

The Second Wave: Aboriginal Cultural Centres in Sustainable Development

T. Jones¹ & C. Birdsall-Jones²

¹ *Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute, Curtin University, Perth, Australia*

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ABSTRACT: Over the past 10 years there has been a widespread, localised, uncoordinated effort across Australia to create Aboriginal cultural centres. Generally funded by regional development bodies and/or local government, these centres focus on leveraging culture to drive human development (training, employment) while meeting a range of social and cultural goals. Among their goals are cultural events, engagement with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and education about Aboriginal cultural knowledge. They can be differentiated from the first wave of Aboriginal arts centres that began in the 1970s that were controlled by Aboriginal organisations in which the Federal government exercised influence via funding models, had the principle activity of facilitating the production and marketing of art, and tended to be in remote locations. The focus here is on an exemplar of the established, though still developing, second wave of Aboriginal cultural centres. This paper presents a hypothesis on the characteristics of the second wave of Aboriginal cultural centres and their alignment with state-defined priorities for sustainable development through the case study of an Aboriginal culture and heritage centre. Insights are drawn from key informant interviews about the creation and operation of Gwoondwardu Mia, the Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre in Carnarvon, Western Australia.

1 INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal culture and heritage is to a degree responsible for the expansion of cultural policy into a broad range of policy areas. The perceived success of Aboriginal arts centres in generating incomes and employment in remote communities, and ultimately the entry of Aboriginal symbolism into the national iconography, had a profound and far-reaching effect on how Aboriginal heritage and culture is viewed and understood, including effects on its role in sustainable development. In this paper, we examine whether there is a case for a new model of using culture and heritage within sustainable development in Australia: an uncoordinated and localized wave of Aboriginal cultural centres established since the mid-1990s.

The second section addresses the cultural policy context in Australia. The development of cultural policy for Aboriginal culture in Australia is addressed in the next section through a historical analysis of Aboriginal Arts Centres. The fourth sections present the research methods, then the background and case study of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre in regional Western Australia. The final section presents a discussion and hypothesis about Aboriginal Cultural Centres, including that they are a distinct wave of cultural institutions that have developed in Australia in the last fifteen years. This section reflects on their characteristics and the reasons for their growth during this period.

2 THE CULTURAL POLICY CONTEXT IN AUSTRALIA

Cultural policy analyst Jennifer Craik characterises Australia's cultural policy as a neo-patronage approach towards elite arts, where an arms-length state-funded organisation deter-

mines funding via peer evaluation that almost always protects the status quo, and an instrumental whole of government approach across agencies to non-elite arts and culture that were included in cultural policy from the 1960s (2007). The characteristics of Indigenous cultural policy both influenced and was heavily influenced by the expansion of cultural policy, as is discussed using the example of arts centres in the next section. Craik holds it out as a successful cultural field that challenged the boundaries and orthodoxies of cultural policy. Its importance is confirmed through its prominence in the recent 2011 *National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper*, although it is a potential concern that it is linked to heritage rather than 'core arts' at the beginning of the document, and to cultural maintenance through the goals with no mention of new expressions and directions. Indigenous culture has been the focus of a range of policy areas, including at the Federal level the environment (Indigenous heritage), social services (use of arts programs), as well as languages and a range of arts programs. It has also been a focus of tourism strategies.¹ Indigenous culture's attraction to policy makers at the Federal level has been replicated at all levels of government, leading to a wide range of policies that aim to satisfy a variety of policy goals.

A second development with implications for Aboriginal cultural centres is the use of culture in regional development programs. The role of culture in urban and regional development, particularly through ideas like the creative classes (Florida, 2002) the creative city (Landry, 2006; Landry & Biancini, 1995) and creative industries (Cunningham, 2002; Hartley, 2005; Venturelli, 2001), has increased the scope for state investment in culture and the arts in urban locations. Cultural regeneration programs have been popular in Europe for some time (as per the European Capital of Culture program), although critical analysis suggests that their success has been mixed (Currid, 2007; Lloyd, 2002; Oakley, 2004; Pratt, 2008). Regional areas have also sought to take advantage of these trends and in particular their capacity to attract tourists as a driver for jobs and growth (see for instance in Germany, (Drda-Kuhn & Wiegand, 2010), and for a global study across the USA, Australia and Europe, Duxbury (2009)). Gibson (2002) identifies tourism (which followed lifestyle migration from urban centres) as crucial for understanding regional cultural industries in the Far North Coast of New South Wales due to its ability to fund infrastructure and reinforce regional identity (2002). The growth in this and other (Curry, Koczberski, & Selwood, 2001) rural communities contrasts to the decline in other rural communities that are reliant on primary industries, and has led to an increased state interest in cultural development initiatives. Growing interest in cultural and creative industries as a driver of development is supported in the broader international context by UNESCO initiatives to support creative industries in developing countries (such as through the Jodhpur Initiatives (UNESCO Bangkok, 2005)), and its ongoing championing of cultural development internationally, most prominently through the World Decade of Cultural Development (1988-1997) (Throsby, 2010). The expansion of cultural policy, particularly into urban and regional development, provides part of the background to the emergence of a number of publicly funded Aboriginal cultural initiatives in the last decade. However, it is not possible to understand why Aboriginal culture is now perceived as a potential driver of development without a close examination of Aboriginal arts centres.

