

NORTHERN TERRITORY
Arts Strategy 2034



Acknowledgment of Country

The Northern Territory Government respectfully acknowledges the First Nations people of this country and recognises their continuing connections to their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to their leaders past, present and emerging.

Whilst this document uses the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples are First Nations people living in the Northern Territory. Therefore, strategies, services and outcomes relating to 'Aboriginal' Territorians should be read to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians.

Our commitment

We value and celebrate that Aboriginal art, culture and stories have been central to the expression, practice, and preservation of Aboriginal Cultures for tens of thousands of years and recognise Aboriginal Culture, languages, and lore as fundamental to the Northern Territory's identity.

Our commitment is to build stronger partnerships with the Aboriginal arts and culture sector by transforming the way we work together through meaningful engagement and genuine collaboration.

We will harness industry expertise and insights by working closely with Aboriginal community-controlled peak bodies including Desert and ANKA to ensure Aboriginal voices are heard to cement their integral role in shaping the Territory's cultural landscape.





Cultural funding in the Northern Territory

The creative arts are foundational to the arts, culture and creative industries and a major source of innovation, driving technological advancements and new business models. This cannot be achieved without government investment.

The Northern Territory Government invests 80 million annually¹ into arts and cultural activities across core arts, other cultural and related domains²:

- **Core arts domains:** visual arts and crafts, performing arts, literature and writing
- **Other cultural and related domains:** Audio-visual and interactive media, design and creative services, cultural and natural heritage and festivals

This strategy defines arts, culture and creative industries as a spectrum of economic activities that generate and commercialise creativity. Given the extensive scope of these industries, this strategy focuses on activities that support artists in their core creative practice.

Recognising that artists often work across multiple art forms, this strategy values and preserves traditional creative practice while fostering innovation. It encourages creative thinking, the use of emerging technologies, and the development of new art forms. This strategy prioritises artists and arts workers and facilitates pathways to empower



artists and the arts sector to seize opportunities across the broader creative industries.

The strategy is comprehensive yet adaptable. Deliberately flexible, the strategy allows the Northern Territory Government and the arts sector to adapt and respond to emerging opportunities, innovation and changing contexts over the next ten years. By maintaining this flexibility, we can support and enable a wide range of initiatives and partnerships that align with our core priorities and principles.

The sector is facing transformative change, and the need for storytelling, key messages, research, resources, evidence and a shared approach to long-term planning is more important than ever. A collective effort is required, and every voice matters. By working within a governance and accountability framework we will make our collective advocacy impactful and effective so that the Northern Territory's arts, culture and creative sector can achieve its full potential.



Our vision

The Northern Territory is a thriving community enriched by vibrant arts, culture, and creativity, vital to the Territory's social, cultural and economic future.

Our priorities

1. Empower

Invest in people to build a strong, creative and culturally diverse arts sector

2. Connect

Invest in connecting arts, culture and creativity to community to grow the creative and cultural life of the Territory

3. Enrich

Invest in audiences and celebrate the value of Territory arts and culture to grow a strong arts, cultural and creative economy

Our principles

These principles underpin the strategic priorities to Empower, Connect and Enrich.

Cultural heart

The crucial place of Aboriginal stories is recognised and respected at the centre of the Territory's arts and culture

Creative communities

Access and opportunity to arts and culture enriches the lives of all Territorians

Artistic ambition

Empowered artists thrive and innovate in sustainable careers and contribute to the creative and cultural economy

Connecting culture

Future focused arts leadership enables diverse and language-rich multicultural connections and a robust and valued arts sector

Territory identity

The Territory's vibrant arts and culture is recognised at home and abroad and is reflected in our stories and connects us with a sense of belonging and achievement

Our values

- Recognition
- Respect
- Empowerment
- Collaboration
- Inclusivity



OUR PRIORITIES

1. Empower

Invest in people to build a strong, creative and culturally diverse arts sector.

