Value in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Souvenir Art Sector

Brendan Mahoney

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Abstract

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector with its wide range of products has a long and significant history and is economically important within the industry. However, the full scope of this significance has not been adequately recognised in the academic literature. While the sector’s substantial economic contribution is acknowledged in some policy documents, these considerations are generally brief, with little analysis of any value the sector might generate in the social and cultural spheres. This neglect of souvenir art is driven by two key factors: its low status in the social hierarchy of the arts (Bourdieu, 1984), and the difficulty of finding analytical tools capable of assessing the complexities of the sector without falling into assumptions about the cultural value and ‘authenticity’ of souvenir art.

In an attempt to redress this, the thesis develops both a theoretical framework that aims to adequately capture the social, cultural and economic significance of the sector, and analytical tools that cover the broad set of discourses that comprise the subject. As such, I have adapted the insights of modern and critical political economy theories to analyse the distribution of economic capital, and broadened these theories to encompass Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984) concepts of social and cultural capital. This combination of theories forms a broad-ranging theoretical framework that accommodates economic capital and the qualitative discursive constructions that inform amounts of social and cultural capital within the same system.

I use this framework to illustrate the social, cultural and economic value of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and its products.
These values are traced through an analysis of seven examples of organisations active in the sector.

The thesis undertakes a close analysis of aspects of the souvenir art sector that have not been adequately represented in the literature, including the diversity of organisations and broad spectrum of products. The thesis makes an argument for the legitimacy of the sector while addressing the limitations of discourses of authenticity and inauthenticity. I analyse the political economy of the sector to reveal the interaction between state policies and funding statements and the example organisations, illustrating the substantial social, cultural and economic capital that the sector generates.
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A grateful thank you to all my friends for their support. Cheers.

And to my partner, thanks for your advice and expertise with grammar and syntax, your support and encouragement.
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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Brendan Mahoney
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAB</td>
<td>Aboriginal Arts Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSIA</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSIC</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDEP</td>
<td>Community Employment Development Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCITA</td>
<td>Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEWHA</td>
<td>Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAS</td>
<td>Indigenous Arts Strategy (Northern Territory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBA</td>
<td>Indigenous Business Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICS</td>
<td>Indigenous Culture Support</td>
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<td>IVASI</td>
<td>Indigenous Visual Arts Special Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACIS</td>
<td>National Art and Craft Industry Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACISS</td>
<td>National Arts and Craft Industry Support Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIAAA</td>
<td>National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QIAMEA</td>
<td>Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing and Export Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACS</td>
<td>Regional Arts and Culture Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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WA Western Australia
1. Introduction

1.1 Prelude – Origins of This Thesis

Artworks and products featuring the designs of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures have always been a part of the visual landscape of my life, although it was only recently that this became apparent to me. On reflection, the majority of my earlier experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art were not through fine art institutions or of fine art products, rather they were public displays of commercial products in retail outlets, as well as the few items that my parents had collected during their travels around the country. In particular, I remember one item, a small returning boomerang with three wavy horizontal lines of red and white acrylic with a generic motif of the outline of a kangaroo embellished with line patterning in the centre.

Plate 1: Brendan Mahoney Small Returning Boomerang on Bookshelf [Photograph] (2010)
I am unsure of the origin of the boomerang and of who might have made or sold it, but it is similar to dozens of other products that are still available around Sydney. My parents displayed the boomerang among other items they had collected on the bookshelves in our living-room. The boomerang took centre-stage on the shelf that was closest to my eye-line when I came in the front door, next to the car keys, and along with small Australian flags and Readers’ Digest books in the background, like it was part of a shrine to Australian culture (see Plate 1).

My experience is not unique, however, with the products of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and organisations forming a significant part of the visual landscape of Australia as they are prominently displayed in public spaces, retail outlets catering for the souvenir market, corporate spaces, public and private art galleries (Fry and Willis, 1996, 199) as well as in private homes. Despite the prominent position that these products have in the landscape of contemporary Australian culture, they are not accorded much attention in academic or policy literature. It is this gap in the literature that I attempt to bridge in this thesis.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts investigated in this thesis are, therefore, not fine art paintings by renowned artists, which form the focus of the larger proportion of the academic literature. Rather, the thesis focuses on a diverse group of products that includes paintings, screen-prints, fibre works, boomerangs, didgeridoos, and printed products such as t-shirts, mugs, tablecloths and a variety of other items that feature artwork and designs by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and organisations. The artistic products of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander art industry are made by various organisations and represent a mixture of mass-produced and one-off handmade objects, artefacts, crafts and fine art (Altman et al., 2002, 4). These products are recognised and certified as being produced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and organisations and comprise a specific group of artistic objects which are addressed in more detail in Section 1.3 below.

It is important to note that there is also a range of products that are made to look like Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art but are by non-Indigenous producers and organisations using appropriated designs that are commonly referred to as “imitations” or “fakes”, which need to be addressed separately and therefore are not considered as a part of this thesis (Altman et al., 2002, 14, 20). However, the line between the ‘legitimate’ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and the ‘imitations’ is not definitive, with some non-Indigenous involvement in the production of the objects, particularly in the manufacture of mass-produced items (Altman et al., 2002, 20; Altman, 2000b, 86). The products of these joint-ventures are still considered to be culturally authentic and legitimate as long as they incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art or designs, which are certified through documentation of an appropriate and valid provenance usually supplied by the producer and/or the producing organisation (Wright, 1999, 85-87; Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 89).

The full range of the legitimate handmade and mass-produced products is under-represented in the academic literature on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art
industry. It is the high-end products of the fine art sector of the industry that are generally perceived as having the greater economic, artistic, social, and cultural value. These differences in status and value mean that the products of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry are divided into two sectors; the fine arts and what I have termed ‘souvenir art’. The term ‘souvenir art’ is contentious due to associations with lower quality and cheaply priced goods as other researchers have noted (Hume, 2009, 59), which was also raised in a response that declined to participate in the questionnaires I distributed for this thesis. However, the notion that ‘souvenir art’ is inherently a lesser quality or cheaper product is not part of the meaning here (see Section 1.3). I use the term ‘souvenir art’ to indicate that these products share the common feature of being sold as a “memento” (Noble, 2004, 240) of an experience (most likely travel or tourism related) and that the products feature artwork or designs produced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and organisations.

The distinction between the sectors is blurred in parts as they overlap in terms of the artists and organisations that make the products, some of the types of products sold and in the outcomes that can be generated by engaging in this form of employment. This means that some artists create products that are being retailed in a variety of contexts across both sectors. Despite this, I argue, as others have previously, that it is a useful distinction due to the different status and value that the products of each sector have (Altman, 1991, 7; 2000b, 86), and that as a result a great deal of research and policy attention has been presented about the fine arts while ‘souvenir art’ has been largely neglected (Hume, 2009, 56). This is an oversight that I aim to address in this thesis.
1.2 Thesis Aims

In this thesis I analyse the social, cultural and economic value of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and its products in an attempt to redress the inadequate consideration and subsequent undervaluing of the sector and the industry as a whole. Although the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry has been the subject of numerous reports and studies that acknowledge the long and significant history and its economic importance (such as Senate Standing Committee, 2007; Positive Solutions, 2006; Altman, 2007), the full scope of the significance of the souvenir sector has not been adequately recognised in the academic literature (Hume, 2009, 56). While the substantial economic contribution is acknowledged in some policy documents, these considerations are generally brief, with little analysis of any value the sector might generate in the social and cultural spheres. This neglect of souvenir art is driven by two key factors: its low status in the social hierarchy of the arts (Bourdieu, 1984), and the difficulty of finding adequate analytical tools capable of assessing the complexities of this sector without falling into assumptions about the cultural value and ‘authenticity’ of souvenir art.

In an attempt to redress this situation, this thesis develops both a theoretical framework that recognises the social, cultural and economic significance of the sector as well as analytical tools that cover the broad set of discourses that comprise the subject. This facilitates an in-depth engagement with the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art.
To achieve this, I have adapted the insights of modern political economy (Frey, 1978) and critical political economy (Murdock and Golding, 2005) to analyse the distribution of economic capital, and broadened these approaches by including sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984) concepts of social and cultural capital. This combination of theories forms a broad-ranging theoretical framework that accommodates economic capital, along with the qualitative discursive constructions that inform amounts of social and cultural capital, within the same system.

Using this framework, I analyse the social, cultural and economic value of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and its products. These values are traced through an analysis of seven examples of organisations active in the sector. I analyse the value of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and its products and I indicate how it is constituted through various modes of appraisal combined with a complex set of discourses from a broad range of fields.

Through this analytical process I detail parts of the sector that have not been adequately represented in the literature, including the diversity of organisations and broad spectrum of products. In doing so, I present an argument for the legitimacy of the sector while addressing the limitations of the concepts of authenticity and inauthenticity. Beyond these limitations and other previous representations of the sector, I analyse its political economy, revealing the interaction between the policies and funding statements and the example organisations, and thus indicating the substantial social, cultural and economic capital created.
In summary, the research questions I aim to address are:

1. How is the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art discursively constructed?

2. What is the structure of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector? What organisations are involved, and what is the range of products that they produce?

3. What is the social, cultural and economic value of the political economy of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector?

1.3 **Key Terms and Definitions**

Some of the terms used in this thesis are contentious: they are not universally accepted nor are there settled definitions in the literature. Therefore, it is important to clarify why these terms have been chosen and the particular way they are defined and used here. The first point of clarification is the use of the titles ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ and ‘Indigenous’ which is more political in nature than academic, but is still very important in determining the way the peoples and the information about them are represented. I also address ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art’ and the controversial term ‘souvenir art’ and how both of these terms are combined to form the main subject of this thesis. The last two terms to be discussed here are the ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry’, and the ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector’, defining the often blurred boundaries of these fields and the relevance of these categories to the analysis.
1.3.1 Titles: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous

The titles used in this thesis to represent Australia's indigenous peoples, ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ and ‘Indigenous’, are not altogether controversial. Despite this, I am aware of some contention about these titles and the meanings ascribed to them from representatives of indigenous communities and prominent artists who prefer the use of the traditional names of specific indigenous peoples (Langton, 1994, 96; Michaels, 1994, 150). As such, in this thesis where one specific indigenous cultural group is being referred to, their traditional name is used. However, this form of title is not appropriate for indigenous collectives where people are from more than one specific grouping.

The issue is further complicated when the titles are used to signify the cultural products made by indigenous peoples, or state policies that concern indigenous peoples on a national level. Therefore, the terms ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’ and ‘Indigenous’ have been used in this thesis to signify a national level of representation for the indigenous peoples of Australia. Both of these titles are socio-political constructions that have been conferred on the indigenous peoples of Australia through the process of colonisation and need to be acknowledged as such, as this has implications for the power relations between the researcher and the subjects of study (Michaels, 1994, 150; Langton, 1994, 101). This is the case even though indigenous peoples use these terms for their own political recognition in post-colonial societal structures (Michaels, 1994, 150; Langton, 1994, 104). The titles are
therefore used with due recognition of the indigenous peoples of Australia and their heterogeneous and independent political status.

While the two titles occupy the same basic meaning, they are both used in this thesis in different contexts to mark the subject that is being discussed. The title of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander has been adopted in referring to the artistic products of indigenous peoples and the industry that is associated with producing, distributing and selling the products. The use of the title Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflects its widespread occurrence in the arts and arts industry, such as by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council. The use of the word Aboriginal in the literature concerning art usually refers specifically to Australian Aboriginal culture, and the phrase Aboriginal art is often used to mean indigenous Australian art, to the exclusion of all other culturally and geographically specific indigenous art. However, the full title of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is used in this thesis to indicate the national level of representation, as it includes not only Aboriginal art and involvement but also the art and involvement of the Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia. This is necessary as Torres Strait Islander art and culture is significantly different from that of mainland Australian indigenous cultures and is included here to avoid misrepresenting the peoples involved.

The second national title used here is Indigenous with a capital ‘I’, indicating its use as a title and not as a descriptor. The use of the title Indigenous in the thesis is consistent with its use in policy documents where it refers to peoples or persons who
identify as indigenous, such as Cultural Commitments: Indigenous Policy Statement and Action Plan (2004a) by the Department of Culture and the Arts in Western Australia. As such, the title of Indigenous includes Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal peoples as a national grouping, but also refers to the individuals who identify themselves as being Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal and/or Indigenous (Langton, 1994, 97). This means that Indigenous is the best title to refer to individuals and group representation outside of an arts context and is used as such in this thesis.

1.3.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art

As previously mentioned, the title of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is commonly applied in the literature concerning art, forming one of the central subjects of this thesis. The phrase of ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art’ is used to mark the cultural identity of the producers of the artistic objects, but it importantly also relates to the style and content of the art as it indicates that the artwork has stylistic and/or thematic elements that are culturally specific. To ensure that the works discussed as a part of this thesis meet the above criteria, only products from recognised and certified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and organisations have been included.

There have been a couple of previous formal processes for labelling within the sector or industry (Wright, 1999, 85-87; Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 123).
Additionally, there are a few current forms of formal and informal documentation for the purposes of guaranteeing cultural authenticity and provenance, the most prominent of which is the industry and government supported Indigenous Art Code (Indigenous Art Code Limited, 2010). These forms of authentication, which usually accompany the products in the marketing material and at the point of sale, are generally provided by the producer and/or the producing organisation, such as an art centre or the manufacturer of products featuring licensed designs (Mahoney, 2009; Wright, 1999, 85-86). I have used these forms of documentation as well as the general acceptance and recognition of the products and producers in the industry in my research to authenticate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and designs discussed in this thesis. Through this process, I am able to exclude the “fakes” and “imitations”, while specifically addressing authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and designs including objects that have a complex provenance, such as products of joint-ventures between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Altman et al., 2002, 14; Altman, 2000b, 86).

In addition, I follow the convention from the field of art history, theory and criticism where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art usually refers to contemporary art; that is, art produced within the last forty years or so, including the production of traditional forms such as bark and cave paintings. The contemporary period marks the production of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art for consumption by people outside of Indigenous cultural groups, within the structures of the commercial Western/international art market (Altman, 2005, 4; Edwards, 2007, 59). This last distinction is important in this thesis as it focuses the analysis on art that is
deliberately made in awareness of the discourses of contemporary art and engaging with the art industry (defined in more detail later in the thesis).

The above definition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art forms the basis for discussion within this thesis, although to narrow the types of art considered, additional criteria have also been adopted. In this thesis I am primarily concerned with the plastic arts, that is to say physical or tangible art objects and artefacts, as the products sold as souvenir art (which is defined in the next section) are generally tangible art objects, including paintings, prints, fibre art, ceramics, and products that have designs incorporated in them. Therefore, this thesis does not include analysis of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music, photography and film, performance, dance, and new media, with all references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art reflecting this usage.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is often discussed with reference to the terms ‘traditional’ and ‘urban’. Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is a style of contemporary art usually associated with rural and remote areas where artists use customary elements such as patterns, designs, symbols, and colours, while using modern media such as canvas and acrylic paints (Benjamin, 2000, 469; Michaels, 1994, 51). Urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, as its name suggests, is associated with artists from urban areas, particularly in the south-east of Australia (Croft, 2007, 285). The urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art style is generally informed by a range of traditional Indigenous styles from around Australia that are combined with Western/international art influences (Benjamin,
The terms traditional and urban are useful shorthand for the region of production and general aesthetic of the artwork, but are not suitable as hard and fast categories, as there is much more diversity in the forms produced.

1.3.3 **Souvenir Art**

The term ‘souvenir art’ is applied in this thesis to a collection of artistic products such as paintings, screen-prints, fibre works, boomerangs, didgeridoos, and printed items such as t-shirts, mugs, and tablecloths as they share the attributes of being produced and sold outside of a fine art context (Hume, 2009, 56) and gain value through their use as “mementos” which are used to “authenticate our experiences” (Noble, 2004, 240). As noted, these souvenir art products are not normally included in the literature about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art as they are not considered to be of the same status as fine art objects, and as a result the term of ‘souvenir’ is hotly contested (Hume, 2009, 56).

The term ‘souvenir art’ is only one among many that are used to designate some or all of the products considered in this thesis. The terms used across a variety of fields to delineate non-fine art from fine art, particularly the types of artistic products made by indigenous peoples, include “souvenir or souvenir art” (Blundell, 1993; Hitchcock, 2000), “tourist art” (Littrell, 1990; Littrell, Anderson and Brown, 1993), and “handicraft” and/or “ethnic art” as used by Frederick Wherry (2006), or any combination of these. These terms have not directly originated from the categories of
art history, theory and criticism, but are primarily from the discipline of tourism research which encompasses a wide range of areas related to tourist practices, management and economics of the tourist industry and the social and cultural interactions involved. The discipline’s consideration of the material culture of tourism and the associated terms are useful for the insight they provide about the value attributed to the products and the ways in which it is constructed, allowing an analysis of how the relative status of souvenir art contributes to the undervaluing of the sector.

In response to all of these terms and the specific constructions of their meanings I use the term ‘souvenir art’ in this thesis for four reasons. Firstly, the word ‘art’ is included to mark the primary feature of the objects, the inclusion of an aesthetic design, which in this thesis is the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander motifs and designs. The inclusion of the word ‘art’ is in contrast to the traditional separation of fine art and souvenir categories, recognising that similar forms and designs are used across sectors as discussed in Section 1.3.5.

Secondly, souvenir art is consistent with the use of the term of “souvenir” in tourism and material culture research to mark the purchase of an object as a memento, often described or defined as a material object that embodies or symbolises a place, time, or particular experience, connected with tourism (Kim and Littrell, 2001, 640; Noble, 2004, 249; Blundell, 1993, 65; Hitchcock, 2000, 1). The use of the term “souvenir” is important to this thesis as it indicates the personal uses and value created through purchasing decisions based on “self-concept” or identity creation (Littrell, 1990),
individuated and social taste (Bourdieu, 1984), and authentication of experience (Noble, 2004). The combined term of ‘souvenir art’ therefore refers to any product that has aesthetic designs and performs the function of being a memento.

Thirdly, I have not used the combined term of “ethnic and tourist arts” which is used by economic and cultural sociologist Frederick Wherry (2006, 6), as the concept of ‘ethnic arts’ is better expressed as the specific ethnicities of the producers, in this case as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. However, Wherry does provide an instructive definition of “objects with aesthetic value produced for internal consumption or for external sale” (2006, 6). The definition is applicable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art with products being made specifically for the market, but includes items such as carved bowls or woven baskets that can be used by the producers outside of market concerns.

The final reason that the term ‘souvenir art’ has been chosen is that there is some contention in the literature about the term ‘tourist art’, which has been called “inadequate” in light of the many sites that consumers can purchase indigenous arts due to international trade (Evans, 2000, 127). The multiplicity of sites where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art is available means that the consumers are not necessarily tourists at the time of the purchase, even though the product performs the function of a memento.
As a result of all of these considerations the term ‘souvenir art’ is used in this thesis to mean a product that is produced for external sale that also has aesthetic value and is primarily designed to be consumed as a memento. It is important to note that while size and weight may play a part in the viability of a product, as demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, these properties, as well as price, are not part of the definition used here as there is a broad range of products with a broad range of dimensions sold at various price-points. While this definition of souvenir art may seem broad, this is a deliberate strategy to be as inclusive as possible so that this thesis is able to encompass the full scope of producers, products and the values generated. I also acknowledge that the term ‘souvenir art’ is, and will most likely remain, contentious and problematic as a result of the debates around the inclusion of such items as art, which concern the relative status, and, ultimately the value of the products.

1.3.4 The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Industry

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry is an entity that is less arbitrarily defined than some due to its enshrinement in government policies (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts, 2008b), academic research (Altman, 2000b; Altman et al., 2002), and popular discourse. There are, however, less specific terms that include the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry within them such as the “arts industry” which refers to all styles and artforms, and the alternative term of “cultural industries” which is broader still, encompassing mass-communication media such as television and print as well as the traditional “arts” (Caust, 2003, 53). There is resistance to the term of ‘arts industry’,
with the broader term of ‘cultural industries’ being preferred in much of the literature on arts and cultural policy (see Chapter 3). Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is usually subsumed with the categories of the arts or cultural industries, I have chosen the term ‘the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry’ to facilitate a focus on the circumstances of the production and distribution of this particular style.

Therefore, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry is the term used to indicate the organisations and individuals that are involved in the production and dissemination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art for commercial sale. It is important to note that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander element refers to the production of art and designs and does not necessarily relate to the organisations and individuals involved in the manufacture, distribution, or consumption of the products, as these processes can be undertaken by Indigenous peoples, non-Indigenous peoples, or in an Indigenous and non-Indigenous joint venture (Altman, 2000b, 86).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry is comprised of the usual elements of a goods-based industry, where there are producers, wholesalers and distributors, and retailers. Some of these elements are amalgamated into the one location or agent, where the producing organisations may also retail directly to the public on the same site or wholesale to other agents (Altman, 2000b, 89), or galleries may handle distribution as well as retailing the product. In addition to the different roles that some organisations perform in the industry, there are also differences in
organisational structure and focus with some organisations being not-for-profit while others are profit oriented businesses.

As an arts-based industry, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry follows a similar structure to the rest of the contemporary art market, which has a primary market where artworks are sold for the first time usually through galleries, and a secondary market of resales usually through auction houses (Velthuis, 2005). The structure of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry formed out of an association with the modernist art market in the 1970s and developed along with the transition from modernism to postmodernism in art which created the contemporary international art market (Edwards, 2007). As a result, this thesis necessarily deals with discourses of industry and value that have formed since the development of the contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry and the corresponding changes in art history, theory and criticism.

1.3.5 The Souvenir Art Sector of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Industry

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry is divided in this thesis along the same lines as the divide between fine art and souvenir art discussed above, creating a fine art sector and a souvenir art sector. As there has not been a strong academic and government focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art, it is not surprising that the sector has not been discussed much. The primary
market of both the fine art sector and the souvenir art sector is structured in the manner described above, with organisations involved in the production, wholesale, distribution, and retail of artworks. However, the organisations involved and their particular roles can differ, with the majority of retailing in the fine art sector being undertaken by art galleries, while in the souvenir art sector the retailing is performed by organisations and individuals operating art galleries, retail outlets and market stalls.

The division between the two sectors is not completely supported by the structure of the industry, however, as there is a considerable cross-over in both the production and sale of fine art and souvenir art (Altman, 2000b, 86). In the production process there is no clear-cut distinction between the different artforms, with fine art and non-fine art items produced by the same organisations and even by the same artists (Myer, 2002, 31). In addition, the division of products between the markets is not absolute, with some products being represented and displayed in both sectors. Although the difference in status between the two sectors is integral to this thesis, the construction of that status is complex and multifaceted, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, and does not equate to price, which is not part of the definition used here.

Despite these indistinct boundaries, there is an operative division between the souvenir art and fine art sectors. The souvenir art sector requires specific attention despite being structurally similar to the fine art sector, as it caters to an alternative demand in the market related to the value ascribed to souvenir art, which is expressed through the different retailing structures. Therefore, even though most Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander artists, “tend to draw no distinction between practices” (Myer, 2002, 31), the sectors largely operate as separate given the different constructions of the financial markets and status ascribed to the artistic products.

1.4 Methods and Methodology

This thesis uses predominantly qualitative methods and applies them to both qualitative and quantitative data in an effort to comprehensively analyse all forms of value. The qualitative approach supports the aims of providing “a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, 1) for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and its products. To achieve this context-bound rich description, qualitative and quantitative data are treated as complementary sources, describing aspects of the subject in a manner consistent with qualitative analysis (Brannen, 2007, 284). There are multiple methods used to collect and analyse data in this thesis to enable a rich and thorough description of all aspects of the political economy of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and its products. The use of multiple methods is supported by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln “to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (2008, 7), which suits both the qualitative methodology of the thesis and the aim of context-bound description and analysis of the sector and products.
Three methods are employed in this thesis to analyse the social, cultural and economic value of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and its products. The first is qualitative discourse analysis, which is applied to data generated through desk research to identify the discursive structures that influence the value of the sector and products. Qualitative discourse analysis is used in the thesis to examine how value is constructed across different fields such as art history, theory and criticism, economics and political economy, and state policies relevant to organisations involved in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector, establishing a framework for analysing the variety of values generated.

The method of analysis follows the generic processes of qualitative analysis, which Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson identify as beginning “with the identification of key themes and patterns” (1996, 26), which in this case are the influences on the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art and its sector. After a thematic analysis has been carried out, Coffey and Atkinson suggest that the information needs to be coded so that the amount of data generated is manageable (1996, 27), which is achieved in this thesis using the keyword functions of the referencing database EndNote. It is important to note that these qualitative research methods are based on a constructivist position that acknowledges the subjective interpretation implicit in creating a “representation or reconstruction of social phenomena” (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996, 108).

Qualitative discourse analysis is used in Chapters 2 and 3 to contextualise the research with reference to the key ideas that inform the theoretical framework of this
thesis, focusing on the approaches to the construction of the subject and its value. In addition, the theoretical framework is also informed by an analysis of the wider discursive fields, providing a detailed background to the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art and the political economy of the sector. As policy research forms its own distinct academic field, it is covered in the theoretical framework with its own conventions and particular concerns with the depth of the discourse analysis presented in Chapter 3, along with the field of economics and political economy.

Qualitative discourse analysis is also applied in Chapter 4 to the policies and funding documents of Australian governments and agencies to examine the extent to which the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector is expected to produce social, cultural and economic value. The method allows for a contextualised and in-depth qualitative study that highlights the “wider system of social relations” that collectively construct the policies and therefore part of the value of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and its products (Blackmore and Lauder, 2006, 98, 100).

The second method is a comparative study which analyses the types of social, cultural and economic capital that are able to be generated by seven example organisations involved in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector. The example organisations involved in the sector illuminate how they operate, their history and political economy, and the values that they generate (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). These chapters also focus on the values generated by the attributes of the
products, combining discourse analysis with the data to indicate the value and status of these products. The method of purposeful selection and comparative analysis is useful as this form of qualitative methodology does not rule out the use of qualitative and quantitative data (Bryman, 2008, 58, 53). The use of both types of data is important in my analysis so as to account for the quantitative data of economic capital through the theoretical framework of political economy, which is addressed in more detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

Finally, some of the purposely selected data was collected through a questionnaire that was distributed to organisations involved in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector. The questionnaire data is supplemented with publicly available information and personal communications which is qualitatively analysed as part of the comparative examples to provide a more comprehensive indication of the values that are generated. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data guides the analysis of the social, cultural, and economic value generated by the organisations involved in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector.

The questionnaire has a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions about the organisations, their history, approximate earnings, product lines, and funding arrangements which provide much needed information about the sector (see Appendix A). The questionnaire is designed to collect data that is used to describe the position and experience of the organisation, in line with the qualitative methodology of the thesis (De Vaus, 1990, 24). The questionnaire adheres to the
relevant ethics protocol and was approved by the UWS Human Research Ethics Committee. As a result, there are limitations on the presentation of the data resulting from the questionnaires, with the data de-identified to ensure the privacy and commercial competitiveness of the organisations and individuals involved. There was also a very limited response to the questionnaire from the industry that constrains the analysis here, with no statistical analyses or wider survey information about the industry. This also affects the conclusions able to be drawn in this thesis. The use of data from a small sample limits how far the information can be generalised. For this reason there are no claims beyond the specific analysis of the organisations and structures of the sector that are described, except to say that the organisations exemplify particular values generated and indicate the types of value that can possibly be generated within the particular political economy of the sector.

There is also much discussion in the literature about purposeful selection and comparative example methods and the issue of generalising from qualitative studies, with many claims that such studies are not sufficient in scope to allow wide reaching conclusions to be drawn (Schofield, 2000). As stated above, the conclusions of this thesis are not intended to be generalised, but instead represent the specific and grounded circumstances of the examples in an effort to analyse components of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry. Nonetheless, it is foreseeable that the results may also be useful in the consideration of other indigenous arts industries internationally or other industries that draw on Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and cultural knowledge. For these purposes it is important to note that the comparative examples employed are used qualitatively, providing detailed and contextualised information and analysis, which aids in the
“comparability” and “translatability” of the study, so that the degree of “generalisability” to these situations can be assessed based on the degree of similarity (Schofield, 2000, 75, 93).

1.5 Thesis Structure

The thesis has seven chapters. This introductory chapter describes the aim of analysing the types of social, cultural and economic value generated within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector, and argues the rationale for gaining a greater understanding about the construction of the value of the products, the sector and the industry as a whole.

Chapters 2 and 3 lay out the theoretical framework of the thesis, featuring an in-depth discussion of the theories that inform my approach to the subject. In these chapters I take an interdisciplinary approach to the construction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art and the different systems of valuation involved. The chapters are organised by the discursive field. Chapter 2 includes an analysis of Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological concepts of value, social and cultural capital, and addresses how value is constructed in the field of art history, theory and criticism, arguing for the relevance of these fields to the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art. Chapter 3 focuses on industry policy, economics and political economy, exploring the discursive construction of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and the methods of valuation within these fields.
Chapter 4 provides a thematic analysis of the policy types and directions of the contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, with a comparison between the data and analysis available for the fine art and souvenir art sectors. The differences in the consideration and status, and ultimately the value, accorded to the sectors are apparent in the analysis of the industry and policy developments in the area. The chapter draws on previous studies as well as qualitative discursive analysis of a range of relevant policy areas such as Indigenous, arts, and industry policies.

Chapters 5 and 6 describe and analyse examples of the types of value generated by organisations involved in the souvenir art sector of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry to redress the lack of data. These chapters are divided by the different organisational structures of the examples within the sector. Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the value generated by three examples of art centres active in the sector. Chapter 6 considers four examples of different sized profit oriented businesses and the types of value that they generate with the political economy. This political economy also provides an indication of the significant amount of value that is generated by the sector.

The concluding chapter provides an overview of the analysis presented in the thesis that contributes to redressing the inadequate analysis of the sector. This chapter addresses the types of organisations involved in the sector, the discursive construction of the value of the products, and the social, cultural and economic value as exemplified by the selected organisations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector. The chapter also outlines the remaining gaps and further
research potential of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, souvenir art, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry.
2. Theoretical Framework: Bourdieu, Art and Value

The following two chapters present an analysis of the various modes and methods of valuation that are currently applied to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector. By drawing together these methods and addressing the discursive structures that underpin the construction of value, I am able to create a thorough theoretical framework that encompasses the social, cultural, and economic value of the souvenir art sector, and address one of the key factors that lead to the undervaluing of souvenir art in the industry. The theoretical framework demonstrates the interdisciplinary approach used in this thesis, broadly considering the construction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art and its value across four fields of study: Bourdieu and sociology; art history, theory and criticism; policy research; and economics and political economy. Each of the fields has its own particular theoretical frames which contribute to the overall valuing of the products and sector.

I have selected texts that are most relevant to the valuation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art and its sector where possible. Although, due to the lack of available research in this area noted in the introduction, I have also used related accounts from subjects that share some similarities which can be applied to the subject. It is not my intention to provide an exhaustive explanation of theories of valuation, but to focus on material that relates directly to the construction and assessment of the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art and its sector. The analysis of the forms of valuation informs the subsequent chapters where
I apply the theoretical framework to examples of organisations active in the sector and their products.

This theoretical framework is divided into two chapters to provide a greater depth of analysis. The first chapter takes in the fields of sociology, focusing on the theories and concepts of Pierre Bourdieu, and art history, theory and criticism. In the first section I provide an account of Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic capital (1984), with a specific focus on the concepts of social and cultural capital, and how these can be applied to the valuation of art objects and work within economic systems. This theoretical background is followed up with demonstrated applications of the analytical concepts in Bourdieu’s own works (1984; 2005) and critical analysis of the usefulness of related Bourdieusian studies by other authors. The second field, art history, theory and criticism, is important in considering how the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander objects and souvenir art is discursively constructed. Art history, theory and criticism is a complex field which encompasses several historical periods with associated changes in discursive structures as well as incorporating a variety of disciplinary perspectives, comprising a set of discourses that affect valuations of the souvenir art sector.

In the second chapter on the theoretical framework, I address the methods and modes of valuing associated with the third field, policy research, and the formation of policies around the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry. The second theoretical chapter also discusses the field of economics and political economy, addressing the influence of economic models of valuing as well as the particular type
of political economy that is used as the basis of this thesis. Finally, I conclude by bringing together all of the various modes of valuing and presenting the final theoretical framework for the rest of the thesis, which incorporates social and cultural capital into a political economy analysis.

2.1 Bourdieu and Sociology

2.1.1 Pierre Bourdieu’s Concept of Value

Bourdieu’s concept of value is central to the theoretical framework of this thesis, with social and cultural capital assessed and analysed alongside economic capital in the political economy of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector. The form and structure of the analysis in the theoretical framework chapters is also informed by the work of Bourdieu more generally: they rely on the concept of ‘field’, his critique of economic theory, and his contribution to the theorisation of the sociology of art.

Bourdieu’s theories and concepts developed over the full course of his career and have covered many subjects including the sociology of art and social status (1984). Bourdieu is also prominent in areas that are not strictly appropriate for this thesis, particularly in education and the reproduction of knowledge and class systems (see Bourdieu and Boltanski, 1977). However, I am specifically using Bourdieu’s
concepts from the length of his career in the field of the sociology of art, particularly, Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977), Distinction (1984), The Love of Art (Bourdieu, Darbel and Schanapper, 1991), and The Social Structures of the Economy (2005). Although I take into consideration the critiques and revisions of Bourdieu’s work, it is primarily the concepts and theories from his own works which inform my theoretical framework, as the original concepts remain robust and have the advantage of allowing for greater comparisons to other Bourdieusian works. As such, while indicating the original context and application of the theory, I consider and use the concepts broadly informed by Bourdieu’s oeuvre, which provides the thesis with a thorough framework.

The concepts of social and cultural capital, along with economic capital, are important to this thesis as they are the principal forms of value used in the political economy analysis. Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital were developed in his work detailing a sociological theory of the role of symbolism in contemporary societal interactions (1977). In order to create a theory that can accommodate the symbolic and the material relations between individuals, Bourdieu uses social and cultural capital as subsets of a general symbolic capital that individuals possess in varying amounts (1984, 228). Although Bourdieu only makes passing reference to the exact formulation of the concepts of social and cultural capital, they have a rigorous grounding in his theoretical and empirical works. The concepts function on the premise of an “economic metaphor” (Velthuis, 2005, 27), with a type of knowledge or personal circumstance is equated to a type of capital that a person may use or spend, or importantly, convert into other types of capital (Bourdieu, 2005, 195).
The concept of ‘social capital’ represents the amount of latent benefit an individual or group has accumulated through interpersonal relationships (Bourdieu, 2005, 2). Cultural capital is the amount of knowledge an individual or group has accumulated about their society, including societal objects (such as artworks), and social rules (such as social taste, mores and etiquette) (Bourdieu, 1984, 228). Both social and cultural capital are extra-economic capitals that take their value from human interactions that do not involve the exchange of money for goods and services, but still contribute a form of value to the recipients or holders of the capitals.

The concepts of social and cultural capital are intended to be quantifiable (Bourdieu, 1984, 114), in the sense that there are varying volumes, degrees or amounts that are possessed by individuals at any one time. However, Bourdieu did not make it his business to set hard and fast formulae or criteria for assessing these amounts, and as such they have remained only relative quantities that are measured through discourse analysis. The relative nature of social and cultural capital is in distinct contrast to the functioning of economic capital, which has a set of complex interactions that determine exact amounts. Social and cultural capital are therefore applied to the political economy framework of this thesis in the same relativistic manner. However, I attempt to refine the various quantities of the types of capital through the further imposition of criteria, such as how widely the capital is intended to reach and its intended impact, which is guided by the discursive statements of value analysed in the following sections of the theoretical framework and subsequent chapters.
The mix of economic and extra-economic dimensions necessary for, and often included in, assessments of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, such as my use of social and cultural capital alongside economic capital, draws attention to the important underlying propositions in the use of economic and political economy theory here. The first proposition is that the dominant approach of neoclassical economics is not broad enough in its scope and complexity, and needs to be augmented with extra-economic categories, in this case, Bourdieu's symbolic capitals. One of the most important implications for the use of the political economy in the analysis of this thesis is that not only are social and cultural capital extra-economic, but they are also qualitative forms of capital as they do not possess specific quantities, unlike traditional economic and political economy data. This is discussed in more detail in Section 3.2.

Furthermore, the inclusion of social and cultural capital in the political economy analysis is not as just another quantity placed alongside the economic data in a balance-sheet, but is a determined “acknowledgement that the economy is dependent on and is affected by the non-economic” (Fine, 2001, 26). Therefore, Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital do not just simply complement political economy analyses, but critique and enhance them by reworking the basic assumptions that confine them to quantitative and monetary considerations. This allows the theoretical framework to extend into traditionally qualitative areas, such as social and cultural policies that are relevant to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector, and provide a comprehensive analysis of values generated.
There is also the related issue that, as mentioned above, the concepts of social and cultural capital are based on an “economic metaphor” (Velthuis, 2005, 27). The reliance on what is essentially a modified economic theory places Bourdieu’s work firmly within a capitalist logic (Fine, 2001, 29; Velthuis, 2005, 27), even though it deviates from standard economics. While this might appear limited, it is necessarily limiting, as a theory cannot exist outside of its socio-historical circumstances. The fact that the concepts are situated within a definite historical and theoretical moment points to another underlying feature of Bourdieu’s theory, namely the insistence on a socially and historically grounded analysis (2005, 1). The social and historical specificity of the theory does not come directly from the abstract concepts or theoretical framework, but in emphasising the use of the concepts in the analysis of concrete situations, in line with Bourdieu’s own sociological commitment to grounded analysis (2005, 2) and the qualitative methodology set out for this thesis.

To this end, the analysis that is presented is intentionally limited to the specific time-period of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art production as indicated in the introduction, and is only applicable to the Australian situation of art history, theory and criticism, policy and industry environments, and the particular organisations indicated herein.

The commitment to socio-historical analysis implied by the use of Bourdieu’s theory is also underscored by his notion of “field”; that is, the loose theoretical grouping of institutions, classes, people, or statements around a scheme of thematic relations, whether physical proximity (geography), demographic or conceptual group (class, occupation, institutional commitment), or other social phenomena (2005, 5). The notion of field limits the researcher to a specific social space and historical time, as it
would be impossible to encompass more than a small series of related fields thoroughly. The concept of field is used in this chapter to distinguish the different approaches to value and valuing between the institutional and academic disciplines of sociology, art history, theory and criticism, industry and policy research, and economics and political economy.

2.1.2 Bourdieu’s Engagement with Value in Art and Economics

Bourdieu’s analysis and critique of art, status, and economics are dominant themes throughout his works, providing much considered commentary on the ways that art is constructed socially, culturally, and economically. This forms an integral background to the approach taken in this thesis. In terms of the field of art history, theory and criticism, Bourdieu’s classic work Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (1984) and the co-authored The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public (Bourdieu, Darbel and Schanapper, 1991) both engage with the value and status of art and artistic consumption, and help to define the field as it is formulated here. Bourdieu’s engagement with economics and industry policy are also important in the construction of the fields in this chapter, with Outline of a Theory of Practice (1977) and The Social Structures of the Economy (2005) being particularly instructive.

In Distinction, Bourdieu presents an empirical study of, “the conditions in which the consumers of cultural goods, and their taste for them, are produced”, using the
concepts of social and cultural capital along with economic capital to express the range of value generated by the status of consuming artistic products (1984, 1). The Love of Art also addresses the social and cultural value and status of being familiar with artworks through a survey, which is analysed based on class affiliation and taste, finding correlations in class and education with taste (Bourdieu, Darbel and Schanapper, 1991, 2). It is important to note that the research Distinction is based on was undertaken in France in the mid 1960s and The Love of Art took place around the same time, published in French in 1969. As such, these studies reflect a distinctly different social and historical time and cannot be directly overlaid on to the subject of the contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector in Australia. Rather, I use Bourdieu’s studies as a model of analysis in the fields of art and economics to inform my application of his concepts to the contemporary Australian environment and particular circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art.

One of the ways Bourdieu’s works guide the approach taken in this thesis is in his original framing of the ‘field of art’, which has changed in the contemporary era to form the field of art history, theory and criticism as I discuss later in Section 2.2. Bourdieu asserts the primacy of aesthetics in the field of art, stating that the aesthetic “pure gaze’ is a historical invention linked to the emergence of an autonomous field of artistic production, that is, a field capable of imposing its own norms on both the production and the consumption of its products” (1984, 3). Furthermore, Bourdieu contends that all post-impressionist art, “demands a purely aesthetic disposition” (1984, 30). Consequently, the category of art has at once narrowed down to the singular conception of a pure aesthetic that everything must fit within, while
simultaneously expanding the category of art: to make everything fit within the idea of the pure aesthetic, encompassing other objects such as “collectors’ curios or historical and ethnographic documents” (Bourdieu, 1984, 30).

Bourdieu’s position on the field of art provides a useful description of modernist art and art theory that echoes Arthur Danto’s (1964) concept of the “Artworld”. Here the category of art is determined by the theories that designate a style or object as art, with the over-riding modernist approach being a theoretically-based aesthetic disposition that accounted for a greater range of objects (Danto, 1964, 573). Danto expanded on this by demonstrating that late-modern and postmodern art objects, such as Robert Rauschenberg’s Bed (1955), rely on a further conceptual level of art theory past the modernist pure gaze for their meaning (1964, 581). Through this demand for knowledge of aesthetic (or broader art) theory an exclusive value based on the ability to decipher and use this understanding is formed, which in Distinction Bourdieu refers to as cultural capital (1984, 228). The field of art history, theory and criticism that I use here is formulated in part around the idea of this modernist aesthetic theory, in conjunction with modern, postmodern and contemporary complications of the theory, with their emphasis on social context, including the conditions of the production and consumption of art (see Section 2.2).