3 ABORIGINAL ARTS CENTRES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON CULTURAL POLICY

The Aboriginal arts centres set the context for the cultural centres their perceived and actual success established that Indigenous culture was a viable driver of commercial, social and cultural benefits. Before Aboriginal cultural centres can be judged to be different or separate to the arts centres, we must establish the arts centres' characteristics and history. Any analysis of Aboriginal cultural centres needs to both recognise the importance of the history and experiences of the arts centres and be distinguishable from them. Prior to the 1970s, Aboriginal cultural objects were only perceived as art when they fit European conventions (such as bark paintings) and only then through a redefinition of art that started in museums (such as painted shields and other tools), so many objects were ignored or were not collectable (Morphy, 1998). In 1971,

¹ Most recently, increasing the supply of labour, skills and Indigenous participation was a key plank of the *National Long Term Tourism Strategy*.

Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Pty Ltd was established on the back of a tourism report, and played a key role in establishing credible outlets for Aboriginal art. This organisation controlled the supply of art by buying and holding all of the art, with the purpose of creating a market, albeit one that could only absorb a portion of the art produced. Following the election of the Whitlam Government in 1972, self-determination became the central element of Indigenous policy, and the Aboriginal Arts Board (AAB) in the Australia Council was established. This all-Aboriginal board was accompanied by a new type of arts bureaucrat, entrepreneurial and focussed on supporting and implementing the priorities of Aborigines, including buying much of the art in the 1970s (Myers, 2002). Hence at the time the first arts centres emerged, the two key sets of policy priorities around the arts centres viewed them as economic enterprises, and as a means for self-determination and Aboriginal expression.

The AAB's values and financial support were crucial contributions to what John Altman calls the "arts centre model" (2005, p. 6). This model employed non-Aboriginal arts advisors (also called arts centre managers) who were directly accountable to the artists. Altman's (2005) description concurs with Felicity Wright and Frances Morphy's more focussed definition, although he also notes the existence of a small number of urban centres:

Organisations operating in remote Australia owned and controlled by Aboriginal people. Their principal activity is facilitating the production and marketing of art and craft. A centre may be independently incorporated, or auspiced by an Aboriginal company or incorporated association. (Wright & Morphy, 2000, p. ix)

Altman's analysis of arts centres moves beyond organisation and activity to consider how their success is shaped by their role mediating relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures and priorities:

These are hybrid organisations, at once cultural and commercial, local and global, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—fundamentally inter-cultural and operating between thoroughly different locales. (2005, p. 6)

To be successful, the arts centres have to bridge geographical and cultural divides while satisfying the requirements of artists, policy makers and the market. The relationship between these elements has shifted over time.

1989 was a key turning point for Indigenous arts policy in Australia (Altman, McGuigan, & Yu, 1989). The *Aboriginal arts and crafts industry* report (Altman, et al., 1989) led to the end of Aboriginal Arts and Crafts and the control of supply, and the consolidation and growth in support through ATSIC administration of funding. The Aboriginal Arts Board (now the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board—ATSIAB) in the Australia Council focussed its resources on specific projects, arts promotion and professional development for individual artists. Fred Myers (2002) identifies 1981 to 1989 as the boom years. During this time economic rationalization came to dominate the administration of arts centres, while exhibition and retail successes led to the entry of Aboriginal art into public collections and international exhibitions, and an association of Aboriginal symbolism with Australian cultural nationalism. The state's policy emphasis became increasingly on the arts and crafts industry, rather than on arts as an activity of cultural preservation. Myers characterises the third period, from 1989-2000 as a "privatisation period" (2002, p. 124), shaped by the establishment of a calibrated market for Aboriginal fine art. The changes of 1989 ultimately resulted in less control for arts centres and continued issues of quality for dealers as the market suffered from an "entrepreneurial free for all" (Myers, 2002, p. 315), including a growth in highly questionable business practices that divided artists from their communities and took advantage of their immediate need. According to the 2007 Senate Standing Committee report, there were 110 arts centres in Australia, supporting the greater part of the 5000 arts producers whose work sells for between \$400-500 million (Standing Committee on Environment Communications Information Technology and the Arts, 2007), although this is likely to be lower now due to a downturn following the start of the Global Financial Crisis in 2008.

