

## **UTS Protocols for the acquisition, collection and exhibition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art.**

The Cultural Ministers Council in Australia through its National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts policy acknowledges “the traditional owners and custodians of Australia and its Territories”, recognises “the essential connection between the Arts, Culture, Heritage, Land, Sea and (Customary) Law”, and “encourage[s] the maintenance and awareness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols throughout the Arts”<sup>1</sup>.

The collection and display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art within the UTS Gallery are important for these reasons and more.

The UTS Gallery is a dedicated public gallery, presenting a rich and varied program of high quality exhibitions, educational activities and special events, which make a significant contribution to the cultural life of university and the wider community of Sydney. The primary role of the Gallery is to give the university community and the visiting public the opportunity to view, appreciate and interact with quality artworks that demonstrate the value of the visual arts to everyday life, education, and technology. An important function of the Art Collection is to record and document significant aspects of Australian art and design heritage, and to support professional practitioners in these fields by purchasing and exhibiting their work<sup>2</sup>.

The Gallery acknowledges the diverse and dynamic nature of the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups, cultures, identities and visual arts practice across Australia, and encourages contributions to exhibition/display and public program ideas from both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at UTS as well as the broader community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Sydney.

In line with national policy, the Gallery recognises “the rights of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders to claim, control and enhance their cultural development and cultural maintenance through the Arts”. It values input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in the university and will seek their advice and input into the decision-making process:

- when considering exhibition proposals or major acquisitions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art; and,
- when working with the artistic expression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to ensure that their views and histories are being accurately represented in a respectful way.

Information about the Art Collection is available to staff and students and members of the public on request. Furthermore, the University Curator is available to assist students and staff on matters concerning the Collection and its application to study programs and research or any University project associated with art and technology and visual communication<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See Cultural Ministers Council Policy Priorities and Principles at <http://www.dcita.gov.au/>

<sup>2</sup> UTS Gallery website at <http://www.utsgallery.uts.edu.au/gallery/>

<sup>3</sup> UTS Art Collection website at <http://www.utsgallery.uts.edu.au/collection/>