The **Empower priorities** strengthen the arts sector by investing in people actively engaged in the arts, to build a diverse, innovative, and inclusive community of artists and arts leaders. Priorities develop Aboriginal leadership through community-controlled mechanisms and supports artists to thrive in sustainable careers. The **Empower priorities** will enable the provision of resources, training, and skills development and the nurturing of emerging artists.

1. Aboriginal leadership in the arts is promoted and strengthened by recognising, acknowledging and using well established Aboriginal community-controlled leadership structures
2. Artists are supported to thrive in safe, inclusive and sustainable careers fostering creativity and innovation in creative practice
3. Access to resources, training, and skills development to support education and career pathways
4. The next generation of emerging artists is nurtured within a culturally diverse and responsive arts sector

Our commitment

- ✔ Build stronger partnerships with Aboriginal community-controlled leaders including Desart and ANKA in a culture-first, strength-based approach to capacity building and program development and delivery
- ✔ Support artists to create new work, develop new skills and access pathways to employment and career development
- ✔ Remove barriers to emerging and professional artists and arts and cultural workers with disability from realising their ambitions
- ✔ Support targeted investment in skills, education and training, using and growing local leadership capacity
- ✔ Support lifelong learning, employment and opportunity in the arts and inspire the next generation of arts and cultural leaders





OUR PRIORITIES

2. Connect

Invest in connecting the arts, culture and creativity to community to grow the creative and cultural life of the Territory.

The **Connect priorities** foster creativity and innovation to enhance the Territory’s cultural life by linking arts, culture and community. They support arts organisations to be leaders in their regions, promote inclusivity, foster creative partnerships, ensure safe and diverse workplaces, and invest in accessible infrastructure.

1. Arts organisations are supported to be leaders in their regions, cultivate connections, and grow valued creative communities
2. Inclusivity and diversity is promoted to increase connection, access and participation for all in arts and culture

3. Creative partnerships, collaborations, and innovation are supported locally, nationally and globally
4. Creative workplaces are supported to implement safe and sustainable practices and be culturally diverse and desirable places to work and create
5. Arts infrastructure is fit for purpose and accessible, connecting arts, culture, and creativity to community
6. The arts and culture sector is strengthened through robust arts and cultural policy and program development that is inclusive of all Territory voices

Our commitment

- ✔ Support opportunities for arts organisations to develop strong governance, finance and management frameworks to maximise strategic opportunities for sustainability, growth and innovation
- ✔ Support opportunities that increase access and engagement in arts and culture for people of all ages, backgrounds, and ability
- ✔ Establish an Arts and Culture Advisory framework with regional arts representation to advise government on current and emerging issues and opportunities relevant to regions, arts practice and expertise
- ✔ Invest in the development and implementation of initiatives that support safe, respectable, and fair workplaces that attract and grow the Territory’s creative workforce
- ✔ Invest in venues and facilities that activate spaces to support innovation, creation and presentation of culture and creativity, informed by industry and community needs
- ✔ Support arts organisations to develop and deliver diverse creative programs underpinned by best practice in financial, governance, equity and human resource management



NT Wri

KINIMANU
KUKURIPA



OUR PRIORITIES

3. Enrich

Invest in audiences and celebrate the value of Territory arts and culture to grow a strong arts, cultural and creative economy.

The **Enrich priorities** aim to boost the arts, cultural and creative economy of the Territory by investing in audiences and celebrating the impact of arts and culture. Priorities acknowledge the diversity of languages and emphasise the central role of culture for Aboriginal initiatives, embrace our rich multicultural communities and promote Territory artists locally and globally, grow audiences and markets and communicate the value of the arts.

1. A 'culture-first' approach is embedded across all Aboriginal arts and culture initiatives recognising the crucial place of Aboriginal artists
2. Territory artists are celebrated, promoted and supported to grow demand in local, national, and international markets
3. Audiences and markets for Territory stories, creativity and performance are nurtured and grown
4. The value of the arts is measured and communicated

Our commitment

- ✔ Work with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and peak bodies to leverage opportunities and strengthen the sector, elevating Aboriginal arts and cultural knowledge and leadership
- ✔ Strengthen international engagement and exchange, leverage cross sector partnerships and celebrate success
- ✔ Invest in initiatives that respond to changing audience needs and market dynamics to grow reach and demand for Territory arts and culture
- ✔ Invest in research and evaluation, to measure, map and promote the value of arts and culture in the Territory and grow audiences globally
- ✔ Leverage opportunities across arts and culture portfolios, all levels of government and across borders to deliver against arts and culture strategies and respond to priorities of the sector as they arise



Accountability and governance

This strategy is delivered by the Northern Territory Government in partnership with Territory and national partners.