While the previous discussion provides an outline of the policy context and developments in the governance of art centres, does not communicate arts centres' range of tasks and goals. In the Standing Committee report (Standing Committee on Environment Communications Information Technology and the Arts, 2007), Desart presented the most complete list of arts centres' roles: cultural and identity maintenance; places where culture and law is respected and renewed; a place of work and earning income; distributor to a range of markets; strengthening

the community through youth, health and social activities; places of learning where artists teach, and artists and staff learn artistic and administrative skills; and places of respite, care and informal support particularly for older people and women (2007, p. 31). Other submissions added conservation of art work, educating the broader community, and contributing to Aboriginal control and self management. The Standing Committee report (2007) and Wright and Morphy (2000) draw attention to issues with governance, staff training, staff retention and infrastructure funding. For the art centre executives (largely composed of senior artists and custodians), Wright and Morphy found that less importance was attached to income and the centres were seen primarily as cultural institutions, emphasising cultural maintenance, facilitating artists, and the production of art (2000).

The attractiveness of arts centres to governments, like Aboriginal cultural enterprises more generally, are their capacity to satisfy a range of policy goals, including regional development, reconciliation, supporting regional and national symbolism, and Indigenous development. While these goals are broad and encompassing, some shared characteristics can be identified. First, they are Aboriginal controlled and owned. Second, they facilitate the production and marketing of art and craft as their primary activity. Third, they are social enterprises in that they produce a range of benefits for their employees, artists and communities, not just financial returns. Fourth, their intercultural role as mediators between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures and priorities shapes their characteristics as institutions and creates a deal of tension in the position of the arts advisor or centre manager. Fifth, they are for the vast majority reliant on government support in order to operate, which comes from Federal sources in particular Federal funding through Department of the Arts (DOFA) and a work for government subsidy² scheme. However, arts centres will also seek funding from other sources. Now we turn to the case study to see the degree to which an Aboriginal cultural centre differs from an Aboriginal arts centre.

4 THE CASE STUDY: GWOONWARDU MIA GASCOYNE ABORIGINAL HERITAGE AND CULTURE CENTRE

4.1 *Methods*

The objective we pursue here is to determine the characteristics of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre's establishment and activities, before determining if that centre can be distinguished from the Aboriginal Arts Centres, and if there are grounds for further study of these centres. The cultural centre used as the case study is the Gwoonwardu Mia Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Culture Centre, located in Carnarvon in the Northwest of Western Australia. We came to an agreement with Gwoonwardu Mia's board and Indigenous Reference Group to assess its operations and social and cultural impacts in Carnarvon. Through the data collection, we became aware that the activities and establishment of Gwoonwardu Mia were quite different from the Arts Centres described in the existing literature, leading to the question of what if any are the distinctions between cultural centres and arts centres.

We pursued two methods of data collection and analysis. First, we examined the existing documentation on Gwoonwardu Mia, including meeting minutes and planning documents. Second, we undertook 21 interviews with 23 respondents, 20 in Carnarvon in July 2011 and one the following month in Perth, with people who were involved in Gwoonwardu Mia's activities. This covered people with a range of engagement including: board members, Indigenous Reference Group members, past and present employees, key people who were involved at the beginning of establishing Gwoonwardu Mia artists who were involved with Gwoonwardu Mia, employees of the key funding body, and people involved with the training programs. This included 15 Aboriginal and six non-Aboriginal people, all of which were or had been involved in Gwoonwardu Mia. Respondents received a fact sheet, gave written consent to participate, had the goals of the research clearly explained to them, and was informed of their right to not participate or withdraw at any time. All respondents received copies of the transcript of their inter-

² CDEP

view to verify its accuracy. One respondent chose to withdraw her interview on reviewing the transcript.

The interviews were semi-structured and based around an interview schedule that had received approval from the Ethics Committee. The interview schedule included two categories of questions: questions about the establishment of Gwoonwardu Mia; and questions on its social and cultural impacts including its current, planned and potential roles and activities. Interviews were recorded, and ranged in length from 30 minutes to 90 minutes, reflecting the engagement of the respondents with Gwoonwardu Mia. Transcripts of the interviews were analysed using inductive qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) where the categories were developed as near as possible to the material. Eight interviews (of the 20 remaining interviews) were coded into categories and the resulting list of categories was formulated and reviewed. We then recoded all of the texts into these categories, which are the basis for the information presented here. The themes were also applied to the archival data for consistency.

