

Investigating the social welfare indicators of Aboriginal Regional Art Centres: a pilot study.

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The Honourable Brendon Grylls MLA (centre), artists, staff and visitors at the opening of Wirnda Barna Artists - 30th September 2010

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The inaugural meeting of Wirnda Barna Artists at Cue Shire Hall July 2009, where the group decided upon the name for their enterprise.

From L to R: Cheryl Mongoo, Michele Penny, Gloria Fogarty, Alice Kavanagh, Olive Gibson, Beryl Walsh, Francis Walsh, Phyllis Simpson, Liza Walsh, Ashley Walsh, Tim Acker, James Brockman, Valerie Dongara and Kay-Anne Dongara (niece), Noella Little and daughter, Monica Brockman, Mavis Mongoo, Tim Pearn, Wayne McDonald, and Valma Gilla.

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1 Abstract

This research project uses a case study approach to:

- 1) investigate how interdisciplinary insights can be used to accurately document the social, cultural, community and individual well-being and economic impact of Aboriginal Art Centres in rural communities;
- 2) evaluate the utility and comprehensiveness of existing data sources and methods;
- 3) monitor the progress and achievements of the newly established regional Wirnda Barua Art Centre; and
- 4) foreshadow future directions for theory development to support the arts and rural economic, cultural and community development.

The project is significant because of the novelty of an interdisciplinary approach and the focus on holistic assessment in terms of the contribution an Art Centre provides to cultural life, economic development, community strength, well-being and health.

The research found that the project had made good progress towards achieving its goals and provided significant community wellness outcomes that represent a cost-effective means to address some of the underlying collective social stressors that the “Closing the Gap” policy is designed to reduce.

2 Executive summary

I think now with the Art Centre and what people are doing in town I think there is a more optimistic feeling that yes, Aboriginal people are able to do things on their own (Stakeholder).

Wirnda Barna Artists (Wirnda Barna - the Art Centre) has given Aboriginal people hope - hope that they can achieve more respect in the community, hope that things will improve for their children and an affirmation that they have something positive to offer society. The purpose of this study is to measure the effects on wellness and community life of Aboriginal Australians provided by an Art Centre servicing Aboriginal artists.

This report describes the findings of a project that analysed the impact of a new Art Centre in the Midwest Region of Western Australia. The Art Centre serves six communities within an area classified by the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia system (ARIA) as 'very remote' (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2004). The project examines both the achievements and challenges faced by the new Art Centre (the main part of the report) and provides a preliminary analysis of the applicability of established measurement methods developed in different disciplines and some possible directions for future research (the appendix). The primary purpose of the Art Centre project was to support the artistic development and marketing opportunities for groups of Aboriginal artists in the upper Murchison region.

The evaluation drew data from a total of 53 interviews with artists, community stakeholders (funding bodies, community service providers and community members) and Wirnda Barna staff, and developed social profiles of the communities served by the Art Centre. We found that the project had achieved diverse positive social welfare, personal, social, community as well as health and well-being outcomes.

The government's 'Closing the Gap' strategies are aimed at eliminating the health and longevity disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in Australia within one generation. Strategies are premised upon the recognition that equality in health outcomes can only be achieved through a combination of equitable access to appropriate health services and measures to address the underlying social factors that predispose populations to ill-health and early mortality (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2005).

The report discusses indirect social causes of ill-health and premature mortality which include social conditions like poor housing and poverty, and 'collective health stressors' (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2005). Collective stressors are social stressors which differentially affect one cultural group in society collectively. Examples of collective stressors identified in previous research include racism, absence of collective control (and exclusion from governance) of important social institutions, and for Indigenous Australians, a lack of recognition of the cultural rights *as indigenous people* of Australia (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2005).

The social profiles showed evidence of normalised racism, social marginalisation of Aboriginal people and few local employment opportunities, especially for young Aboriginal people in communities serviced by Wirnda Barna. The establishment of Wirnda Barna has begun to address entrenched underlying social conditions that contribute to the nationally identified gap in health and well-being between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. In the evaluation we found convincing evidence that Wirnda Barna played a pivotal role in alleviating some collective health

stressors in the communities served, by supporting the dignity of Aboriginal people and by enhancing Aboriginal community self-esteem.

The role of the Art Centre in providing both symbolic public recognition for Aboriginal art and culture, and personal support for artists is particularly powerful. For both Aboriginal people and many non-Aboriginal people, 'Aboriginal artist' is a highly valued social identity. When someone sees themselves as an artist it is easier for them to see themselves positively as someone who is skilful and valued, contributing positively to cultural maintenance through the cultural transmission elements in their artwork and providing a positive role model to young people in their community. The interviews showed that, through membership of the Art Centre, artists believed they had achieved a new-found respect *as artists* and this had raised the profile of Aboriginal art within the immediate communities in the Murchison.

The most remarkable outcome of this evaluation has been the universally positive regard we found for the Art Centre amongst the stakeholders, artists and community members we interviewed. The qualitative data collected in this report point to a conclusion that the Art Centre has been effective in modifying some of the underlying and entrenched causes of poor health in Aboriginal communities, in particular social exclusion. All interviewees attached great importance to the Art Centre initiative and described diverse artistic, social, community, micro-economic and tourism benefits that they believed had already been realised. Social contributions included community reconciliation, facilitation of local Aboriginal culture, receiving public acknowledgement in the upper Murchison communities, enabling of Aboriginal people to be respected outside their own community, facilitating Aboriginal people to form a positive identity for themselves, and improvements in personal and community health and well-being. Informants considered it symbolically important that the Shire council had provided active support for the Art Centre initiative and that the Art Centre was located prominently on the main street of Mount Magnet. Aboriginal people and stakeholders we spoke to interpreted Shire support positively, as providing formal recognition of local Aboriginal culture. The tourism benefits included that the Art Centre potentially provided a focal point for Indigenous tourism and a public showcase of Indigenous regional heritage, especially when combined with other Indigenous tourism initiatives offering cultural interpretation.

An important question is whether the Art Centre provides a sufficiently cost effective approach. Standard cost-benefit approaches do not work in this instance because the social benefits are inter-generational and multi-faceted, spread across employment, health, community, justice and welfare support, and there is no means to quantify the benefits based on a one-year time-frame. The social benefits of community reconciliation extend to the whole community and beyond the benefits to the artists themselves. Spread across the whole population, the cost of this initiative is minimal. We concluded that start-up funding to Art Centres over 10-20 years would represent a very low cost programme to achieve important results in health promotion, community development, crime prevention, employment and education.

Furthermore the Art Centre contributes to tourism, economic development as well as art and culture. This means that a substantial part of the start-up funding for this project could feasibly be underwritten by areas of government responsible for those portfolios where the initial benefits are being realised: health and community development, justice, workforce and employment, regional development and potentially education, art and culture.

The evaluation found that all but one of the intended project inputs had been implemented and that good progress had been made towards achieving the intended outputs. The artistic benefits cited by artists included much improved access to materials and markets, and improved sales and technique.

Two areas of concern emerged. Firstly, the ongoing financial viability of the project as sales have generated less revenue than originally projected and there was a deficit of \$26,000 after the first year of operation; and secondly, staff retention, as both paid staff members have now resigned. We examined these concerns and made the following observations.

Projects like this are ambitious and long-term and cannot be effectively supported with short-term funding. Furthermore, with hindsight, the projections of revenue from sales appear to be optimistic given the proportion of new artists within the group and the lack of established markets for art from this region. Recognising that Art Centres not only play an art enterprise role but also provide significant social welfare outcomes dictate that human resources for Art Centres need better support. Operational success is reliant upon good managerial staff and recruitment for these positions is difficult and coupled with high burnout. Art Centres require two or more staff to realistically provide its services and maximise sustainability.

In summary, the Art Centre has made substantial progress toward achieving its inputs and outcomes. The art spaces are operating in the three most active communities and artists are using better quality materials. Artists valued the promotion of their work, the opportunities to develop their skills and broaden their horizons. For new and emerging artists the Art Centre has allowed them to develop skills and technique and provided access to better quality materials. There is evidence that community well-being outcomes are being achieved, including difficult outcomes such as improved community cohesion. There is also convincing evidence that the Art Centre has the potential to contribute positively to art production, to tourism, to social and community development, to community health and well-being including health promotion and even to reconciliation - in the medium to long-term.

Wirnda Barna - look in all honesty it has been fantastic for this town. I know every time we've had a meeting with Council I think that's one of the first things that have come out of it. It's been fantastic (Stakeholder).

3 Summary of Key Research Findings

This evaluation provided convincing evidence that the Art Centre produced many social benefits such as reducing poor health, welfare and policing costs as well as increasing community well-being and facilitating community reconciliation. Social, community, health and well-being outcomes include:

- the Art Centre demonstrates a positive effect on alleviating collective stressors in the Aboriginal community;
- evidence suggests that the Art Centre provides a positive social identity and a 'ceremony of elevation' to alleviate the social marginalisation of Aboriginal people;
- the Art Centre plays an important role in community reconciliation by providing a positive environment where Aboriginal people and the broader community interact (as illustrated by the picture on the front page of this report);
- the Art Centre provides an effective conduit for other agencies to better serve Aboriginal people and increase social welfare benefits;
- police attribute a decrease in community tension and conflict in the community to the Art Centre;
- the Art Centre has increased community cohesion, brought disparate Aboriginal families together and alleviated family feuding;
- health staff reported that the Art Centre has offered benefits in terms of well-being with Aboriginal artists reportedly feeling better;
- the Art Centre has provided increased self esteem in the Aboriginal community by providing them with a sense of hope;
- the Art Centre has provided employment opportunities and positive role models to young Aboriginal people;
- the Art Centre has instilled respect for Aboriginal people and culture from the non-Indigenous community;
- the Art Centre has increased Aboriginal cultural transmission and inter-generational learning;
- stakeholders were consistent about the positive influence on young people provided by contact with the Art Centre;
- the Art Centre is providing employment and income for contributing artists and the occupational status of 'artist.' Evidence suggests that improved labour market status and income for parents of school-aged children improves school attendance and retention rates;
- the Art Centre plays a pivotal role in community building and is possibly the only organisation able to build the capacity of Aboriginal people to contribute to the governance of community organisations in the town; and
- investment in Art Centres provide a low cost, effective method to deliver important associated outcomes in health promotion, community development, crime prevention, employment and education.

On this basis, there are strong arguments that Art Centres should be partially funded from reconciliation, health promotion, child protection, employment preparation, mental health support, crime prevention and Aboriginal educational budgets. Support should also continue to be provided by government, the arts, tourism and regional development funding. The overall costs are small and as a shared initiative, easily affordable by each department.

4 Key Research Findings

The original basis for funding the Wirnda Barna project was primarily to provide start-up support and artistic development for Aboriginal artists in the upper Murchison region. These outcomes have mostly been achieved except that sales generated less revenue than originally projected. However, the evaluation of Wirnda Barna showed evidentially, that a very important contribution of the Art Centre is in the form of social, community, health and well-being benefits, illustrated in Table 1 (Appendix 1 provides a verbatim quote to illustrate how we define each theme identified in Table 1). The establishment of the Art Centre has begun to address the deeply entrenched underlying social conditions that contribute to the nationally identified gap in health and well-being between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

From the community profiles obtained, all the Murchison towns served by the Art Centre show strong evidence of normalised racism and social marginalisation of Aboriginal people. Social marginalisation and racism are strongly correlated with many personal and social ills including poor health, increased risk of incarceration and increased welfare dependency, lower levels of educational achievement and inter-generational poverty as documented by the research which

informed the development of the “Closing the Gap” policy statement (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2005).

Social marginalisation is very difficult to reverse. The first part of this section briefly outlines the social processes involved in marginalisation and describes ways to effectively reverse social marginalisation. The second part examines if and in what ways the Art Centre has contributed to changes in social processes that, if maintained over time, have a very good prospect of permanently reversing the social marginalisation experienced by Aboriginal people in the communities served by the Art Centre. The third part of this section revisits evidence about whether the Art Centre provides cost effective mechanisms for achieving the policy goals articulated in the “Closing the Gap” policy through community reconciliation.

4.1 Closing the Gap

The government’s “Closing the Gap” strategies aim to eliminate the health and longevity disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in Australia within one generation. Strategies are premised upon recognition that equality in health outcomes can only be achieved through a combination of equitable access to appropriate health services and measures to address the underlying social factors that predispose populations to ill-health and early mortality (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2005). The impetus for the “Closing the Gap” initiative came from a report published in 2005 by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Social Justice Commissioner. The report examines the direct causes of ill-health such as poor access to services, as well as the indirect causes including social conditions such as poor housing and poverty, also described as ‘collective health stressors’ (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2005).

Collective stressors are social stressors which differentially affect and collectively impact one cultural group in society. Examples of collective stressors identified in previous research include: racism, absence of collective control (and exclusion from governance) of important social institutions, and for Indigenous Australians, lack of recognition of their cultural rights as *Indigenous people* of Australia (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner,

2005). Many of the processes that reduce collective stressors are known and include "control over their physical environment, of dignity, of community self-esteem, and of justice. It is not merely a matter of the provision of doctors, hospitals, medicines or the absence of disease and incapacity," (National Aboriginal Health Strategy, 1989) cited in (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2005). The data collected for this study and summarised in Table 1 indicates that 100% of the sample had a positive view of the Art Centre and supported its continued operation in the community. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the Art Centre demonstrates a positive effect on alleviating collective stressors.

4.2 Processes of social marginalisation

Two collective stressors very much in evidence in the Art Centre communities were social marginalisation and racism. Social marginalisation occurs through complex social processes which involve repeated inculcation and reinforcement of negative stereotypes (by members of both the dominant group and members of the marginalised or excluded group). Racist stereotypes are frequently the means by which this is achieved. Through both institutionalised

and interpersonal processes, members of the excluded group internalise a negative self-image that conforms to (negative/racist) social expectation (Garfinkel, 1956). Because the process is socially reinforced and because individuals have internalised a negative self-image, it is very complex to address social marginalisation. Simultaneous change is required to weaken external processes that reinforce negative identity and stereotypes, and strengthen processes that support marginalised people to claim a positive identity for themselves.

In his classic work, Garfinkel (1956) discusses how 'ceremonies of degradation' are used symbolically to socially exclude some groups of people and reinforce negative social identity which people internalise. 'Ceremonies of elevation' can be used as an effective means to counter social exclusion.

A 'ceremony of elevation' provides a symbolic means to elevate the status of individuals and social groups within communities and to provide support for people to assume a positive identity and self-image. Through such ceremonies negative stereotypes can be displaced by positive ones and change an internalised sense of identity. For example, 'Aboriginal artist' is a social identity that is valued in both the Aboriginal community, in Australian society more broadly and internationally. By contrast, being unemployed is not a role that is valued in Australian society in general. Although this role is more normalised in Aboriginal communities, there is still ambivalence about unemployed status and this was reflected in the artists' comments. When someone sees themselves as an artist however and represents themselves to others as an artist, they generally receive positive validation. This was reflected in interviews with artists who saw themselves positively, as someone who is skilful and valued, as evidenced by the sale of their work, contributing positively to cultural maintenance through the cultural transmission elements in their art works and providing a positive role model for young people in their community.

Table 1 indicates that 50% of the community stakeholders and 30% of the artists sampled agreed that they had improved positive identity since becoming involved with the Art Centre. Additionally, increased respect for the Aboriginal community was reported by 22% of community stakeholders and 10% of the artists sampled for the study. Evidence from interviews suggests that the Art Centre provides a ceremony of elevation to counter social marginalisation.

4.3 The Art Centre and community reconciliation

The most remarkable outcome of this evaluation was the unanimously positive regard for the Art Centre held by the stakeholders, artists and community members we interviewed. All interviewees attached great importance to the Art Centre initiative and described social and community benefits that they believed had already been realised. The social contributions include community reconciliation, public acknowledgement of local Aboriginal culture in the upper Murchison communities, respect for Aboriginal people outside their own community, a positive identity for Aboriginal people and improvements in personal and community health and well-being. Social benefits were reported by 44% of community stakeholders and 10% of the artists sampled for the study (Table 1).

We were told by many informants that the Art Centre had contributed to community reconciliation. Community reconciliation has many potential benefits for the whole community. Aboriginal people told us how pleased they were that they were able to exhibit their art, particularly when it was positively received at exhibitions and when it was sold. The Mount Magnet exhibition was the smallest, but held special significance for some artists who mentioned that through the exhibition they had achieved important local recognition for the value of their art and for their culture more generally. Others discussed visits to more established Art centres and commented positively on the cultural recognition this provided.

Table 1 shows that 50% of community stakeholders and 10% of the artists sampled agree that there have been cultural improvements as a result of the Art Centre. Wirnda Barna has supported artists to enter competitions and some have won prizes. Informants considered it to be symbolically important that the Shire council had provided active support for the Art Centre initiative and that the Art Centre was prominently located on the main street in Mount Magnet. Aboriginal people and stakeholders we spoke to viewed Shire support positively, as providing formal recognition of local Aboriginal culture which they believe had previously been absent. Table 1 shows that 27% of community stakeholders and 5% of the artists attributed improved community reconciliation to involvement with the Art Centre.

4.4 The Art Centre and self esteem

From the interviews conducted we concluded that the Art Centre had already played an important role in community reconciliation. The Art Centre offered 'ceremonies of elevation' to Aboriginal artists through organised public exhibitions and by facilitating successful entry into competitions for the artists. The interviews show that the artists believed they had achieved a new-found respect due to the Art Centre, and that this had raised the profile of Aboriginal art within the immediate communities in the Murchison.

The respect of others is important because it fosters and supports self-respect (Hinman, 2003). Table 1 indicates that increased respect for the Aboriginal community was reported by 22% of community stakeholders and 10% of the artists sampled for the study. According to the Aboriginal people we spoke to, being an artist is one of the few positive identities available to them that allows them to retain their Aboriginal cultural identity.