There have been significant changes in the field since Distinction, which means that the formulation of the field of art history, theory and criticism that I use varies from Bourdieu’s. In particular, the inclusion of cultural research and interdisciplinary analyses and the rise of theories of postmodernism formed the “new” art history
(D’Alleva, 2005, 24), while changes in art practices that mark the internationalisation of art, and the non-movement-based era of contemporary art, also broadened the field. All of these developments sit (sometimes uncomfortably) against, among and alongside traditions of aesthetic judgement. Therefore, the field of art history, theory and criticism that is used here encompasses texts that engage with art aesthetically, but also includes analyses that are primarily concerned with artistic production, artistic consumption, and the social and cultural importance or meanings of art and art objects.

Apart from being one of the defining discourses of the field of art history, theory and criticism, modernist aesthetic theory also forms a significant discourse of valuing. As The Love of Art highlights, those who have the ability to understand the rules of art are able to appropriate it as cultural capital, which can then be mobilised as social capital by associating with others as an “arts community” (Bourdieu, Darbel and Schanapper, 1991, 39). The social status that is accorded to the interpretation, consumption and possession of art through the setting of (class-based) standards is a major tenet of Bourdieu’s work, which is usually summed up in the phrase “[t]aste classifies, and it classifies the classifier” (1984, 6). As Bourdieu goes on to state more clearly:

> [s]ocial subjects …distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed. (1984, 6)

Bourdieu makes this statement in relation to his analysis of class-based classifications, which is rendered as status rather than social/economic class
affiliation in this thesis due to the complexities of contemporary social affiliations.

The point remains the same however, that the aesthetic disposition contributes to the
valuing of art as it makes the ability to appropriate it exclusive to those ‘in the
know’, providing status and therefore social and cultural capital to the person.
Additionally, and importantly for this thesis, the status is also attributed to the
individual art object and the category or type of art object in general. In this way,
fine art objects garner more status through the aesthetic disposition needed to
consume them, in contrast to the identification of the utility provided by a souvenir
product such as a printed tea-towel or coffee mug.

Bourdieu’s work has also helped develop my approach to the fields of industry
policy research, economics and political economy. Bourdieu’s Outline of a Theory of
Practice (1977) establishes the use of social and cultural capital, how these capitals
interact with economic capital, and comments on the academic field of economics.
The Social Structures of the Economy (2005) applies the three types of capital,
namely social, cultural and economic capital, in an analysis of the interaction
between sociological theories of systems of exchange, the field of economics, and
real-world economies. In both of these works, Bourdieu criticises the construction of
the field of economics as an isolated discipline that does not engage with socio-
historical reality, characterising economics as:

> based on an initial act of abstraction that consists in dissociating a particular category of
practices, or a particular dimension of all practice, from the social order in which all human
practice is immersed. (2005, 1)
Bourdieu, recognising that the field of economics deliberately excludes the socio-historical circumstances from the “rules” and “models” of economic theory, deploys the concepts of social and cultural capital as forms of symbolic capital to reinstate the social reality into the economic analyses (1977, 178). The critique of the limited outlook of conventional economics and the need to incorporate the symbolic capitals that influence the economy and measurements of value to provide a more complete account is a key part of the theoretical framework of this thesis. Therefore, the concepts of social and cultural capital are integrated into a political economy analysis in an attempt to address the “ahistorical vision of economics” by including crucial information such as the, “economic dispositions of economic agents and, especially, of their tastes, needs, propensities or aptitudes” (Bourdieu, 2005, 5).

Bourdieu’s works and his criticisms of the field of economics are also important in the construction of the field of industry and policy research in the theoretical framework. In The Social Structures of the Economy, Bourdieu analyses the role of the state in instituting and determining “the way the economic field functions” through policies, tax, and industry support measures (2005, 12-13). Bourdieu demonstrates this with the brief example of generic “family” policies that are governed by “inheritance laws, the tax regime, family allowances and social assistance” with consequent effects for patterns of consumption and “standards of living” (2005, 12-13). This has two important implications for the theoretical framework. Firstly, both industry and state policies are linked as one field through the political distribution of funds and are treated as such; and, secondly, due to the political distribution of funds by state departments and agencies it is most appropriate to use a political economy analysis that incorporates all three capitals.
These are important for the thesis as there are state and industry policies that have economic and extra-economic intended outcomes which need to be drawn together in the analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

2.1.3 Bourdieu’s Concepts in Other Studies

In addition to Bourdieu’s original works discussed above, others have applied his concepts in a range of works concerning the social status and value of cultural goods. Two Australian contributions have informed my approach here. Sarah Hinde and Jane Dixon from the Australian National University apply a sociological perspective to market systems and health outcomes in their research, and in the article “Reinstating Pierre Bourdieu’s Contribution to Cultural Economy Theorising” (2007), they argue for a range of Bourdieu’s concepts to be included in analyses of cultural economies, including the cultural industries. Additionally, humanities researchers, Tony Bennett, Michael Emmison and John Frow, perform a Bourdieusian study of Australian cultural consumption practices in Accounting for Tastes: Australian Everyday Cultures, using the concepts of social and cultural capital (1999).

Hinde and Dixon make the case for a revision of theory in cultural economics to incorporate Bourdieu’s theory to overcome the “theoretical dichotomy” between economic and cultural research approaches (2007, 415). Hinde and Dixon are therefore proposing to use the concepts of Bourdieu to correct the economic and
policy models of cultural economics by including symbolic capital and the concept of field in the same manner as I am in the political economy analysis of this thesis. They apply the concept of field in a way that broadens the scope of their analysis, bringing together economic and cultural concerns in the industrial production of cultural goods, instead of the separate treatment of the approaches and disciplinary areas (Hinde and Dixon, 2007, 411).

In addition, Hinde and Dixon use the concept of symbolic capital, particularly cultural capital, to analyse the competing demands and complex positions of producers and consumers in individual decision-making processes and structural analyses of the supply chain. They argue that the inclusion of cultural capital is necessary as conventional industry and policy theories, such as actor network theory and conventional political economy analyses, do not adequately account for the multiple positions of agents (Hinde and Dixon, 2007, 411). Although I do not intend to undertake a supply chain analysis, but rather a political economy analysis, Hinde and Dixon’s article expresses the strengths of Bourdieu’s concepts in the analysis of cultural goods, with the application of cultural capital to industry and policy analysis shown to be a viable framework that overcomes the problems of conventional analyses.

Using Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital based on the model of Distinction, Bennett, Emmison and Frow’s Accounting for Tastes details the cultural consumption of Australians with reference to the socio-demographic divisions between different types of media and arts expenditure. There have also been
significant contributions in this area from Friedland et al. (2007) in the United States, analysing patterns of cultural consumption with an emphasis on communications media. The Friedland et al. study is also based on the model provided by Distinction, but despite being more recent it is less relevant to this thesis as the analysis is remodelled for the uniquely American dimensions of political association, demographics, and consumption practices.

Accounting for Tastes, however, was situated within the distinctive social environment of Australia in the mid-1990s, using a national survey detailing cultural preferences and a smaller number of interviews to represent Australian views and practices, reflecting the socio-cultural differences in data and application of the concepts. These differences and the way they are handled in the study guide my analysis of the attribution of value concerning cultural capital in policies that identify the provision of cultural resources and social capital in the interpersonal connections that are facilitated. In particular I am informed by Bennett, Emmison and Frow’s analysis of discursive features of programs of, “community empowerment... and… the promotion of cultural diversity” as part of Indigenous and multicultural arts policies in the Australian environment (1999, 243), which I detail in Section 3.1.2.

Accounting for Tastes is broader in scope than this thesis, encompassing media and popular culture products as well as demographic analyses of consumption practices, providing a useful background of Australian and particularly Indigenous production and consumption to the narrower focus of my analysis (Bennett, Emmison and Frow, 1999, 236). However, the study’s use of the Bourdieusian concepts is useful in two
ways. Firstly, it demonstrates how the relative amounts of value measured as social and cultural capital can be usefully applied to the social structures of value formation in the Australian context of contemporary arts production and consumption, particularly in terms of the status associated with various cultural products (Bennett, Emmison and Frow, 1999, 243, 263).

Secondly, the study also demonstrates a Bourdieusian analysis of the institutional structures that create the public policies that support and fund the cultural industries, finding that, by extension the state “becomes involved in underwriting class-specific practices of distinction” (Bennett, Emmison and Frow, 1999, 230). This finding has informed the analysis undertaken in this thesis with the inclusion of industry and policy research concerning state arts funding and the emphasis on status within these structures. The finding that status distinctions were implicated in multi-faceted processes of valuing structures beyond class demographics (Bennett, Emmison and Frow, 1999, 263-264), is reflected in and supports my analysis of the relative attention and assumptions of value attributed to each sector, which result in the construction of a lower value of the souvenir art sector.

2.1.4. **Reinterpretations, Revisions and Criticisms of Bourdieu’s Concepts**

There have also been some reinterpretations and reworkings designed to address the limitations of a Bourdieusian analysis which I consider here, assessing whether they can be usefully applied to this thesis. These include criticisms from Bennett,
Emmison and Frow (1999), and others about Bourdieu’s seemingly ahistorical application of the concept of field, and related criticisms about it being unable to take social change into account (Lash, 1993) or being applied too rigidly (Frow, 1987), or too simplistically (Hooker, Paterson and Stirton, 2000; Prior, 2005). Additionally, there are variants of the concepts of social and cultural capital, including a form of social capital that is conceived as the amount of value interpersonal ties provide to a community (J. Coleman, 1987), usually linked to civic engagement (Putnam, 1983), as well as a critique of Bourdieu’s use of social and cultural capital from an economic perspective (Throsby, 1999; 2001).

In setting out their methodology for Accounting for Tastes, Bennett, Emmison and Frow raise several reservations about Bourdieu’s concepts and the way they are applied in Distinction (1999, 5). These issues include the previously mentioned point that Bourdieu’s analysis of French society and artistic consumption is not commensurate with the different socio-historical setting of Australia in the contemporary era (Bennett, Emmison, and Frow, 1999, 5). Bennett, Emmison and Frow also comment that Bourdieu’s analysis of society in Distinction relies too heavily on “the construction… of conceptual oppositions which tend to be static and substantial”, creating a sense that the structures of society are fixed and universal, against Bourdieu’s own theoretical commitment to concrete and grounded analysis (1999, 12). These criticisms resonate with the concerns of this thesis as Bennett, Emmison and Frow identify that, as a result, Bourdieu’s analysis does not, and cannot, take into account “globalised patterns of cultural production and distribution” (1999, 5) and contemporary structures of “mass-mediated culture… such as the culture industries” (1999, 12).
There are also related criticisms from a range of authors about Bourdieu’s original use of field, particularly in his analysis and characterisation of the field of art history, arguing that the field is defined too simplistically (Hooker, Paterson and Stirton, 2000), making it incapable of encompassing postmodern and contemporary subjects in art and social structures of art and artistic consumption (Frow, 1987; Prior, 2005). These authors argue that Bourdieu reductively characterises the field of art history “as a continuous field” rather than a set of “disparate and fragmented” institutions and individual agents that collectively produce and contest meanings (Hooker, Paterson and Stirton, 2000, 214-217, original emphasis). This argument is also linked with Bourdieu’s theorisation of the aesthetic division between “legitimate culture [which] is defined by its opposition to the ‘vulgar’ or ‘common’” (Frow, 1987, 61). This position, it is argued, is too simplistically rendered, especially when “high and low culture have interpenetrated,” and “the tight classificatory schemes attending to each have given way to blurred cultural categories” (Prior, 2005, 124).

These arguments are concerned with Bourdieu’s original analysis in Distinction (1984), which in light of contemporary developments over-emphasises the construction of ‘high’ culture with little attention paid to ‘lesser’ forms or ‘mass’ culture products, and portrays the field of cultural production as a singular and closed system. The limitations of Bourdieu’s original analysis do need to be borne in mind and addressed so they are not reproduced in a thesis such as this. However, these are not problems with the original concepts and how they are intended to be applied, but rather the limited application of the concepts in an analysis of an increasingly complex field. As such, the concept of field “should not be seen as a fixed geometrical space but more as a process, an accomplishment produced over and over
in and through social relations” (Prior, 2005, 135), which includes a variety of actors, institutions and positions, requiring a more subtle account of the various discourses of status in contemporary cultural categories.

There is also a related critique of the concept of field by the prominent social theorist Scott Lash, who claims it is inflexible to social change as it conceives of the analysis taking place in a static moment, with Bourdieu’s analysis focusing on structures of societal reproduction (1993, 203). Lash contends that due to this formulation of field Bourdieu’s theory neglects collective political action that challenges the power relations involved in the reproduction of the social structure (1993, 205). While analysis of collective political action and societal change would certainly be useful to Bourdieusian and other analyses of society and culture, it is not always appropriate to focus on it. For instance, in this thesis I am investigating the complex relations of the sector as they stand to gauge the value at this point in time, and while charting the changing structures may be of relevance to future industry planning, it does not explain how value is constructed or what the value is. Furthermore, Lash’s contention that the field is static misses the distinction that a field is necessarily located in a socio-historical point, so while it may seem static it is actually a cross-section of society at that time, complete with structures of change and reproduction, which is elucidated with description and analysis (Bourdieu, 2005, 39-40).

In addition, there is another formulation of “social capital”, which is found in the literature on trust, institutional democracy and citizenship associated with and propagated by Robert Putnam (1983) and James Coleman (1987). The version of
social capital used by both Putnam and Coleman is remarkably similar to Bourdieu’s concept, with social capital representing the value to a community or society of the interpersonal ties and associations (J. Coleman, 1987, 36; Bourdieu, 2005, 2).

However, this form of social capital is not attributed to Bourdieu and his system of symbolic capital, but is separated from it to the point where analyses of cultural capital and economic capital are omitted from the studies. This version of social capital is therefore left to function as a floating analytic device divorced from the full context of symbolic exchange. As Bourdieu graciously gestures, social capital is:

> often associated today with the name of James Coleman, who was responsible for launching it on the highly protected market of American sociology – [where it] is frequently used to correct the implications of the dominant model through the effect of ‘social networks’. (2005, 2)

I retain Bourdieu’s use of social capital, as it works within a theoretical framework which allows a greater complexity and variety of interactions to be analysed through the conversion of capitals, in contrast to the limited application of a single capital.

The last of the reinterpretations is a salient critique from Australian cultural economist David Throsby (1999; 2001), which is based on a contestation of terms between Bourdieu’s version of cultural capital and the counterpart term in conventional economic theory of human capital. Throsby argues that Bourdieu’s conception of cultural capital is “in its individualistic form, very close to, if not identical with, that of human capital in economics” (1999, 4). Indeed, the two terms of “cultural capital” and “human capital” are similar in what they include, being the accrued knowledge and skills of a person that they can then use to their advantage.

However, the terms do differ in their application, with human capital being limited in
its meaning to the productive labour capabilities of the individual. Cultural capital, on the other hand, takes into account all accumulated knowledge, skills, and ideas without limiting it to any particular field. Importantly, this allows the field to be set by the parameters of the research and not arbitrarily restricted to economic and monetary productivity.

Bourdieu also acknowledges the similarities, but dismisses the concept of human capital as “vague and flabby”, noting that it carries with it “sociologically unacceptable assumptions” associated with the imperfect parameters of conventional economics (2005, 2). As previously mentioned, the symbolic capitals, including cultural capital, are needed to supplement and enhance conventional economic theory to include extra-economic exchanges and interactions. Human capital is not able to overcome the limitations of conventional economic theory as it is part of it, being restricted to economically productive interactions only, making it too narrow for a study such as this.

Throsby’s contention over the term of “cultural capital” is more complex, however. Throsby articulates his own version of a “cultural capital” from an economic perspective which he defines as, “an asset which embodies, stores or provides cultural value in addition to whatever economic value it may possess” (2001, 46). The formulation of cultural capital presented by Throsby is similar to Bourdieu’s, with the main difference being that Throsby only applies cultural capital initially to tangible objects; he then expands it to encompass intangible capital expressed as the “ideas, practices, beliefs, traditions and values” of a culture, but still limits it to
analyses that do not allow for human embodiment of cultural capital (1999, 6-7). Without human embodiment of cultural capital, the concept is only able to be an attribute of an economic entity, not a capital which can be possessed or exchanged, again limiting the extra-economic dimensions of analysis.

In terms of this thesis, Throsby’s concepts of human capital and cultural capital would mean that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists would possess human capital which they would convert into the cultural capital of the souvenir art products. These concepts work as long as the interaction is economic, but cannot account for interpersonal value arising from the work (which is covered by social capital in Bourdieu’s theory) and does not explain how the value is generated except that it is a by-product of the creation of an economic product.

In the end, although both theories could provide forms of analysis which could explain parts of the research question, Bourdieu’s theory is better equipped to handle the social and cultural aspects of this thesis. Furthermore, it is not conceivable that the two sets of concepts could be meshed together without overhauling either or both theories due to the contestation of the key terms of cultural capital, human capital, and social capital. However, the mixing of Bourdieu’s original concepts of social and cultural capital with standard economic (monetary) capital in a political economy analysis (see Section 3.2) does allow economic and sociological theories to coexist and complement each other in a cohesive theoretical framework.
2.2 Art History, Theory and Criticism

The field of art history, theory and criticism is central to the construction of the categories and discourses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and souvenir art; it constitutes the core literature on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art. As previously mentioned, Bourdieu argued that the pure aesthetic gaze as the defining feature of the field of artistic production in Distinction, reflecting art and art appreciation in the modernist phase (1984, 3). However, it is also important to note that certain art historical approaches in the modernist phase did have a complex engagement beyond pure formalism, such as the iconographical analyses of Erwin Panofsky ([1955], 1993) and the culturally constructed mental schemas of Ernest Gombrich ([1950], 1974).

Furthermore, the field of art history, theory and criticism in the contemporary era shifted to incorporate cultural theory, as well as Marxist, feminist, and postmodern critiques in what is known as the “cultural turn” or “new” art history (D’Alleva, 2005, 24-25). Therefore, the field of art history, theory and criticism that is used here is interdisciplinary, encompassing texts that are concerned with artistic production, consumption, and the social and cultural importance or meanings of art and art objects, from the disciplines of art history and the humanities more broadly including, cultural research, sociology, anthropology and ethnography, as well as research on tourism practices and tourist consumption (D’Alleva, 2005, 84). The blurred boundaries of this field have been set broadly to include the range of perspectives in the literature on art that informs the construction of Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander souvenir art as a category and its value. In addressing the value of souvenir art and fine it is important to note that in this thesis these categories are based on the types of products sold in each sector, rather than a directly through the actions or discursive effects of art history, theory and criticism.

### 2.2.1 The Modernist Aesthetic

Modernist aesthetic theory informs the valuing of art objects through the continued importance of its discursive structures and contemporary revisions of theories set against its assumptions. This is particularly the case with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art due to the circumstances of the emergence of the contemporary industry in the 1970s on the cusp of modernism and the postmodern turn which transformed practices in the contemporary era (Edwards, 2007, 58-59). As previously described, Bourdieu describes the modernist aesthetic as based on the pure aesthetic that “asserts the absolute primacy of form over function” in the age of post-impressionist art (1984, 7, original emphasis). This modernist theoretical perspective is set against its antecedent, classicism (Gombrich, [1950], 1974, 442), which was seen by modernists as representing a set tradition that prescribed the imitation of realistic forms that restricted originality (Shiff, 1996, 106-107). The break in style, from the realistic and symbolic to the non-representational, abstract and self-expressive, also constituted a break in aesthetic theory with modernism’s insistence on formalist aesthetics (Danto, 1964, 573).
American philosopher and art critic Arthur C. Danto perceptively notes that to “see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld” (1964, 580). It is important to note that Danto’s theory of the artworld was formed in response to late-modern and proto-postmodern artworks, which had moved away from formalist aesthetics of abstraction to incorporating or perfectly simulating everyday objects and conceptually reappropriating them as art through art theory (1964, 581). In order to make sense of these new types of practice, Danto argues that within each period it is the theories of art, including modernist formal aesthetics that construct the artistic value of the artworks.

Modernism consisted of a diverse set of theories (linked to the various forms and movements of art during the period), of which formalist aesthetics was one particular, if highly influential, strain. However, as art historian and cultural researcher Anne D’Alleva describes, the theories were brought together to form one “unitary, totalising narrative” (2005, 150), which occupied a dominant position until it was effectively fragmented under the pressure of postmodern critiques and the new art history. The narrative centres on the concepts of originality and authenticity, which are important valuing discourses of fine art objects, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks generally. The concepts of originality and authenticity take several forms in the narrative of modernism, with the notion of the avant-garde being a practice of continually being “original” or innovative (Krauss, 1988, 157-158), the importance of an original or authentic idiosyncratic self-expression (Shiff, 1996, 108), as well as the ideal of the original or singularly authored one-off (or at least limited edition) art object. These discourses of originality and authenticity are
influenced by romantic notions that are filtered through dominant modernist narratives, particularly the notion of self-expression, which represented “the beginnings of an aesthetic ideal that went on to become predominant in the twentieth century” (Craske, 1997, 37).

The results of modernist discourses being applied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art are diverse and include the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art becomes part of the tableaux of Western art history and as such comes under its rubric. This means that the value of artworks is appraised, at least in part, on their individual artistic vision, the development of personal, theoretical and conceptual themes, and importantly as a primarily aesthetic object. From its inception, the contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry has had strong associations with discourses of modernist abstraction due to the perceived aesthetic similarities between the contemporary artworks and modernist movements of abstraction (E. Coleman, 2004, 235). The aesthetic similarities and therefore the application of Western aesthetic theory were influenced by non-Indigenous arts advisors and teachers as well as art critics and theorists applying “[f]ormalist’ criteria... to translate Aboriginal painting for non-Indigenous eyes” (Benjamin, 2000, 466).

The conflation of discourses of modernist abstraction, particularly paintings considered to be in the style of abstract expressionism, with contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is based on aesthetic similarities such as the use of dots, lines, fields of colour and geometric designs in a ‘painterly’ fashion.
without clearly defined or structured boundaries or representational depictions of the subject matter. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in this style is typified by the paintings of Emily Kame Kngwarreye, but can be equally applied to the work of Western Arnhem Land artists from Injalak Arts and Crafts such as Priscilla Badari or acrylic on canvas limited edition prints from urban artist Terry Johnstone (see next page). These features and the discourses of modernist abstraction provide the artworks with the status and value of (fine) art in the Western art tradition. However, they are not all accorded the same value with a distinction made between fine art and souvenir art due to differences in other artistic discursive constructions of status (discussed below) which are reproduced in the methods of appraisal.
Plate 2: Emily Kame Kngwarreye Ntange Dreaming [Synthetic polymer paint on canvas] (1989)

Plate 3: Priscilla Badari Namarrkon - Lightning Man [Ochres on Archers Paper] (Undated)

Plate 4: Terry Johnstone Nesting Lyrebird [Canvas Screen-print] (Undated)
2.2.2 The Cultural Turn and the Contemporary Era

With the cultural turn in art history, theory and criticism, modernist notions of formalist aesthetics were critiqued as being a narrow approach to artistic practice and value, with the recognition of modernist art history approaches beyond formalist aesthetics and inclusion of postmodern theories where the grand narrative of modernism is replaced by the “practice of multiple histories of art” (D’Alleva, 2005, 155). The re-evaluation is formed around a greater interdisciplinary approach that includes anthropology, ethnography, sociology, cultural research, political history, and economics in a combined attempt to understand the social and cultural elements of artistic production and consumption. This is not to say that aesthetic considerations are not represented, but that there is a greater focus on contextualising the artworks within their socio-historical circumstances, giving rise to different forms of value. In the case of the geometric and abstract artworks above, additional consideration may focus on the traditional and customary uses of art and the forms, symbols, and aesthetic elements and the particular cultural and intercultural meanings and values generated.

Therefore, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art may share some aesthetic elements with abstract expressionism and other forms of abstraction, it is also significantly different in the way these elements are used. Artworks that can be considered abstract aesthetically may actually be representational depictions of landscapes and figures with “metonymic signs and symbols” (E. Coleman, 2004, 237), performing a “form of encoded symbolism” (Perkins, 2007, 14). It is obvious
that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art does not fit the modernist abstraction model due to the different cultural traditions and conception of artistic practice of Indigenous Australians and needs to be valued according to broader, more complex criteria.

The information about the symbols and ‘stories’ of the artworks is often necessarily incomplete, however, as the “ability to interpret these paintings is inseparable from the right or the obligation to paint them: their sources are in a participatory ritual” (Michaels, 1994, 51). This results in a situation where the “meaning in traditional art is managed cross-culturally by offering a reduced, schematised gloss of some figurative meanings associated with non-Western and unfamiliar images” (Michaels, 1994, 51; Benjamin, 2000, 467). The distinction between what is shown or explained and what is not in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is theorised by Marcia Langton, an anthropologist and geographer specialising in Indigenous research, as inside or secret-sacred indigenous knowledge and outside or non-secret-sacred indigenous knowledge (1994, 90-91). However, this is not a simple dichotomy, as the outside knowledge embodied in the art is readily available through the art market and art institutions, meaning that “visual art, can now be grasped, if only distantly, because of the increasing body of scholarly and critical literature and catalogues of exhibitions” (Langton, 1994, 91).

The value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is accordingly influenced by the acknowledgement of cultural content in the form of discourses of cultural authenticity, which adds “lustre” by presenting a “traditional or authentic” cultural
product and version of “Aboriginality” or ‘Indigeneity’ (Benjamin, 2000, 469). As Marcia Langton notes, however, there are different forms of “‘Aboriginality’” or Indigeneity that function as “a field of intersubjectivity in that it is remade over and over again in a process of dialogue, of imagination, of representation and interpretation” of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (1994, 99-100). This necessarily creates multiple “‘Aboriginalities’” produced through the different contexts and interactions that constitute how an artwork is made and received, which is perhaps most evident in the use of Western materials in art production, but also present in the intercultural documentation and explanation of cultural symbols (Langton, 1994, 91, 99-100). The discourses of valuing are therefore diverse, including notions of modernist abstraction, cultural traditions and meanings, and the social relations of production, all of which require intercultural mediation (Altman, 2005, 1).

However, the integration of cultural elements into art history, theory and criticism and the associated value of cultural authenticity sit uncomfortably alongside influential art historical approaches that privileged formalist aesthetics and insisted on a strict separation between aesthetics and the cultural sphere. Additionally, ethnographic display traditionally emphasised the social and cultural relevance of the object resulting in the erasing of “both use value and aesthetic value” (Fry and Willis, 1996, 203), positioning art and aesthetics in opposition to social and cultural discourses. These forms of valuing still affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art through its display, and the aesthetic of some of the materials used such as bark and natural ochres in bark paintings (Edwards, 2007, 61), as well as artefacts such as decorated and carved boomerangs, woven artefacts, didgeridoos and shields.
The tension between the multiple discourses of cultural and artistic/aesthetic authenticity is productively explored by American economic and cultural sociologist Frederick Wherry in his work, “The Social Sources of Authenticity in Global Handicraft Markets” (2006). Wherry’s work is particularly relevant as it explores the, “diversified… understandings and expressions of authenticity in producing and marketing… ethnic and tourist arts” in the Hang Dong district of Thailand (2006, 6). Although Wherry’s research is applied to a different socio-cultural context, it is important to this thesis as the focus on the souvenir production of an indigenous group provides useful insights into general discursive positions.

Addressing conventional notions of authenticity, Wherry notes that they are inadequate as they suggest at one end, “that authenticity becomes endangered (and eventually extinct) in global markets… because buyers might demand artisans to produce images based on signs disconnected from the original history and traditions” (2006, 7). Or, on the other hand, there is also the idea that, “by placing authentic forms on a pedestal, the artisan, the broker, and the consumers protect these forms from profane distortions” halting the natural progression of artistic innovation and production (Wherry, 2006, 9). However, as Wherry correctly identifies, both conceptions have a “taken-for-granted singular meaning” which are “simplistic, over-limited and limiting notion[s] of authenticity” (2006, 10).

These discourses of authenticity identified by Wherry translate all too well to the arts production of Indigenous Australians, with similar concerns over slavishly persevering an ethnographic-style authenticity of the ‘traditional’ as well as concerns
about the lack of ‘authentic’ cultural production ending in meaningless, derivative commercialism. While this affects the whole industry, the discourses are particularly prevalent in the souvenir art sector where it is assumed that there is a reduced level of cultural content due to some products using processes of mass-production and the general commercial emphasis of the sector (which is addressed further in the sections below).

In contrast to these simplistic notions, Wherry posits that authenticity should not be viewed in the conventional, “sliding scale from the authentic to the inauthentic or from simulation to simulacra”, but as a social process of valuing (2006, 28). This process of valuing is constituted by the various discursive constructions that emerge through individual grounded interactions for each circumstance and product across production, retail and consumption (Wherry, 2006, 28). This way of understanding authenticity goes beyond dichotomous constructions and navigates the spaces between the constructions of the “original” and meaningless products or vague simulations. By creating nuanced accounts of particular forms of authenticity, it becomes possible to give consideration to both aesthetic and cultural discourses and values.

As discussed above, the aesthetic and cultural discourses are embodied in the qualities of the products such as the different forms of media, for example the handcarved and internationally marketed figures associated with the handmade original that are also mass-produced described by Wherry (2006, 22). This translates to similar situations in the Australian context (see Chapters 5 and 6). Additionally
this can be extended to other types of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art, such as painted images that are licensed by the artist to be mechanically mass-produced on t-shirts and coffee mugs associated with commercial and everyday objects but also exhibiting the particular aesthetic style of a cultural group. Therefore, in this thesis, I analyse the social process of valuing souvenir art, with all of the diversity, contestations and complexity of products that embody cultural capital to various degrees.

With the mixed discourses of valuation brought together through ideas of modernist art and the integration of cultural theory and research, there are numerous ways to value artworks and many aesthetic and cultural elements to take into account. In his study, Wherry identifies four distinct strategies of artisan discursive engagement with commercial production through his fieldwork in Thailand (2006, 27). However, in this thesis I take Wherry’s account of multiple authenticities, which are in a constant process of competition and re-evaluation, and apply it to the varied discursive constructions associated with contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art production, creating an account of the composite set of values. Therefore, the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is often indeterminate and shifting as each perspective brings with it different approaches, traditions and discursive structures. These structures are brought to bear alongside each other, meaning that the “contradictions of this system resist resolution” (Michaels, 1994, 162).
While collectively Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is hard to value it is still possible to value individual art objects based on the specific discourses that affect them. One of the major art historical discourses that affects the valuing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, and particularly art of the souvenir sector, is the distinction between fine art and other forms of aesthetic or artistic products, which is discussed below.

2.2.3 The Aesthetic and Cultural Discourses of Craft

The category of craft that comes from the Western tradition of art history, theory and criticism further complicates the valuing of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art objects. The category of craft is not represented by one central narrative like modern formalist aesthetics, but has a set of complex ideas with individual histories and developments which came together in the modern period and have been re-evaluated in the postmodern period (Greenhalgh, 1997, 21). Paul Greenhalgh identifies three main discursive structures that make up the modernist craft category in his article “The History of Craft”, describing them as “decorative art, the vernacular, and the politics of work” (1997, 35, original emphasis).

‘Decorative art’ refers to items that have artistic elements, but fail to be considered fine art as the objects retain a functional purpose or “use-value” which is opposed to the romantic view of artistic production as non-commercial and self-expressive (Greenhalgh, 1997, 29). The ‘vernacular’ is Greenhalgh’s term for the natural
aesthetic qualities associated with handmade and pre-industrial techniques of local community cultural practice which “carry the mystique of being the authentic [cultural] voice of society” (1997, 31). Lastly, ‘the politics of work’ is the notion of “the empowering of individual workers, about the political control of the work situation” (Greenhalgh, 1997, 34). The three discourses combine to create the multifaceted category of craft which generally includes some element that relates to having strong associations with a cultural authenticity through the rustic aesthetic and appeal to community-based folk-art cultures; a form of aesthetic authenticity represented as skill, technique and artistic decoration; and a socio-political medium of alternative labour practices (Ioannou, 1989, 68).

This results in a situation where craft is a multitude of things that are not associated with fine art practices, including:

- a particular type of person, environment, genre, technique and market. Pottery, weaving, basket-making, metal-smithing, stick-making; their craftsman makes things by hand using pre-industrial technologies and sells them to make a living. (Greenhalgh, 1997, 24)

These discourses affect the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander craft objects such as woven baskets and carved bowls, and souvenir art objects like carved figures, as well as artefacts that have an element of decorative or artistic design, such as handcarved boomerangs and painted didgeridoos.

But beyond the value of individual objects the discourses have an important bearing on the value of souvenir art, as craft is constructed under modernist art historical discourses to automatically represent a lower status than fine art. The reduction in
status comes from the notion of being “the arts not fine” (Greenhalgh, 1997, 26, original emphasis). Craft and souvenir products are excluded from the category of fine art on the basis of the modernist tenets of self-expression and an aesthetic divorced from utility, often referred to as ‘art for art’s sake’ in opposition to the quotidian. The notion of self-expression restricts craft and some souvenir art products from the category of (modernist) fine art as both require an adherence to certain forms (such as a bowl or mug), which necessarily limits the expression of the artist (Shiff, 1996, 108). The forms are also utilitarian, interfering with the ‘autonomy’ of art due to their association with commercialism in contrast to formalist aesthetics, as well as being linked to ideas about lesser arts which are derived from their association with domestic and non-aesthetic environments (Ioannou, 1992, 27). The discourses of modernism were also set against ornamentation, which was considered as an unnecessary embellishment, an attribute by definition associated with the lesser regarded ‘decorative arts’ (Greenhalgh, 1997, 30). It is these contrasting constructions that Bourdieu notes sets the modernist ideal in opposition to “the universe of everyday objects” (Bourdieu, Darbel and Schanapper, 40).

At once resolving and complicating the discourses of craft, the postmodern re-evaluation of the category integrates perspectives from the disciplines of sociology and social history, which critique the limited status and value accorded to craft objects. Feminist theorists and artists critiqued the underlying gender bias associated with craft products due to the “relationship between gender, traditional crafts, [and] domesticity”, while other theorists focused on the social and historical circumstances that lead to the mixed category of craft, including the role of romanticism and
modernism in denigrating the value of functional items (Ioannou, 1992, 27). While postmodernism re-evaluated the position of craft, highlighting the inconsistencies of craft discourses and therefore increasing the value attributed to craft objects, postmodern pluralism also means that this re-evaluation co-exists with the older discourses, resulting in a reappraised but variable discourse of value.

However, the re-evaluation of aesthetic traditions and criteria, and the integration of fine art modernist discourses from the 1960s and 1970s, allowed the category of craft to encompass notions of aesthetics and “the conceptual preoccupations of the fine arts” (Ioannou, 1992, 26). Through this new permutation, the fine art and craft categories became closer, forming “fine craft” which holds some of the discursive structures of the fine arts, such as self-expression, while remaining a craft due to the original function and utility of the object as well as associated discourses of pure aesthetics, artistic innovation and commercial connotations (Ioannou, 1989, 12). Fine craft gains status and value from its associations with fine art which is the most venerated form of art, but remains a lesser category due to the residue of modernist craft discourses. Therefore, the category of craft is effectively split in two, with fine craft being re-evaluated and appraised along the lines of modernist art, while more conventional craft still attracts the devaluing discourses of modernist status distinctions. However, this does not mean that there is a clear division between the types of craft sold in each sector, as traditional craft objects and artefacts are sold in the fine art market through galleries, as well as fine craft objects retailed in souvenir stores and tourist markets.
2.2.4 Kitsch, Repetition and Postmodern Sensibilities

In a similar construction to that of craft, mass-produced art is designated as a lesser aesthetic form, or simply kitsch, due to the propensity for repetitive designs appropriated from fine art styles to serve commercial ends. The romantic notion of artistic innovation and originality, which is expressed through the modernist avant-garde, is contrasted with derivative designs and repetition (Greenberg, [1939], 1986), with consequences for the value of some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art.

In his seminal essay, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” ([1939], 1986), the influential American art critic Clement Greenberg juxtaposes the (positive) aesthetic and social attributes of avant-garde art with the (negative) aesthetic and social characteristics of kitsch. In particular, Greenberg contrasts the “non-representational or ‘abstract’” and its “aesthetic validity” produced through an “obedience to some worthy constraint or original”, in other words, its artistic authenticity ([1939], 1986, 9) with kitsch. Describing the origins of kitsch, Greenberg states that kitsch is “a product of the industrial revolution” and was devised to fill a gap in the market for those who are “insensible to the values of genuine culture, [but are] hungry nevertheless for the diversion that only culture of some sort can provide” ([1939], 1986, 11, 12). It is important to note that Greenberg’s critique of kitsch was made in the context of the rise of fascism and concerns about the manipulation of the masses, and that autonomous avant-garde art represented a field of critical thinking.
Although Greenberg’s early modernist conception is somewhat dated, and other modernist theorists did not place such an emphasis on formalist aesthetics (Panofsky, [1955], 1993; Gombrich, [1950], 1974), it has an enduring legacy in the definition of the term of kitsch. In Greenbergian modernism kitsch comes to function as the binary other in opposition to avant-garde art, as derivative, clichéd and commercial (Kjellman-Chapin, 2010, 29). Furthermore, the term ‘kitsch’ and the notion of it being in contrast to ‘high’ art, while complicated by postmodern appropriation, “continues to be used with regularity…” (Kjellman-Chapin, 2010, 27), drawing contemporary scholarly attention devoted to its analysis (Kjellman-Chapin, 2010). This opposition is particularly interesting when applied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art as, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is a contemporary artform with discourses of abstraction attached to it, the mass-produced products that use these features can still be considered kitsch in terms of being deliberately commercial and imitative and consequently of less artistic authenticity and less value in modernist terms.

Sam Binkley (2000), an interdisciplinary cultural sociologist in the liberal arts, perceives kitsch to be a neutral, or even a positive form of art in line with postmodern theories. Binkley, in “Kitsch as a Repetitive System: A Problem for the Theory of Taste Hierarchy” (2000), categorises Greenberg’s view as being in the tradition of the mass culture theorists who defined kitsch as a style derivative of higher art styles, imitative, given to formulae and stock motifs, and thus radically inferior to the creativity and innovation found in high culture, and indeed symptomatic of a uniquely modern form of aesthetic corruption. (133)
Binkley’s postmodern take on kitsch asserts the arbitrary distinctions of previous ‘high’ and ‘low’ tastes, attributing to kitsch the more positive characteristics that represent a “unique aesthetic of repetition”, “an appeal to sentimental affirmation over existential probing”, and an “affirmation of rhythm and meter” (2000, 132, 133, 134), producing a different form of artistic authenticity. This postmodern re-evaluation of kitsch reflects the radically different social context to that of Greenberg’s original theorisation, with the re-evaluation taken to be politically progressive as a critique of the rarefied elitism of the modernist art world. While these re-evaluated forms of appreciation are undoubtedly part of a postmodern sensibility where they are enjoyed for their ability to counter the modernist hierarchical discursive structure through a self-aware or ironic approach to the artwork, they do not supersede the modernist discourses. Rather, they are a reworked version of them. Therefore, despite Binkley’s enthusiasm for kitsch properties and interpretations, it is too simplistic to assert that kitsch has been misunderstood, and to remedy the situation by ascribing to it an aesthetic authenticity that rivals the modernist avant-garde. Rather, kitsch can be deployed as a ‘critical’ strategy within contemporary art and consumption practices.

In considering the value of imitative art and repetition, the theoretical framework of this thesis is informed by the work of Christopher Steiner, an American social anthropologist working in art history. In particular I am guided by Steiner’s article, “Authenticity, Repetition, and the Aesthetics of Seriality: The Work of Tourist Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1999), which analyses the complex role of repetition in validating the artistic and cultural authenticity of African masks in the souvenir art market. Steiner argues that the authenticity of souvenir art, especially
mass-produced products, is generated by the repetition of qualities so that each object is validated by the succession of similar objects (1999, 89). Therefore, the repetition of designs associated with kitsch and a loss of value in modernist art theory can actually create value as an “object’s economic worth... depends not on its originality or uniqueness but on its conformity to ‘traditional’ style” which is reinforced by similar designs and objects (Steiner, 1999, 95). This has relevance for souvenir art products which use already known designs or symbols that are not traditionally associated with the artist, but serve to authenticate the aesthetic style and its cultural legitimacy in the market. For instance, the repetitious conformity of designs on some mugs or t-shirts, or even in paintings, can work to validate the aesthetic and cultural authenticity of the product for consumers without a strong background in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.

As previously mentioned, Binkley’s affirmation of kitsch and repetition is informed by the theories of postmodernism, which challenge modernist conceptions of originality and authenticity and allow a plurality of aesthetic styles. The questioning of absolute authenticity and the plurality of postmodernism has also touched the discipline of tourism research and is represented in the concept of the “post-tourist” or postmodern-tourist who recognises “that there is no authentic tourist experience, that there are merely a series of games or texts that can be played” (Urry, 1990, 11, original emphasis). Tourism researcher John Urry describes the postmodern experience of souvenir art. In relation to miniature replicas of the Eiffel Tower, he states that:

it can be simultaneously enjoyed as a piece of kitsch, an exercise in geometric formalism and as a socially revealing artefact. (1990, 100)
Although it is not likely that the range of souvenir art in this thesis will be as stark as Urry’s example, the principle of multiple modes of consumption including the various forms of kitsch, such as Steiner’s repetitive authentication or the self-aware enjoyment of qualities that were deemed as lesser in modernist discourses, is nonetheless applicable to many of the objects. The fact that souvenir art (and art in general) can be experienced or valued in multiple ways does not negate the overall effect of the discourses of valuing and the spectrum of status. Instead it constitutes a form of valuing based on the recognition of the various and competing forms of valuing, informed by a social and cultural art theory. This means that the discourses of valuing and the attendant status are not altered or replaced, but are simply reconstituted (Kjellman-Chapin, 2010, 32).

