NT Arts Strategy 2034 – Survey and Consultation Report

Developing an arts strategy for the Northern Territory





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1. Executive Summary

The Northern Territory Government, through Arts NT, is developing an arts strategy (the Strategy) for the Northern Territory (NT). The Strategy aims to inform arts sector and government priorities and will guide government investment into the arts over the next 10 years.

Informed by the National Cultural Policy *Revive*, the Strategy seeks to lay the foundations for the NT arts sector to grow its capacity and value, increase community access and participation, foster artistic excellence and leadership, and celebrate the Territory's First Nations arts and culture.

Acknowledging that arts, culture and creative industries are interwoven and mutually essential to the fabric of a vibrant and healthy society, the Strategy will offer a focused approach to investment in the arts, resourced from the ground up. The Strategy supports the principles of the National Cultural Policy, and will be flexible to respond to future opportunities and strategies that strengthen, value and elevate NT arts and culture.

Over the next 10 years, the Strategy seeks to empower creative individuals and grow the Territory's creative workforce, contributing to a thriving and connected community enriched by arts and culture.

This report analyses the responses and feedback and makes recommendations responding to the needs and initiatives identified through the survey and broader consultation. Identifying the goals of the strategy and the priority actions for investment will ensure a roadmap to enable and grow a sustainble and thriving arts and cultural community, vital to the social, cultural and economic future of the Territory.

2. Background

The NT Government values the important role the arts play in shaping the Territory's culture, enriching lives and contributing to economic growth. The NT Government respectfully acknowledges the First Nation's people of this country and recognises their continuing connections to their lands, water and communities, and as fundamental to the NT's identity.

According to the 2021 Australian Census¹ s over 2,800 Northern Territorians are employed in the cultural and creative industries in the NT and 53 Aboriginal-owned arts and culture centres and artists groups actively support more than 8,000 Aboriginal artists and arts workers².

The consultation comprised a *Have Your Say* survey supported by a discussion paper and opportunities online and in person to provide feedback and discuss what is most important for creatives working in the arts and culture sector and/or other industries, and individuals with an interest in the arts.

The Have Your Say survey and consultation to develop the NT Arts Strategy was conducted across all regions of the NT to gain an understanding of the current status and development needs of the Territory arts sector.

Over 300 people contributed to the Strategy's development, which included face-to-face and online consultations with over 230 artists, arts organisations, and the broader community with interest in the arts, in addition to 70 written submissions being received.

The <u>Discussion Paper</u> outlined the Government's commitment to fostering a vibrant and sustainable arts sector in the NT. It encouraged artists, stakeholders, and the community to enter into a dialogue about the future of the arts in our region. It proposed a draft vision and seven pillars, which helped shape discussions and frame the feedback received.

The draft vision proposed for the Strategy was to embrace the power of the arts to foster creativity, share our Territory stories.

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¹ Creative Trident UR Employment Counts Story, Australian Bureau of Statisic https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/ml.mccutcheon. Accessed online 1/5/2024.

² NT Arts and Culture Infrastructure Survey 2023 – Evaluation Report, Northern Territory Government. Accessed online 1/5/2024.

The seven suggested key pillars of the NT Arts Strategy were:

- 1. First Nations led First Nations leading First Nations arts initiatives
- 2. Inclusive expression Accessibility and inclusivity
- 3. Empowered tomorrow Sustainability and growth
- 4. Connected collaboration Community engagement, cultural exchange and collaboration
- 5. Elevated value Identity and building value
- 6. Protected creativity New technology and innovation
- 7. Shaping the arts Advocacy and policy.

3. Consultation Outcomes

The consultation launched on 23 January 2024. Artists, arts organisations, and the broader community with an interest in the arts were invited to provide feedback to the Discussion Paper through the NT Government *Have Your Say* website, directly to Arts NT via email, face-to-face and online meetings or through targeted focus groups with Arts NT.

In addition to targeted consultations, the Strategy is informed by the current National Cultural Policy <u>Revive</u> and relevant NT Government strategies, frameworks and plans including the Northern Territory Social Outcomes Framework, Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities' Strategic Plan 2021-25, 10-Year Generational Strategy for Children and Families in the NT 2023 - 2033, Education Engagement Strategy 2022-2031, the NT Youth Strategy 2023–2033 and the NT Disability Strategy 2022-2032, including the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Consultation closed 10 March 2024 and Arts NT engaged with:

- 111 people in 26 public face-face, online or targeted focus groups sessions
- 120 people via the Meeting of Professionals (MAP) conference in November 2023.

