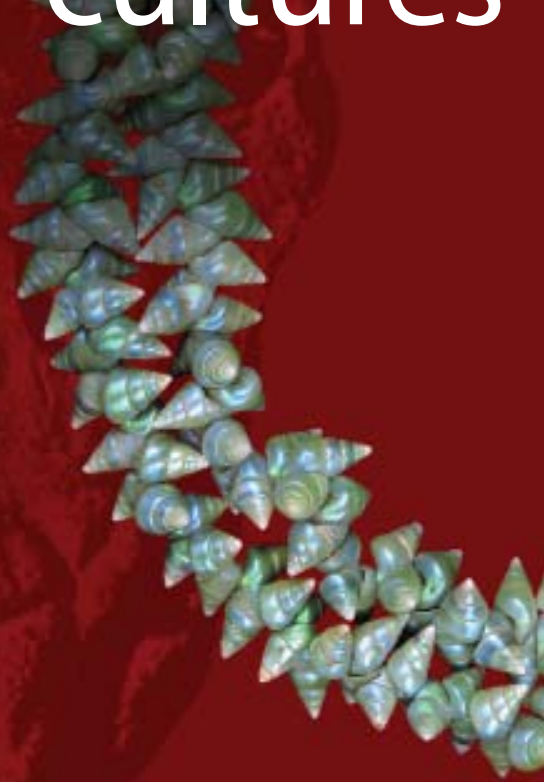


An initiative of
Arts Tasmania's Aboriginal
Arts Advisory Committee

respecting cultures

Working with the Tasmanian
Aboriginal Community
and Aboriginal Artists



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Advisory Committee

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Working with the Tasmanian

Aboriginal Community

and Aboriginal Artists

Updated 2009



Tasmania
Explore the possibilities



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Respecting Cultures: Working with
Tasmanian Aboriginal Artists and
Communities

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This update of *Respecting Cultures* is an interim update, undertaken with the permission of the original contributors and initiated by the Arts Tasmania Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee.

Front Cover:

Tasmanian Aboriginal rock carving at Mt Cameron West (detail)
Reproduced courtesy of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart

Photographer: Leo Luckman

Tasmanian Maireener necklace, Phasianotrochus bellulus, early 20th century
Reproduced courtesy of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston

Back Cover:

Coiled natural fibres basket, 1995
Delia Summers
Collection of National Maritime Museum of Australia, Sydney
Photographer: Lola Greeno

contents



Aboriginality	5
Introduction	6
Context	8
Survival of Cultural Traditions	10
> Shell Necklace Making	
> Basket Weaving	
> Wood Crafts	
> Ochre	
Cultural Retrieval	13
> Dance and Song	
> Language	
Contemporary Arts	14
Guiding Principles	16
Developing Project Proposals – A Checklist	20
> Respect	
> Aboriginal Control	
> Communication, Consultation and Consent	
> Interpretation, Integrity and Authenticity	
> Secrecy and Confidentiality	
> Attribution	
> Recognition and Protection	
> Proper Returns	
> Continuing Cultures	
Protocols in Practice	25
Aboriginal Community-Based Organisations	29
Other Contacts	32
National Agencies	34
References	36
Cultures CD	Inside back cover

introduction

Australian governments, both State and Federal, have developed protocol guides to assist in the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural arts and to provide guidance for interacting with Aboriginal artists in the use and marketing of Aboriginal arts and culture. These guides continue the work of individuals and organisations committed to providing directions for appropriate ways to work with Aboriginal artists and their communities.

The Australia Council for the Arts has produced a series of protocol guides for producing Indigenous Australian arts. These are essential reading. They are published in five booklets, each addressing specific artforms: visual arts, media arts, music, performing arts and writing.

The Australia Council guides provide comprehensive sections on protocol issues for each of the art form areas that apply equally in Tasmania, including community consultation, purchasing or exhibiting Aboriginal works of art, managing arts events and festivals, publishing and recording, contacting Aboriginal artists, and protocols concerning deceased artists and display of art works, governance, management and copyright. Rather than repeat this information in the Tasmanian guide, these sections in the five *Cultures* guides are recommended reading. The guides can also be found on the Australia Council's website at www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_arts

Respecting Cultures provides a specifically Tasmanian perspective as a companion text to *Cultures – Protocols for Producing Indigenous Arts*. Together, these publications promote cultural harmony and goodwill through best practice methods of interaction and negotiation.

Respecting Cultures is also an important tool in managing the ethical use of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and arts. It is designed not only to protect Aboriginal cultural expressions¹ created by Tasmanian Aborigines, but also to assist people who support and practise

integrity in arts and culture, including heritage and history. It can be used to foster relationships in sharing Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural expressions within a set of expectations and/or obligations, and to enhance these relationships within the arts industry.