The field of art history, theory and criticism constructs the subject of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art through the many and various discourses of valuing, which persist, overlap and resist neat resolutions. The construction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art is achieved through the distinctions between artistic objects constituting the categories of fine art, (fine) craft, and mass-produced kitsch and their particular status and value. The categories are based on the interactions of aesthetic, social and cultural discourses constituting particular versions of value, such as avant-garde, anti-commercial authenticity; the grass-roots handmade cultural authenticity of craft; or the postmodern appreciation of kitsch, abstract design and multiple cultural and aesthetic authenticities of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designs on a mass-produced t-shirt. It is important to note that these discourses do not constitute a negation of the modernist concepts of the avant-garde or the divide between ‘high’ and ‘low’ arts as it is often
asserted under postmodern theories, but still rely on forms of originality and authenticity that continue to be generated and need to be accounted for. This results in a situation where the range of products described above span the spectrum of status that operates across the industry, with the discourses of valuing loosely separating the categories of products between the sectors and constructing a lower relative status and value for the souvenir art sector.

The discourses of valuing affect not only aesthetic or art-related subjects, but are also implicated in wider social and cultural issues, including the social relations of production and economic and cultural concerns, with the denigration of souvenir forms, particularly craft and mass-produced products, contributing to the lack of status and attention accorded to the souvenir art sector. This undervaluing is further accentuated by the conventional focus on the economic value of arts production that Bourdieu identifies and addresses by applying social and cultural capital. With this in mind, I now present the next theoretical framework chapter looking at industry policy, political economy, economics, and use-value, before I tie all of these elements together to form the theoretical framework that is applied in this thesis to provide a detailed analysis of the value of the souvenir art sector.
3. Theoretical Framework: Policy, Economics, Political Economy and Value

This second chapter of the theoretical framework addresses the construction of value in the fields of industry and policy research, economics and political economy. These fields are addressed together, following the aforementioned insights of Bourdieu’s (2005, 12-13) analysis (see Section 2.1.2), as policy and industry are intimately linked through the economy created by the political distribution of funding and support; this also necessitates a political economy analysis. Taking this into consideration, I first consider how the production of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is framed by industry and policy research as an industry that generates economic and extra-economic value for producers and the wider society. The way that the industry and its value are constructed and accounted for contribute to the relative undervaluing of the souvenir art sector as economic capital dominates, meaning that the full range of value in the industry is not adequately represented. These constructions of value are followed-up in Chapter 4 in an analysis of the policy environment that informs the political economy of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector.

In the second section of the chapter I present a critique of conventional approaches to economic valuing, including Bourdieu’s reservations about conventional economics and the need to encompass a greater range of values as demonstrated by the previous section. I also consider alternative economic theories, particularly modern political economy and critical political economy, which can accommodate the necessary range of values. In the final section of this chapter I address the imbalance of values.
and forms of valuing by proposing a more robust approach to valuing in the industry, which is applied in the rest of the thesis, in the form of a comprehensive political economy.

3.1 The Sector and Industry: Policy Discourses and the Construction of Value

The first part of this chapter addresses the construction of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, and the souvenir art sector, in industry and public policy research discourse and the standard methods of valuing that come with these. As such, the literature centres on the broad field of industry and policy research, with a specific focus on the discursive construction of value through arts and culture, economic, industry, and Indigenous policy arenas. This focus is not intended to be representative of the whole field, but has been selected to facilitate a focus on the specific circumstances of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry and the Australian policy environment.

It is important at the outset to clarify the terminology commonly used in policy research, with “state” used here instead of “government” as “the state is better able to incorporate the fact that a wide range of public agencies, departments and statutory authorities, not just governments, interact with the economy” (Bell and Head, 1997, 3). Although in the Australian context the word ‘state’ can refer to the form of regional or provincial government, this form is clarified here by either using ‘state
and territory’ or by the name of the regional government, such as the state of South Australia.

To achieve a thorough analysis of the valuation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art, complete with the complexities and subtleties of the various policy areas, I use a qualitative “policy-as-discourse” approach (Blackmore and Lauder, 2006, 98). By using this approach my analysis is consistent with the conventions of policy research, which is shaped by the particular demands of the discipline, with discourse analysis in the field taking into account statements of intention as well as the subsequent actions (Blackmore and Lauder, 2006, 97). This convention is important as many of the policies have not been formally evaluated and it also allows an analysis of policy statements in the qualitative, hard-to-evaluate areas of the extra-economic social and cultural objectives, which are addressed in this section.

The field of industry and policy research is important as it informs the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art through the construction of art production as an industry and the articulation of the values that are sought through state support. In particular, there is much discussion in the field over the policy directions that influence the balance between economic rationales for support and the desire for extra-economic outcomes. For this reason I focus on the theoretical divide between arts and cultural focused policy research that argues for the extra-economic contributions, and industry policy research that represents a primarily economic valuing system; this allows me to highlight the contested and complex forms of
valuing in operation. Through these systems and discourses of valuing a preference emerges for the quantifiable figures of economic capital over the qualitative extra-economic values generated, resulting in a skewed representation of industry value. It is imperative therefore, that the theoretical framework of this thesis can accommodate the multiple values that are generated by the industry to provide a more accurate picture of industry and sector value.

3.1.1 Policy Discourses: Arts and Culture and Industry

Policy research in the area of arts and culture is characterised by Arjo Klamer, an economist from the Netherlands who specialises in the economics of art and culture, as divided between two positions, the culturalist and the economist (2001, 2). Klamer posits that the culturalist position is that traditional economics does not apprehend the “special values of cultural heritage”, while the economists “complain about the failure of culturalists to acknowledge the economics of cultural heritage” (2001, 4). While the characterisation of the contestation between the two positions is a little simplistic and too general to apply to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, it does express the key discursive structures of the field. These discursive structures form a clear division between economic valuations expressed as quantitative figures of employment or sales, and the concessions to extra-economic value which are mentioned as general social and cultural value. Despite this, both structures of valuing are acknowledged and used in the field and as such both quantitative and qualitative values need to be accounted for (see analysis in Chapter 4).
The discourses of economic value in public policy research forms a mode of valuing that is usually gauged by quantitative figures of employment and sales, constructing arts and cultural production as an industry that needs to generate economic capital in the marketplace (Caust, 2003, 54; Craik, 1996, 183). This mode of valuing sits in opposition to the modernist romantic view of aesthetic engagement which is based on the ideal of artistic self-expression unencumbered by non-aesthetic considerations such as the commercial environment and economic gain (see Section 2.2.1). A version of the opposition to commercial considerations based on the modernist romantic view of arts production is advanced in policy research by the ‘culturalists’ who advocate for policy decisions based on the other values generated through engagement with the arts (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, 20). These ‘other’ values are usually qualitatively stated, such as the benefit to national culture and the enrichment of people’s lives. The culturalist position therefore argues for a kind of arts and cultural policy based on the particular (extra-economic) values of arts production and consumption that are not adequately accounted for in economic figures (Klamer, 2001, 2).

The culturalist position does not necessarily discount the economic value of arts production however. Instead it contends that economic considerations have a disproportionate weight in public policy discourses and attributes this considerable influence to a state policy environment where “[e]conomic arguments are fashionable” (Klamer, 1996, 14). This position is evident in Australian arts and cultural management researcher Jo Caust’s article “Putting the ‘Art’ Back into Arts Policy Making: How Arts Policy Has Been ‘Captured’ by the Economists and the Marketers” (2003). Caust argues that the neoclassical economic view used in
contemporary policy debates means that traditional economic discourses associated with the extra-economic values of the arts such as ‘the public good’, ‘positive externalities’, ‘market failure’ and ‘social welfare principles’ are excluded from consideration (2003, 52). It has been noted that the limiting of arguments to narrow economic positions such as those above is part of a broader trend of “economicisation” or economic colonisation under neoclassical economics, affecting conceptions of value and performance evaluation in other public policy areas such as health and education (Arvanitakis, 2007). As discussed in Section 2.1.2 on Bourdieu’s engagement with art and economics, there are problems with this conventional economic approach. This is addressed in more detail in Section 3.2.

With the emphasis on the economic value of arts production in policy discourse under neoclassical ‘economicisation’, the ‘arts as an industry’ discourse also extends to related areas termed the “creative-” or “cultural industries” (Craik, McAllister and Davis, 2003, 18). The term ‘cultural industries’ does not have a universal definition (Pratt, 2005, 33), but usually includes a variety of sectors such as tourism and particularly “cultural tourism” (Craik, 2001, 94), as well as “creative productions and work, intellectual and cultural heritage, and community participation” (Craik, 1996, 189).

However, the concept of the creative or cultural industries has been criticised for having too much “breadth” (Pratt, 2005, 33), or covering too many forms of cultural production. This creates an effect where, what was traditionally called “the arts” (usually formulated around the concept of the fine arts), became “a small player by
comparison with the communications or media areas” (Caust, 2003, 53). Similarly, by grouping together the disparate forms of cultural production within the cultural industries, policies relating to these areas are condensed into a general industry-based economic agenda. This has the effect that cultural industries policy “becomes almost indistinguishable from say, urban policy, welfare policy, environmental policy, unemployment policy or Indigenous policy” in the economic and social outcomes (Craik, 2005, 11).

As arts and cultural industries policy comes to function as a subset of general industry and economic policy the valuing discourses that are used for evaluation of the policy, industry and the cultural goods and services also come to form a set of narrow economic criteria gauged by quantitative figures of “employment creation, cultural tourism, cultural export, and the market-multiplying effect of cultural activity” (Caust, 2003, 52). While these measures of economic value are certainly one aspect of the industry, exclusive focus on these attributes in neoclassical economics means that extra-economic factors are relegated or ignored as ‘externalities’.

In this context, externalities are almost always represented as intrinsically positive; that is, elements not valued by the market through a pricing mechanism that have positive social, cultural or environmental consequences (see Section 3.2.1 for further analysis). However, it has been shown that these same externalities in state funded arts and cultural programs also have potential negative consequences in some circumstances (Matarasso, 1997, 81). Therefore, any comprehensive account of the
value of the industry needs to be flexible enough to accommodate the complexity of positive and negative qualitative extra-economic externalities alongside quantitative economic data. Importantly, Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital that I use to account for these externalities are not necessarily limited to positive values in their application, although they are usually applied in this manner.

While economic arguments are made in relation to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, discourses of positive externality which represent extra-economic values are also mobilised in policy documents (see Section 3.1.2 below). These include the social and cultural benefits of employment, supporting investment in local identity and community, or a general ‘public good’ (Altman, 2000a, 78). This means that targets in cultural industries policies usually commit to a range of economic, social and cultural value in terms of employment and the cultural and social aspects of the industry and values associated with community engagement, and particularly broader governmental aims of “the pursuit of social equity and justice” (Bennett, Emmison and Frow, 1999, 15). These discursive features form a general economic approach to valuing that is evident in the policies of the Australian Commonwealth, states and territories, which display a preference for economic figures while acknowledging social and cultural value with vague statements (see Chapter 4).

A strong example of such industry-focused economic discourses of valuing is the creative industries approach of South Australia (SA), which is formally presented in the Creative Industries in SA Report (Cross-Government Steering Committee, 2005)
and followed-up by references to the creative industries in the revised state plan of 2007 (Government of South Australia, 2007). The definition of creative industries used in the report included “craft, visual arts and Indigenous arts” as one of the components, alongside other categories such as audio-visual, media and digital media, advertising and cultural heritage institutions, in the flexible definition (Cross-Government Steering Committee, 2005, 24). Policies based on this creative industries approach function as economic and industry policies, with employment, industry growth and community engagement policies effectively merged into a single dot point, although it is important to note that the main values and figures put forward refer almost exclusively to economic value (Government of South Australia, 2007, 27).

The emphasis that the industry discourse puts on economic value is evident in SA’s creative industries report, which is expressed in the list of economic benefits of, “employment opportunities for 16,500 people, pays wages of some $640 million... [and] a turnover of $2 billion and contributes almost $1 billion towards... SA” (Cross-Government Steering Committee, 2005, 37-38). In addition, the state plan includes a target (Target T1.26) that addresses Indigenous unemployment, which is recognised as necessary to, “provide for the full and equal participation by our Aboriginal population in the social and economic life” (Government of South Australia, 2007, 17). There is also a specific target that has the goal of developing the creative industries and contributing to community engagement with creative activities (Government of South Australia, 2007, 26). The creative industries target is officially expressed as “T4.1 TARGET – Creative industries (new): increase the number of South Australians undertaking work in the creative industries by 20% by
2014” (Government of South Australia, 2007, 27). The emphasis on economics is in contrast to the vague statements about social and cultural objectives and values that are made in the South Australian policies and plans. This economic focus is also indicative of a general bias in assessments of value that is found across the policy environment (see Section 4.4).

3.1.2 Social and Cultural Value and Evaluation in Policy

There are alternatives to the economic approach as suggested by the culturalist perspective, which, while still couched in the language of industry outcomes, engage with social and cultural value. (Although these engagements with extra-economic value still do not acknowledge Bourdieusian theory). The most clearly articulated discussion of these discourses is in European arts and cultural policy researcher François Matarasso’s study, Use or Ornament?: The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts (1997), which addresses the problem of evaluating the social and cultural benefits of the arts that are identified by policies in the UK.

The social and cultural outcomes are specified in arts and cultural policies in terms of “social cohesion” (or social inclusion), “health and wellbeing”, “identity” (which in the Indigenous context usually also includes statements of ‘cultural maintenance’ or ‘cultural development’) (Matarasso, 1997, 9) or national identity and multiculturalism (Bennett, Emmison and Frow, 1999, 243). The terms are vague and general, with social cohesion referring to bringing people together and facilitating
social and communal bonds (Matarasso, 1997, 37, 7). Local identity is mobilised in projects that have a component of “celebrating local cultures and traditions” (Matarasso, 1997, 8), and health and wellbeing is simply how arts and cultural activities can “make people feel better” (Matarasso, 1997, 9).

Even though the discourses are vague, making evaluation of them difficult, Matarasso’s study demonstrates qualitative methods of evaluation that could provide evidence of the efficacy of social and cultural value (1997, 87). The approaches to arts and cultural policy by Matarasso (1997) and Bennett, Emmison and Frow (1999) in this section provide the background to, and the processes of, my analysis in the identification of the key discursive structures of economic, social and cultural value that are sought and generated by these policies. Significantly, I am able to analyse these values in Bourdieusian terms as capitals and account for them in an integrated system next to economic value, according each an appropriate relative weight based on the strength of the discursive commitment and allocation of resources, instead of the improvised and vague statements of extra-economic values that characterises many current approaches.

Some of the discursive structures and evaluative frameworks for the various values are articulated in the arts and cultural sector policy for the state of Victoria, Creative Capacity: Arts for All Victorians (Arts Victoria, 2003b), as well as the numerous evaluations of state funding programs (Keating, 2002; Department for Victorian Communities, 2006; Arts Victoria, 2007). Creative Capacity clearly sets out an intention of creating economic, social and cultural value stating that, “the cultural
sector has tremendous potential to contribute even more to our society economically, socially and educationally” (Arts Victoria, 2003b, 2). The policy presents the ‘arts as an industry’ discourse, in this case referred to as “the cultural sector”, although in Creative Capacity, the rationale for economic capital is not only tied-in with the cultural industries, but with the broader ‘knowledge economy’.

The broad scale and ambition of the policy is also carried through to the scope of the benefits indicated in the variety of “priority actions” listed under the banner of “fostering local identity”, which includes festivals, Indigenous arts, youth arts, arts education, local arts practice, and workshops (Arts Victoria, 2003b, 20). Discourses of identity are usually associated with social and cultural value, as it indicates the creation or maintenance of interpersonal or social bonds that are formed around a shared cultural activity, such as a festival or common interest (Matarasso, 1997, 8). The discourse of identity and the creation of social value through Indigenous arts participation involve interpersonal and intersubjective creation of forms of “‘Aboriginality’” within and across Indigenous cultural groups (Langton, 1994, 100).

In contrast, identity discourses of broader scope, such as national Indigenous identities or even national Australian identities, require intercultural intersubjective dialogue about the artwork achieved through the textual construction of “‘Aboriginality’” (Langton, 1994, 99-100). This broader discursive structure functions beyond those participating directly in the cultural production or activity and often involves documentation or explanation so that the “aesthetic and cultural values” are understood (Langton, 1994, 105).
A similar discourse is articulated in the general aims of Creative Capacity with the intention to create “a cultural life that builds community, embraces diversity and promotes wellbeing” (Arts Victoria, 2003b, 2). The discourse of wellbeing that is being applied here refers to a vague notion of wellbeing that produces social value through benefits to individuals, groups, or the whole society, which occur due to the emotional, physical, and community ‘health’ that greater social bonds create (Matarasso, 1997, 9). These claims of social identity strengthening and wellbeing can be measured through qualitative surveys of the participants or as relative amounts through the types of networks created (Matarasso, 1997, 75).

Following from the broad evaluative framework of the Creative Capacity policy, there have been multiple evaluations of individual programs and funding structures administered by the Victorian arts advisory and funding body, Arts Victoria. The effectiveness of arts policies is a particular concern in Victoria, with a proliferation of guides and evaluative materials in an area that is noted in the literature as being hard to evaluate and difficult to measure. To overcome the difficulty, Arts Victoria released Evaluating Community Arts and Community Wellbeing: An Evaluation Guide for Community Arts Practitioners, providing “a comprehensive base for undertaking evaluations” (Keating, 2002, vi). As part of the process advocated by the guide, it is recognised that there is a need to provide “a balanced understanding of the role and worth of the arts in our society – one that embraces their aesthetic, cultural, economic and social values” (Keating, 2002, ii). This acknowledgement of the importance of social and cultural value as well as economic value that are required by policies underscores the necessity of accounting for them in a thorough theoretical framework where all the values are accorded appropriate weight.
The first of the documents that evaluates a particular funding program is Strengthening Local Communities, which focuses on “the impact of two Arts Victoria programs designed to provide access to arts and cultural experiences for Victorian communities” (Department for Victorian Communities, 2006, 2). The arts programs were focused on artists working with communities to create new artworks where participants developed new skills and strengthened community and professional networks (Department for Victorian Communities, 2006, 4, 6, 9). The evaluation found that the program produced, “significant benefits for artists, participants and communities”, particularly in the form of social outcomes, such as promoting tolerance and developing a “sense of belonging” (Department for Victorian Communities, 2006, 10).

The second evaluation, Small Arts Organisations Research and Evaluation states that small arts organisations generate economic and social value for the community, with social outcomes being a high priority for the organisations (Arts Victoria, 2007, 6-7). One of the social outcomes that the evaluation found was recognition and cultural diversity, with Indigenous people making up 25% of participants engaged in this manner (Arts Victoria, 2007, 8). The evaluation also details the economic value that is generated, such as the benefit to cultural tourism, with an average of 33% of sales attributed to tourists (Arts Victoria, 2007, 8). Although the programs that were evaluated were not related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art it is clear that it is a possibility, particularly with strong Indigenous participation and the significant economic contribution through cultural tourism that was generated in general.
Furthermore, these evaluations demonstrate that the often vague statements and discourses of social and cultural value can be measured through qualitative assessments and be integrated with economic assessments as well. This results in a situation whereby the discursive constructions of the field of policy research, such as wellbeing, identity, social inclusion, and educational outcomes, create distinct categories of value in the forms of social, cultural and economic value, as well as providing methods for evaluation, which are applicable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art. These categories and discourses of value that form various types of social and cultural capital are analysed, and form part of the assessment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector in this thesis (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Despite using all of these forms of valuing together, the field of policy research has not advanced a particular theory or model that can account for all the values in a complete system. As noted earlier, the economic elements are particularly persuasive and pervasive forms of valuing due to the tendency of ‘economicisation’ in policy and political discourses (Arvanitakis, 2007), which is often in conflict with the qualitative social and cultural value, necessitating a different theoretical model of valuing.
3.2 Economic and Extra-Economic Valuing

In this section I address the economic and extra-economic models of valuing art objects, and bring these elements together to form one consistent political economy method that I apply in the thesis for a comprehensive analysis of the value of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector. The field of economics and political economy provides an influential model of valuing, with a quantitative economic value applied to goods and services based on the characteristics of the product. The economic method of valuing is persuasive, as the industry arguments from the policies above demonstrate. Economics also has a complicated history with artistic products and the field of art history, theory and criticism, which is evident in the romantic notion of artistic production being opposed to commercial and economic concerns. The industry and policy discourses addressed above also suggest that there is a need to account for the extra-economic social and cultural value through qualitative evaluation, representing a different model of valuing that needs to be integrated into the framework. The unique construction of the theoretical framework of this thesis aims to adequately capture the extra-economic values using Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital, and integrating them with an analysis of economic capital by adapting the insights of critical modern political economy.
3.2.1 Economics, Political Economy and Art

The field of economics and political economy encompasses many different approaches to explaining the value of products through the mechanism of an exchange value or price, as well as the processes of the distribution of economic capital, and how to manage the economy to the maximum benefit (or minimal detriment) of society as a whole. I have combined the disciplines of economics and political economy as one field due to their interrelated methods, concepts and history. This section focuses on the approach of political economy while addressing key components of economics. The form of economics used here is neoclassical economics as it is the orthodox and dominant form, which is critiqued by Bourdieu (2005, 1) as being limited in its scope and application. However, I consider other forms of economics in the next section on qualitative and extra-economic models.

The discipline of political economy differs significantly from other forms of economic analysis in the scope of activities that come under scrutiny, with political economy focusing on the politics of exchanges of capital within society, typically engaging with governmental and political authorities’ expenditure and the implications that arise from them (Goodsell, 1984, 289). Political economy analyses are also applied to a large range of economic subjects, including national economy management by governments, the implications of international trade and borrowing, the impact of industries on the environment, and the purchasing decisions of households and individuals. However, this section focuses on the general techniques
that political economy employs in valuing objects, and particularly on the political economy of art and art objects.

The political economy of art objects has been a subject of study since the eighteenth century, which gained prominence in the nineteenth century (De Marchi, 1999, 4), continuing into early twentieth century, with inquiries such as art critic John Ruskin’s book The Political Economy of Art (1907). Ruskin advocates for the retention of artists by the state for public works as they are seen to yield the greatest national benefit (1907, 26). Ruskin was not alone in these views, with Matthew Arnold, a prominent English literary, political and social critic of the same period, advocating that “the creative power of genius” be used for the national benefit of all citizens ([1869], 1993, 79, ix).

However, as economist Neil De Marchi points out, art has not been a major focus of political economy research, especially with the emphasis that early works had on pricing issues and “the valuation of art… considered problematic for economic analysis” (1999, 1). The pricing of goods and services is the central valuing mechanism of the field, however the pricing of art was problematic because “even if the prices of paintings are determinate, those prices do not obey the usual rules, or indeed any rule” (De Marchi, 1999, 2). The main economic rules referred to by De Marchi are the cost of production theory and the theory of utility, where either the cost incurred in the production of goods and services through the materials used or the amount of labour needed, and/or the amount of use or benefit that the purchaser
receives from the good or service will determine the economic value of a given good or service (1999, 3).

De Marchi is quick to point out, however, that the general claim that economists have ignored art as a consequence is false, and the study of art in economics, and particularly in political economy inquiries, has a strong tradition (1999, 4). This tradition has continued in various forms into contemporary research such as Olav Velthuis’ (2005) study, Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art, which presents a sociological account of economics, analysing how the value of fine art paintings are constructed in the primary international art market. Other recent contributions that use a mix of sociological and economic approaches include the statistical account of Michael Hutter et al (2007) of the comparative price structures of dealers and the auction market, and Marta Herrero’s (2010) study of the role that auction catalogues have in the social and economic calculation of value.

However, it is important to recognise that the field of economics and political economy has undergone significant changes throughout its history, and these changes inform methods of valuing, in particular what is and is not considered by the disciplines. In the first instance, at the time of Ruskin in the nineteenth century through to the early twentieth century, the field of political economy was being supplanted by neoclassical economic approaches as the main discipline of economics, with the terms almost interchangeable (1907, 32). However, the field of political economy at that time was also concerned with moral and philosophical
questions about the proper uses of economics for the benefit of humanity (Moore, 2005, 493). John Ruskin suggested that in the management of the political economy of art, an analysis needed to consider:

first, how to get your man of genius; then, how to employ your man of genius; then, how to accumulate and preserve his work in the greatest quantity; and lastly, how to distribute his work to the best national advantage. (1907, 22-23)

In Ruskin’s approach, the tendency to take into account philosophical or moral questions is demonstrated by the last function of determining the political economy of art, that is, how to use art to the best advantage of society. Also evident in Ruskin and Arnold’s approaches are notions of artistic romanticism, whereby the artists are represented as a narrow population of male geniuses instead of workers.

Ruskin argued that there were positive externalities that come from artworks in public spaces, such as galleries where the general public could be exposed to art in an educative environment that enhanced public life (1907, 107). Viewing the positive externalities of art in a different way for a different time, John Maynard Keynes advocated for increased arts funding to ensure the continued employment of artists during the Second World War (Moggridge, 2005, 547). Keynes also argued vigorously for other externalities, including the maintenance of the national culture and boosting civilian morale through the use of the (performing) arts (Moggridge, 2005, 546). These arguments of positive externalities have persisted as discourses that are evident in the policies presented above, such as the employment and educative social benefits of the “knowledge economy” of Creative Capacity (Arts Victoria, 2003b, 2, 20), and the identity and social cohesion findings of the
Strengthening Local Communities evaluated programs (Department for Victorian Communities, 2006, 2). Arguments of the public or social good are a general feature of cultural industries and cultural policy theorising (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005, 7), which are based on economic theory that recognises that there are “spillovers” associated with engagements with market exchanges that cannot be directly priced within its disciplinary boundaries (Klamer, 2001, 10).

Despite the different types of externalities alluded to by various political economists and arts and cultural policies, the typology of externality discourses is fairly consistent in the context of arts and cultural policies and theorising. As previously mentioned, in this context externalities are almost always positive elements that are not priced through a market mechanism. The assumed positivity of the externalities of art are a result of economic arguments of efficiency, where the greatest good, and least harm, is created for all citizens, which in this context is generally rendered as “arguments that demonstrate that with public support of the arts some people would be better and none worse off” because it can be collectively enjoyed by everyone (Klamer, 1996, 17). However, as Matarasso argues, there can be negative effects resulting from arts policies, especially in areas of social and cultural development (1997, 81). This is due to the risks involved for the people engaged, with the potential for interpersonal conflict, confronting situations, or that even positive outcomes are subject to change over time if they are not maintained (Matarasso, 1997, 81).
Additionally, externalities are considered to be unquantifiable by economic methods, in that they are not able to be priced, meaning that the acknowledged value of the externality is not comparable to the economic value given in the setting of a price. These conditions of externality mean that economists are able to label a good or service (or entire industries) as having externalities, and then turn their attention to the market side of the good or service in an analysis of its price value, setting aside the other potential values as they are outside the capabilities or concerns of the field (De Marchi, 1999, 28).

The placing of the specific value of externalities outside the confines of political economy follows from the tightening of the boundaries of economics in the twentieth century. Economics in the post-war period becomes the dominant form commonly referred to as neoclassical economics, which focuses on the movement of economic capital, with little consideration of the moral or philosophical concerns of earlier political economy works. This creates a situation where “[e]conomics becomes more about itself than about the economy” (Klamer, 2007, 5), that is, economics as an academic discipline is involved with issues of modelling and theories that do not necessarily relate to the direct realities of national or international economies. In this environment, David Throsby comments that when neoclassical economic analysis does “attempt to account for culture, it can do so only within its own terms” (2001, 9). For Throsby the solution to this, as noted in his criticisms of Bourdieu in the previous chapter, is to reform economic theory by adding a new form of capital to its analyses in the form of cultural capital (2001, 45). Although I am using Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital in favour of Throsby’s reforms, the point remains relevant, that conventional economics as a field is insulated from questions
that it deems external considerations. The extra-economic values that externalities represent, as well as potential models of valuing that integrate it with economic forms, are considered below for their application in the analysis of this thesis.

3.2.2 Extra-Economic Valuing

In this section I argue for the use of Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital in accounting for extra-economic values alongside economic capital to enable a consistent theoretical framework. This new form of theoretical framework is needed to overcome the current inadequate analyses of valuing in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector that treat social and cultural value as unaccountable externalities. The conventional economic models of appraisal are inappropriate for artistic products and industries as social and cultural value are defined and sought in arts and cultural policies as a part of the overall outcomes that are a necessary and important part of the political economy. Furthermore, as the standard economic mode of appraisal views the extra-economic values as incompatible with economic methods, the two sets of values cannot be accounted for within the same system: yet it is imperative that the extra-economic values are able to be accounted for alongside economic capital to accurately value the sector and correct the traditional bias against extra-economic values.

Therefore, the break between economic value and social and cultural value is not just a theoretical point about externalities and a need to widen the definition of the
acceptable capitals in economic analyses, as Throsby suggests (2001, 45). Instead, neoclassical economics represents a distinctly quantitative method, while social and cultural value are expressed in qualitative terms that cannot be assigned a definite figure. These differences are the result of the processes of valuing where the quantitative economic figure is set at the point of exchange which marks what a consumer is willing to pay for a particular product, while social and cultural value are realised through qualitative processes of assessing the effect on interpersonal relations in the case of social value and the effect of individual and collective manifestations of knowledge as cultural value.

It is often argued that the qualitative nature of the values makes them hard to evaluate (Keating, 2002), but the methods employed in the Arts Victoria evaluations and by François Matarasso such as questionnaires, surveys, interviews, and discourse analysis, have demonstrated that qualitative valuing is not a barrier (Matarasso, 1997, 15). The difficulty lies, however, in the fact that qualitative data “is not easily quantified or compared” (Matarasso, 1997, 16) to quantitative economic data and cannot be accommodated within traditional economic models of valuing. Consequently this generates the need for a mode of appraisal that can accommodate and account for all of these values, such as my use of Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital with economic capital in an inclusive theoretical framework.

Importantly, Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital are able to represent qualitative values in a way that allows for their comparability and interaction with quantitative economic capital as the policies demand. As detailed in Section 2.1, the
concepts of social and cultural capital are symbolic capitals representative of qualitative values which, as a part of Bourdieu’s theory, are able to interact with quantitative economic capital, as they can each be converted or exchanged for other types of capital (2005, 195). The fact that social and cultural capital are treated as commensurate values with economic capital which interacts in an economic model allows the distinct types of value to be brought together into a coherent system.

Furthermore, the concepts of social and cultural capital are able to reflect the values of the industry, as Bourdieu created and applied them especially to account for the symbolic interactions involved in the field of cultural production (1984). As previously mentioned, the context-bound application of the concepts is central to Bourdieu’s theory and is represented in the particular use of social and cultural capital as it applies to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector. As the discursive analysis of the policies demonstrated above, both social and cultural value are sought and claimed, often with specific mention of those values as social and cultural (Government of South Australia, 2007; Arts Victoria, 2003b). The discursive categories lend themselves to the concepts of social and cultural capital (as well as employing the concepts within the categories), making the form of symbolic capital proposed by Bourdieu’s theory readily applicable to this context.

Therefore, the concepts of social and cultural capital are able to represent the qualitative values and be exchanged with economic value, creating an economic model of valuing through Bourdieu’s “economic metaphor” of symbolic capital (Velthuis, 2005, 27). This facilitates an appraisal of the range of values in policies.
and outcomes of organisations active in the sector. For example, the South Australian creative industries policies and revised state plan that focused on economic capital (see Section 3.1.1), also stipulated that social and cultural value be generated in the form of community engagement through creative activities and social and economic participation (Government of South Australia, 2007, 26, 17).

Although there is still the problem that these statements are very vague and are dwarfed by the stated economic figures of the policy, they do demonstrate a commitment to generating social and cultural capital. In particular, these extra-economic capitals are justified by claims of creating greater employability, through the cultural capital generated in applying cultural knowledge in arts production and the furthering of skills, and notably the creation of communal bonds through creative expression that represent a stronger commitment to social capital. Even though the amount of social and cultural capital expressed remains qualitative and can only be assessed as relative amounts, with stronger discursive commitments to social capital than cultural capital, the extra-economic values are nonetheless made accountable with, and convertible to, economic capital. This can be seen with both the social and cultural capital realised through the provision of services and programs based in economic capital (such as grants or financial incentives).

This model of valuing is still not compatible with the neoclassical economic model however, as it challenges the theoretical assumptions about how the market operates and the process of price formation. In particular, it challenges the assumptions of utility-maximisation and the cost of production, as it provides alternative
explanations for consumer behaviour instead of conventional ‘externalities’ outside of the theory. There are other forms of political economy however, which are able to house economic and extra-economic value/capital within their theoretical structure, with modern political economy and critical political economy forming the basis of this framework here, as discussed in the next section.

3.2.3 Critical Modern Political Economy, Bourdieu and Value

The alternatives to neoclassical economic political economy that are used in this thesis are a combination of approaches from cultural and political economists, with Bruno Frey’s modern political economy (1978) and Graham Murdock and Peter Golding’s critical political economy (2005), forming what I have termed ‘critical modern political economy’. These alternative approaches to political economy and economic theory have a long and complicated history in the post-war period (Frey, 1978; Murdock and Golding, 2005). The combination of critical and modern political economy approaches brings a well-rounded set of alternative theories to bear with Frey’s theory representing Marxist critiques (Frey, 1978, 37), which are similar to those that inform the cultural turn in art history, theory and criticism (see Section 2.2.2). Additionally Murdock and Golding’s critical political economy employs theoretical concepts and analytical techniques associated with policy research that are often applied to the cultural industries (Murdock and Golding, 2005, 60) (see Section 3.1.1).
Bruno Frey argues in his book Modern Political Economy that there is a need to take a wider view of the political processes that affect economic analyses in contrast to neoclassical political economy, as “economic development depends on political factors, and economic factors have a strong influence on political decisions” (1978, 3). He further contends that modern political economy remedies this narrow focus by including, “the democratic process”, and its effects in the methodological assumptions (Frey, 1978, 6). The inclusion of political processes in economic analyses means that it is possible, in theory, for goods and services with externalities (such as art products) to have a concurrent value determined across the market and the state, with state policies used to instruct and gauge the non-economic values that arise, as demonstrated in the policy analysis above.

Although there is no set formula for performing a political economy analysis (Anderson, 2004, 141), Frey (1978) identifies and compares the approaches of the main streams of thought in post-war political economy analyses up to that point. Most relevant to this study are the approaches of radical economics and applied economic theory. Both schools of thought take as their basis neoclassical economic theory, but differ in the approach to it. Radical economics mainly provides a “critique of (neo-) classical theory with the attempt to construct a theory of its own” (Frey, 1978, 37) from a Marxist perspective. Although this thesis does not engage with a Marxist critique of the capitalist system, radical economics does provide criticisms of neoclassical economics that have informed the theoretical framework, including the assumption that consumers are always utility-maximising, and the emphasis placed on quantitative forms of capital (Frey, 1978, 42). As previously mentioned, the assumption of utility-maximising is inappropriate for artistic objects
as their value relies at least in part on ‘externalities’, although there are some products such as artefacts and crafts which may be affected by discourses of utility. Also, the critique of quantitative capital is important for this thesis as it forms the basis for the inclusion of Bourdieu’s qualitative capitals, and the role of the state is included through analysis of policies using the political economy method (see Chapter 4).

Applied economic theory uses neoclassical economic theory to analyse state social policy, providing coherence to economic arguments by stabilising theory in counterpoint to the reworking of assumptions through the radical economics approach (Frey, 1978, 160). The form of policy analysis also has a different emphasis to that of radical economics, with applied theory usually focused on state policy advice for “practical application” (Frey, 1978, 49). The combination of political economy approaches, particularly in the area of policy research and analysis, allows for a breadth of analysis of disciplinary areas to be addressed such as the indigenous, industry, economic and cultural policies discussed in Section 3.1, as well as areas of evaluation and outcomes.

In addition, this thesis is also informed by “critical political economy”, which brings together an analysis of the “textual construction and consumption” of policy discourses and “the economic organisation of media industries” (Murdock and Golding, 2005, 60), providing an account of industry value. The approach also incorporates a concern for the historically grounded description of qualitative research and a focus, “on the interplay between the symbolic and economic
dimensions” (Murdock and Golding, 2005, 60-61). The inclusion of symbolic and economic aspects across both policy and industry analysis, facilitates the use of Bourdieu’s symbolic capitals across a broad political economy analysis and affirms the grounded qualitative analysis of the theoretical framework. All of the approaches outlined here, including critical political economy, provide different approaches to that of orthodox or mainstream economic theory by emphasising the, “overlap and mutual interdependence of social, economic and governmental/administrative activities” (Bell and Head, 1997, 2).

Critical and modern political economy works on art are rare, and rarer still are works that attempt to analyse the value attached to arts-related goods and services that could serve as a guide for the analysis of this thesis. Some works of modern political economy that focus on art have featured analyses of broad trends in governance (Zimmer and Toepler, 1996), and types of governments and policies (Frey, 1999). Most of the other works approaching this topic would be more properly referred to as cultural economics or cultural policy research and do not usually incorporate political economy approaches.

Therefore, the sense in which ‘political economy’ is used in this thesis is similar to Bruno Frey’s “modern political economy” which combines the strength of the approaches of radical political economy in questioning the assumptions made by neoclassical analyses while applied economic theory provides consistency to the arguments posed (1978, 160). In addition, ‘political economy’ also incorporates the major points of “critical political economy”, with its focus on qualitative analysis and
the inclusion of symbolic aspects of production and consumption alongside economic value (Murdock and Golding, 2005, 60). Therefore, ‘critical modern political economy’ in this thesis is taken to be the study of the symbolic and economic outcomes of the political distribution of capital through the analysis of state policies which are applied to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry.

3.3 Theoretical Framework: Conclusion

The theoretical framework of this thesis incorporates Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital into a critical modern political economy analysis, accommodating and accounting for a wider array of value arising from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art in Australia. The use of this theoretical framework is intended to provide a novel approach and contribute new solutions to the questions of value and the souvenir art sector. The concepts of social and cultural capital and the critical modern political economy approach used in this thesis are able to address the assumptions that underlie the neoclassical theory and its limitation of only accommodating quantitative data. The limiting of value to the quantitative figures of economic capital and its subsequent emphasis in policies and the industry has led to an undervaluing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector as it generates significant extra-economic values that have not been adequately accounted for. The theoretical framework here is designed to confront these assumptions and limitations by including qualitative types of capital to create “a comprehensive balance-sheet of symbolic profits, without forgetting the
undifferentiatedness of the symbolic and material aspects” (Bourdieu, 1977, 181, original emphasis).

The idea of a “comprehensive balance-sheet” is particularly important to this thesis as it brings relevance to the analysis of the political economy of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector by recognising the qualitative values of souvenir art that have not been adequately acknowledged. The value of souvenir art objects is accounted for by the concepts of social and cultural capital capturing the ‘externalities’ of the products, which are also represented in the policy statements of the industry as economic, social, and cultural objectives. The political economy analysis of social, cultural and economic capital is able, therefore, to encompass the full range of economic and symbolic values in the resulting outcomes, instead of the traditional concerns of purely financial analyses.

Through this theoretical framework I am able to address the construction of the value of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector across the various fields considered here, and expand the consideration of value from economic and vague extra-economic or artistic values to accountable and relative amounts of social, cultural and economic capital (see Chapter 4). From the analysis of the construction of value of the sector, I am also able to analyse the social, cultural and economic value that is generated by organisations active in the sector, the value engendered by their products and the end value generated by the organisations due to the political economy within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector. Therefore, through the comprehensive range of value able to be gauged and assessed
as part of the political economy, this theoretical framework allows for a better account of the value of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector. Additionally, the application of the theoretical framework and the account of value that it yields create new possibilities for engaging with the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and assessments of value in public policy more broadly (see Chapter 7).
4. An Outline of Industry Policy and the Division of the Sectors

This chapter analyses how the discursive structures of public policies act to mark and define the relative value of the fine art and souvenir art sectors within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry. The analysis follows on from the survey of the framing discourses of value across the range of art, cultural, economic and industry policy and research, which represent the public value of the industry and sectors as predominantly economic with vague extra-economic outcomes (see Chapter 3). From this basis I am able to analyse the values that are constructed through the different directions that policy discourses and the industry have taken since the industry’s inception. The values that are constructed are central to the political economy of the souvenir art sector and the reasons why it has been, and continues to be, undervalued. Unsurprisingly, this consistent undervaluing has resulted in a lack of research, development and focus on the sector.

To highlight and address the undervalued and largely unacknowledged position of the souvenir art sector, I examine the policy developments of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry holistically. In particular I focus on appraisals of value, noting the type of value/capital required by or sought in policy and funding documents. By addressing the specific policy discourses I am able to situate the industry and its value within the context of the broader policy environment. This is important as it affects the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art through the construction of arts production as an industry and gives rise to policy directions that privilege particular art objects and practices over others.
To analyse the policy landscape of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, I draw on a number of previous studies that have addressed the development of the industry and the various associated policies. In particular, I rely on the work of Professor Jon Altman from the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University, as it provides the most comprehensive account of the industry and policy. Altman presents a very useful analysis of the history and policy directions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry in his book Brokering Aboriginal Art: A Critical Perspective on Marketing, Institutions, and the State (2005) and follow-up article “Art Business: The Indigenous Visual Arts Infrastructure” (2007). He also analyses the structure and value of the industry in the article “Selling Aboriginal Art” (1991), which is followed up a decade later in “The Indigenous Visual Arts Industry: Issues and Prospects for the next Decade” (2000b). Further, Altman (2000a) provides data on the role, practices and efficacy of art centre funding and support.

There are a few other significant contributors who analyse the directions taken and interrelations between the industry and policies. Relevant works have been provided by Jennifer Craik (2001) and Felicity Wright (1999; 2000). Additionally, there are important contributions to industry data and analysis from two federal level reviews, the Report of the Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Inquiry (2002) or Myer report, and Indigenous Art, Securing the Future: Australia’s Indigenous Visual Arts and Craft Sector (2007) by the Senate Standing Committee.
I combine the above works with a selection of policy documents and funding statements and take a thematic approach to analysing the policy and funding directions, as the industry value that is constructed through the discursive operations of each policy direction forms the basis of appraising value. I have identified three main policy types that express the principal discursive structures of policy constructions of the industry: Indigenous policy focused on social and cultural outcomes to address issues of disadvantage, inequality and participation; arts and cultural policy that advocates and supports the social and cultural benefits of aesthetic production and consumption; and cultural industries (including cultural tourism) policy which aims to increase and develop economic outcomes or potential. Each policy type is addressed in its own section with relevant policy documents to facilitate a focus on their respective discursive structures. These policy types include a range of positions that are not necessarily exclusive to one category and as a result some of the same policy documents will be referred to in more than one category to provide a comprehensive analysis of the discursive constructions.

