

ACCELERATE 2009–2016

Impact Assessment and Evaluation Report
Hilary S. Carty, May 2017





ACCELERATE IMPACT AND EVALUATION REPORT

The British Council in Australia and the Australia Council for the Arts have commissioned this impact evaluation of the ACCELERATE programme for Indigenous cultural leaders which ran with seven cohorts and achieved 35 alumni from 2009 to 2016.

ACCELERATE was developed as a partnership between the British Council and the Australia Council for the Arts in 2009. Over the years, ACCELERATE has also been supported by Create NSW, Arts Queensland, Creative Victoria, Arts NT, and the Department of Culture and the Arts WA with additional support from private partners including British Airways, BT Global Services, SBS NITV and Virgin Atlantic.

The significant achievements of the programme would not have been possible without the creativity, conviction and commitment of the ACCELERATE alumni who are both benefactors and contributors to its success and its future.

British Council in Australia
www.britishcouncil.org.au

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

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Cover images: ACCELERATE alumni and programme coordinators.

From left to right row by row: (1) 2013 Alumni. Image: Casamento Photography (2) Angela Flynn, 2015 alumni. Image: Mark Gambino (3) 2014–15 Alumni. Image: Richard Timbury (4) Kimberley Moulton, 2013 alumni. Image: Casamento Photography (5) UK Trainer Mark Wright, Alumni Adviser Ron Bradfield Jnr and UK Consultant Nicola Turner. Image: Anna Kucera, Blue Murder Studios (6) Rita Pryce, 2012 alumni. Image: Parker Blain (7) Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin Creation Lab, 2016. Image: Mark Gambino. (8) Peter White, 2009 alumni and Jacob Boehme, 2014 alumni. Image: Mark Gambino. (9) 2016 Alumni. Image: Mark Gambino.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Artwork: Lucy Simpson, Gaawaa Miyay Designs.

The British Council in Australia and Australia Council for the Arts have commissioned this impact evaluation of the ACCELERATE programme for Indigenous cultural leaders which ran with seven cohorts and achieved 35 alumni from 2009 to 2016. ACCELERATE drew on the UK's experience in cultural leadership programmes and the British Council's connections into the UK's strong cultural and creative sectors to create a bespoke provision for continuous professional development.

ACCELERATE comprised:

- two intensive leadership development residentials: one in Australia to kick-start the programme; and the other book-ending the UK programme with a day of preparation on arrival in the UK and a day of reflection prior to departure
- bespoke connections to respected industry professionals and organisations in the UK
- mentoring with respected UK cultural leaders
- industry placements in targeted UK organisations (where appropriate and feasible)
- Action Learning methodologies with leading Action Learning specialist providers.

The Australia Council for the Arts has been a stakeholder and partner since the beginning, providing financial support, advice and guidance through its Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander and Capacity Building Departments. The Australian State Arts Agencies – Create NSW, Arts Queensland, Creative Victoria, Department of Culture and the Arts WA, and Arts NT – have also supported the programme. In addition, sponsorship from Virgin Airways, NITV, BT Australia and British Airways have contributed.

Impacts

Few participants viewed themselves as leaders on encountering the programme. The positive affirmation, the opportunity to align with a respected peer group, the recognition and valuing of ideas and contributions, all served to build and/or reinforce self-belief and strengthen the participant's self-perception as a leader. Expertly and sensitively facilitated by UK consultant, Mark Wright, individuals looked within at their own ambitions and looked across to hear, support and positively challenge or champion the ambitions of others. This precious encounter and the techniques it embedded remain at the core of successful practice for a significant number of individuals.

The opportunity to concentrate on their creativity and to focus conversations on creative originality, without the layers of perception/expectation of 'Indigenous' artist was liberating within the UK experience.

Undoubtedly, one of the most valuable elements of the ACCELERATE programme has been the opening up of access to a wealth of UK cultural institutions. In all cases, the encounters have been informative and instructive. Due to the bespoke matching of participants with organisations, a healthy number of firm and lasting connections have been established. For many, the UK visits brought a heightened sense of urgency in the need to lead the development of culture for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as a means of building resilience and reducing reliance on external agencies. For UK organisations, the interaction afforded an enhanced understanding of contemporary Australia.

ACCELERATE prioritised international working for 2014–2016/17 with enhanced funding from the Australia Council. The impact of Yirama Yangga-na (2016) was to affirm the value and potential for self-determined leadership, creative development and international connections. Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin First Nations Cultural Summit provided a culturally safe space to collaborate, interrogate, debate and strategise over a three-day cultural summit and a five-day creation lab.



2013 ACCELERATE Alumni. Image: Casamento Photography.

Critical Learning Points

- The need to anchor the programme within the British Council.
- Essential partnership investments from the Australia Council for the Arts and State Arts Agencies.
- The care and commitment of the British Council in Australia engendering trust and respect.
- Bespoke connections made by Nicola Turner, UK Consultant.
- Engagement and level of care demonstrated within the Leadership Intensives.
- Cultural sensitivity and cultural care embedded with the support of alumni.

ACCELERATE has marshalled strategic leadership investment for the long term. It is imperative to match that long-term ambition with long-term financial planning and the development of legacy programmes, such as Maaguuk (Unite), which extend the practice within State-based cohorts, as well as looking internationally to positively impact other First Nations communities.

Conclusions

ACCELERATE has delivered an inimitably Australian innovation in leadership development. It has exceeded expectations and, most critically, it has delivered both micro and macro outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leaders. The significant achievements of the programme would not have been possible without the creativity, conviction and commitment of the ACCELERATE alumni who are both benefactors and contributors to its success and its future.

After eight years of delivery, and in the context of significant financial challenges, a pause in the delivery of the programme has afforded the opportunity to take stock; to review and gather opinion, reflect back and look forward, based on the evidence of key outcomes. In the context of the British Council, ACCELERATE has been a significant success, delivering against past and current ambitions.

For the British Council in Australia, with strategic priorities determined by UK national exigencies, embedding activities within regional infrastructure and the priorities of local stakeholders is imperative to secure medium- to long-term impact, and harness the legacy of its intervention.

For ACCELERATE in Australia, that key long-term partner is evidently the Australia Council for the Arts, whose strategic plan 'articulates our leadership role in building a vibrant arts ecology by fostering excellence and increasing national and international engagement with Australian art and artists'.

Strong advocacy, active sponsorship and stakeholder engagement are essential to garner partnership commitment and galvanise priority investments that build on this proven success. For the outcomes are both dramatic and distinctive: they attest to the strength of the programme and drive the imperative to move strategically and courageously forward – harnessing the legacy of ACCELERATE and securing creative leadership and 'agency' for future generations of First Nation Australians.

ACCELERATE has marshalled strategic leadership investment for the long term. It is imperative to match that long-term ambition with long-term financial planning and the development of legacy programme.

1. INTRODUCTION



2015 ACCELERATE Alumni. Image: Anna Kucera, Blue Murder Studios.

The British Council in Australia and Australia Council for the Arts have commissioned this impact evaluation of the ACCELERATE programme for Indigenous cultural leaders.

This evaluation will: communicate the impact story of the flagship Indigenous cultural leadership programme; identify critical learning points from the programme experience; demonstrate the network and links created with the UK and the wider international community by the ACCELERATE; and articulate evidenced benefits to UK organisations that have taken part in the programme. The brief is attached at Appendix 1.

Background to the Programme

ACCELERATE was launched in 2009 as a new generation of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander artists and producers was emerging within contemporary art practice

in Australia. ACCELERATE came about in response to the lack of representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in positions of influence within the creative and cultural sector and mainstream media.

At that time, a few leadership programmes were beginning to emerge, such as the Wesfarmers Arts Indigenous Leadership and Fellowship program (2009) established by the National Gallery of Australia and Wesfarmers Limited to address the relatively small percentage of Indigenous professionals participating in the visual arts sector.

The Australia Council was developing leadership programmes aimed initially at emerging and mid-career arts professionals, and there was a level of investment in educational opportunities for Indigenous peoples. However, investment in cultural and creative development at a leadership level for Indigenous professionals was less in evidence.

In the UK, the focus on cultural leadership had been enhanced by setting up the Clore Leadership Programme and, later, the Cultural Leadership Programme, a significant governmental investment to strengthen the leadership of the UK cultural sector from 2006 to 2011. The Cultural Leadership Programme (CLP) piloted a range of training and development activities for the full range of cultural leaders – artists, practitioners, curators, managers, producers and executive directors at all scales – delivering intensive training, work-based learning, national and international placements, and online learning. One of the CLP priority aims was to strengthen the diversity of the UK cultural sector, securing better engagement and progression routes for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

ACCELERATE has sought to empower its alumni with the recognition, skills and networks to drive their own careers, both internationally and at home. Between 2009 and 2016, 35 leaders have benefited from ACCELERATE and, in their own words, the programme has been ‘transformational’, ‘life-changing’, and ‘awesome’.



2016 ACCELERATE Alumni. Image: Mark Gambino.

ACCELERATE drew on the UK's experience in cultural leadership programmes and the British Council's connections into the UK's strong cultural and creative sectors to create a bespoke provision for continuous professional development that combined leadership learning with skills sharing and international network building to actively refresh the cultural dialogue between the UK and Australia.

The Australia Council for the Arts has been a stakeholder and partner since the beginning of the programme, providing essential financial support, as well as advice and guidance through its Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Department and its Capacity Building Department.

Critical to the success of ACCELERATE has also been the investment of advice and resources from the State Arts Agencies – Create NSW, Arts Queensland, Creative Victoria, Department of Culture and the Arts WA, and Arts NT – which have partnered with the programme,

and participated in selecting participants and supporting alumni. In addition, ACCELERATE has benefited from sponsorship by Virgin Airways, NITV, BT Australia and British Airways.

ACCELERATE has sought to empower its alumni with the recognition, skills and networks to drive their own careers, both internationally and at home. Between 2009 and 2016, 35 leaders have benefited from ACCELERATE and, in their own words, the programme has been 'transformational', 'life-changing', and 'awesome'.

Targeted leadership development offers a dynamic and impactful way to stimulate engagement for professional practice and the stories of the ACCELERATE alumni provide inspiring evidence of a range of impressive outcomes for individuals, for communities and the Australian arts sector at large.

'A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, especially for an Indigenous professional in a creative industry.'

2015 PARTICIPANT

'If it wasn't for ACCELERATE, I'd still be trying to do this, but I'd be 10 years behind.'

PETER WHITE

'It's a lifetime experience I know I'll always draw upon, in big and little ways.'

ANDREA JAMES



Case Study: The Impact of ACCELERATE

GINA WILLIAMS, 2012

It really did change my life. People go, 'Oh yeah?' and I say, 'No seriously, you have no idea'.

Baseline

I was writing songs in English and working on country with some crew – I used to do a 500 kilometre return trip every week from Perth out to country to do song writing workshops with some mob, so I was interested in seeing how song writing and use of the Noongar language could be used to make change.

I wasn't really sure what I was going to do. I was interested in being part of ACCELERATE, and to see things globally and how I could use them in a local approach.

Most alumni came from organisations, I didn't have that. I'm an individual practitioner, so I don't have the power of a big organisation behind me. My leadership is through connecting with people and doing my own thing.

Key ACCELERATE Inputs

ACCELERATE showed me really practical ways to shift from being reactive to actually being strategic.

In this really practical way, we did this hero's journey, and I sat down and imagined what my perfect world would look like and actually, the stretch between where I was and where I wanted to be wasn't that impossible, it wasn't out of reach.

I was interested in language – Noongar has less than 400 speakers, so when you consider there are 40,000 Noongar people in Australia, less than 1% of the population speak their own language – so Nicola Turner organised a meeting with the artistic director of the National Eisteddfod of Wales. Because the Welsh language was almost wiped out and there are parallels between that and Noongar language. He was brilliant. He said: 'you just need to work out what makes your heart beat faster and you do that. Apply that to making the change'.

I got to sing in a jazz club in London. You know, the first Noongar girl in my family to get a stamp in her passport is suddenly singing in London! I sang a couple of songs in English and then I trotted out my language songs and the response was amazing – people went nuts over it. It was a very emotional night.

'I couldn't have done any of this without the British Council. I would never have thought to do any of this had I not done ACCELERATE.'

If you'd told me this five years ago, I'd have said: "nup, not going to happen".'

GINA WILLIAMS, ALUMNI 2012



Gina Williams, Alumni 2012.
Image: Jarrad Seng.



Key Impacts

I'm continually trying to think about leadership in terms of my own development – it has to be about that but also about legacy; about what you leave behind in community, what you give back. I knew immediately I had to come home and write songs in language. I'd already started doing it but I wasn't brave enough to go public. So, we went out to the community and mapped it out and I had a plan, and in the 24 hours that followed, I wrote the entire album in language and I haven't look back.

My life completely changed in the most unexpected way. I released an album entirely in Noongar language. We have toured nationally. I've had critical acclaim and I've been able to contribute back to my community.

The people we were doing the songwriting workshops with, we got them recorded, registered with APRA [the music copyright agency, Australasian Performing Right Association], took them touring...

So the things I experienced in the UK, I was able to go home and, at a much smaller level, I was able to pass that on to somebody else.

We're in the process of putting together an application to Celtic Connections. I've also received funding to return to the UK to do a series of shows with other esoteric language speakers. I'm looking to work with Gaelic and Welsh language singers. I want to try to set something up in Scotland because there are two old languages that are spoken there, which are very rare. We are also working to sing with language singers in Cornwall in Cornish language. My grandfather came out on a boat from Cornwall. So I'm really interested.

So the premise for the concerts is that even though we sing in language no-one necessarily understands, the underlying themes show that we're not so different after all.

I always thought leaders belonged to education, the justice system, health or law... that's what makes you a leader. What I've realised is that leadership comes from all sectors of the community at all levels. It never occurred to me that through my own creative practice I could lead. What I thought was my greatest weakness – the fact that I'm an individual – has turned out to be my biggest strength. I can actually circumnavigate the system and carve my own path.

Awards and achievements

Indigenous Act of the Year, West Australian Music Industry Awards, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 (only since writing songs in Noongar language).

Finalist – West Australian of the Year Awards 2017 (in recognition of work around music and language). Winners announced June 2017.

Noongar language Welcome song, composed and taught to over 40,000 people across the country. Many primary schools now sing this song alongside the National Anthem.

A children's book published to support this work (proceeds support the delivery of language workshops in schools).

Other language groups (such as Malgana) have started applying my songs to their endeavours to revive their own languages.

'Singing at The Vortex in London in my Noongar language is my most profound memory.

At the time, there were only 270 speakers of Noongar and I got to sing that in London. The room went really quiet and really still and just the idea that these people had been so respectful of something that was so precious and so rare.

That was a profound experience, I knew I could do it at that moment.'

GINA WILLIAMS, ALUMNI 2012

2. METHODOLOGY

The brief calls for an informed and authoritative overview of the impact of the ACCELERATE programme, based on a mixture of desk research, interviews, analysis and insight. The author brings to this review the experience of designing, developing and delivering a range of leadership programmes and sector evaluations within the UK and Australia, as well as the experience of leading cultural policy and practice at national and international levels (see Appendix 2 for a short biography of the author).

This evaluation follows a summative framework drawing together both quantitative and qualitative metrics to assess the achievement of set objectives and the identification of additional (and unanticipated) outcomes achieved through its impact. The evaluation assesses the following three areas.

1) Planning and delivery –

the evidence of control measures regarding programming, financial and qualitative oversight, review and adjustment, to improve on lessons learnt through the process.

To contribute to this review, the British Council commissioned researchers, Sue White (Australia) and Nicola Turner (UK; assisted by former mentor, Diane Morgan), to interview and gather data from the ACCELERATE alumni and UK mentors and organisations. Early discussions with the British Council and commissioned researchers enabled a shared approach to the formulation of the research priorities and the rationalisation of key interview questions. In addition, a number of contributing stakeholders were interviewed directly by the author and desk research undertaken to:

- map the origination, development and evolution of the programme, through annual evaluation reports, the tracking of the key milestones and the strategic interventions from the British Council, Australia Council for the Arts and other key partners
- capture and reflect the range of training, leadership development activities, sector placements, mentors and other contributors (see Section 3: ACCELERATE in Outline).

The list of those consulted in the process of this review is provided at Appendix 3.

2) Outcomes –

achievements against set objectives, assessed through records of activities undertaken and key impacts on identified areas of reach.

The report draws heavily on the input of ACCELERATE alumni, and their testimonies and case studies demonstrate the impact and career pathways that have been achieved. The interviews with alumni, mentors, organisations and stakeholders have informed the core of this report as they articulate the experience and perspectives of those who have led and/or taken part in the ACCELERATE journey.

The key themes, issues and impacts for participants are presented in Sections 4.1 and 4.2; impacts for Indigenous communities in Section 4.3; and the wider creative and cultural sectors in Section 4.4.

'I can tie all of it back to ACCELERATE. It's the best leadership program I have ever participated in. It changed my whole perspective about my life personally and professionally.'

BARBARA BYDNER



Ron Bradfield Jnr, 2013 Alumni. Image: Casamento Photography.

The benefits to identified UK and international organisations are provided in Sections 4.5 and 4.6.

