnbull at the time, rejected the Uluru Statement out of hand.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart is a canvas on which all Australians can collaborate to paint a new future, a true future that heals and recognises that this continent is, was and will always be *Our Country – True Story*. The NAIDOC theme calls for us to 'work together' showing us that when we do, great things can be achieved. But there is a long way to go as the rejection of the Uluru Statement demonstrates.

Aboriginal artists from Central Australian desert art centres, as you will see from the works presented in this exhibition, maintain a continuum of truth telling about country while the debates about recognition and sovereignty take place all around them.

Truth telling is the foundation of strength and here in Central Australia Aboriginal law, the Tjukurrpa/Altyerre, is that strength. Country is fundamental to the identity of Aboriginal people in Central Australia and the works in this exhibition start from this place – telling true stories about our country.

The artists in this exhibition speak to the audience through a range of mediums from canvas to artefact, sculpture to video installation, about their country. They continue this ages old tradition of visually expressing and asserting what is important to them through their art.

Aboriginal artists are story tellers, they speak the truth of this country as evidenced by the use of art in determining successful land claims and native title claims. The Vincent Lingiari Art Award provides a platform for artists to explore traditional and contemporary issues. The artists of Ampilatwatja, Kathleen Nanima Rambler and Denise Ngwarraye Bonney paint their father's and grandmother's country, demonstrating the lineage of land tenure. Hubert Pareroultja's watercolour on silk speaks to the *Caterpillar Dreaming (Tjoritja/West MacDonnell Ranges, Central Australia)* providing another story of the landscape surrounding Mpwarnte (Alice Springs). The 2019 Hadley's Art Prize winner Carbiene McDonald Tjangala's *Four Dreamings* refers to four sacred sites that run between Docker River and Kata Tjuta – his father's travels between these four sites brought him into contact with the ill-fated gold explorer Lasseter. Judith Yinyika Chambers, *Cutting of the Road* tells of the many unheard of stories where Aboriginal men, women and children have contributed much hard labour to 'develop' country. Nellie Patterson's *Ulurunya* (Uluru Sacred Site) is a timely reminder to those that oppose Anangu sovereignty.

It is with great pride that Desart in partnership with the Central Land Council and Tangentyere Artists is able to once again represent the voice of these artists through these powerful works. Just as it has always been, art will continue to be the voice and the truth for Aboriginal people.

Philip Watkins
Chief Executive Officer
Desart

Kathleen Nanima Rambler
My Father's Country at Sunrise (2019)

Acrylic on linen
183cm x 152cm

Artists of Ampilatwatja

To Kathleen Rambler the truth of her country is in its landscapes and light, the one solid under foot, the other changing with the day but consistently profound.

Now from Ampilatwatja but originally from Barrow Creek, Rambler is a keen observer of the plays of light on the land. Of her entry, *My Father's Country at Sunrise*, she says: "This is where I grew up. When we would go hunting, we always climbed those hills and took photos. Sunrise and sunset are my favourite times of day. The sky is always so beautiful."

Rambler has aunts who were part of the Utopia batik movement of the 1970s and 80s. As a child, she watched them work. The sky in her entry seems to draw inspiration from that too.

Rambler's work has been part of 32 group exhibitions, in the NT, interstate and overseas, and is part of a collection in Shanghai, China.

Denise Ngwarraye Bonney
My Grandmother's Country (2019)

Acrylic on linen
183cm x 153cm

Artists of Ampilatwatja

Ampilitwatja artist Denise Bonney knows her country intimately from hunting it, and from finding its hidden water. To her, the land conveys this most material truth.

She says of her entry *My Grandmother's Country*: "This is my mother's mother's country, out near Canteen Creek, where we go hunting for wild onions, goannas, echidnas and sugar bag honey in the trees. I like to hunt in my country; there is water all year round even if it looks dry. We follow the bird tracks to know where to dig and then we find water. This painting is after rain; many grasses are out, but the riverbed is still sandy."

Bonney is a senior member of the Artists of Ampilatwatja group. Her work has been part of 19 group exhibitions in the Territory and as far as Seoul, South Korea and Freiburg in Germany. She was awarded the King & Wood Mallesons Contemporary ATSI Art Prize in NSW last year.