Respecting Cultures was first published in 2004, as an outcome from the *Tasmanian Talkabout: Indigenous Protocols, Partnerships and Promotion* conference held at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery at Inveresk in Launceston in April 2002. The conference involved many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practising artists and cultural activists seeking to protect their community rights in cultural arts programs. Other contributors to the *Tasmanian Talkabout* conference and its outcomes included professionals from around Australia sharing their invaluable skills and experience in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts industry. Leading Indigenous professionals in the fields of the arts, heritage and law discussed the importance of protocols and their implications for artists and the wider community. More information on this forum and presentations can be found on Arts Tasmania's website at www.arts.tas.gov.au.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal community is developing its involvement in the arts industry, and is actively involved in the protection of its cultural art forms. This publication was a collaborative project between Arts Tasmania, the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee of Arts Tasmania and the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and was produced in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council.

This update in 2009 is an interim revision. It is intended that Arts Tasmania and the Tasmanian Aboriginal community will work towards a fully revised, new edition in the near future.

¹ Cultural expressions involve all art forms, including media and technology, performing art and craft, and literature.

Aboriginality

The Tasmanian Government believes that self-determination is an important element to reconciliation and therefore considers that Aboriginality should be determined by the Aboriginal people. The Tasmanian Government provides a range of programs and services for the social, cultural and economic advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. A policy has been developed to provide consistency in the verification of a person's eligibility to access Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander specific programs and services delivered by the Tasmanian Government. The policy applies to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific programs and services provided by the Tasmanian Government. It also applies to eligibility for membership/representation on Tasmanian Government committees/boards/groups where the person is required to be an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander.

Eligibility for Tasmanian Government programs and services is based on the three-tiered criteria used by the Australia and Tasmanian Governments and as defined by Federal and Supreme Court decisions. The criteria for eligibility requires that an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander:

- > is of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- > identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and
- > is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives or has lived.

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA) in the Department of Premier and Cabinet is responsible for assessing eligibility under the Policy. A copy of the Policy can be downloaded at www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cdd/oa/eligibility_policy

For more information please contact:
 Office of Aboriginal Affairs
 Phone: 03 6232 7082 Fax: 03 6233 4506
 Email: oa@dpc.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Aboriginal rock carving at Preminghana (detail)

Reproduced courtesy of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart

context

The culture of Tasmanian Aborigines is dynamic. It has adapted and survived over 35,000 years. Events such as the flooding of the Bastian plain (land bridge) at the end of the last Ice Age isolated Tasmania for 12,000 years. The affect of this major climatic event was not only geographic; it resulted in social and cultural isolation. Thus emerged a people with unique social and cultural practices, traditions and beliefs. Generations of families developed a special balance in living with the land, as creative and explorative as any other people in developing tools and crafts for daily use.

Knowledge was a community tool and their lifestyle and heritage was maintained through stories and cultural records such as hand-stencils and rock-carvings. Although the full meaning of these stories and visual records may be lost forever, they symbolise Tasmanian Aboriginal spirituality, and reflect a history over thousands of years. Their true value is in the pride and respect they generate within the Aboriginal community today.

Tasmanian Aboriginal culture has survived over centuries of conflict and colonisation, including the misrepresentation and misinformation of history, which remains strong within the memory of Tasmanian Aborigines today.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal community does not separate culture, heritage and arts into disconnected categories; rather, it regards them as integral components of a whole. Tasmanian Aboriginal heritage is the responsibility of a number of Aboriginal community-based organisations, with statewide responsibility falling to two of these organisations – the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. There are a number of Aboriginal community-based organisations that have responsibility for their own geographical regions, at times respectively, and at other times jointly. A list of Aboriginal community-based organisations is on page 29.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (TALSC) has a specific role and responsibility to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage, including managing culturally significant cave sites and places of spiritual and ceremonial significance. One of the roles that TALSC undertakes is considering applications to access Aboriginal heritage, including utilisation of heritage sites, stories about Tasmanian Aborigines, and the use of texts, images, symbols and representations of Aboriginal culture, heritage and history.

Today the Tasmanian Aboriginal community carries within it memories of its Aboriginal ancestors, who lived with the land and harvested the land and sea's rich resources.

Grass Fish trap, c1994
Audrey Frost
Reproduced courtesy of the
Tasmanian Museum and
Art Gallery, Hobart



survival of cultural traditions

Today's artistic practices reflect the Tasmanian Aboriginal community's cultural pursuits and strengthen traditional culture, expression and identity. This in turn is an important development for all Tasmanians, and for industries such as the arts and tourism.

Tasmanian Aboriginal men and women continue to maintain cultural traditions through their arts by handing down their knowledge to younger generations.

Shell Necklace Making

One of the major cultural art forms continually practised is shell necklace making, a delicate but painstakingly laborious traditional custom that is recognised nationally and internationally. Tasmanian Aboriginal women have been collecting *Maireener* shells in a sustainable way for thousands of years for stringing into necklaces and bracelets. These cultural arts continue to be practised by Aboriginal women whose families survived on the Furneaux Islands, handed down by elder women to maintain an important link with traditional lifestyle.