Arts NT received a total of 70 written submissions including:

- 54 survey submissions via Have Your Say, including:
- 16 written submissions directly emailed to Arts NT

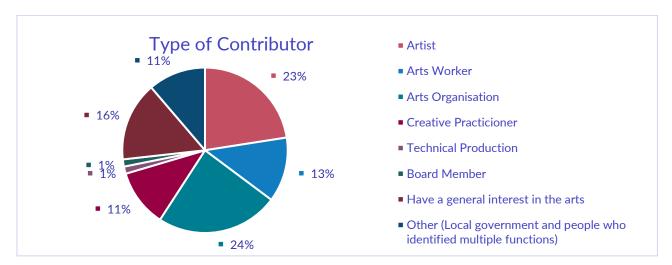
Key themes resulting from the consultation include:

- Ensure cultural safety for First Nations people and that First Nations initiatives are genuinely 'culture first' and First Nations-led
- Access to funding, with simplified grants processes, to acknowledge increased costs of operating and living
- Improve and increase access to affordable arts infrastructure and establishment of arts hubs
- Foster youth arts and embed arts into school education
- Support safe and healthy employment for artists, arts workers and creatives with fair remuneration
- Capture and communicate the value of the arts
- Develop an investment strategy for the arts including pathways to philanthropy and sponsorship
- Recognise the evolution of art forms with new arts practices emerging.

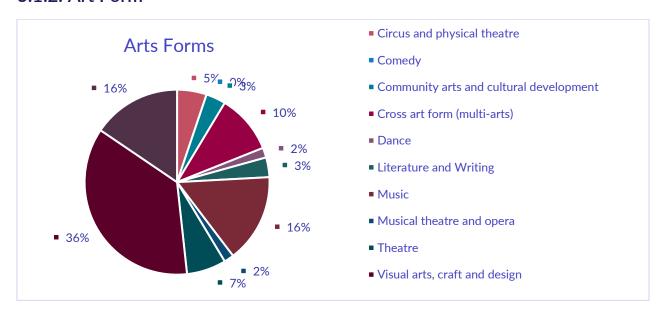
3.1. Submissions by type of respondent

The below graphs identify the proportion of respondents by type. This helps us to understand the demographics of respondents and provides insight into who was participating in the consultation. Statistics include those that engaged via *Have Your Say* and written submissions. Demographics of in person consultation attendees were not collected.