I consider the discursive content of both federal and state/territory policy directions, which are summarised in Appendix B, in an attempt to gauge both the relative weight given to economic, social and cultural value expressed as intentions or actual allocations (Blackmore and Lauder, 2006, 97), and the broader industry and sector directions. These values follow the pattern identified in Section 3.1 of economic and extra-economic values, which I have rendered as social, cultural and economic capital through the application of the theoretical framework formulated in Section 3.3.
This approach represents an alternative to the cohesive narrative of the development of the industry and policy at the federal level, which has been the main focus of most other studies. The focus on the federal environment is understandable as it does have the main “power over Aboriginal affairs, income taxation, [and] social security” (Bell and Head, 1997, 5), which is pertinent to the analysis here. The analysis of state and territory policy directions has usually been sidelined in favour of national/federal developments, yet these are important drivers of focus and change within the local environments of organisations involved in the industry. It is important to note that, while I cover the span of industry and policy operations over the past four decades at the federal level, I limit my analysis of the multiple policy directions of the eight states and territories to 2000-2009. Furthermore, while governments at the federal and state/territory levels have undertaken different policy directions at various times due to particular local trends or issues, the thematic analysis is able to bring to light the broad policy directions and discursive structures that create value within the industry and the sectors.

The forms of value that are established through policy positions and industry developments are important as they create distinctions that separate the fine art and souvenir art sectors. As I argue in Section 4.4, the seemingly unified industry and policy discourse of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art production is divided, not only in the structure of the retail markets, but also in the policy environment. Importantly, this unacknowledged division of the sectors reflects assumptions about the relative economic and cultural worth of the sectors. These assumptions are influenced by the social status accorded to souvenir art, resulting in the situation whereby the policy engagements with the industry not only overlook the value
generated by the souvenir art sector, but also contribute to the undervaluing of the sector by diminishing its significance.

Acknowledging and addressing the souvenir art sector in policy and funding documents is therefore important, as to do so has the potential to raise the recognition of the current social, cultural and economic value of the sector, as well as increasing that value by confronting the bias towards the economic credentials of the fine art sector. With the acknowledgement of the sector and its value in policy there is greater scope for programs and initiatives focused on social and cultural capital creation in Indigenous communities to use souvenir art production to achieve these goals, further strengthening existing enterprises and the sector in general.

4.1 Indigenous Policy: The Creation of Arts Production as an Industry

Indigenous policies have been central to defining the industry and its range of values through the articulation of what they should address, and importantly how they should be assessed and evaluated. This is most obvious in the formation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture as an area of specific public policy interest aimed at pursuing objectives of social, cultural and economic value. This area of policy began in the period from the late 1960s to early 1970s when Indigenous policy changed from protectionist and assimilation discourses to self-determination, which was formally introduced in 1972 (Altman, 2007, 43). The shift in policy had a dramatic effect, moving away from a focus on state or state-
sanctioned institutions such as missionary settlements performing the role of guardians and managers, to a commitment to self-determination that allowed Indigenous peoples greater autonomy.

As part of the self-determination policies arts production was promoted as an economic and cultural activity that could lead to greater opportunities for Indigenous peoples, particularly in the area of remote and regional employment (Altman, 2005, 4-5). Key institutions and infrastructure for the industry were either established during this period or underwent significant change (Altman, 2005, 6). This was most notable in the area of Indigenous art centres, institutions in the form of incorporated community-based organisations that are managed by a governing executive body, elected from the Indigenous community (Altman, 1991, 6; 2005, 6; Wright, 1999, 27). Significantly for the analysis of the sectors, art centres create product industry-wide, with most art centre production representing “an imprecisely defined combination of both tourist [souvenir art] and fine art” (Altman, 1991, 6-7).

The new arts and Indigenous policies lead to existing institutions transitioning from “part-time” and predominantly missionary-owned and operated enterprises to Indigenous-owned arts and cultural infrastructure (Altman, 2005, 6). It also lead to the outright establishment of some Indigenous art centres, some of which were associated with the outstation movement where Indigenous peoples previously in amalgamated missionary or rations centres returned to traditional lands or town centres (Altman, 2007, 44). However, the majority of art centres were still “dependent on public patronage” (Altman, 2005, 2).
Indigenous policy that is focused on arts and cultural production therefore forms the basis of the industry and also of most of the policy directions that are discussed here. The legacy of the initial Indigenous policy directions go beyond the general platform of engagement in the area, with specific Indigenous policies returning to the key discursive structures of Indigenous self-empowerment and enterprise. This is evident in the Hawke government’s creation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 1989. ATSIC functioned as an all-purpose advisory and services body for the Indigenous community at the federal level, with the services it performed and funded usually related to facilitating arts and cultural programs. The main cultural and commercial initiative that ATSIC administered took the form of the National Arts and Craft Industry Support Strategy (NACISS), primarily as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art program providing operational funding and support to art centres (Wright, 1999, 45). The NACISS program was created and administered by ATSIC after it was negotiated that responsibility for Aboriginal visual arts be transferred from the Australia Council to ATSIC in 1991 (Wright, 1999, 47), representing the shifting pattern of infrastructure and Indigenous policies.

One of the ways of describing the value of the industry is to provide an economic figure of total sales, total employment and/or artist income. This form of valuing is clear in Jon Altman’s study “Aboriginal Art Centres and NACISS: an Appraisal of Performance Based on Audited Financial Statements” (2000a), which analyses the efficacy of funding to Indigenous art centres and the return to artists. Altman finds that “every dollar of support for a sample of 17 centres generated $6.40 in sales and $4.30 in returns to producers” (2000a, 78). These results represent strong financial returns based on the NACISS funding administered by ATSIC, which according to
the Myer report totalled approximately $7 million in 2000 (Myer, 2002, 199). These figures of economic capital often culminate in an appraisal of the economic value of the industry. Altman provides an analysis of assessments of the industry worth in “The Indigenous Visual Arts Industry: Issues and Prospects for the next Decade” (2000b) with estimates at the time varying between $155 million and $200 million, depending on which parts of the sales and industry sectors are included (89).

However, these figures only demonstrate the economic capital expended and an appraisal of the value generated, despite other extra-economic outcomes being specified in the policies. This includes funding designed to encourage “preservation, development and promotion of arts and culture within remote communities” (Myer, 2002, 199).

In another change of direction, emphasis and institutional affiliation, the NACISS program, now called the National Arts and Crafts Industry Support (NACIS), was transferred from ATSIC to the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA). This move was in part necessitated by the Howard government’s abolition of ATSIC in 2004, which marked a significant shift in Indigenous policy (Altman, 2007, 47). The policy direction changed from self-determination, represented by the Indigenous representative body of ATSIC distributing funds for social and cultural projects, to Indigenous-specific initiatives within a “mainstream” department, effectively “divesting the responsibility for Indigenous affairs across all government departments” (Altman, 2007, 47; 2005, 14).
Despite the changes there was continued support through the NACIS program for Indigenous art centres. Additionally, the process of mainstreaming also included an element that counter-balanced the policy providing a transitional phase-out, with Indigenous-specific funding initiatives drawn from existing funding and transformed into special and limited support. This included the “Indigenous visual arts special initiative (IVASI), which provide[d] $4 million over four years (2004-05 to 2007-08)”, and later the former Regional Arts and Culture Support (RACS) transformed into Indigenous Culture Support (ICS) which delivered $6.8 million in 2006-2007 (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 61, 43). Additionally, there was $5.6 million in 2006-2007 in NACIS funding from DCITA (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 61).

There were some changes to the funding and support with the election of the Rudd government in late 2007, which were enacted through modifications of the pre-existing content and initiatives, and shifts in the ministerial departments responsible for the measures. The Rudd government rearranged the ministerial portfolios and the corresponding departments from the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts. Despite the arts being subsumed by an ostensibly environmental portfolio, the majority of the programs that had been administered remained the same. However, these initiatives were re-badged under the banner of “Arts and Culture” and were justified by arts and cultural policy discourses (see Section 4.2). The renamed initiatives included the NACIS program, Indigenous culture support (ICS), Indigenous visual arts initiatives, and provision for art centres (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts, 2008a). There has been little change
in the policy direction since Julia Gillard became prime minister, although there were slight changes in emphases, which I detail later.

The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts claimed to assist in, “the maintenance of cultural practice within Indigenous communities and the promotion of Indigenous cultures as dynamic and integral elements of Australian culture and identity” (2008a); this acknowledges the cultural capital of Indigenous culture that is embodied in Indigenous arts. The emphasis on cultural capital seems to indicate a change in rationale from industry support and economic rationality to empowerment and cultural support. However, the focus shifts back from the cultural to the economic with the initiatives concerning the NACIS program, as the main web-page stated that, “the program’s overall objectives are to assist art centres to become stronger and to build a more sustainable Indigenous visual arts industry” (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts, 2008b).

The major contribution to Indigenous policy of the Rudd/Gillard Governments, the Closing the Gap policy framework, focuses on the “key areas of life expectancy, infant and child mortality, early childhood education, literacy and numeracy skills, school completion rates, and employment outcomes” (Australian Government, 2009, 10). The most relevant components of this focus to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry are the wellbeing subsection of the life expectancy ‘building block’ and the employment outcomes, addressed primarily through the benefits to health and wellbeing of accruing social and economic capital (Australian Government, 2012, 120, 40). However, there is only a little direct engagement with
the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, with a commitment to continuing the former NACIS finding and support, which has been renamed Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) program (Australian Government, 2012, 101).

The majority of initiatives associated with the Close the Gap policy that are aimed at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry are incorporated through tie-ins with a number of other complementary measures. These programs and policies include the continuation of the previously mentioned Indigenous Culture Support (ICS) through the Commonwealth Office of the Arts (Office of the Arts, 2012), the draft national cultural policy (Office of the Arts, 2011) and the associated review of the Australia Council (Trainor and James, 2012). However, these complementary programs and policies do not reflect the broader Indigenous policy of the Close the Gap framework, but rather the discursive structures of arts and cultural and cultural industries policy, and will be addressed further in Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

The continuation of the focus on economic capital and employment as well as the appeals to social and cultural capital in the Close the Gap framework and the addition of other types of policies under the same umbrella demonstrate that there is some overlap and merging between the Indigenous and arts policy areas. This merging is to be somewhat expected considering that I am focusing on policy directions that relate to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry. However, there are substantial differences in approach and valuing discourses that are mobilised between the Indigenous policy model, which is driven by the need to address forms of socio-economic disadvantage across a range of areas, and arts and
cultural policy, which principally focuses on the facilitation of arts and cultural production on the basis of the (usually extra-economic) benefits.

It is under the broad Indigenous policy direction that the production and sale of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, including souvenir art, is established as a unified industry and market. Within this unified structure key institutions like art centres and later ATSIC developed, with aims of self-determination achieved through economic, social and cultural objectives. However, appraisals of industry value relied heavily on economic figures of sales and employment. The later shift towards “mainstreaming” further emphasised evaluations based on economic capital, with social and cultural capital that was also sought remaining vaguely stated. This focus on economic capital results in the souvenir art sector becoming obscured by the known figures of the fine art sector and the associated assumption that the souvenir art sector derives relatively less economic value, and social and cultural capital, as a result of its lower social status.

4.2 Arts and Cultural Policy Initiatives, Outcomes and Extra-Economic Values

Arts and cultural policy focused on Indigenous participation in arts production is clearly articulated for the first time in 1973 with the creation of the Aboriginal Arts Board as part of the Australia Council, in operation formally from 1975 (Altman, 2007, 44). The Australia Council for the Arts (or the Australia Council as it is commonly called) is the federal independent authority that advises the government
on arts policy and issues, distributes funding and grants for arts and culture, and promotes the arts and culture. The Australia Council has been restructured several times during its existence, but has generally maintained some sort of peer-assessed artform or activity-based boards, with the Aboriginal Arts Board, which later became the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts board, representing the particular cultural expressions of Indigenous peoples. The board’s status as a genre in its own right within the Australia Council is interesting as, although it definitely represents a distinct aesthetic and cultural style, the separation of Indigenous artistic expression from other artform specific funding categories establishes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art as a special case. The formation of the Aboriginal Arts Board not only provides a source of funding, but also establishes an independent federal Indigenous arts policy body and advocate through the Australia Council’s advisory role.

The boundary between Indigenous policy and arts and cultural policy was made clearer following a recommendation from the 1989 review into the industry that contributed to the shifting of some of the existing funding for art centres from the Australia Council to the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and later to ATSIC from 1992 to 2004 (Altman, 2005, 8; 2007, 47). The change in funding arrangements away from the Australia Council limited it to supporting specific arts projects through grants instead of funding organisations (Altman, 2005, 8). This change signalled a move to specific cultural funding and support focused on community-based organisations (Altman, 2005, 8). The shift in funding infrastructure represented a shift in policy direction away from a general cultural policy towards “a blending of the cultural with the commercial” achieved by federal
government departments and ATSIC with their larger allocation of resources (Altman, 2005, 8).

The role of the Australia Council became the distribution of arts and cultural grants for individual projects and advocating for the place of arts and culture in Australian public life through research and policy development. As part of the arts and cultural policy agenda in the early 2000s the Australia Council produced several research reports and policies concerning the visual arts and Indigenous arts, which represent different processes of according value. The discussion paper Planning for the Future from 2001 addresses the Australia Council’s role in disseminating and funding arts and culture, with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, and the Visual Arts and Crafts Board discussion groups most relevant to the current focus. Additionally, the Australians and the Arts (2001) report, which is based on survey and interview material collected by Saatchi and Saatchi and commissioned by the Australia Council, provides complementary research of the views of Australians towards the arts and how they are valued within contemporary society. There was also the wide-ranging Myer Report (Myer, 2002), which provided an appraisal of the funding and values generated by arts and culture in Australia.

The latter half of the decade is marked by a shift towards publishing guides and offering practical services, particularly within Indigenous arts, such as Protocols for Producing Indigenous Australian Visual Arts (Australia Council, 2007), and the Senate Committee report that included submissions from Australia Council, *Indigenous Art, Securing the Future: Australia’s Indigenous Visual Arts and Craft*
Sector (2007), which recommended the production of the Indigenous Art Code (2010). This period concludes with the Review of the Australia Council (2012), which suggests a division between funding for excellence within the Australia Council and community arts programs, instigated by the drafting of a New National Cultural Policy (considered separately in Section 4.3). However, it is the types of value and the associated discourses of the arts and cultural policy direction in the early part of the decade that established the key divisions that are reproduced here.

Australians and the Arts reported that the majority of Australians place a high value on the arts (Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, 2001, 46). When this result was investigated further it was found that the positive valuing of the arts seemed to be a consequence of the importance placed on the social and cultural aspects. However, the economic form of valuing was also prominent, with the finding that the “potential business benefits of the arts were recognised by three-quarters of people surveyed (76%), who agreed that the arts ‘can mean very profitable business, both at home and overseas’” (Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, 2001, 336).

In contrast, the Myer Report represents value by figures of total sales for the arts industry (as distinct from the cultural industries, see Section 4.3), which includes the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry as well as other topics of interest, such as craft-specific data and analysis. The report first establishes the economic sales value of the visual arts and craft industry in general as “approximately $160 million” in 1996–1997 (Myer, 2002, 43). It then goes on to state that there are no definitive figures for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, but that
“[i]n 1999-2000, commercial galleries sold $35.6 million of Indigenous artworks, $12.6 million of which was secondary sales” (Myer, 2002, 245). However, as the Myer Report notes, the “financial estimate of the contribution of the sector to the Australian economy may under-estimate its true value, due to the social and external benefits it provides” (Myer, 2002, 43).

All of these forms of valuing are represented in Planning for the Future, which provides an insight into the particular discursive structures around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and crafts. As previously mentioned, the idea of a separate funding category for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts (ATSIA) in the Australia Council is interesting as it established and continues to make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art a special case. The separation of Indigenous-made art from the rest of Australian art in the policies of the Australia Council was noted by the participants in the discussion, whose opening statement rejected this divide in the “dream” that:

[i]n 2010 there will be only Australian art that reflects the overall Australian landscape and future of society, that is, our Indigenous art and practices will be accepted on their merit rather than their identity. (Australia Council, 2001, 25, original italics)

The sentiment expressed in the statement above represents a tension between the objectives of arts policies, which are based on the principle of a ‘meritocracy’ where funding is awarded on the aesthetic achievement of an artwork or artist, as positioned against the non-aesthetic, social, cultural (and economic) focus of Indigenous policy directions. The tension between these policy types results in the ‘dream’ of general artistic acceptance being abandoned, while the rest of the discussion considers more
immediate policy directions focusing exclusively on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts development, and issues of social, cultural and economic value aside from artistic/aesthetic values. There is an attempt to confront these tensions, however, with the proposed changes in the 2012 Review of the Australia Council with the removal of artform boards and a more defined focus on excellence (Trainor and James, 2012, 8-9), which is discussed further below.

Planning for the Future identified three main areas for improvement in Indigenous arts development. The first area is control, with the discussion group asserting that, “Indigenous artists should have control of: … branding of Aboriginal products; a process for a label of authenticity… [and the] autonomy of the ATSI Arts Fund…” (Australia Council, 2001, 26). The control of the fund is an industry-wide measure that seeks greater self-determination in a similar manner to the role ATSIC played at the time in administering and distributing the bulk of cultural funding (Myer, 2002, 199).

The second and third areas, headed “Influence” and “Structures” state that there should be a coordinated national policy framework for all governments and calls for “State/Territory governments to recognise art as part of Aboriginal community development” (Australia Council, 2001, 26). These measures are primarily structural and a generally non-descript form of social and cultural policy dressed as an industry-wide arts policy, as the main objective is expressed as Indigenous “community development” achieved through participation in the industry.
In response to the concerns over the control of the ATSI Arts fund and other parts of the industry at the time, work was already being undertaken to address the issues of control over branding and particularly the label of authenticity through the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association (NIAAA) label of authenticity, which was in operation from 1999 to 2003 as noted by the Myer report (Myer, 2002, 155). Although the NIAAA label ultimately failed due to administrative costs, it was a significant undertaking in an area that is often cited as a concern both in the souvenir art sector, where unfair or unethical competition from imports and “fakes” is an issue, and in the fine art sector where imitations and copyright are prominent issues (Altman et al., 2002, 17, 20). These issues are followed up in the 2007 Senate report (see Section 4.3) and are addressed in part by the release of the Indigenous Art Code in 2010.

While the Indigenous Art Code is centrally concerned with promoting the cultural authenticity of artworks in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, it has been positioned as a means to “guide ethical commerce in the sector” (Indigenous Art Code Limited, 2010, 1). The Code’s focus on the commercial aspects of the industry is appropriate given that it is the main site with the resources and means to monitor and control the ethical purchase and sale of artworks. However, the commercial focus also necessarily emphasises the aim of generating economic capital within the industry. The promotion of the code and its members at the point of sale and in other materials (Indigenous Art Code Limited, 2010, 6-7) does also serve to highlight and potentially enhance the cultural capital generated by the industry. I return to the Art Code in Section 4.4.
The concerns about having a separate ATSI funding category and the division of powers within and between federal and state/territory funding responsibilities were addressed in the 2012 Review of the Australia Council (Trainor and James, 2012). Taking its cues from the broad terms of reference the co-chairs, Gabrielle Trainor and Angus James, provide a wide-ranging review that includes the original aims, scope and structure of the Australia Council (Trainor and James, 2012, 9). The review affirms “the two principles on which the Council was established – that is, operation at arm’s length from government, and decision-making on funding based on the assessment of artistic merit by a panel of peers” (Trainor and James, 2012, 9). However, the proposed approach to artistic merit and the peer assessment is different to the recent operations of the Australia Council, with applicants assessed by a board of peers instead of artform-specific boards, placing a greater focus on ‘artistic excellence’ (Trainor and James, 2012, 9).

The replacement of the artform boards is significant as it brings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts under the same mainstream categories as other artists and accords with the ‘dream’ of the Planning for the Future paper (Australia Council, 2001, 25). It also accords with the renewed focus on artistic merit and the contribution to social and economic values (Trainor and James, 2012, 9). However, this focus is in tension with the stated aspirations for community-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts development and the values of social and cultural capital (Australia Council, 2001, 26). The tension is resolved through a restructure of the responsibilities, with the Australia Council focusing on artistic merit and the federal Office of the Arts supporting “community cultural maintenance as part of the Australian Government’s broader policy on ‘Closing the Gap’” (Trainor and James,
Such a transfer of funding and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art would create clear divisions of responsibility, but would also strengthen the divide between professional arts, and community-based programs such as Indigenous Culture Support (ICS) (see Section 4.1 and Section 4.4).

Although there are multiple policy directions across the states and territories, they are surprisingly consistent in the way that the arts and culture policies are administered through institutional and departmental structures. The states and territories invariably have a dedicated arts advisory body, which is set up in a similar fashion to the federal level body of the Australia Council, with its role outlined as being an arms-length advisor to the government as well as the manager of grants and public funding for cultural institutions. The arts advisory bodies also share the common thread of being titled ‘Arts state/territory’ with Arts ACT, Arts NSW, Arts NT, Arts Queensland, Arts SA, Arts Tasmania, Arts Victoria, and Arts WA, which are all subsumed under broader portfolios and departments.

While the arts agencies are similar and are suggestive of a traditional arts and cultural policy focus, the portfolio and department oversight highlights the various approaches and the forms of value ascribed to the industry (Craik, 1996, 195). In four of the states and territories the arts agency is located in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Arts SA, Undated; Arts Queensland, 2002; Arts Victoria, 2003a) or the equivalent Chief Minister’s Department (Arts ACT, 2009), according it high status in the government, but not providing a specific policy direction. The Northern Territory (NT) Department also does not suggest any specific direction for
its arts agency Arts NT due to its position within a primarily environmental portfolio in the Northern Territory (Northern Territory Government: Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, 2007). The remaining three states and territories come under two department types, with general arts and culture with an industries focus in NSW and WA (Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation, 2008; Department of Culture and the Arts, 2009), and an economic and tourism department in Tasmania with the Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and the Arts (Arts Tasmania, 2009b). While the departments serve as a guide to the forms of value sought, each state and territory has had a particular policy focus and direction.

The remaining portion of this section focuses on New South Wales (NSW) as it has a general arts and culture policy that covers approximately 30% of Australia’s Indigenous population living in the state as at 2002, and of particular importance are the “823 Indigenous people in NSW [that] were employed in a cultural occupation as their main job” in 2006 (National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics, 2008a, 26, 30). The arts and culture policies of NSW were articulated in several levels of structured plans, including an overall state plan with broad objectives that are related to the other more specific plans.

Arts NSW Strategic Plan 2000–2011 (Arts NSW, Undated) stated up-front that Arts NSW and the policy ‘align’ with the Department and state policies. The strategic plan addressed key points that linked in with the Department plan, the first of which connected Arts NSW’s “[p]rograms which benefit young people, cultural diversity and Indigenous communities” to “stronger community cohesion and capacity, and
improved health and wellbeing” (Arts NSW, Undated, 1). This echoed the commitment to social capital in the Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation Corporate Plan 2007 – 2011 as part of aims one and two (of six) which were “[s]tronger community cohesion and capacity” and “[i]mproved health and wellbeing” (Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation, Undated, 2).

These aims suggest an investment in social capital in order to create links between the members of communities which, in the words of the Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation 2006-07 Annual Report, “reinforces social bonds, engages marginalised communities and helps to overcome costly social dysfunction” (Department of Arts, Sports and Recreation, 2008, 17). Another of the key points committed Arts NSW to, “[f]ostering the arts in our society to increased community and stakeholder appreciation of the value of the arts” (Arts NSW, Undated, 1), directly aligning with corporate result five of the Departmental plan and the investment in cultural capital through promoting and increasing community appreciation of the arts and culture (Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation, Undated, 2). While these statements are vague in terms of how the arts create these positive results, they do indicate a general arts and cultural policy with aims across social, cultural, and economic policy areas with the attendant capitals through the discourses of ‘wellbeing’, ‘social inclusion’, and ‘cultural and economic development’ (Matarasso, 1997, 9).

The aspirations of these policies were fleshed out in even more detail in the Department’s annual report 2006-2007 which stated that, “[o]ur Indigenous Arts and
Cultural Expression Strategy recognises that the arts are fundamental to the social and cultural wellbeing of Indigenous people” (Department of Arts, Sports and Recreation, 2008, 18). To that end the annual report highlighted the investment in infrastructure made in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, with Arts NSW funding, “an Indigenous Cultural Centre and 15 arts offices positions throughout the state, including 13 regional arts development offices” (Department of Arts, Sports and Recreation, 2008, 17).

Even though NSW has general arts and culture policies, the policies still appeal to the ‘arts as an industry’ discursive structure, citing economic and industry development, and employment statistics (National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics, 2008a, v), although not going so far as to formulate a fully-fledged cultural industries policy.

The pattern of the states and territories is also reflected in the federal arts and cultural policies, research and programs, which worked on an ‘arts as an industry’ basis. The industry focus of the arts and cultural policies underscores and in part necessitates the evident emphasis on economic capital. The focus on economic capital tends to overshadow and obscure the social and cultural objectives, meaning that social and cultural capital remains relegated to the position of vague statements in appraisals of industry and sector value, even though extra-economic value is integral to the rationale and discursive structures of the category.
The emphasis on economic capital within an arts and cultural industry approach not only relies on economic figures predominantly from the fine art sector, but also reduces the value accorded to the industry and sectors through the under-representation of the social and cultural capital generated. The combination of economic appraisals and a lack of consideration of social and cultural capital lead to the impression that the souvenir art sector does not have a strong relative value. This construction of the souvenir art sector as creating a lesser value is exacerbated in arts and cultural policies due to the focus on artistic excellence as part of the meritocracy of the arts and cultural funding and advocacy agencies at federal and state/territory levels. With the insistence of artistic excellence as part of the criteria the economic, social and cultural value of the souvenir art sector becomes discursively intertwined with the lower social status of souvenir art products based on aesthetic authenticity, and therefore constructed as of relatively less value and importance.

4.3 Cultural Industries Policy, the Benefits of Employment and the Economy

As outlined in the introduction of this thesis, the cultural industries are distinct from the arts or arts and cultural industry that arts and cultural policy addresses, with the cultural industries including media and communication sectors in addition to the traditional arts (Caust, 2003, 53). The types of policy responses are differentiated by the approach to value, with arts and cultural policy emphasising extra-economic and aesthetic values that are coupled with economic concerns, and the cultural industries approach having a stronger economic imperative (Caust, 2003, 52), which also supports extra-economic values. The emphasis on economic value is manifested in
the quantitative figures of sales and employment used in the justification for support (Caust, 2003, 52), as my analysis of South Australia’s creative industries policies in Section 3.1.1 demonstrates. I return to these themes, the cultural industries policies of the other states and territories further on in this section.

The cultural industries policy position is not new however, having been pursued at the federal level since the inception of the industry alongside the other policy directions, with policies to create infrastructure and demand starting in the late 1960s and continued through the 1970s (Altman, 2007, 44). The first major cultural industries policy took the shape of the state-run “retail/wholesale operation”, Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Pty Ltd, which was established in the early 1970s after a review in 1965 of Australia’s tourism industry (Altman, 2007, 44). It has been credited as being instrumental in developing the industry and expanding the available markets by playing “a major role in stabilising credible outlets for Indigenous art in most state capitals” (Altman, 2005, 4). These measures effectively establish the national industry without differentiation between souvenir art and fine art products, in line with the majority of production practices in art centres referred to in Section 4.1, facilitating growth in tourist consumption in the area of traditional arts and crafts (Craik, 2001, 106-107).

The development of both the tourism report and trading company in combination demonstrates the central role of what is now called cultural tourism to the foundations of the industry and the economic discursive structures that accompany it, such as greater tourism development and employment. The terminology of cultural
tourism as a part of the cultural industries emerged in the early 1990s in policies such as Creative Nation, and the Department of Tourism and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Committee (ATSIC) developing “an Indigenous tourism strategy and a cultural industry strategy” (Craik, 2001, 106-107). The legacy of this form of cultural industries and cultural tourism policy is seen in the recent positions taken in the new National Cultural Policy: Discussion Paper (Office of the Arts, 2011) and in some of the states and territories, with Western Australia’s Indigenous cultural tourism policy and Queensland’s cultural export program, and recent federal policies aimed at economic self-sufficiency such as those pursued by Indigenous Business Australia (IBA).

The cultural industries approach of the 1990s saw a merging of the discursive practices of both arts and cultural, and cultural industries approaches through a renewed interest in the economic value of the arts. This is evident in the Keating government’s 1994 policy, Creative Nation: Commonwealth Cultural Policy, which sets out the federal government’s role in providing support for social, cultural, and artistic activities in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994). The tone of Creative Nation exemplifies the policy discourses in the latter half of the industry’s history, with the focus on economics, cultural industries and cultural tourism (Craik, 2001, 94; Craik, McAllister and Davis, 2003, 18). The trend towards economic discourses and valuing increased under the Howard government in 1996, which altered the policy direction by reducing “the levels of funding available to the public cultural sector” including the Australia Council and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), putting further emphasis on neoliberal economic policy positions (Bennett, Emmison and Frow, 1999, 228-229). This economic focus
also persists with the change to the Rudd/Gillard government with the introduction of the newer discursive feature of enhancing ‘productivity’ in the new National Cultural Policy: Discussion Paper (Office of the Arts, 2011, 11).

The trend towards economic arguments is articulated in general terms in Creative Nation through statements such as:


[t]his cultural policy is also an economic policy. Culture creates wealth. (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 7)

These general statements are backed up by economic figures stating that “our cultural industries generate 13 billion dollars a year… [a]round 336,000 Australians are employed in culture-related industries” (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 7). As mentioned in Section 3.1.2 of the theoretical framework, the discursive formation of the cultural industries represents a type of economic valuing as it suggests, “a need to justify public expenditure on the grounds of economic contribution” (Craik, McAllister and Davis, 2003, 18). Furthermore, Creative Nation also exhibits a neoliberal emphasis based on neoclassical economic assumptions that the private market is more efficient and preferable to public funding, meaning that there is a “need for the public cultural sector to become less reliant on government funding” by finding private sponsorship (Bennett, Emmison and Frow, 1999, 228).

Creative Nation also makes direct mention of and gives general support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and tourism, based around Indigenous identity and products (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 100). The support takes the form of mentioning in national policy the cultural worth of Indigenous identity to
the tourism trade and the monetary worth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art purchases as “estimated at $46 million a year in 1991” (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 100). In this way, tourism has been incorporated into the cultural industries and cultural policy, with a particular focus on cultural tourism, with other forms of tourism more usually addressed in industry and general economic policies (Craik, 2001, 94-95). However, the valuing is still put in terms of economic capital, being “reduced to statistics on expenditure on arts and crafts or Indigenous cultural tourism” (Craik, 2001, 95) as it is in Creative Nation (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 100).

The focus on the economic contribution of the cultural industries and cultural tourism is off-set by the social and cultural objectives in Creative Nation, which state that “the ultimate aim of this cultural policy is to increase the comfort and enjoyment of Australian life… [i]n that it pursues similar ends to any social policy” (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 7). Creative Nation also invokes social and cultural values that are asserted in aspects of the policy through discourses of identity, community engagement and inclusion, and wellbeing (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 6-7). The social and cultural objectives supported by the policy are typically vague and unquantified, conforming to the usual pattern of firm quantitative figures to support economic justifications, with concessions to extra-economic capitals.

Creative Nation justifies federal expenditure on the basis of returns of social and cultural capital, stating that “the culture and identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Australians has become an essential element of Australian identity, a vital expression of who we all are” (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 6, original emphasis). As identified in the analysis of policy discourses in Section 3.1, identity is usually associated with social and cultural value concerning the creation or maintenance of interpersonal bonds or communal activities. In the case of Creative Nation identity is deployed on the national scale to produce an Australian sense of identity that is “Aboriginal-centred” (Craik, 2001, 89). The larger use of the discourse of identity however, means that the notion is vague as it is necessarily dispersed across the national culture, although it does link into the cultural tourism efforts of the policy. These discursive structures are reminiscent of the arts and cultural policies addressed in Section 4.2, but these cultural industries discourses differ on the crucial point of being argued as part of an economic agenda.

The Creative Nation policy also sees a valuable return in social capital with the ability, “to heighten our experience and add to our security and wellbeing” as well as providing employment opportunities, which encourage social inclusion (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 7). The discourses of wellbeing and social inclusion through employment are similar to that of identity in that they revolve around the idea of the benefits garnered through greater social interaction and the sense of community involvement. These outcomes occur through the support of arts production, which provides “neutral spaces in which friendships can develop”, facilitating social cohesion and inclusion as well as improving wellbeing through “increased levels of confidence, activity and social contact” (Matarasso, 1997, 7, 75). Although these discourses are presented several times throughout Creative Nation in the usual vague form, it is not possible to suggest even a relative amount of cultural
and social capital that is intended to be generated, as there is little description of the
importance of these outcomes to the policy.

As discussed in Section 3.1, both South Australia (SA) and Victoria have adopted a
creative and cultural industry policy direction in the decade 2000-2009, emphasising
the economic contribution of arts production. Like Victoria, Queensland’s policy
direction was based on a broad notion of the cultural industries, which formed the
key discursive element of the multiple and concurrent policies that relate to the
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry in the state. The policies range
from the broad scope and timeframe of 2005-2015 of the state plan, Smart State, to
interim policy statements and assessments such as the Creative Communities:
Queensland Arts Industry Sector Development Plan 2007-2009, Visual Arts, Crafts,
Design (Arts Queensland, Undated b). The cultural industries approach also extended
to “whole-of-government” initiatives incorporating export and trade, development,
and social wellbeing policies into arts policies. Two such strategies were the Driving
Export Growth for Queensland 2006–2011 policy and the use of government
agencies such as the Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing and Export Agency
(QIAMEA) (Arts Queensland, Undated b, 4).

The more direct arts industry policy, Creative Communities, put forward an initiative
to increase, “capacity for regional, remote and urban Indigenous visual arts, craft and
design through an appropriately resourced and supported Network of Indigenous
Arts Centres” (Arts Queensland, Undated b, 9). However, the policy did not lay out
any firm figures for capital expenditure. In contrast to the preceding policy
statements, the Backing Indigenous Art policy that ran from 2007-2010 clearly detailed the investment of “$10.73 million into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts industry”, which included $4.42 million for the Indigenous Art Centre network (Arts Queensland, Undated a, 2). The Indigenous Art Centre network, like the bulk of Queensland policies and funding, emphasised the generation of economic capital through industry development and assistance with social and cultural spin-offs of the Indigenous target policy as a secondary concern.

As the cultural industries have a broad and shifting definition, the discourse encompasses many forms of policy directions (Craik, 1996, 189; 2001, 94), with cultural tourism and economic/industry development displayed in Queensland’s Indigenous Arts Marketing and Export Agency (QIAMEA) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry specific policy of Backing Indigenous Art (Arts Queensland, Undated a; Undated b). The Northern Territory (NT) and Western Australia (WA) also enacted policies that fall under the broad banner of the cultural industries discourse, although the NT undertook a specific Indigenous arts industry policy, including an export strategy, while WA’s policy direction focused on Indigenous participation in the cultural tourism sector in a similar vein to a cultural industries policy position.

The Northern Territory’s policy for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry was tailored to the particular conditions of the region, which include a significant Indigenous population of 36,178 (representing 13% of the national Indigenous population), and the large numbers of Indigenous artists estimated to be
between 3000 to 5000 in 2002 (National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics, 2009, 18; Altman, 2003, 10-19). This resulted in the deliberately focused policy of the Northern Territory Indigenous Arts Strategy: Building Strong Arts Business, which was implemented in 2003 with a proposed six-year time frame and a strategic review after the first three years, and the Indigenous Arts Strategy (IAS) not continuing in an official capacity past 2009 (Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs, Undated, 3).

The IAS was designed to plug in to other NT initiatives, with social and economic capital being represented by the Building our Community and Building a Better Territory policies, as well as contributing to the NT economic development strategies of other departments and agencies, such as Building Stronger Territory Trade, the NT Tourism Strategy, and the NT Employment, Education and Training Strategy (Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs, Undated, 3). The 2006 review of the IAS detailed some measures such as the “Export Action Plan” that, as of early 2006, had led to arts and crafts purchases of $200,000 in value, including purchases by collectors and exporters (Positive Solutions, 2006, 8). While this does not provide a direct amount of funds invested by the government, it does demonstrate that economic capital was the principal measurement of evaluation. The review also cited the restructuring of Arts NT to include three positions under the title “Indigenous Arts Development Unit” creating an arts industry focus to policy delivery (Positive Solutions, 2006, 8).
The cultural industries policy approach, with its neoliberal emphasis on economic capital that also utilises social and cultural capital, is also evident in the introduction of a new federal authority, Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) in 2005, and a senate inquiry into the industry (Senate Standing Committee, 2007). These developments reflected the broader Howard government approach that favoured mainstreaming and economic self-sufficiency. Indigenous Business Australia was established as an arms-length agency initially under the banner of Indigenous Affairs (Indigenous Business Australia, 2006, 2). Although IBA is a direct Indigenous initiative it is framed by the economic mainstreaming policy direction of industry support and economic rationalism, with the stated aim of “creating opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities to build assets and wealth” (Indigenous Business Australia, IBA: Your in to Greater Opportunities, Undated c, 2). As mentioned in section 4.1, IBA initiatives have also been tied-in to the Rudd/Gillard Government’s Close the Gap campaign, demonstrating the same commitment to economic capital through employment (Australian Government, 2012, 94).

The aims of the IBA and the focus on neoliberal economic rationalism is otherwise expressed as the notion of “self-sufficiency” which is based on Indigenous participation “in mainstream commercial activities in order to assist them to shift further away from welfare dependency” with social and cultural objectives low on the list of priorities (Indigenous Business Australia, 2006, 5). The “self-sufficiency” discourse emerged along with the Howard government’s commitment to “mainstreaming” that resulted in the abolition of ATSIC and the changes to NACIS (Altman, 2007, 47), discussed in Section 4.2.
To achieve the desired outcome of economic self-sufficiency IBA programs focused on industry, business and organisational financing support. IBA through its “Enterprises” program assisted Indigenous businesses with support in business planning, management advice, business development and economic capital in the form of, “finance” for the “acquisition, establishment or expansion” of the business (Indigenous Business Australia, Undated a, 2). The “finance” that the IBA Enterprises program offered came in the form of loans that the IBA could issue with “[d]iscounted interest rates… [and] [l]ow loan establishment costs” (Indigenous Business Australia, Undated a, 2). The type of assistance offered by Indigenous Business Australia is clearly different from that of the Australia Council, which provides direct funding through grants. Instead, the IBA provides a less direct form of funding using subsidised loans and advice in an effort to move towards a self-sufficient funding situation so that the government no longer needs to provide economic capital.

Although IBA Investments offer business advice and financial support, the delivery of the support differed, with the use of public-private partnerships where “both IBA and an Indigenous organisation… enter into joint ventures with the private sector in a commercially viable business” (Indigenous Business Australia, Undated b, 2). Despite the indeterminacy of the exact political economy exchanges in this case, it is still clear that the expenditure of Indigenous Business Australia is mostly formulated as being economic capital, in an effort to facilitate “economic independence and control” (Indigenous Business Australia, Undated b, 2). This reflects the policy direction of economic rationalism under the terms of ‘self-sufficiency’, which emphasises economic capital above other values, a position that is supported in
Recommendation 5 of the Howard government senate review of the industry (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 50).

When these programs and the approaches they represent are applied to their potential for individuals and organisations active in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, IBA becomes much closer to a cultural industries approach than the Indigenous policy position it otherwise represents. It should also be noted that IBA has not specifically targeted the art industry, instead working broadly across commercial industries, although “Indigenous artists can, and do, access IBA Enterprises business support and development assistance” (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 77). Therefore, it is not surprising that the IBA and its programs remained under the banner of Indigenous Affairs with the change of government in 2007, even though the portfolio included wider social and cultural policy through its inclusion in the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The general Indigenous policy position of the IBA programs are also reaffirmed in their recent incorporation into the Close the Gap framework, which is aligned with the objectives of increasing employment and general social wellbeing with the creation or support of “125 jobs for Indigenous Australians” (Australian Government, 2012, 94).

The aforementioned report from the senate inquiry, Indigenous Art, Securing the Future: Australia’s Indigenous Visual Arts and Craft Sector (2007), was published towards the end of the Howard government and as such it represents the culmination of the policy directions and outlook of that government. The inquiry was undertaken
by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, and examined the size, scale, benefits, funding and future opportunities of the “Indigenous visual arts and craft sector” (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 1). Despite its cultural industries premise, the inquiry acknowledged the interaction between the economic and extra-economic social and cultural value in its terms of reference, even dedicating one chapter to a discussion of these values (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 15).

However, despite the fact that “[t]he committee was shown strong evidence of how the Indigenous visual arts and craft sector provides substantial economic, social and cultural benefits”, and that the “benefits… go beyond the purely economic and the quantifiable” (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 26), these values are resolutely seen through their description as “‘immeasurable’” (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 15). Aside from the obvious economic importance of employment, the industry was described as generating social and cultural value with the discourses of cultural maintenance, health and wellbeing, and identity at community and national levels invoked (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 20, 25).

The discussion of the value of the industry still had a strong focus on the interactions of employment and engagement with cultural tourism (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 17), evidencing the economic discourses that are associated with the cultural industries policy direction. The committee noted that “[t]he economic benefits of the sector are substantial although difficult to quantify mainly due to the lack of comprehensive data”, reinforcing the continuing need for more work in this area.
As a result the committee mostly relies on previous figures, restating the “$100 to $300 million estimate put forward by Altman and others in 2002 [that] has tended to be adopted as the favoured estimate of the value of the industry” (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 9).