The Art Centre has allowed the artists to view their art as a legitimate and positively regarded occupation. Table 1 shows that 38% of community stakeholders and 25% of the artists sampled, reported economic benefits from being involved with the Art Centre. It has enabled people who

previously had no other occupation to achieve the positive occupational identity of ‘artist,’ even if they have sold only a small number of artwork for not much money. The casual employment created (for canvas stretchers etc) has symbolic value far beyond the monetary contribution, because it enables young people who have never worked before to say they have a paid job (however short-term and intermittent) in a community where any real employment is almost impossible to achieve for young Aboriginal people, as demonstrated by statistics. Research shows that all Year 12 school leavers went straight to employment assistance. None went into jobs or training. Half of the community stakeholders and 25% of the artists talked about the benefits of being part of the Art Centre for young people (Table 1).

The Art Centre is uniquely placed to be able to facilitate ‘ceremonies of elevation’ in ways that other agencies can support but would find difficult to initiate. The dual role of the Art Centre in providing symbolic public recognition for Aboriginal art and culture as well as providing personal support for artists to claim a positive personal identity as an artist, is particularly powerful. This is confirmed qualitatively through the interview data which shows that the artists themselves reported feeling better. Health staff reported that the Art Centre had offered benefits in terms of well-being such as improved mood, and more positive outlook on life and that the police attributed less community tension and conflict to the Art Centre. Social welfare benefits were reported by 72% of the community stakeholders and 30% of the artists sampled for the study (Table 1).

I think now with the Art Centre and what people are doing in town, I think there is a more optimistic feeling that yes, Aboriginal people are able to do things on their own (Stakeholder).

Table 1 shows that 66% of the community stakeholders and 10% of the artists attributed an increase in hope for the community as a result of the Art Centre. (See Appendix for an example of how each theme is defined through verbatim quotes obtained in the interviews).

Table 1: Key themes emerging from data and the number of artists and key stakeholders who provided responses.

Themes from data	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
Positive outcomes.	20	100%	18	100%	38	100 %
Reduction in community tension.	1	5%	5	27%	6	16%
Hope.	2	10%	12	66%	14	37%
Positive identity/self esteem.	6	30%	9	50%	15	40%
Social welfare benefits.	6	30%	13	72%	19	50%
Employment/economic benefits.	5	25%	7	38%	12	32%
Benefits for young people.	5	25%	9	50%	14	37%
Increased involvement in governance.	0	0%	13	72%	13	34%
Respect from others.	2	10%	4	22%	6	16%
Social benefits.	2	10%	8	44%	10	26%
Cultural benefits.	2	10%	9	50%	11	29%

4.5 Cost effectiveness

The qualitative data collected in this report point to a conclusion that the Art Centre has been effective in modifying some of the underlying and entrenched causes of poor health in Aboriginal communities, in particular social exclusion. An important question is whether the Art Centre provides a sufficiently cost effective approach. As mentioned earlier in the report, standard cost-benefit approaches do not work because the benefits of this kind of intervention are inter-generational and multi-faceted, spread across employment, health, community, justice and welfare support. There is no means by which to quantify benefits over a one year time-frame.

The total cost of the Art Centre project for one year, including grants and deficits but minus revenue from sales, was \$162,786. This cost could be expected to reduce progressively as revenue from art sales increases.

There were 45 members of the Art Centre in 2010 so the public subsidy from all sources was \$3,620 per capita for its members. However, the social benefits of community reconciliation extend beyond the artists themselves and potentially flow through to communities in Western Australia and Australia more generally. If the cost is spread across the population of the three communities in Mount Magnet, Meekatharra and Cue, the cost per capita is \$104. Spread across the population of Western Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010) it amounts to 6 cents per person per year, and spread across the entire Australian population, less than one cent per capita annually.

To put this into context, Australian hospitals cost the Australian population \$1,922 per person annually (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2010). This does not include other health or allied health care, health promotion, GP and specialist costs or the social cost of illness. The cost of crime spread over the whole population of Australia was nearly \$1,600 per person annually in 2003 (Mayhew 2003)(AIC, 2010). The cost to the community was calculated in 2005 as \$2,900 for each burglary and \$7,500 for each sexual assault (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2008). This figure does not include the cost of unreported crime, support for offenders and their families or the social cost for victims of crime. The cost of incarceration was estimated at \$98,000 per prisoner per year or \$269 per day including all costs (Australian Government, 2009). The benefits of community reconciliation will be reflected in a reduction of costs across many services, including acute health, drug and alcohol treatment, child protection, special education, the justice system, morbidity, early mortality and lost labour productivity. The effects of successful programmes to reverse underlying adverse conditions are inter-generational and self-sustaining in the long-term.

The outcomes documented in this project are quite remarkable for one that had been in operation for just under 12 months at the time of our second visit. If these outcomes can be replicated and maintained, we conclude that start-up funding for Art Centres will represent a relatively low cost programme to achieve positive results for several government departments including health promotion, community development, crime prevention, employment and education. This is in addition to the financial benefits from art sales and the multiplier effect of this income injection into the community. Furthermore, the Art Centre contributes to tourism and economic development. Art sales are an important component of the project because without it artists are unable to attain a positive 'artist' identity. What this means therefore, is that a substantial part of the start-up funding for this project should come from areas of government responsible for those

portfolios where the initial benefits are being realised: health and community development, justice, workforce and employment, regional development and education.

4.6 Summary and conclusions

In summary, the Art Centre has made substantial progress towards achieving its inputs and outcomes. Art spaces are in operation within the three most active communities where artists are valuing the promotion of their work and the opportunities to develop their skills and broaden their horizons. For new and emerging artists the Art Centre allows them to develop art skills and technique and provides access to better quality materials. There is evidence that community well-being outcomes are being achieved, even some of the more difficult outcomes such as improved community cohesion. There is convincing evidence that the Art Centre has the potential to contribute positively to art production, tourism, social and community development, community health and well-being including health promotion, and even to reconciliation in the medium and long-term.

The challenges however, remain. The biggest of these is ongoing sustainability and economic outcomes. The financial projections for the Art Centre were not achieved and with the benefit of hindsight, our judgement is that they were not realistically achievable within the projected time-frame and parameters of the project. It is also recommended that an accounting system be implemented to provide up-to-date financial information to the management committee so that they are able to set priorities, plan ahead and make informed decisions about project expenditure.

The Art Centre has undoubtedly brought about important benefits for the Aboriginal communities involved. It has impacted directly on the health and well-being of the artists as well as indirectly through improved recognition of Aboriginal art and culture. The Art Centre has been identified as an important catalyst for fundamental personal and social change to address entrenched problems that cause the gap in health and well-being between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The project offers opportunities to instil positive identities for Aboriginal people through a growing respect for their culture and the provision of positive role models for young people. For all these reasons there are strong arguments that the project should be partially funded by departments responsible for reconciliation, health promotion, child protection, employment preparation, mental health support, crime prevention and Aboriginal education. Support should also continue from government, arts, tourism and regional development funding. The overall costs are small and easily affordable when spread across all providers.

Background

5 Introduction

The aim of this project is to develop integrated cross-disciplinary methods to investigate, document and improve the social, cultural and economic benefits derived from a new Aboriginal Art Centre serving six remote communities in Western Australia. An important purpose of this project is to examine the extent to which one newly established Aboriginal Art Centre in Western Australia contributes holistically to the well-being of individuals and communities. Another important aim of this project is to assess the utility and practicality of existing indicators of cultural and community strength and economic outcomes, in this context.

5.1 Intended outcomes

The intended outcomes of this project are to:

- 1) Document the challenges and evaluate the progress of a newly established regional Art Centre (the Art Centre);
- 2) Record how inter-disciplinary insights can be used to usefully document the social, cultural, community and economic contribution of Art Centres in rural communities;
- 3) Evaluate the availability and adequacy of existing data sources and impact measurement methods; and
- 4) Suggest future directions for theory development to support art and rural economic, cultural and community development.

5.2 Significance of intended outcomes

This project is timely and significant because Aboriginal Art Centres potentially provide a useful strategy to address some of the underlying causes of ill-health and early mortality that need to be addressed if the stated targets in the “*Closing the Gap*” policy are to be achieved. This project is novel because it uses multi-disciplinary analysis to provide a holistic assessment of the contribution of a new Art Centre to cultural life, economic development and community strength; and how these may contribute to well-being and health. The need for such an approach was endorsed by a recent panel discussion with Minister Simon Crean, Senator Rachel Siewart and Shadow Ministers Nigel Scullion and Jon Altman and artists from DesART, (Canberra, 2011).

6 Research Design and Methodology

This project has two distinct parts. The first part describes and evaluates the achievements of the Art Centre during its first year of operation and compares this with the intended inputs and outcomes for the Centre. The second part (Appendix 2) analyses the significance of the data from a number of different perspectives to determine how the holistic impact of the Art Centre can best be measured, and assesses the usefulness of different existing tools.

6.1 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is multi-lensed and used an approach similar to Martin (1992). This means that the data was analysed from different perspectives and the insights compared. The analysis will be used reflexively, to inform the results of the study and to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the different theoretical perspectives. In the original proposal it was intended

that the study would draw on three different approaches: Brown's (2006) perspective on the value of the creative process; the literature on social capital including Pope's (2005; 2011) measures of community strength, and the literature on social identity formation using Garfinkel's (1956) concepts of *ceremonies of degradation* and *elevation*. During the course of the study two other approaches were added together with an Indigenous integrative approach using a framework developed by (LaFlamme, 2007) and Altman's (2007) hybrid economy.

6.2 Case study methodology

The project uses a case study methodology as described by Creswell (2007), to structure the evaluation of the Art Centre. Merriam (1998, p.27) defines qualitative case study in terms of the end product as 'an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit.' Yin (1989) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates phenomena in real life contexts. The study utilised a mixed mode data collection to develop the case since both social perceptions and recorded data are relevant to the phenomena under investigation. Multiple sources of evidence were used to obtain data to answer the research questions and to ensure triangulation. Creswell, et al (2003, p.210) supports a mixed approach as a distinct research design which uses both qualitative and quantitative investigative methods. Creswell, et al (2003, p. 231) after Cherryholmes (1992) state that in using mixed methods 'researchers should be concerned with applications, with what works and with solutions to problems.'

Case studies need to have clearly delineated boundaries and in this case, the boundaries of the case study are determined by the documents that provide the brief for the Art Centre. The Art Centre case study has three phases; literature review, analysis of demographic data and deep interviews with stakeholders. Each phase gathered evidence that informed the construction and focus of the subsequent stage in an iterative fashion.

6.3 Key foci within the case study

1. Socio-cultural background context:

What is the cultural and community context of the Art Centre and how has it shaped the Art Centre? Data may include educational and training participation, employment, poverty, family size and family structure, aggregate community health and well-being data including prevalence of disease, substance abuse and mental health data, aggregate crime data for different communities and qualitative descriptions of cultural and community context.

2. The Art Centre development and evaluation:

To what extent has the Art Centre made progress towards its intended inputs and outputs within its first year of operation and documentation of social welfare outcomes? Have there been social welfare outcomes? What can be learnt from this experience?

3. Social and cultural capital perspective (Appendix 2):

To what extent are these theoretical perspectives useful to understanding the contribution of the Art Centre to the communities and to culture? Data about social networks and bonds, involvement in governance, inclusion and exclusion.

4. Art benefits (Appendix 2):

To what extent is the mapping of art benefits approach useful to understanding the personal, community and spiritual value of art to artists? Data on the personal, interpersonal,

community and cultural benefits from engagement in art activities including aesthetic growth, health and wellness, inspirational, renewal, sensory pleasure, relationships with others, cultural and the transfer of values and ideas.

5. Economic benefits (Appendix 2):

To what extent are standard economic analyses useful in understanding the economic benefits of the Art Centre to the community? Data analysis will determine the financial benefit of Art Centres to communities and well-being.

6.4 Methods

The methods chosen for this project were guided by its purpose and context and included interviews with artists and other key stakeholders cross-referenced to existing documents that informed the rationale for the project, and a community profile drawn from publically available social data about the towns and the region. The intended purpose of the first round of interviews was to establish the community context and to begin to build relationships with the artists. The purpose of the second round of interviews was to evaluate the progress of the Art Centre towards its intended goals. Interviews were supplemented by the researchers’ field notes.

6.4.1 Timeline

The original plan was to conduct the first round of interviews before the Art Centre opened. The second round of interviews was scheduled to take place 8 months after the first round of interviews.

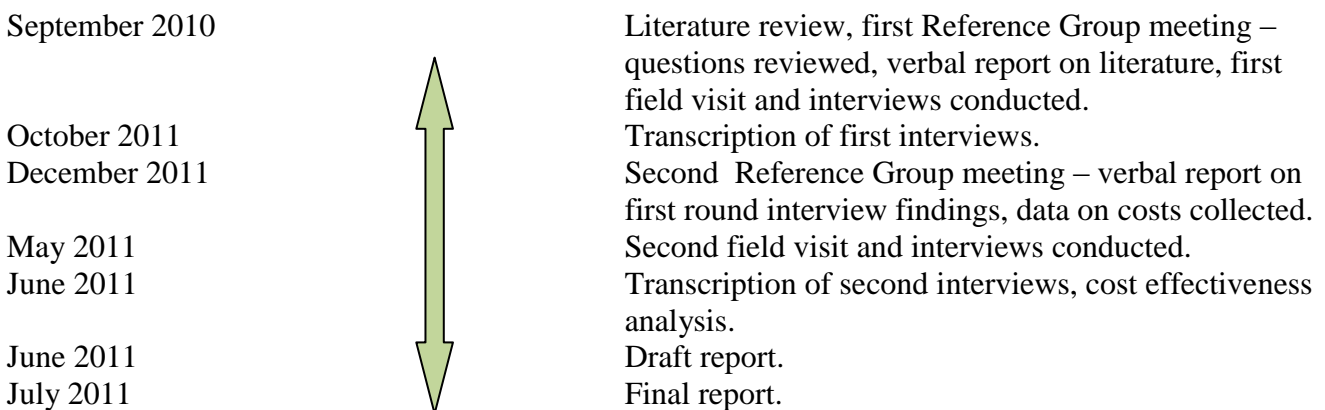


Figure 1: Original Timeline

The first round of interviews was delayed by three months due to contractual delays and land tribunal business and occurred five months after the arrival of the Art Centre Manager and one month after its official opening. By this time a number of programmes were already well-established and during the first round of interviews, in addition to community data, we also gathered data about the artists’ and stakeholders’ perceptions of the achievements of the Art Centre after its first five months of operation. As a result of this a revised timeline was developed and the second round of interviews was rescheduled to the end of August 2011. This date was brought forward to June/July, because of the unanticipated departure of the Art Centre manager in early July. The actual timeline is shown in Figure 2.

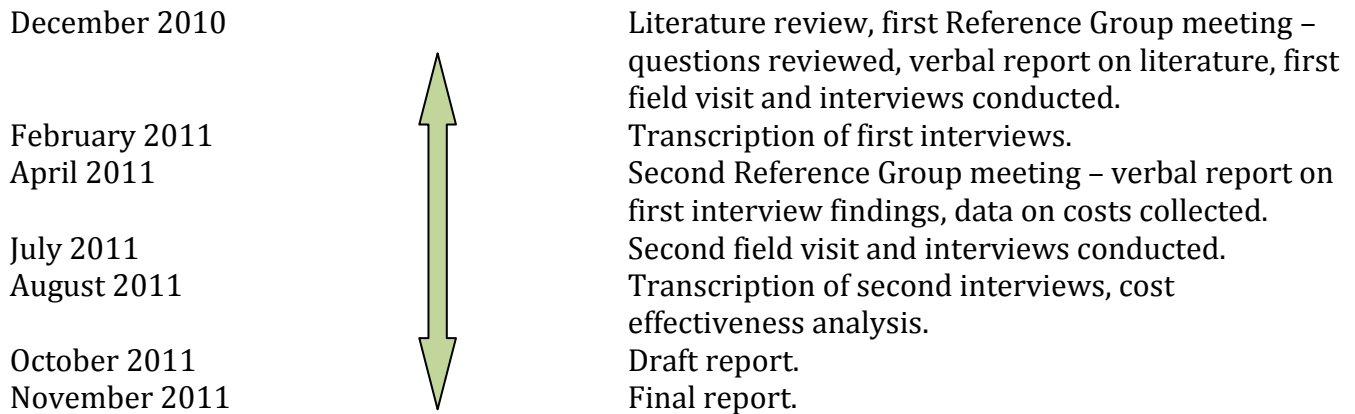


Figure 2: Actual Timeline

6.4.2 Intended and actual sample and sampling frame

The proposed sample and sources of data are shown in Table 2. The samples were purposive and conducted with selected artists who had significant involvement with the Art Centre, and key stakeholders who were knowledgeable about the community. A conversational style of interviewing was used for the artists’ interviews so not all topics were covered in each interview.

Table 2: Intended Sample

Instrument	Sample (purposive)
Semi-structured interviews.	20 interviews with the Art Centre members who work and market their art through the Art Centre in localities such as Mt Magnet, Cue and Meekatharra. Interviews with the two Art Centre staff members and 16 key stakeholders.
Community strength indicators.	Semi-structured interviews with artists/stakeholders from the sample above (16), focal questions derived from (Pope, 2005).
Map of art benefits.	Semi-structured interviews with artists/stakeholders (16) from the sample above, focal questions derived from (Brown, 2006).
Cost effectiveness analysis.	Comparison of operating costs for the Art Centre and sensitivity analysis with community strength indicators using secondary data.
Social and demographic data.	Use of ABS statistics and local records to develop community profiles of income, unemployment, school attendance, medical needs and crime statistics, supplemented by interview data.

The original plan included a total of 38 interviews across the whole project with 20 artists, 16 key stakeholders and the two Art Centre staff.