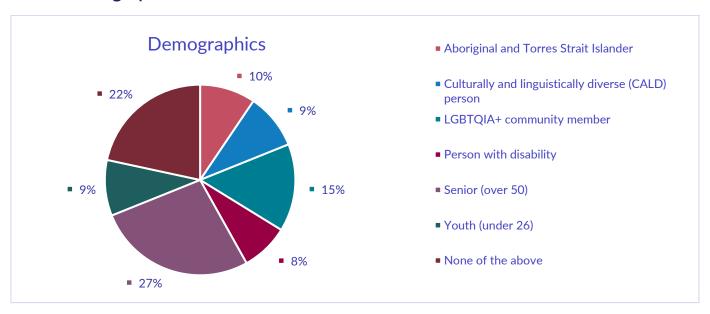
3.1.1. Role in the arts



3.1.2. Art Form

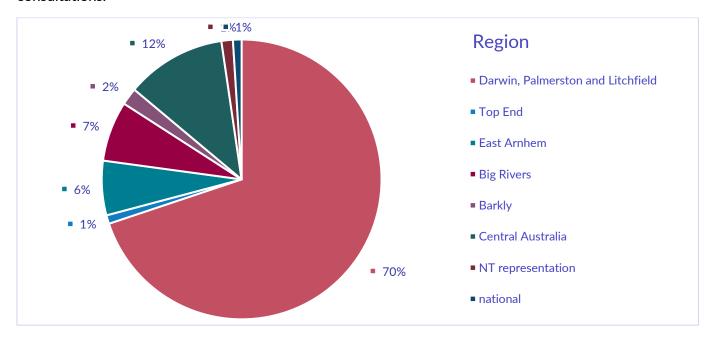


3.1.3. Demographics

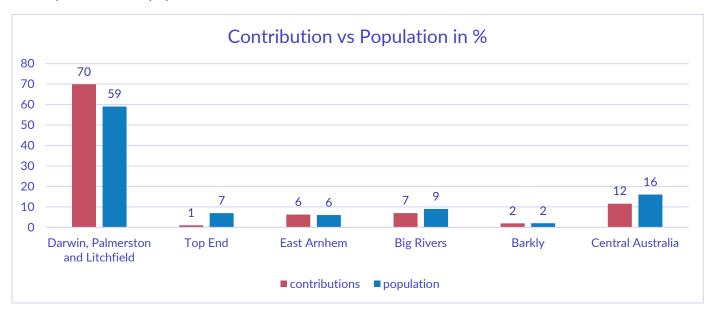


3.1.4. Region

The below graphs include *Have Your Say*, written submissions as well as face-to-face/online and focus group consultations.



In comparison to the population:

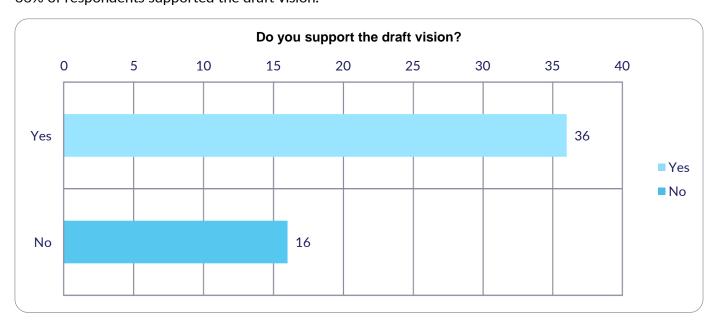


4. Key feedback

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on the draft vision and draft pillars and provide general feedback as to what they would like for the Strategy to capture. Feedback was positive, with 66% of respondents supporting the draft vision.

4.1. Draft vision

66% of respondents supported the draft vision:

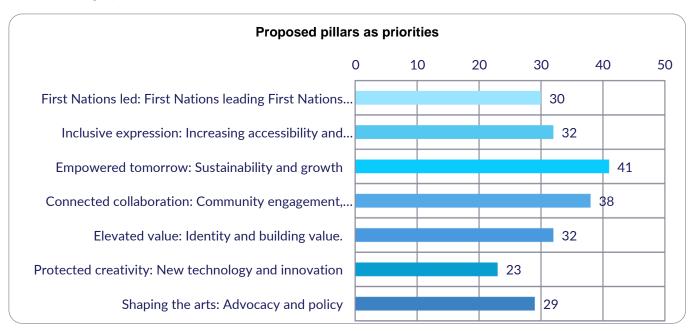


Respondents suggested a range of alternative vision statements and provided feedback on what they felt was missing from the draft vision statement. The following captures the common themes in the suggestions:



4.2. Priorities

The *Have Your Say* survey asked respondents to rank the seven proposed pillars in order of priority. Sustainability and Growth, Connected Collaboration, Inclusive Expression and Elevated Value were ranked highly, with the others followed by First Nations First, Shaping the Arts and Protected Creativity as shown in the below graph:



Additional feedback on the proposed pillars included:

- Centralise the artist and audience development
- Focus more on employment
- Involve youth in arts to tackle current issues
- Why is First Nations its own pillar, should it be integrated across all pillars/priorities?

- Make pillars/priorities achievable and meaningful
- Don't just focus on professionalising the arts but to support community-based arts for people to make arts to support their wellbeing
- Make artists/arts sector a pillar
- Ensure all community groups are represented in arts strategy and have access to the arts
- Try no more than four pillars
- Don't separate out First Nations, treat everyone as one Australia

4.3. Challenges

Respondents highlighted current challenges that they are facing. These are listed below, grouped under four broad themes:

Funding and investment

- Inflation resulting in increased living costs, touring costs and operating costs
- Employment costs have increased whereas arts funding has not increased
- Rising costs of living impacting earned income generated by artists and arts organisations
- Challenge to seek philanthropic funding and sponsorships that are ethical
- Digital arts are evolving as a new form with only some aspects being fundable

Employment and workforce sustainability

- Skills and worker shortage in all areas of the NT, particularly in regional and remote NT
- Difficulty to retain artists and arts workers, with focus on succession planning
- Volunteering in the arts is reducing
- Demand for part-time work and flexible work arrangements
- Vulnerability of artists and arts workers in regard to wellbeing