4.2 *Background*

The history of Gwoonwardu Mia is the history of the Yamatji people who live in and around Carnarvon. The Yamatji are the Aboriginal people who live in the Murchison and Gascoyne regions of Western Australia.³ Archaeological evidence suggests that Aboriginals settled in the Gascoyne at least 32 000 years ago (Morse, 1993). Before European settlement, a number of language groups lived in the Gascoyne region and its surrounds (Tindale, 1974), including the five language groups whose culture is now presented in Gwoonwardu Mia: the Inggarda, Baiyungu, Talanji, Thudgarri and Mulgana. The Inggarda language group is widely accepted as the custodians for the land that includes Carnarvon, which has ongoing implications for Gwoonwardu Mia and language group politics in Carnarvon.

European settlement and its impacts on Aboriginal life in the Gascoyne only began in 1876 with Charles Brockman instigating the first pastoral lease. Carnarvon was established soon after in 1883 as a service centre and trading point for the expanding pastoral industry. Early reports indicate that Aboriginals in the Gascoyne resisted the pastoralists' appropriation of Aboriginal lands (Crowley, 1970; Gunning, 1952). Deprived of fresh water and suffering from imported diseases, Aboriginals in the Gascoyne found a method to survive and stay on their country through work on the pastoral stations. By 1894, ten sheep stations in the Gascoyne employed 283 Aboriginals permanently (Dagmar, 1978, p. 28). The growth of the pastoral industry in the Gascoyne relied on the presence of cheap Aboriginal labour. Aboriginals were awarded full wages in 1968 the vote and full citizenship in 1972. The state administration of Aboriginals also had detrimental effects on the maintenance of pre-settlement customs and traditions, particularly on Aboriginals who lived in or around regional centres (Haebich, 1992). The language groups to the immediate south and north of Carnarvon were the first to move to Carnarvon in larger numbers, followed by the groups living inland from Carnarvon and on stations who moved in larger numbers in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (Dagmar, 1978; Gray, 1978). In 1968, the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission's ruling that Aboriginal workers should receive equal wages came into effect. This led to serious disruption to Aboriginal employment on the stations and it was a major cause of the last Aboriginal migration into the town of Carnarvon after 1968 (Gray, 1978, p. 45).

The 1970s was a watershed times for Aboriginals in Australia both politically and culturally. Carnarvon was no exception, although it proved a difficult location for Aboriginal initiatives. For instance, Grey and Sagers (1990) demonstrates how an Aboriginal educational initiative inspired by self determination policies lacked bureaucratic support and struggled before being abandoned. Aboriginal organisations also were demonstrated to be susceptible to capture by Aboriginal groups (Borsboom & Dagmar, 1984), an issue which continues to this day. Despite these issues, Aboriginals in Carnarvon continued to pursue a variety of initiatives, most notably

³ The Yamatji region overlaps with the Gascoyne region, which is the settler name for the area covering the Shires of Shark Bay, Carnarvon, Exmouth and Upper Gascoyne, approximately 700 Kilometres north of the capital city of Perth.

around housing and land.⁴ According to the 2006 Australian census, 1085 people of Indigenous descent reside in Carnarvon, comprising approximately 19 percent of the population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

Carnarvon itself has suffered from the declining returns from primary industries, with many in the town employed in agriculture (primarily horticulture) and fishing. The largest economic shift has been the increasing importance of the tourism industry. For the year ending September 2008, there were 179 352 tourists to the shires of Carnarvon and Exmouth with an estimated expenditure of \$141 million (Jones et al., 2011), making tourism the most prominent economic activity. The primary attractions of the region as a whole are related to the Ningaloo reef, beautiful coastline and beaches, attracting a high proportion (25.3%) of international visitors (Jones, Hughes, Wood, Lewis, & Chandler, 2009). The town of Carnarvon does not have easy access to either Ningaloo Reef or an iconic beach. However, all visitors driving from Perth to the region and beyond must travel through Carnarvon as it is located on the only major coastal highway, and it sits between the Shark Bay and Ningaloo Coast world heritage areas.

Regional development initiatives have been important for both Carnarvon and Gwoonwardu Mia. The Liberal-National conservative government introduced a development commissions initiative in 1993 as a response to effects from the deregulation of parts of the Australian economy in the 1980s, and due to the influence of the National Party leader Hendy Cowan, who was also the Minister for Commerce and Trade and Deputy Premier (Glasson, Jennings, & Wood, 1997). The purpose of the RDCs can be broadly summarised as stimulating regional employment, investment, coordination and development (Glasson, et al., 1997). The Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC) is one of nine RDCs in Western Australia. The introduction of the Royalties for Regions funding scheme following the 2008 elections also strengthened the position of the GDC as it administrated the scheme in the region.⁵ The *Gascoyne Regional Development Plan 2010-2020* (Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC), 2010), developed by the GDC and the region's four Shires, underlines the GDC's role in coordinating and stimulating economic development. "Positive outcomes for Indigenous people" is one of 19 priorities for the region. Gwoonwardu Mia is mentioned specifically as an organisation that connects Aboriginal residents with tourism and training.

