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Desert perspectives – Aboriginal arts workers in remote art centres

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Australian Government
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The CRC-REP produces two series of reports: working papers and research reports. Working papers describe work in progress for the purposes of reporting back to stakeholders and for generating discussion. Research reports describe the final results of completed research projects.

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Executive summary

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art centres are a significant feature of remote Australia. The 85 or so art centres (Woodhead and Acker 2014) support the creative and cultural expression of thousands of Aboriginal people and, between them, produce a majority of the artworks that enable a national and international market to operate.

These art centres fulfil a range of roles for their communities, beyond providing commercial and artistic programs (Acker and Woodhead 2014, Australian Government 2012, Altman 2005). Located in isolated and marginalised communities that are characterised by a deficit of opportunities standard in the rest of Australia, art centres deliver a fluid and responsive mix of services, often unrelated to their core business of making and selling art, but intrinsic to their social and cultural licence to operate. Increasingly, one of these roles is to provide employment and training.

The research results presented here focus on one of the most significant changes underway at art centres throughout Australia: their shift to becoming employers and the prominence of Aboriginal arts workers in the operations of many art centres. These changes are closely linked to changes in government policy and funding.

This research report is linked to the wider work of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Economies project, which is investigating and reporting on key parts of the supply chain linking remote area artists, art businesses and consumers. The aim of the project is to contribute evidence to negotiating change and opportunity within the sector and to support initiatives that build economic participation for remote area artists through the application of research results. A further aim is to provide some evidence on the place and value of employment in remote Aboriginal communities, particularly given the often negative perceptions by mainstream Australia of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander attitudes to work (Beyond Blue 2014, Gibson 2010).

The research project that informed this report complements earlier work undertaken by the Art Economies project examining the push, pull and shock factors facing non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in their work in remote community art centres (Whittle 2013, Seet et al. 2015). While completed separately, together these studies provide some new perspectives on the reality of remote community employment. Among the findings of this work is the limited research into employment or human resources in remote community settings, particularly outside of the health sector; extant research is focused on attracting and retaining external staff (Haslam-McKenzie 2007, Mahood 2012).

Summary of findings

- **Arts worker employment is highly valued by employees:** Personally, professionally and socially, all arts workers rated their employment highly.
- **A wide range of professional, personal, social and cultural benefits are generated for arts workers:** Tangible and intangible benefits were created. Tangible benefits included financial independence, making better health choices and gaining skills and adding capacity to the art centre. Intangible benefits included increased confidence and self-esteem, cultural knowledge and family support.
- **Attitudes to work are characterised by high levels of confidence:** Arts workers rated their work attitude and quality very highly and reported few difficulties or doubts. A number of arts workers stated their interest in growing their work responsibilities and moving into more senior roles.

- **Arts workers saw few alternative employment options:** Arts workers saw their future employment closely tied to the art centre, with few looking beyond their current employment.
- **Relocation for work was not viable:** There was almost unanimous response that employment needs to be local.
- **Career path:** One third of arts workers were interested in developing a career from their work and becoming an art centre manager.
- **Significant numbers of arts workers continue to make art:** Over 40% of arts workers report art-making as their primary task, although employment program funding guidelines state arts workers cannot be employed for the purpose of creating artworks.
- **Tenure:** While there is turnover of staff who are employed for less than 12 months, those arts workers who stayed for more than a year remained in the job.
- **Working hours:** Nearly three-quarters of all arts workers were part-time employees. One-fifth of arts workers worked full time.
- **Ambition:** Almost one-third of arts workers want to advance their careers and become art centre managers. Almost half of arts workers wanted to access further training and skills.

Introduction

Recent years have seen significant changes in the relationship between remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Australian Government; long-standing programs have been stopped or consolidated and there are now five priority areas that frame almost all services and support: jobs, land and economy; children and schooling; safety and wellbeing; culture and capability; and infrastructure (Australian Government 2015a). Entangled in these changes was the development of the Indigenous Employment Initiative (IEI) for the arts and cultural sector (Australian Government 2015b). This has seen the creation of over 300 positions across the art centre network (Australian Government 2015b) and, in the four years from the start of the IEI program to 2012/13, around \$35 million invested (Acker and Woodhead 2014).