The assessment of critical learning points from the delivery of ACCELERATE are articulated in Section 5.

c) Legacy –
the lasting effect of the programme in terms of new and/or refreshed activities, shifts in perspectives, career and professional development, as well as significant interventions in creative and cultural practice.

The use of case studies and testimonies give particular insights to the qualitative outcomes achieved, which are especially relevant to a programme that seeks to stimulate, activate and animate for shifts in human behaviour and practice at the individual and sector level.

ACCELERATE has delivered seven cohorts in eight years since 2009. This review in 2017 affords an appropriate opportunity for reflection and assessment of legacy outcomes, which include increased sector influence and international engagement as evidenced in Sections 4.1 to 4.6.

Collectively, the ACCELERATE alumni represent a hugely impressive and diverse cohort of talented professional artists and cultural leaders. Their journeys are a dynamic combination of their talent, ingenuity, ambition and hard work.

It is hoped that the Conclusions (Section 6) and Recommendations (Section 7) will collectively inform future developments that address the issues and opportunities for leadership by, with, and for First Nations Peoples nationally and internationally.

'I would not be in the position I am now, if I hadn't had the opportunity to take up what ACCELERATE offers.'

RON BRADFIELD JNR,
2013 ALUMNI

Collectively, the ACCELERATE alumni represent a hugely impressive and diverse cohort of talented professional artists and cultural leaders. Their journeys are a dynamic combination of their talent, ingenuity, ambition and hard work.

3. ACCELERATE IN OUTLINE

3.1 Programme Ambitions

The original articulation of the programme acknowledged that the absence of Indigenous Australians in roles of influence in the creative industries had resulted in ‘misrepresentation, exploitation and mishandling of Aboriginal cultural heritage’ (see Appendix 4, ACCELERATE 2009 Terms of Reference). ACCELERATE sought, therefore: *‘to redress the under-representation of Indigenous leadership...to empower and equip them with the skills, networks and confidence to proactively drive the way Indigenous culture is represented in Australia and internationally’.*

The focus on shifting the opportunity and outcomes for Indigenous cultural leadership lay at the heart of the programme aspirations for:

- equipping future Indigenous creative leaders with the confidence, high-level social entrepreneurship skills and international networks to drive the representation of their own culture internationally and locally
- strengthening the already existing network between Australia and the UK for creative exchange
- promoting the value of Indigenous creative leadership via a high-profile Marketing and Communications Framework in Australia and the UK

- ensuring the recipients’ experiences are effectively fed back to Australian cultural organisations via an Australian internship programme
- ensuring that structures are developed to provide ongoing professional support for recipients
- fostering platforms and pathways to promote the value of Indigenous knowledge and learning methodologies in the Arts.

Focused as an opportunity for professional development in creative leadership, ACCELERATE comprised:

- two intensive leadership development residentials: one in Australia to kick-start the programme; and the other book-ending the UK programme with a day of preparation on arrival in the UK and a day of reflection prior to departure
- bespoke connections to respected industry professionals and organisations in the UK
- mentoring with respected UK cultural leaders
- industry placements in targeted UK organisations (where appropriate and feasible)
- Action Learning methodologies with leading Action Learning specialist providers (2011–2014).

3.2 ACCELERATE Participants

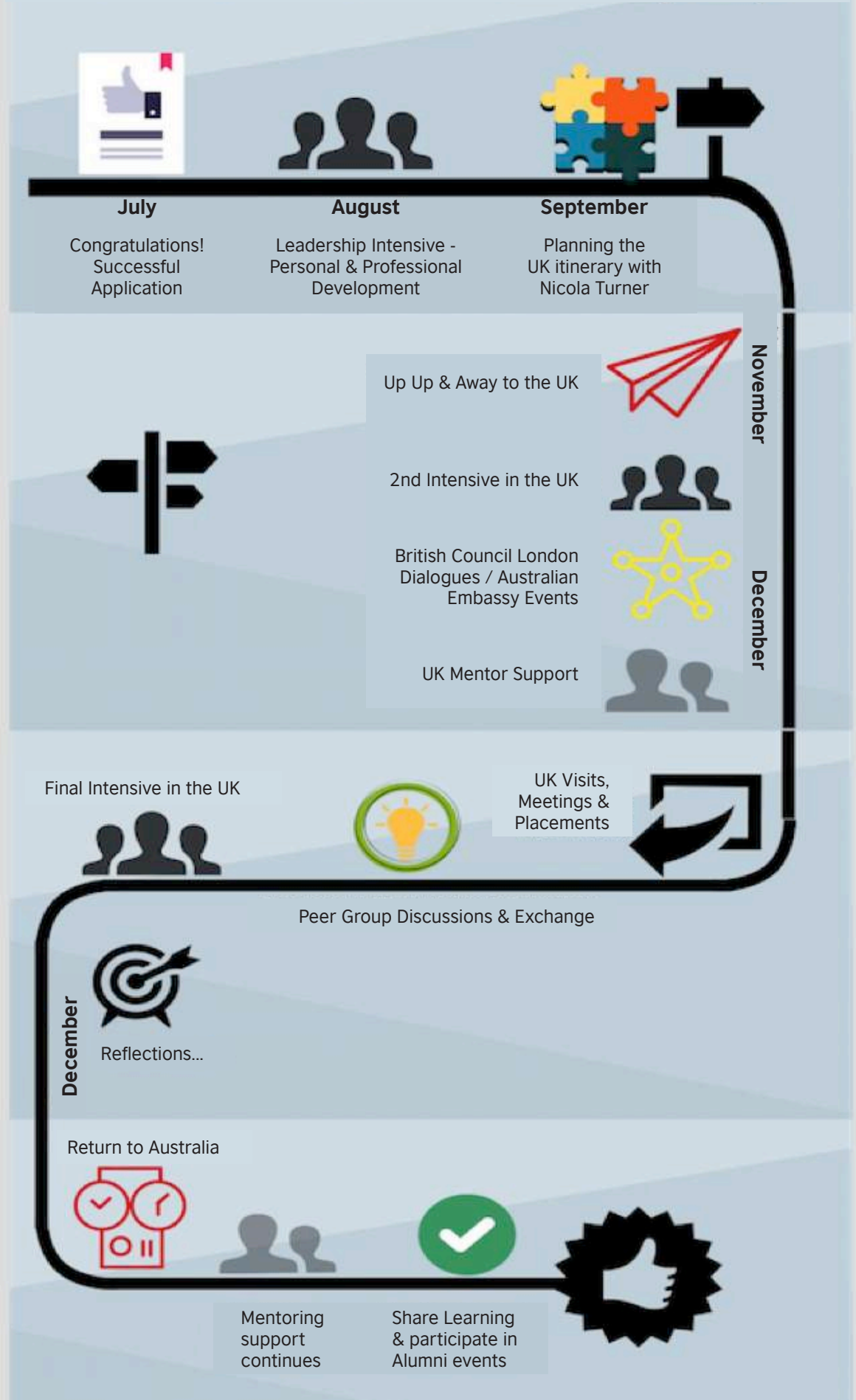
ACCELERATE has provided leadership and professional development opportunities for 35 cultural leaders drawn from a pool of over 190 applications.

ACCELERATE has appealed to a significantly diverse range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. For example, as noted in the Annual Evaluation Report, in 2014, the programme received 30 applications:

- 22 female / 8 male
- the majority aged between 30 and 40 years
- 29 chose to identify from specific language groups
- 26 applicants were Aboriginal, 3 were Torres Strait Islander
- 42 distinct language groups were identified in total.

Primarily targeted at mid-career level, the programme alumni includes an eclectic, dynamic and diverse range of professionals from the creative fields of dance, music, theatre, museums, visual arts, fashion and design; as well as producers, managers and directors. The names and year of engagement of all ACCELERATE alumni are provided in Appendix 5: Program Overview.

ACCELERATE JOURNEY MAP



Geographical Spread

In terms of geographical spread, participants from across Australia have benefited from ACCELERATE.



3.3 Core Delivery Partners

The British Council has been creating ties between people in the UK and other countries for over 80 years. As a cultural relations agency, the British Council harnesses the power of education, the arts and creativity, sport and science to build mutually beneficial relationships worldwide. In Australia since 1947, the British Council has worked to build mutually beneficial relationships between future leaders, innovators and creatives in both countries, guided by a belief that the future for the UK and every nation depends on people of all cultures working together to develop foundations of mutual understanding and trust.

The British Council devised the ACCELERATE programme as a strategic opportunity to support the development of Australian cultural leadership. From the outset, it sought partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts. As well as being an essential funding partner, the advice, national networks, experience and expertise of Australia Council staff, in particular the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts team, steered by the respected Lydia Miller, were recognised as critical to the effective design, development and delivery of the programme.

In addition to these ‘founding’ partners, the programme has benefited from the priority investment of State agencies in Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory. The financial resources and advisory support from the States helped to create an influential chain of participants, who stood as visible success stories within their local sectors and supported the promotion of the programme to their networks.

Further detail on the contributions of the core partners is provided in Appendix 5: Programme Overview and Section 3.5, Financing the Programme.

3.4 UK Cultural Organisations and Mentors

A central element of the programme was the visit to the UK and the opportunity to connect directly with a range of UK organisations and professionals. This ambition was extensively delivered with a total of over 250 UK cultural organisations contributing to the programme between 2011 and 2016 (see Appendix 5 for a full list of UK mentors and organisations).

Regular contributors included the following organisations:

- key national cultural institutions, such as Southbank Centre, National Theatre Scotland, National Theatre Wales
- funding and infrastructure agencies: Arts Council England, British Council Northern Ireland, British Council Wales, Creative Scotland, Crafts Council and the Design Council
- UK festivals and celebrations: Edinburgh International Festival, Eisteddfod of Wales, Manchester International Festival, London International Film Festival
- national and major museums: British Museum, National Galleries Scotland, Pitt Rivers and the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum
- key visual arts galleries and organisations: Arnolfini, Autograph ABP, Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow, Tate, Barbican Centre and William Morris Gallery
- design and creative industries: Aardman Studios (Wallace & Gromit), Belfast Print Workshop and Culture Label

“Making those connections was off the charts for me.”

2012 PARTICIPANT

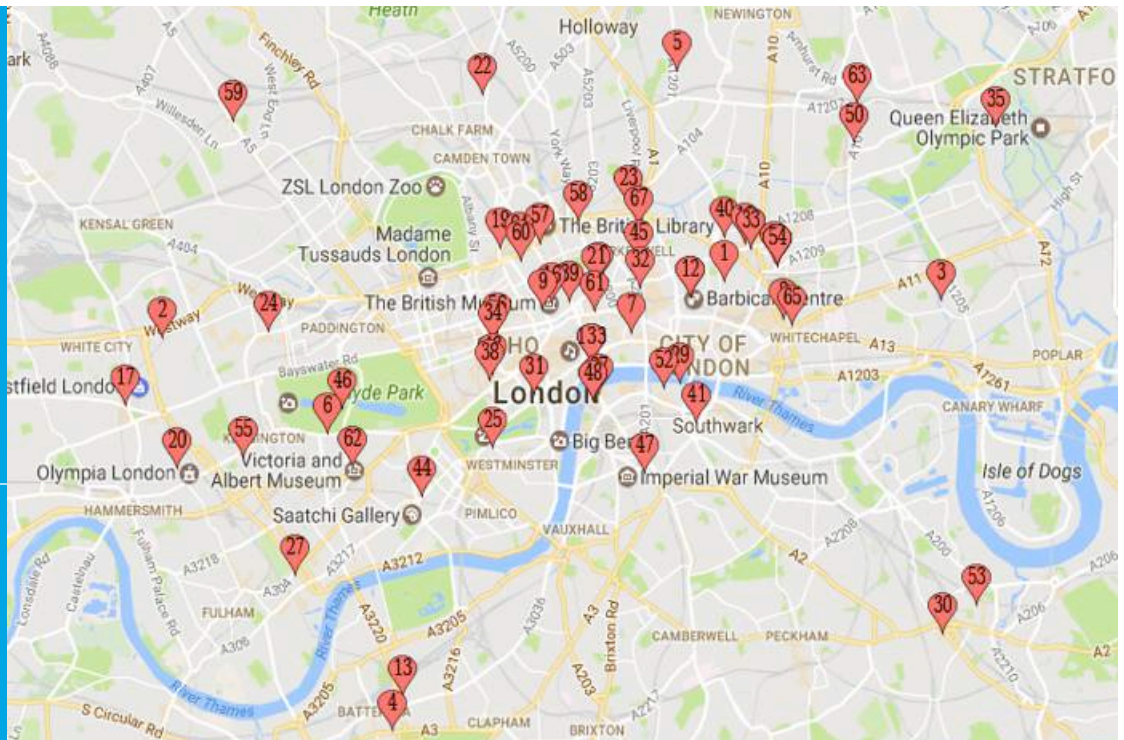
UK Cultural Organisations and Mentors

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More than 65 hosts and mentors were located in London.



UK MENTORS AND HOSTS

'They were all seriously high-calibre individuals. You just read their biogs and CVs, they have done so much; taking on key curatorial positions, making work and leading in their field.'

Joon Lynn Goh – Host

'They have illuminated and challenged around the complex questions of identity, diversity and representation – as artists – in the Australian context. I learn every time.'

Fiona Bartels-Ellis – British Council

'It's about having confidence in your own art form and your own culture, and the way to have confidence is to know that you're not alone... that's why conversations about these experiences are important, so you don't feel isolated or following a lonely path.'

Brian Ó hEadhra – Host

'If we can share our expertise to help people stay in the game of culture and begin to own their destiny in terms of where they want to go, then that's a good thing.'

Mark Sealy – Mentor

In the majority of cases, the connections within the UK consisted of scheduled meetings and extended visits to gain familiarity with key personnel and the distinct ways of working of different organisations. Formal placements proved challenging to establish for such short visits to the UK. Participants were stimulated with opportunities to see work in progress, to attend rehearsals, read-throughs, writing workshops, conferences, training events, festivals, gallery openings and networking and panel events. Where possible, access to devising and development processes were opened up by attending, observing or contributing to programming meetings. In a handful of instances, extended engagement was facilitated, such as with the National Theatre Wales and Greenwich Dance Agency.

ACCELERATE alumni testify to the tremendous impact of this element of the programme. For the majority, it provided a chance to connect directly with individuals and institutions they had only heard about and never dreamed of reaching. Several commented on the generosity and openness with which information was shared and connections offered. The size, scale and fluidity of the UK sector created both curiosity and surprise, and brought significant reflections and comparisons to the modus operandi in Australia. Importantly, the ambition to stimulate entrepreneurship, provide international connections and spark new and strengthened activities back at base was resoundingly achieved.

From the perspective of many UK organisations, ACCELERATE provided a valued and rare opportunity to learn first-hand about Australia and the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The professionalism and calibre of the participants was noted, as was the genuine spirit of generosity displayed by UK hosts.

Mentors

Mentors were introduced into the programme in 2011 to create a dependable and independent support for contextualisation, probing, clarifying and optimising the experience in the UK. A range of professionals contributed in this way: artists, curators, producers, chief executives, designers, managers, narrators and more. (See Appendix 5). This one-to-one support has been noted as immensely valuable by the alumni.

Mentors helped participants put their own cultural journeys into perspective and develop strategies for resilience. For example, Participant KBW said: 'I have a fuller sense of what is possible, and the way other organisations are run, on a bigger platform. It's a bit like the country kid returning – I used to think "this was the way things were done" but my perspective at what else is happening in the sector, and looking at my own organisation, I definitely have a more critical viewpoint'.

'What it essentially comes down to is accessibility and social mobility. That's the key... it's about getting the access to the industry, which is why ACCELERATE is great...'

I was able to show how the networks are created... It's more challenging in Indigenous communities who don't get those opportunities to network.'

RICH WARREN, MENTOR

'One of the things ACCELERATE does very well is to make links outside of the normal structures of festivals and touring. It's about a different kind of conversation, to understand the complexity and the day-to-day of operating in the cultural field.'

JOHN MCGRATH, MENTOR



3.5 Financing the Programme

ACCELERATE has been secured through partnership funding from the Australia Council for the Arts and several State Arts Agencies. Partner contributions were typically secured between \$15,000 and \$30,000. Create NSW, Creative Victoria and the Department of Culture and the Arts WA contributed consistently throughout the programme. Arts Queensland contributed in all years, except 2014. Arts NT contributed in 2016 only.

The annual budget expenditure varied from \$163,000 to \$203,000, depending on the number of participants, the securing of additional in-kind support, and external sponsorship. Airlines Virgin Atlantic and British Airways have both partnered the programme, contributing flights. British Telecom has sponsored the programme, including providing the welcome reception at the exclusive BT Tower in London. The Government of Australia has annually welcomed participants at the prestigious Australia House in London. Receptions at the British Council Head Office, Spring Gardens have additionally contributed to creating a warm welcome for the groups.

In 2014, a successful application to the Australia Council enabled a significant financial boost to the programme, specifically targeted at enhancing alumni activities for the 2014–2016 period. Securing a significant \$355,700, the focus of the increase was: *‘an expanded suite of activities to support the growing alumni network and create new opportunities to showcase work on an international scale’* (ACCELERATE 2014 Evaluation Report).