Joseph Williams
Manu (2019)

Multi media
184cmx 225cm x 253cm
multi media; wood artefacts and video projection

Barkly Regional Arts

Country rings true in Joseph Williams' entry *Manu*, with the sound of clapping boomerangs as a scene pans across the land.

The artist explains his multi-media entry, featuring objects like boomerangs themselves, their images projected, as well as their pulse accompanying the scene across the land: "*Ajjiinyi Manu, Ajjinyi Apparr*" (my country, my story).

Yuwala (wood) I collected from *manu* (country) nearby my *nguraji* (home) Tennant Creek. These *yuwala* (trees) are special and have ***wini*** (names) in *ajjinyi appar* (my language) Warumungu.

The objects are facing in four directions: *kajunu* (North), *kakurru* (East), *kankurru* (South), *karu* (West) of *manu*, and the boundaries of *Wumpurani Karrinyi* (Aboriginal people) of this manu.

These objects are multipurpose tools and very special to *anyungku* (us). The colours are from *manu: wumpurani* (black), *wirringkiri* (yellow), *palamiri* (white), *apanjarra* (red)."

Williams is a carver from Tennant Creek, carving but also reinventing traditional objects such as boomerangs. His work has been in three group exhibitions.

Hayley Panangka Coulthard
Titjarritjarra (Willy Wagtail Dreaming) (2019)

Terracotta and underglaze
30cm x 25cm x 25cm

Hermannsburg Potters

How do you tell a story in clay, true or otherwise?

Just ask Hayley Coulthard. The Hermannsburg potter is renowned – and acclaimed – for her AFL footy pots. Her pot titled *St Kilda versus Collingwood* was acquired by the Art Gallery of South Australia in 2011. And in 2016 her work was part of a National Gallery of Victoria exhibition commissioned to tell – in pots – footy's history in Hermannsburg.

However, her entry here, *Titjarritjarra*, is of country, her grandfather's country: Palm Valley, near Hermannsburg. And its Dreaming by that name, Willy Wagtail. Says Coulthard: "She flies around all the country and rests in Palm Valley, turned to rock. Today we still visit the rock. Sometimes we get bush medicine there. Because of this rock, we call this place *Titjarritjarra*."

Coulthard's work has been in some 38 group exhibitions and is in collections of the National Gallery of Victoria and the National Portrait Gallery, as well as the Art Gallery of SA.

Beth Mbitjana Inkamala
West MacDonnell Ranges (2019)

Terracotta and underglaze
52cm x 36cm x 36cm

Hermannsburg Potters

"When I paint this land, I think about how it was formed and how it feels when I walk over it," says Hermannsburg potter Beth Inkamala. "I know every mountain and every gorge has a story about how you travel and how you connect with it."

In these ways, Inkamala is the conduit between the truth or essence of her country and her pots, hand-coiled and painted in her distinctive style. Her entry *West MacDonnell Ranges* is a case in point, the ranges rippling across the pot surface.

Inkamala watched her aunties working with clay in the 1990s. From 2014, she's helped facilitate the 'pots that tell stories' program at Hermannsburg school. She's now chairperson of Hermannsburg Potters.

She has exhibited in 18 group exhibitions, including the 2017 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards finalists' exhibition. And her work is in the National Gallery of Victoria collection.

Eileen Anyama Napaltjarri
Tjitjurrulnga Tali (2019)

Acrylic on Belgian linen
77.5cm x 88.5cm

Ikuntji Artists

Eileen Anyama Napaltjarri's entry *Tjitjurrulnga Tali* is simultaneously abstract and as true a picture of country as aerial photography can be. It is rich with story.

It is of her father's country beyond Kintore rendered in long rows of sand hills forming rhythmic waves across the canvas. Occasionally the rows open out then converge again at a desert water source like the rockhole at Tjitjurrulnga.

The *Tjukurrpa* (dreaming) for Tjitjurrulnga is ice (little frost stars). It is also the story of men and women travelling from Yuendumu community to Tjitjurrulnga, just as Napaltjarri herself moved west with her family and others to the newly established Kintore in the early 1980s. There she learnt to paint watching her parents.

Napaltjarri has gone on to win the Redlands Westpac Art Prize Emerging Artist award in 2005, exhibit in 22 group exhibitions and one solo show and have her work join three collections including the National Gallery of Australia's.