4.3 *Gwoonwardu Mia*

The description of Gwoonwardu Mia here has three parts: a history of its establishment; description of its self-identified 'core activities' and a discussion of its broader impacts. The idea for Gwoonwardu Mia began in the early 1990s with a group of Aboriginal elders who later formed the Gnulli Group of native title claimants, and discussions with the Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC) who were charged with assisting Aboriginal economic development. Kieran Kinsella, the first CEO of the GDC, had previously worked in acquisition of pastoral lands for Indigenous groups. In his interview, he described a meeting where the elders met with Minister for Commerce and Trade, Hendy Cowan:

[We] had Hendy Cowan coming to town for another matter, but we had that meeting. [...] We had lunch around the board table. Hendy was there and he just sat and listened to them. One by one they got confidence. They ended up going on the white board and one guy started by drawing his country, then they all followed suit. At the end of it, maybe it was an hour and a half after lunch they all had fun. Hendy treated them with great respect, and they all left, and Hendy turned to me and said you can have whatever money you need to get this going. So we got \$50 000 out of Hendy, and we employed some consultants to

⁴ These include establishing an Aboriginal housing estate in Carnarvon (Birdsall-Jones, Corunna, Turner, Smart, & Shaw, 2010), establishing an 'outstation' community near Mount Augusta (Kean, 2002), and the Baiyungu people took ownership of Cardabia Station in 1998, and now also hold freehold land near the tourist resort town of Coral Bay north of Carnarvon (Grylls, 2010).

⁵ The Royalties for Regions scheme was an initiative of the Western Australian National Party, which held the balance of power following the 2008 election. It aims to return 25 percent of the State's mining and petroleum royalties to regional areas.

work with us and the steering committee to develop a brief for what should be in the centre, what's all happened. (Interview with Kieran Kinsella, REF)

Through native title negotiations over a new estate in Carnarvon, a Land Use Agreement was put in place that provided the land for an Aboriginal cultural centre, \$4.7 million in funding for building and running costs for 3 years, and an Aboriginal Economic Development Officer who was employed through the GDC. The officer, Rowena Mitchell, and a group of people through an Aboriginal Corporation called Piyarli Yardi, spoke to numerous groups, designed the building, and saw it constructed. However, two sets of conflicts prevented Piyarli Yardi from opening the building in 2005 when it was completed and ultimately delayed its opening until 2009.

The first was within the Indigenous community, where Inggarda elders and other groups felt disenfranchised from the process of creating a cultural centre. A number of interviews indicated Carnarvon has been the location of other organisations that have been captured by family interests with poor results for the broader community. The second conflict was between Piyarli Yardi and the GDC, particularly after the appointment of a new CEO who had little experience in Aboriginal issues. This led to the resignation of Rowena Mitchell (Interview with Rowena Mitchell REF) and PYAC writing to the responsible Minister, Tom Stephens, stating their intention to end all business relations with the GDC. Attempts were made in 2004 and 2005 to reconcile the groups.⁶ In 2005 the new Minister for the Gascoyne, Jon Ford, assumed responsibility for the cultural centre and introduced a new management structure that is still in place. The Board consists of three Aboriginal and three non-Aboriginal members, and a Reference group of 15 Aboriginal representatives, three from each language group, advises the board. The original CEO of the GDC who assisted the first steps towards the cultural centre, Kieran Kinsella, was appointed by the Minister as the Chair, along with three Aboriginal elders, the Shire's CEO and a well-respected local non-Aboriginal businessman. While the Board has been very engaged, the reference group has a small number of committed members. The Board and Reference Group changed the name to Gwoonwardu Mia, which means Carnarvon, or the place where two waters meet (Interview with Maureen Dodd, REF).

The objects of association, largely taken from Piyarli Yardi, are very broad, but still provide the basis of the vision of the centre:

To establish "a common meeting place for the people of the Gascoyne Region where lives are enriched, Aboriginal culture is recognized and practiced, quality employment and business enterprises operate and where youth are actively engaged in creating their own future." (Gwoonwardu Mia Gascoyne Heritage and Cultural Centre, 2009)⁷

The more focussed "Core Activities" (see Table 1) from the 2009-2010 strategic plan indicate the priority areas for the centre, and provide a means of assessing what has been achieved since its opening. The goal of being a "meeting place" is achieved through the success of the other functions and its place in the Carnarvon community. I return to it at the end of the case study. Rather than discussing the core activities separately, we group some of the functions together due to the way they were discussed in the interviews.