The three-year contribution enabled ongoing support of the main leadership programme, as well as direct costs to deliver two international First Nations Forums and three annual interventions to support Action Learning. In addition, an International Development Fund secured grant support to respond to alumni collaboration activities stimulated by the UK visit.

With significant reductions to its budget, the Australia Council has since had to revise its programme of leadership provision. The partnership has taken this opportunity to review the impact of the earlier investment in order to inform future decision-making.



Case Study: The Impact of ACCELERATE

JANE HARRISON, 2012

*'Right now I can't do any more projects,
I'm knocking back things – it has been incredible!'*

Baseline

I was working in the public service – specifically in the policy department of Aboriginal Affairs when I started my ACCELERATE journey. I was juggling my creative work as well.

Key ACCELERATE Inputs

I've always been fairly driven, but ACCELERATE consolidated my ideas about leadership. Leadership not being the person who stands on the soapbox and gives profound speeches, but a different kind of leadership which is more about being behind a group of people, urging them forward and giving them the safety net and the opportunity. Those ideas of leadership and cultural leadership have given us new tools in our toolbox.

UK Visit

Australia feels very much like there are gatekeepers. Over there (the UK), we just seemed to bypass that. That was really fascinating.

I couldn't believe the generosity of the people we met in terms of sharing their expertise and knowledge. They'd say: 'Here's our organisation's strategic plan'.

There was little discourse about cultural leadership in Australia – in the UK, it was front and centre – not just the work – which was new to me.

After going there, I thought, 'Our work is in Australia, that's where we need to connect and build relationships' – but it was the eye-opening aspect of seeing so many different creative models.

I did form some good ties. Lisa Goldman was my mentor and I subsequently used her dramaturgical services with some playwriting I did. I am currently working on an international project with an Irish company.

'Even saying you are an ACCELERATE alumni puts you in a unique club, because of the standard of the alumni, and who they are in the Aboriginal creative world across Australia.'

JANE HARRISON, ALUMNI 2012



Jane Harrison, Alumni 2012.



Key Impacts

A Conduit to the Literary World

I was appointed by the Wheeler Centre in Melbourne to develop the very first Victorian Indigenous Literature Festival, *Blak and Bright*.

It was very successful – we had over 60 Aboriginal writers and storytellers showcased across a range of genres. I feel in that role, I acted as a conduit between the Aboriginal community and the literary world. I made sure it wasn't only the well-known, successful writers that got a gig. I made sure community writers and activists, who wouldn't usually be programmed, also got the chance to stand up. A number of them were noticed by mainstream literary organisations and went on to forge relationships with them, which was fantastic.

The Festival was the culmination of my professional experience. The hidden agenda with all the work I do now is about changing the paradigm about Aboriginal people being seen as deficit – that deficit model – to one of a strengths-based model.

When I did ACCELERATE I was not young, so it's hard to say specifically that any successes are due to ACCELERATE alone, but ACCELERATE gave me the confidence to bring all those threads together, and the skills, to forge that way forward, which was about taking on something that was capacity-building other Aboriginal creatives, not just myself.

Alumni

One of the other really powerful aspects of ACCELERATE is the alumni and the idea that there is this critical mass of Aboriginal people who have gone through the program. There's a group of diehard alumni that get together – you form a really strong bond, particularly with the people you've travelled with, and those relationships are still playing out.

I work predominantly in theatre, but also in the literary world. Having those links with people from all those different artistic streams I think is really important. Bonding more closely with the dancers or curators – that's been really useful and you know you can ring those people up, or meet up with them.

The Aboriginal creative world is fairly small so you're on peer assessments with them, you're on judging panels with them, you connect up in all sorts of ways that are not just to do with ACCELERATE but about leadership and voice.

We want to be running our own show – to have our own leadership around programming. In many hierarchies, I don't have power or authority but I do have a voice – and I am able to take up a bit of power – not of myself, because I'm not great at that myself – but I'll take it up on behalf of the Aboriginal community if I think I can make a difference.

'I was appointed by the Wheeler Centre in Melbourne to develop the very first Victorian Indigenous Literature Festival, *Blak and Bright*.

It was very successful – we had over 60 Aboriginal writers and storytellers showcased across a range of genres. I feel in that role, I acted as a conduit between the Aboriginal community and the literary world.'

JANE HARRISON, ALUMNI 2012

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

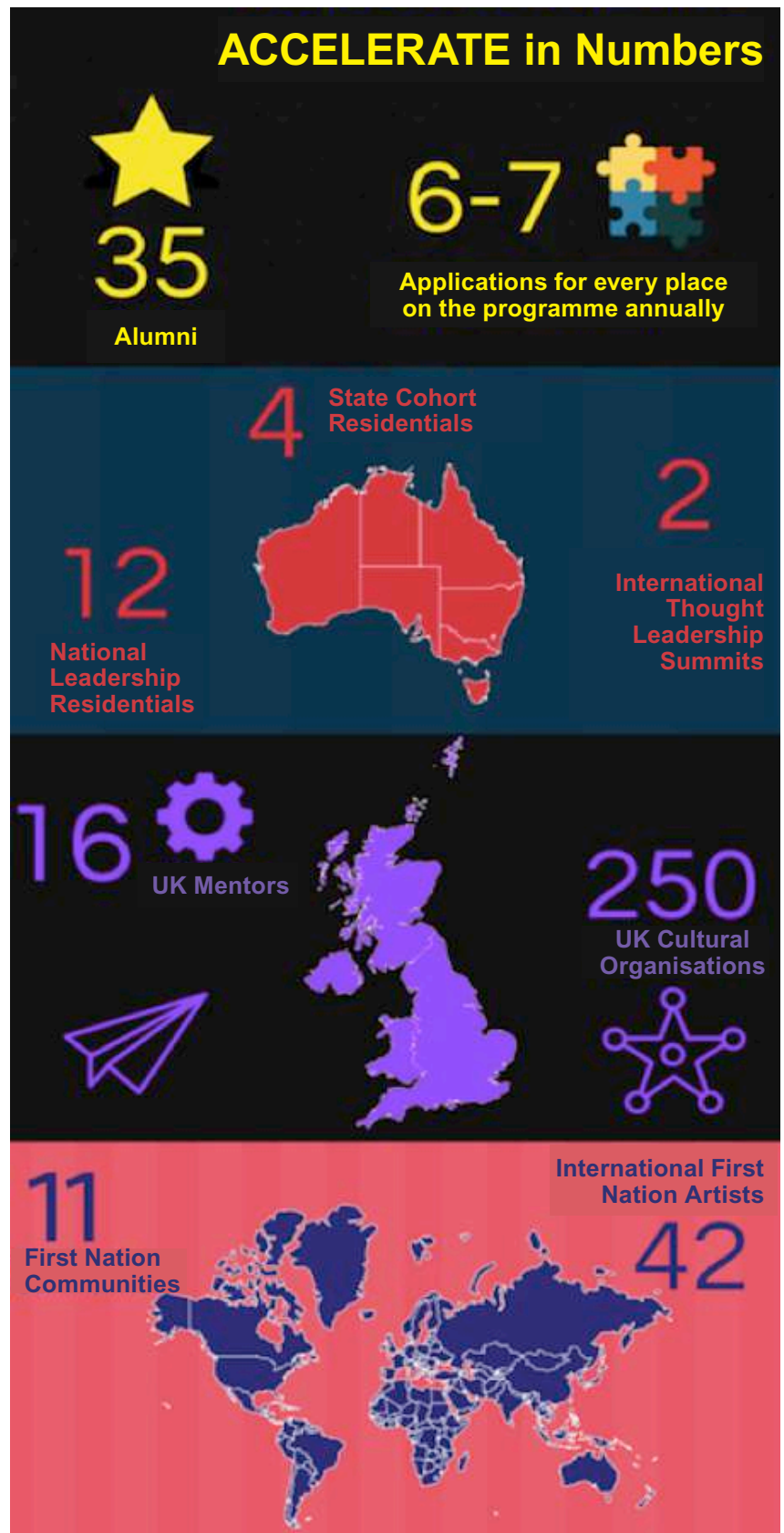
Undoubtedly the impact of ACCELERATE has been significant for many who have come in to contact with the programme. While this positive impact might well be expected from the alumni and core contributors, it is striking that a significant number of key stakeholders interviewed for this report, use the same word to describe their engagement with ACCELERATE – a ‘privilege’. In 2009, when the pilot programme was being devised, there could not have been the anticipation that in eight years, ACCELERATE would achieve so much.

Beyond the numbers, the extraordinary impact of ACCELERATE is attested to by its impact on:

- participants
- artistic/creative practice
- Indigenous communities in Australia
- the wider creative and cultural sectors in Australia
- strengthened cultural connections in the UK
- wider international engagement
- cohort capacity building.

‘Prior to ACCELERATE, I wouldn’t have the confidence or the knowledge to know that (alternative scenario) is not what I want. The program really gave me the time to peruse the way I want to work in the arts industry.’

TRAVIS DE VRIES





Ron Bradfield Jr, speaking at the Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin Cultural Summit in 2017. Image: Mark Gambino.

4.1 General Impacts on Participants

Confidence

One of the key outcomes of investments in leadership training is the intangible, yet fundamental, impact on the confidence of the individuals who take part. The positive affirmation, the opportunity to align with a respected peer group, the recognition and valuing of ideas and contributions, all served to build and/or reinforce self-belief and strengthen the participant's perception of themselves as leaders.

For ACCELERATE participants, the element of self-discovery was often profound, as the Leadership Intensive then dialogues with colleagues and mentors provided a safe space to go beyond the surface level of survival, and tap into personal challenges, creative ambition and professional identity – often for the first time. The impact was dynamic and catalytic.

'The programme starts from where the cultural leaders are at – its bespoke nature is key. ACCELERATE offers the tools to deal with the range of issues they face – to see the world from a wider perspective. It gives them 'agency' – a sense of not being alone. So they return clearer and more confident to face the challenges.'
Mark Wright

Leadership

For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the image of oneself as a 'leader' is a culturally loaded perception. Where the Western construct of leadership might simply be assigned to 'those who lead', for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the definition of leadership has far weightier significance, distinctly associated with 'elders' within communities. Few participants viewed themselves as leaders on encountering the programme, and this issue was one of the persistent threads examined and unpacked as part of the annual Leadership residential.

'It has given me a lot more confidence that I'm on the right track and that I have a platform to talk. In terms of confidence as a leader – I'm trying to contribute to the community and my industry, and it's given me confidence and experience to do that.'

KIMBERLEY MOULTON,
2013 ALUMNI

'I've never seen myself as a leader. I do things, I've always done things, and I've helped Aboriginal community members do what they want to do, and better their lives. But I never saw that as leadership. Leadership in the Noongar world is about elders. You have to earn that...I would never have called myself a leader.'

BARBARA BYNDER, 2011 ALUMNI

'I feel like the whole idea of leadership has changed for me. What I really gained was the confidence to act and help others.'

CARLY LANE, 2014 ALUMNI

'It would be a disservice to measure the impact of ACCELERATE simply based on how many alumni are in top management positions. In that sense 'accelerate' is a misnomer because the aim of the programme is to own your leadership potential, not simply accelerate your career. Rather, if we witness how each individual has developed in artistic confidence, how they are successfully using the tools and connections that the programme provided them, and how they can articulately define the influence they have in their communities and more broadly in the First Peoples arts and creative sectors, we see the impact of ACCELERATE in full force.'
Stakeholder



Participants at the Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin Cultural Summit in 2017. Image: Mark Gambino.

Building Individual and Group Capacity

The Leadership Intensives and the Action Learning Methodology combined to offer the ACCELERATE participants priority tools for individual and collective continuing professional development (CPD). The first intensive created an invaluable 'safe space' for individuals from diverse Indigenous communities from across Australia to find common ground and common aspiration, within but also beyond, the commonalities of their cultural origins.

Expertly and sensitively facilitated by Mark Wright of People Create and Ruth Cook of Action Learning Associates (2011–2014), individuals looked within at their own ambitions and looked across to hear, support and positively challenge or champion the ambitions of others. This precious encounter and the techniques it embedded remain at the core of successful practice for a significant number of individuals: *'A major success of the 2012 programme was the positive group dynamic developed. The participants all stated that they gained a huge deal from being part of this cohort. Importantly, the group added to the leadership development of its members and provided informal mentoring and support.'* (2012 Evaluation Report)

The impact beyond the core group is witnessed externally: *'The creation of the network and the closeness of the group as a collective, bringing a real sense of 'agency', are real strengths of the programme.'* Kevin du Preez, Australia Council for the Arts

'The network of alumni – that's just gold. That yearly meeting is a really great boost for me, having that ongoing contact with the network is so valuable.'

ANDREA JAMES

"The way we get together reboots you and recharges where you are headed.'

NICOLE MONKS

'The ACCELERATE alumni are a stronger, united and more confident team. When things got hard and we were all emotionally compromised, the alumni pulled together with real support and camaraderie to stand as one cohesive unit to drive the event to its conclusion. This gave our international brothers and sisters a level of cultural safety that I have never seen before in a gathering of people from all over the world. We were able to stand strong to support and encourage our visitors. We were able provide a safe space for a real and unedited dialogue in truth and sincerity that has given me a real belief in the future of our collective and what we can achieve internationally.'

PARTICIPANT: YIRAMA YANGGA-NA (2016)

TESTIMONIES: MUTUAL SUPPORT AND LEARNING FROM THE LEADERSHIP TOOLS – COHORT 2011

Theme	Participant	Reflection
MUTUAL SUPPORT	Barbara Bynder	I have been really lucky because I have a fantastic accessible group of people who I can contact when my professional life gets too much for me, and they lift me up and out of that space into positivity. I am grateful for their friendship.
	Kevin O'Brien	The thing that came out of that work with Ruth was a working group, where you feel comfortable talking to each other and taking each other's advice.
	Participant 2011	It was sitting down with the other alumni after a day of going to do our own thing and to come back and talk through with those guys – to just debrief and decompress on a regular basis during those three weeks in the UK. It was more beneficial because it allowed for an unpacking of ideas and strengthening of ambitions. We were all very close and supportive of each other.
LEADERSHIP TRAINING / ACTION LEARNING	Participant 2011	<p>Understanding your own leadership style, your own capacities and how you work; being okay with that because we all work differently and my rhythm and paces work differently to other people. An understanding of myself and how I operate allowed me to work better with other people.</p> <p>The realisation that you don't need to be like your mentor, you just need to find the truth of what you're doing and how you want to do it, and to support people to grow in their way. That has been significant. There are a number of new emerging artists who have benefited from that because I've been directly invested in them, as I'd like to have been directed in at that age or stage of my career.</p>
	Sharon Paten	<p>I still practice the two exercises: the Hero's Journey – when I'm tackling issues I look for 'Where's the siren? Who are my allies? What's the end point?' And the Action Learning – really questioning. Because having been a manager for quite a long time now, not giving people the answers, but having the tools to ask the right questions to get them to come to their own conclusion, has been something I still do to this day.</p> <p>My confidence has grown and those tools that were given to us, they're part of my toolkit in my day-to-day professional life and probably my personal life as well.</p>
	Kevin O'Brien	There was a different confidence – and that squarely came out of the workshop and leadership sessions. Mark was doing these fantastic sessions on micro [issues/thinking]... Ruth was the macro – almost 'how do you develop ambition, what it is, and where does it go?' The two together covered everything. It was instrumental for me.
	Barbara Bynder	What I did was make a deliberate choice to change my own thinking about what I wanted. ACCELERATE did that. It made me realise that learned behaviour can be unlearned. Mark just made me realise I don't have to leave my culture or community to be successful – I started shifting my thinking.
INSIGHTS AND NEW PERSPECTIVES	Marilyn Miller	The triggers for wake up came during that formal process on ACCELERATE, but it has been a process of trusting, generating the confidence and trusting my ability. Because of the information I'd learned on ACCELERATE, and the interaction with my fellow alumni, I realised how the rest of the dance industry in Australia viewed me in terms of leadership. That was a huge realisation, and how I could give back, in terms of what became mentoring.
	Sharon Paten	After ACCELERATE, in every organisation I've gone to since, I've ensured that we've developed an ethical arts code, I've implemented processes about the ethical procurement of art and developed an artists' agreement, made sure they retained IP over their art and that they were remunerated fairly, not just for the purchase of the art but for the ongoing use of it. So, it has had a lasting effect in terms of making sure that every department I go to understand that our art and our community are not there to be exploited.

IMPACT ON INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

'I take part in more high-level conversations about Aboriginal people in a public sphere. This year, I'll give the keynote speech for Reconciliation Australia in Perth and that will focus on ex-service people. My confidence in my ability to have those conversations at that level is much stronger as a result of a conviction I've managed to garner since taking part in this experience.'

Ron Bradfield Junior

4.2 Strengthening Artistic/Creative Practice

The ambition to strengthen the creative confidence and entrepreneurial skills of participants has significantly been achieved, with alumni strongly affirming growth in both their own perception of their work and in how they are perceived by others.

'It is particularly valuable for these artists to be recognised as international.' Alex Doyle

'People understand that if you've been on that program, you've got something. It changed other people's perceptions of the work I was doing.'
Clotilde Bullen

'Indigenous' Artist?