There are both push and pull factors behind the growth in subsidised employment at art centres. Policy settings (and therefore funding) now emphasise ‘getting Indigenous Australians into work’ (Australian Government 2015a), while remote art centres are often the focus for their community’s aspirations (ANKAAA 2014) for local livelihoods and engagement of young people. At the intersection of these factors is the Aboriginal arts worker program, under which art centres receive funding to employ an externally pre-determined number of local people, using formal recruiting and employment processes (job descriptions, superannuation, training, etc.). The art centre provides supervision and training.

The scale and pace of the growth of arts workers has changed the operational landscape for art centres. IEI funding is now the dominant income for numerous art centres (Acker and Woodhead 2014), considerably outpacing other sources of income, including sales.

However, this is a complex zone, where policy and financial forces collide with the wider purposes of a remote community art centre in providing a socially and culturally secure place. Employment of any kind is rare in remote communities; culturally relevant employment is even scarcer.

In recognition of the potential benefits of this employment, as well as the complexity of the employment environment, the Australian Government continues to make changes to the arts worker program. In mid-2015, new guidelines were released, increasing the program’s flexibility (e.g. a new wage structure recognising experience, more flexible working hours) while also giving it a sharper focus (reinforcing rules that arts workers cannot make artworks while on duty). These guidelines also suggest that the distribution and allocation of arts worker funding/positions is likely to change, shaped by art centre performance and capacity (Australian Government 2015c). Broader changes to remote-area employment programs are also underway, with the July 2015 change from the Remote Jobs and Communities Program to the Community Development Program (Australian Government 2015d). Whether these changes will alter the employment of arts workers or the way art centres negotiate their role as employer and trainer is unclear.

It is in this area of competing values and changing policies that this research took place, seeking to understand the perceptions and attitudes of the arts workers themselves. The next section sets out the methodology used for this research, followed by the research findings.

Methodology

The primary aim of this research was to collect and collate the views of Aboriginal people about the reality of their employment as arts workers in remote art centres. There are approximately 100 arts workers employed by around 30 art centres in central Australia.

This research was compared against a similar project conducted in Far North Queensland, which is the only other known study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts workers. The *Indigenous Employment Initiative Training Needs and Opportunities Scoping Study* (Australian Government and IACA 2014) surveyed and mapped 48 arts workers in ten Far North Queensland (FNQ) art centres. While the questions were not identical, they covered some of the same terrain; where the results of this 2014 study provide context or contrast to the survey results from central Australia, this is noted.

This research was undertaken in partnership with Desart (Alice Springs, NT), a peak body for central Australian art centres. Desart facilitates the Aboriginal Arts Worker Program, which coordinates training and provides support for arts workers in the area. Around half (47) of the 100 arts workers in the region have accessed one or more of Desart's training activities.

A semi-structured survey was designed and tested (see the Appendix). In most instances, participants were invited to provide long responses that sought to draw out the qualitative aspects of their employment; some quotes are provided in this report. All questions were optional, yet the completion rate was high, with around 92% of all questions answered.

The Aboriginal Community Research (ACR) section of Ninti One was contracted to carry out the interviews and fieldwork. Two Aboriginal Community Researchers undertook the interviews.

Simultaneously, Desart prepared a list of potential arts worker interviewees, drawn from the arts worker network established through their work across the region. From this list, potential participants were selected according to several criteria:

- Location: a mix of Alice Springs-based and remote community arts workers, covering several different cultural regions
- Tenure: arts workers whose tenure ranged from a few months to years
- Gender and age: a mix of male, female and ages.

Prospective interviewees (and their art centres) were contacted to ascertain their interest in participating; from this a final list of interviewees was determined. The surveys were completed during a series of field trips and site visits to each art centre. A total of 24 interviews were conducted: 23 were face-to-face; one was via telephone. All participants were asked at the beginning of the interview whether they wished to have the interviews conducted in language (or through an interpreter) and none of them asked for this to occur. The 24 interviewees were:

- 75% female, 25% male¹
- from these age brackets: 7 arts workers (29%) were under 30 years old; 10 (42%) were 30–50 years old; six (25%) were older than 50. One arts worker's age was not recorded.

¹ While the methodology for selecting participants for this study is different from that in the study in Far North Queensland (Australian Government and IACA 2014), the striking difference in gender balance is worth noting: 40% male, 60% female.

The interviews took place at nine different art centres between March and May 2015, after which the interviews were transcribed. Analysis of the interviews took place in October and November 2015, by collating and analysing participant responses.

