



# National Aboriginal Art Gallery

## Strategic Business Case

### SUMMARY

Northern Territory Department of  
Tourism, Sport and Culture

July 2019

Cover Image: Wawiriya Burton, Ngayuku Ngura / My Country  
(detail), 2016. Source: NT Government

The EY logo consists of the letters 'EY' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. A yellow diagonal line is positioned above the 'Y'.

Building a better  
working world

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

In keeping with a commitment to reconciliation and respect, we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia and the Traditional Owners of this land and waters. We pay our respect to Elders, knowledge holders and leaders both past and present.

In particular we acknowledge the Arrernte/Aranda Apmereke artweye (Traditional Owners) and Kwertengerle (Traditional Managers) for Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and surrounding estates Antulye (Undoolya) and Irlpme (Bond Springs) and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.



# 1. Executive summary

## 1.1 Introduction

The Northern Territory Government is proposing to develop a National Aboriginal Art Gallery (the Gallery) dedicated to celebrating Aboriginal art.

The Gallery would display changing exhibitions using works borrowed from other Australian institutions. Alongside the display function, the Gallery would have a research capacity which could help to enhance the understanding, meaning and significance of Aboriginal art in Australian public collections.

The Gallery would be housed in an iconic building in a master-planned cultural precinct in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and would be managed on a “First Peoples’ Principles” basis.

Art is important to all cultures and is particularly important to Aboriginal people as it is through art that Aboriginal people express and explore their Tjukurpa (Law / Dreaming / Stories), song lines and history which have been passed down from their ancestors and are depicted in paintings (including rock art), carvings, weaving and sculptures.<sup>1</sup> This has been a continuous feature for the world’s oldest living culture and forms part of a tradition which dates back to the earliest examples of Aboriginal rock art which may be up to 50,000 years old.<sup>2</sup>

These traditions have continued in contemporary Aboriginal art which is commonly considered to have started in 1971 with work produced in the Papunya settlement, 240 km north-west of Mparntwe (Alice Springs). Since this time, contemporary Aboriginal art has grown into a significant global art movement and has, to a large degree, come to define Australian art internationally.

Despite the importance of contemporary Aboriginal art to its people and the size, scale and international significance of the Aboriginal art movement, Australia does not have a large-scale public institution dedicated to Aboriginal art.

The National Aboriginal Art Gallery would address this absence and Mparntwe (Alice Springs) is a fitting location.

## 1.2 The case for a National Aboriginal Art Gallery in Mparntwe (Alice Springs)

The project focuses on building a National Aboriginal Art Gallery in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) to develop a national institution dedicated to Aboriginal art and resolve the absence of such an institution in Australia.

The Gallery is intended to become a centre of Aboriginal curatorial excellence and workforce participation and it also seeks to achieve a range of other economic and social outcomes for Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and for Aboriginal advancement nationally.

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<sup>1</sup> Tjukurpa is a word originating from central Australia but is commonly used. There are other terms used in the over 250 Aboriginal languages which relate to the same or similar concepts.

<sup>2</sup> Daisey Dumas, “Australian rock art may be among the oldest in the world, according to new research”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 February 2016.

### 1.2.1 The benefits flowing from the Gallery

The absence of a national institution dedicated to celebrating the achievements of the art and culture of its First Peoples puts Australia at odds with many other countries with a history as settler Colonies such as New Zealand, Canada, and the United States of America.

A central reason why these precedent institutions are considered important in those countries is that they provide a voice for their First Peoples to tell their own stories. The policy developed by Te Papa in 2003 known as *mana taonga*, for example, recognises Maori ownership of their *taonga* and their right to care for them, speak for them, and dictate how the Museum uses them.

The Northern Territory Government believes that the establishment of such a National Aboriginal Art Gallery would help to:

- ▶ Celebrate the art and culture of Aboriginal people and contribute to Aboriginal empowered and advancement
- ▶ Create greater understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture within Australian society and therefore foster reconciliation
- ▶ Foster a more sophisticated and inclusive image of Australia internationally as a country which is reconciling with its past and celebrates the achievements of all its people

By applying First Peoples' principles of ensuring majority Aboriginal governance, management and workforce, the Gallery provides a vehicle for Aboriginal people to tell their stories to the world investing them with agency in the way in which their stories are told.