One of the unexpected benefits of the UK strand of the programme was the freedom that it provided for participants to be valued as 'artists', 'curators' or practitioners, without the precursor tag of 'Indigenous', perpetually assigned in the Australian environment. The opportunity to concentrate on their creativity and to focus conversations on creative originality, without the layers of perception/expectation of Indigenous art, was liberating in itself. It provided the space for creative breath and the oxygen for creative nourishment, enabling an opening up to fresh ideas and an expansion of creative ambitions.

'ACCELERATE seemed to provide a valuable external breath. It took participants away from the 'Indigenous' cultural context and gave them new stimulation and a place to reflect.'
Ruth Cook

'I dabble in different genres, so in the UK I could portray myself as an artist, without the Indigenous label... If you're an artist, you're an artist – that's really refreshing.' Participant 2015

4.3 Impact on Indigenous Communities

One of the powerful positive outcomes of the programme has been the creative engagement of ACCELERATE Alumni within their Indigenous communities after their UK visits. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists have a strong connection with Country, and the desire to re-ignite their creative practice with, and for, Indigenous audiences brings an additional boon both to the programme and to the ambition to strengthen the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practice.

The potential and evidenced impact of the growing cohort of ACCELERATE alumni on Indigenous communities was referenced by several stakeholders who noted that:

'ACCELERATE had opened doors. Participants are in strong demand, contributing to panels, debates and cultural discourse, and are able to have an influence on the cultural agenda within Indigenous communities.'

'It's about how others engage with Indigenous people also. It's about education and capacity building, and ACCELERATE alumni are increasingly gaining the authority to speak for Aboriginal people and represent them well. These skills are a key outcome of the process.'

Participants noted the following:

'The things I'm trying to change involve bringing other people with me. If I hadn't done this program, I wouldn't understand what that meant and how it translates to the wider community. That's really where the benefit lies.'
2014 Participant

'The ACCELERATE community connects all the Australia people horizontally. It cuts through vertical communities from around the Country.' Kevin O'Brien

'Since colonisation, the Western gaze has continually tried to make us invisible, yet through each generation building upon the previous, we are finding places and spaces to be seen and heard.'

NICOLE MONKS



Case Study: Developing Creative Practice

ALISON PAGE, 2012

Baseline

I was the CEO of an arts organisation, with about 10 full-time staff. I was also starting a new design enterprise – that was part of my role as CEO: to bring a commercial arm to the non-government organisation (NGO) I worked for. I was also the mother of young children.

Key ACCELERATE Inputs

The biggest impact was the leadership sessions. I improved my relationships personally and professionally. It changed the way I communicated; it made me a better CEO. Ultimately it comes down to confidence and purposefulness.

ACCELERATE gave me the confidence to take a huge leap of faith – and to start a new company in a field I didn't know much about. One of the things I worked on was how to pitch – I've never really forgotten those tools.

Key Impacts

I became a much better leader. I made headway in managing staff, particularly difficult staff.

I [realised] that I had all the skills I needed: I knew how to pitch, how to manage projects, and how to build relationships with people. That's the job description of a television producer. I was able to start the enterprise. I feel like ACCELERATE planted the seed for that change. Now I produce television shows: I make films and produce TV. It's the greatest job I've had in my life.

I think the multi-disciplinary nature of most people's work [in the UK] opened my eyes to the freedom that you don't need to stay in one box. That planted the seed for me to jump to film, and that you could have this convergence of film and design.

I'm a much more resilient person. I ask questions – I didn't before. I use mentors now – I didn't before. I'm making more money than I've made in my life. Creatively and socially, I'm making better work than I've ever made.

I chair the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence. I sit on the Indigenous Land Corporation Board.

I've realised I've become quite a good strategist. It's the philosophical and values-based outlook that has affected me the most. I feel I have this resource to draw on when dealing with some of the country's most wicked problems: employment in remote Australia, and Aboriginal Australia in general really – it's a challenging space to be in.

'I am a massive advocate for leadership and leadership development. Before ACCELERATE, I didn't know anything about it. Now I think it's going to save Aboriginal Australia, if you ask me, because it's about being purposeful and being in charge of your own destiny.'

Now, I'm a company director and my job is about decisions that affect a lot of Indigenous communities and I'm just pushing leadership development throughout aboriginal communities. It's just a way of approaching problem solving and managing community.'



Alison Page, Alumni 2012.



Case Study: Impacting Indigenous Communities

LILY SHEARER, 2012

'ACCELERATE rounded off a circle in my life – it reinforced my cultural values and why I do what I do.'

Baseline

I had co-founded an organisation with two others but we were just kicking along from project to project. I stepped away to become the General Manager of Gadigal Information Service – Koori Radio; and another co-founder left for Arts NSW, to increase our skills.

Post-ACCELERATE we all came back together and said: 'We've co-parented an organisation, and we want our baby to rise and shine. What can we do? Let's get cracking and work together as a co-artistic directorate'. I left Koori Radio about a year later. ACCELERATE opened my eyes to the fact that was a nice stepping-stone in my career path, but it was not where I wanted to be.

Key ACCELERATE Inputs

All those great leadership trainings with Mark and the Action Learning with Ruth – that group stuff which we tried to keep doing. It didn't last, but you do it in your head. You don't need to have those groups all the time, if you just use those skills and do it in your head: talk to yourself and write it out on paper. Those skills from Mark and Ruth were awesome.

Key Impacts

Cultural Leadership: ACCELERATE really reinforced to me what a cultural leader does. You don't have to be front and centre to be the leader. I had some of those qualities already, so ACCELERATE just reinforced that I was on the right path culturally.

UK Perceptions: The biggest thing ACCELERATE did for me was soften my heart to mother England. I had a little corner of my heart that was full of bitterness. I don't have that anymore – it's gone due to ACCELERATE.

International Connections: We've been doing all this First Nations international work, so the skills I got on ACCELERATE are making it easier for me to connect the dots of how I take my communities and their stories through the state, national and international platforms. We run the only national First People's script writing development (biannually). Native Earth in Toronto, Canada is running their 30th festival, and Matiriki in New Zealand is up to its 10th.

Yirama Yangga-na last year was a great time to come together and share with other First Peoples, and it strengthened my relationships with some other alumni colleagues. When Peter White and Jacob Boehme asked me to be on the advisory group for YIRRAMBOI, I said I'd love it. I'm loving their ideas, passion and drive. We're all on the same page.

Moogahlin

'I pursued my passion and my love for my co-founded organisation, Moogahlin Performing Arts.

We're a resident company at Carriageworks, and a company in residence at Blacktown Arts Centre, and were one of two companies to get the new four-year funding; that started in 2017.

We lead projects based on cultural foundations and value. We look for partners, working from the bottom up, not top down. We have the knowledge of this land, and if non-Aboriginal people want to work with us, they do it on our terms.'



Lily Shearer. Image: Mark Gambino.



Rita Pryce, 2012 alumna, presenting at the YIRRAMBOI Creation Lab. Image: Parker Blain.

4.4 Impact on the Wider Creative and Cultural Sectors

Over the long term, the aspiration of strengthened Indigenous artists and creatives impacting the wider creative and cultural sectors lay at the heart of ACCELERATE.

‘The program marries cultural ambition with the professional skills and support networks needed to achieve bold creative visions...ACCELERATE has already empowered alumni who are shaping our cultural future as we speak...They have, and will, become the voices that challenge us, imagine and create our future and provide us with new cultural perspectives.’

Rupert Myer AM, Chair, Australia Council for the Arts (2014)

That early evidence of impact has strengthened with an ever-expanding network of alumni creating a ripple effect beyond localised successes and into the wider arts and cultural field. For many, the UK visits brought a heightened sense of urgency in the need to fully lead the development of culture for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as a means of building resilience and reducing reliance on external agencies.

The investment in State-based leadership intensives in 2014 was a direct response, with programmes

taking place in Sydney, Melbourne, Cairns and Perth. The alumni feedback was that the State groups did not have the same degree of affinity as year groups. Nevertheless, the opportunity to galvanise the group was seized and the groups explored issues of legacy planning, and articulated the ambitions for the forthcoming international gathering of First Nations people, exploring ideas of leadership through arts and culture.

Issues of succession planning, the challenges to knowledge transfer, the acknowledgement of external contractor-collaborator expertise and the desire to consciously embed both the learning and the programme methodology have informed discussions and actions throughout the life of ACCELERATE. There has been a conscious effort to secure ACCELERATE within the Australian cultural infrastructure and to build systems for strengthened ownership and practice directed by the alumni. This lay at the heart of the major programme expansion in 2014, which drew from the aspirations articulated at the State cohort gatherings to prioritise:

- increasing the engagement of ACCELERATE alumni with the programme and drawing on their experience to refine the process
- facilitator training – the ‘Train the Trainers’ model so that the skills of group organisation are transferred to alumni

- supporting States-focused groupings, to strengthen practice and connections
- a fund to seed creative collaborations with the UK
- international gatherings of First Nations people exploring ideas of leadership through arts and culture, Yirama Yangga-na (2016) and Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin (2017), both led by ACCELERATE alumni (see Section 4.6).

The significantly increased programme from 2015 was a direct response to bolster the engagement of ACCELERATE alumni, locally, nationally and internationally.

Helen O’Neil, Director of the British Council in Australia, affirms this outcome as tangible: *‘Yes, I can see the impact. There is now a generation of Indigenous leaders who can really navigate the terrain with greater confidence’.*

“What it highlighted was that no matter what you do, until we take control of our own destiny, nothing is going to change. What changes that is taking charge of our own leadership.”

PETER WHITE, 2009 ALUMNI



Case Study: Impacting the Australian Arts Sector

JACOB BOEHME, 2014

Baseline

I was just finishing my Masters in Writing for Performance when I started ACCELERATE. It came at a time when I was needing to make some decisions about my career path. I have an eclectic background as an artist trained in dance, puppetry and performance. Many options were open, but I wanted to make the right choice.

Key ACCELERATE Inputs

The Leadership Intensive was completely transformational – recognising your own baggage. The skills I learnt in the intensives I use all the time – personally as well as professionally. The coaching sessions were essential. They brought clarity – reaffirmed my gut instincts and feelings. The pastoral care and networking was amazing. Nicola's expertise in shaping the encounters was truly insightful. Those visits made me question what I thought I wanted.

Key Impacts

Confidence: It comes as a word-cloud – Confidence. Truth. Vision. Focus. Burn-offs – ACCELERATE was a fire that burnt off things that were unnecessary and re-ignited my passion. Intensity. Determination. Terror. The Unknown. Fear of oneself. Inspired by potential...I was on my way – so while I can't pin it all on ACCELERATE, it was like a steroid injection. It accelerated the path.

UK Connections: The connections into the UK are still vibrant and fresh as I made use of confidence to secure new partnership funding and returned the following year. I re-ignite those key relationships. I returned to National Theatre Wales to fully understand some of the processes they use, and share my own experiences. I know I can bring those methodologies into some of the work I do with Ceremony and devising. I met again with my mentor, the directors, the producers...I'm setting up potential programmes for 2019 in the UK. I was asked to join the International Advisory Panel of the Gulbenkian Foundation – it's a civic role with an international focus – it is a great way to work at the next level.

Indigenous Leadership: Professionally I have made good strides. I became Associate Producer at ILBIJERRI Theatre Company and then Creative Director at YIRRAMBOI (First Nations Arts Festival) – it's an amazing platform for me – but more critically, for Indigenous leadership.

There have been significant impacts for individual artists and curators, but as a group we have more work to do – collectively. There is some progress, but it needs more time to really transfer the knowledge of what and how the British Council has worked with this programme. We need to learn those processes and methodologies. We need to take on the leadership and move things forward. There are a group of us alumni who are working actively to try and do this.

Did ACCELERATE contribute?

'Oh God yes, in terms of looking at myself, my value and my worth; honouring my history and all the work I've done so far. Placing value on everything I've done – tallying it up and realising that I do 'industry' and 'sector knowledge' that not everyone does...
It's very humbling.'

'I'd like the opportunity to share more of the leadership skills and training that I've gone through with my community, down here. I'd like to look at ways of broadening the reach and scope of that training.'



Jacob Boehme, 2014 alumni.
Image: Mark Gambino.



INSIGHT: LEADING FROM THE FRONT – YIRRAMBOI – FIRST NATIONS ARTS FESTIVAL

YIRRAMBOI (<http://yirramboi.net.au>) marks a key development in the promotion of Indigenous cultures within Melbourne, bringing to the forefront the impact of Indigenous leadership on cultural programming. With creative direction by ACCELERATE alumni, Jacob Boehme, it places the authorship of Melbourne's largest celebration of 21st Century First Nations culture in the hands of Indigenous leadership, enabling greater risk, greater adventure and greater diversity to be encountered.

'Programming decisions for major arts venues and festivals throughout Melbourne and the wider State of Victoria are being made by non-Indigenous administrators, with limited networks or knowledge of the Indigenous arts sector and the complexities of contemporary Aboriginal (and urban) cultures.' Jacob Boehme

The Festival created a cultural umbrella under which a host of proactive interventions could sit. As with other festivals, it showcased the talent of a host of Indigenous artists from dance, theatre, music and the visual arts. It created spaces for debate and dialogue, reflection and celebration. But, in addition, YIRRAMBOI provided a platform for the National Indigenous Dance Forum (co-facilitated by ACCELERATE alumni Marilyn Miller); the Blak Critics programme (facilitated by alumni Angela Flynn); Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin (alumni Peter White and Jacob Boehme); and Creation Lab (alumni Rita Pryce and Carly Sheppard).

YIRRAMBOI – a true 'Blakout' of the City.



2014–15 ACCELERATE alumni. Image: Richard Timbury.

4.5 Strengthening Cultural Connections with the UK

It is important to acknowledge that a significant majority of contemporary cultural reference points for Australia within the UK and internationally actually highlight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. Whether paintings, instruments or artefacts, these Indigenous artefacts have substantial value and currency in both national and international markets.

Prior to ACCELERATE, the British Council had not worked with Indigenous cultural leaders and practitioners, yet it now distinguishes the British Council as an innovative and committed partner to Australian organisations.

Undoubtedly, one of the most valuable elements of the ACCELERATE programme has been the opening up of access to a wealth of UK cultural institutions. In all cases, the encounters have been informative and instructive. Due to the bespoke matching of participants with organisations, a healthy number of firm and lasting connections have been established. While several have reaped instantaneous results, others have followed a slower burn of engagement, testing for the right and mutually fruitful opportunity for re-connection and collaboration.

In a few cases, such as Alick Tipoti, excellent connections with the UK were already established and ACCELERATE afforded a deepening of the relationship, sharing and exchanging expertise, as well as the exploration of new opportunities.

For others, the visit to the UK provided a first opportunity to explore arts, culture and creativity on an international scale and in a fresh context. Some of the connections have been assuredly productive and the cementing of relationships has been fairly immediate, for example:

- Travis De Vries will be returning to Edinburgh to present his work at the Storytelling Festival in 2017.
- Kyle Morrison already had a good connection with the Globe Theatre and ACCELERATE allowed him to build on this, face-to-face. Following the UK visit, Yirra Yaakin were invited to translate Shakespeare's sonnets into Noongar and present them on the Globe stage as part of the Cultural Olympiad Festival.
- Jacob Boehme returning for a month's residency at National Theatre Wales to present at the Origins Festival; and as part of a delegation visiting the Wales Millennium Centre's City of Unexpected Roald Dahl celebrations in Cardiff. An invitation to sit on an international Board at the Gulbenkian

Foundation also followed on from the ACCELERATE itinerary.

- Lucy Simpson being invited to speak at the Small is Beautiful Conference in Glasgow in spring 2015, following a meeting of minds with UK cultural leader, Roanne Dods.
- Francoise Lane collaborated with a fellow textile designer in Scotland as an immediate outcome, as well as an enduring relationship with her mentor, Beatrice Mayfield (see the Case Study).

'I swapped details with curators and will be giving them more information to help them get a better understanding of the marks and put cultural protocols into their exhibitions.'

PARTICIPANT

'The UK is amazing in its diversity and its vibrant culture. I had no idea about the art, the work and the nightlife going on there.'

KAMARRA BELL WYKES



Case Study: UK Collaboration

FRANCOISE LANE, 2016

'Being a leader for me is not just about having a successful career – which everyone defines differently. I'm just leading myself and I recognise others are influenced by that.'

Baseline

At the time I applied, my husband and I had our own business, operating fairly successfully. The area I wanted to grow in my professional practice was surface pattern design and textile design. At the time, I'd started to generate some interest regionally, and across Australia – people noticing the work I was doing was unique and had a strong aesthetic. I recognised that in order to progress this side of my career, I needed an international experience.

Key ACCELERATE Inputs

I also saw the benefits for cultural leadership focus as being fantastic – especially being an Indigenous woman, with my own business. With Mark, that work about personal growth and barriers – that has been really fantastic and beneficial. He pushed me to a point where I went 'that's all I'm saying'. That's really good for me: I'm really generous with information, but I found my limit.

ACCELERATE was huge for me. I didn't realise the value of going to the V&A Conservation Preservation Clothworkers Centre, and different art galleries and that whole cultural immersion in arts history and design. It has helped me think beyond traditional uses of these materials.