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure and equipment in the arts is outdated and challenging to maintain
- Access to affordable venues and facilities is limited

Advocacy and leadership

- Arts is not recognised as work and perceived as not valued by NT Government
- No peak body for the arts sector that can advocate to NT Government and industry for the arts
- Arts are serviced by various government agencies such as screen, festivals, strategic arts initiatives such as the Street Art Festivals in addition to supporting core artforms through Arts NT

4.4. Sector priorities

An analysis was completed that mapped all the responses across the *Have Your Say* questions, the written responses and in-person consultation against the role of the respondent. This enables the NT Government to better understand the priorities of each segment of the sector and further group the feedback into themes.

Six out of 20 priorities emerged:

- 1. Sustainable and safe employment including employment pathways and professional development
- 2. Access to resources and funding, including support to diversify income sources
- 3. Access to opportunities to showcase works with access to affordable spaces and places
- 4. Enabling and supporting collaboration, partnerships and networking
- 5. Supporting audience development and engagement
- 6. Increasing the recognition of the value of NT arts and culture

The below image represents how each segment of the sector ranked these six priorities:

	Ranked 1	Ranked 2	Ranked 3	Ranked 4	Ranked 5
Artist	Opportunities to showcase works	Recognition and value	Employment pathways	Resources and funding	Collaboration and partnerships
Arts worker	Diversifying income sources	Sustainable and safe employment	Employment pathways	Recognition and value	Audience development and engagement
Arts organisation	Resources and funding	Diversifying income sources	Sustainable and safe employment	Employment pathways	Collaboration and partnerships
Creative practitioner	Resources and funding	Opportunities to showcase works	Collaboration and partnerships	Affordable spaces and places	Audience development and engagement
Technical production	Affordable spaces and places	Resources and funding	Audience development and engagement	Professional development	Collaboration and partnerships
Board member	Diversifying income sources	Resources and funding	Employment pathways	Collaboration and partnerships	Professional development
Other	Opportunities to showcase works	Resources and funding	Employment pathways	Sustainable and safe employment	Affordable spaces and places

5. Evaluation summary

Over 300 people contributed to the development of the NT Arts Strategy through face-to-face and online meetings. The majority of respondent were artists, artworkers and creative practitioners (48%) working predominantly in visual arts crafts and design (36%), followed by performing arts (32%) and other art forms including literature and writing (26%). Arts Organisations contributed with a response rate of 24%, and peak bodies, local government and people with a general interest in the arts with 16%.

Age demographics showed a diverse range of respondents, with most people identified as being over 50 years of age (27%), followed by young people (9%). Approximately a quarter of respondents identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (22).

The level of feedback received from across NT regions was similar to the current population data, noting that more responses were received from the Darwin region compared to population and less responses were received from the Central Australia region compared to population.

The same six challenges as outlined above in section 4.4 were identified across all contributors and regions and the following are prioritised through the strategy:

- Sustainable and safe employment including employment pathways and professional development
- Access to resources and funding including support to diversify income sources
- Access to opportunities to showcase works with access to affordable spaces and places
- Enabling and supporting collaboration, partnerships and networking
- Supporting audience development and engagement
- Increasing the recognition of the value of NT arts and culture

Based on the collective consultation feedback the following strategy framework at Attachment A is proposed with a vision that in ten years - The Territory is a thriving community enriched by vibrant arts, culture, and creativity, vital to the Territory's social, cultural, and economic future.

Our mission over the next ten years is to **empower** artists and communities to grow and thrive, **connect** the arts to opportunity and grow creative connections, and **enrich** the lives of all Territorians through elevating and celebrating the value of the arts.

The responses and the feedback captured in this report inform the vision, principles and priority actions for the 10-year NT Arts Strategy, and guide the investment in the areas respondents identified as most important today and into the future. This will enable the NT Government to support and grow a sustainable and thriving arts and cultural community in the NT over the next 10 years.