The following section sets out the results of this analysis.

Results

Overall

Participants were asked a number of questions about their overall living and working arrangements. From these responses, the following observations are made:

- Population stability: 75% of arts workers had lived in their community their whole lives and only two of 24 respondents (8%) for less than 15 years.
- Tenure: one-third of arts workers had been employed for one year or less. However, the two-thirds of arts workers who stayed beyond one year tended to remain in the job, with the average length of employment almost four years. There were strong similarities between the tenure of central Australian arts workers and their FNQ counterparts, despite other significant differences.
- Work hours: part-time work dominates, with 70% of arts workers working for 20 or fewer hours per week. Five respondents (20%) worked full-time hours (around 35–40 hours per week). This accords very closely with the work hours of FNQ arts workers.
- Artist or arts worker: of the 96% of arts workers who answered a question about whether they made art as part of their employment, 43% said yes; a further 13% said they made art some of the time.
- Tasks: respondents were asked what their main work activities were. The leading response was cataloguing of artworks, which around 40% of arts workers nominated, followed by materials preparation, cited by around one-third of respondents. Cleaning and maintenance roles were noted by some respondents. Activities related to customer services (talking to tourists, sales, packing) featured in those centres with a gallery. Less than 20% of arts workers nominated more technical/managerial tasks, such as payroll, data entry, etc.
- Schooling: 87% of arts workers had attended high school and 71% of those completed Year 10 or above. Three arts workers had no formal schooling; a further two had completed Year 7. No arts worker had completed schooling beyond Year 12.
- Training: 43% of the 23 arts workers who responded to a question about any post-school training said they had undertaken none. Three respondents had completed Certificate II or III training in business or other areas relevant to art centre work (such as visual art or website management). A number of arts workers had completed training in other, unrelated areas, such as mechanics, sport and recreation or media; none had had training in the arts.
- Work history: 80% of interviewees responded to a question about previous employment; of these, only one arts worker had not previously had a job. Work histories varied considerably, from health and education through to ranger and retail roles.

There are some expected correlations between age, geography and employment among the arts workers. For example, Alice Springs-based arts workers had higher levels of education and were undertaking higher level tasks in their art centre work than those in more remote locations. Similarly, it was older arts workers

who tended to be making art during their working day, while younger arts workers were generally more involved in administrative and operational tasks.

There are strong similarities – and a number of notable differences – between the overall circumstances of the central Australian arts workers and those from FNQ. Working conditions and education largely corresponded between the two regions, with some variation – for example, education levels in parts of FNQ are higher than those across central Australia. However, almost twice as many arts workers (79%) in FNQ nominated art-making as their primary activity.

Motivation

The survey contained a cluster of questions that sought to understand the push factors for Aboriginal people to become arts workers. The questions asked about what attracted them to the role, who or what influenced them to apply and whether they had any barriers to or fears about becoming an arts worker.

The diverse circumstances of the arts workers who participated in this research is apparent in their responses to the question of motivation. Those arts workers who are engaged in art-making often nominated the creative and cultural opportunities of the job, while those arts workers who focused on operational tasks tended to talk more about the practical and tangible aspects of their work, as captured in the following quotes:

I wanted to work here because I know about story and dreaming to paint. (UF)

It's a job, I have two children. (EM)

What was striking about the answers that arts workers gave to the motivation question was how often the art centre was nominated as a 'good place'. A secondary dimension was altruism, with numerous respondents wanting to 'help the elderly' (HF), 'help my people' (MF) or 'show our culture' (GF). Similarly, for FNQ arts workers, the dominant reason for taking up their job was that it 'was a good job'. Secondary reasons were similar (something to do, social reasons, income), though the one notable exception was that in FNQ, 'learning new skills' was the second most common reason given for becoming an arts worker.

In analysing the motivations that arts workers nominated, there is naturally a diverse range of factors. However, there are also a number of consistent themes, with two featuring most strongly: the ability to earn an income and the opportunity for social interaction. Numerous arts workers also listed more personal influences, primarily that their work made them 'feel good' (stated by almost 85% of respondents), and that the supportive, culturally secure space the art centre provided gave them the confidence to 'want to achieve something' (stated by 37% of participants). Cultural and creative reasons also featured in the responses. The job satisfaction of central Australian arts workers aligns with that reported by FNQ arts workers, 85% of whom reported that they 'liked their job'.