It wasn't just the fact of meeting people; it was having that experience of getting out there and doing this without any other distractions. I found so much stimulation in London and Edinburgh. Then, meeting with different people, certain things stood out to me. I had to make sense of it, so I did a bubble diagram to see the connecting factors and what was overriding. My mentor helped me to put into some sort of direction for a business plan, so I can grow and be working towards where I want to be with surface pattern and textile design.

Key Impacts

The largest regional exhibition for the year invited me to put in an EOI for the major exhibition of the year. I think ACCELERATE has something to do with that. I applied for a Collaboration Fund grant and it was successful.

Emily, who is a fashion designer in Edinburgh – we are going to design a backpack shopper bag together – it's a small project. She will start conceptually designing the backpack, and I'll design the fabric. We are going to give it critical design feedback, to tweak it. From there, we'll make a prototype and once we've resolved that, we'll do four different ones in that design. We'll produce a set each for both of us to use as samples to market and sell. It's a collaborative approach – we're working it out so that it's equitable for both of us. Emily was inspired by the way I use my culture to incorporate meaning into designs. I will be learning about her approach to the design process and manufacturing. So we both benefit.

'The experience provided [a chance to] stand alone – meeting all those different people, finding my way around, and doing it successfully; that was a huge thing for my confidence. If I can do that, I can continue to build and be fearless...

I'm wanting to go to Brussels at the end of the year for a trade show. Before, I would have been afraid, now I'm like: I can do this – I have the confidence that I can do this, and in the space I need to be doing it, which is outside Australia.'



Francoise Lane, Alumni 2016.
Image: Mark Gambino.

INSIGHT: ACCELERATE ALUMNI AND UK COLLECTING INSTITUTIONS

The UK holds significant collections of Australian Indigenous cultural objects and human remains. From Captain Cook's visit in 1770 through the 19th century colonial period, museums and repositories obtained collections from sailors, government officials, settlers, missionaries and traders. The issues are controversial and current, as amplified in the British Museum's Enduring Civilisation exhibition (www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/exhibitions/Indigenous_australia.aspx).

For ACCELERATE alumni visiting UK museums, this encounter with inter-cultural history provided inevitable moments of personal challenge and cultural questions, whether regarding rights, representation or indeed, repatriation. These incidents amplified the challenge of how British collecting institutions might balance protecting anthropological collections with working positively with contemporary cultural knowledge holders. For ACCELERATE, this included Alick Tipoti (2011, www.creativecowboyfilms.com/blog_posts/alick-tipoti-at-the-british-museum); Michael Cook (2013 Insider Activism); Emma Loban (2015, www.australiantimes.co.uk/emma-loban); and Jilda Andrews (2016, Challenging colonial legacies today: museums and communities in Australia and East Africa) whose encounters with British institutions offer current and alternative ways to appreciate Australian First Nations perspectives.

Benefits to UK Organisations and Mentors

As noted in the 2012 ACCELERATE Evaluation Report: *'The 2012 winners engaged with senior UK contacts in a way that went beyond a simple professional placement. Deep conversations regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history and contemporary issues took place on many occasions including with the British Council CEO Martin Davidson and the Australian High Commission. On occasion, the group was exposed to some outdated notions that they had to refute. One persistent misnomer was that Aboriginal people form part of 'multicultural Australia'. For the British Council, this level of dialogue is precisely what we look to support through our cultural relations work. It shows ACCELERATE is deeper than a simple 'skills exchange' exercise, and a powerful vehicle to change perceptions internationally.'*

Adrian Greer, Chief Operating Officer, British Council poses the pertinent question of whether ACCELERATE has helped the UK change its perception of Australia, to better understand the country's diversity and potential?

An enhanced understanding of contemporary Australia has most definitely been conveyed to the UK hosts and mentors who relished the opportunity to engage with such an eclectic range of cultural leaders.

In many cases, the strengthened connections were based on an experience of mutual curiosity and shared discovery, and it is notable that UK hosts and mentors were eloquent in identifying the benefits of their own engagement with the ACCELERATE participants.

'It was an eye opener. I felt people weren't too familiar with Indigenous culture and Aboriginal design, but it was a two way street – I equally I didn't know much about them. It was a discussion and I was very interested in that exchange. It was quite an inspiring part of the experience for me and it's pushing me to know more.'

2014 PARTICIPANT

TESTIMONIES: UK ORGANISATIONS AND MENTORS

Theme	Organisation/ Mentor	Reflection
INSIGHTS, LEARNING AND EXCHANGE	Liz Margree	It felt like a privilege to work with some extraordinary people from a completely different part of the world who are navigating the cultural landscape with a backdrop of a whole different history and, on many levels, cultural oppression. It was too important and I couldn't say no.
	Hilary Jennings	Ongoing thinking around what might have been lost of the value of identity and belonging in our definitions of wellbeing in Western cultures, started with conversations with Lucy and has stayed with me and come up in lots of conversations since...it's now in my consciousness and informs other conversations.
	Jane Sillis	I found it very valuable finding out about being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and what impact that had on their career progression...the insight I gained was that it's very challenging representing a cultural group within an organisation that isn't particularly set up to do that. It can feel very alienating.
	Devinda De Silva	On a personal level, I've learnt so much about the history of Indigenous communities...I also learnt that there is so much in common with what we're trying to do. And not just diversity but as creatives...A lot of the conversations were around race, identity and culture and I learnt a great deal. Jacob [Boehme] just trumped any assumptions we may have.
	John McGrath	The prospect of hosting Indigenous leaders from Australia was interesting to us – we were confident it would bring learning to us as organisation. It was particularly insightful and provided rich dialogue for us because of being based in Wales. Because of language and cultural issues in Wales in relation to English culture, that was a point of access for a lot of the visitors. Although it's different cultures, different stories etc., being somewhere like Wales, which is on an uneven tilt relating to the mainstream culture, allows for a conversational space. Some of the ways in which those cultures address each other can be really inspiring.
ONGOING CONNECTIONS	Mark Sealy	I'm going to work with Glenn because he's an interesting man, so there are some outcomes of mentoring people that are fantastic. We're going to continue talking and publish a kind of newspaper for him that is aimed at being a sort of manifesto – 'What does it mean to have a contemporary conversation around Aboriginal voices'. Hopefully it will circulate as much around his network there, as ours here.
	David Crump	Future conversations or collaborations would interest us. As an incubator, we work with people over an extended period, so our style of working is about long-term continuity.
	John McGrath	Getting a sense of what the situation is like in Australia, it made me feel more confident about working with Australian companies in general. I had a better understanding of what the social, cultural and political situation is...Spending time with Kyle, Jane and Jacob gave me a context within which to work with Australia and I would turn to them for advice.



In 2017, both Kimberley Moulton (pictured) and Clotilde Bullen will present at the Venice Biennale.
Image: Casamento Photography.

4.6 Wider International Engagement

Many alumni have already gone on to create incredible international works following their UK experience, including: Kyle Morrison's presentation of Sonnets in Noongar language at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre; Kevin O'Brien's work at the Venice International Architecture Exhibition; and both Michael Cook and Alick Tipoti presenting work at the British Museum in 2015. In 2017, both Kimberley Moulton and Clotilde Bullen will present at the Venice Biennale. The generation of such work tangibly demonstrates that ACCELERATE alumni are international leaders, as noted in the ACCELERATE Alumni International Collaboration Fund Strategy.

The majority of ACCELERATE participants were mid-career cultural leaders as they entered the programme. Some had already established profiles and networks on both a national and international arena, so it would be invidious to infer that all international successes related to participation on the programme. Nevertheless, even with established artists, the impact of ACCELERATE on their creative work, on their connections into international networks, and on their perspectives of leadership is tangible and identifiable.

Michael Cook, as an example, focused on the arts after a career in commercial photography. On entering the programme in 2013, he had already built momentum with successful shows since his first show in 2010 and his work has toured to Holland, Singapore, Geneva and Hong Kong. For Michael, ACCELERATE remains an underlying influence rather than a catalyst. His UK visit:

- stimulated new work about disconnection between mother and child, which resonated with international audiences and stimulated conversations beyond Indigenous themes to universal human themes
- underscored the actions to expose his work to a broader audience
- affirmed how he could embrace leadership using his work as a positive role model for Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences alike.

For Kevin O'Brien, the impact was more immediate and direct. His confidence to independently place his work in the Venice Architectural Biennale was a direct outcome of ACCELERATE. *'A hundred percent gets absolutely tied to the British Council ACCELERATE programme. It squarely came out of the leadership sessions with Mark (Wright) and Ruth (Cook). In her last session Ruth sprung it all on us – 'Imagine what it is that you want to do?' That's when I realised about the Biennale and thought, let's go and do it!'*

'ACCELERATE is one of these things that sits in the foundations and drip feeds to you when you're ready to accept it... it creeps up from underneath, it's like a subconscious thing.'

2013 PARTICIPANT

Strategic Investments: International Connections and Thought Leadership

Acknowledging the potential for increased international profile and impact, the British Council prioritised international working in its range of offers for the enhanced accelerate programme 2015–2017, supported by the Australia Council for the Arts. Two key interventions responded to this agenda.

1. Alumni – Artistic practice and international collaboration: ACCELERATE Alumni International Collaboration Fund

Seed investment for alumni to generate UK/Australian artistic collaborations, for example, residences or collaborative projects delivered either in the UK or Australia, or small scale touring in the UK. In each round, \$15,000 to be granted, with funds matched by an outside source.

CRITICAL THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

‘Our year discussed what we could do to show leadership in action and came up with the idea to hold an event. Each year it became part of the intensive – trying to work out what we could offer as a three-day experience, which would mix everything. We didn’t want it to be another talkfest. We set up a program that could show the initiations of international collaborations, physically. It was very challenging and intensive, but rewarding for those who took part.’
Marilyn Miller, 2011 alumni

‘The value of connecting in a space that was viewed as culturally safe allowed a level of dialogue, expression, interrogation and exploration most participants had not previously experienced. Through these connections, a new model for opportunities, such as international collaborations and greater critical discourse about creative leadership frameworks.’
Peter White, 2009 alumni – Yirama Yangga-na Evaluation

2. Alumni – Critical thought leadership: Yirama Yangga-na (2016) and Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin (2017)

Curated and moderated by ACCELERATE alumni to host presentations, provocations and discussions with selected national and international guest speakers joining the ACCELERATE alumni.

The aim is to:

- engage a wider audience in the complexity and richness of Indigenous culture in a contemporary setting
- empower the ACCELERATE alumni to be thought leaders and to build their profiles nationally and internationally
- provide a platform for international discussion around Indigenous leadership in the arts and creative industries
- present a diverse range of Indigenous speakers and artists from around the world, utilising the British Council’s networks.

Supporting the wider empowerment of ACCELERATE alumni as thought leaders relates directly to the core ambition for the programme articulated in the Terms of Reference in 2009: *Equipping future Indigenous creative leaders with the confidence, high-level social entrepreneurship skills and international networks to drive the representation of their own culture internationally and locally.*

In order to underscore the sense of agency and real empowerment, these international dialogues are underpinned with the core value of mutuality. Further, acknowledging this critical opportunity to demonstrate their leadership in an international context, the events privilege Indigenous voices, ensuring that it is the ACCELERATE alumni who determine the form and function of the proceedings by setting the agenda, determining the content and animating the process to achieve shared outcomes. In this way, the ACCELERATE voices are asserted and affirmed, with British Council and Australia Council partners supporting through collaboration and without control. Nevertheless, the British Council international network was very involved with the summits, coordinating and accompanying national delegations to the events.

Yirama Yangga-na, 2016

The inaugural international ACCELERATE event Yirama Yangga-na (Spirit Singing) was held in Wollongong in April 2016. The programme was developed and delivered by a steering committee, comprising Alison Murphy-Oates and Erica McCalman from the British Council, with alumni Peter White, Ron Bradfield Junior, Barbara Bynder, Jane Harrison, Marilyn Miller and Jacob Boehme. 2011 alumni Marilyn Miller and Kyle Morrison responded to the call for Expressions of Interest and were selected to co-direct the event.

With the core aim to develop long-lasting connections and evolving conversations within the international First Nations arts scene, the 24-strong Yirama Yangga-na gathering brought together the ACCELERATE Alumni with 16 First Nation creative leaders from Canada, Taiwan, Pacifica and New Zealand for three days of dialogue, creative exploration and networking.

A first of its kind, ACCELERATE alumni saw Yirama Yangga-na as part of the process of strengthening connections and conversations. Its impact was to affirm the value and potential for self-determined leadership, creative development and international connections. It lit the fuse for international collaboration and demonstrated a notable example of Indigenous leadership that inspired both alumni and the international delegates. In addition, it sparked great curiosity into the model and practice of leadership that had facilitated such valuable leadership practices as demonstrated by the alumni.

‘International participants sought to gain an understanding of the ACCELERATE program and how it can be applied to their own countries.’
Yirama Yangga-na Evaluation 2016

MARRAM-NGANJINU BIIK-GURRIN

Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin provided a culturally safe space to collaborate, interrogate, debate and strategise over a three-day cultural summit and a five-day creation lab.

Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin First Nations Cultural Summit, 2017

For 2017, Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin First Nations Cultural Summit (May 2017) provided the outlet for thought leadership, discussion and debate, as part of the wider YIRRAMBOI Arts Festival in Melbourne.

'Cultural leaders from First Nations across the world meet to set a path for new work, new ways of working in Melbourne this May.' (Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin – We are Country)

Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin provided a culturally safe space to collaborate, interrogate, debate and strategise over a three-day cultural summit and a five-day creation lab. Together, the two leadership events formed an innovative, responsive and powerful outlet to conjure with the challenges facing First Nations cultural leaders.

The Creative Producers of Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin, ACCELERATE alumni Peter White (2009) and Jacob Boehme (2014), worked collaboratively with the British Council team to shape the agenda for the events which received additional support from the Australia Council for the Arts in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, City of Melbourne and Create NSW. The British Council drew on its extensive network of connections into First Nations communities to ensure the widest possible dissemination, and offered bursary support to facilitate engagement for key participants.

Australian leaders and artists were joined by 26 international artist peers from Brazil, Canada, Fiji, Guam, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Scotland, Solomon Islands, Taiwan, Tonga, USA and Wales to explore the cultural issues facing First Nations creative communities. Featuring keynotes from cultural leaders from across the world and cultural provocations from leading First Nations artists, summit delegates worked together with passion, commitment and a genuine spirit of shared endeavour to envision proactive cultural investments that nurture and support cultural growth and sustainability.

'We need to create more spaces like this, multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary and international spaces to collaborate and weave together new cultural practice.'

JILDA ANDREWS

'This opportunity to learn, to share and to create new work – work that springs from different cultures working together has been extraordinary and affirming.'

2015 PARTICIPANT

'This global alliance is what will guide the agenda for now and the future.'

STAKEHOLDER,
MARRAM-NGANJINU BIIK-GURRIN

5. CRITICAL LEARNING POINTS

'The program builds understanding and trust between Australia and the UK. We have a very horrible history and, through these creative projects and learning opportunities and opportunities for development, it helps mend those relationships and right their wrongs in a way. We are building trust and understanding.'

2015 PARTICIPANT

Whether considering participant experiences or impacts on leadership, communities and sectors, it is clear that ACCELERATE has been a notable success and the positive impacts of the programme far outweigh the smaller range of issues that point to difficulties in the rationale, process, or delivery of the programme. It is inevitable that, with seven iterations of the programme over eight years, there will be lessons to be learnt. These are grouped under four key themes:

1. Anchoring the Programme within the British Council
2. Essential Partnerships
3. Essential Programme Pivots
4. Building on Success.

5.1 Anchoring the Programme within the British Council

Acknowledging the Past

Over the eight years of its existence, ACCELERATE has become the signature leadership programme of the British Council in Australia. With an overt priority to respond to the lack of representation of Indigenous Australians in positions of influence within the creative sector and mainstream media, ACCELERATE enters the complex and challenging arena of colonial context, interventions and consequences. This complexity is

not lost on either the British Council or the alumni, and both gave respectful consideration to whether the British Council had acted judiciously, sensitively and appropriately in commissioning the programme.

'That is a tough and delicate question considering the history. We must be careful not to be regarded as "neo-colonial", patronising or interfering.' British Council Contributor

'Honestly, I just didn't get it! Was this colonialism all over again? It seemed wrong. I was very suspicious. It may seem ungrateful (which I truly am not), but – are they the right ones to lead this programme?' 2014 Participant

'There are undoubtedly philosophical questions about the British Council's authority to lead this programme.' Stakeholder

'I've been impressed with BC and the work that they're doing and, if it is for education and mutual understanding and to right injustices of the past, then I'm all for that.' Stakeholder

In the final analysis, the balance of opinion is that the British Council has demonstrated considerable leadership and integrity in not simply delivering a standard leadership training programme, but in the sensitive, respectful and conscientious way in which ACCELERATE has been conceived, delivered and augmented (see Section 5.3). This, in the end, has pervaded the reflections of all who have experienced or encountered ACCELERATE.

Access to UK Networks

The significant value of the British Council's access to UK cultural resources is highly regarded by all parties. The British Council, as a key international organisation, has drawn upon its standing and access to key UK cultural organisations to facilitate the development and evolution of ACCELERATE over time. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that this element of the programme was delivered not by the British Council core team, or even by staff within the UK, but by the UK Coordinator who leveraged her own substantial professional networks to access cultural organisations.