Table 1: Core activities from Gwoonwardu Mia Strategic Plan 2009-2010

1	Meeting Place
2	Conference / Function facility
3	Outdoor Performance area
4	Café
5	Business Incubators
6	Retail/Gallery Shop
7	Artist in Residence Space and Display area
8	Major Gallery – permanent Interpretive exhibition
9	3D audio visual Gallery
10	Ethnobotanical Gardens

Conference/function facility (1) and outdoor performance area (2) have been functioning since 2009. The first Centre Manager, Lorraine Hayden, oversaw a high-quality fit out with the

⁶ This included a meeting facilitated by Fred Chaney in November 2005.

⁷ The quotations are in the original, indicating its basis in the Objects of Association.

most advanced meeting facilities in Carnarvon. The outdoor space consists of a large grass area, surrounded by small gardens and a high thatch fence, and has a stage. The outdoor space is free for Aboriginal groups out of hours, and the conference facilities has hire rates due to the costs incurred in cleaning and maintenance. Gwoonwardu Mia is not open when there are large events out of hours due to the staffing levels required and costs incurred. However, this works well in that the interior space is not suited to large numbers, and the outdoor space is robust. Events and meetings are essential for attracting people to Gwoonwardu Mia, but in different ways. Events were often commented on for the variety of people they attracted:

The outdoor space seems to be essential as well. That's another space where you get this interaction between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people (Interview with Lorraine Hayden, Ref...)

Meetings raise Gwoonwardu Mia's profile and are a revenue stream:

Its beginning to be a focal point for the whole of Carnarvon. People now tend to use the CC because of the state of the art meeting rooms. Sometimes they have a couple of hundred people at a meeting. Not just Aboriginal people, government, pastoral, Ministers often visit there and have their meetings. (Interview with Paul Baron, REF)

Hence the building design, staffing issues and quality of the fit out have combined to shape the use of the space. Staff have also assisted in generating Aboriginal activities, particularly events. An Aboriginal lady who coordinated an event stated:

I will say they opened that whole centre up to NAIDOC and they allowed me to do NAIDOC two years in a row without paying one cent. And when I did get funding, Justine [the Centre Manager] was there to acquit the money for me. It went straight into the CC account and Justine did that. (Interview with Kathleen, REF).

An important element to remember is that the assessment took place in 2011, less than three years after Gwoonwardu Mia opened and before all of its infrastructure and staff training had been completed. Hence these facilities, and the elements assessed below, were not running at their full capacity.

Gwoonwardu Mia incorporates a cafe, which is open from 10.30am to 3.30pm (the same opening hours as the shop). The cafe opened in the first year and two chefs were contracted to run it and provide training to Aboriginal employees. The quality of the food was very high and it immediately attracted a following and made Gwoonwardu Mia the location of the Durack Institute of Technology's hospitality training for young Aboriginal people. While the original couple moved after attempting to open a training restaurant, an ongoing relationship has been formed with Durack to continue the training and Gwoonwardu Mia have taken over operation of the cafe. Training is now provided by the company of celebrity chef Don Hansie, with Durack providing the training certification. The cafe is also the first restaurant in Carnarvon to attract large numbers of Aboriginals, and one of the only venues where Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals eat together.

I love going down there and seeing the cafe with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in there. There's local Aboriginal people having lunch, there's the tourists, there might be a table of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people having lunch together. That always gladdens my heart. You don't see that in very many places to be honest, even places that have large Aboriginal populations. That's what the cultural centre should be about. (Interview with Lorraine Hayden REF)

Aboriginal trainees have gone on to work in other food venues in Carnarvon.

Gwoonwardu Mia has also led to an Aboriginal art revival in Carnarvon. While the Artist in Residence program is the relevant activity (7), the facilities that relate to artists include sourcing work and assisting with pricing, running a display and shop (6), and assisting with artists' administration. The influence of Gwoonwardu Mia is perhaps best captured by their role with the Jillinbirri Weavers, a group of three Aboriginal women who weave a variety of different objects. The Weavers began working in a community house with an Arts Development Officer, Sarah Trant. When Sarah left Carnarvon, the Weavers became the first artists in residence at Gwoonwardu Mia, and one of the Weavers, Toni Roe, received funding from Gwoonwardu Mia and the Department of Creative and the Arts (DCA) CHECK to work full-time in Gwoonwardu Mia facilitating the Weavers' activities. This now includes entering numerous competitions, trips to New Zealand and Alice Springs for conferences, an artist in residence program in Albany and running a weaving workshop in Geraldton. The administration for the weavers was

managed through Gwoonwardu Mia. Gwoonwardu Mia was also the location of the Carnarvon Arts Show in 2010, which had a large Aboriginal contingent, and the top prize was won by Aboriginal artist Ruby MacIntosh. Three artists were located through Gwoonwardu Mia and invited to exhibit and participate in the Revealed Exhibition held in conjunction with CHOGM in Perth, 2011. Aboriginal artists have benefitted from the encouragement and the presence of an outlet for their work. Two artists stated that previously the art had been 'stacked up' in their bedrooms and that Gwoonwardu Mia was an appropriate place for their work. The venue itself caters primarily for tourist art, and that is what sells. It generates supplementary income for artists:

You don't make that much but if your thinking OK my rates are coming up soon, its going to cost me \$600. If I make half a dozen sets of beads, then that money I can put aside, and when the rates do come up, I have money set aside without having to go into my pension. (Interview with Esme REF).