6.4.3 Actual research sample

The actual plan achieved interviews with the same number of participants during the first visit. Some of the interviews were conducted in focus groups at the request of the participants (Table 3).

Table 3: Actual sample

1 st Data Collection (Number and Method)	Total number of participants
6 x artist focus groups	18
Artist interviews	2
Total artists	20
3 x stakeholder focus groups	6
Stakeholder interviews	10
Total stakeholders	16
Art Centre staff interviews	2
Total	38
2 nd Data Collection Method	
2 x artist focus groups	5
8 x stakeholder interviews	8
Art Centre staff interviews	2
Total	15

6.4.4 Interviews

A guiding principle adopted for interviews with artists was to choose culturally appropriate methods and it was therefore decided to use a conversational interview style. Conversation is a two way process where both parties ask questions and contribute and where either side can introduce topics for discussion. To achieve the required outcomes, key topics were identified and possible questions were developed in advance of the interviews. However not all topics or questions were used in each conversation. The interviewers taped the conversations with the permission of the interviewees and participated in the conversations without reference to any prepared material or notes. The reasons for this approach are described aptly in the quotation:

A positive Indigenous community development model must incorporate ‘yarning up not down’. Yarning up relates to ‘yarning for outcomes’ rather than speaking down to Indigenous people. Yarning down is an indication that the outsider knows best or takes control of the outcomes for Indigenous people (Burchill 2004).

For example, the conversations usually began with questions that asked artists about their perceptions of the part that art played in their own life. This topic was generally probed through a conversation that invited artists to ‘Tell me a bit about your life and how you started to do art?’ which provided the impetus for many different responses depending on the interests of those interviewed. Examples of anticipated areas of discussion included personal motivation to do art, circumstances of life that led the interviewee to begin to produce artwork, how art currently fits into their life, the kind of art produced, how they learned art techniques, were exposed to subject matter and whether they had received encouragement and mentoring from others. Other conversation starters included ‘How are you involved with Wirnda Barna? What difference has the Art Centre made? It was anticipated that this would lead to conversations that would reveal the artist’s perspective and the role that the Art Centre played in their art production and sales. Other possible conversation starters included: “Tell me about your art? How do you feel when you do your art? What benefits do you get for yourself from doing your art?” This cluster of topics was intended to relate primarily to Brown’s work on the value of the creative process to artists. Interviews with other stakeholders were conducted in a semi-conversational style with open

questions, but stayed closer to scripted questions whilst still allowing opportunities to explore any relevant but unanticipated themes.

Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews participants were not prompted about what benefits they identified. This means that some who did not identify particular benefits might still have agreed that those benefits existed if they had been prompted or asked directly. Direct questions are avoided in this kind of qualitative approach in order to avoid leading participants to express agreement with researcher-identified themes (as 'agreement' might occur because of social pressure) and to make room for participants to talk about themes that researchers might not have identified.

In a qualitative method of this type it is therefore not meaningful to attach a percentage to particular attributes based upon an analysis of themes. Generally speaking the number who spontaneously identify a theme would be expected to be less than the number who might have agreed with a proposed benefit had the question been asked directly. The primary purpose of the research is to initially identify potential themes from the group(s) as a whole and the research is complete when no new themes emerge.

Trudi Cooper and Donell Holloway conducted the first round of face-to-face interviews over a period of two weeks during December 2010. During this visit, 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted with artists in the three locations of Mt Magnet, Cue and Meekatharra and 18 other interviews were conducted with key stakeholders including the Art Centre Manager and Community Liaison Officer, the school principal, police, religious and community leaders, the Community Development Officer for the Mount Magnet Shire, the CEO of the Mount Magnet Shire, the nurse, a staff member from the Mid West Development Corporation (MWDC), a staff member from Combined Universities Centres for Rural Health involved in projects in Mount Magnet, the Badimia Family Coordinator, traditional owners and influential people within the Badimia community. At short notice, Donell Holloway conducted the second round of interviews in early July over a period of one week. Trudi Cooper was scheduled to conduct further interviews the following week, but Donell advised that many of the previous participants were away from town to attend a funeral and visit family in Perth and that both the Art Centre staff members had already left town.

Although the original plan was to conduct all interviews face-to-face, it was decided to conduct some by telephone in order to obtain further data. Donell Holloway conducted an interview with the Art Centre Manager by telephone and Trudi Cooper conducted a face-to-face interview in Perth with the Art Centre Community Liaison Worker. Both interviews took place after the interviewees had resigned from their positions. Trudi Cooper also conducted telephone interviews with the Mount Magnet Community Development Officer and the MWDC officer, both of whom she had interviewed face-to-face in the first round. During the second round of data collection there were five semi-structured interviews with artists, seven interviews with key stakeholders and two interviews with former Art Centre staff.

6.4.5 Data analysis methods

The relationship between theory and data was iterative and the research questions had been refined and developed in response to the literature and to data that emerged from the first round of interviews. Table 4 identifies how the data collected will be analysed to answer the focal questions for this report.

Table 4: Data and data analysis

Study question	Summary of data and analytical methods
What is the cultural and community context of the Art Centre and how has it shaped the Art Centre?	Develop brief community profiles of Mount Magnet, Meekatharra and Cue using existing demographic data and triangulate this against interview data and field notes made during visits.
To what extent has the Art Centre made progress towards its intended inputs and outputs within its first year of operation? What were the unintended outcomes? Were there any unintended outcomes? What can be learnt from this experience?	Develop an evaluation framework for information contained in the reports by (Acker & Cosgreve, 2009) and (Pearn, 2007) and use interview data and report data to evaluate the progress made, any unintended outcomes and what can be learnt from the experience.
To what extent are social capital perspectives useful to understanding the contribution of the Art Centre to the communities and to culture?	Use interview data and secondary data to determine firstly whether the Art Centre strengthens community ties and use the data reflexively to determine the usefulness of Pope’s (Pope, 2005) indicators in this context. Examine whether the framework suggested by (LaFlamme, 2007) is useful.
To what extent is the mapping of art benefits approach useful to understanding the personal, community and spiritual value of art to artists?	Use interview data and secondary data to determine firstly whether the Art Centre produces art benefits as defined in Brown’s framework and use the data reflexively to determine its usefulness (Brown, 2006) in this context.
To what extent are standard economic analyses useful in understanding the economic benefits of the Art Centre to the community?	Find what data is available and whether existing economic analyses can be usefully applied in this context.
What additional data would be useful to provide a comprehensive measure of the impact of an Art Centre?	The data analysis used the insights gained from interviews to identify possible additional data that should be systematically collected in a subsequent study. The analysis provisionally identified how this might contribute to existing theory in the parent disciplines.
Can existing measures be extended and developed to provide a comprehensive picture of the contribution of Community Art Centres to wellness and community life?	The overall outcome of the project attempted to address this question.

Case Study

7 Art Centres and Western Australia

In Western Australia the first Aboriginal Art Centres were located in remote areas, such as the Kimberley and in the western fringes of the Western Desert (Aboriginal Art Online, 2005). More recently Art Centres have sprung up in the southwest and midwest areas of Western Australia (Aboriginal Art Centre Hub Western Australia, 2011). Just over one quarter (26%) of the population of Western Australia resides in regional, rural and remote locations (ABS, 2010). The population of Western Australia is growing but growth is not evenly distributed. Nearly one-third of non-metropolitan Local Government Areas (LGAs) had static or declining populations (ABS, 2010). More than half of the LGAs with static or declining populations were in small LGAs with a population base of fewer than 1,000 people (ABS, 2010). Small and declining LGAs face particular economic and social challenges that differ from other urban or rural communities (Kenyon & Black, 2001) and are typical of the challenges faced by the communities served by the Art Centre.

8 Socio-economic context of the Art Centre

The Art Centre is located in Mount Magnet on Badimia country and serves Aboriginal artists in Badimia and Wadjjarri country in the communities of Mount Magnet, Cue, Meekatharra, Yulga Jinna and Yalgoo. The 2006 census indicates that the proportion of Indigenous people in these towns ranges from 20% to 40% - see Table 5. Meekatharra, Mount Magnet and Cue are the largest towns (no separate figures were available for Yulga Jinna). Census data are known to underestimate the Indigenous population (Moss, 2011) by an estimated error margin of around 10% (Moss, 2011). Local information provided to us by informants in Mount Magnet indicated that the 2006 census may have underestimated the Aboriginal population by a larger margin because the enumerator moved to Geraldton before the forms had been collected and as a result many households did not complete forms. We attempted to check this story at the Mount Magnet Shire office, where staff confirmed they had heard the same story, were not able to determine its veracity but considered it to be quite likely.

Table 5: Population data from 2006 census

Town	Number of Indigenous males	Number of Indigenous females	Indigenous people as % of town population	Number of non-Indigenous males	Number of non-Indigenous females	Total town population
Cue	58	54	34%	103	77	328
Meekatharra	211	248	40%	378	299	1136
Mt Magnet	38	53	20%	202	165	458
Sandstone	10	14	20%	61	33	118
Yalgoo	43	49	38%	91	59	242
Yulga Jinna	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	360	418	34%	835	633	2282

Source: ABS 2006

The data for school enrolments indicates that Indigenous students make up an aggregate of 81% of school enrolments in the six towns, ranging from 50% to 100% of enrolments and lends credence to the possibility that the Aboriginal population may be underestimated in the census. The ratio of Indigenous people to non-Indigenous people in all communities is increasing, and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal informants believe that most towns will before long have a predominantly Aboriginal population. This trend is particularly driven by larger numbers of young Aboriginal people, as indicated by enrolment school data - see Table 6. We were told that many non-Aboriginal families with school age children leave the area when their children reach high school age or earlier, and that many high school students, including some Aboriginal students, leave the area to attend boarding schools because the range of subjects offered elsewhere is more extensive. We were informed that these young people seldom return to the area post-schooling. Town data presented in the following sections of this report confirms very high unemployment for school leavers who remain in the area and an increasing need for employment opportunities for young Aboriginal people as foreshadowed by (Acker & Cosgreve, 2009).

Table 6: School enrolment 2011

Town	Pre-compulsory	Primary	Secondary	Total school enrolment	Total Indigenous students	Total non-Indigenous students	% of Indigenous in total enrolment
Cue	3	17	4	24	12	12	50%
Meekatharra	37	84	40	161	144	17	89%
Mt Magnet	20	77	2	129	93	36	72%
Sandstone	1	7	5	13	5	8	38%
Yalgoo	9	20	0	29	29	0	100%
Yulga Jinna	7	16	1	24	24	0	100%
Total	77	322	52	380	307	73	81%

Source: My Schools 2011

http://www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolsonline/main_page.do?displayURL=overview.do&schoolID=4142

The interviews and other data gathered indicated that, since its inception, the Art Centre has primarily serviced artists in the larger communities of Mount Magnet, Meekatharra and Cue. All artists interviewed for this report came from these three communities and in-depth profiles are provided only for the three larger communities.

8.1 Social data for Meekatharra

In 2009 the estimated population of Meekatharra was 1218. The median age of the population was 32.3 years which is lower than the WA median age. There were 123.9 males to every 100 females, a higher ratio than WA as a whole (102.8), and the recorded population had declined by 23.1% over the last 10 years whilst WA had recorded a growth of 19.8%. In the 2006 census 69% of residents were born in Australia, down from 78% in 2001. Meekatharra was ranked 8th out of 142 Local Government Areas in Western Australian on the SEIFA measure of relative disadvantage and this picture is confirmed by statistics that show relatively high and rising levels of unemployment. The overall unemployment rate in 2010 was 14.1%, but for young people aged 15-19 the unemployment rate was 21.4%. The 2006 census confirmed this picture and found that compared with WA, a higher proportion of residents left school before completing year 12

(51.9%); there was a higher proportion of single parent families (21.1%); there was a higher proportion of households renting (46.0%) and in public housing (18.1%); and there was a higher percentage of households without a motor vehicle (14.3%). The median individual weekly income (\$485.49) was below the WA average (Office of Crime Prevention, 2010a).

The number of enrolled students has declined steadily since 2008. Attendance rates at Primary School had declined steadily from 2008-10 (70%, 68.5%, 64.1%) and are well below the state average of 92.9%. Secondary school attendance rates decreased slightly from 2008-09 but increased in 2009-10 (45.4%, 44.8%, 50.5%). These figures are from a very low numerical base and are well below the state average of 87.6%. Post-school destinations confirm poor employment opportunities for young people. Of the 2010 cohort of year 12 school students, all went straight from school to employment assistance in 2011. NAPLAN results for 2010 confirm comparatively low levels of achievement, apart from Year 3 reading and Year 7 numeracy, and that many students were below the minimum standard for their age in reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation and numeracy. The School report indicates that as an attendance strategy, the local Farmer Jacks offered BMX bikes to students who attended school more than 150 days of the year and that weekly book prizes were offered for 100% attendance. A young mother's programme was developed for 2011 in response to the number of secondary girls who fell pregnant in 2010 (Education Department of Western Australia, 2011a; Meekatharra District High School, 2010).

Crime statistics over the last 10 years show that Meekatharra has reported higher offence rates in almost all categories compared to those for WA as a whole. They also reflect substantial increases in rates of offences against the person, other theft (other than motor vehicle) and property damage. The most commonly recorded offences were property damage (16.7%), other theft (11.3%) and non-aggravated assault (7.6%). Rates of recorded crime in Meekatharra are much higher than those for WA relative to population and in 2009-10 Meekatharra reported a 49.3% growth in all reported offences. The highest number of offenders (31%) were aged 20-29: 69% were male and 89% were Indigenous (Office of Crime Prevention, 2010a).

8.2 Social data for Mount Magnet

In 2010 the population of Mount Magnet was estimated at 750. The 2006 census confirmed that 19.1% of the population was Indigenous. The population of Mount Magnet has declined by 19.1% over the last 10 years. The current trend sees the highest percentage of the population being born in Australia (72% in 2006) with an increase in numbers coming from overseas. Mount Magnet was ranked 28th out of 142 Local Government Areas in Western Australian on the SEIFA measure of relative disadvantage, which is evidenced by the 2006 census results citing high unemployment rates (14.8% to WAs 5%) with more females unemployed than males and highest unemployment in the 15-19 age bracket. The 2006 census also found that Mount Magnet has a much higher percentage of households renting than WA (42.9% to 26%) but a much lower percentage of single parent families (4.3% to 14.9%) (Office of Crime Prevention, 2010b).

The number of students enrolled has steadily declined since 2008 with a significant decrease in numbers enrolled from semester 1 to 2. Primary school attendance reported a slight increase each year from 2008 to 2010 (78.2%, 80%, 80.8%) but is still slightly below the state average of 92.9%. Secondary school attendance also increased slightly each year from 2008 to 2010 (56.7%, 59.2%, 59.9%) but remains significantly below the state average of 87.6%. Post-school destinations confirm high unemployment with 100% of the 2010 cohort of Year 12s going straight into employment assistance in 2011 where the intention was for all of them to find

apprenticeships. Semester one 2011 reported 129 students enrolled with 72% identified as Indigenous. Between 2008 and 2010 there was a rapid increase in the number of suspensions per year (10, 25, 34) with the school attempting to target students physically assaulting each other and staff members being verbally abused, as indicators of this increase. The school's 2010 NAPLAN results identified a large number of students residing in the bottom 20% for punctuation, grammar, spelling, writing, reading and numeracy as against the WA state average. Mount Magnet's results improved when compared with 'like schools' where a greater majority of students achieved a (middle) 60% result. A student satisfaction survey conducted in 2009 found that a high percentage of students liked being at school (82%), thought that teachers treated them fairly (79%), enjoyed being in class (82%), felt that they get help at school when they need it (88%), teachers care about how they're going (79%) and overall satisfaction with how they're going at school (62%). Lower results were evident for feeling safe at school (47%) while 79% reported that the school has a bullying problem (Education Department of WA, 2011b; Mount Magnet District High School, 2010).

Crime statistics over the last 10 years show higher crime rates in Mount Magnet than for WA (except for motor vehicle theft) with increases in illicit drug offences and offences against the person and decreases in rates of residential and non-residential burglaries. Mount Magnet reported a much greater percentage of alcohol related domestic assaults than WA as a whole, and much lower non-alcohol related domestic assaults. The most commonly recorded offences in 2010 were property damage (13.1%), other theft (11%), non-aggravated assault (8.2%) and threatening behaviour (7.9%). 2009-10 results found that 67.8% of offenders were male and 83.2% of offenders were Indigenous people. The 20-29 age bracket made up the highest number of offenders at 44.8% (Office of Crime Prevention, 2010b).

8.3 Social Data for Cue

In 2009 the estimated population of Cue was 302. The median age was 35.6 with a ratio of 114.2 males to every 100 females, higher than the WA ratio of 102.8. The 2006 census found that 33.5% of the population was Indigenous, significantly higher than the WA average of 3%. From 2001 to 2006 the percentage of residents born in Australia remained constant at 74%. The 2006 census also found that, compared to WA as a whole, Cue had a higher percentage of residents leaving schools before completion of Year 12 (62.8%); relatively lower single parent families (5.6%); higher percentage of renting (34.3%) and public housing (13.3%); higher percentage without a motor vehicle (12.4%) and a significantly lower average individual weekly income (\$389.69). Cue was ranked 10th out of 142 Local Government Areas in Western Australian on the SEIFA measure of relative disadvantage. Statistics show however, that unemployment actually decreased from 2008 to 2010 (7.1% to 4.9%) and is below the WA average of 5%. Female unemployment at 11.3% is proportionately higher than male unemployment at 3.4% (Office of Crime Prevention, 2010c).

The number of enrolled students has declined sizeably since 2007 in both semesters one and two, with 24 students enrolled in semester one 2011. The 2011 statistics also reported that 50% of students were Indigenous and 50% non-Indigenous. School attendance increased steadily from 2008 to 2010 (68.5%, 81.1%, 85.1%) and is just below the WA state average of 92.9% (Education Department of WA, 2011c).