Beyond simple knowledge transfer, it is important for the British Council to consider the issue of relationship building. Who holds the relationship with UK institutions? And how readily might these be accessed for future engagement? Several host organisations would welcome a closer relationship with the programme (see Section 5.4). What scope is there for reciprocity? Is there capacity within the British Council teams to consolidate and nurture partnerships/relationships for the medium to long term?

'It has done an amazing job. It has been critical to where things are going, that high value of the brand of the British Council, and what that brings to the table.'

PETER WHITE, 2009 ALUMNI



UK Consultant, Nicola Turner, with ACCELERATE participants. Image: Anna Kucera, Blue Murder Studios.

The Profile of ACCELERATE within the British Council

Despite its standing and longevity within the British Council portfolio, opinions vary regarding the level of awareness of ACCELERATE across the British Council and within the Spring Gardens Head Office.

Those who have regularly contributed to the programme acknowledge its value, particularly in addressing some of the complexities of diversity and First Nations' agenda: *'ACCELERATE is thoughtful and intelligent. It is genuinely pursuing diversity and investing in that diversity. It is consistent with British Council values. It is one of those programmes you feel good about – something that really does make a difference.'* Stakeholder

'The dialogue has been stimulating, exhilarating and dynamic.'

Fiona Bartels-Ellis, Director of Diversity, British Council

Notwithstanding the above, and the annual visit to British Council Head Office at Spring Gardens, it is notable that this beacon cultural leadership programme does not appear to be championed by (or demonstrate significant traction with) the arts, creative industries or cultural skills teams. The recently launched British Council Global Arts Strategy prioritises capacity building: *'strengthening the arts sector worldwide by developing its capacity to innovate, to reach new audiences, to develop skills and support livelihoods'*,

as well as strengthening cultural connections between the UK and the world: *'The world will look to the UK for the development of policy and practice regarding the place of culture in inclusion, representing marginalised voices and access to the arts'*.

Undoubtedly, ACCELERATE is not alone in perhaps slipping through knowledge transfer systems within a huge bureaucracy such as the British Council. With Australia not currently highlighted as a priority location, despite its unquestionable contribution to cultural relations and the British Council Corporate Plan priority for Influence and Attraction, the profile and endorsement of the UK teams is less than might be expected for a flagship programme that has contributed to the promotion and profiling of British values for over eight years.

'ACCELERATE has become the flagship programme by which people understand our (British Council) values – it now has brand recognition.'

HELEN O'NEIL, BRITISH COUNCIL

5.2 Essential Partnerships

The Australia Council for the Arts

The desire to secure and deliver ACCELERATE in partnership with the Australia Council was evidenced at the onset of the programme. Funding was critical to the delivery, but so too was the endorsement and support of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts teams in creating and communicating the integrity of the engagement with Indigenous artists and arts practice. For many questioning the rationale of the British Council intervention, the approval and endorsement of the Australia Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership provided reputational endorsement and the confidence to engage.

Over time, the Australia Council has made a significant investment in ACCELERATE (see Section 3.5) and supported the delivery of the programme, bringing its experience and expertise to inform: the marketing and dissemination of the programme across key Australian networks; eligibility and selection criteria; and the assessment process, promoting and ensuring equity; access; and due diligence and accountability. In addition, the knowledge and experience of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander team proved valuable in responding to issues of cultural sensitivity and cultural safety where challenging circumstances pertained.



Australian Government

Australia
Council
for the Arts 

While being a major partner investor, and providing essential support to the mechanics of the delivery and the relationship with the British Council, the vital role of the Australia Council has not always been highlighted; a range of alumni and other stakeholders were unaware of the key contributions of the Australia Council until the advent of their own active engagement with the programme.

The Australia Council role has been instrumental, across all aspects of participant engagement.

The 2015–2017 increased investment in ACCELERATE significantly supports alumni activities, including embedding core skills, thought leadership and international engagement.

The significant reduction in funding to the Council in 2015 led to a strategic review and inevitable rationalisation of its leadership programmes. Nevertheless, the Council's aspirations to foster innovation and sustainability align directly with the ambitions for ACCELERATE. See: www.australiacouncil.gov.au/strategies-and-frameworks/leadership-program/

A higher profiling of the Australia Council role in delivering ACCELERATE would work to the benefit of all.

State Agencies and Territories

Securing investment from the States has been critical to the longevity of ACCELERATE. Continued investment from State partners over successive years of the programme has enabled the building of strong State-based networks, and strong promotional and dissemination networks.

As noted by a stakeholder: *'Increasingly, the gravitas of successful engagement with ACCELERATE has contributed to strengthening the sense of purpose amongst local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative communities, offering tangible collegial support.'*

ACCELERATE validates their contributions as leaders within their communities and, in turn, their endorsement of the programme brings local ownership and engagement. These partnerships build chains of trust and enable quality relationships to connect the local and the international in arts and cultural practice.

'Australia Council seems the 'silent partner' – it has been more funding than support, I think.'

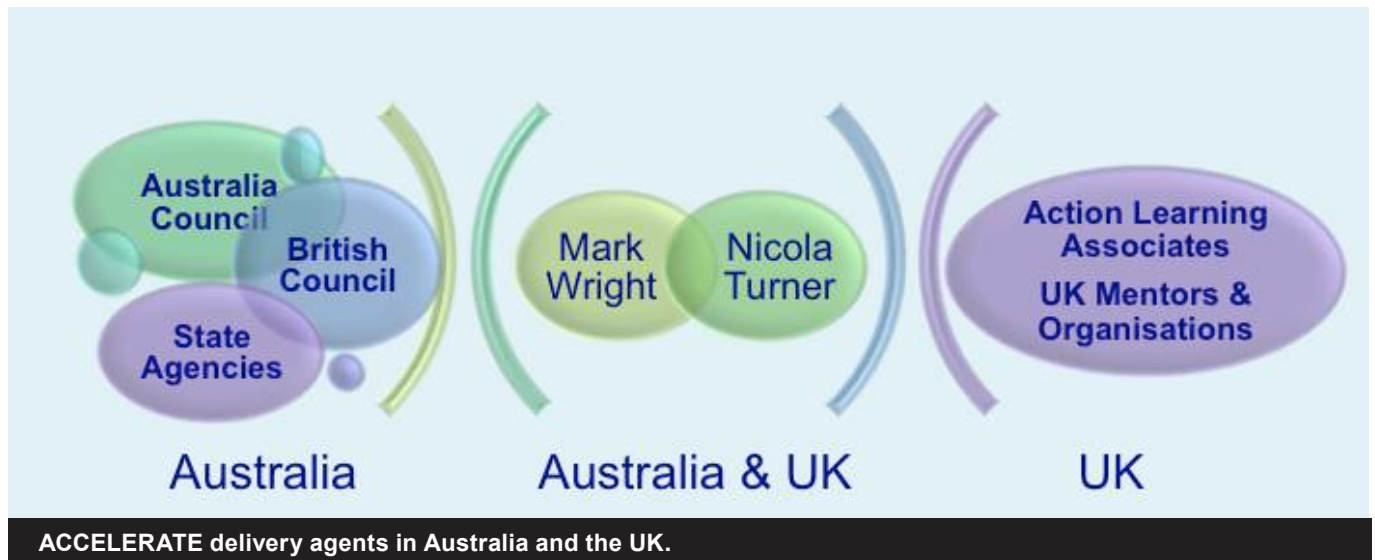
STAKEHOLDER

'We could not have got ACCELERATE to scale without the Australia Council.'

KIRSTEN FREEMAN,
BRITISH COUNCIL

'The Australia Council has been crucial for its expertise. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board funded the programme and, without their years of expertise and networks, ACCELERATE would really have struggled. They have developed the right language to articulate what is important from a First Nations perspective and provided huge support to the British Council itself.'

ERICA MCCALMAN,
BRITISH COUNCIL



5.3 Essential Programme Pivots

The success of ACCELERATE is undoubtedly due to a number of factors. Highlighted by the majority of contributors has been the commitment and sensitive engagement of the key personnel involved in delivering the programme.

The Leadership Intensives were identified by 41% of interviewed participants and stakeholders as one of their top three programme highlights. A further 26% identified the coordination and pastoral care provided by Nicola Turner and the visits to UK organisations as priority highlights. Reviewing the qualitative feedback, the following elements of the programme are acknowledged as underscoring its distinctiveness:

- the commitment of the British Council's team in Australia
- bespoke UK connections and pastoral care
- the Leadership Intensives
- cultural sensitivity and cultural care.

The Commitment of the British Council in Australia

The care and diligence of the British Council staff in Australia has earned the trust and respect of ACCELERATE Alumni. The teams included:

- Rebecca Matthews, Country Director in 2009, initiated the programme
- Kirsten Freeman, Deputy Director, led the British Council engagement from inception to 2015
- Nick Marchand, as Country Director from 2010 to 2014, provided a key advocacy role, which has been continued
- Helen O'Neil, Country Director from 2014
- Programme Managers, Alex Doyle, Alisa Duff, Tahli Corin, Alison Murphy-Oates and Erica McCalman, have each brought priority skills and perspectives to the programme, with the added lived experience of Indigenous culture contributed by Alisa, Alison and Erica.

British Council staff members, led by the personal example of Deputy Director, Kirsten Freeman, are acknowledged to have gone significantly beyond the call of duty to ensure participants achieved positive experiences. This resulted in open communication and a heightened sense of trust.

The duty of care demonstrated with sensitivity, selflessness and generosity, provided genuine empathy as a core underpinning of ACCELERATE. The strong relationships established with the British Council is significantly to the credit of those concerned as, for the majority of participants, there was either low awareness or scepticism of the institution prior to their engagement with ACCELERATE.

'The British Council did an amazing job creating the right environment to succeed. For those that were already leaders, ACCELERATE provided the critical tipping point.'

MELODIE GIBSON,
AUSTRALIA COUNCIL
FOR THE ARTS

'There were very emotionally intelligent people running this programme, in the UK leg in particular. That was hugely critical to its success.'

ERICA MCCALMAN,
PROJECT MANAGER,
BRITISH COUNCIL



UK Trainer Mark Wright, Alumni Adviser Ron Bradfield Jnr and UK Consultant Nicola Turner.
Image: Anna Kucera, Blue Murder Studios.

Bespoke UK Connections and Pastoral Care

From the UK side, it is no overstatement to acknowledge that the insightful, thoughtful and bespoke connections into the UK cultural sector made by Nicola Turner, UK Consultant (<http://ntcreativearts.com>), have been fundamental to the success of ACCELERATE. This is evidenced by the interviews with alumni, stakeholders, and UK mentors and organisations, who all make reference to Nicola's remarkable and quality inputs since 2011.

Nicola brought to ACCELERATE the specific experience of organising leadership programmes, work-based learning and industry placements, developed in her two prior roles as Assistant Director, Cultural Leadership Programme, where she led on the strategic development of the work-based learning strand of CLP and development priorities: Artist Practitioner Leadership Development and International Leadership; and at NESTA, where she delivered the Fellowship Programme and developed a series of Cultural Leadership Fellows. This critical experience had underlined to Nicola the essential tenets of successful industry-based leadership learning and the critical added value of responding in as focused and discrete a manner as possible to an individual participant's needs and ambitions.

Each participant was given a discrete itinerary, tailored specifically to their sector expertise and creative aspirations. (Apart from in 2011, when two participants shared the same programme. Following feedback, this was not repeated in future years.) While some alumni were open and unspecific about how best to develop an itinerary for the UK visit, others were focused and discerning, seeking to achieve targeted connections. The quantum of knowledge, networks and goodwill required to reach into institutions large and small in order to secure meetings for the alumni is admirable.

Beyond the scheduling of itineraries, Nicola Turner invested thoughtfulness and compassion in managing the UK visits, coordinating everything to fit with train and flight schedules, accommodation, social networking, logistics and general pastoral care. With several alumni each year travelling out of Australia for the first time, the levels of pastoral care were often significantly high.

'Nicola went above and beyond what she needed to do. She was just amazing.'
2015 PARTICIPANT

'I feel that the program has been amazing. But specifically my itinerary – which took into consideration all the things I was interested in investigating. I wasn't specific – and as it unfolded, I made contacts, networks and developed relationships with people in the UK in all the places I visited.'
2014 PARTICIPANT

'Far exceeded (expectations). She filled in the gaps – I thought I had no interest in some of those things, but she seemed to have hooked me up with these inspiring, amazing people.'
2012 PARTICIPANT

'Working on ACCELERATE has been the job of my life. To listen and be part of the participants' compelling stories and to learn about their embodied culture and country has been such an extraordinary privilege. I cannot wait to see how they shape their creative futures.'
Nicola Turner, UK Consultant, 2011–2016



2016 ACCELERATE participants. The Leadership Intensives marked the start of the programme each year.
Image: Mark Gambino.

The Leadership Intensives

Nicola Turner secured the contribution of UK leadership trainer and facilitator, Mark Wright (<http://people-create.co.uk/who-are-we/>), who has designed and delivered all the Leadership Intensives since 2011. Mark has a background in international leadership design and delivery, and had successfully delivered one-day and extended programmes as part of the UK Cultural Leadership Programme.

The personal commitment, engagement and deep level of care demonstrated within the Leadership Intensive is a testament to Mark's skill, expertise and highly tuned emotional intelligence. With the Leadership Intensives marking the start of the programmes each year, this intervention is when the participants are perhaps most vulnerable – when they gather for the first time in an unknown space and in the company of an unknown facilitator from the UK. The mixture of anxiety, trepidation and uncertainty can well be imagined.

Through a mixture of personal stories, core leadership models, bespoke leadership scenarios ('The Hero's Journey' is consistently referenced by alumni) and peer-to-peer dialogue, the Intensives encouraged team bonding and enabled a sense of community to develop in a relatively short period of time. The inclusion of previous alumni brought context and lived experiences as an additional form of experiential learning into the mix. A sample Intensive Itinerary is attached at Appendix 6.

'God, he's the duck's nuts isn't he? I've done a lot of these things over the years (and) I've always been a bit bored and not really engaged. Mark is the first one that has properly had me truly engaged...I can't speak more highly of him.' 2015 Participant

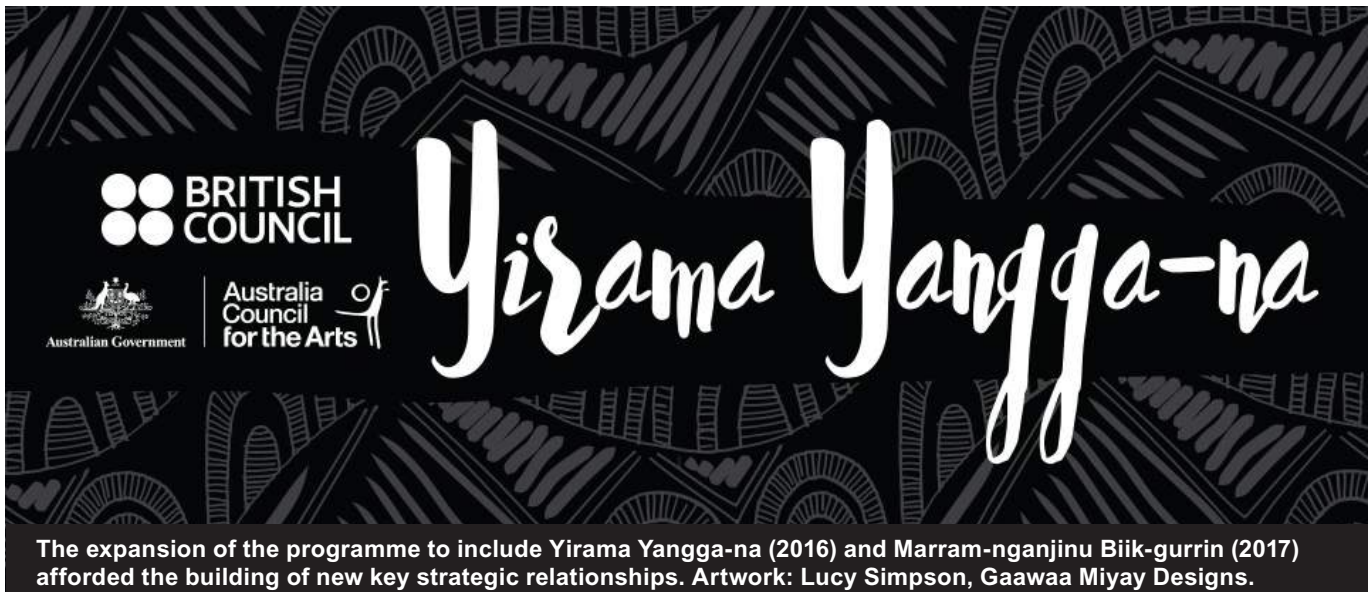
'This weekend was life changing – not only did it help unveil the next part of my professional (career) but it also gave me the tools and mindset to pursue it.' 2012 Participant

'Mark is an amazing man! Professional, knowledgeable, insightful, passionate, inspirational and thorough. Mark's style helped to equip us with many tools to observe, learn and lead, while providing us with enough to challenge ourselves, understand our strengths and identify our weaknesses. He delivered the program with a level of sensitivity that enabled an immediate openness within the group which I felt brought about the best results. We covered so much, but at no time over the weekend did it feel rushed or contrived.' 2014 Participant

Cultural Sensitivity and Cultural Care

Throughout the advent of ACCELERATE, the British Council and other stakeholders have gained significant insights into some of the cultural principles and customs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. This learning has been much valued and increased the respect for the challenges and contexts in which participants enter into, and journey through, the programme. On a few occasions, ACCELERATE participants have felt challenged by their experiences on the programme – for example, visits to Pitt Rivers Museum (which can be a confronting experience as many Aboriginal cultural artefacts are held there, as noted in the 2013 Evaluation Report); through the contrasting perceptions of leadership and how it is earned/assigned; or in the misunderstandings about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within the UK, leading to inaccurate comparisons with UK challenges regarding cultural diversity.