Attachment A. DRAFT Strategy framework

VISION MISSION **Northern Territory** The Northern Territory is a thriving To empower creativity, connect culture **Arts Strategy 2034** community enriched by vibrant arts, culture and enrich communities and creativity, vital to the Territory's social, cultural and economic future **VALUES Priorities** Recognition Cultural **Principles** Respect » Aboriginal leadership in the arts is promoted and strengthened by heart recognising, acknowledging and using well established Aboriginal **Empower** The crucial place of Empowerment leadership structures Aboriginal stories is » Artists are supported to thrive in safe, inclusive and sustainable careers Invest in people to ecognised and respected at Collaboration that foster creativity and innovation in creative practice build a strong, creative the centre of the Territory's The arts sector has access to resources, training, and skills development arts and culture and culturally diverse Inclusivity to support education and career pathways arts sector The next generation of emerging artists is nurtured within a culturally diverse and responsive arts sector Creative communities Arts organisations are supported to be leaders, cultivate connections, and to arts and culture enriches the lives of all Artistic Inclusivity and diversity are promoted to increase connection, access and Connect ambition Invest in connecting the Creative workplaces are supported to implement safe and sustainable Empowered artists thrive practices, culturally diverse and desirable places to work and create arts, culture and creativity Territory and innovate in sustainable Partnerships and collaboration are facilitated across regions and sectors to community to grow the careers and contribute to identity Arts infrastructure is fit for purpose and accessible connecting arts, the creative and cultural creative and cultural life of culture, and creativity to community The Territory's vibrant the Territory arts and culture is The arts and culture sector are strengthened through robust arts and recognised at home and cultural policy and program development that is inclusive of all Territory abroad, is reflected in our stories and connects us with a sense of belonging Connecting Enrich culture » A 'culture-first' approach is embedded across all Aboriginal arts and culture initiatives recognising the crucial place of Aboriginal artists Invest in audiences Future focused arts Territory artists are celebrated and promoted to grow demand in local leadership enables and celebrate the value of national, and international markets diverse connections and Territory arts and culture to » Audiences and markets for Territory stories, creativity and performance a robust and valued arts are nurtured and grown grow a strong arts, culture and and culture sector The value of the arts is measured and communicated creative economy

Appendix A. Feedback and suggested actions

The following section provides detailed insight into the feedback received, presenting suggested actions and initiatives against the seven proposed pillars:

- 1. First Nations led First Nations leading First Nations arts initiatives
- 2. Inclusive expression Accessibility and inclusivity
- 3. **Empowered tomorrow** Sustainability and growth
- 4. Connected collaboration Community engagement, cultural exchange and collaboration
- 5. **Elevated value** Identity and building value
- 6. Protected creativity New technology and innovation
- 7. Shaping the arts Advocacy and policy.

5.1. First Nations led

- First Nations activities/support/soft infrastructure needs to be designed by First Nations with First Nations leading their own arts development
- Create First Nations leadership development pathways that are self-determined and First Nations-led to support creative workforce development, with First Nations representation at executive level and on Boards
- Provide sustained funding for First Nations-led activities to result in First Nations employment
- Provide a dedicated First Nations Arts Development staff position at Arts NT, potentially more than one person, based at multiple locations including Alice Springs or form a First Nations advisory body to lead First Nations activities
- Offer resources and training tailored to First Nations needs and support industry-led and industrydelivered traineeships
- Develop/enable/support mentorship and cross-organisational roles and increase visibility of First Nations leaders
- Invest into First Nations businesses
- Increased accountability regarding reconciliation plans
- Incorporate the concept of cultural safety in funding and operating to learn together and make respectful
 decisions informed through careful listening
- Provide cultural mentorship programs for First Nations youth to learn from experienced First Nations artists
- Offer regular workshops and cultural events led by First Nations artists to create a platform for skill-sharing, storytelling and community building
- Provide cultural competency training for staff and volunteers to create an environment that respects and understands the unique perspectives and experiences of First Nations artists
- Contribute to language preservation and acknowledge different Indigenous cultures with not all mob getting along
- Reference arts and culture as inclusive and accessible as arts and culture help us to understand the nation's diverse identity
- Include First Nations advisory boards nominated by community representatives.
- (Funded organisations) should exhibit indigenous and non-indigenous artists alongside each other to bring the community together.