Crime statistics found that in 2009-10 there was a 47.8% rise in offences compared with 2008-09, with the most commonly reported offences being property damage (20.6%) and non-aggravated

assault (14.7%). Compared to the WA state average Cue had a reasonably greater percentage of non-aggravated assaults (14.7% to WA 6.6%) and aggravated sexual assaults (7.4% to WA 1%) and a much lower “other theft” rate (8.8% to WA 26.5%). Cue also reported a much higher percentage of alcohol related domestic assaults than WA as a whole (75% to 20%), with no domestic assaults not related to alcohol. Viewed relative to the population, the offences recorded show a high percentage of property damage, total acts intended to cause injury and sexual assault. 2009-10 data found that male offenders (83.3%) far exceeded female offenders and that Indigenous offenders (79.2%) also far exceeded non-Indigenous offenders. The 20-29 year age group accounted for the highest percentage of offenders at 41.7% (Office of Crime Prevention, 2010c).

8.4 Social divisions

Our visits to the region indicated that there was entrenched social division between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. Our in-depth community interviews took place mainly in Mount Magnet where social division was very pronounced.

8.4.1 Racial segregation and racism

In Mount Magnet our observations and interviews confirmed that there was very limited social interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups and that there were few neutral sites where such social interaction might occur casually. Even at racially mixed social events such as Race Day, informants told us that although both groups attended, they did not mix. Similarly, although both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal groups used the swimming pool, informants said they did not interact with one another. Whilst we did observe groups of racially mixed children playing together at the pool, we did not observe racially mixed adult groups. This relationship was summed up quite bluntly by one stakeholder who stated:

Mount Magnet traditionally is a very hard community with many barriers and the racism is rife within the community. It's always been like that historically. Nothing's going to change, I mean, half the population are Aboriginal people who live in town so, you know, I don't think it's really changed people's perception about Aboriginal people. I think perhaps to a small extent but not as much as what it should have done (Stakeholder).

Not all stakeholders were as pessimistic about the prospects for change. An opinion was expressed that things had reached a low point in about 2008, when tensions between the ageing white population and Aboriginal youth were especially prominent. The sense was expressed that the young Aboriginal people were the interlopers in town.

Magnet hit a wall about two and a half years ago when Harmony Gold Mine closed down, even though this has been a fluctuating gold mining town it's always it goes and it comes. But at that point in time we had a huge proportion of disenfranchised [Aboriginal] youth and we had an ageing [white] population that possibly didn't have empathy or feeling for all those people that are in their town (Stakeholder).

One stakeholder attributed improvements to the combined influence of a new principal at the school, the Community Development Officer and the Art Centre.

I would say within the last two years there's been return to calm. I think something like the energy that Wirnda Barna brings to a place like this; I think the school is reaffirming its

position in a positive way. I think that the shire that is a partner in this has very good people working for them and still do... their recreation officer [Community Development Officer] (Stakeholder).

Some expressed a belief that recent healing of racial divisions had begun to occur to a limited extent within the community.

I think you'll find that the groups that are [racially] mixed are the new groups (Stakeholder).

Table 7 shows that 22% of the stakeholders and 5% of the artists sampled attributed an increased willingness by community members to include Aboriginal culture in public spaces. A further 22% of community stakeholders interviewed attributed an improved cohesion between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to the Art Centre's neutrality as a meeting place.

Table 7: Community cohesion

Cohesion improvements	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
Improved cohesion as a result of art centre.	0	0%	4	22%	4	10%
Willingness to include Aboriginal culture in public spaces.	1	5%	4	22%	5	13%
Total	1	5%	5	27%	6	16%

8.4.2 Governance of community organisations

We were told that Aboriginal people had little involvement in governance of community organisations in Mount Magnet and that there were no Aboriginal members of the Parents and Community (P&C) despite encouragement to join, no Aboriginal members of the School Council, no Aboriginal Shire Councillors and only a single Aboriginal member of a sports committee, despite strong involvement of Aboriginal people in sport.

The Aboriginal people are really not represented on any of the committees for any of the community groups. Even the sports groups, when it comes to sports we have more Aboriginal people getting involved in the sport than we do non-Aboriginal yet the group has one committee member who is an Aboriginal person (Stakeholder).

In that inter-agency meeting normally it's just the different agencies in town whereas the Art Centre is actually classed as an agency now. So, it comes to the inter-agency meeting and [the Art Centre manager] sends different Aboriginal artists so like a representative to each inter-agency meeting so that they're all getting an idea about how politics work and it's actually affected many different areas as well as just their doing paintings! (Stakeholder).

By contrast we were told that the Shire of Cue had Aboriginal Shire Councillors. Table 8 indicates the limited involvement of Aboriginal people in governance activities. However the Art Centre has

facilitated increased inter-agency involvement, with 50% of the community stakeholders and 10% of the artists sampled acknowledging this improvement.

Table 8: Increased involvement in governance

Increased governance	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
Inter-agency.	2	10%	9	50%	11	29%
Aboriginal involvement.	0	0%	1	5%	1	3%
Total	2	10%	9	50%	11	29%

8.4.3 Absence of public acknowledgement of Aboriginal presence

In many different ways informants commented upon the lack of recognition of Aboriginal culture in public life. One stakeholder noticed the absence of Aboriginal art in official buildings when they first arrived in town.

When I first moved here I was gob-smacked at the fact that there was no Aboriginal artwork around town in any of the official buildings like the shire doesn't have any, the library doesn't have any, the police station doesn't have any (Stakeholder).

A number of informants, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, mentioned that the new Mount Magnet Museum, which had cost over \$1 million and contained artefacts of mining and pastoral life, did not include any information about the Badimia heritage.

It's taken 15 years to get this museum development happening because of internal fighting. I think they are calling it a mining and pastoral museum or heritage museum but it won't feature any Indigenous culture which is a huge gap in things. I don't know how we address that (Stakeholder).

Table 9 represents the participants' views on themes regarding increased respect for Aboriginal people in the community by others as a result of the Art Centre. Their art is regarded as a positive contribution to the community and received positive recognition by 22% of community stakeholders and 10% of the artists interviewed for the study. An average 10% of the sample mentioned that there was positive public acknowledgement for the art produced at the Art Centre and that the artists were achieving more respect from within and outside their community as well as occupational status through the sale of their work.

Table 9: Respect from others

Increase in respect	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
More respect from within and without the community.	1	5%	2	10%	3	7%
Increase in respect	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
Their art makes a positive contribution.	2	10%	4	22%	6	16%
Occupational status.	2	10%	2	11%	4	10%
Positive recognition.	2	10%	4	22%	6	16%
Positive public acknowledgement.	2	10%	2	11%	4	10%
Total	2	10%	4	22%	6	16%

9 The origins of the Art Centre

The proposal to establish the Art Centre arose from a report for the Mid West Development Commission (MWDC) on Indigenous Art in the region, the Mid West Indigenous Arts Industry Strategy (MWIAIS) (Pearn, 2007). The report recommended the establishment of an Art Centre to serve communities in the Upper Murchison/Outback region. The Murchison region is classified as ‘very remote’ in the ARIA classification system (ABS, 2001). Originally, the plan included Pia Wadjjarri but this community joined the Lower Murchison cluster. Cue was planned as the original location of the Art Centre (Pearn, 2007), but the plan changed because of building availability and additional support from the Mount Magnet Shire. An important historical feature of this region is that colonisation has had a significant impact on Indigenous culture through cultural suppression, stolen generations and non-indigenous agricultural, pastoral and mining land-use practices. This has resulted in a significant degree of loss of cultural continuity and cultural fragmentation, and social dislocation (Pearn, 2007). Stories shared with us by artists and community members confirmed loss of cultural continuity and social dislocation, and our interviews indicated that the last generation to grow up in the country was born in the 1930s. By the 1950s most of the Aboriginal population was living in camps on the fringes of existing towns, removed from traditional country. We were told that due to a lack of transport few of the Aboriginal community under the age of 60 had visited the more remote cultural sites.

The main findings of the MWIAIS report were that there was a need to develop higher quality artwork and that practicing artists across the region were under-resourced and under-supported. The report concluded that the development of three regional Art Centres was the only strategy to improve the quantity and quality of artwork and simultaneously improve the capacity of artists to gain improved financial returns from their work. The report suggested that it could feasibly develop a substantial turnover within 10 to 20 years. In addition, an Art Centre could provide secondary support for other regional development initiatives in the region including cultural

maintenance and tourism. The report particularly stressed that only an Art Centre could reliably increase both the quality of artwork from the region and provide the essential link between artists and markets beyond the region (Pearn, 2007).

The report also examined the potential advantages and disadvantages of establishing the Art Centre through a Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) (Pearn, 2007). The report rejected this option on the grounds that Art Centres previously established in this way (to

be reliant on CDEP) had not prospered. Pearn argued that this was mainly because the CDEP wage rather than art became the focus for participants and because CDEP schemes do not have professional staff to market the artwork produced. Other weaknesses with this mode of organisation included the vulnerability to changes to the CDEP scheme and the fact that copyright of all artwork would be owned by the Commonwealth of Australia (Pearn, 2007). The report (Pearn, 2007, p. 12) identified features of successful Aboriginal Art Industry initiatives as:

1. *A cohesive group of artists*
2. *Studio/workspace*
3. *Quality materials*
4. *Governance – Indigenous participation in decision-making*
5. *Professional arts development*
6. *Good management and accountable Human Resource systems*
7. *Marketing*
8. *Gallery representation*

Pearn (2007) contended that it was more important to prioritise these fundamentals to art production than to spend resources on establishing and staffing sales galleries. He argued that:

'Quality paintings/products sell themselves and Art Centres that have in-demand artworks have galleries queuing up to represent them. The artist through the Art Centre pays a commission to the gallery for the marketing services they deliver,' p.12.

The operational plan for the Art Centre was premised upon these priorities. It was anticipated that the Art Centre would offer appropriate services to three different groups (Pearn, 2007, p. 4):

- Established artists who already have studio space but lack professional support
- Artists without either infrastructure or professional support, and
- New and emerging artists who need support and encouragement to participate in art.

Table 10 shows the number of current and future artists estimated in the MWIAIS report

Table 10: Current and future artists by community from (Pearn 2007, p. 66)

Community	Current artists	Potential artists
Cue	15	20
Meekatharra	15	20
Pia Wadjarri	0	20
Mt Magnet	5	20
Sandstone	?	5
Yalgoo	9	20
Yulga Jinna	1	5
Total	45	110

The report also recommended that secondary strategies be included such as inter-agency support and networking, programmes that support cultural maintenance, art development workshops and professional development opportunities for artists as well as integration with tourism development. The MWIAIS report identified the training needs required by an Art Centre and these are shown in the Table 11. They have been copied from the report.

Table 11: Anticipated training needs for the Art Centre, copied from Pearn (2007, p.65)

Training objective	Current situation	Development activity
Art development workshops.	There is no sustained art development occurring in the region. Infrequent workshops are limited with no follow up.	Art Centre will provide sustainable art development through day-to-day mentoring and a calendar of workshop events with follow-up workshops that meet the needs of artists.
Use of quality materials.	Midwest artists do not use high quality materials.	Art Centres will provide high quality materials.
Art Centre administration.	Poor administration.	Adopt best practice principles, employ professional, qualified staff.
Governance.	Little evidence of artists playing an active role in governance.	Best practice Art Centre initiatives will ensure artists’ involvement in governance workshops.
Pricing structures.	Inconsistent prices, artists do not understand commission fees.	Art Centre initiatives will provide pricing structures and educational workshops about how the business operates.

The training priorities and social welfare outcomes for the Art Centre identified in the MWIAIS report informed the development plan for the Art Centre. The MWDC accepted the major recommendations of the MWIAIS report and appointed Tracker Consulting to develop a detailed developmental plan for the Art Centre for its first two years of operation (Acker & Cosgreve, 2009). This report built upon the observations of the MWIAIS report and outlined in greater detail how the groundwork for the Art Centre would be established within the first two years.

10 Evaluation framework for the Art Centre

The evaluation framework for the Art Centre will be based upon information in the MWIAIS report and the development plans produced by Tracker Consulting (Acker & Cosgreve, 2009).

This report suggested that during the first two years the Art Centre should develop artists' skills that will enable some to sell their work to a national audience. To achieve this goal the report identified inputs that the artists would need, including:

- Use of secure, customized artists' facilities including studio space, preparation area, display facilities and storage;
- A best practice operational model including stock control, financial accountability and governance;
- Supply of professional quality materials;
- Professional development opportunities including art skills, art administration and cultural liaison; and
- Opportunities for the sale of works of art and the generation of income through a programme of exhibitions and marketing strategies (p. 2).

Acker and Cosgreve (2009, p.2-3) identify three different types of outcomes the Art Centre will need to work towards to achieve its goals:

1. Employment and business development:
 - New jobs created in the Art Centre; and
 - Increased income for artists.
2. Community well-being and skills development:
 - Increased community cohesion;
 - Greater participation in cultural maintenance and renewal;
 - Enhancement of the links between different groups within the upper Murchison communities;
 - New skills development opportunities;
 - The recording of cultural and social material;
 - The support of exchanges between senior artists and young/emerging artists; and
 - Mentoring and training in a culturally appropriate setting.
3. Raised community profile:
 - The promotion of the culture, history and stories of the area's local Aboriginal people to diverse local and national audiences;
 - Showcasing the continuity, richness and diversity of local Aboriginal culture to a wide audience; and
 - Addressing the limited knowledge and appreciation of local Aboriginal people and culture by national audiences.

The evaluation will ascertain the extent to which the Art Centre has made progress towards achieving these outcomes in its first year of operation. It should be noted that these were goals intended for the first two years and the evaluation is taking place about halfway through this timeframe.

In the timeline developed in the consultants' plan (Acker & Cosgreve, 2009), the Arts Centre Manager (ACM) was scheduled to begin work in October 2009. In actual fact the ACM did not begin his employment until the end of June 2010 because of failure to appoint during the first and second rounds of advertising.

11 Evaluation of the Art Centre

The evaluation process begins by assessing the progress made towards achievement of the 2-year development plan. The evaluation process has seven parts:

1. Scope of the evaluation
2. Artists' voices
3. Economic evaluation
4. Assessment of whether the nominated inputs have been provided
5. Assess progress towards intended outcomes and how the inputs contributed to outcomes
6. Use data collected to identify any other outcomes for the Art Centre
7. Discussion - what can be learnt from this evaluation that may be useful to the future development of the Art Centre or to other Aboriginal Art Centres?

11.1 Scope of the evaluation

Interview data triangulated with other data revealed that Mount Magnet, Meekatharra and Cue had been the main focus of activities in the first year of the Art Centre's development. These sites therefore form the main focus of our evaluation. From interviews we understand that contact had been maintained with artists and potential artists in the other towns, including some visits to deliver materials and collect artworks, but levels of activity were low in the three smaller communities. The gallery at the Art Centre included artworks from Sandstone. We understood that there was not a lot of current art activity in either Yalgoo or in Yulga Jinna and that the Art Centre had decided to prioritise resources in the first year to support active groups, rather than focusing on isolated established artists or emerging artists for whom there was no local support.

11.2 Artists' voices

This section summarises the artists' perceptions of the value of the Art Centre, its benefits to themselves and their communities and their hopes for the future. Artists discussed a range of topics including how and why they became involved in art, the benefits they had derived from art, how the Art Centre had facilitated their art and their hopes for the future. The artists we interviewed included both established artists as well as new and emerging artists.

11.2.1 Established artists

Some established artists had been painting for many years and art is an integral part of their life, generally continuing and supported by family tradition. This group of established artists had been creating and selling work prior to the Art Centre and had learnt their skills from older family members, in some cases supplemented by other more formal sources of art education. The formal sources of instruction varied from art teaching in school to art practice in Fremantle prison. For this group of artists, art was firmly integrated with their identity, usually because they were part of a family recognised for their art. The following comments typify the approach of this group of artists:

I reckon I sit down and paint seven days a week (Artist).

Oh just the work mainly if you're not working you bored. So keep me working, I want to be working (Artist).

And of course the story, sometimes you finish that story and you don't want to give it away. But it's got to go (Artist).

For established artists, art was also a normalised part of their income stream.

Everything from my house is from art like my tables, chairs (Artist).

Oh it puts food on your table; you pay for your bills; comes in handy (Artist).

We got a washing machine, that's the main thing (Artist).

The extra income allowed them to purchase items that would not otherwise have been affordable and challenged the expectations of others.

They asked us where did you get your car from? I says, well what do you think we do –sit around and do nothing? We artists! We sell our paintings –that's where we get car from! It was a big shock (Artist).

Other artists in this group challenged stereotypes with their commitment to their art.

They think we partying all night because we have the lights on, "Oh I thought you'se were partying in here", but no we have music playing and we just painting (Artist).

Established artists told us they had previously sold art through local channels, through Nana's shop, the Tourist Bureau, or had bartered with them for cartons of beer. They indicated a preference for selling their art through the Art Centre although some artists still supplied work to both markets.

You know those two little butterflies that I done? I sold them through the Tourist Bureau and it took me nearly two months to get paid, and they only went for \$70 each! Then I had to get this \$70 and had to wait until the Shire paid their workers and then they'll do the cheque for me at the same time. I got really annoyed with that because at least with X [referring to art sales officer] at the Art Centre it sort of gets there quicker you know (Artist).

For this group of artists a major benefit of the Art Centre was having good access to high quality materials and increased sales opportunities. Before the Art Centre was established artists had to travel to Geraldton to source art materials which involved a five hour bus-ride and an overnight stay. Not all the artists in this group liked the higher quality paint supplied by the Art Centre but used it because they understood the need to use better quality materials in order to attract better prices for their work.