The strategy delivery is led by Arts NT in collaboration with a number of Territory government departments, non-government organisations, artists and communities.

The strategies and policies that guide the implementation over the life of this strategy include:

- National Cultural Policy 2023 – 2028 Revive
- 10-Year Museums Masterplan for Darwin and Palmerston
- Screen Territory Strategic Plan 2022-2026
- NT Major Events Company Playbook 2021-2032
- Northern Territory Youth Strategy 2023-2033
- Northern Territory Disability Strategy 2022 – 2032
- Northern Territory Education Engagement Strategy 2022 – 2031
- Northern Territory Social Outcomes Framework
- NT’s Tourism Industry Strategy 2030
- Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020 – 2030
- International engagement strategy 2022 to 2026
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Two consecutive five-year action plans will guide the investment and actions against the key priorities over the life of the strategy. Published annual reports will include updates and progress against key actions and initiatives of the strategy.



STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

The following is a snapshot of current and potential stakeholders and partnership opportunities

ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR

- Artists and arts workers
- Leading Arts Organisations
- Arts peers
- Aboriginal community controlled peak organisations
- Strategic local, national and global partners across related cultural sectors including film, digital design, fashion, video games, museums, art galleries, keeping places, festivals, cultural and natural heritage, libraries and archives

OTHER SECTORS

- Peak bodies, professional associations, private sector, trusts and foundations
- Education, youth, disability, seniors, multicultural affairs, aboriginal affairs, gender equity, education, health, tourism, business, justice, infrastructure, information technology, environment

COMMUNITY

- Community groups and organisations
- Community members with an active interest in the arts

GOVERNMENT

- Local councils across the Territory
- Northern Territory Government departments
- Australian Government agencies
- Arts and Culture advisory committees
- Local Decision Making and participating communities



We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all who contributed their valuable time in the development of this strategy.

This strategy is developed for the benefit of all Territorians and your input has been essential to ensure the roadmap leads to a bright, creative and prosperous future for all.

References

¹Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, 2022, Cultural Funding by Government—2021–22—Northern Territory.

²United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2009. UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics 2009.

Image Credits

Cover image – Beam Me UP Kate, performed by Slide Youth Dance Theatre.

Page 2 – Image courtesy of Walkatjara Trust.

Page 4 – Whitewater Band from Yarralin. Photo by Richard Starr.

Page 5 – Desert Mob Marketplace, Yarrenyty Arltère Soft Sculpture Workshop 2023. Photo by Rhett Hammerton, courtesy of Desart.

Page 8 – NT Dance Company performing Wanja with Ineke Wallis (foreground), Ruby Platemotely & Banula Marika (background). Photo by Paz Tassone.

Page 9 – Tommy Riyakurray Munyarryan OAM in VR headset presenting the “Wangurri Virtual Museum” project @ InDigiMatha launch, CDU First Nations Gallery, Darwin Waterfront. Photo by Glenn Campbell.

Page 10 – NXT Gen ARTS artist Laura Buckley with Adriana Dent from host organisation Albertini.

Page 11 – 2024 NT Writers Festival, Passing on the Torch panel, showing David Miller and interpreter Kathy Tozer. Photo by Nicholas Goldhurst.

Page 12 – NXT Gen ARTS artists Alyssa Mason and Aaliyah Anderson completing the Young Makers Artist project at Central Craft.

Page 13 – Aerialist from Bamboo Moon by Corrugated Iron Youth Arts. Image supplied by Corrugated Iron Youth Arts.

Page 15 – Darwin Symphony Orchestra performance Odes to Joy, November 2023. Photo by Paz Tassone.

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