Eunice Napanangka Jack
Kuruyultu (2019)

Acrylic on Belgian linen
101.5cm x 122cm

Ikuntji Artists

The widely acclaimed artist Eunice Napanangka Jack permanently wears the story of her country, as well as painting it in her entry *Kuruyultu*. It's true. She explains:

"I can't remember how it all happened, because it happened before I was born. I have a scar on my back from it. My grandfather speared a wallaby at Kuruyultu. That night he ate the wallaby. At the same time my heavily pregnant mother could feel me moving inside her. The next morning, after my grandfather had speared the wallaby, killed and eaten it, I was born. Only my father knows all the stories for that country, and he painted them too. I know the story of the wallaby which left me with a birthmark. That's what I paint."

Jack has held 11 solo exhibitions, joined 162 group exhibitions worldwide, been collected in 14 collections and a finalist in 18 art awards including five times in the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award or its predecessor national award.

Keturah Zimran
Puli Puli – Rocks (2019)

Acrylic on Belgian linen
93cm x 153cm

Ikuntji Artists

One meaning of the phrase 'solid as a rock' is: reliable or trustworthy. In essence: true.

The subject of Keturah Zimran's paintings is frequently rock formations or *puli puli*. And in her entry, *Puli Puli – Rocks*, their solidity is pronounced.

Zimran paints rock formations around her home of Haasts Bluff in particular, with an affinity based on memory as much as proximity, memory of the nutritional richness the rocks concealed. She remembers going hunting there as a child, for *tjilkamada* (porcupine) found hiding amongst the rocks, for *rumiya* (goanna) and to collect *ipalo* (bush banana) and *mangarda* (bush tomato).

Her striking use of colour follows the ways different rocks change hue with the weather and time of day.

Zimran's work has appeared in three solo exhibitions, 63 group exhibitions, and is part of five collections. It earned her the Moreton Bay Art Award and an artist-in-residence in 2017.

Hubert Pareroultja
Caterpillar Dreaming (or Tjoritja/ West MacDonnell Ranges, Central Australia) (2019)

Watercolour on silk
mounted on lightbox
71cm x 137cm x 4cm

Iltja Ntjarra (Many Hands) Art Centre

Hubert Pareroultja's entry *Caterpiller Dreaming*, in the Hermannsburg School watercolour style, is a window into where and how that Dreaming story intersects with the built reality of Alice Springs. Says Pareroultja: "I painted the Western MacDonnell Ranges behind Ellery Creek Big Hole. It's on the Caterpillar track. They (the caterpillars) came through the Warlpiri town camp north of town. They moved through Mparntwe (Alice Springs) almost along where the train tracks are now, towards the hospital. Next to the Todd River they ran into another mob with a different language. They fought.

Across the river is a piece of the caterpillar that got chopped off in the battle."

Pareroultja learnt to paint as a kid watching the famous Albert Namatjira. His work is in the National Gallery of Australia and two state/territory gallery collections. It's been in 34 group exhibitions, three solo exhibitions and three times a Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award finalist.

Mervyn Rubuntja
Rwetyepme/Mt Sonder, Central Australia (2019)

Watercolour on silk mounted on lightbox
71cm x 137cm x 4cm

Iltja Ntjarra (Many Hands) Art Centre

"When I go outside on my homeland and look west this is the view I see, Mt Sonder," says the artist Mervyn Rubuntja of his entry *Rwetyepme/Mt Sonder, Central Australia*. Indeed to many in Central Australia this mountain is as true a reference point as any you will find.

Rubuntja's scope widens and deepens to take in land more generally in the centre, its people and its protection. "As a leader in my community I have a busy life protecting my people and my land," he says.

His broad knowledge of historical, cultural, environmental and social issues informs that role and underpins his artistic practice.

It's a practice that has seen Rubuntja's artwork in 48 group exhibitions, in the NT, interstate and overseas, and eight collections including at the National Museum of Australia. He is the Director of Iltja Ntjarra (Many Hands) Art Centre based in Alice Springs.

David Frank
Itjinpiri 1981 (2019)

Acrylic on linen
41cm x 61cm

Iwantja Art

Painter and former policeman David Frank's entry *Itjinpiri 1981* remembers when, at Itjinpiri near Ernabella, the then South Australian Premier David Tonkin handed freehold title to 102,630 square kilometres of land to its traditional owners under the *Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act, 1981*.