Two questions were asked of arts workers about their concerns or fears in becoming an arts worker: whether they were worried about anything before they started and how they felt after they had started. The almost-universal confidence in the answers is notable, both before and after commencement, as stated in these two quotes:

I knew that it would be alright. I felt I had the skills, I was able to work with everyone; no pressure. (BM)

I felt good and proud to help the older ladies to understand the workplace. (KF)

Numerous arts workers stated their pride, excitement and feeling good about themselves once they started work. The answers to a later question, which asked about any obstacles or difficulties that arts workers faced, reinforced this positivity. The majority answered that there was ‘nothing that makes it hard’, and those few responses that identified any issues were generally positive ones, such as wanting to learn more skills, or not being able to work if their child was sick. Similarly, a question asking arts workers about whether the work was enjoyable or stressful returned an overwhelmingly positive response. The majority sentiment is captured in the following comments:

It’s enjoyable, makes me happy, good work. (TF)

It’s enjoyable, good learning about my work and culture. (GF)

Enjoyable because there are good people to work with. (EM)

There were approximately five participants who mentioned some form of stress. The types of challenges mentioned by arts workers were fairly general ones, mostly reflecting the busy, multidisciplinary work of art centres:

Enjoyable being with others and learning and stressful when I am by myself; it is too much. (KF)

Enjoyable – good atmosphere; stress – payday humbug. (OF)

Enjoyable; can be stressful multi-tasking. (RF)

The socially interdependent nature of desert communities is reflected in participants’ responses to questions regarding the support they sought or received in their employment as arts workers. The overwhelming answer was that support came from ‘family and friends’, with almost equal emphasis on the support from the art centre manager and, to a slightly lesser degree, from Desart and their Aboriginal Arts Worker Program. A typical response is ‘I get good support from my family and friends and the art centre manager’. Social interaction is part of all workplaces, but the emphasis of arts worker responses to this question foregrounds the importance of support both in the workplace, but also (primarily) from outside of it. The external forces of family and friends and the continuity provided by training, such as that through Desart, appear to be central to attracting and retaining arts workers.

Some key similarities can be seen when comparing arts worker motivations from central Australia and FNQ; for example, the FNQ study showed that the dominant reason for becoming an arts worker was that it ‘was a good job’, broadly in line with the motivations listed above. There are also some differences: while almost half of central Australian arts workers were keen to upgrade their skills, FNQ arts workers were less motivated by opportunities to upskill and access training, with 19% of arts worker nominating this as a priority.² Further, central Australian arts workers were more aspirational, with one-third interested in becoming an art centre manager; in FNQ, less than 10% of arts workers were interested in more senior positions.

Attitudes

Many of the responses to a series of questions about the attitude of arts workers to their employment could be summarised as ‘confident’. For example, arts workers were asked to rate what they thought the art centre manager thought about their attitude to work and the quality of their work. While some arts workers

² However, the FNQ arts workers who saw new skills as a priority did nominate a diverse range of skills development areas, highlighting the range of their professional interest.

simply answered 'good', 79% of the interviewees gave a ranking out of 10 for both questions. Of these, 13% ranked the manager's view of their attitude to and quality of work as 7 out of 10, the other 87% gave a ranking of 8 or more out of 10.

Similarly, when asked about whether they felt pride in their work, all 24 respondents answered positively. Fifteen arts workers rated the pride they felt as between 8 and 10 out of 10. Some comments that describe these feelings are:

Being an Aboriginal person and working for Aboriginal people makes me feel good. (RF)

I feel proud about sharing culture with other artists, it's a good place to work. (AM)

I feel proud, people appreciate buying the art, no problems. (IF)

When asked how they would feel if their arts worker employment ended, arts workers were similarly clear. All but two of the 24 respondents said they would be 'unhappy' or 'depressed'; the other two respondents' answers were about having to find another job.

I would feel unhappy, no job, no money, nothing to do. (BM)

I would be unhappy, I wouldn't have a job and I have a personal attachment – lots of effort put in to become skilful. (RF)

I would feel depressed due to no income, I would be unhappy, community would miss out. (NF)

Over 90% of arts workers also said that they would advise other people to work in the art centre. Some typical responses to this question were:

Yes, because it's good learning both ways. (GF)

Yes. It's a good job, rewarding, learn different things, learning from artists at a grass roots level. (RF)

Yes, because they can learn about their Dreamings and get paid. (VF)

Arts workers were also asked to suggest if there were better ways that art centres could attract and retain staff. Only a limited number of responses were recorded for this question, with most saying they were unsure. The only response that attracted more than an individual answer was that almost 20% of arts workers suggested higher pay as an important incentive. This accords with the arts worker responses from FNQ, where the low pay (and/or restricted hours³) was seen as not differentiating arts workers' work from basic welfare and was seen as a barrier to attracting higher performing, better skilled staff.