Late in the nineteenth century a number of women aimed to keep this part of their traditional culture alive in order to allow their daughters and grand-daughters to participate in their cultural heritage. Today, there are only a few Tasmanian Aboriginal women who maintain this art, but they continue to hand down their knowledge and skills to younger women in their community. However, during the past ten years or so the shells have become more difficult to find. Also, all of the current shell necklace makers now live away from the Bass Strait islands, requiring them to return to the island beaches, usually during the low spring tides, to collect enough shells, thus ensuring that the art of necklace making continues.

Shell necklace making,

June 2003

Reproduced courtesy of the
National Museum of Australia,
Canberra

Photographer: George Serras



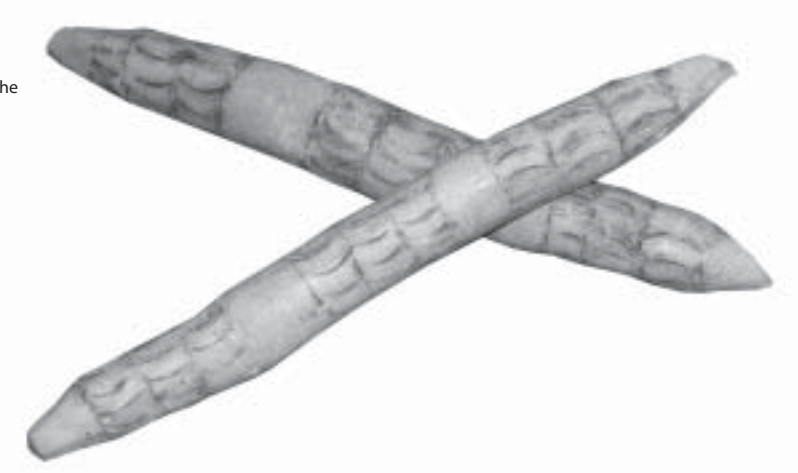
Basket Weaving

Baskets had many uses, including carrying food, women's and men's tools, shells, ochre, and eating utensils. Tasmanian Aborigines used various basket-type carriers made from plant materials, kelp, or animal skin. The kelp baskets or carriers were used mainly to carry water and as drinking vessels. Plants were carefully selected to produce strong, thin, narrow strips of fibre of suitable length for basket making. Several different species of plant were used, including white flag iris, blue flax lily, rush and sag, some of which are still used by contemporary basket makers, and sometimes shells are added for ornamental expression. ²

² West, A., *Tasmanian Basketry*
Project Literature Survey, 1996

Clap sticks with poker
work design

Reproduced courtesy of the
Tasmanian Museum and
Art Gallery, Hobart



Wood Crafts

Tasmanian Aboriginal men continue to make spears and waddies from native hardwoods, using skills handed down from their fathers and uncles. Traditional clapsticks are still made and coloured with ochre by both men and women. Other crafts using both hardwoods and softwoods are more often seen in galleries and other sales outlets and are often displayed and sold at the Putalina (Oyster Cove) Festival³ and other Aboriginal community events.

Ochre

Ochre is an important spiritual and cultural resource to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. Traditionally, Aboriginal women had the exclusive role of obtaining ochre. Today, many Tasmanian Aboriginal men continue to respect the traditional cultural custom by obtaining ochre from the women only.

Tasmanian ochre ranges in colour from white through yellow to red. It has many uses, including ceremonial body marking, colouring wood craft products, tie-dyeing and various other uses in crafts and arts. Tasmanian Aborigines consider ochre to be a special cultural resource.

³ Putalina (Oyster Cove) Festival, held each year, marks Aboriginal reoccupation of the place on 16 January 1984.

cultural retrieval

Dance and Song

Dance is traditional in Tasmanian Aboriginal society, much of which was used to maintain knowledge through story-telling and for ceremonial purposes. The various styles of dancing express specific narratives in very different landscapes and constitute a rich source of inspiration and meaning.

Today's Aboriginal community has seen a revival and development of contemporary dance. In the early 1980s, four young Tasmanian Aboriginal women established the Weilangta Dancers, introducing new dances both as a cultural expression and as a political statement. Their idea was to reaffirm Tasmanian Aboriginal dance as a living culture, and to challenge the broader community view that Tasmanian Aborigines were extinct, or at the least *only descendents*, with no culture at all.⁴

⁴ Spotswood, J., interview, Cape Barren Island, February 2003.

Language

Much Tasmanian Aboriginal language has been lost through colonisation, leaving few words being used by members of today's Aboriginal community. Following consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (TALSC), many public sites have been renamed with Aboriginal place names, mainly sourced through Plomley's Aboriginal Word List. Although these words are now in general usage for these locations, permission needs to be sought when using these names in another context, eg exhibitions, book titles or in song.

The Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board has endorsed the recommendation of the Arts Tasmania Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee in relation to using Aboriginal language as follows:

- > palawa kani words must only be used after gaining permission from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre; and
- > Aboriginal words in the public domain, including in archival records or historical publications must be submitted to the Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee for consideration and support.

This requirement relates to the use of palawa kani words in the papers and publications of the Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board, its Panels and Committees – including, but not limited to, the Arts Grants and Loans Handbook, minutes, advertisements and other promotional material.

contemporary arts

Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts are a recognised driving force in the surge of international interest in Australia's arts and culture. The arts market is a place of negotiation and agreement that requires trust and respect. Protocols in this guide are as relevant to using contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal arts as much as any other aspect of Aboriginal culture.

Tasmanian Aborigines insist that their culture be recognised as an evolving one, refuting any suggestions of a static Aboriginality based on traditional culture. Contemporary art formats and materials have brought forth new avenues of creative art expression.



Spectre, 2001
Judith Rose-Thomas
Reproduced courtesy of the
Aboriginal & Torres Strait
Islander Arts Board of the
Australia Council for the Arts
Photographer: Anita Heiss

Surviving cultural concepts mixed with modern practices are providing new and exciting cultural expressions, a base for creative ideas and a future shaped by traditions and cultural aspirations. This creative essence provides the Tasmanian Aboriginal people with a sustainable basis for developing socioeconomic and political expression within their self-determined framework.

Art forms created by Aboriginal people in Tasmania today are varied and imaginative in scope and material. Some Aboriginal artists living in Tasmania come from or have ancestral roots in other Australian States and Territories. These artists are welcomed, as they bring their own culture, techniques and stories to their practices in Tasmania. However, the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and its organisations do not represent the use of the cultural expressions of these artists. Nor is it appropriate for other Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people from other States and Territories to adopt Tasmanian Aboriginal art and culture as their own, or to present, represent or interpret Tasmanian Aboriginal art and culture to others.

The Australia Council's protocol guides include lists of contacts in other States and Territories.

Tasmanian Aborigines are sometimes encouraged by their families to incorporate references to the 'old people', special places and family stories into their art work. Thus, some art may reflect childhood experiences, personal spirituality and responses to islands and ancestors.

An important development within the arts in recent years has been the supportive recognition and invitation of culturally-appropriate opportunities for Tasmanian Aboriginal artists, both within and outside this island state, by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.



guiding principles

The increasing interest in Tasmanian Aboriginal culture reinforces the importance of appropriate representation in the media, arts and education. With the growing number of individuals and organisations seeking to include aspects of Aboriginal culture in their projects and programs, published protocols are valuable public guidelines for collaboration and cooperation, ensuring an awareness of appropriate ways to approach the development of activities and interaction with Aboriginal artists and organisations. Protocols may need to be flexible, to reflect the diversity of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and the differing art forms; however, an understanding of the value systems and cultural beliefs of Tasmanian Aborigines is essential in developing projects and programs involving their arts, culture and heritage.

Commissioners of protocol guides and their researchers, writers and editors around Australia acknowledge the importance of widespread sharing of information to create greater cultural awareness. An informed approach through consultation makes for smoother transactions and negotiations and most importantly, enhances benefits for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists by creating a more knowledgeable and fairer environment in which to work.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal community is open to seeking involvement in arts and culture-related projects where their artists can showcase their creative expressions and the awareness of their culture can be extended. *Tasmanian Aborigines expect endorsement of their right to have their culture respected, a right to manage it, and a right to benefit from it, both personally and for their community.*

⁵ *Special Places* is the term used by Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage Officers and Aboriginal community members, meaning significant physical cultural heritage. The term *significant site* is not widely accepted in the Tasmanian Aboriginal community because it implies that cultural heritage places have hierarchical status.

All artists expect integrity in the arts industry, including a respect for differences of cultural expression. *The Tasmanian Aboriginal community has expectations concerning use of its culture, heritage and history. Essential to the proposed use of Tasmanian Aboriginal intellectual property or the involvement of the Aboriginal community is the full disclosure of prospective project details by the intending applicants.*

People should be mindful that Aboriginal heritage and culture involves concepts of spiritual and cultural connections with the land and sea. This includes recognition of Aboriginal *Special Places*⁵, or materials that are both the physical and intellectual property of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal community has a spiritual connection to *Special Places* in the Aboriginal landscape, some of which are known only to Aboriginal community members. These *Special Places* are traditional places; they belong as a heritage to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. *Therefore it is important for everyone, particularly those developing projects, to understand and acknowledge that non-Aborigines may not have access to certain knowledge and culture.*

Aboriginal heritage, culture and history needs protection with firm moral integrity and ethical practice by non-Aboriginal arts practitioners and industry entrepreneurs. Copyright, intellectual property rights legislation, or some other legal instrument, will always lag behind community need.

