

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS



The *Creative Barkly* research maps a broad range of art forms and creative practices, including commercial, amateur, and subsidised, representing the Barkly Region's multicultural population (both First Nations' and non-Indigenous). The team conducted face-to-face **surveys with 120 artists in communities across the Barkly Region**, as well as sector **interviews with 36 key stakeholders and organisations**. Existing international literature and policies advocate for strength and asset-based approaches to regional development. The Creative Barkly team has distilled the following recommendations for strength-based and arts-led regional development that emerged from the study findings.

1. **All levels of government and organisations with a regional development mandate** should consider the arts as central to regional development in this very remote area.
2. **Remote art centres and arts organisations** should be funded and supported as key contributors and co-leaders of holistic regional development that pursue multilateral and interdependent spheres of development across the many domains of value that matter to the people of the Barkly including: cultural, social, community, personal, spiritual, ecological, political, and economic.
3. **The *Desert Harmony Festival*** should continue to be funded as the major community festival event in the Barkly Region, and should continue to be strongly supported as a key element of regional development plans and activities.
4. **Government, non-government, and local tourism and development bodies** (e.g. Tourism NT, Tourism Central Australia and local economic development committees) should recognise arts organisations and artists (e.g. Barkly photographers) as key agents and content developers in regional tourism, identity development, and marketing. Arts organisations and artists should be included as key partners in the development of tourism strategies and campaigns that support cultural and eco-tourism and economic development by the tourism and arts and cultural industry sectors.
5. **Government agencies and arts organisations in the Barkly** should be responsive to local artists' strengths, aspirations, and visions for a thriving arts sector and provide for their professional development and support in their future planning and development of the arts and cultural sector.
6. **Organisations should include the value of their volunteer labour** in all their funding applications and acquittals. Further, government and other funding bodies should not take this limited pool of volunteer labour for granted, but expressly recognise the value of this activity in their grant and policy programs, and not expect volunteer labour to be a 1:1 substitute for certain activities, roles or positions.
7. **Future regional development strategies prepared by government and other organisations** whose activities include a regional development focus, should support and leverage the previously unmeasured, large cohort of Barkly artists identified in this research, rather than relying solely on ABS data.
8. **Barkly arts organisations and artists** should aim to develop new and/or strengthen existing, partnerships with commercial galleries and professional arts organisations outside of the Barkly to provide opportunities for artistic exchange, professional development, training, residencies and industry development.
9. **The Northern Territory Government** should acknowledge that Barkly artists practice multiple artforms, and incorporate this into their Creative Industries strategy. We recommend that industry incubators, supply chains, and value ecology approaches should also respond flexibly to the distinctive diversity of art forms and creative practices in Barkly artists.
10. **Well-resourced and evaluated creative industries incubators need to be established in the Barkly Region.** Cooperative decision making on where and how to develop such incubators needs to leverage input from the Barkly creative ecology. We recommend that government work with Barkly organisations to refine the scale and scope of these potential incubators.
11. **Tertiary institutions, the VET sector, and ISACNT**, should recognize, and support resources, around informal mentoring and family learning as a foundation for regional development. In particular, such bodies should consider how mentoring for this region's artists can provide a model and pathway for future training and development approaches across many areas of artist development including arts business, intellectual property, artistic techniques, sales and marketing, and promotions. This can also be extended to those agencies that have in their remit "workforce development" as well as CDP program designers.
12. **Existing training opportunities should be maintained and wherever possible enhanced**, through funding programs, artistic exchange programs, development and mentoring opportunities. We also recommend that opportunities for exchange, development and mentoring should be embedded into formal training programs offered by the tertiary and VET sector if they are not already so incorporated.
13. **Creative placemaking** and industries' policies and theory must recognise that Barkly First Nations' artists derive benefits from working on their ancestral lands. Such concepts should be explored in future creative placemaking and industries policies at all levels of government.

14. **Strategies and/or campaigns to encourage new residents into the Barkly Local Government Area** should specifically include the region's diverse and vibrant creative sector, showcasing the range of art forms and events that occur, rather than focusing narrowly on one or two events.
15. **Government and organisations with a regional development mandate** should ensure that arts and regional development funding and policies support remote artists to create their work in diverse spaces. Likewise, we recommend arts organisations support the use of diverse spaces for creative practice in the region.
16. **First Nations' artists and arts organisations** should be funded and supported to continue cultural innovation, transmission, healing, agency, and self-presentation through events such as the *Traditional Dance Festival* in Ali Curung.
17. **All levels of government – and all who are interested in Australia's long-term wellbeing and progress** – should continue to fund and support intercultural as well as intra-cultural arts and creative activities that can heal longstanding cultural and political divides. Such activities should be inclusive of all diverse cultures in the Barkly Region.
18. **Commonwealth and Territory governments should position the Barkly Region as a national and international leader in community controlled and led development** through such mechanisms as the Territory Government's *Local Decision Making Program*.
19. **Youth and Child, Sport and Recreation funding programs** should specifically allow for and fund arts and cultural activities.
20. **Health and wellbeing policies and funding** should continue to expand the role of the arts in health promotion and addressing local determinants of health.
21. **Perceived silos in regional development** can be overcome by engaging diverse members of the Barkly arts ecology and surrounding networks (for example government policy makers) in evidence-led discussions and decision making informed by the diversity of: i) organisations and individuals engaged in the Barkly arts ecology; ii) art forms and applications; and iii) forms of value and capital.
22. **Funding bodies must provide opportunities for Barkly artists** to develop their skills and success in applying for grants and prizes; and funding programs must be tailored to artists' specific needs and the success markers outlined in this report.
23. **Members of the Barkly creative ecology** should discuss and share knowledge on ways to preserve the distinctive styles within communities and artist groups while promoting cost-effective training and a distinctive regional identity and brand.
24. **The Barkly Region can become a national and international leader in ethical industry practice in remote regions** (best practice). Arts organisations, senior artists, community representatives, and relevant partners can be leaders in the local arts ecology in this regard and mentor non-arts organisations and individuals in the sector.
25. **There is a need to develop markets and opportunities for arts and creative products and services outside of the Barkly Region.** This can be facilitated by national and Northern Territory policies and the Barkly creative ecology and its external partnerships and networks.
26. **There is a need for arts shop fronts and promoters** that will appeal to tourists and day visitors to the Barkly Region at various locations along the Stuart Highway.
27. **Regional development policy makers and planners** must consider the complex, multiplex role of regional and remote art centres as community hubs offering essential non-arts related services. Likewise, those diverse roles and strengths must be factored into future funding programs.
28. **Key arts organisations in the Barkly arts ecology** should take the lead in productively exploring opportunities to influence the role of CDP in the arts and its relationship to regional development.
29. **Policy makers must recognise the profound role of digital and online activity** in remote arts and creative industries and resource them accordingly.
30. **Future policies and funding programs should adopt a balanced approach to investment** in people rather than necessarily prioritising infrastructure and equipment. For example, a program such as the *NTG Arts Trail Regional Stimulus Program*, while highly valued by the Barkly arts sector, might also productively focus on developing human resources and capacity to maximise the investment.
31. Non-Indigenous participants expressed a desire to participate more strongly in arts programs and events. **Arts programs and events should therefore enhance opportunities for culturally diverse residents in the Barkly to participate in art making and performance.**

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