5.2. Inclusive expression

5.2.1. Children and young people

- Children need to have access to a wide mix of arts activities and consistent exposure to arts to build creative skills, thinking and confidence
- The NT Music School as a model could be expanded to other art forms to provide experienced artists across schools
- Limited arts skills development is available at high-school level or post school, with no formal performing arts training option available in NT
- Initiate youth focused art projects that empower young individuals to express themselves creatively, such as mentorships, art competitions, community art installations
- Hold youth summit/youth arts conference to promote arts for youth
- Long-term mentorship programs needed for young people (12 month plus)
- Improve educational resources to regional areas
- Increase digital literacy across the arts to engage young people in the arts

5.2.2. Engagement and audience development

- Broaden audiences with an Arts Week and creating of creative hubs
- Develop a plan to make the NT a festival hub
- Incorporate subsidies for AUSLAN interpreters or other accessibility needs such as audio descriptions or braille for arts events
- Embrace technology to expand audience reach, but ensure that old forms of engagement are maintained (i.e. ticket buying in person)
- Use (larger than life) digital presentations, use technology to immerse public into storytelling and support virtual galleries, online exhibitions and digital art initiatives
- Incorporate discounts for artists and arts workers, and offer First Nations discounts
- Introduce mobile art studios for remote communities to support more activities that creatively engage whole communities
- Advertise the arts
- Bring back established touring circuits Darwin to Alice Springs and Townsville to Broome

5.3. Empowered tomorrow

5.3.1. Employment and Training

- Provide training and skills development locally for artists, production staff and arts administrators, and bring interstate skills development expertise into the NT
- Support arts organisation's staff training and resourcing
- Train local creatives in event management via workshops/forums/talks
- Skill artists in transforming art works into public art
- Support industry-led traineeships to allow organisations to train for roles they need most
- Support workplace wellbeing programs and provide specialist HR advice to artists, similar to legal advice being provided by Arts Law

- Support succession planning with mentorships
- Offer full-time employment for artists, potentially through resource sharing with other arts organisations or industry sectors
- Stipulate to procure local original artists in interstate touring shows or locally organised events/festivals/conferences
- Support an arts department to offer relevant and needed training/certification at Charles Darwin University
- Subsidise workshops to be financially accessible on a range of creative practices on a regular basis
- Develop employment models for part-time work across the arts
- Support an employment assistance program for independent artists
- Establish arts sector peak body to advocate for sector, either within NT or nationally
- Consider supporting basic accredited training through arts funding to cover basic arts related skills
- Consider developing/supporting micro credentials for artists/arts administrators
- Consider Arts Ready model for NT
- Develop a database of current skills needed amongst arts organisations to develop relevant and affordable professional development
- Consider secondment program with Corporate Australia
- Employment of First Nations people across all organisations
- Develop initiatives to attract back to the NT artists who left NT to study interstate
- Develop strategies for succession planning in regional/remote NT

5.3.2. Funding

- Increase funding for Arts NT to support/offset increased showcasing/operating costs
- Invest in the development of locally made commissioned shows
- Simplify grants application process, undertake accessibility audit and tailor reporting/documentation based on grant size
- Review grant applications to store applicant data/organisation documents with option to renew where applicable
- Make it easier for artists to access funding across NT Government provide one access point, or develop cross-portfolio funding (i.e. health/wellbeing, education, tourism, regional development)
- Support a Reserves Rebuild Fund for arts organisations to assist with unforeseen circumstances
- Increase arts projects funding to be more than \$20,000 and increase funding for arts organisations to offer adequate salaries comparable to non-arts industries
- Support tutors or facilitators that can assist with writing of grant applications or create a buddying program
- Avoid multiple grant rounds to be open/close at the same time, adopt Expression of Interest (EOI) process
- Re-establish Arts NT office in Alice Springs to ensure on the ground knowledge
- Invest in festivals
- Upskill artist and arts organisations to access philanthropy and sponsorship
- Develop investment strategy for the arts

- Consider a living wage for artists
- Funding in remote regions could be distributed by regional steering committees
- Include budget line for Access costs in grant application budgets
- Commitment from Community Benefit Fund (CBF) to provide dedicated funding to the arts