Some artists in this group chose to paint at the workshops but others chose to work at home, either because of family commitments or because of personal preference.

Lot of people that do art who work here but they mostly take their art home and they do it at home, like that (Artist).

One of my girls has said that she prefers to be home in private. She doesn't want other people around; whether that's if she's worried about her artwork been interfered with I'm not sure. It was more that she wanted to do her work and not have other people comment on it whilst she's working on it (Artist).

11.2.2 New and emerging artists

Many new and emerging artists commenced painting regularly only when the Art Centre opened. When asked for their reasons, they generally indicated that an important motivation was to provide a sense of purpose in their lives and to counter boredom. Table 12 shows that 50% of the community stakeholders and 5% of the artists interviewed, view the Art Centre as a community hub.

Just we got nothing else to do so I just decide I might have a go at doing art (Artist).

If you don't work what do you do, and half of these guys here are on sickness pension so what do you do if someone can't work? It's generally, "Have you been down to Wirnda Barna lately? I think Wirnda Barna has got something on?" (Artist).

Oh something to do, I felt bored when I had nothing to do. So I started painting (Artist).

It's a pleasure, it's for me and X [referring to husband] to do something because we've got no commitments, no grandchildren or anything at home so we're by ourselves and we thinking well why not come down and paint, which we really liked from day one (Artist).

Art had not yet become an established part of the identity of many of the newer artists who had produced some paintings but were waiting to see how they sold before they produced more.

I've done four paintings and so I won't go down there for a while. Got four up there already, sold two (Artist).

I got six down there and I'm doing my last one and I said I'm not doing no more until I start selling. I sold three (Artist).

New and emerging artists were very reliant on the workshops to develop technique, but also learnt from each other and from exposure to the work of more experienced artists when it was displayed in the gallery. We observed them discuss the latter, both in terms of content and technique. The benefits this group identified included feeling good when paintings are sold, the extra income and the transference of knowledge about bush tucker to their children. Table 12 shows that 5% of community stakeholders and 10% of the artists interviewed acknowledged the importance of the knowledge of bush tucker for future generations. One new artist planned not to sell his work.

Oh I feel good sometimes when they get sold (Artist).

A lot of kids too like when the parents do the bush tucker they start to understand what they are, and if they're not quite sure they'll ask their parents and they tell them that's what they eat. It's good to see it too because now again they'll go bush and don't know what to look for, the bush tucker (Artist).

I think it's helping us a lot because at the end of the day they know they've got a couple of dollars coming in (Artist).

I keep my paintings, it belongs to me, I don't sell them (Artist).

Table 12: Cultural benefits

Cultural benefits	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
Bush tucker.	2	10%	1	5%	3	7%
Community hub.	1	5%	9	50%	10	26%
Total	2	10%	9	50%	11	29%

11.2.3 Health and well-being

Throughout our interviews with artists many commented about the direct and indirect contributions of art to their health and to their feelings of well-being. Sometimes this was discussed in terms of an increased sense of purpose in their lives, sometimes a sense of self-esteem and being valued by others when their paintings were sold, and sometimes very directly as the need to stay sober when painting. From these conversations it was also apparent that many artists were living with chronic health conditions, especially diabetes. Throughout these conversations there was a sense that art provided a possible avenue for them to realise cultural recognition for their community and personal validation in a society that provided them with access to limited positive social roles.

I know if you drink you can't do nothing. You know I got to be sober (Artist).

It's given them confidence. I've known X [artist's name] when I first met her she was really withdrawn, she was really quiet, not interested interacting with anybody including her kids. She was quiet and drunk all the time but you see her now she's outspoken, she's got different ideas, she went to one of the council meetings and actually put forward a couple of ideas that she had. She's not drinking as much now ... The only thing that I can put that down to is that she is actually doing her art. There is quite a few of them coming through like that because a lot of them do their art (Stakeholder).

Table 13 depicts a summary of the social benefits that were attributed to involvement with the Art Centre by the community stakeholders and the artists sampled for the study. Reduced alcohol intake and an improvement in personal well-being and overall health were reported by 15% of the artists. 72% of the stakeholders reported that the Art Centre represented a neutral space and community hub which facilitated interaction by other agencies with Aboriginal people. There was also acknowledgement by 16% of stakeholders of a reduction in criminal activity in the community because people were actively engaged in art.

Table 13: Social welfare benefits

Social welfare benefits	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
Reduced alcohol intake.	3	15%	5	27%	8	21%
Improvements to personal well-being/health.	3	15%	3	16%	6	16%
Art Centre made the role of other agencies easier.	0	0%	13	72%	13	72%
Reduction in crime.	0	0%	3	16%	3	16%
Total	6	30%	13	72%	19	50%

11.2.4 Hopes for the future

Table 14 illustrates the number of community stakeholders and artists sampled who indicated an increased sense of hope because of the Art Centre. Increased self esteem and a positive self-identity were reported by 15% of the artists interviewed. In general, 22% of the community stakeholders reported self esteem improvements for Aboriginal people producing art at the Art Centre. The artists mainly expressed hope for the future survival of the Art Centre. Other hopes were for marketing to be extended to internet sales and for a savings scheme similar to one they knew about at Wiluna, to facilitate saving for larger items.

Table 14: Positive feelings/self esteem

Self esteem improvements	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
Hope as a result of the Art Centre.	0	0%	4	22%	4	10%
Increased self esteem.	3	15%	1	5%	4	10%
Positive self-identity.	3	15%	4	22%	7	18%
Total	6	30%	9	50%	15	40%

11.3 Economic evaluation

The appraisal of this initiative suits neither traditional cost-benefit analysis (CBA) nor cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) as the precise or approximate benefits, valued in either dollars or outcomes, are unknown. Instead the following evaluation will firstly summarise the annual costs and income for the first year of operation using the Art Centre’s 2010/11 financial statement.

Note that the sales income is accrued over the latter nine months of operation only in the first year.

11.3.1 Costs

The capital, operating and maintenance expenditures are derived from the expenditure section of the 2010/11 financial statement for the Art Centre. Total costs are \$222,786 (excluding working capital which was included in error in the capital item of the financial statement).

11.3.2 Capital costs

There are two types of capital expenditure that generally apply to a project – fixed capital and working capital. Fixed capital includes the acquisition of land, buildings, equipment, vehicles and infrastructure. It could also include start-up training. Working capital is used to finance the operating expenses of the enterprise and may include cash reserves and the value of stocks or raw materials and spare parts.

The financial statement for 2010/11 only refers to a general heading of capital which is valued at \$27,000 in 2010/11. However this is directly linked to Regional Grants Scheme funding rather than the acquisition of fixed assets. Hence the capital item is likely to be working capital only. For the purposes of this analysis therefore, there is no capital expenditure.

Note that the financial statement refers to payments for professional development (training) of staff and artists of \$4,588 and \$4,587 respectively. Given the high staff turnover at the Art Centre it would be prudent to include these payments under operational costs rather than capital. Furthermore, it appears that the premises, vehicles and office equipment were pre-owned as the statement includes their usage (rent, petrol and maintenance) but not their purchase price, nor does the financial statement record depreciation of these assets.

11.3.3 Operating costs

Operating costs relate to the hire of labour, the use of raw materials, energy and associated costs such as insurance and marketing. Taxes are usually included in operating costs if applicable. Maintenance expenditure including ongoing staff training or equipment should be added. The funding body or other stakeholders may have *de minimis* limits on this type of expenditure. Some operating costs are fixed, for example annual rent and insurance, while other operating costs are variable.

The aggregated operating costs for 2010/11 are \$202,786. This figure includes labour costs totalling \$89,541 - \$64,941 for Art Centre staff salaries and \$24,600 for artists' payments. Material costs, such as postage, office supplies, camera peripherals, art supplies and printer/fax/internet consumables comes to a total of \$27,900. Energy usage totals \$3,000. Rent payments were \$7,800 and venue hire was \$1,990. Vehicle operating costs include petrol consumption of \$14,000 and vehicle maintenance of \$3,640. Other maintenance costs of \$11,400 were incurred for facilities (\$2,200), equipment (\$750) and culture (8,450). Promotion and marketing amounted to \$4,775. Professional development for staff and artists was \$9,175. Insurance for the premises and contents as well as public liability amounts to \$5,289. Expenditure on professionals' fees totalled \$16,100 - accounting (\$8,000), auditing (\$3,100) and consulting (\$5,000). Other travel costs were \$7,496 and bank charges of \$680 were incurred.

No payments are recorded in the 2010/11 financial statement for consumption (GST) or income (personal or company) taxation. GST has probably been paid and is therefore included in the payments for eligible goods and services. Income tax was probably not paid as the Art Centre recorded a net loss in the first year.

Given that the Art Centre provides both goods (artwork for sale) and services (exhibitions of the artwork as well as a Centre for community culture) it is expected that labour costs will form a large proportion of total expenditure. Using the above figures, labour costs are 43.3% of total operating costs. Of these, 72.5% are for salaries and on-costs for Art Centre staff. Artists' payments account for 27.5% of labour costs or 12.1% of total costs. In 2010/11, 45 artists were formal members of the Art Centre through producing and selling their artwork and a further 25 Indigenous artists were in training and skills development. It is expected that artists' payments will grow as a proportion of total labour costs as promotion of the Art Centre and the artwork spreads. It is also anticipated that total labour costs will increase in the medium to long term.

Travel expenses are considerable at 12.5% of total costs, however Art Centre staff and consultants are required to travel to widespread communities in the Mt Magnet Shire in order to develop and promote the Art Centre and to encourage new and established Indigenous artists to participate. It is expected that these costs will continue in the medium term.

11.3.4 Income

In the Art Centre's 2010/11 financial statement total income is recorded as \$180,141. This includes \$40,000 in activity-generated income (sale of artwork) and \$140,141 in subsidies. In its first year of operation therefore, the Art Centre required income support from a variety of sources amounting to 78% of its income. The budgeted activity-generated income of \$150,000 did not materialise, with the result that income from the sale of art made up only 22% of total income.

11.3.5 Net profits

The Art Centre generated a loss of -\$22,645 in 2010/11, a deficit of 12.6% of income. Note that this deficit excludes the \$27,000 working capital reported as expenditure in the 2010/11 financial statement.

11.3.6 Benefits

One of the potential benefits of income generation from the sale of indigenous art at the Art Centre is the multiplier effect on incomes in the local community. The production and sale of art at the Art Centre has become the nucleus of economic activity in the community and in some respects, this emulates what Phipps and Slater (2010: 58) refer to as 'cultural tourism.' The multiplier effect will depend on the Marginal Propensity to Consume (MPC) which is the extra spending attributed to individuals and the community when extra income is earned. In Australia the MPC is about 0.6, hence the closed economy multiplier effect is 2.5 times the initial change in income.

Using the art sales income figure of \$40,000 in 2010/11, the resultant effect on the wider community can be expected to be about \$100,000. However, this effect will be diluted to the extent that the art sales income is used to purchase goods and services that are sold outside the community, or goods and services that are imported into the community from elsewhere in the State, or even interstate or overseas. If the total expenditure figure of \$222,786 is used to derive the multiplier effect, then the impact on the community is at most \$556,965. However, the same

caution applies here because the flow-on effects may benefit consumers and producers outside the local community.

Altman (2005) reports that, in remote Australia, the proportion of Indigenous adults in mainstream employment, Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) employment, unemployment and not in the labour force are 15%, 42%, 7% and 36% respectively. Changes to the CDEP programme on 1 July 2009 resulted in many Indigenous adults, who were previously in CDEP employment, becoming unemployed. The unemployment rate for Indigenous adults increased to 49%.

Labour market studies confirm that the creation of employment for previously unemployed persons should reap benefits for the individuals themselves, in terms of occupational status, employment and income, as well as for their families (see, for example, Harkonen, 2011). In much the same way the Art Centre is providing employment and income for contributing Indigenous artists and providing them with the occupational status of 'artist.'

Importantly, better labour market outcomes are achieved hand-in-hand with reduced dependence on taxpayer-funded welfare. Such labour market and welfare outcomes are, to some extent, quantifiable. For example, if an Indigenous artist can be self-supporting through the sale of his/her artwork, there will be an average saving of \$32,000 per annum (OECD, 2011) on the median welfare payment in Australia. In addition to employment and income, the Art Centre provides career pathways for artists, art workers and administrators (Phipps & Slater, 2010).

Another effect of labour market improvements in Indigenous communities is reduced domestic violence and property crime and concomitant reduced imprisonments, detentions and remands into custody, arrests and charges against adults and juveniles. The resultant savings to the criminal justice system are not insignificant when one considers that the saving to the WA government of one prisoner per year is over \$100,000 (WA Department of Corrective Services (DCS), 2010).

Improved labour market status and income for parents of school-aged children has been shown to improve school attendance and retention rates. For example, the Australian Institute of Family Studies (The Smith Family, 2008, p.6) reports that:

“Overall, clear links were found between family financial disadvantage and children’s readiness for school and their later academic achievement and adjustment.”

Whilst ill-health can be a cause and a result from unemployment, there is consensus in the literature that “unemployment itself is detrimental to health and has an impact on health outcomes - increasing mortality rates, causing physical and mental ill-health and greater use of health services” (Mathers & Schofield, 1998). Thus, the health status of employed workers is on average better than that of unemployed workers. This may result in employed workers having fewer hospitalisations, reduced bed-days if hospitalised and reduced medical care from GPs and specialists.

GP, Specialist and Emergency Department visits cost an average of \$68 (Department of Health and Ageing, 2011), \$77 (Department of Health and Ageing, 2011) and \$550 (WA Department of Health, 2010) respectively. An overnight stay in a public hospital costs, on average, \$1,468 (WA Department of Health, 2007). Reductions in these costs represent savings to both the publicly

funded health system and to individuals in terms of gap payments. If labour market status improves, the increased health of individuals and decreased demand on the health system will generate savings for both individuals and State and Federal governments.

Mental health issues have also been linked to labour market success. Slater (2010) points out that “a strong sense of identity is a prerequisite for mental health” (p. 150) and “cultural identity depends on access to culture and heritage as well as cultural expression and endorsement” (p. 150). Although Slater’s frame of reference was involvement in Indigenous festivals, there are similarities with the production and showcasing of Indigenous art.

A further benefit of a regional art centre like the Art Centre, is that it provides a community hub with access to opportunities that encourage cultural awareness and maintenance. Slater (Slater, 2010) in her examination of the importance of indigenous cultural festivals noted that “the festivals are fundamentally about sustaining Indigenous worlds: the very life worlds that are not being valued in the race for statistical equality” (p. 145). Quantifying the benefit of ‘sustaining the Indigenous world’ in monetary terms however, is not possible. This is a case of a ‘missing market’ (Hanley & Barbier, 2009, p. 22).

In summary, several artists mentioned that the Art Centre had facilitated their art production and that both art production and sales contributed positively to their self-respect, their well-being and their capacity to assert and transmit their cultural heritage. Secondary sources suggest that participating in activities that celebrate cultural identity improves the mental health of participants. The qualitative data gathered from artists who participated in this study supports the claim that Art Centres improve mental health and well-being for the artists who are involved.

11.4 Inputs

Four inputs in the development plan (Acker & Cosgreve, 2009) were nominated for our assessment of the extent to which these inputs had been provided within the first year of operation.

Space had been secured in all three locations where the Art Centre was active in its first year of operation. Quality materials were being supplied to artists, exhibitions were held and a variety of professional development activities were offered to artists. Both the artists and other stakeholders attested to the fact that the Art Centre was actively increasing the management skills of the artists involved and promoting active governance of the Art Centre.

I can see that he’s actually training the locals to do his job, like he’s giving them more different responsibilities in town. Like they’re going to run this programme and that programme and he’s gone to financial advisors and talk to the painters about how it’s going to affect their Centrelink payments and pensions. He’s just really branching out in different ways which will have a lasting effect (Stakeholder).

We found a Centre Manager who wants to leave skills behind, not just in painting but the whole notion of how you make paintings like stretching canvasses (Stakeholder).

This quotation from one of the stakeholders confirms that the Board was made up of members drawn from the three major communities. It also highlights the need to build people’s confidence and self-esteem to enable them to actively participate as Board members.

Well I think one of the most important things has been the building of people's self-esteem as individuals, you know, socially we're way down on the bottom scale and I've noticed with the Art Centre it started up there. People have become empowered so they're building their own capacity to be able to do things and make decisions and that's what we've always wanted from day one. The Board's a really good example because the Art Centre's a regional set-up. It's obviously made up of reps who sit on the Board from Meekatharra, Cue and also Mt. Magnet. So what we've found is, I've actually noticed a growth in people's attitudes towards the whole governance side of things and in terms of decision making and as directors of an organisation. And people are becoming more aware of their rights and obligations as directors so that's been interesting to look at from the outside (Stakeholder).

Even during the first round of interviews it was evident that the artists understood they would be required to learn the skills necessary to run the Art Centre for themselves.

He [ACM] wants to train someone up so that when he moves on he is leaving someone here (Artist).

One area of concern identified in the economic evaluation is the need to implement a best practice model for financial accountability. Table 15 details a summary of achievements of inputs for the Art Centre.

Table 15: Summary of achievement of inputs

Input	Evidence	Achievement
Use of secure, customized artists' facilities including studio space, preparation area, display facilities and storage.	The Art Centre site in Mount Magnet. The Bundi Club in Meekatharra. The Cue workshop.	Yes
A best practice operational model, including stock control, financial accountability and governance.	Stock control: AMS stock control system was established. Financial accountability: see economic evaluation. Governance: a Management Committee was in place, but interview data was divided on the extent to which it had yet been able to actively steer the management of the Art Centre.	No
Supply of professional quality materials.	Interviews confirmed that quality materials were sourced and supplied to artists.	Yes
Professional development opportunities, including art skills, art administration and cultural liaison.	Interviews confirmed that varied opportunities for developing art skills and cultural liaison had been provided and had been highly valued - we observed both programmes during our first visit. Development opportunities provided for art administration development raised awareness and increased knowledge of some aspects of art administration.	Yes
Opportunities for the sale of works of art and the	A programme of exhibitions was organized throughout the year, artists were supported to	Partial

generation of income, through a programme of exhibitions and marketing strategies.

enter art competitions and achieved some successes. Income generation, whilst less than projected, was valued by the artists. On-line marketing was discussed as an important strategy but this did not eventuate during the first year.

