



Cultural Engagement Framework -

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
arts and cultures in Queensland



Queensland
Government





Acknowledgement

The Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land. We extend our respect to Elders, past, present and emerging and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as First Peoples of this country.

We acknowledge the continuation of diverse cultural practices and knowledge systems of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination is a human right as enshrined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The *Queensland Human Rights Act 2019* also recognises the particular significance of the right to self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Artwork adapted from original designs with permission from the artists.



Chern'ee Sutton Artwork

Chern'ee Sutton is a contemporary Aboriginal artist from the Kalkadoon people of Mount Isa. Her artwork represents the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy (DCHDE) commitment to a journey together with First Nations peoples; building long lasting relationships that embed truth telling, healing and self-determination at the heart of our systems and services.



Laurie Nona Artwork - 'Urgabaw Guwa' (Oo[r]-Ga-Baw Gu-wa)

Laurie Nona is a proud Badhulayg, Maluyligal, Guda Maluyligal and Meriam Nation man from Badu Island in the Torres Strait. His artwork represents DCHDE's commitment to real change through partnerships and collaboration, placing 'people' at the heart of its systems and service delivery. Laurie has articulated this through Urgabaw Guwa (Sweet Potato Garden) that for there to be good yield, the sweet potato needs to be cared for by the community, service providers and government. The better everyone works together, and the more effort put into watering and maintaining the sweet potato crop, the better the outcome of the produces will be.



Introduction

The Cultural Engagement Framework (the Framework) has been developed in collaboration with the First Nations Arts and Cultures Panel and Arts Queensland, within the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy (the Department), to inform and guide respectful engagement with First Nations peoples, organisations and communities in the development and presentation of arts, culture and creativity.

The Framework will play a vital role in supporting the delivery of the Queensland Government's priorities in *Creative Together 2020–2030: A 10-Year Roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland (Creative Together)* and its three action plans (*Sustain, Grow and Thrive*) in particular the priority Elevate First Nations arts.

This Framework has five objectives:

- increase understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and protocols
- improve cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working in government organisations, and the arts cultural and creative sector
- position arts and culture as a platform for enabling and supporting the [Path to Treaty](#)
- ensure that First Nations arts and cultural practitioners, communities and cultural materials are ethically and respectfully engaged
- support achievement of the *Creative Together* vision for a state renewed and transformed through arts, culture and creativity

Statement of Commitment

The Queensland Government is committed to a Path to Treaty journey by building a reframed relationship that acknowledges, embraces and celebrates the humanity of Indigenous Australians.

The Path to Treaty aligns with the [Human Rights Act 2019](#) and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), which acknowledge the importance of the right to self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

In progressing the Path to Treaty, Arts Queensland is committed to working with the arts and cultural sector to increase understanding of ethical considerations and practices necessary for engaging with First Nations arts, cultures, communities and their cultural materials.

This Cultural Engagement Framework (the Framework) enables and drives Queensland Government policy and funding for the arts and cultures of First Nations people in Queensland. It promotes respect for cultural sovereignty, identities, protocols and authority of First Nations peoples. It will support economic participation and growth of employment outcomes.

The Department will operationalise the Path to Treaty as guided by the following [Statement of Commitment](#) principles:

- Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Queensland
- Self-determination
- Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- Locally led decision-making
- Shared commitment, shared responsibility and shared accountability
- Empowerment
- Free, prior and informed consent
- A strengths based approach to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to support thriving communities.

This Framework aims to amplify both First Nations and Queensland Government outcomes. It will continue to adapt and develop as we grow a thriving creative future, with strong relationships that honour, respect and promote the arts and cultures of Queensland's First Nations peoples.

Cultural Engagement Framework Principles

Applying a Human Rights approach to First Nations arts and cultures, the Framework’s principles are as follows:



Department commitments

Arts Queensland has a significant role to play in implementing the Framework. The following outlines Arts Queensland’s application of the principles against the focus areas of the *Creative Together* priority, Elevate First Nations arts.

Creative Together – Elevate First Nations arts

Department commitments

Increase involvement of First Nations peoples in the arts, both artistically and as key leaders and decision makers in planning, policy, engagement and investment.