Now based at Indulkana in northern SA, Frank recalls witnessing this historic moment: "This painting is about the country here, the APY Lands. At *Itjinpiri* this whitefella is giving the paper to the *tjilpi* (senior law man) to say that this is *Anangu Manta* (Aboriginal Land) - this is all yours."

Frank's highly figurative works create narratives that reflect history and his career and experiences as a policeman and *ngangkari* (traditional healer). They have been in 20 group exhibitions and one solo show. He has been shortlisted three times for the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award.

Malya Teamay
Broken Law (2015)

Acrylic on canvas
120cm x 150cm

Maruku Arts

Malya Teamay's entry *Broken Law* depicts some harsh truths about colonisation, but also the artist's optimism about reconciliation.

Part of the painting illustrates pre-contact life in the desert. Here the *Tjukurpa* (Dreaming) and way of life, their links in country and kin, are shown by the strong, unbroken black line.

Upon colonisation, there are rapes, alcohol is introduced and the children of alcoholics take to petrol. The strong black line is broken.

The painting then shows reconciliation of Anangu and non-Anangu finding solutions in open discussion and mutual respect. In this way, Teamay suggests, the *Tjukurpa* will be strong and protective again and the land saved.

Saving land is familiar territory to the artist. Teamay is an inaugural member of the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park board of joint management. His painting is on the Park entrance ticket and in galleries nationally.

Panjiti McKenzie and Roy Yaltjanki
Ngintaka (2019)

Itara – River Red Gum
20.5cm x 19.3cm x 147cm

Maruku Arts

The Dreaming story behind the entry *Ngintaka* is held to be true largely because of the sustenance it is said to give the land and its people.

It's the story of *Ngintaka* or Perentie Man who embarks on a journey to find a better grindstone for his wife, to replace the poor one they were using to grind wild pigweed. While travelling, he created many landforms and vomited up many different kinds of grass seeds and vegetables foods. The story is of profound importance for food resource creation in Anangu culture.

Creating this entry is therefore an expression of caring for country for wife and husband *punu* (woodcarving) artists Panjiti McKenzie OAM and Roy Yaltjanki.

Painter, *punu*, batik and *tjanpi* artist, McKenzie's work has been in 18 group exhibitions and is in three collections, including in the Art Gallery of South Australia, and two commissions. Painter and *punu* artist Yaltjanki's work has joined 10 group exhibitions.

Noreen Parker
Emu Field (2019)

Acrylic on found object
60cm x 60cm

The Minyma Kutjara Arts Project

The 1984-85 Royal Commission into British nuclear tests in Australia during the 1950s and 60s revealed to the world the dark truth of these tests' impact on Maralinga and Emu Field and the people of this country in remote South Australia. Noreen Parker's family knew the impact all too well: her uncle died during the testing while out hunting. Her artwork tells these stories so we won't forget. Now from Wingellina in very remote Western Australia, Parker's entry *Emu Field* is graphic, to which she adds explanation: "My mother and father and families were living in the bush in their *wiltjas* when they heard a big noise. There was a big light then so much smoke it became like night time. People thought it must be *wonambi* (rainbow serpent) coming from the north. They were very frightened and hid in their *wiltjas*. Many were hurt and died. This is a true story from my family."

Carbiene McDonald
Four Dreamings (2019)

Acrylic on canvas
198cm x 122cm

Papunya Tjupi Arts

Carbiene McDonald's entry *Four Dreamings* is framed where Aboriginal mythology meets non-Aboriginal exploration history.

It depicts four Dreaming stories associated with a series of waterholes running between Docker River and Kata Tjuṯa. Specifically, it references four important sites: in the Petermann Ranges, at Docker River, in Bloods Range or Kalaya Murrpu and Mulyayti near Kata Tjuṯa.

McDonald recalls his father walked between these sites, crossing paths at times with Lasseter, the ill-fated explorer of that remote part of Central Australia, and his camels.

As a young man, McDonald retraced his father's footsteps. The memories stay with him vividly today, emerging in his painting.

His paintings have been in two group exhibitions, including one in Germany, one solo exhibition and he is the winner of the 2019 Hadley's Art Prize.