11.5 Outcomes

In this section the outcomes are examined and evaluated. Outcomes are more difficult to assess than inputs and can often only be achieved over an extended period of time. The headings used by Acker (Acker & Cosgreve, 2009) have been retained.

11.5.1 Employment and Business Development

In all three towns unemployment rates are relatively high, especially youth unemployment. Employment opportunities and business development skills are therefore essential. One stakeholder pointed out that both family networks and education are important to accessing mainstream employment opportunities in small country towns.

Employment, with small country towns there's limited employment opportunities. There's the mine site but for those you need a basic level education, plus driver's licence. The Art Centre can provide a lot of training for people and opportunities, especially for extended families. If one person in the family is doing work through there it helps other family members as well (Stakeholder).

Art Business Development as detailed in Table 16 provides many artists with their only opportunity to participate in the mainstream economy. For many people this required a transition of status from welfare recipient to commercial business owner and might involve a considerable shift in self-concept and perception of place in society.

The main thing is to get people thinking about it as their own business rather than something that's run by a non-Indigenous manager and who is someone they can come to for cheques (Stakeholder).

Although the jobs created during the first year were unskilled, short-term and casual, they were nevertheless valued and boosted young people's self-esteem, according to one artist who stated:

You know 16 to 25 year-olds are coming in, people are wanting to work here. [ACM] has been giving young folk an opportunity to work here, they come here and work for a week or two, earn a couple of dollars then go and come back. You may get another group of boys coming through and it's really important to the development of the community and also the self esteem of these young people who would have never had these opportunities. Like making canvasses you know! (Artist).

Table 16: Employment and business development

Outcome	Evidence	Progress towards achievement
New jobs created in the Art Centre.	Interviews indicated that some occasional new casual jobs had been created. For example, to stretch canvases and to drive, but there was no evidence of sustainable ongoing job creation.	Limited
Increased income generated for artists.	Artists indicated that the Art Centre had enabled them to increase their incomes although actual income was significantly less than the income projections in the development plan.	Some progress

Table 17 provides details of the interview responses from the community stakeholders and artists sampled in terms of the employment and economic benefits that the Art Centre provides. Art as an important generator of income was cited by an average of 25% of community stakeholders and 25% of artists. Art was reported to be a positive experience by 38% of community stakeholders and 25% of artists. 38% of community stakeholders and 20% of artists reported that selling their artwork through the Art Centre was a better process than selling it locally. There was also a recognised positive impact on tourism for the town as mentioned by 38% of the community stakeholders and 5% of the artists sampled for the study.

Table 17: Employment/economic benefits

Economic benefits	Number of Artists	% of Artists	Number of Stakeholders	% of Stakeholders	Total Number	Total %
Income from art.	5	25%	4	22%	9	24%
Art is an important source of paid work.	5	25%	5	27%	10	26%
Art is a positive experience.	5	25%	7	38%	12	32%
Selling through the Art Centre better than selling locally.	4	20%	7	38%	11	29%
Positive impact on tourism.	1	5%	7	38%	8	21%
Total	5	25%	7	38%	12	32%

11.5.2 Community well-being and skills development

Long-established community groups, such as craft groups and playgroups tended to cater primarily for the white population and most Aboriginal people did not feel welcome there. Interviews with stakeholders provided some evidence of active commitment to change fostered by the recent arrival of a new school principal, new Community Development Officer and the

opening of the Art Centre. Each of these individuals and organisations had a strong commitment to fostering greater social inclusion and there was evidence of informal collaboration between these organisations.

We were told that established groups catering primarily to the white population excluded Aboriginal people (and some sections of the white community) in informal ways - through a tacit understanding that only the middle class white population was welcome. Partly in response to this, Aboriginal groups such as Bidi Bidi were formally established to serve the Aboriginal community. In interviews and casual social interactions some sections of the white community expressed concern about being excluded from service organisations established to serve the Aboriginal community such as the Art Centre, and the soon-to-be-operational Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS).

This issue poses a difficult conundrum for those Aboriginal service organisations who are also concerned with reconciliation and social inclusion. Denial of services to white community members may be seen to affirm the racial divide, whilst provision of services to all may dilute their ability to offer culturally sensitive services to the Indigenous population they are funded to serve and may be contrary to their funding agreements. The Art Centre, when faced with this problem, made the decision not to exclude white participants from events but to ensure that the direction and ethos of the organisation remained exclusively Aboriginal and that Aboriginal artists remained its primary focus. During our visit we observed a white community member participating in an art development workshop and we were also welcomed to participate. One of the stakeholders interviewed described the way this worked:

People know it's an Aboriginal Art Centre but they sort of see him [ACM] at the art exhibition helping out and being there at the more general art exhibitions at community festivals. He's had the Centre opened and advertised saying people can come in and have a look, I think the community have really accepted it. Also with the workshops and things, he's been really good if there's been someone who is keen on doing the workshop and is not an Aboriginal person he would let them participate (Stakeholder).

The artists we interviewed spoke positively about the role of the Art Centre in bringing their community together and considered that the Art Centre provided a much needed community hub in a town that offered limited opportunities for Aboriginal people to socialise outside of their home. Table 18 illustrates the social benefits that the Art Centre provides with feedback from 11% of community stakeholders and 10% of the artists.

Yeah you socialise with other people, mix, everybody stops and eats and goes back to their art work. It brings a lot of people together; it brings Aboriginal people together in a different way. When we go to Mount Magnet and paint it brings in quite a few people (Artist).

Only one or two of the artists and community members discussed internal tensions within the Aboriginal community. Some stated that tensions had been high some years ago but had reduced within the last couple of years. One stakeholder confirmed a decrease in family feuding and considered that the Art Centre's role as an Aboriginal organisation that promoted Indigenous culture was an important means of providing respect and hope.

We've had incidents where we've had families feuding in town and that all seems to have died off and once again I think it was because there was no hope, nothing for the Indigenous people and that's what the Art Centre has been able to do. It's open to them all, it has given them the

focus, it has given them something to do and they're promoting their own history, their own stories, culture, which is something that we want to try and work with more (Stakeholder).

Others discussed how the Art Centre provided a neutral space that allowed family differences to be resolved. This is illustrated in table 18 with 44% of community stakeholders and 10% of artists affirming the important role of the Art Centre as a neutral space.

So the fact that the Art Centres are a neutral place and almost sanctuary for people to go to because it is away from that household environment, it's away from stress because once you go into the Art Centre you are in your own element. You are dealing with your own art work but there's also the interaction between families and perhaps mums and grannies that don't talk in the community that often. If there is a big issue within the community whether it's a death or fight it's amazing how many of those things are solved around the arts tables and it might take all day. I sat in the Art Centre on a Thursday afternoon and watched two old ladies after a huge feud in town on the weekend; slowly move closer and closer together until they started having a conversation and talked. That sort of thing is invaluable because I think that place is the sanctuary where that conversation can happen (Stakeholder).

In the second round of interviews in June/July 2011, one stakeholder commented on the connection between the cultural activities conducted in 2010, the long-term positive effects on the artists and the self-respect of the Aboriginal community.

I know that a lot of the projects that [ACM] worked on early on with Wirnda Barna involved cultural training and I'm guessing in some ways that has helped. Also doing the art works and having that strong presence in town have helped a bit with some of the self esteem (Stakeholder).

Table 18: Social benefits

Social benefits	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
Opportunities to socialise outside home.	2	10%	2	11%	4	10%
Disputes can be solved.	2	10%	8	44%	10	26%
Total	2	10%	8	44%	10	26%

Table 19 details the community well-being and skills development as a result of involvement with the Art Centre and the percentage of community stakeholders who discussed these themes during the interviews.

Table 19: Community well-being and skills development

Outcome	Evidence	Progress towards achievement	% stakeholders identified this theme
Increased community cohesion.	Evidence is difficult to interpret with confidence but in Mount Magnet both Indigenous and white informants indicated that the Art Centre had contributed positively to community cohesion. We do not have sufficient evidence about Meekatharra and Cue.	There is evidence that progress has been made towards community cohesion but this outcome can only be fully achieved over an extended period of time.	100%
Greater participation in cultural maintenance and renewal.	There was strong evidence from interviews with artists and community members that there had been increased participation in cultural maintenance and renewal.	Good progress.	50%
Enhancement of the links between different groups within the upper Murchison communities.	There was evidence of strong links between groups in Mount Magnet, Meekatharra and Cue. Links with other communities are unclear. Because many family links pre-dated the Art Centre, it is difficult to determine the exact role of the Art Centre, but it appears to have been facilitative.	Progress toward achievement.	72%
Outcome	Evidence	Progress towards achievement	% stakeholders identified this theme
New skills development opportunities.	Interviews indicated that artists had benefited from the skills development opportunities offered and that the quality of the art output had increased.	Good progress.	22%
The recording of cultural and social material.	Observations and interviews confirmed that the Art Centre artists were recording cultural material and that the Art Centre was collaborating with other organisations to enhance this process.	Good progress.	22%
The support of exchanges between senior artists and young/emerging artists.	Both senior artists and young artists discussed how they had mentored or been mentored. From our observations these relationships seemed to be particularly strong in Meekatharra.	Progress.	50%
Mentoring and training in a culturally appropriate setting.	The training we observed and heard about took place in the artists' workshops in Mount Magnet.	Progress.	22%

11.5.3 Raised Community Profile

Community divisions described within Mount Magnet were predicated upon negative assumptions about Aboriginal lifestyle and a lack of interest in Aboriginal culture by non-Aboriginal people. In this context the presence of the Art Centre in the centre of town has a powerful significance as it is the only readily visible sign of Aboriginal culture and presence.

For a lot of people it was the Aboriginal cultural presence in the town so travellers and community members if they were looking for the Aboriginal presence in the town they'd go to the Art Centre (Stakeholder).

Interviews indicated that since the Art Centre was established, some stakeholders hoped there might be a willingness to reconsider the exclusion of Aboriginal culture from public spaces in the town. Other informants considered that the positioning of the Art Centre on the main street was a positive indicator of Indigenous heritage that was otherwise entirely missing from the town and a potential focus for Indigenous tourism.

I see Wirnda Barna as something that is going to be an important site for tourism, you know people do want to see the Indigenous artisan. Talking to X [art sales officer] we had an inter-agency meeting yesterday and X was talking about looking at sculptures, carvings and other things. These are the sorts of things that people want to see, and in that environment where they can actually see it being done, you don't just see the finished product you can actually sit there and watch the person do (Stakeholder).

The first Mount Magnet Art Exhibition, which had its debut shortly after the Art Centre opened and in which the Art Centre artists participated, was considered very important to the profile of the Art Centre artists. They believed that for the first time local people outside their community were taking them seriously as artists. At the same time the sale of artwork was considered to validate their identity as artists, over and above the monetary value of the sale. Artists were also pleased to have opportunities to exhibit their work in galleries across the Southwest. Table 20 indicates evidence of a raised community profile for Mount Magnet and the percentage of community stakeholders who discussed these themes during the interviews.

Going really well and yeah we've some paintings they've gone to Perth, some in Fremantle, some in Margaret River my paintings and I've still got some paintings here (follow up Artist interview June 2011).

Table 20: Raised community profile

Outcome	Evidence	Progress towards achievement	% of stakeholders who identified this theme
The promotion of the culture, history and stories of the area's local Aboriginal people to diverse local and national audiences.	From discussions with artists it became apparent that some artists' work was informed by their stories and heritage, other artists painted more generalist 'bush tucker' themes. The Mount Magnet art exhibitions raised the standing of some of the Art Centre artists in the eyes of the Mount Magnet community and James Brockman was successful in a regional competition.	Progress.	50%
Showcasing the continuity, richness and diversity of local Aboriginal culture to a wide audience.	This was achieved to some degree through exhibitions in Fremantle, Geraldton and Mount Magnet. Culture was showcased to audiences and from the artists' perspective, local recognition was especially important.	Some progress.	50%
Addressing the limited knowledge and appreciation by national audiences of local Aboriginal people and culture.	No evidence that this has been achieved. Progress toward regional appreciation. The Art Centre has a website but no capacity for internet sales yet.	Not yet.	0%

11.6 Other outcomes

A number of important themes emerged from the interviews that have not been discussed in the evaluation so far. They include the importance of the Art Centre Manager's (ACM) role to the broader community, the provision of other services facilitated by the Art Centre, the importance of the development of governance capacity, experience of other services in the community and the perception of positive impacts on other social issues.

11.6.1 The Art Centre Manager

From our interviews with artists, community members and stakeholders, we were impressed by the overwhelming regard for the achievements of the ACM. Here are a small fraction of the responses from stakeholders, community members and artists.

But, with the success of X [the Art Centre manager] so far I think it's been absolutely incredible and important to where this organisation is at now. I think he needs to be recognised for his understanding of our local people and also for their acceptance of him as a wetjula bloke coming into an organisation like this. That's something we tend to forget about a lot and I think he needs to be recognised, the importance of his role because he has been very supportive right across the board from our young people through to our old people. It's been incredible and unless you've got that then quite often things will fall to bits and fail, (Artist).

Oh he's fantastic, he's quietly spoken but you can see the body language between him and the kids is very very positive. The kids admire him, I can sense that they've already accepted him as a role model (Stakeholder).

So very quickly he has established himself as sort of being an integral part of everything we do. We sort of work by thinking how can we work Wirnda Barna into this and he's been incredibly helpful with everything that we've done (Stakeholder).

Wirnda Barna - look in all honestly it has been fantastic for this town. I know every time we've had a meeting with Council I think that's one of the first things that have come out of it. It's been fantastic (Stakeholder).

I have only positive things to say about Wirnda Barna, you know, I think I've said most of it. I think it's an absolutely magnificent opportunity for, not just Magnet artists, but all of the communities around us and they all do contribute and [ACM] through his contacts promotes that. I can think that can be only good. The last thing I have to say about Wirnda Barna is heaven help us if Wirnda Barna does not survive as an entity in this town, in this region. It's terrific (Stakeholder).

This success was attributed to the willingness of the ACM to quickly become involved in many aspects of community life and to actively foster relationships with other social and community agencies.

He's been involved in the tourist advisory committee; he has come along to those. He comes to the inter-agency meetings as well so he's worked in with the school, Bidi Bidi. We have a youth group school holiday program and they've gone to Wirnda Barna and they've done some art projects with him as well. Even with the Mt Magnet festival he did a kids art activity as part of the program, as well as having it open over the weekend so people could go and have a look (Stakeholder).

This approach was considered by informants to be essential to both the establishment of the newly arrived ACM and the centrality of the Art Centre within the community. The downside of this approach was that it clearly placed the ACM under huge time pressure to maintain connections with other organisations whilst at the same time developing the Art Centre. The consequences of these pressures were very evident, even during our first data collection visit. One informant described the pressure that came with the short term contract and outlined the negative consequences for both the committed employee and the Aboriginal community thus:

[ACM] has only got an 18 month contract and with the energy he's putting out he wants to get as much done as he can in a short space of time. Unfortunately, that is the cycle of all the roles and responsibilities outside of local business. Everything is a revolving door; police, teachers they all come and go. So, the relationship building happens short and sharp, and someone might come in and build relationships and have impact but then they're gone again. Aboriginal people have watched that for 50 years (Stakeholder).

11.6.2 The Art Centre and community services delivery

Many community services remarked how the Art Centre had made their role easier. Police commented on fewer disturbances and a health worker commented on positive health outcomes

for people she referred. The Art Centre also provided supervision for some young people undertaking Juvenile Justice Community Service Orders and we were told that the Art Centre enabled white staff from government departments and other organisations to make contact with Aboriginal clients more easily.

If you want to find an Aboriginal person in town at the moment you go to Wirnda Barna and ask where they are (Stakeholder).

There's no censoring. It's a safe place to go and other agencies in town have learned that they are more relaxed there. Whereas now I've noticed that more and more of them [Department for Child Protection] are meeting their clients at Wirnda Barna or just sitting around Wirnda Barna. It's a good place to be and not associated with negative things (Stakeholder).

I think Art Centres should be somewhere that the government agencies think about in terms of when they're looking to divert funds to support people to keep them out of the prison and justice system (Stakeholder).

11.6.3 The Art Centre and community capacity building

In that inter-agency meeting normally it's just the different agencies in town whereas Wirnda Barna is actually classed as an agency now. So, it comes to the inter-agency meeting and [the Art Centre manager] sends different Aboriginal artists so like a representative to each inter-agency meeting so that they're all getting an idea about how politics work and it's actually affected many different areas as well as just their doing paintings! (Stakeholder).

Several stakeholders regarded the Art Centre as playing a pivotal role in community building and possibly the only organisation able to build the capacity of Aboriginal people to contribute to the governance of community organisations in the town. Table 21 shows that inter-agency governance and the relationship with the Art Centre was mentioned by 50% of community stakeholders and 10% of artists sampled. These quotations illustrate the perceived needs, the connection with the Art Centre and a description of how the process was starting. Capacity building for governance was identified as a need for local government, as a strategy for long-term social change and as an immediate need for the community as a whole.

There is a need for governance and capacity building amongst the Aboriginal community so they can play a role on local government because local government is very influential and if that happened that would be a really profound change as well. Even though it does sound like it's peripheral towards what Wirnda Barna is doing it's actually not. So, I'd say that needs to happen so you've got proper representation of the majority on town council (Stakeholder).