Benefits

Given the complicated social and cultural space in which arts worker employment takes place, the benefits, or pull factors, are important to understand. Arts workers were asked how their employment had helped with other dimensions of their lives. While there were diverse answers, the dominant answer (given by over one-third of arts workers) was related to confidence. For example:

I become a stronger and better person, it is where I want to be, my family look up and want to be like me, it makes me proud. (NF)

³ The program in place at that time – National Jobs Creation Package – limited most arts worker positions to 20 hours per week.

New ideas, especially when we travel and share ideas with other art centres and showcase to kids what our ladies are doing. (MF)

Meeting new people. I feel good. (OF)

Other responses were more conventional: satisfaction at being employed and receiving income (and one unconventional response: ‘Helps me to pay court fine and to slow down drinking.’ [CM]). Cultural and family benefits were mentioned by around a quarter of respondents, typically:

It has helped keep my family strong. (GF)

It has helped me to help others, learn more about art and culture. (PF)

Altruism also featured in participant responses; for example, ‘I want to help my people’ (MF) and ‘help the elderly’ (HF).

The future

Participants were asked about their aspirations for their arts worker positions. The following observations are made:

- All the arts workers interviewed want their jobs to continue.
- When asked whether they would like to work elsewhere in the arts sector, 59% said no, 27% were unsure and 14% said yes.
- Almost a third (32%) of respondents said they were interested in progressing their careers and becoming an art centre manager. However, 41% also said they had no such interest. The rest were unsure.
- When asked if a better (pay and conditions) art centre job was available, but in a different community, two-thirds of respondents were not willing to relocate.
- Almost half (47%) of the arts workers were interested in further training to upgrade their skills through TAFE or higher education.
- Similarly, half of the respondents stated their interest in working in other industries; however, 41% said they had no such interest (the remaining 9% were unsure). Responses described the broad areas that are conventional options for employment in remote areas (tourism, land management and mining), with few responses being specific about a job or position.
- Arts workers were asked where they expected to be working in one and five years’ time. Over the shorter term, 95% of arts workers expected (and wanted) to still be employed at the art centre. At the five-year mark, this dropped to 57% of arts workers expecting to be in the same job, with the remainder unsure.

Again, there are some notable differences and similarities to the aspirations of central Australian and FNQ arts workers. Future arts management careers were nominated by a third of central Australian arts workers, and the corresponding figure in FNQ was less than 10%. The low figure for FNQ likely corresponds to the higher number of arts workers making art, as their training and development interests also centred on creative and studio-based, rather than management skills. However, both regions recorded strong levels of interest in accessing further training and education. In answer to an additional question about working in other arts (but non-art centre) jobs that would require them to leave their community, 13% of central Australian arts workers stated an interest. However, 59% gave a clear ‘no’ to this question, reflecting arts workers’ strong attachment to their art centre work and, likely, to their home community.

Discussion and conclusion

From the responses, it is clear that arts workers highly value their employment and that it is valued for a number of reasons, often characterised by how well their employment connects with the social and cultural logic of remote community life. While the context of their employment is complicated and often does not align to the purposes of the funding that enables it, on an individual (and community) level the ability to access culturally relevant work is important, esteemed and – given the limited job options in remote Australia – rare. It is also striking that this research has recorded such positive responses when mainstream perceptions about remote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander attitudes to work are often negative or stereotyped (Beyond Blue 2014, Gibson 2010).

The benefits of employment that arts workers noted were diverse, including factors such as income and skills which all employees see as benefits, and cultural maintenance and family relations, which might be more particular to arts workers in remote central Australia. However, what was most notable was the confidence that arts workers reported, both in starting their job and in the pride that flowed through to other, non-professional dimensions of their lives.