Charlie Tjapangati
Pirrinya (2019)

Acrylic on linen
91cm x 91cm

Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd

To many Aboriginal people there is no greater truth than the Dreaming. Dreaming stories are true in their structuring of group relationships, lore and connections to country frequently portrayed in art. From Kiwirrkurra in very remote Western Australia, Charlie Tjapangati's entry *Pirrinya* exemplifies this. He explains in translation: "This painting depicts Pirrinya, a swamp site northwest of Jupiter Well in WA. A large group of Tingari men camped here before travelling to Lake Mackay. The Tingari are ancestral beings of the Dreaming who travelled over vast stretches of the country, performing rituals and creating and shaping particular sites.

Their travels and adventures are enshrined in song cycles that still form part of the teachings to post-initiation youths today."

Born in approximately 1949, Tjapangati has exhibited in nearly 80 group exhibitions and several solo shows in the NT, interstate and overseas. His works are in 11 collections also interstate and overseas, including in the National Gallery of Australia.

Doris Thomas
Family Camp, Deep Well Station (2019)

Acrylic on linen
68cm x 68cm

Tangentyere Artists

The truth of the story in Doris Thomas's entry is evident in its detail. The country is literally imprinted on her. She says of her entry *Family Camp, Deep Well Station,* where she was born: "My grandmother is holding me. I've just been born. Mum brought this white lady to see me. My stepfather is there wearing the lavender shirt and cowboy hat. All the family is around us. We lived in humpies. We used 44 gallon drums for rubbish, painted beside each humpy. We stored water from the well, the buckets hanging in the painting. I've got a birth mark on my face representing the rocky outcrop behind. It's a part of the *Iterrkewarre Tjukurpa* that ends up down at Chambers Pillar."

Experienced in fabric painting, carving, pottery and painting, Thomas has exhibited in over 50 group exhibitions in the NT and interstate. Her art is in four collections, including overseas.

Margaret Smith and Julie Anderson
Kungka kutjara Tjanpi palyanyi ngurra wiru (two women making Tjanpi on lovely country) (2019)

Tjanpi (wild harvested grass) with raffia, cotton fabric, ininti seeds and gumnuts
56cm x 110cm x 48cm

Tjanpi Desert Weavers

Tjanpi artists Smith and Anderson say "tjanpi is the way we tell our truths and remember."

And what is truer to us than self-portraits?

Tjanpi, meaning 'dry grass', now also means baskets and sculptures made from it. In this entry, one form references the other, plus the history of this art and the organisation behind it, as well as portraying the artists themselves. "Baskets are how we learnt to weave and how Tjanpi Desert Weavers got started," say the makers of *Kungka kutjara Tjanpi palyanyi ngurra wiru (two women making Tjanpi on lovely country)*.

The children riding the camel in this work is one of Smith's strong childhood memories.

"Making *tjanpi* helps us tell stories to share with everyone, and so we can keep them strong in our minds," the artists say.

Smith has exhibited in seven group exhibitions. Anderson made her first tjanpi basket last year under Smith's guidance after moving to Alice Springs for renal dialysis.

Charmaine Kulitja
Ngayuku Ngura (My homeland) (2019)

Acrylic on canvas
76cm x 122cm

Walkatjara Art

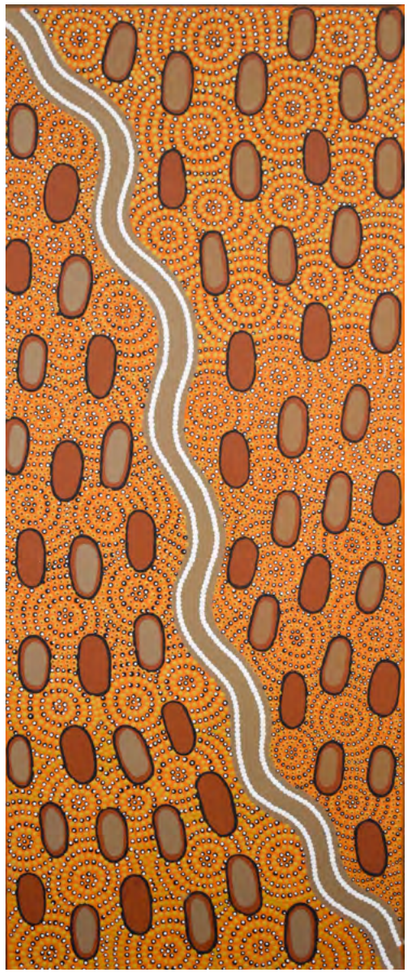
Just as maps are considered a true description of country, so too is emerging artist Charmaine Kulitja's entry *Ngayuku Ngura*. To her it's a painting of "strong community who share stories of *Tjukurpa*, my family roads and national park roads." That is, a map and more.