The estimates of industry worth are followed up with partial figures and estimates of employment, with figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) suggesting that there are 786 Indigenous people earning a living at a full time rate in visual arts and crafts occupations and an estimate of 6,000 Indigenous artists engaged in the industry more generally in 2006 (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 8, 10). Additionally, the report accounted for industry value in mainly economic terms using previous data and some new data through submissions such as the figure of at least 110 art centres nationally (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 27). This is despite a consensus that there remains a “lack of comprehensive data” for the industry (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 16).

As the senate inquiry was geared towards assessing the value and structures of the industry in order to assist it towards becoming self-sufficient, a great deal of attention was paid to the issue of “imported non-authentic Indigenous arts, craft and souvenirs” and proposals to address it, including using authenticity labels (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 112-113) (see the Indigenous Art Code in Section 4.2). The inquiry also revealed another aspect of the “mainstreaming” direction undertaken in the cultural industries and Indigenous policy with considerable
attention given to the proposal to abolish the permit system for Aboriginal lands (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 177).

The National Cultural Policy: Discussion Paper (2011) drafted by the Gillard government shifts the emphasis of cultural industries discourses away from the direct mainstreaming agenda instituted by the Howard government and towards the structures of Creative Nation (1994). The economic imperative of the cultural industries established in Creative Nation is continued in the National Cultural Policy, which is allied with the discourses of cultural tourism and particularly with Indigenous cultural expression (Office of the Arts, 2011, 20). As with the previous policies the new National Cultural Policy focuses on the economic contribution which is calculated in numeric figures such as that “[i]n 2010, 23.2 million cultural and heritage visitors contributed approximately $28 billion in tourism expenditure to the Australian economy” (Office of the Arts, 2011, 21). However, aside from the bottom-line calculations, there are also acknowledgements of social and cultural values that are generated by cultural tourism as it “builds and reinforces… their identity, and can increase the capacity of their communities to participate in these opportunities, and in education, training and employment” (Office of the Arts, 2011, 20).

In contrast to the above discursive structures informed by Creative Nation, the new National Cultural Policy draws only slightly on the mainstreaming directions of the Howard government policies. The only direct mainstreaming features of the new cultural policy are the positions of the recent related Review of the Australia Council
(Trainor and James, 2012), which advocates for the creation of general peer-assessment instead of artform boards such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts board (see Section 4.2). Both the Review of the Australia Council (2012) and the National Cultural Policy (2011) are also linked to the Rudd/Gillard government’s overall Indigenous policy of Closing the Gap as they contribute to targets of employment in arts production and wellbeing through “cultural support to strengthen Indigenous communities” (Office of the Arts, 2011, 4).

The creative industries contribution to employment is further underscored in the National Cultural Policy with the emerging discourse of productivity that focuses on industry dividends. The discourse of productivity in the National Cultural Policy serves to strengthen the ‘arts as an industry’ structure by treating the cultural industries like any other industry in an environment where innovation and productivity boost economic performance. This discourse of productivity is most clearly illustrated in the statement that “[a] creative nation is a more productive nation” (Office of the Arts, 2011, 3). The discourse of productivity and the industry focus still does not preclude social and cultural values being promoted however, as notions like “community cohesion” are listed alongside innovation and productivity (Office of the Arts, 2011, 11).

As mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, the picture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry remains incomplete. Jon Altman has consistently lamented that “[r]eliable information on the current size of the industry does not exist” (1991, 8; 2000b, 86), and attempts to remedy the situation have been
undermined by a “lack of comprehensive data” (2000a, 82). As the reliance on “anecdotal evidence that there are between 5000 and 6000 Aboriginal artists in Australia” and estimates suggest, there is still a lack of data and analysis of the industry and sectors (Altman, 2000a, 92).

This survey of the value of the industry from a cultural industries policy position demonstrates the basic discursive positions of valuing expressed as economic and employment figures, with limited consideration of the unmeasured social and cultural benefits. This is a general trend, which along with the ‘arts as an industry’ focus, blurs the distinction between policy types, particularly between arts and cultural and cultural industries policy. However, cultural industries policies do have a stronger emphasis on economic capital, as they are generally pursued under neoliberal economic discourses such as mainstreaming and self-sufficiency. The evaluation of the economic value of the industry relies on data on the fine art sector, with the souvenir art sector generally unknown. This lack of data concerning both social and cultural value, and the value of the souvenir art sector in general, contributes to it being undervalued as it goes unacknowledged and unaccounted for.

4.4 Conclusion: Assumptions, Hidden Divisions and the Separation of the Sectors

All of the values referred to up until this point have been figures based on either state/territory or national accounts of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art
industry as a whole and have not had a focus on the souvenir art sector. Some of the studies and reports do mention the souvenir art sector, although it usually features as an absence, either not named (Myer, 2002, 245) or mentioned as a source of value that is presently unknown (Altman, 1991, 7; Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 14, 189). Even basic economic data that does not rely on estimates is largely unavailable and there are virtually no policies and initiatives that mention or target the souvenir art sector specifically. This is despite all levels of government having clearly articulated plans outlined in policy documents and funding statements for the industry; rather, the ‘industry’ is generally assumed to be synonymous with the fine art sector.

This represents a significant gap in the literature on industry and sector value, which this thesis aims to redress by attempting to scope the social, cultural and economic value of the souvenir art sector. In this chapter’s final section I address the assumptions and hidden divisions through an analysis of industry and policy developments and the discursive structures that are a part of the separation of the fine art and souvenir art sectors. In doing so, I consider additional industry and policy developments to those detailed above, and revisit some policies to elicit further insights about the discursive construction of industry and sector value.

As I noted in the introduction to this thesis, the separation of the fine art and souvenir art sectors is most visible in the retailing of the products, not the type or locations of producers, who usually create a range of products across the industry (Altman, 1991, 12). Therefore, while the producers of the industry are generally unified under the
same structures, such as art centres, the market and the status of the products creates a division in the industry, and this is reflected in the lesser relative value ascribed to souvenir art products and production. This division of the industry into two sectors with blurred boundaries based in the separate retailing of the products is partly a result of developments in the industry and the policy responses to industry value, and partly a result of the discursive operations discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

The division between the fine art and souvenir art sectors arises on account of several complex factors including the bias towards economic value and the subsequent lack of accountability of extra-economic social and cultural value that causes them to remain largely unacknowledged. The types of values emphasised in industry and policy discourses combines with assumptions about the relative value of the fine art and souvenir art sectors that is influenced by the relative social status of the products. In particular, souvenir art is deemed to be of lesser value on two counts: economically, due to the smaller amounts paid per piece rather than overall sector value; and in respect of social and cultural value, which are assumed to be reduced with the lesser aesthetic/artistic merit of the souvenir art product, rather than enhanced on account of the values generated through souvenir art production. These assumptions and unacknowledged divisions within the industry and policy are linked to the specific circumstances of industry and policy developments.

As mentioned in the first chapter on the theoretical framework, the contemporary industry emerged on the cusp of modernism and the contemporary era in art. The regional style of Western Desert painting is particularly associated with the
discourses of modernist abstraction due to the stylistic elements of seemingly abstract dots and lines (E. Coleman, 2004, 235). The association between Western Desert art and modernism is particularly significant as it is “the acceptance of Western Desert art [that] was an important catalyst for the more widespread acceptance of other regional art styles as fine art” (Altman, 2005, 5). These discursive structures mark the beginning of a shift from policy approaches feeding into an industry without defined sectors, to the division of sectors based on the recognition of the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fine art sector, and the subsequent lesser attention and consideration given to the value of the souvenir art sector in industry and policy discourse.

The division of the sectors is associated with the status accorded to types of products in art history, theory and criticism. This is evident in the concerns about which types of product are valued and the implications for policy development and program funding in the aforementioned Planning for the Future (Australia Council, 2001). The discussion paper begins with a general statement about the definition of the arts, with the resolve that

the Council will need to work beyond the traditional dichotomies; high arts versus community arts; commercial or subsidised versus amateur; established arts and artists versus the young and the new that have often inhibited successful outcomes. (Australia Council, 2001, 3)

The definition of ‘the arts’, and what is officially supported, is also a concern in Australians and the Arts, which attempts to get around the limited notion of the arts as the traditional arts (Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, 2001, 26).
Interestingly, and importantly, Australians and the Arts finds that, “the source of the limited definition of the arts appears to be the arts sector itself” (Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, 2001, 32). This suggests that the arts industry (as distinct from the cultural industries) has strong institutional biases that limit the value ascribed to craft, mass-produced arts, and community arts, which is drawn from the historical divide between the fine arts and everything else decorative (Greenhalgh, 1997, 26). This is significant in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art as it encompasses a range of craft and mass-produced products which are considered to be ‘lesser’ forms of art (Greenhalgh, 1997; Steiner, 1999), (see Chapter 2 for further discussion).

In an attempt to counter the discourses that limit the value of some products the Visual Arts and Crafts section of Planning for the Future begins with the statement, “craft has a special place in the hearts and minds of many, connecting as it does the hand with the mind through a curious combination of problem solving and aesthetics” (Australia Council, 2001, 57). This has the effect of affirming the fine status of the products represented through an appeal to the discursive structures of fine art and fine craft discussed in Section 2.2. With the call on aesthetics, the Visual Arts and Crafts discussion group invokes the status of modernist fine art as the ‘highest’ form, which is mixed with the “problem solving” of craft, forming the fine craft discourse to retain the artistic and cultural value of the industry although associated primarily with the fine art sector (Ioannou, 1989, 12).
There is a concern in both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art board and the Visual Arts and Crafts board sections of the Planning for the Future paper to assert the artistic/aesthetic validity and value of the products, which is important in terms of the construction of the sectors. This is evident in the Visual Arts and Crafts discussion group which is mindful that the contemporary art and craft sector needs to “reassure the public of their value” due to the uneasy position of the arts and crafts category, and seeks validation through increased recognition brought about by further investment by the Australia Council and governments in infrastructure (Australia Council, 2001, 57).

Due to these concerns within the arts and cultural policy environment, Australians and the Arts investigated the nation’s views and valuing of art. It found that the positive valuing of the arts seemed to be a consequence of the importance placed on the social and cultural aspects of the arts and tended to include a wider variety of products and practices, including amateur arts, crafts, and commercial products as artistically valid (Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, 2001, 31, 32). Therefore, while the ‘fine’ end of the spectrum has considerable status which both Australia Council boards appealed to, this report would suggest that among the general public there is an acceptance of the artistic and other values of the ‘lower’ status and commercial products that are devalued by the industry’s emphasis on the fine art sector.

These sector/status-based differences are most notable in the arts and cultural policy-centred body of the Australia Council, due to the notion of funding based on artistic merit or ‘excellence’, rather than the performance indicators of most other public
policy. This may suggest that there is a particular challenge in arts and cultural policies to adequately manage the demands for economic capital (in the neoliberal tradition usually expressed in cultural industries policies) and social and cultural capital concerns in an aesthetic ‘meritocracy’. While this is most likely a part of the policy landscape that leads to the undervaluing of souvenir art, it is only one part of a much more complex environment where multiple policy directions are undertaken through a series of agencies at different levels. Furthermore, the majority of policies across the categories emphasise economic capital over social and cultural capital, and have some element of status that affects the estimation of sector value whether economic or artistic.

The recommendations of the recent Review of the Australia Council reflect the tensions within the discursive structures that create the separation of the sectors with the division of responsibilities for ‘artistic excellence’ and “wider social and economic objectives, in community” (Trainor and James, 2012, 19). The recommendations advanced by the review suggest that the Australia Council with its established focus on ‘excellence’ through the ‘meritocracy’ of peer-based assessment should undertake the promotion and support of programs of (fine) artistic endeavour, while the federal Office of the Arts “is best placed to support community cultural maintenance as part of the Australian Government’s broader policy on ‘Closing the Gap’” (Trainor and James, 2012, 16-17). This division is already visible, but not so clearly drawn, with the Office of the Arts administering the Indigenous Culture support (ICS) program which supports a “strong cultural identity [that] contributes to Indigenous wellbeing and to building healthy, safe and supportive communities” as part of the Closing the Gap agenda (Office of the Arts, 2012, 1).
Some of these complexities are also visible in the Indigenous, cultural industries, and art and cultural policies that have supported the development of the typically multi-sector producing art centres (Altman, 1991, 6-7). Across the policy positions there has been some form of funding and support for art centres with seemingly no clear distinction between the sectors. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the number of art centres, with 39 art centres identified in 1996 and “an estimated 100 Australia-wide” by 2002 (Altman, 2007, 46), along with corresponding growth in diversity of regional styles, products and producers across a range of locations in the industry (Altman, 1991, 7). However, the focus on the Indigenous cultural industries infrastructure of art centres does exclude businesses involved in the more commercial, mass-produced and manufactured products that tend to be part of the souvenir art sector (see Chapter 5). This represents a form of artistic status distinction across all policies, which is also combined with the general emphasis on economic value.

Although there are problems of definition in the industry at the point where fine art and souvenir art markets meet, the extreme ends of each market are quite obviously distinct, with the attendant status distinctions associated with products such as the mass-produced and manufactured souvenir art and the high-priced, one-off fine art canvases. It is at these extremes where an increasing amount of sales were achieved during the 1990s. In the fine art sector there was a strong emphasis on secondary sales with the “burgeoning secondary arts market since the first specialist Indigenous arts auction in 1995” (Altman, 2005, 10). This is also linked to the promotion of other regional styles in the vein of Western Desert art (Altman, 2005, 5), as contemporary fine arts.
In contrast the souvenir art sector was closely associated with tourism and particularly cultural tourism markets; as Altman noted, souvenir art or tourist art “is by definition that which is bought by overseas visitors to Australia or Australians touring the country” (Altman, 1991, 7), usually outside of the commercial gallery and certainly outside of the auction house market. Altman also notes that, “the growth in domestic and international tourism will be accompanied by a growing demand for manufactured Indigenous tourist art, especially as souvenirs” (Altman, 2000b, 90). This is situated within an environment where there is a distinction in production methods between “individual arts practice and arts manufacture” (Altman, 2000b, 86).

While these changes were industry-wide as they relate to common elements in production, the diversity also saw a growing separation of the sectors as somewhat distinct and independent markets (Altman, 1991, 7; 2000b, 86). Additionally, with the administrative failure of the NIAAA label which was instituted as an industry-wide measure, the Indigenous Art Code contained the provision that documentation is “not required to accompany Artwork when sold if… the Artwork is sold for less than $250…” (Indigenous Art Code Limited, 2010, 6). As such the Indigenous Art Code does not represent the whole sector, leaving out the lower priced goods which are usually associated with the souvenir art sector, which are deemed prohibitively costly to administer (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 123-125).

This results in an increase in sales in each market, although as Altman states, while the “[g]rowth in the tourist art sector has been evident” it is “hard to measure, owing
to an absence of historic baseline data” (2000b, 89). It does seem to increase based on Altman’s previous estimate in 1991 that the souvenir art sector accounted for approximately half of all sales (10). This can be compared to Altman’s estimate almost a decade later that the “manufacture of tourist art” could be worth $170 million of an overall industry figure of approximately $200 million (2000b, 89). Therefore, it remains that the “distinction between tourist and fine art remains of crucial importance for any analysis of the market” (Altman, 1991, 7), due to the high level of sales in each sector as well as the diverging markets. Although with the insistence on the analytical distinction between the sectors it is also important to recognise “that there is considerable overlap between these two broad categories” (Altman, 2000b, 86).

It is noteworthy that the souvenir art sector of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry is not directly mentioned in policy documents nor in most studies of the industry. This absence is possibly not surprising in a wide-ranging study of the visual arts industry such as the Myer Report, where the only reference to souvenir art is that there are:

[n]o comparable figures… available for the value of Indigenous art sold by other means, such as through department stores and tourist enterprises, but it is possibly significant. (2002, 245)

The report follows this statement of ‘the unknown’ with an estimate of a potential value of $5 million in paintings sold to international tourists, which is based on a 1996 Australia Council survey (Myer, 2002, 245).
Although in the Indigenous visual arts industry focused report of the Senate Standing Committee there is considerably more engagement with the sector, it is still represented as an unknown, and potentially greater, source of value (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 14). In fact there is a whole section of the final chapter on industry opportunities dedicated to what is referred to as “[t]he Tourist market” which is loosely defined as any type of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art product (including fine art) sold to tourists of any description (including fine art collectors) that fulfils the function of a memento (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 187). Despite the focus on this ill-defined market, there are no firm figures or even general values asserted, and no official recommendations, but just a general suggestion that “the different types of tourist markets need to be taken into account… if the industry is to continue to be successful” (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 189).

While further consideration of the souvenir art market is certainly needed, the report does not suggest why it has been previously neglected, how it could be better accounted for, nor what to do past the recognition of its existence. As I have suggested, the neglect of the souvenir art sector is not a simple oversight, but is based on a series of assumptions about its relative lack of value due to its artistic and economic social status that has led to the undervaluing of the sector in policy and industry assessments, which crucially exacerbate the undervaluing.

Policy and industry engagements with the souvenir art sector tend to focus on economic capital even though all of the capitals, including social and cultural capital, are represented in the initiatives and objectives of policies. This focus on economic
capital obscures the social and cultural capital generated by the sector, which usually have not been measured and consequently are only asserted in vague statements, rather than being appropriately represented as a part of the value. The focus on economic value, and the ways it leads to the undervaluing of the souvenir art sector, is evident in the Creative Nation arts and cultural/cultural industries policy. Creative Nation and the National Cultural Policy both state definite economic figures for the industry value (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 100; Office of the Arts, 2011, 21), but only assert vague statements of social and cultural value (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 7; Office of the Arts, 2011, 20) (see Section 4.3).

Furthermore, apart from the few estimates offered by Jon Altman that I noted above, there are no solid figures for the economic capital generated by the souvenir art sector and it seems to be generally assumed in the industry that the relatively lower status and price-points of the products equates to a lower economic contribution. Such a lack of information not only makes assessing the value of the sector difficult as I have discovered in writing this thesis, it also reflects a broader disregard for the extra-economic benefits that are generated. The economic focus of Creative Nation and the National Cultural Policy is also combined with a generally industry-based approach that is not sector specific. This has the effect that the information contained within the documents to argue the importance and effectiveness of the measures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art are skewed towards fine arts economic and employment figures (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, 100; Office of the Arts, 2011, 21).
The general emphasis on economic capital is moderated by social and cultural policies, which have programs of self-determination, focusing on Indigenous-specific measures such as the Indigenous Culture Support and the continuing support of Indigenous art centres, even if it takes an industry slant (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts, 2008a). These policies help to construct the boundaries of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry and the relative value of each of the sectors, as well as providing public funding for the industry. This means that the industry needs to be or become economically self-sufficient, although social and cultural value is still required. This creates an institutional bias towards the high status value of the fine art sector with its easily assessable economic worth of calculated gallery and secondary sales, in contrast to the lower status and more diffuse sales of the souvenir art sector, which remains an unknown quantity and is generally omitted from considerations of the industry.

While the policy directions of the states and territories do not offer the same cohesive narrative of the federal level, they still utilise the same discursive structures of social cohesion, social and cultural wellbeing, cultural maintenance and development, and economic benefits. As these policies draw on discourses representing different types of value it is imperative that these values can be accounted for in any political economy of the industry, which I attempt in this thesis using the concepts of social, cultural and economic capital previously detailed.

In summary, it is also important to note that the majority of programs referred to a general Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry and there was little mention
or deliberate targeting of either the fine art or souvenir art sectors. As such the subsequent generation of social, cultural, and economic capital is not meant to be, and does not function as, exclusive to a specific sector. Despite this, the fine art sector with its higher status is generally presented and presumed to be the face of the industry, attracting greater academic and policy attention. Therefore, the policy engagements with the industry not only neglect the value generated by the souvenir art sector, but also contribute to the undervaluing of the sector by diminishing its relative significance. In an attempt to redress this imbalance, the following chapter presents an analysis of the diversity of organisations involved in the souvenir art sector, and the types of value they are able generate.
5. Examples of the Structures and Values from an Unknown Sector:

Art Centres

The previous chapter highlighted the lack of data, analysis and consideration of the souvenir art sector in the majority of the policies, reports and accounts of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry, reinforcing the undervaluing of the sector. However, it also suggested that there remains a substantial political economy of state funding and support that is applicable to the souvenir art sector, even if the policies do not specify nor reflect a commitment to it. As Altman notes, a “key feature of the Indigenous arts industry is the high degree of government support it enjoys”, which is not unusual for arts or Indigenous enterprises (2000b, 86). But as there remains “limited information on the structure of the market…” (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 12), any further analysis of the political economy of the value of the sector is hampered.

In the following two chapters I seek to partially redress this situation by drawing attention to the diversity of organisations that are active in the souvenir art sector and the types of values that they can potentially produce. To this end I have chosen specific examples that fit within each of the jurisdictions of the Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales to facilitate an analysis of the local conditions of organisations involved in the souvenir art sector in an effort to illustrate the diversity of organisations and their products, structures and functions. This deliberate strategy of selection is in order to create a picture of the sector and the values it can generate, building on the outlines provided by other studies. The examples have been drawn from a combination of desk research using publicly available data, my personal
communications with art centre staff and new information gathered through qualitative questionnaires distributed to organisations active in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector in 2007. The examples are analysed with reference to their particular policy landscapes based on their locations as this, along with their functions and operations, forms the essential information needed to apply the theoretical framework to demonstrate the potential of the political economy of the sector.

To facilitate this analysis I have divided the examples into two main categories based on their organisational structures as not-for-profit organisations or profit oriented businesses, and their size, in terms of employees and turnover. These categories have been deliberately grouped within particular state and territory jurisdictions to facilitate a focus on the political economy rather than being an attempt to represent national accounts of the sector. Through the use these categories and the dedication of a chapter to both of the organisational types I am able to provide a greater depth of description and further analysis of the different structures between and within the categories, the particular roles and the types of products that are produced.

It should be noted that these are not definitive categorisations, but represent a starting point for analysis of the interactions and complexities of a sector that has not been accorded a great deal of detailed study. Furthermore, there are also some similarities in the roles that the example organisations perform within the sector and the categories, however this is not a deliberate part of the categorisations and may not be necessarily related. I have provided a map with the location of each of the example
organisations in Appendix B, while maps for each jurisdiction are provided later in this chapter.

The first of the categories, the Indigenous Art Centre, is the most robust with previous analyses from Altman (2000a) and Wright (1999; 2000), coupled with dedicated funding from the National Art and Craft Industry Support (NACIS) and later the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) programs. This category of the Indigenous Art Centre also has a concrete definition: an incorporated community-based organisation that is Indigenous-owned (Altman, 1991, 6; 2005, 6; Wright, 1999, 27). The second category, of Commercial Organisations, combines an independent operator, a smaller scale organisation, and two medium to large businesses as they all share the features of being profit oriented. These descriptive categories refer to circumstances within the sector and are relative to each other, with terms such as small or large not intended to represent their position in the wider commercial environment. The discussion is limited to the souvenir art sector to facilitate a focus on the particular circumstances and interactions of the organisations with policy and industry bodies, as this has not been acknowledged nor accounted for in the literature.

It is important to note that the data gained by questionnaire is subject to respondent anonymity to protect the competitiveness of the commercial organisations in the next chapter. As such I have not identified the examples by name or detail (such as their website address), but refer to them under the descriptive titles of the Independent Operator and Small, Medium, and Large Organisations. Furthermore, I am
constrained by the lack of previous research, and limited response to the
questionnaire, in the data, descriptions and analysis of the sector that I present below.

Despite these limitations and ethical constraints, I have focused on these
organisations to describe and analyse the range of activities within the souvenir art
sector. As noted, this is a sector that has been under-represented in the literature and
as such the position of the organisations within the political economy of state funding
and the resulting values that these organisations generate has not been
acknowledged, leading to a further undervaluing of the sector. I seek to partially
redress this imbalance by analysing the position of Art Centres in this chapter and
Commercial Organisations in Chapter 6, so that the full range of values generated
within the sector is better represented in this thesis. By moving towards a more
accurate representation of the sector, funding bodies will better appreciate the sector
and potentially be able to enhance the outcomes of the souvenir art sector for the
Indigenous producers, the economy, and the wider community (discussed in Chapter
7).

5.1 Art Centres

Indigenous Art Centres were one of the first institutions involved in the sector with
their production typically spanning the breadth of the industry. As such, they have
received sustained interest and funding from state bodies since the inception of
contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art production (Altman, 2005, 2;
2007, 47). As noted above, Indigenous art centres are defined as incorporated,
community-based organisations focused on arts and cultural production that are
managed by a governing executive body elected from the Indigenous community (Altman, 1991, 6; 2005, 6; Wright, 1999, 27). The community-based nature of art centres means that there is great diversity in their types and functions, as each art centre is moulded by its governing body to suit the particular community, location, and history.

As part of their work art centres facilitate a range of services that can include arts and crafts production, marketing and promotion of artists or artistic products, product distribution, and a range of administrative and support services. The three art centres that I focus on here display some of the diversity in the functions of these organisations within the souvenir art sector, based on their varied histories and forms of production. The functions and forms of production of the art centres influence the resulting social, cultural and economic capital that is invested and generated within each community, contributing to the outcomes of the sector more broadly.

5.2 Injalak Arts and Crafts

Injalak Arts and Crafts (simply referred to as Injalak from here on) is an incorporated art centre based in Gunbalanya (Oenpelli) in Western Arnhem Land (see Plate 5 on the next page). The artists woven of the area produce a variety of items including paintings on paper and bark, products and fibre art, artefacts and carvings, and screen-printed products which are detailed and marketed on the Injalak website (Injalak Arts and Crafts). This range of production is marketed across both sectors of the industry, generating value for the community within the political economy of the
sector in the form of the economic and social benefits of employment and the reinforcement of culture through arts practice.

Plate 5: Injalak’s base in Gunbalanya marked in Purple, Maruku’s base in Mutitjulu marked in Yellow and Warlukurlangu’s base in Yuendumu marked in Red [Map] (2010)

Injalak has a broad range of activities with a focus on arts production, working to provide the artists with the supplies and materials necessary to create and sell their artworks, such as the fabrics and dyes for screen-printing and the paper for paintings. To facilitate this range of production Injalak has regular “buying sessions” in Gunbalanya and the surrounding outstations (Murphy, 2005, 203). However, the artists also independently collect and prepare many of the natural materials used at Injalak, such as the bark and ochres used for bark paintings and paintings on paper. In addition to the provision of materials, Injalak promotes the art centre and artworks, maintains a gallery space, manages exhibitions as well as the purchasing and documenting of artworks (Murphy, 2005, 200). Injalak also takes a broader view of its work, incorporating social, cultural and economic objectives into its operations,
such as ensuring cultural maintenance and the wellbeing of the artists (Injalak Arts and Crafts; Murphy, 2005, 200).

According to Injalak’s website, Gunbalanya is home to approximately 1,000-1,200 predominantly Kunwinjku-speaking people, although the area was traditionally home to many other groups as well (Injalak Arts and Crafts). There are also around 200-400 Indigenous people who live outside of Gunbalanya at one of ten outstations (Injalak Arts and Crafts). From this local population, Injalak also has an artist-membership of approximately 200 individuals, from which an executive committee of nine Indigenous members is elected annually (Murphy, 2005, 200; Injalak Arts and Crafts). Therefore, Injalak Arts and Crafts considers the West Arnhem Land region, “from the East Alligator, which forms the border with Kakadu, to the Mann River” as their “‘artistic catchment’ area” (Injalak Arts and Crafts). The location of Injalak means that there is a potential pool of funding available to it that comprises Northern Territory and Commonwealth funding for art centres through the arts industry support of the NACIS program, arts grants from Arts NT and the Australia Council; Indigenisation of the workforce through the NT’s Indigenous Arts Strategy; and cultural tourism funding due to Injalak’s position near Kakadu and its own local rock art sites.

Injalak engages with the fine art market by way of bark paintings and paintings on paper, the fine art and craft market with the fibre works, and in the souvenir art market with some fibre works, paintings on paper, and screen-printed products. The combination of the broad discursive structures of both the aesthetic and cultural authenticity determines the value of the individual products. I explore these
discourses below before considering the fine art ochre on bark and paper paintings of Injalak, which demonstrate the different values produced between similar products, as well as highlighting the blurred boundary between the fine art and souvenir art sectors.

As discussed in Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, the category of fine art is associated with modernist discourses of individual creative expression, which is set against other imperatives such as an adherence to tradition or commercial gain, and is often associated with abstract and non-representational aesthetics (Shiff, 1996, 108). This modernist position is countered and reworked by the interdisciplinary approach of the contemporary era, which contextualises the social and cultural elements that contribute to the aesthetic (D’Alleva, 2005, 155). Fine art products across the industry gain their value through the interplay of the discourses of aesthetic/artistic authenticity and cultural authenticity.

The bark paintings are ‘traditional’ style paintings that depict, “images of animals, spirit beings, sorcery figures and people” in the Western Arnhem Land figurative style which is known for the use of x-ray style images on monochrome backgrounds (Murphy, 2005, 200; Injalak Arts and Crafts). Although the depictions are usually figurative they are not realistic, using symbolic and abstract features such x-ray designs and abstract patterning such as fine-line cross-hatching, which create an aesthetic originality commensurate with contemporary fine art discourses. The aesthetic discourses are reinforced by the use of rectangular pieces of bark from the stringy bark tree, which is smoothed and flattened to make a board-like surface (Murphy, 2005, 200; Injalak Arts and Crafts), creating an art object approaching the
European tradition. This allows the painting to be conceptualised as separate from the concerns of everyday life as it is removed from its embedded context and viewed within the frame of the art market.

The aesthetic elements are only one part of the product and its value however, with the discourses of cultural authenticity contributing to the position of the products. The history of the product raises interesting issues about its contemporary production and sale, as before the collection of bark paintings in 1912 in the Injalak area, the art of the region was ephemeral and tied-in with social and religious practices (Injalak Arts and Crafts). During this early period of bark painting collection, the paintings were not regarded as fine art objects, but rather as ethnographic artefacts where the meanings of the objects were predominantly social and cultural.

The ethnographic discourses persist due to the use of traditional styles that resemble earlier barks collected as artefacts, as well as providing the products with cultural authenticity (Edwards, 2007, 61). There are also other features associated with the
bark paintings as ethnographic objects in addition to the continuing aesthetic legacy embodied in the reinterpretation of the designs and the use of traditional painting techniques such as the x-ray style. One of these main features is the visual effect of the natural colours of the bark surface, with the accompanying natural ochres used as paint, signifying a cultural authenticity. This discursive structure was also found by Frederick Wherry in his case study of carved products from Thailand, noting that, “[s]o long as the tools appear to be traditional and are at least handmade from local materials, questions about how the ancestors might have carved the same forms seem irrelevant” (2006, 20).

The use of bark as the backing surface was also significant as it allowed the paintings to be easily portable, both for the ethnographic researchers and explorers and the contemporary consumer. The feature of being portable is important when considering any commodity, but is particularly important in the case of souvenir art products as they are generally associated with some form of tourism and therefore need to be, “particularly adapted to the transient visitor (by size/weight/price)” (Evans, 2000, 131). The limitations on the size of bark able to be stripped from the tree and the light weight of bark as a medium makes bark paintings appropriate as souvenir products. Despite this, the paintings are only amenable to the upper limit of the souvenir art sector, as they attract a higher status by being marketed as predominantly fine art products through their exhibition in Injalak’s art gallery-style retail space and indicated by the high prices that are set for the products.

The other fine art products from Injalak, the paintings on paper, are a recent addition to their stock, used as an alternative to painting on bark (Injalak Arts and Crafts).
Injalak introduced the modern medium of Arches 640gsm paper, citing that the supply of paper is more constant and that the paper does not have the problems exhibited by bark, such as the potential for warping and mould (Injalak Arts and Crafts). While Injalak claims the paper has “a density and texture not unlike the surface of bark” (Injalak Arts and Crafts), the use of paper takes away the visual references to ethnography. The images that are painted on paper are no different to those produced on bark, and are painted in the same ochres in a traditional style, conferring cultural authenticity on the images as well as the aesthetic authenticity gained from the move to paper. Furthermore, the high quality paper, which is specifically produced for art and design purposes, implies that the products are to be viewed as fine art products. However, paper as a medium has generally been regarded as less valuable than canvas in the history of Western painting due to traditions that suggest that works on paper are ‘preparatory’ to a main work on canvas.

Plate 7: Owen Naborhilborhl, Mimi Spirit [Ochres on Arches Paper] (Undated)

Another element of the market demand for the paintings on paper may be the portability of the products, with the range available in six sizes ranging from XX small (310 x 210mm) to medium (1000 x 750mm) and large (1000 x 1500mm) with
four of the six sizes being described as small (Injalak Arts and Crafts). The bias
towards supplying smaller sizes of paper suggests that not all of the paintings on
paper are targeted at the fine art market where generally bigger is better (and more
expensive), although smaller works may also be a sign of testing market demand or
the allocation of resources based on artist status. Using smaller sizes in this manner is
also in keeping with the tradition of preparatory works mentioned above, and
creating a fine art product with a slightly lower status. However, Injalak’s intention is
revealed in the statement that the, “[p]aper is also much easier to freight” for
international buyers (Injalak Arts and Crafts). Therefore, the culmination of these
discourses and Injalak’s display and commentary of the products on its website
bestows the status of fine art objects on the paintings, with the smaller range able to
be sold in the souvenir art market as they are considered to be less prestigious and
more portable relative to the larger paintings or barks.

The employment in arts production that the paintings on paper and bark represent
provides a mechanism for “maintaining and strengthening cultural values” (Australia
Council, Undated, 3). This is because the arts production presents an opportunity for
the traditional customary knowledge, such as harvesting the natural materials or the
creation of the designs and forms, to be practiced and taught to others. As previously
mentioned, one of Injalak’s major objectives is maintenance of the “art and culture of
Western Arnhem Land” (Injalak Arts and Crafts). Cultural maintenance is
represented in the traditional elements of the designs and production techniques of
the products, with these features continuing to be practiced, reinforced through their
use and display as valuable attributes, and passed on through instruction to the
younger artists of the centres. In the case of Injalak’s painting products, the skills and
knowledge associated with gathering and applying traditional ochres not only represents cultural authenticity providing a greater value to the product, but also provides an opportunity to continue the use of those cultural techniques and their particular local significance.

The values generated by Injalak’s production of fibre art also involve forms of cultural maintenance and development as a consequence of the artistic and cultural authenticity the products display. Fibre works make up the majority of artworks bought by Injalak, with a corresponding 140 artists working in fibre arts and crafts (Murphy, 2005, 203). The supply of fibre art is regularly more than the market demand, which puts some financial pressure on the centre as Injalak purchases the works from artists in-full and up-front (Murphy, 2005, 203). However, the investment in the craft of fibre art is important as a form of popular community engagement and expression of social identity that is based on traditional and innovated cultural forms.

The category of craft is informed by a complex set of discourses with a central dichotomy between fine art and the arts excluded from that category (see Section 2.2.3). The art objects may be excluded due to factors such as enduring use-value, constrained self-expression through an adherence to the same functional forms and the skilled, but not individual, aesthetic production of the objects (Greenhalgh, 1997, 21, 29; Ioannou, 1989, 68). Due to these factors, craft is positioned on the scale of worth according to social tastes as generally below fine art, encompassing an area that takes in fine craft at the upper limit overlapping with medium level fine art, but
is held in higher esteem than mass-produced and purely commercial items. These positions of status can be seen within the fibre art of Injalak.

Injalak’s fibre works are considered to be fine craft due to the considerable artistic innovations, which include influences from Western craft forms under missionary direction (Hamby, 2005, 212), and the loss of functional elements. The category of fibre works is deliberately broad as there is a variety of forms produced, including bags, baskets, and mats as well as more sculptural pieces. The category of fine craft fibre works in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is not unique to Injalak, with similar forms and products have been exhibited in Australian art galleries and institutions such as those by prominent fibre artist Yvonne Koolmatrie. The Injalak fibre works are made by weaving natural plant fibres such as pandanus and palm leaves, which may be tinted with vegetable dyes or left in their natural colours (Injalak Arts and Crafts). The use of natural materials and colours provides the fibre works with cultural authenticity, which is enhanced by the fact that the products are also handmade (Finlayson, 1991, 56).

Plate 8: A Woven Basket from Injalak [Pandanus Fibre] (Undated)
The fibre works are notable for the amount of different types of forms produced and the different techniques employed in their production (see Hamby, 2005). However, Mary Ann Littrell’s research into textiles in the souvenir art market suggests that consumers’ perceptions of cultural authenticity are predicated on the elements of, “the raw materials, colours, motifs, design, or production techniques of a craft” (1990, 237). I am therefore only concerned with a few points of difference that add value to the products.

The fibre works are a hybrid of traditional materials, forms and techniques matched with forms and techniques introduced by missionary staff. The fibre works continued to be practical objects in the form of bags, mats and baskets, but the forms were altered to suit market conditions in the southern Australian cities, becoming similar in style to European basket forms (Hamby, 2005, 212). However, in the souvenir art market the hybridity of forms and techniques are unlikely to affect the value the consumer places on the fibre art as the materials are local and natural, providing sufficient cultural authenticity for the products (Littrell, Anderson and Brown, 1993, 206). In this case the value of the fibre works is also supported by the aesthetic authenticity in the use of colour, which represents an artistic innovation from the “classic” style of ochres painted on the finished works, to the newer forms of dyed fibre assembled to create colourful geometric patterns (Hamby, 2005, 161-163).

The changes in form and style that the fibre works have undergone result in a value that is informed by both craft and fine art discourses, which coalesce in the products being considered as fine craft objects. The category of fine craft is regarded as “less-threatening” than fine art as it is more accessible through common cultural concepts.
such as functionality and style according to survey data presented by Quadrant Research Services (1997, 15) to the Australia Council. That fine craft is more approachable for consumers is important in the souvenir art sector, where people may be purchasing the products without a great deal of prior consideration. Fine craft is also well suited to the souvenir art sector as it is also "more affordable" than fine art objects (Quadrant Research Services, 1997, 64). In conjunction with the approachability of fine craft, it still retains an exclusivity that exceeds that of regular craft items. Therefore the fibre art products of Injalak are marketed as fine craft in their display in Injalak’s gallery and in the fine art style documentation the fibre art has received with the publication and associated exhibition, Twined Together: Kunmadj Njalehnjaleken, providing a form of exclusivity while making the products seem more approachable due to the familiar forms and materials.

Injalak also sells limited edition prints which are situated within the category of fine craft. Injalak produces prints on fabric and on paper, as well as a range of non-limited edition, screen-printed products that are addressed below (Injalak Arts and Crafts). The limited edition prints have some of the same attributes to that of the fine art paintings, although there are some important differences.

Plate 9: Gabriel Maralngurra Untitled [Print] (Undated) from Injalak
One of the important differences is the medium that the artworks are produced in, with printing generally considered a less significant or important medium for artists than painting, as a result of the application of craft discourses and the capacity for mechanical reproduction. The prints are considered fine crafts due to the combination of manual, skilled production and an emphasis on fine art concepts and aesthetics (Ioannou, 1989, 26). The limited edition prints also have a reduced value compared to the paintings due to the loss of the prestige of the original article that occurs with a medium that allows for multiple reproductions, even if the reproductions are limited in number, creating a form of exclusivity and commercial value. This is also combined with the aforementioned lesser value that accompanies the medium of paper, and the associations of fabric products with domesticity and utility, which are both considered lesser qualities that are associated with decorative arts (although this has been critiqued and reworked in the cultural turn it rarely adds value outside of the category of fine art/craft which actively supports the conceptual reworkings).

As the prints rely on aesthetic authenticity with the supporting cultural authenticity of the content to secure their value as a fine craft, the designs of the works are of central importance. The limited edition prints produced by Injalak usually have one central subject on a monochrome background and other stylistic techniques in a similar style to the paintings. As such the Injalak prints garner the same value in terms of artistic and cultural authenticity, with the only substantive difference in value due to the medium’s reproducibility and status.
The artistic value of Injalak’s screen-printed fabric products is furthered altered by their status as mass-produced items, even though the designs of Injalak are similar to the other graphic products made by the centre (May, 2005, 189). The majority of products in the category of mass-produced or licensed products are functional items with a predetermined use-value and a basic market price, with additional value being gained through the secondary function as decorative or aesthetic objects with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designs printed on them. In the case of Injalak, the designs are screen-printed on lengths of fabric as well as a range of items including t-shirts, tablecloths, tea towels, cushion covers and bags (Injalak Arts and Crafts). The functionality of the mass-produced products results in a loss of aesthetic authenticity, as they are part of the “universe of everyday objects (or, more precisely, utensils)”, contrasting with the separate world of pure aesthetics (Bourdieu, Darbel and Schanapper, 1991, 40).

The aesthetic and cultural authenticity of the designs is therefore central to the value of the mass-produced products. Injalak’s range of screen-printed products use images that are not a direct translation of the traditional images of the paintings, but are adaptations (usually simplifications) of the same figurative style and elements of traditional designs depicting native animals and spirit beings (May, 2005, 189). Therefore the products gain a limited amount of cultural and aesthetic authenticity provided by the traditional style used. The use of culturally and regionally specific elements such as the depiction of long slender figures, acts as visual shorthand indicating that the product is from the Injalak area.
The general sense of authenticity based on the regional aesthetics provides enough value to make the object work as a souvenir in the sense that the product is from a definite location that is identified by the artwork. The production of the limited-edition prints and screen-prints facilitate the practice and development of traditional designs and iconography, creating and strengthening cultural capital among the artists. Furthermore, the culturally specific religious practices of Kunwinjku-speakers of the Injalak area are also reinforced, explained, and passed on using the traditional protocols of sacred designs and knowledge, generating both social and cultural capital for the artists and wider community.

The products of the souvenir art sector with the range of screen-printed items help to offset Injalak’s investment in developing the fine art and craft products, which are generally “handmade, labour intensive, limited in quantity and relatively expensive” (Wright, 1999, 60). The craft and souvenir products achieve the offset by providing a small investment in time and materials and a quick turnover of funds in a market that “accounts for a huge portion of the turnover of Aboriginal arts and crafts product” (Wright, 1999, 61). Injalak is insulated from the financial pressures that the development of the fibre works market places on them due to the high degree of diversification in production and markets pursued at the centre.