This success has occurred without any formal training programs for artists, or even a dedicated space for them to practice. The Artist in Residency program has been limited by the absence of artists studios. While the weavers were quite flexible in their practice, another artist in residence found the space difficult to use:

Its a nice atmosphere but its too professional here. Its a workplace you know. I go home and everything is on the floor. You know what I mean? If I could just chuck my paint on the floor and sit down, I'd be right, but its too professional here. I feel like I can't make a mess, and I always want to just run amok. (Interview with Bonni, REF)

The Board and management have responded to this situation by sourcing the designs for men and women's artist studios and are in the process of applying for funding. This would include a position that operates more like an Arts Adviser in an Arts Centre.

Plans for the two galleries (8 and 9) are underway and the permanent Aboriginal Heritage display in the main gallery should be open by June 2012. Funded by Lotteries WA, heritage research has been undertaken by Maryanne Albrook and Malcolm Jebb, and has been described by one elder as "a history in our words" (Interview with Maureen, REF). Members of the Board and Reference Group are very excited about the display, and anticipate that it will address the wishes of one of the original men who spoke to Hendy Cowan, to have a place where his children and grandchildren could learn about "where they fit in the universe and the Aboriginal global universe" (Interview with Lorraine, REF). The ethnobotanical gardens (10) are being developed in conjunction with well-known gardening expert and commentator Sabrina Hahn. The Business Incubators (5) consist of two computers and carrels located in the Gallery Shop. While there have been close calls, they have not been taken up for use by an Aboriginal start-up. The Board has rejected other offers for use from other organisations.

Employment and training in the Centre has been facilitated by funding from the Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC) to train Aboriginal staff. This has enabled Gwoonwardu Mia to employ six people on a part time basis for four years, facilitating the creation of individual training plans for staff. Gwoonwardu Mia has been quite successful compared to other training providers in retaining staff, and staff have gone on to full time work with other businesses. However, working with people who have not generally previously had long-term employment creates staffing difficulties for the Centre Manager. There is flexibility for staff when managing family issues and an emphasis on communication. The Centre Manager position is also quite stressful and demands high levels of cross cultural understanding and communication, and high-level administrative skills. Staff also commented on the opportunities that working at Gwoonwardu Mia provides for cultural learning.

Funding for Gwoonwardu Mia has been from a variety of sources, many of them coordinated through the GDC. The original \$4.7 million was insufficient due to cost increases caused by delays in the project, and the original model was predicated on the existence of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), the peak Indigenous body that was disbanded in XXXX. The Chair of the Board stated:

[As] it came down it got more expensive. Rather than get more money, they started to chop stuff off it. It was chop the landscaping, chop the fit out. So here you were, the most vulnerable group, you were setting them up to fail. We proved that it was \$1.8 million dollars. The first thing that I sat down was to say to get the place to work will be to get the

centre open. Lets say it was \$2 million short, and if not for Royalties for Region, we would be a long way short of where we are.

Money has been sourced for the fit out (Regional Development Scheme), business incubation pods and office and IT equipment (Lotteries West), the landscaping (Department for Local Government and Regional Development) and establishing the permanent heritage display (Lotteries West and Royalties for Regions). The ICC funding for staffing is also substantial. The Centre Manager is employed through the GDC, which provides a sufficient guarantee to attract quality applicants. Income streams are derived from the core activities, and will increase over time, particularly once the permanent exhibition is established. There was broad agreement amongst respondents that it was unrealistic to expect a Cultural Centre like Gwoonwardu Mia to cover its costs. The business case for Gwoonwardu Mia relies on tourism to generate revenue and broader regional returns, which also links with the place of Gwoonwardu Mia in GDC plans to connect Aboriginals to tourism and training in services (Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC), 2010).