Each circle represents a location significant to the artist and her family. Uppermost is Kulpijara, her artist mother's homeland. Then down the map is Kaltijinda (in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park).

On down and to the left is Mutitjulu, with a yellow square like Kulpijara and flanked further to the left by orange sand dunes.

The yellow squares mark places of great importance to the artist, while the other squares signify strong, connected communities generally. Above Mutitjulu, Kulitja has connected Ranger Tjuta, or 'rangerville', where the national park rangers live.

"Above rangerville is Amata; family there," she says. "This road quick way to get there. We using one road to sit down together."



Dulcie Moneymoon
Papa Tjukurpa (2019)

Acrylic on canvas
51cm x 122cm

Walkatjara Art

Emerging artist Dulcie Moneymoon's account of her entry *Papa Tjukurpa* recalls the transmission of its story from generation to generation. And hints that there is only so much Dreaming truth or meaning that can go in such public displays, with some necessarily remaining secret, 'special'.

Mutitjulu-based Moneymoon explains the story is her grand-father's Dreaming or Tjukurpa: "My Fathers father. His name is Glen Moneymoon. We used to all camp there, me, my sisters, all of us together, his homeland not far from Kaltukatjara (Docker River).

There (in the painting) is the little creek and the *Papas* (dogs). This is all the story he told us, the only place about it he can tell us. It's (otherwise) a special story that I don't share here. The *Papas* are different colours, some orange, some brown. We lay by the creek and he told us the story."

Nellie Patterson
Ulurunya (Uluru Sacred Site) (2019)

Acrylic on canvas
61cm x 76cm

Walkatjara Art

Elder Nellie Patterson's entry *Ulurunya (Uluru Sacred Site)*, her explanation of and reason for it, speak in no uncertain terms. *"Nyangatja puli Ulurunya, nganampa ngura Tjukurpa pulka tjara. Kala painting tjuta palyalpai-amilapai Culture Centre-ngka, minga tjuta nganampa nguraku nintiringkula kulintjaku,"* says the widely exhibited Patterson.

"This is the rock known as Uluru, our home with its powerful law. We do our paintings at the Culture Centre there so tourists can learn about our country, understand and respect it. That is all."

True story.

Judith Yinyika Chambers
Cutting of the Road (2019)

Acrylic on canvas
76.2cm x 152.4cm

Warakurna Artists

Remote Aboriginal mobility is legendary, but the story of Aboriginal people actually cutting the roads through their country is one seldom heard. Judith Chambers knows it because her family did it. Her entry *Cutting the Road* depicts the making of a new road linking Warburton to Warakurna more directly than had roads made by the more well-known road maker Len Beadell. Judith's family was among many who worked on this road in very remote Western Australia. With just one tractor and axes, the men chopped the trees to clear a path and the women and children chopped and burnt the stumps.

Chambers has been involved with Warakurna Artists since 2006 and serves as a member of its executive. As well as painting, she makes grass (*tjanpi*) and fibre baskets and sculpture. She has exhibited in over 30 group exhibitions and her work is in the National Museum of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria and Western Australia Museum collections.

Marlene Rubuntja
My Father's Country (2019)

Mixed media soft and hard sculpture
44cm x 57cm x 34cm

Yarrenyty Arltere Artists

Marlene Rubuntja's entry *My Father's Country* tells her father's true story with both humour and pathos.

Her artist father Wenten Rubuntja famously fought for Aboriginal people's right to settle Alice Springs town camps. She regrets he was rewarded with three tin sheds on his country, too hard for him to live in.

Says Marlene: "You know I was talking about this story in the art room and old Trudy Inkamala said, 'I went there and you know what, there was only emus and kangaroos living in those tin sheds, true story.'

It might sound funny and this sculpture might make you laugh but it makes me sad when I think about my father and those tin sheds."

Winner of the inaugural Vincent Lingiari Art Award, Marlene Rubuntja's work has twice been a finalist in the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, is in eight public collections including the Art Gallery of NSW and been in 78 group exhibitions including the Sydney Biennale.