There's a closed golf club that has no committee, there is no one there. There are no sporting groups in town, no community services in town, everything is been picked up by the Shire. So a lot of it is trying to enable the community to get those things going again and try and get some skills out there so that people who are still in town can take that over and start running their own things again (Stakeholder).

Right across the board there is a flow-on effect into other organisations because people come in and they see particularly the governance aspect of it and if they're sitting on another board they'll know we need to do it this way like, they do at Wirnda Barna. So, Wirnda Barna is

becoming a model for other groups to look at in terms of the governance side for their own organisations (Stakeholder).

Table 21: Increased involvement in governance

Increased governance	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
Inter-agency.	2	10%	9	50%	11	29%
Aboriginal involvement.	0	0%	1	5%	1	3%
Total	2	10%	9	50%	11	29%

11.6.4 The Art Centre and young people

Community analysis of the towns showed that there is a rising number of young Aboriginal people for whom there are few opportunities for employment or other gainful community participation. Crime statistics show that crime peaked in the 20-29 year old demographic in all communities and concerns were expressed about drug and alcohol use. The Aboriginal community members and artists as well as the local community service providers were concerned about this situation, and viewed participation in art through the Art Centre as a potential palliative. The opportunities for inter-generational contact were considered to be particularly important. The community service providers were impressed with the way that the Art Centre had managed to engage with this group and the view was expressed that the Art Centre was possibly the only group that had successfully managed to achieve this.

Between finishing school and age 25 there’s a whole heap of people in town who I have never met because they don’t participate in anything. They don’t come to sporting activities or community events - they sit at home. The only place that I have seen them go or heard of them going is to Wirnda Barna (Stakeholder).

The Art Centre gave them the confidence that they could actually do it. So, they’ve actually applied for the mine site jobs whereas before they were just ??? every weekend (Stakeholder).

Young X who only started painting there 3-6 months ago and the smile on his face on open day! He’s just amazing, it’s great to see young people get a spark because they haven’t had a spark for quite a while (Stakeholder).

Other services reported that they believed the engagement of young people with the Art Centre had reduced police and ambulance call-outs, although during our second visit we heard that there had been a recent upsurge in vandalism by young people aged 13-16 years. Generally there was a perception that contact with the Art Centre had increased young people’s well-being and some service providers even named individuals who they believed had been positively transformed through their involvement with Wirnda Barna. The feedback from stakeholders was remarkable in its consistency about the positive influence of the Art Centre on young people. Table 22 illustrates this finding with 50% of community stakeholders and 25% of artists interviewed attributing the Art Centre with providing positive role models for young people. Furthermore, 11% of community stakeholders interviewed reported a belief that young Aboriginal people experienced improved well-being as a result of the Art Centre. There was also acknowledgement

of the training opportunities that were available for young people at the Art Centre with 22% of community stakeholders and 10% of artists discussing this theme.

Respondents in the Aboriginal community believed that the Art Centre played an important role for this age group. Many artists were actively trying to encourage young people to participate in art production and had achieved some success. We were told of one young person who had been heavily involved in drugs and alcohol, and who, through sustained support, had become engaged in art, was now working successfully in art production and had stopped drinking and taking drugs. Other artists were clearly frustrated that more young people had not chosen to get involved. The following quotations illustrate the mix of artists' views on this issue;

Everybody's artwork has improved and the thing about it is we've got a couple of younger people that's coming in, painting, having a go at it, actually sold a couple of paintings (follow up Artist interview June 2011).

Them young ones they don't hardly do art, I don't know why but (Artist).

When the kids come in they don't know about their culture. When you tell them in painting, "Oh yeah!" [Referring to children talking]. It looks stupid to them, "Oh anybody can do that". But when you tell them what it means they sit down and they start painting, some of them you can't stop. So once they get into it they alright (Artist).

We're trying to get the young people but all young people not into paintings, they maybe would like to do something else and that's where X's [the Art Centre manager] and X's [husband] aim is to try and give different sorts of things like silk screening. So that's the sort of thing we would like, it's something different where they've got different choices (Artist).

I don't think there is any young person that can carve eggs now days (Artist).

Once again, overall views indicated that the Art Centre had provided positive benefits for young people.

Table 22: Benefits for young people

Young people	Number of artists	% of artists	Number of stakeholders	% of stakeholders	Total number	Total %
Positive role model.	5	25%	9	50%	14	37%
Training opportunities.	2	10%	4	22%	6	16%
Increased well-being.	0	0%	2	11%	2	5%
Total	5	25%	9	50%	14	37%

12 Postscript: Considerations for the future

In May 2011 we were informed that the Art Centre Manager (ACM) had decided not to renew his contract and was moving overseas and that the Art Centre Community Liaison Officer (CLO) had

resigned a few weeks earlier to take up a different position out of town. This left the Art Centre without any permanent paid staff. A new manager was finally recruited in February 2012. The founding ACM had been in post for 12 months and the part-time Community Liaison Officer, for about 10 months. In the period after they left we contacted both the ACM and the CLO and spoke to other stakeholders who had been closely involved with the Art Centre to see what could be learnt for the future. A few major themes emerged: funding and goals, scope of the project, social value, tourism potential and staff retention.

12.1.1 Funding and goals

An important theme that emerged was the problem of attempting to establish a long-term project with short-term funding. The Art Centre was funded by short-term, mostly non-recurrent funding from multiple sources to establish a project that, if successful, would require long-term support, probably for 10-15 years. A consequence of this was that staff spent a relatively large amount of time applying for and acquitting small sums of money, with each agency requiring different reporting. Concern was also expressed by one informant that some of the projected grants had not materialised. It is proposed that a more stable income stream is required. One respondent did not believe that this was achievable through current government funding arrangements and suggested that Art Centres might be more stably funded philanthropically with long-term agreements. With hindsight, the projections of revenue from sales appear to be overly optimistic especially given the proportion of new artists within the group.

12.1.2 Scope of the project

In this evaluation it has become clear that there were high expectations for outcomes to be achieved and a great deal of preparatory work required for those outcomes to be realised. To achieve the intended outcomes in the community environment was clearly going to require extensive social change, personal development and capacity building. Our report found evidence that those processes had indeed begun and were proceeding successfully. Without exception, everyone we interviewed spoke highly of the efforts, skill, energy and dedication of the ACM but it was also clear, even from our first visit, that the frenetic pace of work and the range of demands and expectations could not be sustained in the long-term. We were told that the Key Performance Indicators had been reduced in scope in preparation for the appointment of the next Art Centre Manager – an apparently necessary step.

12.1.3 Social value of the Art Centre

This evaluation indicates that the Art Centre generates many social benefits that have the potential to reduce ill health, welfare and policing costs, as well as increasing community well-being and facilitating community reconciliation. The sum of money required to support this project over a 10 year period is not huge, even assuming a more modest rate of growth from self-generated income through sales. It seems plausible that the whole cost of supporting the Art Centre over the next 10 years could be more than offset by conservative estimates of savings in social costs, health, education and justice.

It also appears that the Art Centre played at least two separate roles. The first, as an Art Centre for the minority of more established artists who are able to access high quality supplies and support for their own professional development and marketing. The second, as a culturally supportive community centre where community members are validated, supported and enabled to produce art for sale or as recreation, but where the function of the Centre is primarily therapeutic and concerned with community and personal development rather than commercial activity. It is not possible to entirely separate these two activities because most people, especially young people

and new artists, are likely to become involved initially because of the cultural support provided by the Centre. However, different skills are required to support each function and the priorities of each role do not always pull in the same direction, making it difficult for one person to fulfil both, even if the KPIs are reduced in scope. In an ideal world different individuals would fill each role to reduce the strain on a single staff member.

12.1.4 The Art Centre and Tourism

Many stakeholders mentioned the potential for the Art Centre to play a pivotal role in tourism development in the region, especially if the Art Centre was combined with other Indigenous tourism initiatives offering cultural interpretation. Indigenous tourism was felt by most stakeholders to be very under-developed in the region. Respondents believed that Indigenous tourism has the potential to encourage tourists to stay overnight in the region and even to make the region a tourist destination, rather than one that tourists pass through on their way to somewhere else. Art production was viewed as essential to such a venture, especially if the Art Centre allowed tourists to discuss stories and cultural meaning of artwork with artists, to watch the art production process and to be guided to local significant sites. If these assessments are correct, the Art Centre could justifiably be supported as part of a regional tourism development strategy.

12.1.5 Staff retention

A final concern that arises from the report is the question of staff retention. Recruitment for positions of this type is difficult and uncertain. Addressing the first three issues above would go some way towards improving conditions for staff, but if this is not possible, other means of support will need to be investigated.

Appendix 1

Table 23: Interpretation of themes

Themes from data	Examples of verbatim quotes that describe each theme
Positive outcomes.	"Just to keep on going, it's like a support centre for us where we can just come in and sit down. I mean if this wasn't here we would never ever know about painting or anything. But I'm glad it's a thing that comes together and brings the people together through painting."
Reduced community tension.	"There's been return to calm. I think something like the energy that Wirnda Barna brings to a place like this". "We've seen changes where some of the families were arguing and things happening that were negative and Wirnda Barna's come along. We've seen reduction in anti-social behaviour and all these things because you have the families there. So that's probably one of the major benefits that it's actually had."
Hope.	"I think now with Wirnda Barna and what people are doing in town I think there is a more optimistic feeling that yes, Aboriginal people are able to do things on their own."
Positive identity/self esteem.	"You should see the difference in these kids. Even the older blokes you see the difference in their confidence like 'I did that' and you should have seen X [artist] when we had her paintings here. She was like 'they're mine, I did them' and we paid \$300 for each one. The difference that you see is 'That's mine and I can do that.'"
Social welfare benefits.	"[Art's] important for your health and well-being and old people rather than them sitting doing nothing they are here painting away."
Employment/economic benefits.	"Through Wirnda Barna, they employed all the CDEP [Community Development Employment Program] people to come help and set up Wirnda Barna when they first opened."
Benefits for young people.	"I think the really important thing for this place has been the amount of youth that have embraced it so, we have young people coming in to paint."
Increased involvement in governance.	"Yeah I think the development of the community, although it has been a journey and it will continue to be a journey but the fact that they are taking such a strong leadership role and the fact that they really want this to work and they know that it's important that they become hands on and get involved. That's been a real strength. They've still got a long way to go in that journey and learning the governance etc but they are active participants, you know, that they demonstrated last week when about twenty people when we had a meeting in Mt. Magnet at the gallery for the committee members and twenty-plus people turned up and that shows, you know, commitment to the Centre and that was from Sandstone, Meekatharra so people from all over the region. It wasn't just, you know, twenty people from Mt. Magnet."
Respect from others.	"Undoubtedly there is a re-emergence of the culture. Some communities I've seen in the Northwest the existence of elders just didn't appear to be present here. So I think that is an emerging strength."
Social benefits.	"Wirnda Barna is a neutral place and almost sanctuary for people to go to because it is away from that household environment; it's away from stress because once you go into Wirnda Barna you are on your own element. You are dealing with your own artwork but there's also the interaction between families and perhaps mums and grannies that don't talk in the community that often. If there is a big issue within the community whether it's a death or fight it's amazing how many of those things are solved around the art tables and it might take all day." "You socialise with other people, mix, everybody stops haves and eat and goes back to their art work. It brings a lot of people together; it brings Aboriginal people together in a different way."

Themes from data	Examples of verbatim quotes that describe each theme
Cultural benefits.	<p>“It’s such a vibrant community here even though it could be slow at times. When you do get people here it’s really active. You would have seen over the weekend when people came through, the vibrancy here and the work that’s been done here.”</p> <p>“A lot of kids too like when the parents do the bush tucker they start to understand what they are, and if they’re not quite sure they’ll ask their parents and they tell them that’s what they eat.”</p>

Appendix 2

13 Measuring Success

The case-study reported in the main body of this report used qualitative interviews to identify perceived benefit of an Aboriginal Art Centre. In addition to the case study, this project had three other purposes. These were:

- To investigate how inter-disciplinary insights can be used to accurately document the social, cultural, community and economic impact of Art Centres in rural communities;
- To evaluate existing data sources and methods; and
- To make recommendations about future directions for theory development to support the arts and rural economic, cultural and community development.

An important purpose of this project was to evaluate the sensitivity of existing measures of benefit drawn from different disciplines. The original intention was to examine three different approaches, one to measure community strength (Pope, 2005), one to measure economic benefits (cost benefit analysis and cost effectiveness analysis) and a third to measure the art benefits (Brown, 2006). During the project another Indigenous community/cultural framework was added (LaFlamme, 2007). LaFlamme's framework is being developed to provide an integrated Indigenous community/ cultural measure of impact to determine community and cultural affects of targeted economic livelihood support.

13.1 Need for interdisciplinary measurement

Interdisciplinary measurement is important because it is difficult to accurately capture the relationship between benefits across multi-disciplinary areas such as economic development; community development; cultural maintenance; artistic development; human development; crime prevention; health and well-being. The literature in different disciplines indicates that Art Centres have a capacity to contribute positively to many areas of personal, social and community life (Acker, 2008; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010; Morphy, 2009; Wright, 2000), and also points to the interrelationships between social-cultural community, economic well-being (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010; Morphy, 2009); the deleterious effects of exclusion, racism and poverty (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010); and the importance of hope and purpose for well-being (Eckersley, Dixon J, & Douglas, 2001).

From a variety of disciplines including economic development, social geography, community development and arts development, different writers have argued that Aboriginal Art Centres have identifiable positive impacts for individuals, communities and society, but it is a very difficult task to integrate documentation of how benefits accrue holistically. It is well-documented that both macro social factors, such as social status and social class (Marmot & Wilkinson, 2006), social psychological factors such as social support for positive identity, including cultural respect, autonomy and collective efficacy (Garfinkel, 1956) and intra-psychic factors like personal hope for the future (Eckersley, et al., 2001), influence health and well-being. It is also apparent that macro and micro social and social psychological factors are interrelated in complex ways.

Previous research has found that there are many positive cultural, social and health outcomes attributed to Aboriginal Art Centre activities (Altman, 2007; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010; Australian Government, n.d; Acker, 2008; Morphy, 2009; Wright, 2000). Art Centres can assist in maintaining, renewing and imparting cultural knowledge (Acker, 2008, Acker & Cosgreve, 2009; Morphy, 2009; Wright, 2000), they can facilitate the recording of cultural material and are an effective means for inter-generational cultural learning (Acker, 2008, 2009). Aboriginal Art Centres act as a creative space and business outlet for artists. According to Acker (2008), they “value the complex and often intangible interaction between people, country, culture and the dynamic social interactions at work.”

Morphy (2009) contends that Art Centres can facilitate collaboration between extended communities and cultural groups and can communicate important cultural values and information to non-Indigenous Australians. Morphy (2009) differentiates between geographic communities and communities of interest and contends that Art Centres operate to increase cohesion of both forms of community. Through their support of community cohesion, Art Centres also support rural development because a strong community base enables the retention of essential services through effective government-community-business-voluntary partnerships, and can also be used to attract visitors (Kenyon, 2001).

Both Kenyon & Black (2001) and Jenkins (2005) argue that in small rural communities with static or declining populations, successful and sustainable economic development is most likely to succeed where there is a strong community.

13.2 Towards an interdisciplinary model

The approach taken in this project was to examine some existing measures of economic, personal and social impact, and to evaluate:

- The utility and sufficiency of each approach and in particular, the sensitivity of each approach in the context of Aboriginal Arts Centres;
- The practicality of each approach, especially whether necessary data can be collected in this context; and
- Theoretical compatibility of different approaches and especially whether their foundational assumptions are compatible.

For this purpose the Wirnda Barna case-study documented in the main report is used reflexively in this appendix to evaluate the usefulness, practicality and compatibility of some important measurement frameworks from different disciplines. Approaches examined include:

- The ABS Framework for measuring wellness in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations;
- An economic approach including standard cost benefit and cost effectiveness methodologies;
- A social capital based measure of community strength (Pope, 2005);
- An integrated Indigenous community/cultural measure (LaFlamme, 2007); and
- A framework to map the experience of art (Brown, 2006).

In this discussion each method is initially reviewed in isolation from the other measures, and compared with case study data to determine its utility, sufficiency and practicality. Next, the theoretical compatibility of different frameworks are assessed. The discussion concludes with a proposal for future development of holistic measurement of Aboriginal Art Centre impact.

13.3 ABS framework for measuring wellness

In 2001 the ABS produced a framework for measuring wellness (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001), and in 2010, adapted this framework to the specific context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) populations (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010). According to the ABS, the reasons why these adaptations were necessary were because the earlier framework *‘does not explicitly articulate the unique cultural and historical factors which affect the individual and community well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.’*

The two frameworks are similar in their overall structure. They are loosely based upon an ecological systems framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and measure wellness in nine overlapping domains, each with an individual, community and societal component. The main differences (except for the ninth domain where ‘citizenship and governance’ is omitted from the general population schema, ‘population’ from the ATSI schema) are nominal. Within each domain, definitional and conceptual differences, both explicit and implicit, are in evidence. For example, there are explicit differences in concept of family and implicit differences in the meaning of ‘culture’. The nominal differences are illustrated in Table 24.

Table 24: ABS wellness domains

ATSI measures of wellness (2010)	Australian population (2001)
1. Culture, heritage and leisure	Culture and leisure
2. Family, kinship and community	Family and community
3. Health	Health
4. Education, learning and skills	Education and training
5. Customary, voluntary and paid work	Work
6. Income and economic resources	Economic resources
7. Housing, infrastructure and services	Housing
8. Law and justice	Crime and justice
9. Citizenship and governance	Population

It would be possible to align the approaches taken in this project with the ABS framework which contains important elements of well-being. However, for the purposes of measuring the impact of an Aboriginal Art Centre there are good reasons not to take this approach.