5.3.3. Infrastructure

- Increase arts infrastructure (performance/exhibition spaces, rehearsal spaces, workspaces), with all venues being accessible, offering equipment to use and provide mentors to work with
- Take accessibility audit of arts venues as well as arts spaces audit across NT and provide public register of venues/arts spaces
- Develop shared community arts spaces with performance spaces for hire (free for volunteer-based groups, fees for funded arts organisations), accessible to families with scope of kids' education
- Investigate public-private partnerships in developing arts venues/arts spaces
- Provide mid-sized performance spaces in Darwin and Alice Springs (up to 300 pax)
- Maintain current venues such as the Darwin Entertainment Centre
- Consider supporting equipment and infrastructure upgrades to meet industry standard currently only covered through Community Benefit Fund
- Move towards more renewable technologies
- Provide co-workspaces for people to create across disciplines
- Improved education facilities in secondary schools for dance, music, visual art and design, and include architecture with VET courses to support careers
- Providing consistent internet access across the NT
- Return arts trail funding

5.4. Connected collaboration

- Support Southeast Asian exchanges and networks
- Foster collaboration across art forms and support cross-portfolio collaboration/residencies
- Support residencies/collaboration with the gaming industry
- Provide standard support to national marketplaces such as APAX and APAM and include Arts NT as advocacy body into delegations
- Offer funding without immediate show outcomes
- Use local, highly skilled creatives as collaborators or mentors
- Provide more regular industry briefing and discussion opportunities for the arts sector to support networking and resource sharing and expand Meeting of Arts Professionals (MAP) to be accessible online
- Collaborate with multicultures and align international activities with Austrade goals and 2030 Thrive plan and take up collaboration opportunities with sister cities
- Create artist speed dating opportunities with arts organisations
- Foster collaborations between non-Indigenous and First Nations artists
- Bring back residencies at NT's cultural institutions, potentially with 2-3 artists at any one time
- Provide more pathways for artists to exhibit/perform at Darwin Festival
- Develop an artist register to connect artists into a larger artistic community

5.5. Elevated value

- Acknowledge First Nations as a strength in the NT, and the NT as national leaders in First Nations arts
- Support local marketplaces to encourage national stakeholders to experience NT arts in the NT, in not only in Darwin (best between November to June)
- Promote distinct stories and talents of the NT and get arts to the people where people can see it
- Acknowledge art as real work, position arts as central and connected to social, economic and cultural health and educate venues and business and the general public to recognise the work of artists
- Develop an arts industry website showing sector trends and opportunities such as Bite Size Arts News, with information available long-term
- Use arts awards as a vehicle to promote the arts and artists alternate locations and stream online
- Lift value of the arts by Arts NT not being absorbed in a larger government department noting that other jurisdictions have government department for arts funding bodies
- Increase visibility of Arts NT and resource Arts NT to work on cross-government funding and advocacy
- Harmonise data collection and evaluation across the arts and partner with arts data evaluation specialist, and gather data on statistics and experiences relating to social impact based on data dictionary
- Celebrate role models in the arts
- Develop an arts voucher system for tourists
- Support arts development and outcomes for arts festivals and consider supporting the presentation for festivals as a major achievement milestone for artist and their works

5.6. Protected creativity - New technology and innovation

- Consider gaming industry to skill up artists and as an arts career option for writers, actors, designers, audio engineers, musicians and producers
- Support gaming industry in partnership with Screen Territory and support operational funding to develop digital art skills
- Recognise gaming design as art
- Al produced artwork should have an statement with it that it was Al produced
- Investigate fashion pathway

5.7. Shaping the arts - Advocacy and policy

5.7.1. Public Art

- Create a percent for art policy to provide more employment for artists and increase the value of the arts through public art
- Advocate for public art installations in public places
- Consider the development of an overarching Public Art Policy for the NT

5.7.2. Collaboration across government

- Develop framework to address environmental challenges in the arts
- Consider tourism town asset model to offer assets in partnership with private sector
- Renew creative industries strategy as whole of government initiative
- Strive to embed policy concerning arts, culture and creativity across other portfolios
- Improve working relationship between tiers of government in NT
- Advocate for art therapy programs
- Advocate and leverage opportunities across other government agencies

5.7.3. Advocacy

- Advocate for Public Benefit Institution (PBI) to be accessible to arts organisations registered as charities
- Consider partnership with private sector to offer pro-bono financial services for artists
- Support arts advisory group with clear terms of reference and broad community representation
- Address fair compensation for artists with focus on licensing and royalty conditions
- Easier access to copyrighting creations
- Address gender equality across all sections of the NT Arts Strategy
- An arts and Disability officer for Central Australia and Top End (separate)
- Create an Indigenous arts strategy
- Redefine art centres as art and cultural centres, and provide framework for support
- Use plain English