From the research data, it is impossible to draw conclusions as to whether the lack of alternative employment options reported by arts workers is due to the quality of or attachment to working at the art centre, or the unappealing or unlikely prospects of other work in their community. However, the conviction of arts worker responses in wanting to maintain their work at the art centre and their very limited interest in other professional opportunities (e.g. relocating for work) is conspicuous.

In contrast to the stability suggested by the attachment of arts workers to their employment and its relevance are the forces of change at work in the remote employment sector. Higher level policy shifts aside, the sizeable role of employment (with its attendant challenges for resource poor, not-for-profit arts organisations) and the funding (and funding dependency) it triggers create a new and unfamiliar environment for art centres to negotiate. How art centres adapt to the new range of expectations from both inside and outside is unclear and an area that would benefit from further research. This research should include art centre manager perspectives of arts workers and the Aboriginal Arts Worker Program. In contrasting this central Australian-focused research with that undertaken in FNQ, it is clear that, ideally, regional differences should also be incorporated into any additional research.

While art centres remain a prominent feature of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia, their purpose and their services to their communities is undergoing significant change. Whether this change complements or challenges the business model and the creative practice that have made art centres perhaps the longest-lasting and most successful program by government in remote Australia remains a critical question.

Appendix

Project title: “Indigenous Human Resources in Remote Australian Art Centres”

Thank you for taking your time to participate in this research.

Your responses to this interview are completely confidential and anonymous. I will code your personal details in the final research report and any publications to maintain your anonymity. This protocol will be used as a framework for the interview. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Date/ Time (Start/ End):

Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Age:

Sex:

Married:

Number of Children:

Section A: Background

1	How long have you been living in this community?
2	How long have you been working as an Arts worker in this community?
3	What are your main tasks (arts admin, assistant manager, data entry, materials prep etc.)?
4	Besides these tasks, do you also work as an artist at this art centre? If so, how much time do you spend working as an arts worker and how much as an artist?
5	Can you provide some more information about your job: • Number of hours worked p/week? • Salary? • Temporary vs. permanent position: if temporary, how long is the contract?
6	Have you done any training after you left school (certificates, TAFE etc)? If so, which one/s have helped in your work as an arts worker? How?
7	What schooling did you do (Year 7, Year 10, more?)? Which school/s (in community or in town/city)?
8	Have you had any other jobs in this community before becoming an Artsworker (type of job, length of time)?
9	Have you had any other jobs before coming to work in this arts centre (e.g. different communities, in town, then type of job, length of time)?

Section B: Attraction/motivation for becoming arts worker

1	Can you please describe why you wanted to be an Artsworker?
2	Can you please tell me about who influenced you to work in the art centre. (Interviewer to ask interviewee to indicate on a scale of 1–10, or draw where the interviewee sits on a line from very little to very much) • Influence of people: ○ Elders – who? ○ Other family members – who? ○ Other friends/ community members – who? ○ Other people e.g. teachers, art centre manager? Tell me about what influenced you to work in the art centre. (Interviewer to ask interviewee to indicate on a scale of 1–10, or draw where the interviewee sits on a line from very little to very much) • Other influences: ○ Income - earning a wage ○ Had to do it (to keep Centrelink money etc) ○ Social interaction, being with family or friends. ○ Good place to work, good staff/manager ○ Learning and skill development ○ Makes me feel good ○ Want to achieve something ○ Culture and stories, especially from the old people ○ Time out from day-to-day humbug ○ Like the Art Centre ○ Other
3	Were you worried about anything before you started work at the Art Centre? (Prompt on personal preparations/organisational preparations.) Did you think you would have enough skills to do the job? Did you think you would be able to work with all the people at the art centre? Was there pressure on you from family or friends or anyone about taking on the job? What sort of pressure? Positive or negative? Has that pressure gone away?
4	How did you feel once you started your Artsworker job?