Principles: Accountability

Collaboration

- Collaborate with the First Nations Arts and Cultures Panel to inform policy and investment in First Nations arts
- Increase First Nations peer assessors on AQ grant assessment panels, with a goal of 50% representation
- Prioritise First Nations artists’ and communities’ engagement in the review and development of arts policies and programs
- Require funded organisations and projects working with First Nations peoples to provide evidence of proper consultation, consent and permission for working with First Nations communities and materials as part of their application
- Engage First Nations businesses where able, in line with the Queensland Government’s commitment to increase the share of government procurement contracts awarded to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses

Increase career and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners across the state.

Principle: Leadership

- Invest in dedicated programs and initiatives that will support career development and arts practice of First Nations artists and cultural workers
- Work with arts and cultural organisations to create career development and employment opportunities for First Nations artists and technicians
- Work with the sector to increase First Nations representation on boards and in key leadership positions



Support and grow the ethical distribution of First Nations arts products.

Principle: Self-determination

- Require that all AQ funded organisations and projects support cultural rights of First Nations peoples
- Partner with tourism agencies and bodies to raise awareness on ethical distribution of First Nations arts
- Advocate for the ethical, intellectual and cultural heritage property rights of First Nations peoples

Grow opportunities for audiences to experience authentic First Nations arts and cultures.

Principle: Authenticity

- Invest in the development, presentation and touring of First Nations arts, festivals and events
- Ensure AQ managed facilities are culturally inclusive and welcoming to First Nations peoples and audiences
- Advocate for First Nations peoples to lead and inform the development and presentation of the 2032 Cultural Olympiad

Foster the role of arts in celebrating and sharing the many cultures, languages and traditions of Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Principle: Culture and Country

- Participate, celebrate and raise awareness of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events through arts and culture
- Promote the impact and outcomes of engagement in First Nations arts for artists and communities
- Advocate for a greater focus on First Nations arts and cultures across other government portfolios including tourism, innovation, communities and education
- Advocate for the role of First Nations arts and cultures in enabling truth-telling and story-telling as part of the Path to Treaty



Principles in practice

Arts and culture have a central role in supporting the Path to Treaty. The following table outlines approaches that the arts and cultural sector can use to put the Framework principles into practice. These are a guide only and are not an exhaustive list. Use the Resources section of this document for further ideas and advice.

Principle	Practice
Culture and Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you and your organisation aware of the Traditional Custodians of the Country/ries you work on? • How are you acknowledging the Traditional Custodians in symbolic and practical ways – have you asked them about what would be appropriate? • How is the Country and Culture acknowledged in the work being expressed within and around the work? • How are you and your organisation acknowledging and celebrating key First Nations cultural events and dates? • Is an Acknowledgement of Country or First Nations flags, art work and stories displayed in your workplace?
Self-determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you checked what and whose cultural permission should be sought prior to going forward with a project or program, and are you ready to accept their advice and decisions? • Do you have the appropriate cultural permissions to develop and present the work? • Are First Nations practitioners leading the planning and delivery of the work?
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in place for your organisation? • Are you continuing to seek out cultural advice and knowledge from the appropriate cultural and community representatives? • How are you, as an employer, respecting and creating an environment where Aboriginal and Torres employees, clients and suppliers feel culturally safe, and free from discrimination and challenge to practice their cultures and traditions? • Are you aware of your own cultural bias or established views, which impact your perception of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures?



Collaboration

- Do you have an Indigenous Engagement Strategy?
- Are First Nations practitioners and communities a part of your engagement and communications strategy?
- Do you consult appropriately with First Nations communities (including Elders and other leaders) prior to undertaking collaborations and work in and with those communities?
- What are the mutual benefits of this initiative for First Nations peoples and for everyone's ongoing learning?
- How do you intend to continue your relationship and ensure strong First Nations engagement after the project is completed?

Leadership

- Are First Nations artists and arts workers leading the design and delivery of work?
- Are there First Nations members on your board and in key leadership positions within your organisation?
- Are you providing programs and services that are accessible and relevant to First Nations peoples?
- How are you as an employer, supporting the professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (mentorship, formal/informal training, etc.)?

Authenticity

- Are you employing First Nations artists and arts workers to curate, manage and produce First Nations stories, arts and cultural forms?
 - Are First Nations peoples part of your community of practice and community of interest?
 - Are you working with First Nations suppliers of services, products and materials?
 - How can you commit to and invest in cultural education to increase awareness of and literacy in First Nations arts and cultures?
-

Information and resources to support embedding these Principles in your practice are provided in the Resources section of this Framework.