Injalak’s engagement with cultural tourism is also paying dividends, with the centre generating significant interest in local tourism and the art centre, creating employment in both sides of the venture for local people (Wright, 2000, 201). The encouragement of cultural tourism has led to “substantial” sales for the art centre, although there is no more detailed data publicly available about sales figures or the
portion of sales by product (Wright, 2000, 201). Being not-for-profit and community focused, all the income generated by Injalak is returned to artists through direct payments or in infrastructure for the art centre and the community, which was one part of the objectives articulated by Injalak’s executive committee when it was established (Injalak Arts and Crafts). This aligns with policies of self-determination, and particularly policies focused on economic self-sufficiency, which seek to assist the community through stable and self-directed employment (Injalak Arts and Crafts; May, 2005, 195).

However, Injalak’s executive committee also stipulated extra-economic self-determination goals for the art centre, such as cultural maintenance, the promotion of the Indigenous cultures of Western Arnhem Land, as well as furthering education and a sense of community (Injalak Arts and Crafts; May, 2005, 195). In these multiple aims it is clear that social and cultural capital is desired along with economic capital. Firm figures for the social and cultural objectives of Injalak are not available and the information on the economic capital that Injalak generates is also imprecise. However, Anthony Murphy, Manager at Injalak Arts and Crafts, provides a recent figure that is indicative of Injalak’s position with “over $100 000” returned to artists from work in fibre art in 2003 (2005, 203). When this figure is contrasted with Injalak’s “rapidly growing” turnover in 1990 and 1991 of “over $150 000” and “more than $220 000” respectively (Wright, 2000, 43), it would seem reasonable to assume Injalak’s turnover is at least $500 000, although there is no publically available data to support this. This places Injalak in a strong position within the industry and the political economy, with similar outcomes to the second of the example Art Centres, Maruku, but with a more diversified product range.
Maruku Arts and Crafts is owned by the Anangu-speaking peoples of the Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjara lands that fall within the boundaries of three different states, the Northern Territory, South Australia, and Western Australia (Isaacs, 1992, 15). Within this area Maruku services artists in “Amata, Indulkana, Fregon, Ernabella, Mimili, Docker River, Pipalyatjara, Kalka, Wingellina, Blackstone, Jameson, Warburton, Warakuna, Tjukurla, Kanpi, Nyapari, Finke, Mutitjulu and many smaller homeland centres” (Maruku Arts and Crafts).

However, the main sites of Maruku Arts and Crafts are located within the Northern Territory, with the warehouse and offices based in the community of Mutitjulu and its retail outlet is located at the Kata Tjuta Cultural Centre at the base of Uluru.
Maruku’s production focuses on wooden crafts that are traditionally called ‘punu’ (Isaacs, 1992, 15), which have been variously described as craft, artefacts, tourist art, souvenirs, and (fine) art (Altman, 1991, 7; Isaacs, 1992, 114; Hodge, James and Lawson, 1998, 41). Maruku’s success is in part attributable to the focus on crafts production, which is a “distinctive niche in the market” (Isaacs, 1992, 131) with high demand for products like, “didgeridoos, punu, and small items for the tourist market” (Wright, 1999, 81). This description of a “tourist market” is made by Wright citing feedback from retailers at about twenty-nine art centres which suggested that the demand for product is of two very different kinds: (a) small ‘tourist’ items that can reliably be produced, and licensed or value added products; or (b) fine art by the biggest ‘names’ in the art market. (1999, 66-67)

The “tourist market” that Wright refers to is part of what I have called the souvenir art sector, as defined in the introduction as products that have aesthetic value and gain further value through their use as mementos, which are made for sale in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry. This definition is an apt description of the type of products that Maruku produces.

Maruku intentionally and strategically produces for the souvenir art market as it allows other artforms that are produced within its region that are associated more closely with the fine art market, such as painting and batik work, to be marketed by other organisations (Isaacs, 1992, 131). Although Maruku does produce a limited
number of fine art acrylic on canvas paintings, these products have not been included in the analysis here as they are exclusively aimed at the fine art sector and do not have the relevant features of souvenir art products (Isaacs, 1992, 134). It is noteworthy that Maruku is also not engaged in the mass-produced and licensed products section of the market (Mahoney, 2009).

Maruku’s production is therefore focused on wooden crafts and artefacts, and it is through this core activity of the art centre that values of social, cultural and economic capital are generated. Maruku has two craft product ranges that feature burnt-incised designs: carved wooden figures and carved wooden bowls. The small carved wooden figures of animals are incised with burnt designs described on Maruku’s website as, “either the natural markings of the animal or traditional design work” (Maruku Arts and Crafts). The figures are carved from sections of local woods and represent about ten different small native animals including figures of birds, lizards, goannas, snakes, and echidnas (Maruku Arts and Crafts; Isaacs, 1992, 114). The carved figures are categorised here as craft, as the carving and incising processes need some skill and artistic sensibilities as to the aesthetic considerations, but also rely on imitations of
naturally occurring subjects, especially when the incising involves the natural markings of the animal.

The aesthetic authenticity is not only challenged by the imitative nature of the products, but also on the grounds that the products are deliberately commercial as they are reproduced, albeit by hand, in the same forms with the direct intention of being sold. The commercial nature of the products creates a tension with their aesthetic value as the “art market is a site… informed by two contradictory or conflicting logics: a logic of art, and a logic of capitalist markets” (Velthuis, 2005, 24). The contradictory logics are a result of the romantic and high modernist discourses of art being opposed to any form of motivation that is not a result of the artist’s aesthetic vision, and the economic imperative to maximise utility and profit from goods. Deliberately commercial items, especially those in the souvenir art market which is generally not considered to be where ‘real art’ is sold, represent a logic of “obtaining maximum ‘effect’ …at minimum cost”, which is accorded a low status (Bourdieu, 1984, 379).

However, Australian art consultant, curator and author Jennifer Isaacs argues that the products are valuable because they embody the cultural authenticity of the makers’ knowledge of the subject and the practice of carving (1992, x, 114). The contradictions and contestations between the discourses that form the value of the product leave it with a low artistic value, but a medium level of cultural authenticity resulting from the traditional practices of carving and designs used, providing a mid-range value in the souvenir market.
This translates into an economic value for the product that does not just signify the price of the labour and materials, but also indicates the other types of value, such as the various forms of authenticity and cultural capital, that the product is imbued with (Velthuis, 2005, 158). The complicated decisions in forming a price for products can be seen in the case of Maruku’s crafts, which take into account artistic and aesthetic factors such as the shape and form of the piece, the quality of the incising of the design, the quality of the wood, the finish of the product, and its size (Wright, 1999, 116). These criteria aim to meet the requirements of the souvenir art market as determined by the art centre staff.

There are also other criteria that are considered in the pricing of the products, such as the cultural importance of the design to the artist or community. For example the use of a significant Tjukurpa (Dreaming) created by a particularly important artist with the appropriate right and knowledge to reproduce the designs within the community (Hodge, James and Lawson, 1998, 41-42), which maintains the traditional cultural standards. All of these considerations result in Maruku’s carved animal figures being priced at between $5 for a small carving and $600 for large carvings (Hodge, James and Lawson, 1998, 41).

Maruku’s carved wooden bowls are craft in the sense of having a primary purpose of utility with ornate features, or as Paul Greenhalgh might describe them, vernacular pieces, as they are utilitarian, handmade and pre-industrial in aesthetic, which also serve as decorative art (1997, 21, 39). The bowls are made from local woods and come in a variety of sizes and forms that are related to the traditional uses of carrying, winnowing and digging (Maruku Arts and Crafts; Brokensha, 1978, 46).
The bowls also feature the technique of burnt incising on their underside creating “intricate, repetitive, pleasing patterns, [of] a dark burnt brown on the lighter brown of the wood” (Isaacs, 1992, 111).

Plate 12: Carved Bowls with Burnt-Incising designs from Maruku [River Red Gum/Mulga Wood] (Undated)

Aesthetic authenticity is represented in Maruku’s bowls in the form that they take and the technique of incising. The forms of the bowls have changed considerably and are so varied in shape and size that they only approach the traditional forms they are based on (Isaacs, 1992, 108). These differences in the shapes and sizes of the bowls represent artistic choices about the individual appearance of the product. The aesthetic authenticity is reinforced through the use of the burnt incising technique on the underside of the bowls, which is a relatively new (post-contact) practice, applied with the artistic consideration needed to reinterpret traditional designs in an aesthetic form (Isaacs, 1992, 109; Brokensha, 1978, 47).

These aesthetic innovations and considerations work with the discourses that celebrate individual artistic vision and support the claim that the product is an artistic
object. However, the aesthetic discourse is in tension with the discourse of utilitarian products being less valuable as a result of the ability for use outside of aesthetic appreciation (Bourdieu, 1984, 5). Under the utilitarian discourse the bowls become less valuable than fine art as they are everyday products that reproduce designs for decoration, although it is important to note that they still retain the value that is generated by their other attributes.

The tension between these two discourses does not mean that they are in a binary opposition, but instead that the value is difficult to pin down. One result of this process is the creation of a discursive position for craft products like the bowls in the formation of the category of fine craft. This position opened up in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of the prominence of the aesthetic properties of traditional crafts becoming the dominant rationale for their production, with the previous functional elements being less important (Ioannou, 1989, 12). This can be seen in the bowls made for Maruku, which have changed considerably in size, shape and design as part of aesthetic decisions (Brokensha, 1978, 49). This creates a value for the bowls of Maruku that is high in status due to the aesthetic components and the general sense of cultural authenticity from the functional and handmade appearance that the products convey, which is tempered by the loss of some aesthetic value due to the utilitarian form.
The artefacts of Maruku, which include boomerangs, shields, spears, spear-throwers, clubs, chisels and music sticks (see below), demonstrate the complex position and value created by these discursive structures. Maruku’s products are handcrafted, often decorated with carved or incised patterns, and are still made in the “authentic” traditional manner and materials (Maruku Arts and Crafts). In addition, most of Maruku’s products could be utilised as a tool, but are more commonly produced as commodities that have an aesthetic and cultural value.

Plate 13: Shields, Chisels and Clubs, Music Sticks, and Boomerangs from Maruku

[Red River Gum/Mulga Wood] (Undated)

The category of artefacts shares many of the same discursive features of craft, although there is an even greater emphasis on the cultural authenticity of the object and less consideration of aesthetic or artistic elements. The change in discursive focus is due to the origins of the category that initially was used to refer to
anthropological and ethnographic specimens which conveyed connotations that these objects were not aesthetic objects and did not have any modern functionality (Fry and Willis, 1996, 203), as well as inferring that the objects are “authentic” articles that represent a people’s way of life (Wherry, 2006, 7). In turn, the ethnographic discourses focus attention on a type of cultural authenticity, although it is also closely linked with “misconceptions about the unchanging and hermetic nature of Aboriginal art”, which devalues and invalidates contemporary culture and products in favour of an older “authentic” ideal (Miller, 2007, 30). These discourses are tempered in the contemporary era however, as the category of artefacts reflects market practices where items that were once considered objects of utility from a particular culture or society are produced, marketed and sold as aesthetic objects (Wherry, 2006, 6).

The shields produced for Maruku demonstrate how the discourses of utility and aesthetics can be applied to artefacts. The shields feature on both the front and back “a variety of traditional designs” that are particular to the Anangu peoples that Maruku services (Maruku Arts and Crafts). This makes them both a deliberately aesthetic object, as well as retaining some of the potential functions that it was used for, such as carrying items or ceremonial functions, even if they are not commonly used in contemporary society (Brokensha, 1978, 40). It should be noted at this point that not all of the objects described as artefacts have incised decorative features, but all of the products are carved and as such incorporate aesthetic elements of form and shape in their construction. For a product such as the shield, the producers are necessarily constrained in the shape and form that they use. However, there is possible innovation in the details of shape and form such as the dimensions and
degree to which the shield is curved, and there is considerable innovation afforded to
to the artist in the form and type of incised design on the shield in the same manner as
the works of craft, such as the bowls produced by Maruku.

The value from the possible artistic innovation is offset however, by the romantic
sentiment that overtly commercial items such as souvenir artefacts are of a lower
quality, as it is assumed that the products are made with little aesthetic concern
(Edwards, 2007, 61). This discourse is prevalent and has even been expressed by art
centres in response to questions about engaging with the souvenir art market, with
some centres suggesting that “anything produced for the tourist, souvenir market…
[is] automatically ‘low quality’” (Wright, 1999, 68). Importantly, this view of
souvenir art is also one of the reasons for the low response rate to my questionnaires,
with a number of responses expressing that they would not participate in the research
as a result of not wanting to be categorised as a ‘souvenir art producer’ due to the
connotations of low status, and instead preferring to be associated with the fine art
sector.

These responses are in line with the finding from the Australians and the Arts report
that it is the sentiments of the arts sector that limits the definition of the arts,
excluding the non-fine arts (Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, 2001, 32). The value of
the artefacts is therefore placed in a kind of double-bind with regards to authenticity,
as the insistence on an aesthetic authenticity in the Western romantic tradition is at
odds with the need for cultural authenticity. The effect of these discourses of artistic
authenticity on the artefacts produced by Maruku is to devalue the artistic input that is in the products, lessening their overall value.

This tension is played out in the value ascribed to the boomerangs produced for Maruku. The boomerangs are culturally authentic in their materials, being made from local woods, as well as being authentic in form and production techniques (Isaacs, 1992, 100). However, the boomerang is a very common product across Australia, which is made both traditionally and non-traditionally in many different areas and with a large degree of variation between the size, shape and design (Jones, 1996, 78). In this instance the boomerangs are consistent with the regional character of traditional boomerang production, with Maruku selling only non-returning boomerangs (Isaacs, 1992, 102; Jones, 1996, 78). This means that not only are the products made locally, employing local people’s aesthetic and cultural knowledge, but also using local materials in the production, all contributing to a sense of the regional character, validating the cultural authenticity. The specific regional character and cultural authenticity are associated with a specifically local form of “‘Aboriginality’” that is created through the producers’ sense of cultural and ethnic identity being conveyed to the consumer in an intersubjective and intercultural dialogue (Langton, 1994, 99-100). These regional differences also aid in market diversification as they act as brands, allowing consumers to make distinctions between the different types of product, or different form of “‘Aboriginalities’” (Langton, 1994, 99-100), creating more variety in the industry.
However, the boomerangs are not entirely traditional, as the designs are produced using the post-contact incising technique of “poker work”, otherwise known as burnt-incising (Isaacs, 1992, 100). Burnt-incising can therefore be viewed as an artistic innovation and more broadly as a form of cultural development that is incorporated into practices of cultural maintenance. However, like the developments of dying associated with Injalak’s fibre works, it is unlikely that the average consumer is aware of these developments in the production of the artefacts, or that the established development of burnt-incising would be perceived as less authentic. Accordingly, the boomerangs and the artefacts from Maruku in general have a value that is similar to the craft products, and particularly the animal carvings of the centre, in the mid-range of the souvenir art market.

The focus on crafts production is possible at this large scale due to the strong workforce of artists and sales that are facilitated by Maruku’s retail and wholesale operations. There has been a seemingly stable artist population at Maruku for the last two decades, with the website sharing figures published in the early 1990s and the year 2000, showing that there are approximately 3,000 Indigenous people, 800 of which are artist-members (Isaacs, 1992, 6; Wright, 2000, 113; Maruku Arts and Crafts). The constant membership has allowed a steady flow of production, resulting in a situation where Maruku “usually has in stock more than 30,000 pieces of craft”, a figure that seems to include all forms of artistic production, providing a strong base for the centre’s wholesaling and retailing enterprise (Maruku Arts and Crafts).

The regional outlook of Maruku is also important as it consolidates the strong regional identity and aesthetic that differentiates Maruku crafts and artefacts from
other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander products in the industry (Altman, 2005, 5). The sense of community that is fostered through the working relations and community-owned organisational structure also contributes to a shared sense of identity. The discursive structure of identity in relation to social capital can refer to identity on several levels, with national identity often implied by larger cultural events and projects and federal level funding, while identity can also refer to regional and local identity or another “specific geographically defined imagined community” (Stevenson, 2000, 8, 26). Social capital is generated as the arts production reinforces social cohesion, creating a sense of shared identity and community at local and regional levels.

The activities and employment facilitated by the art centres also generate social capital, which is the benefit derived from greater interpersonal and community relations (Bourdieu, 2005, 2). Social capital is often evaluated in cultural policies based on “the level of community trust, the development of social networks, the evolution of different groups and the extension of social relationships and community” (Australian Expert Group in Industry Studies, 2004, 41). Maruku mobilise social capital through the relations created by employment, as well as the sense of shared identity locally and regionally as regional Indigenous organisations that are centred on local arts and cultural production. These factors of social capital are often referred to under the discursive structures of social cohesion or social inclusion, and community or national identity (see Chapter 4).

Maruku contributes to a socially cohesive community by creating working environments that facilitate interpersonal relations at local and regional levels.
Additionally the centre is a community-focused organisation in which “cohesive action” outside of arts production can be achieved, such as a forum for local political action, political representation to government authorities, or community initiatives in health and education (Morphy, 2009, 124-125). Maruku also provides further opportunity through the operation of the cultural centre which allows the interaction of all members of the Anangu of the Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjara lands. In this way the work and structures provided by the art centres create interpersonal links and skills as well as a “sense of community” (May, 2005, 195).

Maruku facilitates the production of the crafts in the large area of the Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjara lands by regular visits to each community, where consultation with the artists, the purchasing of crafts and the provision of tools and services occurs (Maruku Arts and Crafts). The artists are able to buy the tools to make the craft objects from Maruku which resells the tool bought in bulk at a reduced cost, and the artists are paid up-front in cash for their craft, which helps the local communities participate in a monetised economy (Isaacs, 1992, 53).

The employment in arts production also creates cultural capital by providing an opportunity for cultural maintenance and development in producing the products, furthering education with practical experience and/or additional training and qualifications. Maruku provides its artists with the opportunity for cultural maintenance and development (Wright, 2000, 218), representing a return in cultural capital. The collection and carving of local woods in traditional forms, whether artefacts like the spears and shields or fine crafts like the bowls, are examples of cultural maintenance with these traditions employed and taught to younger artists.
The use of traditional designs based on the specific local cultural systems that regulate the use of that knowledge on the products is reinforced in the burnt-incising on the shields and bowls. However, the practice of burnt-incising is also an artistic innovation, as are the interpretations of the designs, representing a form of cultural development, all of which is made possible on a large scale through the arts production facilitated by the arts centre.

The crafts are predominantly retailed through Maruku’s store, with around two thirds being sold there, and the rest being wholesaled throughout Australia (Wright, 2000, 189). The retail store also presents the artists of Maruku with more opportunities for employment with up to three staff during its peak season and a further ten staff in the art centre (Wright, 2000, 216; D’Aranjo, 1991, 91). While these employment figures may not seem substantial given the 800 artists and general Indigenous population of 3,000 in the area, it is still significant in the context of remote Indigenous community employment where there are little other employment prospects (Altman and Finlayson, 1992, 14).

The activities of the art centres have also generated cultural capital for their members by providing opportunities to further their skills and education outside of traditional arts production or artistic experimentation (Australia Council, Undated, 3). Maruku has provided opportunities for skills development and further education in arts production and other activities of the arts centre. These types of activities have been shown by other evaluations of arts programs to provide a basis for further employment and further general life skills and capacity (Matarasso, 1997, 8, 33). It is also important to note that, even though the work in arts production is generally
limited to the skills and vision necessary to produce the desired form and aesthetic, it also provides organisational, interpersonal, administrative, and basic economic management skills.

This form of cultural capital is principally generated by the part-time and full-time positions in the retail outlet at Uluru, which have provided experience in all aspects of retail work and operations as well as more casual volunteer positions for craft making and cultural demonstrations at the cultural centre (Wright, 2000, 216). These opportunities create varying amounts of cultural capital depending on the extent of engagement and the amount of new and useful experiences that are available, however they represent significant capital for the communities given the otherwise limited training and employment available and the high quality support provided by the art centres in these positions.

Maruku’s incorporation in 1991 reflected policies of self-determination and the increasing professionalisation of the industry (Altman, 2005, 6), which had been encouraged through the long-term staffing of art centres facilitated by NACISS funding. As part of these same policies there were also several opportunities for jobs training in retailing and administration through the Community Employment Development Projects (CDEP) positions financed by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and run by Maruku shortly after incorporation (D’Aranjo and Yates, 1989, 10).

In more recent years Maruku’s strong financial position is underscored by consistently outperforming the average art centre earnings of $312,546 (Altman,
2000a, 84), with sales from its store earning $650,000 in 1994-1995 and exceeding $950,000 in 1998-1999 (Wright, 2000, 218). These strong figures underpin Maruku’s move to becoming financially self-sufficient in the year 2000 (Healey, 2002, 3). Unfortunately, figures and statements referring to the year 2000 are the last publicly-available information about Maruku’s financial position, making further analysis difficult.

However, as Wright notes, “[u]sing Altman’s [(2000a)] performance indicators, we can [see] that Maruku outperforms nearly every other art centre” (2000, 115). However, despite this strong performance, Wright argues that it “received a relatively small amount of subsidy from ATSIC’s NACISS program for the size of its operations” (2000, 115). This means that Maruku only received around the average or less for that period. In addition to this, Maruku also had trouble securing support from government agencies in order to attend trade fairs, although Wright point out that, “this is partly because Maruku has not had a business plan until now [1997], and many funding bodies, such as AusTrade, require one” (2000, 192).

This support is related to Maruku’s structure as a community-based not-for-profit organisation which is positioned in the industry to facilitate cultural, social and economic value for its members and wider community in an area where other support services and the market are not widely available. Although for the decade 2000-2009, Maruku has not received consistent NACIS or IVAIS funding as, in the year “2000 Maruku became financially self-sufficient with the withdrawal of funding from ATSIC due to the centre’s impressive turnover” (Healey, 2002, 3). However, Maruku has received a one-off grant of $9,000 in 2007 from Arts NT for a felting
workshop at Mutitjulu under the category of “Indigenous Visual Arts and Craft” (Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, 2007, 9).

It is not clear whether the level of support has been undermined by Maruku’s economic success or its preference for souvenir art. However, both of these factors seem to have played a role in limiting further funding opportunities for the expansion and consolidation of the enterprise. As such, Maruku’s level of support appears to be hindered by the tendency of cultural industries policies to emphasise support for institutions and public infrastructure that is not commercially viable in efforts to moderate market failure. Furthermore, arts and cultural policies in this area appear to focus on the fine art sector rather than souvenir art production.

The distinctions between art centres based on the sector in which they produce and the market they are in are important as they can affect how the social, cultural and economic values are generated. As Altman identifies:

some [art centres](like Papunya Tula Artists, Warlayirti Artists, Warlukurlangpu Artists) are primarily engaged in marketing commercial fine art; while others primarily market tourist art (Maruku Arts and Crafts, Waringarri Aboriginal Arts, Goolarabooloo Aboriginal Arts and Crafts). (1991, 6-7)

As previously mentioned however, art centres usually deal in products across both sectors (Altman, 1991, 6-7). In a submission to the 2007 senate inquiry, Warlukurlangpu Artists (cited in Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 187) mentioned that their marketing strategy included selling in both fine art and souvenir art markets, which was also confirmed in personal communication with the administrative and gallery staff while I was at the centre in 2010 (Personal Communication, 19/08/2010). Producing and selling across both markets not only
expands the possible avenues for sales, but also increases the available types of participation for the artists with some crafts being able to be completed on a casual and part-time basis away from the art centre. This also increases the avenues for social interaction and income generation facilitated by the provision of art materials and activities of the art centre.

The strategy of producing for both sectors is also identified by Wright with the range of products across art centres in general including:

- paintings on canvas, bark, paper and silk; screen-prints, etchings and lithographs on paper;
- batik on silk and cotton; artefacts; jewellery; musical instruments; softwood and hardwood carvings; clothing; painted and slump glass; ceramics, and fibre crafts. (1999, 59-60)

Additionally, the diversity of products and the methods of their manufacture is reflected in the art centres as the, “[d]ifferent products attract different markets and wallets, and need different levels of preparation, handling, documentation, freighting, and marketing”, which also creates variation in turnover and income (Wright, 2000, 159). These divisions between art centres also have ramifications for their position within the industry and the type of assistance available as exemplified by Warlukurlangu.

5.4 Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation

Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation services Warlpiri communities in and around Yuendumu in the Central Desert of the Northern Territory (see Plate 5). Warlukurlangu was established in 1985, incorporated in 1986 and is “[o]wned and governed by its more than 600 members” (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation). It is directed by the sixteen members of the executive that are drawn
from the artist-population (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation).

Warlukurlangu has a large range of products that span both sectors, with acrylic paintings, limited edition prints, wooden craft artefacts and licenced homewares and accessories (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation). Warlukurlangu works to facilitate the production, promotion, and marketing of the products, generating economic capital in an area where “[e]mployment… is extremely limited and most residents are recipients of government benefits” (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation).

Additionally, Warlukurlangu, like most art centres, provides a range of social and cultural services for the artist members and their wider community outside of the production of arts and crafts (Wright, 1999, 152). Warlukurlangu directly acknowledges this and views its work as providing “social, cultural and economic rewards for its members” (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation). Warlukurlangu is involved in a range of programs for the benefit of its artists and the wider community, including support for the Mount Theo Youth Program and other community development initiatives (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation). Furthermore, Warlukurlangu also runs programs to assist with the health and wellbeing of residents in the remote area that it operates in, and a program to mitigate the health and safety problems associated with dogs in the community (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation).

However, of particular interest for this thesis is the financial and material support for traditional ceremonies that Warlukurlangu provides, as it is most closely associated with the distinct social and cultural role of art centres through the provision of arts
production and associated activities. The financial support for ceremonies, by helping to buy food as well as supplying materials such as “ochre, feathers and hairsting for the camps” (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation), represents an investment in economic and social capital that feeds into the generation of economic capital through future arts production, although it is not directly aimed at doing so. Rather, the centre’s support for the ceremonies is a part of the cultural maintenance program, along with other trips to the artists’ traditional country, which reinforces the cultural and social practices of the community more broadly than the commercial production of art within the centre (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation).

In 2010, I volunteered at Warlukurlangu Artist’s Aboriginal Corporation art centre in Yuendumu. While I was there I undertook various general duties at the art centre such as mixing paints and sorting linen canvases by size, and had many conversations and experiences with other volunteers and staff. I draw on some of these conversations, experiences and observations, as well as substantive desk research in my analysis below.

To analyse the artistic and cultural authenticity of the products of Warlukurlangu I draw on four products that I bought as souvenirs of my visit, as well as associated works of the artists. I purchased a mug featuring one of Shorty Jangala Robertson’s significant designs, a paraja (traditional food carrier) painted with bright acrylics and a turrurru (music sticks) decorated with acrylic painted horizontal dotted bands by Nora Napaljarri Andy and a decorated boomerang by Elizabeth Napangardi
Lechleitner that alternates between burnt-incised designs of honey-ants and painted acrylic dots in circles (for purchasing decisions see Section 7.4).


Plate 16: Elizabeth Napangardi Lechleitner Boomerang
[Photograph – Brendan Mahoney] (2011)

The range of products that I purchased as souvenirs represents several of the discursive categories of artistic products, with the traditional food carrier and the music sticks most closely associated with crafts although also able to be considered
as artefacts, the boomerang firmly in the artefact category. Finally, the mug represents licensed and mass-produced items, but also relies on the production of the original acrylic paint on canvas designs. While the different arts discourses affect the appraisal of artistic and cultural value, it is important to note that all of these products contain common artistically and culturally valuable elements. The Shorty Jangala Robertson design that features on the mug provides a useful example of the artistic and cultural aesthetic features that create value for the works.

The design by Shorty Jangala Robertson that is reproduced on the mug is not identified in the descriptions on the packaging or on the website (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation). However, the design and description are very similar to some of Shorty Jangala Robertson’s paintings on canvas which are titled Ngapa Jukurrpa (Water Dreaming) – Puyurru (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation). While the designs vary in composition and colour schemes they retain the same motifs and aesthetic elements, which are described similarly on the accompanying descriptions. These designs usually include a monochrome background with curved and straight lines in a loose grid-like formation that is infilled and/or bordered with dotting (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation). These compositional elements are explained in the descriptions as representing elements of the natural landscape, rather than as abstract elements, where the long lines are creek beds full with flood waters, while the short lines are clouds and circles (when represented) are water soakages (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation).
Like the artworks of the previous art centres, the designs, motifs and materials affect
the artistic and cultural values that are ascribed to the products. Shorty Jangala
Robertson’s water dreaming designs, both as original canvas paintings and as
reproduced on a mug, convey cultural authenticity through the use of traditional
motifs that represent the local landscape. The reproduction of traditional cultural
forms engenders a type of cultural maintenance, creating a form of cultural capital
within the community. Furthermore the customs, meanings and motifs are specific to
the local Warlpiri community, generating a distinct cultural and social identity.

Additionally, the values generated by the products are influenced by the artistic
authenticity of the designs. The materials used in the production of the original
acrylic on canvas paintings indicate a fine art bearing, similar to the paintings of
Injalak, although with less cultural authenticity and more artistic authenticity
established through the use of non-traditional acrylic paints. This in combination
with the elements that appear like abstract expression that were previously mentioned
which, while not accurate in describing the intention behind the depiction, does
correlate with some forms of aesthetic appreciation associated with the fine art
category.

However, in each of the descriptions, which vary slightly, the motifs are explained as
part of the paintings’ ‘story’ through documentation that accompanies the products.
Documentation can take many forms and may be used to communicate a wide range
of information about products: it may include only a brief note of authorship on a
swing tag or it could be a much larger document with detailed information. The
information included could be about the product’s materials, size and subject matter,
as well as the artist’s cultural heritage, such as their language group or Indigenous community, and/or a statement of authorship, copyright, and catalogue number (Wright, 1999, 86-87). The addition of documentation accompanying the products reinforces the aesthetic and social values, particular with regard to authenticity. As such, “[d]ocumentation can be seen as a form of ‘value adding’” (Wright, 2000, 109), due to the extra promotion that it provides as well as the assurance of authenticity that makes the product more saleable.

Warlukurlangu provides a strong example of the forms and value attached to documentation that it presents along with its products. Warlukurlangu is reputed to have the best maintained archive of artist biographies and painting authentication, which includes a description and photograph of the work, and an explanation of the ‘story’ depicted (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation; Wright, 2000, 103). It is significant, therefore, that the ‘story’ that accompanies the mug that features the Shorty Jangala Robertson design is a slightly truncated version that appears alongside the similarly designed paintings on the Warlukurlangu website (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation).

Additionally, the documentation Warlukurlangu provides for the crafts and artefacts is limited to a small official Warlukurlangu swing tag that has the price on one side with a short blurb about the art centre, and the name of the artist on the other side with the logo of the centre. The difference between the forms of documentation are often justified in terms of the need or expectation in the market for authentication and the price (see the Indigenous Art Code in Section 4.4), which is played out in the forms recorded for Warlukurlangu.
Another important element of art centre operations in the political economy is the payments to producers, which are usually made in four different ways: The artists can be paid up-front on completion of the work; paid an advance with the balance on completion; paid a deposit or “start-up money” with the balance paid after sale; or art centres can take work on consignment (Wright, 1999, 97). In the case of centres that use consignment and after sale payment methods, Wright found that the mark-up of artists’ work “ranged from 20 per cent to 200 per cent depending on the centre and product” and after the sale the percentage that the artist is paid “ranged from 80 per cent to 25 per cent” (1999, 98).

These forms of payment are not necessarily exclusive, with more than one possibly operating at any one time, such as the practices I observed at Warlukurlangu in 2010 where artists were given the option of an advance or being paid the whole amount on completion (Personal Communication, 20/08/2010). Furthermore, the prices paid to the artists are set as half of the sale price of the finished work, with the other half of the proceeds going towards the art materials, artist assistance, and exhibition and art centre administrative costs (Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation).

The type of payment system is also linked to the type of art that the centre produces, the organisational structure and the available resources. One of these factors is whether or not the art centre operates a retail outlet; 10 out of the 39 art centres surveyed in 1997 had an outlet (Wright, 1999, 111). The operation of a retail outlet affects returns as it allows the art centre to manage its own mark-ups and stock flow, but at the same time the art centre also has to take into account the operating costs of the outlet when paying the artists.
Warlukurlangu does not maintain an external retailing space, but rather has a modest gallery attached to the art centre in Yuendumu. The gallery space requires some maintenance and attention, although a prominent part of the art centre’s work is in the documentation of the works and artist profiles that are compiled and displayed with the works.

This broad account of the history and position of art centres demonstrates the importance of Art Centres as key institutions of the sector and industry as well as the diversity of roles that the centres perform. These examples have been selected as they illustrate some of the diversity of Art Centre engagement with the souvenir art production and associated sector activities, in combination with the amount of data already available as this allows me to present a detailed account of the outcomes that result from their political economy. The next chapter provides further analysis of the values generated by four example Commercial Organisations involved in the sector.
6. Examples from an Unknown Sector: Commercial Organisations

In this chapter I focus on the diversity of Commercial Organisations active in the sector and the types of values that they can produce. It is important to address the Commercial Organisations to gain a better understanding of the organisations and structures of the sector beyond the acknowledged cultural authenticity and social value of art centres. I have separated the Commercial Organisations into two sub-categories based on their size to help facilitate a greater depth of analysis, with the smaller scale profit oriented enterprises of the Independent Operator and the Small Organisation grouped together; and the Medium and Large Organisations in the category for larger profit oriented businesses. Importantly, the examples I have chosen are also separated by the state/territory jurisdiction, with the smaller scale organisations located in Queensland, and the larger scale organisations located in New South Wales. The organisations have been grouped deliberately by state jurisdictions to facilitate a focus on the particular policy directions and therefore the type of values that are represented with the distinct political economy environments.

As with the previous chapter, the use of the example organisations and their particular circumstances is not intended to be broadly representative, but to contribute descriptions and analysis to the under-researched souvenir art sector. This chapter is similarly constrained by the limited response to the questionnaire, and the imperatives of ethical restrictions, which means that the example organisations are not named or identified. Despite this, the Commercial Organisations illustrate the types of values that are achieved compared to the types of values that are sought in the policy and funding documents.
6.1 Smaller Scale Organisations

The category of smaller scale organisations focuses on profit oriented businesses with annual turnovers of under $100,000 and few employees. I have designed this category (along with the category of larger scale organisations in Section 6.2) in order to partly redress the lack of consideration given to enterprises within the sector that have a commercial outlook. This is in contrast to the emphasis in the literature placed on the not-for-profit model of art centres due to the significant number of artists that are serviced (discussed in the previous chapter) and the clearer role of state funding and support.

I refer to these enterprises by the descriptive titles, the Independent Operator and the Small Organisation, to protect the commercial positions and privacy of the people and organisations involved. The example organisations are based on publicly available information as well as data gathered from an unpublished questionnaire (see Mahoney, 2009 which is supplied in Appendix A). Despite being grouped in the same category due to size and commercial outlook, it is important to note that I have selected these examples to demonstrate the diversity within the sector that has not previously been captured. In particular, there are differences concerning their business structure and functions in the sector, which affect the interactions with the political economy of state support and outcomes that they generate, facilitating an analysis that highlights their relative attributes and positions.

The category that I have designed as independent operators represents artists who produce their own products and retail those products themselves for personal profit,
as well as retailing related products from other artists or organisations to broaden their range. In contrast, small organisations are for-profit businesses that are involved in limited arts production and/or retailing products from other artists, art centres, and organisations. These functions, as well as the products sold, generate value within the sector, as illustrated below. However, as the available information and data are limited these examples cannot be generalised beyond these specific circumstances.

Plate 17: The Independent Operator shown in Orange and the Small Organisation shown just above in Blue [Map] (2010)

The small scale organisations that I have selected are all based in urban areas near Brisbane and prominent tourism locations on the coast of Queensland. The stock that is sold through these retailers, however, also includes products from other organisations in other locations whether urban, regional or remote; as well as in other states and territories, and may even include international goods with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander style designs produced as either Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaborations or as non-Indigenous “generic imitation or… illegal
copying” (Altman, 2000b, 88). As Altman notes, there is a lot of speculation in the industry about fakes, although their prevalence is not known, which “reflects a poor understanding of Indigenous and mainstream small arts business generally” (2000b, 88).

Both of the organisations operate as smaller scale businesses, with the Small Organisation managing one gallery and associated website with only a few employees, and the Independent Operator being self-employed along with their spouse and selling online, at markets, and from their studio (Mahoney, 2009). The size of the Independent Operator and Small Organisation is underscored by their small turnover of under $100,000 per annum (Mahoney, 2009). There is also a large departure from the art centres in how the profit is invested, with the Independent Operator and the Small Organisation (as well as the Medium and Large Organisations addressed in Section 6.2) being profit oriented businesses, and not community-based organisations.

The Independent Operator provides an example of the range of products, producing their own paintings, painted didgeridoos and decorated boomerangs, as well as retailing a range of apparel (t-shirts, jackets and scarves), postcards, homewares (plates, mugs, drink holders), jewellery, and a host of other items that feature Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art designs (Mahoney, 2009). The mass-produced items retailed by the Independent Operator may also come from inter-state, but are described as being sourced from within Australia (Mahoney, 2009). These items span the spectrum from fine art paintings to crafts, to mass-produced souvenirs.
The Small Organisation, although based in Queensland, does not directly produce any artistic product, but retails a narrow set of items sourced from nine art centres based in the Northern Territory and South Australia, selecting a range of products across the centres (Mahoney, 2009). The items that are retailed by the Small Organisation could be described generally as arts and crafts, and include such items as paintings on canvas, limited edition prints, plain and decorated didgeridoos and boomerangs, handcrafted bowls, earthenware, bracelets and necklaces (Mahoney, 2009).

The Independent Operator and the Small and Medium Organisation retail acrylic paintings on canvas or linen which fit the description of products that are marketed in both the fine art and souvenir art sectors. Again, the difference between the products in each sector rests in the amount of aesthetic/artistic and cultural authenticity of each product, with the higher aesthetic authenticity and stronger cultural authenticity achieving a fine art status in contrast to the lesser souvenir art status. The exact amounts and their effects on the status and the products are determined by the attributes of the product and the discursive structures that construct the categories and systems of value.

The use of wholly modern materials on all of these products heightens the aesthetic discourses as the paintings are marked as contemporary art, while also limiting any cultural authenticity discourses to the designs, motifs and techniques employed in the artwork. The Small Organisation displays the acrylic on Belgian linen paintings in a gallery environment (Mahoney, 2009), which suggests that it is intentionally working with the discourses of the ‘higher’ status of fine art. Therefore, a key component of
the status of the acrylic on linen contemporary paintings is the fine art discursive structure of originality through artistic authenticity, which can be measured in part through the innovation in the aesthetic style from ‘traditional’ colours or forms to original compositional elements, which necessarily also draws distinction from aspects of cultural authenticity embodied in the techniques or practices of production.

It is hard to describe the specific changes in the aesthetic of the paintings sold by the Small Organisation due to the many different styles of paintings from different art centres retailed by the organisation (Mahoney, 2009). It is preferable therefore to discuss one specific example from the products retailed by the Small Organisation, with the paintings by artists from Papunya Tjupi Arts demonstrating the contemporary variations that constitute the works as artistically authentic.

Papunya Tjupi Arts is a recently established art centre located in the Papunya community in the Northern Territory. The community of Papunya is famous for its role in the early period of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts in creating the regionally distinctive art style featuring dotted landscapes, which is often associated with the Papunya Tula art centre located in Alice Springs. The paintings from Papunya Tjupi all use acrylic paints on linen, with a mixture of traditional ochre-style colours and non-traditional, vibrant colours. The use of both traditional and non-traditional colours is an aesthetic innovation contributing to the aesthetic and artistic authenticity of the works. All of the works are also created as one-off paintings, conferring on them a sense of uniqueness often associated with the artistic vision of the romantic artist of modernist discourses (Krauss, 1988, 160-166; Craske,
1997, 36-37), which still has some currency in the contemporary era particularly in the consideration of an artist’s particular style.

Plate 18: Tilau Nangala *Women’s Ceremony* [Acrylic on Belgian Linen] (Undated)

The artistic innovation that is required for aesthetic authenticity is necessarily underpinned by some form of cultural authenticity, where traditional elements are combined or reworked with new compositional or stylistic features. In the case of works from Papunya Tjupi, the use of the traditional and regionally important feature of dotted in-fills creates value through the cultural authenticity of the style and technique, while the innovation of using the dots to form coloured fields of pattern rather than the traditional in-fill only approach generates a strong aesthetic authenticity, culminating in a strong overall value represent in the asking price of $1,200.

However, as the prints of the Small Organisation are sourced from a different art centre to that of the fine art paintings, there are some differences in the aesthetic and cultural authenticity of the designs. The prints still use bold colours in conjunction with a traditional browns and reds, but differ in the style, with regional elements reflected in the subject matter of local flora and fauna depicted as well as in
concentric circles and bands of colour (see next page). This creates different forms of cultural capital that are beyond this immediate analysis, which are also combined with the loss of status associated with the loss of the original as illustrated by the limited edition prints produced by Injalak above.

The acrylic on canvas products made and sold by the Independent Operator have different discourses attached to them due to the differences in style, with the paintings being in a contemporary ‘urban’ Aboriginal art style. The website of the Independent Operator states that the modern art materials are combined with traditional patterns, such as the styles of “dot art” and “cross-hatching”, as well as traditional subject matter listed as “Aboriginal themes” and “animal figures” (Independent Operator Website).