Section C – On the Job

1	Tell me what is strong or good about your art centre job (Interviewer to ask interviewee to indicate on a scale of 1–10, or draw where the interviewee sits on a line from bad to good) • Income/money • Social interaction, being with family or friends. • Learning and skill development • Good place to work. • Good people at the art centre • Sense of achievement/identity • Connection to culture • Security
2	In the main tasks you mentioned earlier, can you also elaborate on how often and how much time you spend of these tasks (daily, weekly etc.) and about what tasks you like/dislike, which ones are boring and which ones interesting.
3	What did you think about your work when you first started? • Working with non-Aboriginal Art Centre managers. ○ Art Centre work practices: ○ Working with and talking to other non-Aboriginal people, like buyers and tourists. ○ Working with – and maybe being the boss for – other family. ○ Working with art centre rules. ○ Workload. Need to get as many examples/ stories as possible. Need to prompt on what problems there were, whether there was any resolution and how.
4	What support have you gotten in your job at the Art Centre? • Prompt on support by family, friends. • Prompt on support/training by Art Centre manger. • Prompt on support/training by Desart. • Is there help or training or information you wanted that you didn't get?
5	Did you get support from other people in the community? Prompt on support by other stakeholders or people (e.g. friends, other workers etc.)
6	What, if anything, makes it difficult for you to do your job? Prompt on examples of any problems and why. • On the job factors: e.g. salary, working conditions, art centre situation • Background factors: e.g. training and education • Threats (please provide specific examples e.g., harassment, discrimination, intimidation, family feuds), problems/conflicts with the people, money, and resources;

	Other demands and pressures, like family obligations, pressure for money etc. (please provide specific examples)
7	Is being an artswoker enjoyable or stressful? - What makes it enjoyable? - What makes it stressful?
8	What do you think the Art Centre Manager thinks about your quality of work? (Interviewer to ask interviewee to indicate on a scale of 1–10, or draw where the interviewee sits on a line ranging from very poor to extremely good) Is this different to how you think about it? (Interviewer to ask interviewee to indicate on a scale of 1–10, or draw where the interviewee sits on a line ranging from no difference to extremely different)
9	What do you think the Art Centre Manager thinks about your attitude to work? (Interviewer to ask interviewee to indicate on a scale of 1–10, or draw where the interviewee sits on a line ranging from very poor to extremely good) Is this different to how you think about it? (Interviewer to ask interviewee to indicate on a scale of 1–10, or draw where the interviewee sits on a line ranging from no difference to extremely different) Can you provide some examples to support your answers? Prompt to elaborate on examples of how different the perspectives were. Need to get as many examples/ stories as possible. Need to prompt on what problems there were, whether there was any resolution and how.
10	Overall, tell me if things have improved for you since you started work at the art centre. (Interviewer to ask interviewee to indicate on a scale of 1–10, or draw where the interviewee sits on a line ranging from deteriorated badly (1) to no change (5) to significant improvement (10)) - Financial situation (livelihood, debt reduction, housing) - Skills and education - Health - Self-esteem - Family benefits - Friends - Community involvement, identity and pride - Overall - Prompt on benefits to other members of family and community? Prompt on examples of what improved between themselves and: - Other art centre workers - Elders - Other community members and why? - Need to get as many examples/ stories as possible. Need to prompt on what problems there were, whether there was any resolution and how. Prompt on whether and how the managers/ organisation helped or did not help.

Section D – After

1	Tell me if you feel proud about what you are doing now in the Art Centre. (indicate on a scale of 1–10, or draw where they sit on a line from not proud to extremely proud) Prompt to elaborate on why they responded the way they did. Need to get as many examples/ stories as possible. Need to prompt on what problems there were, whether there was any resolution and how.
2	What would you do (or feel?) if your job at the art centre stopped today? (indicate on a scale of 1–10, or draw where they sit on a line from extremely unhappy to extremely happy) Please elaborate.
3	Has your Artswoker job helped you with other things in your life? If yes, what sort of things?
4	What about further work opportunities? • Do you want to continue at the art centre – why/why not? • If there was an opportunity to work in a different job in the community, would you? Why/why not? • Would you like to work in a different job in the arts (that is, a job not at an art centre)? Why/ why not? What if that meant leaving the community? • What about progressing up to be an Art Centre Manager Why/ why not? • If there was an arts worker job with a better salary and conditions somewhere further away, in another art centre, would you consider moving – why/ why not? • What about opportunities to upgrade e.g. TAFE and University? • Are you interested in working in other industries and locations (e.g. mining, tourism, pastoral)? • What job do you expect to be doing in: • One year from now? • Five years from now?
5	Would you advise other people in your family to be an art centre worker? Why/why not?
6	Are there better ways for art centres to find and keep arts workers? What suggestions would you have to find and keep art centre workers? Prompt: also for peak bodies and government.
7	If there's one thing you could change about being an art centre worker, what would it be?

Thank you this concludes this interview. I will send through a copy of the transcript for you to have a look over. Do you have any questions?

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