The stakeholders who benefit from the proper use of protocols are primarily artists, but also the wider Indigenous arts community. As an example, the whole visual arts/craft community benefits from a cohesive approach and broadly accepted ways of transacting, which flow on into non-Indigenous visual arts communities as well.

The whole community then benefits from the input of a healthier, vigorous, more harmonious arts sector.⁶

Respect of Aboriginal people's cultural inheritance and adherence to ongoing self-monitoring of cultural responsibility by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are essential to the dynamic continuation of Aboriginal culture and respect between cultures.

6 Doreen Mellor, Tasmanian
Talkabout, Launceston 2002.

Important points to note

- > It is important to note that the use of stereotyped images of Aborigines and the portrayal of Tasmanian Aborigines as being extinct is offensive to Aboriginal people today.
- > Essential to the proposed use of Tasmanian Aboriginal intellectual property or the involvement of the Aboriginal community, is the full disclosure of prospective project details by the intending applicants.
- > Non-Aboriginal arts expression using Tasmanian Aboriginal culture, heritage and/or history without firstly addressing appropriate protocol process guidelines and principles is simply unacceptable.
- > Equally, permission needs to be obtained by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists for rights to use cultural expressions owned by other communities, for example dot painting.
- > Where land is to be used for events involving the arts, there should be Aboriginal community approval and agreement that acknowledges environmental and cultural concerns.
- > There may be requirements for permits to be sought by Aboriginal community members under the *Living Marine Resources Act 1999* and the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* to undertake some cultural activities. For information, please contact the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.
- > Where any proposal involving Aboriginal arts and culture is aimed at reconciliation outcomes, the proposal should clearly state the benefits to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.
- > The teaching of the traditional making of art forms requires approval from authorised Aboriginal community representatives, as does the use of Aboriginal history or writings.

- > Rock carvings and rock art belong to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and are protected under the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. Permission for use needs to be sought from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council.
All Aboriginal artefacts and sites are protected under the provisions of the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. Prior to undertaking any activity that may impact on Aboriginal heritage the provisions of the Act must be checked and compliance ensured. A person who contravenes, or fails to comply with, any of the provisions of the relevant section of the Act is guilty of an offence and is liable to a fine. Please contact Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania at Aboriginal.heritage.tas.gov.au or phone 03 6233 6613 for information.
- > Non-Aboriginal access is not usually allowed to the known traditional ochre sites, established on ancestral walking tracks around Tasmania. For further advice on ochre, contact the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council.
- > Use of historical records of Tasmanian Aboriginal language without approval is considered a breach of protocol by the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal community expects that protocols need to acknowledge Aboriginal control of language as a primary principle.⁷
- > If the use of Aboriginal language is being considered by non-Aborigines, contact the Office of Aboriginal Affairs for advice, who will refer you on to the appropriate Aboriginal organisation.
- > Stereotyping of Aborigines is inappropriate in today's society, and proposals involving Aboriginal arts and culture should ensure that they are based on informed advice.
- > On occasions, secret sacred content may be used inadvertently by artists. Once this becomes known, the works should not be displayed in public.
- > Cultural sensitivities with regard to deceased artists should be observed.
- > The Tasmanian Arts Advisory Board has strongly committed its desire to uphold the principles and protocols contained in this document. The Board has agreed a policy position whereby it will take advice from the Arts Tasmania Aboriginal Arts Advisory Committee on any breaches of protocol reported and will undertake appropriate action to address these.

7 Sculthorpe, H., Tasmanian
Aboriginal Centre letter, 29
January 2002.

developing project proposals – a checklist

The key to approaching the application of appropriate protocols is respect. Consider how this is established in a project or proposal. Finding the correct way for a project to be achieved with respect for the people being represented or involved as artists will lead towards a better approach to understanding the cultural sensitivities within the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

The Australia Council's *Cultures* protocols guides need to be referenced for detailed information on the application of the following principles involving specific art forms. Important references to marketing opportunities are also included, with authenticity and integrity of works being a priority.

Respect

Welcome to Country

As a sign of respect, an Aboriginal person can be invited to give a 'Welcome to Country' at significant events. Please take into consideration that availability may be limited, and that time and transport arrangements may be a major consideration. It may be appropriate to offer a fee, and certainly any out-of-pocket expenses should be met.

Acknowledgment of Country

Not all events and activities require the presentation of a formal 'Welcome to Country' by an Aboriginal person. The text below has been provided as a guide for people who wish to acknowledge the original custodians of the land at the start of their events and does not require an Aboriginal person to be present.

When formal presentations of projects involving Aboriginal culture and heritage, such as performances, exhibitions, launches etc. are being undertaken, it is considered a mark of respect to preface the event with a statement in line with the following:

'I (we) would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community as the traditional and original owners of this land and continued custodians.'

or

'I (we) acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal community as the traditional people of this island State, and its surrounding islands.'