These features suggest that the paintings should attract a higher value due to the cultural authenticity of the artwork. However, these traditional elements are heavily associated with two other regions, the dots being associated with the Western Desert region in central Australia such as those from Papunya Tjupi, while the cross-hatching is associated with some North Queensland practices and Arnhem Land artists, such as the paintings from Injalak (Altman et al., 2002, 7). The appropriation of other regional styles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is not unusual in the souvenir art market, particularly stylistic elements that are, “conceived as generically Indigenous, such as dots or cross-hatching” (Altman et al., 2002, 13). Therefore, while there is some cultural authenticity to the artworks with the animals being traditionally related to the areas that the artists operate in, the overall generic elements only serve to signify that it is an Australian Indigenous product.
In the case of the Independent Operator, the prices of the paintings are staggered from $65 to $115 depending on their size (A5 to A3) (Independent Operator Website). The sizes indicate that the paintings are aimed at the lower end of the fine art market and are appropriate for the souvenir art market in their easy portability and status which is reflected in the prices. The value of the paintings of the Independent Operator is a culmination of the generic urban art style, which creates a lesser form of cultural authenticity; the aesthetic authenticity gained from the contemporary art
discourses about the media used; and the size and pricing. The sum of these factors means that the Independent Operator’s paintings are valued at a level that approximately places them within the lower-end of the fine art market, which has a considerable overlap with the souvenir art market.

These values are further reinforced by the addition of documentation. The paintings of the Independent Operator and the Small Organisation include biographical information about the artist and information about what is depicted in the artwork, as well as the brand name and label of authenticity (Small Organisation Website; Mahoney, 2009). The biographical information provides a type of accreditation, where the consumer is assured that the artwork is made by a practicing artist, as well as providing details about the artist’s cultural background. It is unusual for non-Indigenous fine arts and crafts products to have the cultural elements of a work authenticated in this way (Altman et al., 2002, 14).

It is important to note that, as mentioned in the introduction, I have based my selection of sample organisations partly on the grounds that this type of information is provided to certify the legitimacy of the products in the industry. This form of documentation also serves a similar accrediting function for consumers wishing to buy legitimate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art products, and affirming the cultural authenticity that contributes so significantly to the value of a work. To these ends there have been industry attempts at authenticity labelling, as discussed in Chapter 4, which aim to guide consumers toward certified legitimate goods and guard against trade in fakes, copies and imports that are viewed as unfair and unethical in the industry (Altman et al., 2002, 17).
However, while the Indigenous Art Code (see Section 4.4) does require a level of authentication, it does not cover the whole sector, with works under $250 being exempt from the system (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 123-125), leaving the reinforcing of authenticity and value through documentation to individual producers and retailers. To this end, the Small Organisation stated that it would “welcome the approval of ‘Made in Australia’ tag” for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander products it sells (Mahoney, 2009).

The smaller scale organisations are both involved in retailing artefacts. The Independent Operator produces artefacts including didgeridoos, boomerangs, bullroarers and music sticks (see next page), while the Small Organisation retails plain and decorated didgeridoos and boomerangs made by various art centres. The products of both of the smaller organisations are handcrafted and handpainted, with the artefacts (along with the paintings on canvas) accounting for all of the handmade products of the Independent Operator, making up 40% of their stock (Mahoney, 2009).

The fact that the artefacts are handmade gives the products the air of cultural authenticity in relation to their manufacture, by being produced in a manner that is at least similar to traditional techniques, providing a “vernacular” or rustic aesthetic in the same way as crafts (Wherry, 2006, 20; Greenhalgh, 1997, 21). The artefacts also gain value through being necessarily individual in form and design, providing some aesthetic authenticity. There are also economic considerations that contribute to a higher value, such as the high amount of labour expended on handmade production.
and the associated scarcity due to the limited quantity able to be produced (Wright, 1999, 60).

![Boomerangs and Didgeridoos](image)

Plate 21: Boomerangs (16 inch) [Three-Layered Plywood] (Undated) and Didgeridoos [Yellow/Brown Box Eucalyptus Wood] (Undated) from the Independent Operator

However, the Independent Operator seems to be reluctant to capitalise on or engage with these economic considerations, stating that, “you could not charge for the time spent on handcrafting and handpainting these artefacts” (Mahoney, 2009). This kind of response is common when dealing with artistic products, as the romantic discourse of artistic production is often set against commercial considerations (Velthuis, 2005, 21). The response also represents a kind of aesthetic evaluation of the items from the producer, indicating that they regard their products not just as artefacts but as craft or art objects.

Another consideration that might be influencing the pricing decisions is the market conditions, as the producer is competing with similar products that are sold at low prices. Artefacts are popular in the souvenir art market and are relatively common, as buyers in this market tend to purchase “what they perceive to be the known and identifiable symbols of Aboriginality, such as the returning boomerang and
didjeridu” (Finlayson, 1991, 62). The fact that the time and effort spent on the creation of the artefacts is not fully realised in the price indicates that, while cultural authenticity is important in that it conveys a sense of Aboriginality or Indigeneity, at the lower end of the souvenir art sector that the Independent Operator works, in open markets and retail stores (Quadrant Research Services, 1997, 15), only needs a limited amount.

This form of Aboriginality or Indigeneity is less specific and broader in scope, relying on general notions that represent at best a united, or at worst an undifferentiated, Australian Indigenous culture and people formed through general markers of unique or common items or designs. The limited cultural authenticity necessary for the indicators of Indigeneity may also be linked with the perceptions of status and value of artefacts and souvenirs more generally, as there is an expectation that artefacts do not need more than a basic authenticity to serve their function within the limited value of the sector (or else it would be placed in a different market segment such as fine craft).

Perhaps in an effort to overcome this, the Independent Operator attaches labels to the artefacts that describe the career of the Indigenous artist, explaining the designs and emphasising the original use of the items (Mahoney, 2009). The cultural authenticity of the artefacts is underscored by the explanation of the designs, which usually involves the basic meanings and cultural significance of the symbols, creating a stronger and more specific form of Aboriginality. While the extra information about the artist and the traditional use of the artefact add a small amount of aesthetic and cultural authenticity, it has been found that “written documentation at the point of
sale serves to reinforce the externally linked evaluation” (Littrell, Anderson and Brown, 1993, 210). Therefore, the accompanying information strengthens the authenticity of the products by amplifying the statements of artistry and traditional cultural elements, even though documentation is not common with artefact and craft products (Wright, 1999, 86).

In contrast, the mass-produced products of the Independent Operator and the Small Organisation are produced by other artists and organisations. Although the Small Organisation retails jewellery items in this category, there is not much information available on these products. I therefore focus on the products retailed by the Independent Operator.

That the mass-produced products are generally inexpensive means that large turnovers are required to make a profit, which is demonstrated in the case of the Independent Operator who has a policy of only marking-up the price of products by 30% to 100% (Mahoney, 2009). The modest mark-up is most likely a result of being constrained by the competitive market, with the Independent Operator commenting that, “the product is only worth as much as someone is prepared to buy” (Mahoney, 2009). The final economic value of the majority of mass-produced items surveyed here is under $100, with the value of a large amount of the products being clustered between $5 and $25.

There are some developments in the sector and policies that have indirectly benefited the organisations. Both organisations have benefited from the greater focus on the cultural industries federally and in Queensland, which increases the profile of the
industry, and particularly its economic significance. Additionally, the related emphasis on cultural tourism in the cultural industries policies of Queensland, with its association with souvenir art, is likely to aid in the organisations’ development of that sector (Arts Queensland, Undated b).

The cultural industries policies and discourses are particularly relevant to the profit oriented organisations as the commercial organisations are not able to be subsidised under a “public good” or “market failure” discourse as the not-for-profit art centres are (Altman, 2000a, 78). Within the cultural industries framework, smaller scale organisations are seen to be important for the “conception stage of texts” and their ability to innovate, even though “such companies may account for small levels of market share” (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, 174-175). The fact that these examples of smaller scale organisations are not known to have received support or funding from state sources may result from the fact that cultural industries policies tend to focus public support on infrastructure and planning initiatives, rather than direct support or assistance, despite the designation of these organisations as important for their role in the industry. Additionally, the commercial nature of the cultural industries means that the products and businesses may be regarded as “mass or low culture”, and therefore not worthy of support (Pratt, 2005, 31), or that direct support cannot be justified when the organisations are making a profit for private purposes.

The distinction between producer and retailer is important in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art in the market when considering the supply-side bias of government support for the industry such as grants for artists or investment in industry infrastructure. This is particularly relevant in considering the Small
Organisation, as it does not have any role in the production of the art and crafts; it is also unable to seek support in the form of artist’s grants from agencies such as the Australia Council or the state and territory equivalents. It should be noted however, that the limited function of art gallery-style retail operation undertaken by the Small Organisation may not be typical and cannot be generalised further. Additionally, the fact that all of the products are sourced from within Australia may reflect that the examples were purposely chosen to provide insight into the industry practice of legitimate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art, verified through documentation and authentication.

At the state level, the Backing Indigenous Art program that ran from 2007-2010 allocated $10.73 million across a range of initiatives that were aimed at supporting the arts and cultural industries (Arts Queensland, Undated a, 2-3). However, most of the initiatives involved funding art centres or export opportunities, with the only possible area of the funding applicable to the Independent Operator being the $3.43 million for “Building Skills and Opportunities”, although the description of the program is vague and seems to have been mainly directed towards art centres in Queensland (Arts Queensland, Undated a, 3). However, Arts Queensland undertook promotional activities under Creative Communities: Queensland Arts Industry Sector Development Plan 2007-2009, Visual Arts, Crafts, Design which the small organisations would have indirectly benefited from (Arts Queensland, Undated b, 8).

The Independent Operator gains the most from the promotion undertaken by Arts Queensland, with urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art specifically mentioned and targeted as part of the program to encourage “the growth and
prosperity of Indigenous cultural enterprises and the wellbeing and social cohesion that result from a strong connection with culture” and the building of “capacity” (Arts Queensland, Undated b, 17, 8, 21). Not only is the Independent Operator employed in production of the paintings and artefacts, facilitating the continuation and development of Indigenous culture within their community, but they also contribute to wider cultural capacity through their associated work as an “Indigenous Business Consultant and Mentor” (Mahoney, 2009).

However, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the Australians and the Arts report for the Australia Council found that the arts sector tends to promote a limited definition of the arts, which is mainly confined to the high-status fine arts (Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, 2001, 32). Therefore it is unlikely that much benefit would be derived by the example organisations other than the higher-status fine art and fine craft of the Small Organisation, without a significant and dramatic change in the type of promotions had occurred in the intervening 5-8 years, although this does not appear to be the case. Additionally, the Independent Operator and the Small Organisation are at a disadvantage with cultural industries policies, as they operate as privately-owned businesses, while most state cultural industries funding is in the form of “building cultural infrastructure” to generate general industry capacity (Craik, McAllister and Davis, 2003, 28). Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) does provide support for private profit oriented businesses, however. With IBA operating from 2005 and financial assistance usually in the form of loans with social and cultural capital support through partnerships (Indigenous Business Australia, Undated c), it is possible that the organisations could benefit from these measures.
As with the art centres, the smaller scale organisations have generated some cultural capital, although it is in a different form. The cultural capital that the art centres generated was mostly in the form of skills and education for the producers facilitated by the art centres, although they also contributed to broader community cultural capital through the explanation of their cultures through exhibitions and the documentation that accompanies the works. It is this broader form of cultural capital that the Independent Operator and Small Organisation generate through what is often termed community “capacity building” in policy research, rather than the individual education aspects of cultural capital (Australian Expert Group in Industry Studies, 2004, 41).

However, it is in the area of social capital that the Independent Operator and the Small Organisation arguably contribute most. They have combined designs and products from different regions in a way that promotes and fosters a collective national Indigenous identity and culture that focuses on the similarities of individual Indigenous groups, which is also a part of a distinctly Australian identity often associated with tourism (Craik, 2001, 89). It is possible, however, that this ‘national identity’ may result in the individual Indigenous cultures that the designs or products are sourced from becoming homogenised in the commercial environment. As Marcia Langton notes, differing values result from multiple forms of “‘Aboriginalities’” that represent types of identity and identification formed through “intercultural experiences” (Langton, 1994, 99-100). Not all of these forms of “Aboriginality” or Indigeneity are positive, especially when the representations are made “not in dialogue with Aboriginal people, but from other representations” (Langton, 1994, 100). Consequently, this form of social capital through the representation of a
national Indigenous identity can be both positive and negative depending on the context and how it is deployed.

In the case of the Small Organisation, the representations of “Aboriginality” and Indigeneity are created through its gallery display of the various products sourced from Indigenous art centres, meaning that the experience is intercultural, with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people involved in the production and consumption of the souvenir art (Langton, 1994, 100). The Small Organisation through this form of “Aboriginality” therefore encourages social inclusion on a national level, rather than a local or regional level, as it links “groups and individuals with vastly different and often opposed interests” (Morphy, 2009, 116). The promotion and particularly the explanation offered in the documentation of the cultural authenticity of “Aboriginality”, also help to protect against the potential of negative values associated with homogenising Indigenous peoples or essentialist notions of Australian identity.

The social capital generated by the Independent Operator is similar, although it is arrived at by other means as the products of the two businesses are substantially different. As the products made by the Independent Operator combine some local materials and local cultural elements of Indigenous spiritual practices with a general Indigenous artistic style comprised of various distinctive aesthetic and cultural elements, such as dotted in-fills and cross-hatching designs. These products, combined with the similarly designed mass-produced stock that the Independent Operator retails, create a national form of Indigeneity based on a shared Indigenous
identity. As mentioned above this national Indigenous identity can be problematic in its homogenising effect.

However, the documentation provided helps to distinguish pieces of individual cultural and artistic authenticity and works to guard against some of the negative effects. Instead, souvenir art, along with the documentation, emphasise the Independent Operator’s ‘political self-representation’ (Langton, 1994, 104) as an autonomous Indigenous voice as asserted on their website (Independent Operator Website). The shared Indigenous identity is particularly important as a socio-political position that enables Indigenous people to create “their own theories or models of intercultural discourse such as land rights, self-determination” (Langton, 1994, 104). This promotes a general set of shared history, culture and society as an imagined community, while allowing for the multiplicity of Indigenous cultures and “Aboriginalities”. This is especially important in urban situations where the artefacts of that history are not as evident.

The national Indigenous identity formation promoted by the activities of the smaller organisations also generates social capital through its use as a part of “an Aboriginal-centred sense of Australian identity” (Craik, 2001, 89). Although this form of identity creation may seem opportunist or glib co-opting, it is not insubstantial, as it is often invoked in national and international discourses (including tourism campaigns), and it creates a position that ‘the nation’ can take on (Craik, 2001, 89). It is also important to note that this form of national Australian identification necessarily entails engagement in a dialogue between the Indigenous producers of souvenir art and the Indigenous and non-Indigenous consumers, potentially creating
an intercultural understanding of “Aboriginality” within Australian social and cultural life (Langton, 1994, 100, 105).

Despite their small scale, the Independent Operator and Small Organisation still generated a significant amount of value through their engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector. However, for the Independent Operator and their spouse, the small amount of earnings from the art production and associated retailing gave them a reasonable income. These earnings represent a positive and significant outcome, with artists tending to have relatively small personal incomes that usually need to be supplemented by work outside of their artistic practice (Throsby and Hollister, 2003, 45). Similarly, the Small Organisation is also an employer, although it is not clear whether the organisation is Indigenous-owned or has provided Indigenous-specific employment through its operations. It has provided indirect employment however, to Indigenous artists as it retails products from art centres in central Australia (Mahoney, 2009). The position and values of these examples has been undervalued as the social and cultural capital that they generate has not previously been accounted for, which is further undermined by the limited acknowledgment they have received in policy and industry accounts.

6.2 Larger Scale Organisations

Larger scale organisations are profit oriented businesses that employ over 15 people, with Medium Organisations estimated earnings of $100,001 to $500,000, and Large Organisations estimated earnings of $500,001 and above. I have designated these businesses larger scale organisations because of their relative size compared to the
other organisations involved in the souvenir art sector, rather than the general business environment (Altman, 2000a, 84). Despite their relative size in the sector and industry, these organisations have received little attention compared to the not-for-profit art centres. I intend to partially redress this by providing some examples of the functions and value generated by larger scale organisations in the souvenir art sector.

The larger organisations are generally involved in producing and selling their own range of products, which include a wide variety of items such as arts and crafts, and licensed and manufactured products that feature Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art designs. The Medium Organisation is wholly Indigenous-owned in the form of an incorporated artist’s collective based in a coastal urban area of NSW in a region that the Indigenous artists have cultural links to (Medium Organisation Website) (see Plate 22 on the next page). The Medium Organisation produces what they describe on their website as “authentic Aboriginal fine art and merchandise” (Medium Organisation Website). In this respect the Medium Organisation departs from the art centre model which is usually based on handmade and handcrafted arts. Additionally, both the Medium and Large Organisations are profit oriented companies which, unlike art centres, do not have explicit social and cultural aims.

The Large Organisation, located in the inner-west of Sydney, is an example of a non-Indigenous-owned company that manufactures products with licensed designs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists’ artworks as well as purchasing other arts and crafts stock from Indigenous artists and organisations (Large Organisation Website). This means that the Large Organisation does not carry any products
associated with fine art as it relies on licensed designs for mass-produced objects and does not produce any one-off original pieces.

Plate 22: The Medium Organisation marked in Maroon and the Large Organisation marked in Green

[Map] (2010)

The position and commercial focus of the Medium and Large Organisations means that they are generally at odds with the funding regimes, although there are possible avenues of support available. The commercial, profit oriented focus, while not precluding social and cultural benefits, does highlight the economic impetus of the organisations that makes it more difficult to justify funding and support based on traditional market failure discourses, as well as spending public money for private company profits. This is further complicated by their position within the industry as producers and retailers of low status, mass-produced products, as illustrated below.

The Medium Organisation, like the Independent Operator and the Small Organisation, sells fine art paintings on canvas in a contemporary ‘urban’ Aboriginal art style. The artworks of the Medium Organisation are described on their website as
“contemporary coastal Aboriginal Art” (Medium Organisation Website), with the paintings using the ubiquitous Aboriginal art features of patches of dots to form the landscape/background of the painting, and figurative animals, particularly prominent native animals such as the kangaroo, goanna, emu, and dolphin. As with the Independent Operator, the paintings of the Medium Organisation derive some cultural authenticity from the traditional themes and iconography of the animals, although they primarily serve to reinforce broader and more general notions of Indigeneity.

Plate 23: Terry Johnstone Echidnas Feeding on Honey Ants [Canvas Screen-print] (Undated)

from the Medium Organisation

The acrylic paintings on canvas are important for the Medium Organisation as they are the only products that are made directly by the organisation, with the other products being a collaborative effort whereby the art and designs of the paintings are reproduced on manufactured goods through licensing agreements. However, the paintings have a fine art aesthetic which indicates to the consumer that these products do belong in the Medium Organisation’s gallery space, and are above all else artworks. In the absence of previous data and analysis in this area and given that
there is no definite line separating the sectors, I estimate that the social status created by the attributes of these products would place them in the low to middle range of the fine art market and/or in the middle range of items in the souvenir art market. This estimate is based on the accurate, but not very specific, cultural authenticity of the designs and the artistic authenticity of the choices made in producing the originality of the designs and in the materials used. All of these elements combine to generate a significant amount of value for the paintings.

The general cultural authenticity of markers associated with Aboriginality and Indigeneity were also represented by the artefacts from the Medium Organisation, which are no longer produced due to changes to their catalogue since the start of this thesis. The range of artefacts, which included boomerangs, bullroarers, didgeridoos, and music sticks, have been included as they are indicative of the type of product by similar organisations in the market. The artefacts differ significantly from the products of the other organisations as they use licensed designs placed on manufactured goods. Furthermore, there are problems with the regional character of the didgeridoo, which is traditionally a northern and central Australian artefact. The clearly manufactured look of the objects and problems with traditional provenance contribute to a lack of authenticity for the products, reducing the value of the artefacts relative to the handcrafted and more culturally authentic products.

The lack of artistic and cultural authenticity and the resulting lower value of the artefacts mean that the products are restricted to the lower end of the souvenir art market. The lower value and the lower price they subsequently sell for does not mean that the products have little value or are only sold to the most uninformed or gullible
consumers. The artefacts of the Medium Organisation instead keep a low level of value by retaining a low level of authenticity through the apparent symbols of Aboriginality and Indigeneity in both their function as artefacts and the designs placed on them. However, as social anthropology and art history researchers Ruth Phillips and Christopher Steiner note, the discourses that have been mobilised have competing claims, with the result that “a particularly dense aura of inauthenticity surrounds objects produced for the souvenir and tourist trades” (1999, 4). It is perhaps not surprising then that the lack of discernment buyers in the market have concerning levels of cultural authenticity, in addition to the confluence of discourses, results in the artefacts being regarded more as commodities than as artistically or culturally valuable objects. The prices for artefacts remain in the lower and middle end of the market, with boomerangs being priced between $10 and $200, and didgeridoos priced between $250 and $1,000.

What the Medium Organisation describes as “merchandise” on its website is quite varied and includes artefacts such as boomerangs, bullroarers and didgeridoos; homewares in the form of mugs and plates, coasters and photo-frames; apparel such as bags, t-shirts, hats, scarves, socks and ties; as well as jewellery, letter writing sets, cards, and magnets (Medium Organisation Website). As of the year 2000, the Medium Organisation licensed designs to 16 companies, which were featured on 50 different products, and sold “through approximately 500 retail shops throughout Australia” (Altman, 2000b, 89). It is not known however, where the products are manufactured. This is not unusual, as “[i]nformation on production of manufactured art is far more difficult to come by” because they are often private companies which means that they need to protect their commercial and competitive advantage.
(Altman, 2000b, 88). However, as Altman notes, “some art centres are also involved in manufacture” (2000b, 88), such as Injalak’s foray into licensed calendars and greeting cards which are capable of attracting funding and support (Wright, 2000, 163).

The Large Organisation has a similar product range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art to the Medium Organisation, which is described on its website as “authentic” although in conjunction with the qualifying word “based”, seemingly skirting the issue of provenance (Large Organisation Website). The Large Organisation also produces Australiana and other souvenir products which are marketed on the same website, however I do not consider them in the discussion here as they are not strictly part of the sector as it has been defined (Large Organisation Website).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art product range of the Large Organisation includes apparel, with a large range of t-shirts as well as pants, socks, ties and bags; an extensive range of homewares including mugs, placemats, pot holders, tablecloths and tea-towels; travel accessories, and art prints (Large Organisation Website). Despite the uncertain wording of the provenance and the organisation being a non-Indigenous company, the licensed designs that appear on the products are created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists working in central Australia, which is detailed in the website (Large Organisation Website). However, the details of the licensing agreements for the designs, and where the processes of manufacture occur, whether locally, inter-state, or offshore, are not known. The products of the Large Organisation are retailed through a large distribution network in Australia and online.
The Large Organisation claims on its website that it is now “the market leader in the production and distribution” in the sector, although this cannot be verified (Large Organisation Website).

Retailing in licensed and mass-produced products is common in the broader economy and in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector (Wright, 1999, 127). As previously mentioned, the licensed products hold the value of the everyday item that the design is placed on as well as the added values associated with the reproduced design. The designs of the Medium Organisation are based on original paintings that are reproduced on a range of products. In contrast, the entire range of products that are made by the Large Organisation feature reproduced designs without an original from a painting. The designs often feature identifiable native animals such as kangaroos, emus, goannas, snakes, and dolphins, which are figuratively represented and embellished with dots, lines and markings. The landscapes generally contain concentric circles and some form of connecting lines between the circles, usually noted as representing watering holes or camp sites, and the backgrounds are composed of fields of dots (see next page).

The designs feature a strong use of vibrant colours such as primary reds and yellows, bright blues, pinks and purples, which often sit alongside more traditional colours, such as red ochre, browns, whites, and mustard yellows. The colour choices are generally dependent on the subject matter depicted, with coastal images of fish and dolphins usually featuring strong blues, while desert animals are portrayed in earthy colours such as browns, yellows and reds. The variety of colour schemes offers consumers a choice for their decorative needs or favourite colour, as well as the
choice of which one of the themes, animals and colour choices best suits their idea of an authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design, and therefore has the most value to them.

From the Medium Organisation:

Plate 24: Ron Potter Coastal Kooris Design
[Print] (Undated)

Plate 25: Terry Johnstone Following the Tide Design
[Coffee Mug] (Undated)

From the Large Organisation:

Plate 26: Linda Brown Nabanunga
Waterhole Dreaming Design [T-shirt] (Undated)

Plate 27: Graham Calma
Crocodile Dreaming Design [Print] (Undated)

The mass-produced medium of ready-made manufactured goods reduces the cultural authenticity and therefore the value of the objects. As the use and form of the
products are not unique or particular to the producers of the organisations, there is no cultural authenticity associated with the products. The products are also made using materials that do not hold any particular significance and are not locally produced, and in many cases the manufacture of the base products is not undertaken by the organisation itself, or even within Australia, but is done “offshore” (Altman et al., 2002, 20). This means that the status of the products and organisations as Indigenous is contestable or “ambiguous”, as Altman et al. state, “they are licensed by an Indigenous organisation, and so are no more classifiable as ‘imitations’ than any other licensed product, but they are manufactured in a similar manner to outright imitations” (2002, 20).

However, the industry speculation about the proportion of the sector attributable to “rip-offs” (Altman, 2000b, 88; Altman et al., 2002, 20), often carries the ill-considered implication that there is little difference between outright ‘imitations’ or ‘fakes’ and legitimate Indigenous designs placed on mass-produced items. This position therefore excludes all mass-produced items from the ‘legitimate’ market and undermines the value that these products still hold, simply due to superficial similarities in the processes of manufacture, particularly as manufactured souvenir arts has been identified by Altman as an area of growth in the industry that has further potential (Altman, 2000b, 89, 92). The value that these products have and contribute to the sector needs to be acknowledged and supported by the industry to ensure further economic growth, and support the extra-economic outcomes that this form of production generates such as the cultural maintenance and development engendered in the continued practice of the designs as part of the artists’ Indigenous identity.
The certified legitimate mass-produced products do however inhabit a different market segment to fine arts, crafts and artefacts where the relatively small amount of cultural and aesthetic authenticity is not an insurmountable problem. This is because consumers of these products value them in a different way and may not be interested in an absolute authenticity, or be able to articulate what authenticity represents to them (Wright, 1999, 66-67; Finlayson, 1991, 56). The items retain the standard commodity use-value of the product (cup, t-shirt, or postcard), which is combined with the symbols of Indigeneity in the designs. Additionally, the documentation that often accompanies these products, such as those of the larger scale organisations, usually includes information about the Indigenous meanings and stories behind the designs and a short biography of the Indigenous artist to endorse the basic authenticity of the design (Medium Organisation Website; Large Organisation Website). Documentation of this kind has been found to aid in communicating the value of souvenir art products to consumers, with store owners providing “background information… to ‘authenticate’ objects” (Finlayson, 1991, 60). It is these values that have usually been overlooked in preference for the relatively larger and more obvious values of the higher status products, despite the significant contribution that is made by this segment of the sector.

The term and description of “urban Aboriginal art” is appropriate for these artworks due to the appropriated styles, and the materials, colours and aesthetics which are features of other urban Aboriginal art. There are, however, differences in the regional character and therefore the value of the products of the organisations. Despite the Medium Organisation’s coastal New South Wales location, there is an extensive use
of dots and x-ray style images taken from the regionally distinct practices of the Western Desert painters and Arnhem Land practices respectively. Appropriating these easily identifiable symbols of Indigenous culture supports the value of the products by representing a distinctive form of Indigeneity, but also lessens the distinctiveness and cultural authenticity of the products resulting in a reduced overall value.

In contrast, the Large Organisation contracts artists from central Australia, making the use of dots a regionally-specific and culturally authentic practice. However, the designs also feature coastal animals, with a design integrating turtles and crocodiles composed entirely of brown, red, yellow and white. The regional character of the work is therefore complex, with the subject matter being far removed from the traditional experience of the artist, while still retaining traditional stylistic elements. Perhaps it is for this reason that the artworks are referred to generically as “Australian Aboriginal art” with no greater claim to cultural authenticity other than that it is produced by an Indigenous person of Australia (Large Organisation Website), creating a sense of an all-encompassing Australian Indigeneity.

The repetition of the forms and design elements, the everyday functional nature of the products, and the fact that the products are mass-produced are all elements that are at odds with modernist aesthetics. The contrast between modernism’s focus on originality and repetition is particularly stark in Clement Greenberg’s influential theorisation of the difference and value of “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” ([1939], 1986). Greenberg contends that kitsch is predicated on, “the availability close at hand of a fully matured cultural tradition”, and that it borrows from the cultural tradition “its
devices, tricks, stratagems, rules of thumb, themes” ([1939], 1986, 12). This applies to the designs based on a range of regionally distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts that are borrowed and combined.

This discursive position still influences the status and value of contemporary souvenir art as something that is not only “mass-produced, but also a hint of the counterfeit… something passed on to tourists, [and] not ‘real’ art” (Kjellman-Chapin, 2010, 28). However, this form of kitsch theory leaves little room for any acknowledgement of value past that of the functionality of the mass-produced product, which does not adequately reflect the situation of souvenir art, as the artwork necessarily constitutes a part of the value of the product as I have demonstrated above. Furthermore, this form of kitsch is not capable of acknowledging the other attributes and value that a kitsch aesthetic can contribute to a work or its enjoyment and appreciation by consumers.

One of the ways that kitsch aesthetics can add value to a work is by reducing the amount of cultural capital required by the consumer to interpret the design, by “short-circuiting the work of aesthetic appreciation, substituting an obvious, easy and direct sign” (Binkley, 2000, 139). Kitsch has also been reassessed using postmodern theories, which question the absolute authenticity of modernism and tempers it with a plurality of values. A pertinent theorisation of this form of value is found in tourism research where authenticity and a sense of “contrast with everyday experiences” are part of the creation of value (Urry, 1990, 11). The “post-tourist” or postmodern tourist is a type of tourist/consumer who is aware of, and takes pleasure in, the contested and multiple meanings of the products that contribute to the experience,
instead of searching for an authenticity that does not exist in a market of mass-produced products and experiences (Urry, 1990, 11). However, this does not mean that kitsch is definitely positive or negative or that status distinctions disappear, but that it reconstitutes the previous distinctions based on the recognition of kitsch properties in their consumption (Kjellman-Chapin, 2010, 32, 38), creating a sub-set of products with their own distinctive value that is recognised and sought out by some consumers as a form of cultural, or subcultural, value.

It also must be remembered that these designs are not so much individual pieces and products that hold a value in separation to the other designs, but are an option and a colour scheme for the base products that the design is placed on. The value of the products is the result of the repetition and subtle differences in the designs where, as Christopher Steiner notes, “its authenticity and cultural rationality flow from the qualities it shares with other mass-produced objects and commodities” (1999, 89, original emphasis). This can be seen in the designs of the Large Organisation where there are two different colour schemes, blue and brown, offered for the same design on the same product (see next page). The different colours are not a result of the Large Organisation re-colouring the design in the manufacturing process, but the design being produced twice, which can be seen in changes in the lines of the abstract pattern between the versions.
In addition, there are several different “brands” of t-shirt offered by the Large Organisation. It is unclear whether the brand names are sourced from another organisation, from other artists or a different range of designs by the same artists. At any rate, the designs featured on the branded products are in the same broad style. In this way the value of the range of products and designs is an aggregate of the general notions of artistic authenticity and Indigeneity, which is reinforced in its repetition as acceptable in the market.

Additionally, this type of repetition can be consumed as a kitsch aesthetic without the need to “make a fetish out of the correct interpretation”, and can be valued by the consumer for the multiple qualities that the object represents (Urry, 1990, 100). Therefore, the mass-produced products create value not only as functional items, but also as souvenirs that represent a generic sense of Aboriginality, as well as the complexity of Indigeneity and the various individual regional styles represented in
the works, and the value of repetition that authenticates the product through its similarity to the other products on offer in the souvenir art market.

Overall, the products are well suited to the middle and lower end of the souvenir art market as they are generally not heavy, small in size, and inexpensive. Additionally, the lower levels of transmission of the cultural and artistic elements of the work, which is aided by familiar and generic elements and the extra information provided in the accompanying documentation, as well as the lower prices for production, means that the products are available and affordable to a large segment of consumers. Therefore, only those consumers who regard themselves as purchasers of higher status objects are excluded from consuming the souvenir art products.

The Medium Organisation started in the early 1990s as a community arts and education initiative for local Indigenous people (Medium Organisation Website) in a similar manner to the beginnings of some art centres. However, the development of the Medium Organisation differs from that of the art centres in two important ways. Firstly, the goal of community development was not as broad as that of the art centres, with employment being the only practical step taken along with a general hope to encourage “a new sense of Aboriginality amongst its participants”, which is recounted on their website (Medium Organisation Website). As a result the Medium Organisation is not in the same position as the art centres, with a questionable eligibility for broader social and cultural initiatives. However, the Medium Organisation may still be able to apply for assistance through Indigenous Business Australia, but there is no indication that this has happened.
The intended outcomes of arts funding serve as a guide to how these organisations might qualify for support, with the 2006-2007 annual report emphasising “Indigenous community capacity” (Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation, 2008, 18). Furthermore the subsequent Arts NSW Strategic Plan 2007-2011 elaborates on this position, stating a commitment to “stronger community cohesion and capacity, and improved health and wellbeing” (Arts NSW, Undated, 1). These outcomes represent the strong focus in NSW of using arts and cultural production to facilitate social policy goals. Importantly, the Medium Organisation achieves the stated outcomes as it creates social and cultural capital through the production of local and Indigenous-specific arts that work to advocate for their cultural position in the community, creating an environment of positive interactions and wellbeing within the organisation and with the wider community.

Community capacity is brought about in the work of the organisations in generating social and cultural capital through arts employment, which offers opportunities for education and skills development, social cohesion, furthering wellbeing and identity building. The discourse of community capacity is usually most associated with “formal or informal training” or education and employment outcomes (Australian Expert Group in Industry Studies, 2004, 41). The Medium Organisation, which was originally set up as a community employment and training venture, states on its website that it employs 22 Indigenous people as artists and in other roles within the company (Medium Organisation Website), generating cultural capital within the coastal community of 200 Indigenous people (Hodge, James and Lawson, 1998, 28). The Large Organisation generated less cultural capital due to its structure as a non-Indigenous organisation based in Sydney that contracts at least 15 artists from central
Australia to create its designs (Large Organisation Website), offering a limited style of employment with no additional opportunities for advancement.

The larger organisations also generate community capacity by means of the increased amounts of social capital created for their employees and wider communities at the local and national levels. The Medium Organisation creates social capital at a basic level by providing its employees an opportunity for work-based socialising (Matarasso, 1997, 7). The Medium Organisation also has the wider function as a community-based business which facilitates social cohesion at a local level through the promotion of the particular coastal community’s Indigenous culture and identity through its branding, products and documentation. However, the products of the larger organisations use a variety of local aesthetic and cultural elements in conjunction with regionally specific elements, creating local versions of a general Indigenous style, or Indigeneity. As with the Independent Operator, the general Indigeneity of the products promotes a pan-Indigenous identity and sense of community, which extends to a sense of Australian culture on a national level of social cohesion (Morphy, 2009, 116). The organisations also assist in generating individual and community wellbeing as a part of the creation of social capital through the opportunities for positive socialisation and the personal and collective expression of their culture and identity (Mills and Brown, 2004, 65). This form of wellbeing has been found to be particularly positive with “stronger cultural identity… associated with higher educational attainment and a higher probability of being employed” (Dockery, 2011, 10).
This is important as supporting a “sense of Aboriginality” in the local Indigenous community is the main stated social and cultural objective of the Medium Organisation (Hodge, James and Lawson, 1998, 28), and a component of the value generated by the Large Organisation through the active promotion of ‘Indigeneity’ and Indigenous culture as part of the Australian national identity through their products that are marketed alongside Australiana. These forms of “Aboriginality” or Indigeneity are similar to that of the smaller organisations, with the Medium Organisation’s “Aboriginality” based on the specifics of a local Indigenous identity similar to the art centre products, but also incorporating a sense of national Indigenous identity. However, both the larger organisations partly reflect the practices of the Independent Operator through their use of Indigenous designs from other regions, invoking a ‘national’ Indigenous identity that risks a form of homogenised commercial Indigeneity, although this is countered somewhat by the accompanying documentation. Although these forms of “Aboriginality” and Indigeneity have potentially negative effects, the expression of these forms and consumer engagement with them and their complexity still suggests the positive value that is sought through the simplistic policy discourses of identity community cohesion.

Another important point of comparison between the larger organisations and the art centres is that both the business model and the type of art that is produced are fundamentally different, with art centres usually focusing on original and handcrafted products, while the Medium Organisation has focused on producing manufactured and licensed products that use original designs. The Medium Organisation works from an art and design studio and gallery where it retails some of its products, along
with original fine artworks in conjunction with a retailing website (Medium Organisation Website).

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the federal policies of the recent decade of 2000-2009 were characterised by a focus on support for the cultural industries while at the state level, New South Wales (NSW) had a general arts and cultural policy with some cultural industries elements. NSW’s general art and cultural policies could have been a source of potential funding and support. However, as these larger scale organisations almost exclusively produce manufactured souvenir art with what could be described as hybrid or generic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designs, grants for artists would be limited to the production of the designs, not the actual products as might be the case with fine art, craft or handmade artefacts. Furthermore, the fact that neither of the larger organisations is solely responsible for the creation of their products restricts their access to direct grants and assistance.

This is particularly the case at the federal level of arts and culture policy. It is unlikely that the large scale organisations would have received artist’s grants from the Australia Council as the majority of their products require complex production and manufacturing processes with more than one producer, and as mass-produced goods are generally deemed to lack the aesthetic merit required as part of the funding criteria (Australia Council, 2001, 3). Furthermore, as the Large Organisation contracts the artists for their work and they are not officially part of the organisation, there would be little chance of artist grants within the organisation’s structure.
In a similar vein it also seems like the organisations were well placed for NACIS funding as, in addition to the economic imperative of industry support, the program was designed to support Indigenous cultural maintenance and identity (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts, 2008a). However, as I mentioned in Chapter 4, the NACIS funding was, and continues to be, primarily for art centres and not-for-profit organisations (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage, and the Arts, 2008b). Furthermore, while the NACIS program is not specifically aimed at the fine art sector, it also does not leave much room for the production of souvenir arts, and particularly mass-produced products, due to the unacknowledged bias towards high value and status products.

The Medium and Large Organisations have contributed to the economic self-sufficiency of their employees and contracted artists as well as to the industry, as they should generate profits of $100,001 to $500,000 and above $500,001 respectively based on their size and operations, although the exact figures are not known as they are not publicly available. Therefore, both of the larger organisations generate social, cultural and economic capital as sought by the policies, with the Medium Organisation providing a significant amount to its communities (local and national) and the Large Organisation providing more general and diffuse value. Despite this, or perhaps because of the economic self-sufficiency, neither of the organisations is known to currently receive any external funding or support.
6.3 Example Organisations: Conclusion

The seven examples described and analysed above demonstrate the varied positions and roles within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and the national and regional policies that form the basis for the political economy. The categories that I have used here highlight the differences between the structures of the organisations, with the community-based, not-for-profit art centres contrasting with the commercial profit oriented organisations. These distinctions are important when considering the political economy of state funding and support as it determines whether the organisation is eligible under particular discourses and policies, with discourses of market failure and public good externalities and the associated cultural industries policies not being applicable to the private, and especially the solely for-profit organisations.

Furthermore, the for-profit organisations are also distinguished by whether they are self-retailing like the Medium and Large Organisations and to some extent the Independent Operator, or retail the works of other individuals and organisations as in the case of the Small Organisation, as it limits the support available through artist’s grants which only apply to items produced by the businesses. It is clear however, that all of the example organisations generate some degree of economic value for the producers and retailers, their communities and the wider economy. Furthermore, all of the organisations generate some form of the social and cultural value sought by state policies, such as the cultural maintenance involved in producing forms and designs and the interpersonal interactions involved in arts production and retailing. It
is also clear that these values have not been recognised and represented in the literature to date, resulting in the further undervaluing of the sector.

It is perhaps not surprising then, that the examples also demonstrated a clear divide between the art centres, which have received state funding and support and the commercial organisations which, except for some early state involvement in the founding of the Medium Organisation, have not received direct support. This is important for the political economy of the sector as, although the majority of industry production occurs through art centres, the commercial sector is an important element which it seems is not currently supported by state policies, even though it arguably performs very similar functions and produces similar values. This may be as a result of the lack of attention given to the souvenir art sector generally in state policies, however this is hard to gauge from the small sample size, and it must be reiterated that these results cannot be generalised beyond the specific circumstances of the organisations as a consequence of the lack of previous data.
7. Conclusion

In this conclusion I present the key arguments and findings of the thesis, addressing how the souvenir art sector is undervalued, and the effects of this on the sector and the industry as a whole. I also provide some recommendations for enhancing the sector and industry value in Section 7.2 below. I also highlight the remaining gaps in the literature and understanding of value in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector, and the need for further research into processes of valuing in consumption, international comparisons, and other Australian souvenir products in Section 7.3. Finally, to conclude on a note of personal reflection as this thesis began, I address my own modes of valuing and consumption of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art within my visual landscape.

7.1 The Value of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Souvenir Art Sector and Products

This thesis has argued that the souvenir art sector of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry generates significant value with substantial amounts of social, cultural and economic capital created. While some of this value of the souvenir art sector has had some limited acknowledgement, it has been inadequately represented and under-appreciated. This thesis constructs an innovative theoretical framework to demonstrate the substantial value of the sector, a critical modern political economy
approach that incorporates Bourdieu’s (1984) concepts of social and cultural capital, offering a viable way of accounting for and capturing these values.

I have identified that the lack of data, research and knowledge about the sector has come about as a result of discourses that mark the souvenir art sector as relatively lower in both status and (economic) value. This creates a situation for the industry whereby the lack of demonstrable value fuels assumptions of a lower general worth and further exacerbates the undervaluing of the souvenir art sector. This undervaluing and devaluing process particularly affects the commercial, profit oriented sample organisations and producers of licensed and mass-produced items, which have been shown to be overlooked in analyses of the sector and industry. In recognition of the social, cultural and economic capital that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector generates, the value and status accorded to the sector need to be reviewed, acknowledged and reflected in industry and policy considerations.