'ACCELERATE has become the most fulfilling thing I've ever done. It is a real privilege to be part of it – the boldness of the idea is tremendous. There are not many other organisations that would be able to use its leverage in this way. The qualities of the group each year have been astonishing. The strength has been in the approach to listening rather than telling participants what to do. ACCELERATE gives them a place and an opportunity to explore leadership and their place within it.'
Mark Wright, UK Leadership Trainer



Within a programme that explores personal and professional leadership journeys, the issues of cultural sensitivity and cultural care cannot be overlooked and, with broadening awareness, more evidence of this has been built into the programme, often with the guidance of past alumni.

These included:

- making adjustments to the application form and process to better demonstrate cultural understanding and appropriately frame the approach to reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (see Appendix 8)
- affirming and acknowledging the Indigenous understanding of leadership, rather than simply proffering the Western construct
- alumni contributing to the first Leadership Intensive to both share their experiences and support new participants to understand and anticipate the opportunities and challenges ahead
- adjusting the provision of Action Learning, which had had mixed responses from participants
- detailed logistical and pastoral support for participants travelling out of Australia for the first time
- contextual briefing for UK mentors and hosts to better understand some of the underlying issues from the perspective of the participants

- bringing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander skills and expertise directly into the management of the programme at the British Council.

'I would, and did, change the preparation for the candidates before they go, so they are better prepared emotionally and mentally for the trip, and for the cultural shock.'
Ron Bradfield Junior

'What was really great was having Ron (Bradfield Jnr) there...at the intensive in Sydney. It was important for me and I know it was the same for others. He understood what people who aren't black fellas can't understand.'
2012 Participant

5.4 Building on Success

Investing for the Long Term

The significant increase in programme funding for 2015–2017 has proved to be a mixed blessing (see Appendix 7). As noted in the ACCELERATE 2014 Evaluation Report, the increased funding was targeted at: *'expanding the circles of influence through these individual alumni to their organisations, sectors, States and onto a national and international scale. This expansion of the ACCELERATE programme will raise the profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and leaders, provide them with a platform to influence national conversation, and support opportunities for ongoing international collaboration'*.

Two key developments impacted the increased resources and ambitions:

1. a change of government in Australia led to an 'overnight' reduction in funds to the Australia Council for the Arts, resulting in the requirement to immediately reprioritise its allocation to programmes
2. while there had been clear evidence of, and demand for, increased investment in alumni-focused activities, there has been less take-up of the extended activities than anticipated, significantly due to the career pressures on this highly sought after group of professionals. In many respects, ACCELERATE is a victim of its own success.

Nevertheless, this strategic expansion of activities and investments around alumni-based activities will, over time, support the embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practice within Australia. The expansion of the programme to include Yirama Yangga-na (2016) and Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin (2017) afforded the building of key strategic relationships with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which also resulted in financial support (\$60,000 over the two gatherings) and City of Melbourne (value of \$35,000 in-kind support to Marram). Such examples evidence the potential of securing other investors to underpin the sustainability of the programme going forward.



**ACCELERATE alumna Angela Flynn speaking at the Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin Cultural Summit.
Image: Mark Gambino.**

One of the challenges faced by programme organisers has been to appreciate and accommodate the fact that not all interventions and investments will gain immediate traction, and that a more elongated roll-out of the range of activities might, with hindsight, have proved more effective. The resources made available for such a range of activities might well require a longer dissemination and incubation period before they are expended. In such instance, a slower take-up of resources is neither a 'wrong' intervention nor a reflection of a lack of desire to engage. Rather, it may point to the need to take account of cultural context, trust, engagement and confidence, as well as the imperative to deliver against set funding cycles.

ACCELERATE has demonstrated significant cultural sensitivity and support for participants during the programme, and it remains important to ensure that the range of alumni opportunities underscores the principles of this approach, offering both structured and self-determined access to resources, to meet the needs of the eclectic group of alumni. ACCELERATE has marshalled strategic leadership investment for the long term. It is imperative to match that long-term ambition with long-term financial planning.

Reflections from the UK Networks

A number of UK mentors and organisations have developed a long-standing engagement with ACCELERATE. The Indigenous Australians they have met, befriended, mentored and supported have left a lasting positive impact, and many feel invested in its outcomes. They proffer two focal points to contribute to the learning from the programme:

1. Strengthen connections into the wider Australian cultural networks

- *The pencil needs to be sharpened locally. Secure curatorial advice structures, opportunities, networks with academics etc. to build a voice, build agency. Local cultural networks need to hear that voice in a more profound way.*
- *What's really important is being part of a bigger network and community – that's where the work comes from...Any programme like ACCELERATE, focusing on diversity, needs to make people part of that wider network.*
- *Mentorship from non-Indigenous arts leaders in Australia would be valuable – knowing that someone who has influence within the system has got your back.*
- *There need to be schemes to get your foot in the door, but once you're there, provisions need to be made to encourage and allow people from diverse backgrounds to get onto other schemes and integrate.*

2. Build deeper engagement with UK host organisations

- *What scope is there to meet the others in the cohort? And for greater involvement in the wider programme? To connect in to other mentors and organisations?*
- *We have received information on Indigenous communities in Australia but how can we now catalyse this?*
- *To see the bigger context would be interesting.*

'The networks created through ACCELERATE are really valuable. We should be seen as a resource. We can build genuinely creative partnerships, if we can maintain those connections.'

ANGELA FLYNN, 2015 ALUMNI

'I did enjoy meeting with the various people and I would hope that ACCELERATE will continue. It can't be underestimated, the importance of this work, the goodwill from the British Council and the people involved in it, it's extremely valuable.'

BOhE

EXTENDING THE ACCELERATE MODEL LOCALLY

Maaguuk is about connecting the independent artist sector to each other and allies in the wider arts industry, assisting members to identify what resources they do have as a collective, and empowering them through skills development and training to self-direct, manage and grow the independent and small-medium Indigenous arts sector.

Extending the ACCELERATE Model – Going Local

In Victoria, Jacob Boehme and the Victoria Alumni have sought to build on the core programme elements to create an ACCELERATE-style leadership opportunity 'Maaguuk' (Unite), with a focus on building capacity for Indigenous leadership and networks between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations within the Victorian arts sector.

This partnership connects the British Council, Australia Council for the Arts and Creative Victoria in a pioneering and strategic innovation to secure the human infrastructure for cultural change and cultural longevity. For it is investment in the creative leadership, skills and entrepreneurship of the next cohort of cultural leaders that will provide opportunity and sustainability in the support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture for the future.

Maaguuk is about connecting the independent artist sector to each other and allies in the wider arts industry, assisting members to identify what resources they do have as a collective, and empowering them through skills development and training to self-direct, manage and grow the independent and small-medium Indigenous arts sector.

The inaugural Maaguuk programme took place as part of YIRRAMBOL in May 2017.

Four cultural practitioners from Victoria worked with ACCELERATE consultant, Mark Wright, to explore issues of leadership, purpose, models and approaches – creating opportunities for reflection, and supporting them to create and articulate compelling narratives that describe their leadership ambitions. Participants reflected that the two-day workshop was a rare and valuable opportunity to hone the tools and techniques of leadership; to marshal their energies for current and future challenges.

Maaguuk offers a dynamic approach to extending the ACCELERATE model into regional Indigenous communities. It requires the investment of State agencies and, with significant prospects for direct and tangible impacts on local cultural practice, also has the potential to attract philanthropic and corporate sponsorship, if the right approaches can be made.

In other States, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders face the challenge of creating new models that bring entrepreneurship into the developmental mix; exploring social enterprise and hybrid routes to financing that will, in the longer term, underscore a more self-reliant approach to creating infrastructure for growth. Seed funding, information, advice and guidance, as well as connections into like-minded networks are key to moving these initiatives from ideas into strong propositions.

Both Maaguuk and the assistance with the development of social enterprises create important roles for the British Council and Australia Council for the Arts in supporting the transference of knowledge of ACCELERATE into other bastions of cultural infrastructure.

'We need to be working in different ways, creating sustainable business models so that our next generations have better options to embrace the fullness of their culture.'

RITA PRYCE, 2012 ALUMNI



Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin Creation Lab, 2016. Image: Mark Gambino.

Extending the ACCELERATE Model – Going Global

There is undoubtedly potential for the ACCELERATE model to be shared with other First Nations communities internationally. At its core is a strategic investment in leadership excellence, delivered in partnership with local agencies and communities. The context is ripe for such strategic interventions.

Governments and cultural institutions in countries across the world are increasingly interested in properly recognising the value of First Nations knowledge and the place and contribution of First Nations culture to national life. But who sets the policies, who are the gatekeepers to audiences and how do First Nations artists develop their own ways of making and presenting their work in the 21st century?

MARRAM-NGANJINU BIIK-GURRIN
CULTURAL SUMMIT

It would be singularly questionable, however, to ignore the tangible leadership learning from the eight years of ACCELERATE and simply 'start again' within a new context. The opportunity arises for a strategic connection across First Nation Cultures to intelligently harness the partnerships at the heart of the ACCELERATE success, so that the value in the model underpins new innovations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leaders as part of any new First Nations stakeholder leadership development group.

Through this unique gathering, we will create the foundations of a global network of First Nations cultural and creative leaders, where we celebrate our unique cultural and creative expressions, support each other in how we navigate through asserting our own cultural sovereignty, and draw strength from the knowledge of a global collective.

MARRAM-NGANJINU BIIK-GURRIN
CULTURAL SUMMIT

'ACCELERATE was first and foremost a glorious opportunity for me to learn from a range of cultural leaders in Australia from Indigenous backgrounds about their world view, their ways of making work and the challenges they face in making that work. I gained a lot from it and I hope that, through the exchange, I was able to be supportive of them and there were things that they took away from the encounters with the companies that I ran that were fruitful to them. I hope that, as with all the best exchanges, it will continue to lead, as it has done to date, to ongoing involvement and mutual inspiration.'

John McGrath, Director,
National Theatre Wales

6. CONCLUSIONS

We extend safe spaces for culture, creative exploration and exchange; building trust, enabling dialogue and presenting marginalised voices. We support the protection of cultural heritage, and the retention and expression of cultural identities.

Graham Sheffield, Director Arts British Council,
Arts Strategy to 2021

Commencing with the pilot programme in 2009, over the seven iterations and eight years to 2016, ACCELERATE has proven to be inimitably Australian innovation in leadership development. Led by the British Council, with the desire to positively extend the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leaders actively contributing to the successful cultural profile of the country, the British Council drew on its acknowledged expertise, management and networks to craft and hone a programme that is noted to have enhanced the leadership of its 35 alumni. While some impacts have been temperate and slow burn, others have been dramatic and literally, life-changing.

Leadership is fundamental to effective societal development and lasting cultural change. ACCELERATE has delivered. It has exceeded expectations and, most critically, it has delivered both micro and macro outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leaders. The significant achievements of the programme would not have been possible without the creativity, conviction and commitment of the ACCELERATE alumni who are both benefactors and contributors to its success and its future.

Individual leadership skills have been improved and artistic/creative practice enhanced.

Local networks have formed, and collective support and collaboration networks are now in evidence. Connections into the UK have been formed and strengthened, and relationships of trust, understanding and mutual respect have replaced stereotypes and cultural innocence. The masterful and sensitive leadership and pastoral care of UK Consultant, Nicola Turner, and leadership consultant, Mark Wright, stand at the centre of the programme's experiential success.

Recent interventions within ACCELERATE have targeted the strengthening of the network and the delivery of outcomes beyond the core beneficiaries. The 2nd international gathering has only just completed, hence it is early days for this phase of the programme. However, it is still clear to see that Yirama Yanggana and now Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin, devised, produced and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leaders, have made tangible the extension of the impact of ACCELERATE from the voice of the individual artist, to the echo of local and national collective opinion. That voice is now amplified to sound beyond the shores of Australia and reverberates in big and small First Nations Communities globally. ACCELERATE has connected the Indigenous cultural leader to the international cultural community.

The innovative and inspirational leadership of the British Council team in Australia has been admired by all. Its genuine appetite to learn, to serve, and to act with care, diligence and integrity, within a challenging but distinctly valuable area of leadership development, is commendable and commended. The strategic and prescient investment of financial and human resources from the Australia Council for the Arts demonstrates its firm commitment to fully embrace the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural development. Together, both organisations have created a paradigm shift in the opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leadership provision.

After eight years of delivery and in the context of significant financial challenges, a pause in the delivery of the programme has afforded the opportunity to take stock: to review and gather opinion, reflect back and look forward, based on the evidence of key outcomes. In the context of the British Council, ACCELERATE has been a significant success, delivering against past and current ambitions.



For the British Council in Australia, with strategic priorities determined by UK national exigencies, embedding activities within regional infrastructure and the priorities of local stakeholders are imperative to secure medium- to long-term impact, and harnessing the legacy of its intervention.

For ACCELERATE in Australia, that key long-term partner is evidently the Australia Council for the Arts, whose strategic plan (A Culturally Ambitious Nation – Strategic Plan 2014–2019): *‘articulates our leadership role in building a vibrant arts ecology by fostering excellence and increasing national and international engagement with Australian art and artists’.*

Strong advocacy, active sponsorship and stakeholder engagement are essential to garner partnership commitment and galvanise priority investments that build on this proven success. For the outcomes are both dramatic and distinctive; they attest to the strength of the programme and drive the imperative to move strategically and courageously forward – harnessing the legacy of ACCELERATE and securing creative leadership and ‘agency’ for future generations of First Nation Australians.

‘It’s not simply about redressing the balance – it’s also about shaping the future.’

HELEN O’NEIL, DIRECTOR,
BRITISH COUNCIL IN AUSTRALIA

ACCELERATE has proven to be inimitably Australian innovation in leadership development. Led by the British Council, with the desire to positively extend the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leaders actively contributing to the successful cultural profile of the country, the British Council drew on its acknowledged expertise, management and networks to craft and hone a programme that is noted to have enhanced the leadership of its 35 alumni.

Individual leadership skills have been improved and artistic/creative practice enhanced. Local networks have formed, and collective support and collaboration networks are now in evidence. Connections into the UK have been formed and strengthened, and relationships of trust, understanding and mutual respect have replaced stereotypes and cultural innocence.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

This impact evaluation study makes the following findings and recommendations, divided into two areas: optimising the outcomes within Australia; and in connecting First Nations internationally.

Optimising Hard-won Outcomes within Australia

THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN AUSTRALIA TO:

1. Acknowledge and celebrate the value in this groundbreaking leadership programme by creating and promoting an online resource that provides access to the information, features, learning and outcomes from ACCELERATE. Sharing information about the programme will support the ongoing work of the alumni, as well as making a strategic contribution to the culture and development arena.
2. Secure an ongoing commitment from the British Council to invest in the legacy resourcing of its successful innovation, including advice, liaison, networking and active connections that acknowledge ACCELERATE alumni as a resource for the British Council now and in the future.
3. Adopt a proactive convening role in order to make the case to priority stakeholders (in particular the Australia Council for the Arts, State agencies and potential philanthropic sponsors) for the legacy of ACCELERATE to be adopted as part of core leadership development priorities going forward.
4. Ensure that the governance of legacy programmes and activities include leadership representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leaders, building on the principles that underpinned the Yirama Yangga-na and Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin Cultural Summits.

THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN AUSTRALIA AND THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS, IN PARTNERSHIP TO:

1. Acknowledge the requirement for a supported period of transition towards more autonomous engagement of the ACCELERATE alumni with the broader range of arts resources within Australia.
2. Create opportunities for closer liaison, relationship building and strategic connections that will enable the alumni to demonstrate agency and drive future initiatives to secure the ongoing leadership of Indigenous arts practice.
3. Consider the development of a challenge or matching fund to encourage State engagement with ACCELERATE legacy activities, such as the Maaguuk programme supported by Creative Victoria in 2017.
4. Build on the leadership models from ACCELERATE, the States-based activities and the essential interaction with international cultural engagement to develop a new national programme of leadership development, led by Australian Indigenous cultural leaders.
5. Support the programme alumni network directly, but also extend CPD opportunities to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in existing or potential producer, manager and facilitator roles, in order to broaden the talent pipeline for First Nations leadership development.
6. Similarly, ensure that ACCELERATE alumni have appropriate access to the wider range of practice and professional development opportunities in order to fully deliver their roles as part of the broad Australian cultural and creative sector.
7. Advocate and promote the principles for successful engagement that have informed the ACCELERATE programme outcomes, so that these methodologies may be embedded in wider cultural sector agencies and organisations in Australia.
8. Continue to facilitate strategic connections with UK cultural institutions and draw on the expertise of Nicola Turner and Mark Wright to share the prerequisites of successful delivery, supporting legacy planning strategies and opportunities for national and States-based programmes.