Resources

Treaty

- **Statement from the Heart (2019)** <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement>
- **Path to Treaty - Queensland Government Response to the Treaty Advancement Committee Report (2022)** <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/resources/dsdsatsip/work/atsip/reform-tracks-treaty/path-treaty/ptt-response-tac-report.pdf>
- **Treaty Advancement Committee Report October (2021)** <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/resources/dsdsatsip/work/atsip/reform-tracks-treaty/path-treaty/treaty-advancement-committee-report.pdf>
- **Queensland Government Treaty Statement of Commitment and response to recommendations of the Eminent Panel** <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/TableOffice/TabledPapers/2020/5620T1358.pdf>

Human Rights

- **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** *A universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of indigenous peoples.* <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>
- **Queensland Government Human Rights Act 2019** *Queensland's Human Rights Act 2019 protects 23 human rights in law. The Act primarily protects civil and political rights drawn from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2019-005>
- **The Tandanya Declaration** The Tandanya Declaration is the first international archives declaration on First Nations people and matters. The declaration calls on the jurisdictional archives of the world to acknowledge and adopt themes and commitments of the declaration including self-determination, knowledge authorities, property and ownership, recognition and identity, research and access. <https://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/partnerships/international-council-archives-ica/tandanya-declaration>

Cultural Capability

- **Cultural Capability** *Queensland Government checklist to help your organisation through the process of planning to purchase and participate in cultural capability training including preferred suppliers* https://www.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0022/175423/purchasing-training-guide.pdf
- **Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, Cultural Capability Action Plan (CCAP)** *CHDE's CCAP aim to create an environment that embeds cultural safety in all aspects of the department, to enhances engagement, partnership, service delivery and workforce processes.*
- **Reconciliation Australia** Reconciliation Australia website has resources to support organisations to take meaningful action to reconciliation including how to develop Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs). <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/>



- **First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous engagement in museums and galleries** Developed by Terri Janke and Company, the Roadmap aims to provide a high-level plan for stakeholders to improve First Nations engagement and employment. https://223116f5-186a-4ef8-8beb-326bf73fcd09.filesusr.com/ugd/f76062_c67539d5b2e2433181f66b15ec499d89.pdf
- **Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy** The Queensland Indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Procurement Policy (QIPP) provides a whole-of-government framework to increase procurement with Indigenous businesses. <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-partnerships/business-economic-development/queensland-indigenous-procurement-policy>
- **Artslaw Centre of Australia** Independent national community legal centre with education and resources to Australian artists and arts organisations across all art forms, on a wide range of arts related legal and business matters. <https://www.artslaw.com.au/>

Country and Culture

- **Traditional Owners Map** AIATSIS map representing the language, social or nation groups of Indigenous Australians <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>
- **Culturally important dates** List of culturally important dates that celebrate or recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. <https://www.qld.gov.au/firstnations/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/dates>
- **Protocols for consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal people** Queensland Government guide for government officers and others working with Aboriginal peoples and communities. <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/resources/dsdsatsip/about/publications/protocols-consultation/aboriginal-protocols-for-consultation.pdf>
- **Mina Mir Lo Ailan Mun: Protocols for consultation and negotiation with Torres Strait Islander people** Queensland Government guide for government officers and others working within the Torres Strait region. <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/about-us/corporate-publications/protocols-consultation-negotiation-aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-peoples>
- **Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts** Australia Council for the Arts' protocol guide that spells out the legal as well as the ethical and moral considerations for the use of Indigenous cultural material in arts and cultural projects. It includes checklists and case studies on how considerations have been embedded in arts and cultural projects <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/investment-and-development/protocols-and-resources/protocols-for-using-first-nations-cultural-and-intellectual-property-in-the-arts/>
- **Indigenous Art Code** The Indigenous Arts code guides ethical commerce in the sector, that ensures fair and ethical trade in Artwork; transparency in the process of promotions and sale of Artwork; and that disputes arising under the Code are dealt with efficiently and fairly. <https://indigenousartcode.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Indigenous-Art-Code.pdf>



The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders for all cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

If you have difficulty understanding this publication and need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS National) on telephone 131 450 and ask them to contact the department on 13 QGOV (13 74 68).