When considering the values generated by the organisations involved in the sector it is important to note that the souvenir art sector shares a blurred boundary in terms of products and markets with the fine art sector in the middle of the social status spectrum, with organisations and producers typically working across both sectors. However, it is also important to recognise that the markets and their treatment in the academic, industry and policy literature are sufficiently different to warrant separate analysis and attention.
The products sold in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry have complex discourses of artistic/aesthetic and cultural authenticities that determine their status and value and the sector it is sold in. While products in the souvenir art sector generally have less status and value relative to products in the fine art sector, souvenir art products do still hold a value that is realised through their production, sale and consumption. The products and their sale informs the status of the sector as the values of the products are tied to the outcomes that the sector generates, with the amount of cultural or aesthetic authenticity affecting the products’ economic worth, as well as the cultural and social capital involved in their production and retailing.

It is important to understand these constructions of value so that future appraisals can navigate the complexities of the values represented in the political economy. The discursive construction of the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art is principally undertaken in the field of art history, theory and criticism, as well as being informed by the fields of economics and sociology as demonstrated in Chapter 2 and 3. Within the field of art history, theory and criticism, products of the souvenir art sector attract relatively less status due to their exclusion from the higher status associated artistic/aesthetic authenticity. Despite the negative comparison with fine art products, souvenir art products still embody specific forms of value in terms of artistic/aesthetic and cultural authenticity that need to be acknowledged and taken into account (as demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6).

However, this range of production and attendant value has not been adequately recognised, leading to assumptions about illegitimate production and low worth
based on its status that contribute to the undervaluing of the sector (Altman, 2000b, 88). As these assumptions and undervaluing more generally are reflected in the literature on the industry and in policy documents (Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 112-113), there is a need to acknowledge the ‘legitimate’ products and the significant values that are produced. These ‘legitimate’ or ‘authentic’ products, which generally lack artistic and cultural authenticity, gain their value from the utility of the object as well as the markers of Indigeneity, which contribute the extra value of being used as a souvenir. This understanding of the values of the products and the sector is needed to counter the inaccurate assumptions that contribute to undervaluing the sector and that inhibit the potential growth in the sector that could be achieved through recognition of these issues in the development of academic, industry and policy assessments (as discussed in the recommendations in Section 7.2 below).

This thesis also highlights how the lack of attention given to the souvenir art sector in academic studies and state policies affects the allocation of funding and support (see Chapter 4). As I have noted, the lack of consideration of the sector creates a feedback effect where the values that are achieved by the sector are undermined, as they are regarded as being less substantial than those generated by the fine art sector. The undervaluing of the sector is in part based on a bias towards accounting for value in economic terms, without due consideration for the social and cultural value. This is based on the assumption that due to its lower status the souvenir art sector also has less economic significance than the fine art sector. This assumption is underscored by the lack of consideration and data of the souvenir art sector when compared to the known and quantified value of the fine art sector, which is often presupposed to
represent the industry in policy documents (such as those discussed in Chapter 4). Furthermore, the bias towards economic value was evident across all policy types analysed, but was more prominent in cultural industries policies and especially in the recent suite of policies that focus on self-sufficiency, mainstreaming and productivity as part of a neoliberal economic direction.

In light of the various values considered, I argue that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector has been undervalued as a result of the low status attributed to it. This has important implications for policy development and funding arrangements as production in the souvenir art sector is arbitrarily restricted by status, ignoring the potential for greater economic returns as well as its social and cultural benefits, which are considered in the following section.

In order to partly address this situation I have described and analysed the value of the souvenir art sector by studying the political economy of seven organisations, providing examples of the social, cultural and economic capital they generate within the sector. The examples indicate that the organisations active in the sector generate significant value in the forms of social, cultural and economic capital. Importantly, as it is predominantly used as the indicator of overall value in the industry (see Chapter 4), economic capital is generated for the producers and the wider community through the production and sale of souvenir art. As demonstrated in Chapter 5 and 6, the economic capital generated is significant: for example, the majority of the organisations are financially self-sufficient in contrast to publicly-funded arts institutions and producers; the organisations provide employment and income to
Indigenous people in circumstances where opportunities are limited; and there are benefits to the wider community by way of a greater revenue base and reduced costs of service provision gained through the mobilisation of social and cultural capital.

Substantial cultural capital is also generated in a number of different spheres by the activities of the sample organisations analysed in Chapters 5 and 6. The cultural capital benefits the producers through greater knowledge and skills, particularly through the employment in arts production and other roles in the organisations that further education with practical experience and additional training and qualifications. Cultural capital is also generated in the form of cultural maintenance and development produced through the continuing use of traditional and hybrid arts practices due to arts production. The cultural capital is also extended throughout the wider Australian community through the dissemination of knowledge created as a part of the promotion and explanation of Indigenous cultures.

Substantial social capital is generated by the sample organisations through the facilitation and strengthening of various interpersonal relationships contributing to both personal and social wellbeing, and assisting in community cohesion. The social capital generated emerges in part from the practice of the distinct cultural heritage of the populations associated with the sample organisations and the assistance the organisations provide in developing infrastructure and facilitating a forum for the communities. As discussed in Chapter 5 and 6, the social capital is generated through: workplace socialising in the context of limited employment opportunities; the promotion of local, regional and national identities through arts production; and the
role played by some of the organisations as community forums, service providers and advocates.

These values illustrate the types of outcomes that result from the various organisations within the sector, despite the limited funding and support available, with the majority of funding that is available either not getting through to the organisations or not sought by them. Therefore, while the examples create significant value, meeting the criteria of state policies and on this basis deserving of support, the funding has not been forthcoming. By identifying the types of social, cultural and economic capital that the sample organisations generate, I have attempted to illustrate the “significant” value of the sector that has been alluded to by other studies but never quite captured (Myer, 2002, 245; Senate Standing Committee, 2007, 188).

It is also important to recognise that the main type of organisation in terms of employment and securing state funding in the souvenir art sector is the community-based not-for-profit Indigenous Art Centres, which operate across both sectors (see Chapter 5). While art centre souvenir art production has received some previous attention, it has been overshadowed by the interest in the contribution of art centres to the fine art sector (as mentioned in Section 4.1). Furthermore, the other types of organisations involved in the souvenir art sector, the commercial businesses, including independent operators, and small, medium and large organisations analysed in Chapter 6, have generally been overlooked in the literature. The oversight is due to a combination of ‘lower status’ products and an emphasis on financial competition that is not accommodated in the policies that underpin the
7.2 Recommendations

The conclusions of this thesis lead to the following recommendations for the development of the value of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and its products within the political economy. The recommendations are intended to address general points of accounting for and enhancing the value of souvenir art within the industry, with suggestions of which institutions are likely to be able to conduct the required work and how an initiative or policy intervention may work in principle. Although the recommendations have been shaped primarily by the research and analysis presented in this thesis, I have also drawn on selected findings and recommendations from previous studies. The following recommendations, therefore, are intend to stress the types of value that are generated by the industry and how they might be further enhanced.

7.2.1 Recommendation 1 (A): A Consultative Approach to the Discursive Constructions

As addressed in Section 7.1 above, the discursive construction of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and its products affects its value and status
relative to the fine art sector. However, the souvenir art sector and the industry can take action to positively influence these discursive structures to increase its value and status. The first and most important point of action that the industry can take is to engage and consult with all of the organisations of the souvenir art sector including art centres, independent operators, and businesses involved in the production, distribution and retailing of the arts to develop a truly industry-wide strategy for promoting the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts in all of their forms.

This broad objective needs to be narrowed in scope based on wide consultations which are most likely best undertaken by the Australia Council through its research and advocacy functions. It would be most beneficial to undertake a specific consultative research project that engages with submissions and holds forums with the sector in a similar manner to the Planning for the Future paper (Australia Council, 2001). This research could be then used to guide further marketing and promotion campaigns, which may include broadening the reach of the Indigenous Art Code through a voluntarily opt in mechanism for goods under $250 (Indigenous Art Code Limited, 2010, 6).

This can help to educate consumers and counter the problems associated with offshore imitations, particularly remedying the perception that fakes are prevalent in the souvenir art sector of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry. Protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art producers from “the impacts of tourism and commercial pressures in the wake of market expansion” through the use of authenticity labels was also identified as a priority in the Senate Standing
Committee Report (2007, 188). Promotion can also be undertaken at the point of sale of the products, with documentation and accreditation schemes that support the aesthetic and particularly the cultural authenticity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art products. As noted in Chapter 6, the use of documentation is particularly effective and sought by consumers to authenticate the product and is already widely used, as are accreditation schemes and labels, which have been pursued by the industry for some time. This strategy might be able to draw on the successes of the Indigenous Art Code without the need to expand the program administratively, avoiding the costs associated with the failure NIAAA label (see Section 4.2). For further information see Recommendation 2.

7.2.2 Recommendation 1 (B): A Broader Definition

From the basis of the consultations it may be possible to start assembling and promoting a broader notion of art beyond the ‘traditional arts’, which was identified as a problematic restriction in Planning for the Future (Australia Council, 2001, 3). The expanded notion of the arts could include lesser status arts and artistic products such as non-fine crafts, artefacts, and mass-produced and manufactured arts and design like those identified as part of the souvenir art sector in this thesis. This ‘broader art’ can be couched in the notion of the community’s perception of art so that it continues the trend of being more expansive, encompassing a range of artistic practices and products, such as the lower status amateur arts, crafts, and commercial products, bringing the definition of art closer to community standards (Saatchi and Saatchi Australia, 2001, 31, 32).
Furthermore, the broader definition of the arts presents an opportunity to widen the evaluation criteria so that they are based on the arts industry’s support and recognition of the social and cultural value of the artistic products. This is in preference to the nebulous concept of the ‘creative work’ of the cultural industries (Craik, 1996, 189), which does not typically address artistic qualities and values directly in the funding criteria. Setting evaluation criteria that is appropriate for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art sector and the arts and cultural sector more generally is addressed in more depth in Recommendation 3.

7.2.3 Recommendation 2 (A): Market Research

As suggested in Recommendation 1 (A), it may be beneficial if there is a coordinated strategy for production and promotion based on the industry consultations and specific market research in addition to the independent and private market research that already informs parts of the industry’s market research. This could be undertaken by engaging with producers in consultation and promoting the factors that contribute to good quality products and the benefits these souvenir products create, enhancing the existing quality and addressing the undervaluing of souvenir arts production.

This is best undertaken through the auspices of Australia Council in cooperation with relevant Federal Government Departments such as the Office of the Arts through considered research and consultation. As Recommendation 4 of the recent review of
the Australia Council (Trainor and James, 2012, 16-17, 19) suggests, it is important that in the development and implementation of such a plan involves the Australia Council taking responsibility for ‘artistic excellence’ and the Office of the Arts attending to the wider social and cultural elements of the promotions to ensure that their division of responsibilities does not compromise the outcomes, but works to strengthen them. Such an approach would lessen the financial burden on the sector to conduct independent market research and may stimulate innovation. The outcomes of the market research and subsequent promotions (see below) should be tabled and reviewed at regular intervals established by the initial consultations.

7.2.4 Recommendation 2 (B): Industry Promotion: Labelling and Accreditation

Based on the above Recommendation for market research, it is then possible to undertake promotions and marketing that emphasise the importance of the values of the cultural and artistic authenticity across the spectrum of products to consumers. This could take the form of tourism-linked campaigns as they have been previously successful in emphasising the intrinsic values of souvenir art and their link with tourism in cultural tourism policies, initiatives and agencies (see Section 4.3). These links and forms of institutional cooperation between agencies such as the Australia Council and Tourism Australia can be mobilised in connection with the Indigenous Art Code or as an independent initiative that promotes cultural tourism locations and ventures and local art production.
Such a strategy could utilise the skills of art centre regional resource bodies such as the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA) and Desart, individual art centres such as the sample art centres that cater for forms of tourism or community-based businesses such as the Medium Organisation. An informed cultural tourism campaign in this fashion would be able to draw on and highlight the unique locations and cultural authenticity of the products and support local Indigenous and national Australian identity (Office of the Arts, 2011, 20; Craik, 2001, 89). Furthermore, a linked tourism and arts campaign will not only serve the whole industry, but could help to boost the souvenir art sector in particular by supporting the growth already occurring in manufactured arts (Altman, 2000b, 90).

If the marketing and promotion could be linked to the Indigenous Art Code (see Recommendation 1 (A)), the additional documentation and accreditation could also have the benefit of ensuring that consumers are informed about what is and is not an authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art product made by Indigenous artists. In this way, the labels could assist the general cultural authenticity that comes from the products being recognised as ‘legitimate’ in the sector and the industry, creating an environment where imitative, non-licensed products lose further status due to their less authentic provenance.

However, it is important to ensure that the labels do not inadvertently devalue the souvenir art products that derive their value from discourses other than those of authenticity. These include licensed and mass-produced products that generate their value through repetition, cross-cultural borrowing, kitsch and postmodern discourses,
as well as products with complex provenance through international production of some components, which are liable to be devalued further by emphasising their ‘inauthentic’ or less authentic elements. This can be achieved by emphasising the role of the Indigenous artist and the importance of their regional and cultural practices in the creation of the art or designs for the products, rather than scales of artistic excellence or the place of manufacture.

7.2.5 Recommendation 3 (A): Measuring What Counts - Beyond the Economic

In order to promote the values of souvenir art products and the benefits associated of arts production as recommended above, it is first necessary to recognise the values within the industry. To support industry recognition and engagement with these values it might be beneficial to hold workshops or seminars for industry stakeholders that are specific to the type of organisation explaining the likely benefits that are generated, and the usefulness of accounting for these values. Supporting and promoting the artistic and cultural value of the products within the industry has the advantage of drawing attention to the legitimate innovation of forms and designs and the regional cultural practices that underpin the artistic practices of all products. It may also help the organisations involved in the industry to understand and develop strategies to cope with the tensions inherent in the multiple roles they fulfil productively (Wright, Altman and Morphy, 2000, 105-106).
Furthermore, with the awareness and measurement of these values the industry may be in a better position to promote and support the value and status of souvenir art within the general arts and cultural industry by emphasising its social, cultural and economic value in a coordinated effort. This could also help to facilitate the early stages of accounting for these values through voluntary evaluation surveys and the creation of better grant application and resolution processes with the Australia Council, Federal Departments, and state arts agencies (further information below).

7.2.6 Recommendation 3 (B): Voluntary Evaluation Surveys

The industry can also enhance its value through the implementation of voluntary evaluation surveys that can be used to reinforce perceptions of its worth based on the social, cultural, and economic benefits it produces. This would be of benefit to future marketing campaigns such as those proposed in Recommendation 1, as well as when seeking state assistance and support (see Recommendation 4). Such an undertaking would best be coordinated by the Australia Council, in conjunction with the Office of the Arts State and Territory Arts agencies, as the forms of the capitals would need to be defined to ensure consistency and a standard evaluative form or criteria developed.

The evaluation policies and framework of Arts Victoria (Keating, 2002; Department for Victorian Communities, 2006) could provide a base for the development of interstate and national evaluation criteria as they have been applied successfully in the field and incorporate most of the key concepts. Through the application of the
voluntary evaluation surveys consistent forms of evaluation and performance benchmarking in the industry could be developed as suggested by Wright, Altman and Morphy in Recommendation 36. (B) of the Art and Craft Centre Story (2000, 113). This would also reflect the Conclusion 1.2 of the Review of the Australia Council that there is a need to align the policy objectives and performance indicators of the Australia Council and federal departments (Trainor and James, 2012, 13). The development of such a consistent set of criteria could support accountability and evaluation in this area by providing clear articulation of the aims and outcomes in all of the types of capital (social, cultural, and economic) intended.

In developing the surveys it will be important to recognise that the forms of value generated and an organisation’s performance will by different depending on the types of products made. Furthermore, “narrative and qualitative indicators should be taken into account in addition to quantitative indicators” as suggested in Recommendation 36 (B) (Wright, Altman and Morphy, 2000, 113). This could help strengthen the case for further recognition and funding for the industry and the souvenir art sector in particular. Furthermore, it may aid the development of more concise and targeted state policies, as using the three types of capital would tighten the vague discursive statements, which at this point are not generally followed up in evaluations of policies or programs except in Victoria (see Section 3.1.2, and for further information on refining the qualitative capitals and theoretical framework see Section 7.3.2 below). However, for this to succeed there would need to be the recognition of the value of changing evaluation methods (addressed below).
7.2.7 Recommendation 3 (C): Sharing Knowledge

Additionally, the change in evaluation within the industry would require significant administrative collaboration with state and federal agencies to coordinate the use of the terms, definitions and outcomes of the industry surveys. This may be problematic in some policy areas, such as grants for artists, where social and cultural capital generation may not be usually applied, with artistic ‘excellence’ used as a main part of the criteria as suggested in in the 2012 Review of the Australia Council (Trainor and James, 2012, 8-9). However, other areas, such as the community cultural maintenance or development programs undertaken by federal Office of the Arts or broader strategies such as the ‘Closing the Gap’ framework (Trainor and James, 2012, 16-17), may be more likely to benefit due to the stronger accountability and demonstrable outcomes.

In the short to medium term, the capitals would still be likely to lean towards quantitative measurements for economic capital and qualitative measurements from stakeholder surveys or other methods such as those employed and discussed by Wright, Altman and Morphy (2000, 113) and Matarasso (1997) (see Section 3.1.2). From this basis the outcomes can be identified and expressed in terms of the specific cultural capital (such as skills or knowledge) to be acquired or gained, the social capital (for instance, the new interactions and bonds created and the sustainability of community interactions) as well as the economic capital required to provide it and expected to be generated from it. This would still provide a greater level of detail about what these goals are and how the programs are achieving them.
Although this would require the industry to make a concerted effort to mobilise resources and evaluate its own performance in these areas, it would have the benefit of providing evidential support to arguments for the funding of the sector that goes beyond economic figures. This is important as Chapters 5 and 6 argue that the sector has much more to offer than narrow economic figures, with substantial social and cultural value generated. Evaluation of the multiple values is likely to pay dividends, as social and cultural concerns are also taken into account in awarding funding and support, in addition to economic considerations.

The implementation of the evaluation forms would need to be done sensitively, to make sure that there is not an unreasonable workload imposed on the organisations. Therefore, a suggestion that the surveys be administered or undertaken once a year as part of normal accounting at the end of the financial year might be preferable. Not only would this help to keep data about funding inputs to outcomes consistent, but it would also assist in organisational and independent reviews such as those undertaken by Altman (2000a). The surveys could then be collected by the Australia Council or the Federal Office of the Arts to be analysed and the individual findings returned to the participant concerned, and the compilation of the results to form a yearly review and report for the industry. This could assist in future industry planning and aid market research efforts.
7.2.8 **Recommendation 4 (A): State and Federal Policy and Evaluations**

As Recommendation 3 (C) suggests state policies and forms of evaluation could also benefit from adopting and more comprehensive evaluative framework that includes social, cultural and economic capitals/values. The recognition of the multiple values generated by the sector may help to provide a clearer picture of the industry, allowing the targeted allocation of the most effective and efficient type of support for the sector and industry, which is particularly important given the scarce resources and public funding available. This is also supported by Recommendation 34 (B) of the Art and Craft Centre Story which advocates that “funding bodies recognise the real value of art centre ‘special projects’ …when assessing grant applications and evaluating the performance of art centres” (Wright, Altman and Morphy, 2000, 113). This may also have the added benefit of being able to bring greater institutional and public awareness of the sector, providing further social and cultural capital to the sector as a whole, and to the individual artists and organisations that can assert the value of their work.

7.2.9 **Recommendation 4 (B): Policy Objectives and Funding**

With the recognition of the souvenir art sector and its multiple values, policies can then direct funding and support towards the production of souvenir art in an effort to encourage growth in the ‘legitimate’, Indigenous-produced, segment of the market. Although this thesis has not focused on options for the levels of state funding for the
sector, it is believed that an increase would have beneficial outcomes for the nation. This belief is supported by the findings of the Senate Standing Committee which in Recommendation 4 suggested “that the Commonwealth establish a new infrastructure fund to assist Indigenous visual arts and craft; [and] that this fund complement existing NACIS program funding” (2007, 47). The reasons the Senate Standing Committee cited for committing further funding was that “that programs such as NACIS… [have] provided both cultural and economic benefits to many Indigenous communities” (2007, 50).

For the purposes of this thesis it is suggested that increased funding and support is targeted based on the types of outcomes and values that are intended to be generated. An instrumental use of funding for art centres and other community-based artists and organisations such as the Independent Operator and Medium Organisation could increase the financial returns to producers and the national income through increased competition with international imitative products. This position is supported by the substantial returns demonstrated by the example art centres. In addition, increased funding of the sector could have the benefit of outcomes in social and cultural capital such as those generated by Maruku, the Independent Operator and the Medium Organisation. These benefits represent an inclusive range of outcomes, some of which are objectives explicitly articulated by the example organisations, while others are the results of the core and ancillary work associated with arts production and facilitation.
In terms of social capital, the example organisations usually generate positive outcomes through socialisation in the workplace and the associated wellbeing benefits (Matarasso, 1997, 7; Mills and Brown, 2004, 50), as well as affirmations of shared identity and community at local, regional and even national levels (Murphy, 2005, 203). Furthermore, this can create and social cohesion and “cohesive action” through the facilitation of local, collective political action (Murphy, 2005, 124-125). The example organisations tended to exhibit cultural capital through benefits in reinforcing, explaining, and passing on the traditional protocols of sacred designs and knowledge. The generation of cultural capital is also expressed through the skills and knowledge associated with employment opportunities, which have been shown by other evaluations of arts programs to provide a basis for further employment and further general life skills and capacity (Matarasso, 1997, 8, 33). Over the longer term there might also be a reduction in social dysfunction and the problems associated with unemployment, such as reduced personal wellbeing and reduced community interaction, cohesion and cultural capacity.

7.3 Further Research

Throughout the thesis I have noted the gaps that remain due to the constraints of time and materials but nonetheless deserve more attention, as well as other areas that offer substantial scope for development of the subject matter and themes of the thesis in areas of related research. These opportunities for further research represent empirical, analytical, theoretical, as well as completely new inquiries into related subjects. These opportunities are briefly outlined in this section, starting with
research that will further contribute to the picture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry and then moving on to the potential application of the research and themes of this thesis in other areas.

7.3.1 Research into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Industry

As I mentioned in the recommendations above, there is a need to expand on the outline of the political economy of the sector that is presented in this thesis. In particular, the political economy could be extended to include the whole industry to gauge the relative values of each sector and present industry-wide data and discourses. Additionally, the political economy presented in this thesis was restricted in the amount of data and, therefore, analysis available through questionnaires and publicly available information. This data needs to be expanded so that the economic value can be more completely ascertained and that the amounts of social and cultural capital allocated can be refined, presenting a more complete political economy. Following Recommendations 3 (A) and (B) may assist in generating more data through the collection and analysis of voluntary evaluation surveys within the sector and industry.

Extending the political economy to encompass both sectors requires identifying the overlaps between production and other roles in retailing or distribution, as well as the analysis of the interplay between the discursive structures of value and the policy implications. As mentioned above, this requires the collection and analysis of
additional data to gauge the size and composition of the industry and the types of organisations and their roles, as there is little data currently available that is not an aggregate of general cultural industries research. In calculating the multiple capital amounts of the expanded political economy, it would also be preferable to move beyond selected illustrated examples to a data set that can be statistically meaningful and representative, which is unfortunately beyond the resources of this thesis.

Another part of the political economy that is beyond the scope of the current thesis is the effect of funding and support at the local government level, which is too large to be fully surveyed within the time and resource constraints of the doctoral process. However, the collective figures of local government funding for arts and culture are significant with, for instance, $397 million in 2006-07 across NSW, while the NSW state government contributing $892 million in the same year (National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics, 2008a, 45). The additional funding and support indicated by such figures needs to be researched and analysed in its own right as to the effect of local government sponsorship, funding and initiatives on the sector and industry. Although the examples used in this thesis did not demonstrate any funding from local government sources, more research is necessary as it is possible that there might be communities involved in arts production that receive such funding.
7.3.2 Bourdieu and Critical Modern Political Economy

This thesis demonstrates the potential of incorporating Bourdieu’s theories, particularly the concepts of social and cultural capital, into political economy analyses, which could be expanded on in other studies. The use of social and cultural capital in political economy analyses could have wide-reaching impacts across a range of disciplines and areas of study, including policy research, cultural industries research, and political economy research into service, hospitality and tourism sectors, community and care workers, manufacturing or agriculture. Importantly for this thesis however, the continued use and refining of the social, cultural and economic capital in political economy analyses offers a way to more accurately account for and quantify all of the values in a way that can compete with economic discourses in decision-making.

As I have shown in this thesis, these capitals can be evaluated and accounted for within a political economy framework along with economic capital. However, further refinement of how the capitals are quantified, even in the form of relative amounts as I have used them in this thesis, is necessary if this model of political economy is to be broadly adopted. A useful approach to refining relative qualitative amounts can be found in labour economist A. M. Dockery’s (2011, 9) work on Indigenous employment and subjective wellbeing, which applies the categories of “strong, moderate, weak or minimal cultural attachment depending upon the quartile of their factor score” to self-assessed wellbeing surveys. This work is also valuable for the fact that it uses self-assessed surveys in a similar fashion to those suggested in
Recommendations 3 (A) and (B) above, and contributes to the use of Indigenous self-perceptions in evaluations. The theoretical framework advanced here is adaptable to the demands of analysis and has the substantial benefit of including a wider range of human interactions, benefits, and costs within the model to gain a more complex understanding of exchanges in society.

7.3.3 Other Souvenir Arts and Indigenous Arts Industries

There is also substantial scope for development of the subject matter and themes raised in this thesis, particularly in the study of other types of souvenir arts and indigenous arts industries. One of the potential avenues for further research is the broader Australian souvenir arts market, such as the other product ranges of the Large Organisation that includes “Australiana and Nature Inspired products” (Large Organisation Website). Research into this area could include analysis of the discourses and values that are attached to Australiana products that are unconnected to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, such as the boxing kangaroo and Australian flag t-shirts or Ken Done artworks. This may be particularly instructive for tourism and market research purposes, as well as studies looking at national culture and identity.

Additionally, consumer perspectives on the reasons for purchasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art and the values that are important in this decision were also not able to be accounted for in the political economy of this thesis. This
research would be useful as market research for the industry (such as that suggested in Recommendation 2 (A)) to tailor their products to the needs of consumers, but is also of importance to policy makers and general academic theory in this area due to the multiplicity of values and discourses that the products present. As the research of Mary Ann Littrell (1990), Mary Ann Littrell, Luella F. Anderson, and Pamela J. Brown (1993), and Soyoung Kim and Mary Ann Littrell (2001) used in this thesis demonstrate, it is the consumers who have the final say in how much they are willing to pay and what discourses and types of authenticity influence those decisions. As such, further research in this area is necessary to go beyond speculative statements about the types of authenticity desired and potentially what separates the sectors in the consumer’s purchasing habits.

There is also further research potential in indigenous arts industries from other countries. In particular the analysis of this thesis could be used as a point of comparison in studying the political economy of souvenir arts production, discursive structures, and values. It may be particularly instructive to compare the indigenous souvenir arts based on how they fit within or outside of Western art history, theory and criticism and the status and values generated from these differences. It may also be helpful to compare the different consumer expectations of indigenous souvenirs or the types of production undertaken internationally.
7.4 Epilogue – Reflections on Personal Souvenirs and this Thesis

In conclusion, I return to some reflections on my recent experiences and engagements with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. Like my previous encounters, these experiences have been broader than the thesis focus on souvenir art and have involved a variety of contexts. My consumption practices are perhaps marked as being more theoretically aware than the ‘average’ consumer due to my academic engagement with representation and value in the field. However, they are presented here to provide a summary of the experiences and role of consumption in the sectors following from the above conclusions, recommendations and suggestions of further research.

My recent experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art have been mixed, although generally maintaining the indefinite but important analytical distinction between practices in the fine art and souvenir art sectors. These experiences include attending exhibitions at public and private art galleries, displays of art and artefacts in ethnographic and material culture museums, displays in corporate/commercial spaces, and retail displays in gift shops and souvenir shops (Fry and Willis, 1996, 199). These visits form a part of my cultural, leisure and entertainment activities (Urry, 1990, 82), both within Sydney where I live and as part of my domestic cultural tourism, undertaken in other Australian capital cities, and are not geared towards purchasing in the art market, but represent a visual consumption of the art on display.
There a few different contexts of display, with my attendance of private galleries consisting of browsing the represented artists rather than curated exhibitions. In contrast, my viewing habits at public art institutions involved dedicated exhibition spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, works placed within spaces for Australian or general contemporary collections, and specialist individual or group exhibitions. The display of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in museological contexts has a complex set of discursive constructions attached to it with art history, theory and criticism categories of fine art and craft/artefact distinctions playing a role. The gift shops I visited either function as private galleries selling a range of products in up-market retail areas, or are more usually in my experience attached to public art and museological institutions. These spaces often have a range of products spanning fine art and souvenir art products arranged into sections that act to delineate the sectors. The gift shops as well as the souvenir shops that sell at the lower end of the fine art spectrum constitute the space of the blurred boundary between the sectors.

The only purchases made during these visits have been catalogues from exhibitions held at public art institutions, sold through the associated gift shops, and while they function as mementos and a type of souvenir, they are not souvenir art as it is defined here. It is worth noting that I have benefited in the form of cultural capital through the knowledge I gained of conventions, artists, and backgrounds, and through the social capital acquired through the course of these experiences that I have shared with others.
Although my experience with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art has been expansive and complex I will focus on one particularly illuminating experience of domestic tourism, which demonstrates the richness of these engagements. Unlike most of my experiences as a tourist, this was outside of a capital city, undertaken by myself and incorporated volunteering. This was my experience of visiting the Indigenous community of Yuendumu in the Northern Territory to volunteer at the Warlukurlangu Artists Aboriginal Corporation art centre in 2010 (see Section 5.4).

In retrospect, one of the most interesting experiences was in the art centre gallery space, which stocked and displayed a range of both fine art and souvenir art made through the art centre. The majority of the gallery was devoted to medium and large acrylic paintings on Belgian linen, most of which were laid out in piles sorted by size on a table and floor space around the edges, while only a few high-profile and high-priced paintings were hanging on the wall with the canvas stretched. The crafts and artefacts, comprising decorated music sticks, plain and decorated boomerangs, paraja (traditional food carriers), didgeridoos and spears, were also arranged in groups on spare floor space, stored in drawers with better examples displayed on a bench top. There were also mass-produced homewares and accessories, such as mugs, bowls, umbrellas, and travel bags featuring major designs reproduced from significant paintings of prominent artists at the art centre, stored in containers within the main administrative space but not on display.

It is important to note the range available through the art centre and that they are all recognised and certified as being produced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
artists. The authentication is particularly prominent in the case of Warlukurlangu, which has a reputation for its excellent work in documenting the authenticity of works produced by its artists (Wright, 2000, 101). I was therefore in no doubt about the authenticity of the works, both artistically and culturally.

My certainty about the authenticity of the products was important when, at the end of my week-long visit, I purchased gifts and souvenirs. The gifts were for my parents, who received decorated music sticks, and for my academic supervisors, who appreciated the paraja (traditional food carriers) and mugs. Research by Kim and Littrell (2001, 652-653) suggests that there is no discernible difference between souvenir purchasing for gifts and for self with aesthetics playing a major role, although portability becomes a greater concern for gifts. However, portability was not an issue in this case as I had the products freighted, but I did differentiate the purchasing of the presents for my parents to those for my supervisors and myself. This is due to the different cultural capital that the audiences bring to the souvenirs and taking into account the spaces in which the souvenirs will be displayed. Therefore, my supervisors in their professional capacity in their offices or workspace are able to appreciate the range of authenticities and academic theories surrounding the works and the purchase, while I required that the gift for my parents be a small piece that was consistent with their existing collection, to go with their boomerang on the bookshelves at home where this process began.

Finally, I would like to reflect on the souvenirs I purchased as mementos of my experience, both at Warlukurlangu and throughout this thesis. I picked the three
items for myself that are featured in Plates 14-16 in Section 5.4, the paraja by Nora Napaljarri Andy, a mug featuring one of Shorty Jangala Robertson’s significant designs, and a decorated boomerang by Elizabeth Napangardi Lechleitner. My engagement with these pieces of souvenir art is complex, and is informed by the artistic authenticity of the developments of individual designs and techniques and the general appreciation of their abstract aesthetic.

This engagement with the aesthetic extends to the complexities of their position within art history and theory, including the kitsch sensibilities of the mug and the identifiable themes and symbols that are repeated. Additionally I value the traditional knowledge, craft skills, and artistic expression of place and identity. Furthermore, I recognise and take an interest in the cultural authenticity of the elements. These can be distinctive (such as the honey-ants), partially known (such as the generic symbol of the circle on the paraja, and the public information made available about Shorty Jangala Robertson’s design documented on the packaging), and include knowing that much is hidden to me and will remain unknown.

The aesthetic and cultural qualities are reinforced by the documentation, which includes official Warlukurlangu swing tags with the artists’ names written in. There is also the reassurance on the swing tags (backed up by my personal experience and knowledge) that the artists are paid for their work, providing economic capital to them and their communities through the art centre in circumstances of limited opportunities. I am also aware of and take pleasure in knowing that the souvenirs contribute social and cultural capital to the artists and their community through
employment in arts production and other areas in the art centre, and through the experiences afforded them such as travelling to exhibitions.

With all of these associations these souvenirs act as a memento of my experience at Yuendumu, with particular associations such as bringing paints to Shorty Jangala Robertson and collecting finished paintings and souvenir art artefacts like the paraja during a buying session at an outstation. As I have already indicated, the souvenirs also serve as reminders of connections to my parents and their cultural milieu, and the academic and interpersonal experiences involved in producing this thesis. The works of souvenir art collectively reflect my personal experiences of tourism, leisure, and professional experiences grounded in a sequence of events and a broader period of engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander souvenir art, culminating in the new visual landscape of my home and life.
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**Plate References**


Boomerangs (16 inch) [Three-Layered Plywood] (Undated) and Didgeridoos [Yellow/Brown Box Eucalyptus Wood] (Undated) from the Independent Operator. Independent Operator Website. 05 November 2009.
Calma, Graham. Crocodile Dreaming Design [Print] (Undated) from the Large Organisation. Large Organisation Website. 05 November 2009.


Independent Operator. When Goanna and Snake First Met. [Acrylic on Canvas] 590x390mm (Undated). Independent Operator Website. 05 November 2009.

Injalak’s base in Gunbalanya marked in Purple, Maruku’s base in Mutitjulu marked in Yellow and Warlukurlangu’s base in Yuendumu marked in Red [Map] (2010). Created by Brendan Mahoney using Google Maps - Map Data, Europa Technologies, Whereis, Sensis Pty Ltd.

Johnstone, Terry. Echidnas Feeding on Honey Ants. [Canvas Screen-print]. 270x190mm (Undated). Medium Organisation Website. 05 November 2009.


Kngwarreye, Emily Kame. Ntange Dreaming [Synthetic Polymer Paint on Canvas]
1350x1220 mm (1989). National Gallery Australia, Canberra.


Lechleitner, Elizabeth Napangardi. Boomerang. [Acrylic on Wood] (Undated)
Photograph by Brendan Mahoney, 2011.

05 September 2010.

Maralngurra, Gabriel. Untitled from the Injalak Hill Suite Series. [Print]. (Undated)


Naborlborhl, Owen. Mimi Spirit. [Ochres on Arches Paper] 300x400mm (Undated).


Nangala, Tilau. Women’s Ceremony. [Acrylic on Belgian Linen] 300x400mm (Undated). Small Organisation Website. 05 November 2009.


Photograph by Brendan Mahoney, 2011.


The Independent Operator shown in Orange and the Small Organisation shown just above in Blue [Map] (2010). Created by Brendan Mahoney using Google Maps - Map Data, Europa Technologies, Whereis, Sensis Pty Ltd.

Appendix A

Questionnaire - The Political Economy of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Industry

1. Completion of this questionnaire indicates your consent to use this data for the research entitled: The Political Economy of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Industry, and no other purpose. (UWS Human Research Ethics Committee Approval H7282)

Section One – Organisation Details

This section asks questions about the organisation’s details and history.

2. Where is the organisation located? (state and postcode)
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

3. Is the above location where the primary production and/or sale work is undertaken?
   □ Yes
   □ No - if not, what is the location where the primary production and/or sale work is undertaken?
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

4. What is the position within the organisation that the Person(s) completing this questionnaire holds?
   Title: ______________________________________________________
   Responsibilities: _____________________________________________

5. What sort of legal entity is the business?
   □ Public/Private Business
   □ Non-Government Organisation
   □ Community Group

6. What is the main orientation of the organisation?
   □ For-Profit
   □ Not-For-Profit

7. Could you briefly describe the history of the organisation?
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
Section Two – Products

This section looks at the types of products produced and sold, and how they are priced and displayed.

8. What types of products are made and/or sold by the organisation?

Paintings
- □ Canvas Paintings
- □ Prints of Paintings
- □ Limited Edition Prints

Printed or Designed Apparel
- □ T-shirts
- □ Bandana
- □ Hats/Caps
- □ Jackets/Sweater/Jumper
- □ Scarf

Postcards
- □ Aboriginal Painting
- □ Australian Landscape
- □ Indigenous People
- □ Other

Didgeridoo / Yidaki
- □ Plain
- □ Decorated

Boomerang
- □ Plain
- □ Decorated

Pottery and Ceramics
- □ Figurines
- □ Bowls
- □ Earthenware
- □ Other

Homewares
- □ Plates
- □ Mugs
- □ Glasses
- □ Shot Glasses
- □ Place mats
- □ Coasters
- □ Drink Holders

Jewellery
- □ Earrings
□ Bracelets
□ Beaded Accessories
□ Rings
□ Necklaces

Decorated Linen
□ Table Cloth
□ Bed Cover
□ Towel

Books
□ Children’s Reading
□ Children’s Colouring
□ Non-Fiction/Educational
□ Fiction

CD/DVDs
□ CD of Didgeridoo Music
□ CD of other Indigenous Music
□ CD of non-Indigenous Music
□ DVD of the Australian Landscape
□ DVD Documentary of Australia
□ DVD Documentary of Indigenous Australia
□ DVD of Indigenous Art

Other (Please Specify) _____________________

9. What percentage of the products are handmade or handcrafted? _____________%

10. What percentage of time does the production of handcrafted items take in the manufacture process? __________%  

11. Is there a policy about how to price products? – If yes, what is it?
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
12. What information is provided with the products?

- Label with biographical information about artist
- Label with Organisation or Brand name
- Label about how to use the product
- Label about the art depicted
- Label about the social significance of the product
- Label of authenticity
- Other (Please Specify) ________________________________

Section Three – The Employees/Artists

This section seeks to identify the basic demographics for those that work as artists, artisans, designers and producers of souvenir or tourist art.

13. How many employees does the company employ? __________

14. What are the average hours of employment per week? __________

15. What type of employment is most common?
   - Full-time
   - Part-time
   - Casual
   - Contract (Average length? ____________)

16. Where are the artists from sourced from?
   - Local area
   - Within the State or Territory
   - Within Australia
   - International

17. What percentage of the artists consider themselves as being from an Indigenous background? _________%

18. What are the criteria for hiring artists?
   - Local Artists
   - Artists with a good reputation
   - Syndication with other companies
   - Other (Please Specify) ____________________________

19. What are the provisions of artist copyright/intellectual property within the organisation?
   - Full Artist Ownership
   - Organisation Ownership
   - Other (Please Specify) ____________________________
20. What are the provisions of artist copyright/ intellectual property for use of intellectual property outside the organisation?
   □ Not Allowed
   □ Allowed
   □ Other  (Please Specify) _________________

Section Four – Organisation Business

This section is intended to explore the financial resources of the organisation and the effect of government assistance (if any).

21. What is the approximate earnings of the organisation in a financial year after tax?
   □ $0-$100,000
   □ $100,001-$500,000
   □ $500,001 or more

22. Does the organisation produce other products that do not utilise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art?
   □ Yes
   □ No

23. Is the organisation involved in any other businesses that are not related to Aboriginal art and/or souvenir production, distribution, or sale?
   □ Yes - If so, approximately what percentage of the business is dedicated to Aboriginal art production, distribution, or sale? _____________%
   □ No (Go to question 25)

24. How much, as a percentage, does the Aboriginal art production, distribution, or sale side of the business contribute to the overall income of the organisation? _____________%

25. Does the organisation use any external funding sources?
   □ Yes
   □ No (Go to question 28)

26. Where does the external funding come from?
   □ Local Government
   □ State Government
   □ Federal Government
   □ Australia Council
   □ Indigenous Business Australia
   □ AusTrade
   □ Other Non-Government Organisation
   □ Other Business

27. How much, as a percentage, does the external funding contribute to the overall income to the organisation? _____________%
28. Does the organisation receive non-monetary external support?
   □ Yes
   □ No (Go to section 5)

29. What form does the non-monetary support take?
   □ Physical Materials and Resources
   □ Media or Communications Support
   □ In-Kind Support
   □ Other (Please Specify) ___________________

30. Where does the non-monetary external funding come from?
   □ Local Government
   □ State Government
   □ Federal Government
   □ Australia Council
   □ Indigenous Business Australia
   □ AusTrade
   □ Other Non-Government Organisation
   □ Other Business

Section Five - Conclusion

Thank you for your cooperation and input into this questionnaire. The results of the analysis will be freely available through the UWS website at the completion of the PhD degree in March 2011. Please send this questionnaire to the researcher (Brendan Mahoney BA Hons, UWS) b.mahoney@uws.edu.au If you have any questions for Brendan Mahoney please contact him at his above email address or alternatively you can contact the research supervisors Dr James Arvanitakis, j.arvanitakis@uws.edu.au and Dr Jacqueline Millner, j.millner@uws.edu.au.

31. Would you mind being contacted to participate in a further one-hour audio-recorded interview for this study?
   □ Yes
   □ No

Preferred Email: __________________________________________________
Appendix B: Map of the Locations of the Seven Example Organisations

Injalak Arts and Crafts is marked in Purple

Maruku Arts and Crafts is marked in Yellow

Warlukurlangu Artists’ Aboriginal Corporation is marked in Red

The Independent Operator is marked in Orange

The Small Organisation is marked in Blue

The Medium Organisation is marked in Maroon

The Large Organisation is marked in Green