Touring events and/or visitors should, where possible, and/or appropriate, make early contact with an appropriate Aboriginal community-based organisation to determine a formal 'Welcome to Country'. The Aboriginal community-based organisation may give advice as to whether a formal welcome should be undertaken, and by whom.

Aboriginal Control

Does your nominated Aboriginal community member have the authority to speak for, or on behalf of, the project proposal?

Consultation needs to occur prior to the development of projects with Aboriginal content. Projects involving Aboriginal cultural expression must be negotiated with the owner(s) or Aboriginal community-based organisations, as appropriate. It is important to locate the most relevant Aboriginal community-based organisation. The organisation should be formally recognised by other established Aboriginal community-based organisations. A list of these established organisations is appended. Relevant government agencies able to provide assistance and advice to project developers are also included in the appended list.

Communication, Consultation and Consent

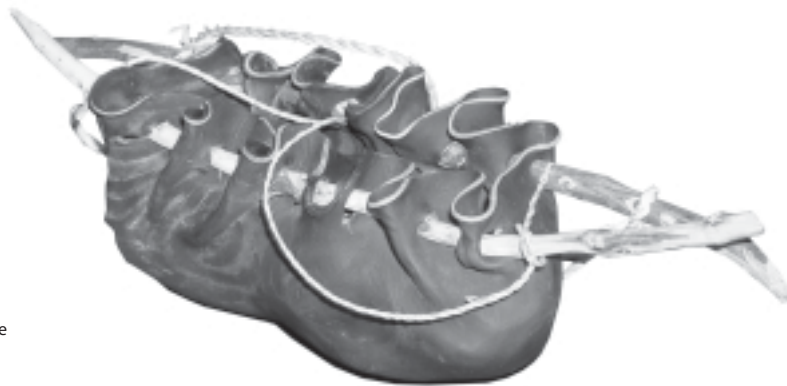
Have you received written agreement for the project?

Sufficient time should be allocated for consultation and responses. Permission needs to be obtained prior to use of stories, images or creations that might infringe on artists' and communities' ownership or copyright. An agreement outlining the conditions of consent must be obtained from the owner(s), custodians or Aboriginal community-based organisations for projects to be initially considered and progressed.

Interpretation, Integrity and Authenticity

Does the Aboriginal community or artist(s) have a clear understanding of the project, including how Aboriginal culture will be represented?

It is recommended that agreements with Tasmanian Aborigines include a record of consultations with Aboriginal community members and/or their representatives, including endorsement that the content is factual and authentic, and evidence that images and language do not contain sacred material or stereotyped concepts or interpretations.



Kelp, sticks and grass-twine water carrier, c1994
Lola Greeno
Reproduced courtesy of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart

Secrecy and Confidentiality

Have you acted in good faith and respected the privacy of Aborigines and community groups involved?

Proposals need to clearly demonstrate that the project will not result in any form of damage to Aboriginal cultural integrity.

Attribution

Has consultation been made in good faith to ensure that the Aboriginal cultural material and/or participants in the project will be properly credited during the project's development and implementation?

Ownership of Aboriginal art works and cultural material must be acknowledged and be evident in project promotional plans. Project proposals involving Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage in the possession of non-Aborigines need to be developed in consultation and must be approved for use by an approved Tasmanian Aboriginal community-based organisation.

Recognition and Protection

Does your project ensure that Tasmanian Aboriginal artists and the community are recognised for their involvement and ownership?

Project proposals need to specify that intellectual property rights will remain the property of the Aborigine(s) who provide it and specify appropriate ownership rights. Written agreements, releases and contracts should be obtained, with examples included in proposals.

Proper Returns

Have you considered ways in which the Tasmanian Aboriginal community can benefit from the use of their material?

Issues of copyright, royalties and fees need to be discussed from the beginning of the project, including informing the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal artists of the potential for commercial returns.

Continuing Cultures

Does your project safeguard Tasmanian Aboriginal sensitive issues?

An Aboriginal perspective should be sought on all issues surrounding the project, and outlined in the proposal. Projects must acknowledge the owner(s) of the cultural heritage and/or expression and satisfy the Tasmanian Aboriginal community on any concerns about the project. These may include: the aims and outcomes; the methodology – the way it will be done; how the results are to be interpreted – the finished/end result; and how it will benefit the Aboriginal community. The community may also have concerns about the use of images, painting, photography, language and written history.

For Aborigines it also is important that there is access to artworks in public collections by artists, their relatives, or members of their community who may have a cultural link to acquired works, and that they feel their presence is welcomed.