This would allow the Gallery to:

- ▶ Become an exemplar for how Aboriginal art should be managed, stored and displayed in Australia and become a catalyst for change in other galleries and museums around the country
- ▶ Undertake a research role to help to fill gaps in knowledge around interpretation and meaning of Aboriginal art in public collections
- ▶ Provide a vehicle through which Aboriginal people can interact with their art and culture and preserve that culture by having Elders teach younger generations the Tjukurpa (Law / Dreaming / Stories) and other cultural significance in the works of art
- ▶ Preserve culture and connection to culture for Aboriginal people which can lead to improved social and health outcomes

### 1.2.2 Other aims and objectives

Furthermore, the Gallery would seek to provide a positive impact on Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and Aboriginal advancement by:

- ▶ Providing training and employment outcomes, particularly for Aboriginal people
- ▶ Creating a civic centre or central gathering place for the community in Mparntwe (Alice Springs)
- ▶ Establishing Mparntwe (Alice Springs) as the beginning of the Territory's Art Trail
- ▶ CBD activation and revitalisation of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and enhanced reputation
- ▶ Assisting to address a number of youth and social challenges in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) by providing a location to gather for all people and providing a vehicle for the preservation of

Aboriginal culture through interaction and instruction around the meaning and interpretation of Aboriginal art

### 1.2.3 Expected outcomes

The expected outcomes of developing the Gallery include a range of potential flow on economic and social benefits for Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and the region including:

- ▶ A direct contribution to the local economy through the construction phase
- ▶ Increased visitation to Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and the consequent economic contribution to the Gross Regional Product (GRP)
- ▶ Increased employment, especially Aboriginal training and employment
- ▶ Stimulating private sector investment in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and remote community art galleries

## 1.3 Key findings on economic benefits

The analysis demonstrates that the construction and operation of the Gallery could have a positive contribution to the economy of the Mparntwe (Alice Springs) region. These benefits would be driven by construction of the Gallery, its ongoing operations and increased tourism.

An indicative cost of construction of the facility has been estimated by the Northern Territory Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics. A range of \$150M to \$180M is expected, dependent on factors including site and design issues. Assuming construction occurs over a two-year period, the direct economic impact (as discussed below) would be approximately \$75M - \$90M per year during the construction phase.

### 1.3.1 Construction Impact

Building the Gallery would create construction jobs and flow-on contributions to other sectors of the economy. The estimated results of the economic contribution analysis for each year of construction (i.e. 2021 and 2022) are outlined in Table 1 and include:

- ▶ A direct contribution of between 115 - 138 jobs
- ▶ This contributes a further 102 - 122 jobs in industrial and consumption flow-on effects
- ▶ A direct contribution of between \$23.1M - \$27.7M to Gross Regional Product (GRP) of the Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and MacDonnell regions and a further \$19.7M - \$23.6M in industrial and consumption flow-on effects

Section 4 provides more details.

Table 1: Economic contribution of construction for each year of the two year construction period

Low Range			
Impact	Direct impact	Indirect	Total impact
Output   \$M	\$75.00	\$43.64	\$118.64
Employment   Jobs	115	102	217
Value-Added   \$M	\$23.11	\$19.65	\$42.76
High Range			
Impact	Direct impact	Indirect	Total impact
Output   \$M	\$90.00	\$52.36	\$142.36
Employment   Jobs	138	122	260
Value-Added   \$M	\$27.73	\$23.58	\$51.31

### 1.3.2 Operational Impact

The Gallery would also generate an ongoing economic contribution from operations.

The figures provided below are for 2025, the third full year of operations, but a similar contribution would be made on an annual basis if the Gallery can maintain the increased level of projected visitation and assumed employment levels. The third full year has been chosen as the year of focus to allow for the Gallery to ramp up to full visitation.

Once operational, and based on comparisons to other galleries and museums and information provided by the Northern Territory Government, the Gallery would employ an estimated 55 full-time equivalent staff (FTE) resulting in:

- ▶ Increased direct and indirect output by \$13.7M
- ▶ 14 additional indirect jobs
- ▶ \$7.2M contribution to the local GRP of the Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and MacDonnell regions

These benefits are annualised and expressed for the 2025 year.