The presence of Gwoonwardu Mia has influenced the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Carnarvon in four key ways. First, it is a “cultural place” where Aboriginal culture, heritage and traditions are respected. One of the Aboriginal board members stated:

the involvement of the local traditional people on the ground has to be a very integral part of its whole functionality. Lose that, I think you start to lose site of the cultural aspects of the centre, of a building like that. You would never want to lose that and forget about those sort of people. Its the authority, its the heartbeat, its the bloodline of information that people want to know about. Whilst these other things can be part of it, that I think is crucial to its whole being. (Interview with Paul Baron, REF)

Gwoonwardu Mia was a place where cultural knowledge was discussed, imparted to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents, and where tourists felt able to ask about Aboriginal connections and perspectives. Second, its establishment caused friction within the Aboriginal community. There is much talk of reconciling the different groups so that the community could be united in support of the centre, particularly amongst Board members, and some of those people are now using Gwoonwardu Mia for meetings and events. Third, it has been a place where non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people form relationships, particularly around events, meetings and the cafe. Perspectives from the non-Aboriginal community were initially negative due to the length of time the building was not used. However, opinions turned around quickly following the opening and the “big first year” (Justine REF), including a number of people dropping artefacts they had at home into Gwoonwardu Mia. Finally, it has created space for two new positions in Carnarvon linking Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people for positive local outcomes. It has linked creative and capable Centre Managers with Aboriginal people who are undertaking cultural and other initiatives. It has also created a cultural interpreter and custodian position within Gwoonwardu Mia for an Inggarda person. This person, who recently passed away, was able to become a facilitator for Aboriginal people through her invitation to use the Centre, and non-Aboriginal people from all positions and perspectives. The current Centre Manager said of her:

She is a remarkable individual, no question. She does that with people across the board, so absolutely with other language groups in that comfort in being welcomed to the centre.

She does it with tourists, she does it with government. Interview with Justine REF

The picture that emerges from this description is a functioning cultural centre in its establishment phase that is dealing with politics within the Aboriginal community it has been created to serve.

5 COMPARING GWOONWARDU MIA AND THE ARTS CENTRES: IS THIS A SECOND WAVE?

Gwoonwardu Mia differs from Aboriginal Arts Centres in a number of ways. First, it is not an Aboriginal corporation and the Board is not entirely Aboriginal. Instead, it has a mixed model and incorporates a reference group. This reflects a broader change away from Aboriginal self-determination in policy to self-responsibility. However, the attempt at a structure that was entirely Aboriginal and the history of capture in Carnarvon should be acknowledged, as well as the

success of the mixed-model. Second, Gwoonwardu Mia's design and spread of activity indicates that the production of art and craft is not its primary activity. Assisting artists and providing an outlet for local Aboriginal art is one of its activities. Its primary function as a "meeting place" is fulfilled primarily through its provision of high quality spaces and services run by Aboriginal staff for hospitality, events and functions. Gwoonwardu Mia is a social enterprise in that it provides a range of benefits for the Indigenous community in the form of training, administrative assistance and resources. It probably does not function as a 'place of respite' for old and young people to the extent of the Arts Centres in remote communities, probably because other places fulfil this function in Carnarvon. Both are focussed on cultural and identity maintenance through their activities. Gwoonwardu Mia does have a strong "intercultural" role through the way it trains Aboriginals in providing high quality services. Like the Arts Centres, the Centre Manager absorbs much of the tension, in this case between the demands and pressures of Aboriginal life in Carnarvon and the demands of work. Finally, Gwoonwardu Mia is likely to continue to be reliant on state funding, but through different funding sources (the GDC and the ICC for staffing costs).

These structural and functional differences are linked to differences both within the Aboriginal community in Carnarvon and to the circumstances of its establishment in the 1990s. The elders who initiated the Cultural Centre expressed a desire for cultural and identity maintenance within Gwoonwardu Mia, which is also expressed within the functions of Arts Centres that are also cultural spaces. However, they also placed greater emphasis on enterprise creation and training. The building design facilitated cultural maintenance through exhibition and events spaces rather than arts practice, and the emphasis now is training Aboriginals to be employed in the services economy and facilitating cultural activities. The GDC is oriented towards regional development. It did introduce some of the elements that assisted the emergence of the arts centres, most notably entrepreneurial staff who were able to facilitate a cultural initiative of a group of elders. To place this in a larger shift in regional Australia, the GDC has assisted Gwoonwardu Mia as a cultural organisation that links Aboriginals into the post-industrial shift in thriving regional communities towards services, particularly to tourists.

Gwoonwardu Mia is an example of an Aboriginal cultural organisation that provides a range of services to visitors, leveraging Aboriginal culture to provide employment and training while also being a place for culture and identity maintenance. The final question we address here is to briefly canvas if there are a number of similar Aboriginal cultural centres in Australia.

LAST THING TO DO, NEED TO GET TO THIS TOMORROW. I AM CONFIDENT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF THEM. I HAVE A PUBLICATION BY CAS LISTING EXISTING CENTRES IN WA.

If there are indeed this many Aboriginal cultural centres in operation, they constitute a second wave of Australian Indigenous cultural organisations inspired by the broad imperatives of Indigenous culture and identity maintenance, reconciliation, and shifts in regional sustainable development towards post-industrial services and consumption.

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