Coiled natural fibres basket with white toothies and black crow shells, 1994

Muriel Maynard

Collection of the National Maritime Museum of Australia, Sydney

Photographer:

Ricky Maynard



protocols in practice

Strings Across Time

Tasmanian Aboriginal Shell Necklaces Gallery

Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery at Inveresk, Launceston

The Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery was presented with a unique opportunity to establish a clear presence for Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and acknowledge Tasmania's Aboriginal community with the redevelopment of the Inveresk site in Launceston. The Museum's nationally significant collection of Tasmanian Aboriginal shell necklaces is now held in a dedicated gallery. The exhibition acknowledges the contribution, both past and present, that Tasmanian Aboriginal women have made to the continuation and development of their cultural traditions and practices.

The Curator of Decorative Arts and Design, Glenda King, presented and discussed an initial proposal for consultation with the Aboriginal Elders Council of Tasmania, including a model of the potential gallery space and some exhibition approaches. The Elders Council agreed to the proposal and gave their full support.

The exhibition was developed through a team approach between museum staff and Aboriginal representatives through a series of workshops with necklace makers and Elders to view the collection and select the necklaces for the exhibition. Members of the Aboriginal Elders Council of Tasmania formed the key reference group, supported by members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation for Women's Arts and Crafts (TACWAC), community members and shell necklace makers. Members of the reference group worked closely with museum staff on selection, display and interpretation. The draft text was reviewed and revised by the Aboriginal Elders Council to ensure accuracy.

Feedback on the project has been positive from both the community and the necklace makers. It has raised the profile both nationally and internationally of this important facet of Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural practice. *Strings Across Time* has been widely covered by the media and attracts much favourable comment from museum visitors.

Watercraft of Tasmanian Aborigines

A research project carried out by the Maritime Museum of Tasmania

Preliminary research on Tasmanian Aboriginal canoes was undertaken as background information for Aboriginal craftspeople to construct a replica canoe.

Before commencing the project, several meetings were held between Aboriginal representatives from Arts Tasmania, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. Letters outlining the project were then sent to Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations, Aboriginal representatives of government organisations and individuals. In response, letters of support were received from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, the South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and the Cape Barren Island Aboriginal Association.

The researcher examined many original sources and produced a detailed report, which includes an annotated list of books and archival material referring to Tasmanian Aborigines, a breakdown of information on specific details of canoe construction, all known illustrations, descriptions of all known models, and a bibliography.

This preliminary research can now be used for the proposed reconstruction of a full-sized Aboriginal canoe.

Tasmanian Aboriginal artists and performances today

Nikki Smith is a young Tasmanian Aboriginal woman trained in classical and contemporary dance. In 1997, her eagerness to learn new styles and gain more knowledge of her own culture led her to study Aboriginal dance at NAISDA, the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association, in Sydney. She has since collaborated with Leah Brown, another young Aboriginal woman, producing exciting contemporary dance in the Tasmanian Aboriginal context.

The first event of Ten Days on the Island 2001 was a Welcome to Country and performances by Tasmanian Aboriginal group the Island Coes and a group of young dancers including Nikki Smith and Leah Brown. The festival employed an Aboriginal coordinator,

Jim Everett, to work with the local community on event coordination and protocols for the opening event. This event laid the foundations for further collaborations with the Aboriginal community towards the 2003 festival.

For 2003 the festival staged the Welcome event in the north of the State. Nikki and Leah were commissioned to develop a dance work, 'Remembering the Echoes', for performance. This work incorporated Elders from the community into the event, particularly those involved with the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery's Fibre Culture exhibition, and other young dancers, Nathan Maynard, Sinsa Mansell and Danny Gardner.

Leah Brown (top) and Nikki Smith, *Yula Kuwuara Paya Tasmanian Talkabout* performance, April 2002
 Reproduced courtesy of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council for the Arts
 Photographer: Anita Heiss



Dorothy Murray, who gave the Welcome to Country, also performed with the Island Coes as part of a series of musical events and participated in a number of events during the 2003 festival, including 'Flinders Island Dreaming' and 'Choral Island', working with younger members of the Aboriginal community.

Traditional Custodians of the Didjeridu

The didjeridu belongs to a specific Aboriginal cultural bloc from the Top End of Australia and marks the cultural identity of these peoples. It is most important for both non-Aboriginal people and Aborigines who are not traditional owners, to acknowledge the origins and people who are the traditional owners and custodians of the didjeridu. It is recommended that non-traditional players of the didjeridu acknowledge the traditional custodians of the didjeridu, explain its use as not representational of traditional playing, explain that the didjeridu's traditional use is always an accompanying music to traditional songmen and women, and express respect for being allowed to use the instrument in a non-traditional way.⁸

'I have seen non-Aboriginal people blowing, and the way they play there's no tune, no song and no meaning. The didjeridu is ours, from here, and it does not belong to Aboriginal people from the south or non-Aboriginal people who have seen us and tried to copy us. We use the didjeridu in celebrations such as circumcision ceremonies, for dancing and for love songs. The didjeridu placed itself here for us. Non-Aboriginal people have also tried to take hold of the didjeridu but they just don't seem to be able to understand it. Maybe if they listen properly to us singing then they might understand.'