Table 2: Economic contribution of Gallery employment 2025

Impact	Direct impact	Indirect	Total impact
Output   \$M	\$8.97	\$4.77	\$13.73
Employment   Jobs	55	14	69
Value-Added   \$M	\$4.70	\$2.53	\$7.23

The Gallery is expected to increase tourism to Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and increase the average length of stay for other tourists. This is based on:

- ▶ The increase in tourism post 2011 in Hobart which is partially attributable to the opening of the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA)
- ▶ Market research undertaken by EY Sweeney which indicated that the Gallery had strong appeal for past and potential visitors
- ▶ National trends indicating strong growth in both indigenous tourism and art-based tourism

In 2025, the third full year of operations, the Gallery could attract an additional 53,000 visitors a year to Mparntwe (Alice Springs) that might not have come without its establishment. In addition, other tourists are anticipated to stay longer. Based on the market research undertaken by EY Sweeney, the weighted average for potential extended stay is 1.16 nights. The economic contribution of increased visitation as outlined above for the 2025 year is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Economic contribution of increased Visitors to Mparntwe (Alice Springs) 2025

Low Range			
Impact	Direct impact	Indirect	Total impact
Output   \$M	\$30.83	\$11.97	\$42.79
Employment   Jobs	132	32	164
Value-Added   \$M	\$12.61	\$6.44	\$19.05
High Range			
Impact	Direct impact	Indirect	Total impact
Output   \$M	\$46.24	\$17.95	\$64.18
Employment   Jobs	197	48	245
Value-Added   \$M	\$18.92	\$9.66	\$28.58

### 1.3.3 Summary of economic benefits

The economic contribution to GRP of the construction of the Gallery would occur across 2021 and 2022. In each of these years the construction of the Gallery would generate:

- ▶ A direct and indirect output of between \$118.6M and \$142.4M
- ▶ Between 217 - 260 direct and indirect jobs
- ▶ A direct and indirect total value-add of between \$42.8M and \$51.3M

Once the Gallery is fully operational, it will generate an economic contribution to GRP based on its operational activity and the visitation it stimulates. The year examined is 2025, the third full year of operations which would allow the Gallery to ramp up its visitation. A similar contribution would be made on an on-going annual basis if the Gallery can maintain the increased level of projected visitation and assumed employment levels. The operations of the Gallery will contribute:

- ▶ A direct and indirect output of \$13.7M
- ▶ Up to 69 direct and indirect jobs
- ▶ A direct and indirect value-add of approximately \$7.2M contribution to the local economy's GRP

Additional visitation will contribute to GRP:

- ▶ A direct and indirect output of between \$42.8M - \$64.2M
- ▶ Between 164 - 245 direct and indirect jobs
- ▶ A direct and indirect value-add of between \$19.0M - \$28.6M

## 1.4 Conclusions

Based on the outcome of the analysis, the Gallery is considered to have strategic merit for the following reasons:

- ▶ Addresses the current absence of a national institution to celebrate Aboriginal art and culture
- ▶ Mparntwe (Alice Springs) has a strong claim to host the Gallery based on historic, geographic and artistic grounds
- ▶ Contributes towards Aboriginal advancement by generating pride within Aboriginal Australians and respect amongst non-Aboriginal Australians
- ▶ The preliminary economic evaluation at the Strategic Business Case stage demonstrates material economic and social benefits generated for the Mparntwe (Alice Springs) region

Based on this strategic rationale, and subject to resolving the identification of a preferred site and finalisation of a detailed project scope (including capital and operational cost estimates), the project can be progressed to the next stage of assessment.

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Ernst & Young was engaged on the instructions of the Northern Territory Department of Tourism, Sport and Culture to prepare this strategic business case (the Project), in accordance with the consultancy agreement dated 22 October 2018.

The results of Ernst & Young's work, including the assumptions and qualifications made in preparing the report, are set out in Ernst & Young's report dated July 2019 (the Report). The Report should be read in its entirety including the transmittal letter, the applicable scope of the work and any limitations. A reference to the Report includes any part of the Report. No further work has been undertaken by Ernst & Young since the date of the Report to update it.

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