Firstly, although the affects of an Art Centre have the potential to influence each of the ABS wellness domains, the impact is more direct in some domains and less direct in others, and this is likely to require different levels of sensitivity in measurement. An important purpose of this study was to determine which domains were most pertinent.

Secondly, an Art Centre may impact in other important ways, over and above the wellness of participants and their immediate community. For example, there is a contribution to rural economy, social development and tourism which affects both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. It is important not to limit the measures of impact of an Art Centre to only the wellness of its participants.

Thirdly, no persuasive rationale is offered for how the boundaries of the domains were drawn. The most plausible explanation seems to be to ensure that they align as far as possible with the existing Australian general population domains. However this approach has led to some arbitrary and unhelpful boundaries, for example, what was the rationale for pairing “culture and heritage” with “leisure,” but separating “culture and heritage” from “customary work?” There is also no rationale for separating “work” from “skills.”

Furthermore creativity is an important element of artistic production, however it is not clear how the intrinsic value of creativity, which was identified by participants, aligns with the ABS domains. Although it might fit into “culture, heritage and leisure” for some participants, creativity seemed to extend beyond leisure, heritage or culture. This was especially apparent for those artists who were experimenting with new forms of expression.

In addition, tacitly underlying this categorisation schema is the assumption that the most important means of measurement is statistical comparison (and only statistical comparison). Given the role and purpose of the ABS, this assumption is understandable and expected, however such an approach tends to emphasize factors that are easily measured and omits factors that cannot (Serman, 1991). The limitations of the use of *only* a comparative statistical approach to evaluation of policy in Aboriginal communities has been clearly articulated by Altman (2009) in his discussion of the “Closing the Gap” policy.

Finally, some of the strongest elements that emerged from our interviews were racial division, institutionalised and internalised racism. In the ABS schema, these elements are buried within other ABS wellness domains. However from a social justice perspective, racism as a collective stressor is a powerful independent cause of many adverse wellness outcomes (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 2005).

In conclusion the ABS framework is not directly useable because of the limitations identified above. However, it provides a checklist to triangulate elements of wellness that emerged from the study. The framework affirms the usefulness of demographic data contained in the community profiles and revealed by the interview data to document social conditions and increase understanding of the social context.

13.4 Review of the four approaches

This section reviews the utility, sufficiency and practicality of each of the other four models.

13.5 Financial analysis – Cost benefit analysis

Financial data combined with interview data and literature on the establishment of other Aboriginal Art Centres indicate that full commercial self-sufficiency is difficult to achieve and could be expected to take many years. Interviewees believed more limited financial sustainability, available through grant sources, might be achieved more quickly. Estimates for achieving commercial self-sufficiency ranged from five to twenty five years and depended upon the continued commitment of artists, the capability of the ACM to build capacity and the buoyancy of the market for Aboriginal art.

In this case study, neither traditional Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) nor Cost Effectiveness Analysis (CEA) could be used to evaluate the benefits of an Aboriginal Art Centre because the benefits, valued in either dollars or outcomes are unknown. At a practical level, a localised aggregate

costing of social, health and welfare benefits, and a *per capita* cost of social, health and welfare support were difficult to calculate because aggregated health data covers multiple communities, and because informants questioned the accuracy of census data which forms the basis of population statistics.

The unquantifiable elements in this kind of analysis include the potential cost savings of positive inter-generational effects on children and young people through having parents and elders who are gainfully engaged in art production, the cost savings to health services derived from a positive identity for young Aboriginal people as a consequence of public acknowledgement of Aboriginal art and culture, and the cost savings of improved long-term physical and mental health and well-being of the artists and their families. All these elements were foreshadowed by the interview data but potential outcomes are long-term and cannot be reliably predicted or costed. Similarly, no monetary figure could be calculated for the effects of Wirnda Barna on tourism, even though many informants identified Wirnda Barna as an important element in tourism development for the region. For rural economies the 'multiplier effect' of even modest additional income to the region may be especially significant. Any additional income to local businesses may make the difference between local sustainability and business closure. Business closure and loss adversely affects the rate of the flow of resources out of small communities and hence reduces the local value of the multiplier effect.

The modified approach taken in this study compares the operational costs of Wirnda Barna with standardised economic indicators, including the multiplier effects of income generated by the Aboriginal Arts Centre, comparison with social costs such as annual average per capita welfare benefit costs and annual per capita prison costs. From this it can be seen that very modest reductions in welfare dependence and incarceration would be revenue neutral when compared with the subsidy costs for Wirnda Barna, even in the early stages of its establishment.

In summary, the modified approach used in this case study enabled the costs of Wirnda Barna to be compared with aggregated *per capita* costs for different social, health and welfare interventions. The benefit of this approach was that it demonstrated the comparatively low cost of Art Centres compared with other forms of social intervention. A benefit of the approach is that it provides some theoretical modelling of how money flows through communities and the multiplier effects of money injected into local economies at different points. A limitation is that the approach is descriptive of social benefits and does not model in any detail how Art Centres contribute to reductions in social health and welfare costs.

13.6 Community development and social capital (Pope)

The positive effects of Wirnda Barna on the sense of connection between people and upon community cohesiveness emerged strongly in the study. Strong community ties are beneficial for individual health and well-being and a reduction in some forms of crime. Pope (2005) developed a cost-effective and practical means to estimate the strength of community ties as a means to decide how to distribute community development services. Her method involved surveying community members to determine the extent and nature of their social ties.

Pope's approach is based upon social capital theory which suggests that two different types of social connections exist within communities – "bonding capital" and "bridging capital" (Pope, 2005). Bonding capital is developed through close personal family-like relationships and through networks of looser relationships between individuals who have a similar social background and

access to similar resources and social networks. Bridging capital is developed when social connections are developed between people from disparate social networks who have access to different resources and different social connections.

The strength of personal family-like social ties was assessed through questions about whether people would be able to borrow \$1,000 from family or friends if they were in difficulty and whether individuals had access to informal practical assistance. The strength of more distant bonding links was assessed through attendance at community events, membership of community clubs and organisations and parental involvement in schools. Bridging networks were assessed according to individual involvement in governance networks and community activism, both of which require formalised interactions with people outside the participants' usual social network. From the Wirnda Barna case study, one example of how Aboriginal Art Centres facilitate bridging links and financial benefit is through the mediation role played by the ACM between the artist and the market place, a relationship that has previously resulted in poor financial outcomes for Aboriginal artists (Acker, 2008, Altman 2003).

It is argued that strong bridging connections bring additional benefits because they provide access to valuable connections outside the community. Aboriginal Art Centres are therefore especially valuable because they have the capacity to foster links between social networks that were not previously connected, both national and international. This project indicated that Wirnda Barna artists were able to foster bonds with other Aboriginal artists and gallery owners outside their community, and were provided with opportunities to develop governance skills and experience through playing a management role in the organisation. In summary, Pope's (2005) social capital measures include:

- a. Measures of participation in governance of community organisations;
- b. Measures of participation in community events; and
- c. Measures of personal social connectedness.

Pope's framework was useful to some extent and data was easily gathered to populate the model but had limitations in this context because the original framework was developed for communities in suburban Melbourne, Victoria. On a positive note, reflecting upon the Wirnda Barna case study reveals that Pope's measures make some useful distinctions between different types of social connection and the special relevance of relationships that promote bridging capital. An important limitation of this approach however, is that Pope's framework for measuring community strength is ill-suited to communities that are racially divided. The Wirnda Barna communities had a very strong personal connectedness and bonding capital but these social links were not cross-racial and racism meant that despite strong personal connection between individuals, the communities were deeply divided. Aboriginal people had very little involvement in governance or 'bridging' relationships beyond the familial social circle.

In summary, there are some elements of Pope's model that could be useful in an extended model of Art Centre benefits. The theoretical basis of the model in social capital theory has the capacity to explain how engagement in art production might be expected to produce community benefits. The model did not discuss the relationship between racism, social capital and community strength, and in racially divided communities this is an obvious omission.

13.7 Creative process (Brown)

Interviews with Wirnda Barna artists found that many artists spontaneously mentioned the close connection between the cultural significance of their work and the creative process. This was especially true of the more established artists but also true of some less established ones and aligns with the findings of previous studies which indicate that in addition to a sense of personal fulfilment, Aboriginal artists can gain a sense of self respect and cultural dignity through their art (Acker, 2008; Wright 2000). Creating art affirms “Aboriginality and the artists’ spiritual and political relationship to country/land” (Wright, 2000, p.42). Brown’s (2006) measure of “art benefit” was examined to see how well it captured the creative and cultural benefits identified in this case study.

Brown’s approach to measuring the benefits of creative processes was to review the literature on reported benefits of engagement in creative activity and to develop a static model of art benefits (Brown, p. 5). His model has two dimensions and five domains. Art benefits identified by Brown (2006) include:

- Imprint of art (intrinsic benefit of creativity);
- Personal development (individual) benefit of art experiences;
- Human interaction (interpersonal) benefit of art experiences;
- Communal meaning measures of benefit of art experiences; and
- Societal/economic benefits.

Brown’s model describes benefits that accrue but only indicates possible relationships between domains in very general terms. When Brown’s model is compared with the Wirnda Barna case study at a purely descriptive level, it acts as a checklist for potential benefits and has some potential utility. There are two serious limitations of this approach.

Firstly, Brown’s model fails to adequately consider cultural significance. It does not articulate the cultural importance of art from an Indigenous cultural perspective. Secondly and analytically, Brown’s model is limited because the model indicates links between individual benefits and community benefits but does not explain how exactly the benefits are connected. It is therefore descriptive but not explanatory.

In summary, Brown’s approach is descriptive. It states that art produces various benefits but provides no theoretical model of how art production generates individual, social and community benefits. The model is not culturally located (and hence is presented as universal) but does not adequately provide a place for cultural and spiritual significance of art as described by some of the informants in our study and by artists in other cultures. At best, the model provides an incomplete checklist for elements that any model should include.

13.8 Art and cultural importance (LaFlamme)

Of more potential interest is LaFlamme’s model. LaFlamme (2007) claimed to have used the concept of sustainable livelihoods as the main organising principle within a Systems Dynamics model to link outcomes from targeted investments in livelihood activities with improvements in health, well-being and income. Systems Dynamics (SD) modelling produces a dynamic model of

the linkages between processes and outcomes, including positive and negative feedback between sub-systems. It has its origins in the 'hard' sciences (classical mechanics) and has been applied to biological and social systems with varying degrees of success.

The starting point for LaFlamme's model was the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) of the Institute for Development Studies (IDS 2006). The SLF is a static model, which he adapts and supplements to incorporate additional factors identified from the literature. LaFlamme's model uses a social/natural capital theoretical approach and attempts to integrate human, social, financial, physical and natural capital. This is a very ambitious undertaking and the article reports work in progress rather than a completed project. The strengths of this model lie in the aspiration to link health and well-being with Indigenous participation, culture and livelihood.

The upside is that the literature review and checklist of factors are potentially useful, in a similar way to Brown's list. The downside is that the model itself seems to fall short of its aspirations in a number of ways. The first problem is that the model does not appear to be dynamic which is a major problem given that dynamic modelling is the defining feature of SD methodology. The model presented does not contain the essential clearly identified feedback loops, stocks and flows.

In SD methodology "stock," "flow" and "feedback loops" are technical terms with special meanings. They transform a static model into a dynamic model within SD methodology - without these elements the model remains static. LaFlamme equates "assets" with "stocks," but this is not technically correct within SD methodology. He does not provide modelling of how the assets "flow" through the system, nor how social processes change the stocks of assets and their flow through the system.

Another limitation of the model in the context of Wirnda Barna is that LaFlamme's model was developed for remote desert communities with very different social circumstances from those found in Murchison communities. LaFlamme's model assumes a particular cultural context where there was a fairly unbroken cultural transmission and knowledge. This is not the case in the Murchison communities where most have been dispossessed of important cultural sites and have suffered from interventionist social policy intended to weaken connection with traditional culture and kinship relationships. Finally, as argued by (Sterman, 1991) the assumptions behind LaFlamme's model would need clearer articulation to ensure that they are conceptually compatibility.

In summary the SD approach used by LaFlamme is interesting and if achievable, potentially provides the basis of a holistic approach model. There are however serious problems with the model, as reported in the article reviewed.

13.9 Some missing elements

In the Wirnda Barna case study several participants spontaneously raised the connection between Wirnda Barna and reconciliation, and the capacity for recognition of Aboriginal Art to give hope and healing to communities that have been scarred by entrenched racism. Connections between hope and wellness have been reported in the positive psychology movement and in the social science, especially in the context of well-being (Eckersley, et al., 2001). The therapeutic benefits of art provide the basis for art therapy and this emerged clearly in the literature about Aboriginal Art Centres.

Wright (2000) argues that Art Centres provide a therapeutic outlet for artists to “express complex and difficult emotions and experiences that do not lend themselves to being expressed in other ways” (Wright, 2000). Wright also argues that art-as-therapy does not diminish the merit of any art piece or Art Centre (2000). This observation appears to be accurate and would need to be acknowledged in any holistic model.

13.10 Theoretical compatibility of different approaches

All four models have different primary foci. None of them was able to alone, holistically measure the impact of Aboriginal Arts Centres on the health and well-being of artists and their communities. Each model makes some potential contribution. A community and cultural perspective is essential because the social context of Aboriginal Art production is an important element of Aboriginal Art Centres. In general remote area Art Centres place great value on the whole community and its socio-cultural well-being (Acker, 2008). A focus on culture and identity is important because Aboriginal Art Centres bring together a particular social grouping from which they develop a sense of identity and community as artists (May, 2006). From the Wirnda Barna case study and from the literature, the well-being of the broader community and its close link with Art Centre activity is demonstrated and there is evidence of a connection with strengthening social bonds, support and development of individual artists.

Two of the four approaches (LaFlamme, 2007; Pope, 2005) explicitly use a social capital or cultural capital theoretical foundation for their modelling. These approaches would be theoretically compatible at a macro level. The economic approach models money flows rather than social relationships. It would appear to be potentially compatible with a social or cultural capital approach and to provide a useful adjunct.

Brown does not provide any theoretical explanations for his model which is more a schema of potential benefits. This might provide a supplementary checklist for a future model but would not directly contribute to the theoretical framework of the model. Any holistic model would need to have community elements where a social capital or cultural capital model would be useful, but would also need to include theoretical elements that link the personal and the social to the effects of racism on identity. This might be taken from sociology especially social identity formation in social constructivism, or from social psychology. The SD approach taken by LaFlamme while theoretically interesting, will be difficult to achieve because a fully dynamic model requires all elements and their relationships to be numerically modelled. Since the relationships are complex and not fully known, it is difficult to see how this will be achieved. An alternative approach might be to build a critical systems model, possibly a Total Systems Intervention model, which does not require the micro-modelling needed for numerical modelling.

13.11 Towards a holistic model of Art Centre benefits

On the basis of this case study the most promising directions for a new model are:

Epistemology: Social constructivist.

Theoretical Framework: Social identity formation

Key Model Elements (from themes within case study):

- Racism and identity formation, healing and reconciliation
- Art, Aboriginal culture, community and identity (Morphy, 2009)
- Art Centre social capital and community development (Pope, 2011)
- Cultural capital, Indigenous community and cultural transmission (LaFlamme, 2007)
- Aboriginal economies (possibly hybrid model (Altman, 2005))
- Australian rural development (sustainability of communities/demography /social geography/tourism)
- Economics of rural communities, modified CBA/CEA (Giles, 2009)
- Social determinants of health and wellness (hope, positive identity, poverty, social class, socio-cultural dislocation, racism, physical and mental health, healing and art etc) (Eckersley, et al., 2001; Marmot & Wilkinson, 2006)
- Policy environment: CTG (Altman, 2009; Australian Government, 2012; Australian Government & Edith Cowan University, 2012)
- Aboriginal art markets
- Community services
- Education, training and employment and unemployment (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008)
- Patterns of victimisation, criminal and anti-social behaviour (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008)
- Art Centre funding and financial stability
- Art Centre Manager as Art Development Worker/Community Development Worker (support systems)

Model Framework: A systems model of some kind has many benefits because it allows interrelationships to be modelled and outcomes to be predicted. A Systems Dynamics (SD) model is probably not practical without a very large research team, because of the difficulty of dynamically modelling the multiple relationships between personal, social, community and policy factors. A more achievable goal might be to build a Total Systems Intervention model to focus on modelling relationships between policy, funding and outcomes (Flood & Romm, 1996).

13.12 Future Directions

Central to any future model will be the ability to articulate connections between the personal, social and political; the community, cultural, spiritual and natural; financial, business and interpersonal elements of the Aboriginal Art Centre environment including how each positively or negatively influences the other. Any model of the connections must have an adequate theoretical basis. A social-cultural capital model seems promising but must encompass social divisions, community and cultural variety. The model needs to articulate social-psychological elements such as how identity is shaped by social factors and connections between Aboriginal art, cultural maintenance and transmission, racism, exclusion and reconciliation.

A positive way forward would be to use a theoretical framework that links identity and social processes to acknowledge the specific ways in which both culture and racism have contributed to

identity for Aboriginal people. This approach makes it easy to link social context, identity, wellness and health outcomes. Garfinkel's (1956) work provides a compatible theoretical basis for this and is compatible with Critical Systems Methodologies (Flood & Romm, 1996). Social capital and cultural capital perspectives could be used as "helper-methodologies" within this overarching framework.

A systems approach is beneficial because it attempts to develop a schema that links processes and includes positive and negative feedback loops from social interventions, and can indicate how interventions in different parts of a social system will affect outcomes elsewhere. System Dynamics models have been used to predict outcomes of social interventions, but to build the underlying model relationships have to be numerically quantifiable. An alternative approach, especially in socially and racially divided communities, might be to develop a Critical Systems model (Flood & Romm, 1996) because this approach focuses on power differentials in social systems.

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