Central Land Council

The Central Land Council is a Commonwealth corporate entity. The CLC operates under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and it is also a Native Title Representative Body under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

The CLC covers an area of 750,000 square kilometres in the southern half of the Northern Territory. In the CLC's region, traditional Aboriginal landowners own more than 400,000 square kilometres of Aboriginal freehold land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*. This represents more than half of the almost 780,000 square kilometres of land covered by the CLC.

The CLC is governed by 90 Aboriginal people elected from communities in the southern half of the Northern Territory. While the legislation governing the CLC is only for the Northern Territory, many of the CLC's constituents' traditional country extends across state borders.

The CLC traces its origins to the history of the Aboriginal struggle for justice and their rights to their traditional land.

This history includes the famous strike and Walk Off by the Gurindji families at Wave Hill cattle station in 1966. The strike drew international attention to the dispossession and disadvantage of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

In February 1973 the Commonwealth set up a Royal Commission under Mr Justice Woodward to inquire into how land rights might be achieved in the Northern Territory. The commissioner's first report in July 1973 recommended that a Central and a Northern Land Council be established in order to present to him the views of Aboriginal people.

After considering Justice Woodward's final report, the Whitlam Labor government drew up a Land Rights Bill, but was dismissed before the law was passed.

The Australian Parliament eventually passed the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* on the 16th December 1976 and the law came into operation on 26th January 1977.

It transferred title to most of the Aboriginal reserve lands in the Northern Territory to its traditional owners and gave other traditional land owners the opportunity to claim land not already owned, leased or being used by someone else. The major townships in the region, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek where excluded.

Today Aboriginal people own almost half of the land in the Northern Territory.

www.clc.org.au

Desart

Desart is the Association of Central Australian Aboriginal Arts and Craft Centres. Established in 1992, and incorporated in 1993, it now has 34 independently governed Aboriginal art and craft centres as members, who in turn collectively represent approximately 8000 Aboriginal artists.

Desart is directed by a 10 member Aboriginal executive committee elected from its art centre members. Desart's region of operations cover an area of 1221 million square kilometres extending from the southern part of the Northern Territory into the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) region of South Australia and into the Ngaanyatjarra region of Western Australia.

Desart is a collective voice for Central Australian Aboriginal art centres on matters of shared interest and delivers programs to members that support the development and maintenance of strong governance, administration and infrastructure. It prioritises opportunities for its membership to promote their art and crafts locally, nationally and internationally and to further their ability to remain autonomous and sustainable Aboriginal businesses.

Desart's programs and services recognise art centres are a vital part of community life in remote central Australia and its mission is to provide support so they grow and remain stronger for art, for culture and for country.

www.desart.com.au

Tangentyere Artists

'Relha ntjaarraka kangkentge urrkaapuma pmara Tangentyere Artists.'

[The many ladies are proud working together at Tangentyere Artists]

Statement (in Western Arrernte) by the artists of Tangentyere about Tangentyere Artists Art Centre.

Tangentyere Artists are part of Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs. The Council was established in the 1970s for and by Aboriginal people, and is now the primary service provider for 18 Alice Springs housing associations, known as town camps.

Many Aboriginal Alice Springs residents longed for an art centre to call their own, to challenge the private dealers and carpet baggers plaguing the town.

Tangentyere Council's art service was first established in 2005, initially providing targeted skills development workshops and some outreach services across a range of town camps. Through the Tangentyere Council Executive, town camp residents were striving for a full time art centre to meet their needs.

Today, with a purpose built gallery, studio and administration, and a professional development program, Tangentyere Artists is the hub for arts activities across Alice Springs town camps.

The art centre mission is to provide innovative, effective and sustainable art programs that foster and support the aspirations and decisions of town camp people. As a not-for-profit organisation, Tangentyere Artists return one hundred percent of proceeds to the artists and their services.

As Jane Young, East Arrernte woman, Chair of Desart, town camp resident and artist, who commenced painting with Tangentyere Artists in 2005, explains:

'Everyone knows Tangentyere Council, and because it's Aboriginal owned and directed, everyone trusts Tangentyere Council, so they wanted their art centre to be a part of Tangentyere. It was the best thing, you know? It was the right place for all of us – we are all welcome here: all cultural groups, all languages, all the people!'

'Now, Tangentyere Artists means Town Camp artists are learning new things every day, and at the same time, keeping their culture strong.'

www.tangentyereartists.org.au

Acknowledgements

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