Tom Djelkwarrngi Wood, translated from the *Kuninjku* language.

⁸ Wood, Djelkwarrngi, *Kaltja Now - Indigenous Arts* Australia, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2001.



aboriginal community-based organisations

List of Aboriginal Organisations in Tasmania involved in arts activities

Aboriginal Elders Council of Tasmania

163 St John Street Launceston 7250
 Telephone: (03) 6334 3138
 Facsimile: (03) 6334 3922
 E-mail: taselder@intas.net.au

Cape Barren Island Aboriginal Association

1 The Esplanade Cape Barren Island 7257
 Telephone: (03) 6359 3533
 Facsimile: (03) 6359 3596
 E-mail: cbiab@bigpond.com.au

Flinders Island Aboriginal Association Inc

West Street Lady Barron 7255
 PO Box 20 Whitemark 7255
 Telephone: (03) 6359 3532
 Facsimile: (03) 6359 3622
 E-mail: Fiaai@bigpond.com.au

Mersey Leven Aboriginal Corporation

8A Stephen Street East Devonport 7310
 PO Box 31E East Devonport 7310
 Telephone: (03) 6427 9037
 Facsimile: (03) 6427 8679
 E-mail: merseyleven@westnet.com.au
 Website: www.merseylevenaboriginal.com.au

Palawa Aboriginal Corporation

280 Main Road Glenorchy 7010
PO Box 723 Glenorchy 7010
Telephone: (03) 62472 2499
E-mail: pa3186@bigpond.com

South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation

19 Mary Street Cygnet 7112
Telephone: (03) 6295 0004
Facsimile: (03) 6295 0535
E-mail: faye@setac.org.au

Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation for Women's Art & Craft

163 St John Street Launceston 7250
Telephone: (03) 6334 9378
Facsimile: (03) 6334 1399
E-mail: ykopper@bigpond.com

Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Association

C/- Hobart College
GPO Box 1188 Hobart 7001
Telephone: (03) 6224 8389
Facsimile: (03) 6224 8635
E-mail: rosemary.brown@education.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council

4 Lefroy Street North Hobart 7000
PO Box 386 North Hobart 7002
Telephone: (03) 6231 0288
Facsimile: (03) 6231 0298
E-mail: reception@talsc.net.au

Woman's Karadi Aboriginal Corporation

4 Rothesay Circle Goodwood 7010
PO Box 523 Glenorchy 7010
Telephone: (03) 6272 3511
Facsimile: (03) 6272 3588
Website: www.karadi.org.au



other contacts

Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania

182 Charles Street Launceston 7250
PO Box 1086 Launceston 7250
Telephone: (03) 6331 2833
Facsimile: (03) 6331 2834
E-mail alct@intas.net.au

Arts Tasmania

146 Elizabeth Street Hobart 7000
Telephone: (03) 6233 7308
Facsimile: (03) 6233 8424
E-mail: arts.tasmania@arts.tas.gov.au
Website: www.arts.tas.gov.au

Office of Aboriginal Affairs

GPO Box 1156 Hobart 7001
Telephone: (03) 6232 7082
Facsimile: (03) 6233 4506
E-mail: oa@dpc.tas.gov.au
Website: www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cdd/oa

Riawunna (Hobart) – University of Tasmania

Private Bag 6 Hobart 7001
Telephone: (03) 6226 2772
Facsimile: (03) 6226 2575
E-mail: riawunna.admin@utas.edu.au
Website: www.utas.edu.au/riawunna

Riawunna (Launceston) – University of Tasmania

Locked Bag 1344 Launceston 7250
Telephone: (03) 6324 3491
Facsimile: (03) 6324 3483
E-mail: riawunna.admin@utas.edu.au
Website: www.utas.edu.au/riawunna



national agencies

Arts Law Centre of Australia

The Gunnery, 43-51 Cowper Wharf Road
Woolloomooloo NSW 2011
Telephone: (02) 9356 2566
Facsimile: (02) 9358 6475
E-mail: artslaw@artslaw.com.au
Website: www.artslaw.com.au

Australian Copyright Council

PO Box 1986 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Telephone: (02) 8815 9777
Facsimile: (02) 8815 9799
E-mail: info@copyright.org.au
Website: www.copyright.org.au

Australia Council for the Arts

PO Box 788 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Telephone: (02) 9215 9000
Facsimile: (02) 9215 9111
E-mail: mail@australiacouncil.gov.au
Website: www.australiacouncil.gov.au

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

GPO Box 553 Canberra ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6246 1111
Facsimile: (02) 6261 4285
Website: www.aiatsis.gov.au

Indigenous Coordination Centre

Lv 3/21 Kirksway Place Battery Point 7004
GPO Box 9820 Hobart 7001
Telephone: (03) 6211 9316 or 1800 079 098
Facsimile: (03) 6211 9399
Website: www.fahcsia.gov.au



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Julia Clark,
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