It is clear to see that Yirama Yangga-na and now Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin, devised, produced and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural leaders, have made tangible the extension of the impact of ACCELERATE from the voice of the individual artist, to the echo of local and national collective opinion. That voice is now amplified to sound beyond the shores of Australia, and reverberates in big and small First Nations Communities globally. ACCELERATE has connected the Indigenous cultural leader to the international cultural community.

RECOMMENDATIONS continued

Harnessing the Model – Connecting First Nations Communities Internationally

THE BRITISH COUNCIL TO:

1. Consolidate and articulate the principles and ethos of ACCELERATE to facilitate culturally sensitive programme offers for leadership development with First Nations communities internationally.
2. Build on the networks being established through Yirama Yangga-na and Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin to harness the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience and expertise, and to underscore the authenticity and integrity of purpose for future engagement with First Nations.
3. Acknowledge that such interventions require networks on the ground, hence connections must be secured both within the First Nation territories and with their national arts/cultural development agencies for such interventions to have credibility and longevity.
4. Acknowledge the essential requirement for the programme pivots highlighted in Section 5.3, and ensure that culturally sensitive leadership expertise and extensive, on-the-ground brokerage of UK networks underpin future iterations of this form of cultural leadership engagement.
5. Acknowledge the learning from ACCELERATE – that it takes time to create a lasting impact. Hence, minimum five-year programme partnerships should be established in order to embed practice.

APPENDIX 1: THE BRIEF FOR THE EVALUATION

POSITION DESCRIPTION: AUTHOR OF REPORT INTO ACCELERATE PROGRAMME IMPACT ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

Term of Appointment: Approximately 50 hours from January–May 2017. Fee: Please provide a fixed quote for the job.

OVERVIEW

The British Council and Australia Council for the Arts are commissioning an impact evaluation case study on the British Council and Australia Council for the Arts' ACCELERATE programme for Indigenous cultural leaders which was delivered from 2009 to 2016, resulting in the training and development of 35 Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander cultural leaders from across Australia. We wish to present a portrait of the Indigenous leaders who went through our programme, and how ACCELERATE has impacted their careers.

We will commission two researchers, one in Australia and one in the UK, to gather data from ACCELERATE alumni and mentor interviews, and to undertake career mapping of participants. The report author will work with those researchers initially in January to develop the methodology and research questions. Once the data is collected, the report author will draw on this, in addition to desk research, to produce a report which meets the objectives below.

Objectives

1. Communicate the impact story of our flagship Indigenous cultural leadership programme in Australia to a range of internal and external stakeholders; to include career mapping; measurable impact on ACCELERATE participants; and the wider creative and cultural sector in which the participants work in, and the Indigenous community in Australia.
2. Present the programme structure, context and critical learning points from Australia to enable colleagues to replicate the programme in other countries.
3. Present how the evaluation learning points inform the way the Australian programme might look in the future.
4. Present the network and links created with the UK and the wider international community by the ACCELERATE participants due to the position of the British Council in the international cultural sector.
5. Study the benefit to the UK organisations where ACCELERATE participants were placed, and present the evidence of increased engagement with Australia.

Expected Output

1. A written evaluation report on the programme which meets the objectives above.
2. A documentation of the ACCELERATE programme structure, learning methodology and suggested model for replication of a cultural leadership capacity building programme which can be replicated or adapted into a number of countries and contexts.
3. A library of digital assets (photograph evidence, video interview, etc.) obtained as part of the research process.
4. Written testimonials and quotes from ACCELERATE participants and the wider community, which will be used for future advocacy of the programme and organisation.

Background

In 2009, the British Council in Australia developed the ACCELERATE programme, a bespoke cultural leadership initiative for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders working in the creative and cultural industries which provides leadership development, mentoring and industry placements in Australia and the UK.

ACCELERATE came as a new generation of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islanders artists and producers was emerging and having a major impact on contemporary art practice in Australia. ACCELERATE came about in response to the lack of representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in positions of influence within the creative and cultural sector and mainstream media, and the lack of a programmes in Australia for cultural leaders to respond to these needs.

ACCELERATE drew on the UK's extensive experience in cultural leadership programmes for both artists-practitioners and arts managers-producers, at a time that the UK itself was looking at increasing diversity at senior levels of the arts and creative industries. The programme, which was adapted according to evolving needs, consists of an intensive three-day intensive workshop course in Melbourne or Sydney, followed by a three week visit to the UK for a tailor-made work placement, mentoring and exchange. The programme is led in-country with support of an Indigenous advisory group. Training and practice-based learning is provided by UK-based specialists, with experience in cultural leadership in both Action Learning and methodologies developed through the Arts Council England and Clore Leadership Programme.

ACCELERATE aims to empower its alumni with the recognition, skills and networks to drive their own careers, both internationally and at home. Between 2009 and 2016, 35 leaders have undertaken the programme with UK trainers and support in developing UK networks and meeting UK counterparts. They have also collaborated in presenting and leading a forum to interrogate and challenge ideas about Indigenous leadership in an international setting.

Drawing on the UK's strong creative sector, ACCELERATE aims to actively refresh the cultural dialogue between the UK and Australia and promotes international collaboration, skill sharing and network building. The Australia Council for the Arts and four State arts agencies have partnered with the programme and participated in selecting participants and supporting alumni.

REPORT AUTHOR RESPONSIBILITIES

In close collaboration with the British Council and UK and Australian researchers: set clear objectives and methodology for the research and evaluation; develop a project plan for the report with key deliverables against a timeline and provide regular verbal progress reports; speak to the report for media, communications and other key stakeholders where required; deliver a high quality publication that meets British Council and Australia Council research objectives; and represent British Council organisational values.

APPENDIX 2: AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Report Author:
Hilary S. Carty MBA CCMi



Hilary Carty is an experienced consultant, facilitator and executive coach specialising in leadership, management and organisational development. Focal areas include: Leadership Research and Evaluation; Cultural Policy and Strategy; Board Development; Business Planning and Development; Programme Design and Delivery; Access and Diversity Innovation; Networks for Professional Development; and Executive Coaching.

Hilary's career demonstrates a successful record of significant senior level leadership and management experience in the arts, cultural and creative industries. Her senior roles have included: Director of the Cultural Leadership Programme, a £22 million government investment in excellence in leadership within the UK cultural and creative industries; Director, London (Arts) at Arts Council England; Director, Culture & Education at London 2012, London's successful Olympic bid team where she steered the development and consolidation of ideas for London's Cultural Olympiad; and Director of Dance for Arts Council England.

Hilary holds an MBA from the University of Westminster, and a BA (Hons) in Performing Arts. With a proven ability for delivering strategic results and, in recognition of her significant contribution to the leadership of culture in the UK, Hilary has been awarded: Honorary Doctorates from De Montfort University (2001), Middlesex University (2009) and University of Westminster

(2014); Honorary Fellowship of Goldsmiths, University of London (2012); Cultural Fellow, King's College London (2015); and Visiting Research Fellow, School of Management and Business, King's College London (2017).

Her trustee / governor / committee roles include: Royal Opera House Learning and Participation Committee; De Montfort University; Creative United; Heritage Lottery Fund, London Committee; and The Horniman Museum and Gardens.

Hilary's leadership and evaluation projects include:

- Course Director, Leading Culture in the 21st Century, King's College London (April 2017)
- Independent Strategic Review of Governance in Arts and Museums in England and Wales (July 2016)
- Consultant, Museums Association, Transformers Programme, UK (2014 to present)
- Consultant, Confidence Choice Connections, Women Leaders in Museums, (2014–15)
- Scoping the Leadership Development Needs of the Cultural Sector in England, (2013).

For full details of publications and research, see:
www.co-creatives.co.uk/illuminate/

APPENDIX 3: CONSULTATIONS FOR THE EVALUATION

List of those consulted for the ACCELERATE Impact Assessment and Evaluation

ACCELERATE Alumni 2009–2016

2009
Peter White
2011
Barbara Bynder
Marilyn Miller
Kevin O'Brien
Kyle Morrison
Sharon Paten
2012
Jane Harrison
Nicole Monks
Alison Page
Rita Pryce
Lily Shearer
Gina Williams
2013
Ron Bradfield Junior
Andrea James
Michael Cook
2014
Jacob Boehme
Carly Lane
Clothilde Bullen
2015
Angela Flynn
Carly Sheppard
2016
Kamarra Bell Wykes
Travis De Vries
Francoise Lane
Jonathon Saunders
Jilda Andrews

NB – All alumni were invited to contribute to the evaluation.

UK Mentors and Host Organisations

Name	Organisation	Involvement with the Programme
David Crump	Head of Business Incubation, Cockpit Arts	Participant Meetings, 2012, 2014, 2016
Devinda De Silva	Head of Collaboration (Participation) National Theatre Wales	Host Organisation, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016
Hilary Jennings	Consultant, Happy Museum	Participant Meetings, 2012, 2014, 2016
Joon Lynn Goh	Senior Producer, In Between Time	Participant Meetings, 2015, 2016
Liz Margree	Consultant, People Create	Mentor, 2014, 2016
Beatrice Mayfield	Textile Designer	Mentor, 2016
John McGrath	National Theatre Wales / Manchester International Festival	Host Organisation and Mentor, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014
Brian Ó hEadhra,	Gaelic Arts & Culture Officer, Creative Scotland	Participant Meetings, 2012, 2013, 2016
Mark Sealy	Director Autograph ABP	Mentor, 2013, 2014, 2016
Jane Sillis	Director, Engage	Participant Meetings, 2013, 2014, 2016
Rich Warren	Encounters Festival Director	Mentor, 2016

NB - Organisation listed when contributing to the Accelerate Programme

List of those consulted for the ACCELERATE Impact Assessment and Evaluation

ACCELERATE Stakeholders

Name	Organisation	Involvement with the Programme	Year/s
Dr Fiona Bartels-Ellis	Head of Equal Opportunity & Diversity, British Council	UK Speaker	2011–2016
Ruth Cook	Action Learning Associates	Facilitator: Action Learning	2011–2013
Alex Doyle	Project Manager, British Council in Australia	Project Management	2014
Kirsten Freeman	Assistant Director, British Council in Australia	Programme Lead	2009–2014
Melodie Gibson	Australia Council for the Arts	Selection & Account Management	
Adrian Greer	Chief Operating Officer, British Council	UK Speaker	
Sharni Jones	Arts New South Wales	Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Programmes	
Lydia Miller	Executive Director, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Arts	Funding & Development Partner	2009–2016
Helen O’Neil	British Council in Australia	Director Arts	2014–2016
Alison Murphy-Oates	British Council in Australia	Programme Manager	2014–2015
Erica McCalman	British Council in Australia	Programme Manager	2015–2016
Kevin du Preez	Australia Council for the Arts	Selection & Account Director	2014–2016
Helen Salmon	British Council in Australia	Head of Arts and Partnership	2016
Nicola Turner	NT Creative Arts	UK Consultant	2011–2016
Helen Thomas	British Council, Cultural Skills Unit	UK Speaker	2015
Sue White	Independent Consultant	Programme Evaluations	2011–2016
Mark Wright	People Create	Facilitator, Leadership Intensives	2011–2016

NB - Organisation listed when contributing to the Accelerate Programme

APPENDIX 4: ACCELERATE 2009 TERMS OF REFERENCE

ACCELERATE: Indigenous Australian Creative Leadership Programme Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference

Background

ACCELERATE supports Indigenous creative leaders to undertake tailored-leadership training and professional placements in the UK and Australia in 2009 to empower and equip them with the skills, networks and confidence to proactively drive the way Indigenous culture is represented in Australia and internationally.

A one-year 'proof of concept' will take place in 2009 with a formal evaluation of the programme taking place no later than March 2010.

A Project Steering Committee has been established to oversee the development of the Project.

Project Initiators and Managers: British Council and The University of Melbourne through the Wilin Centre.

Project partners: British Council; The University of Melbourne through the Wilin Centre; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Australia Council.

Airline partner: Virgin Atlantic.

Project Steering Committee:

Alex Doyle, Strategy Project Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts, Australia Council

Michelle Evans, Head of the Wilin Centre, The University of Melbourne

Sam Cook, Partnerships Manager, Wilin Centre, The University of Melbourne (main contact)

Rebecca Matthews, Director, British Council (Chairperson)

Kirsten Freeman, Assistant Director Melbourne, British Council (main contact)

Sue Davies, Wilin Centre Publicist, The PR Exchange

NOTE: apart from 'Project initiators and managers', the above wording is not for any publicity/marketing material, they are for internal use only.

Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference:

- to meet regularly, either in person, or by teleconference to oversee the development of the Project
- to approve the Project timeline and budget, and review Project progress accordingly
- to agree on upper-level messaging for the Project
- to approve the Marketing and Communications Framework for the Project
- to approve the leadership training and outcomes plan for the Project
- to provide advice on the development of the UK internships and meetings
- to secure tailored Australian work placements in 2010
- to approve the application process and assessment criteria for candidates
- to approve the selection criteria for the recruitment of a Project Assistant
- to form the selection panel for candidates (with the addition of Virgin Atlantic)
- to agree upon a formal evaluation mechanism for the pilot phase of the Project and to set future directions
- to ensure contractual obligations of each partner are met
- to ensure a commitment to excellence across all aspects of the Project.

To be read in conjunction with Project Objectives and Project Governance documents.

ACCELERATE: Project Governance

Background

ACCELERATE supports Indigenous creative leaders to undertake tailored-leadership training and professional placements in the UK and Australia in 2009 to empower and equip them with the skills, networks and confidence to proactively drive the way Indigenous culture is represented in Australia and internationally.

A one-year 'proof of concept' will take place in 2009 with a formal evaluation of the programme taking place no later than March 2010. A Project Steering Committee has been established to oversee the development of the Project.

Project Initiators and Managers: British Council and The University of Melbourne through the Wilin Centre.

Project partners: British Council; Wilin Centre, Victorian College of the Arts; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts, Australia Council.

Airline partner: Virgin Atlantic.

Project Steering Committee:

Alex Doyle, Strategy Project Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts, Australia Council

Michelle Evans, Head of the Wilin Centre, Victorian College of the Arts

Sam Cook, Partnerships Manager, Wilin Centre, Victorian College of the Arts (main contact)

Rebecca Matthews, Director, British Council (Chairperson)

Kirsten Freeman, Assistant Director Melbourne, British Council (main contact)

Sue Davies, Wilin Centre Publicist, The PR Exchange

Project Governance

Each project partner is responsible for delivering clearly articulated outcomes to the Project Steering Committee. Each partner will work in mutual cooperation and respect for the success of the Project.

The intellectual property generated out of the Project resides with the Project Initiators and Managers until the agreed end of the Project.

British Council

Expertise: UK government, institutional and individual contacts; knowledge of relevant UK policy and strategy; experience in managing similar programmes such as Realise Your Dream

Project Manager – Manage the Project timeline and budget; Chair Project Steering Committees (alternating with Wilin).

Communications lead – Develop and deliver a Marketing and Communications Framework to the Project Steering Committee for input and approval, which builds in the expertise and networks that reside within the three project partners and Virgin Atlantic to ensure the widest possible reach.

Administration components – Communications administration including direct mail, compiling distribution lists, organising events etc; and travel arrangements including airfare and accommodation bookings, visa advice, UK regional travel etc.

UK placements lead – Negotiate and organise the UK professional placements and any other meetings with the individual winners and the other Project Partners.

Australian placements – Work in consultation with the other Project Partners and individual winners to secure tailored Australian work placements in 2010.

Wilin Centre, Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts and Music, The University of Melbourne

Expertise: Indigenous Leadership, Protocols, Administration components and pastoral care, Indigenous marketing and design.

Leadership training lead – Research, develop and deliver a targeted leadership programme in the UK with a leadership outcome plan to the Project Steering Committee.

UK placements – Contribute to the development of the UK placements.

Documentation – Deliver the most appropriate form of Project documentation (video/publication/exhibition – excluding the marketing video to be separately developed by the partners) as agreed by the Steering Committee.

Administration components – Application procedures, including application forms, development of selection and assessment criteria for discussion, handling enquiries, receiving applications, managing the shortlisting and interviewing process, notifying winners etc.

Winner mentoring – Through the various educational programmes offered by the Wilin Centre, provide an ongoing mentoring role for the winners.

Communications – Work with the Project Partners to deliver the activities outlined in the Marketing and Communications Framework as agreed by the Project Steering Committee.

Australian placements – Work with the Project Partners and individual winners to secure tailored Australian work placements in 2010.

Australia Council

Announcement – Manage the announcement of the Programme at the National Indigenous Art Awards, 27 May 2009 as agreed by the Project Steering Committee.

Communications – Work with Project Partners to deliver the activities outlined in the Communications framework as agreed by the Project Steering Committee.

UK placements – Contribute to the development of the UK placements.

Eligibility and selection criteria – Contribute to the outline of selection criteria and requirements for eligibility including confirmation of identity process and identification of mid-career artists.

Assessment process – Contribute to enabling an assessment process that promotes equity; access; due diligence and accountability and inclusion of the Executive Director on the selection panel.

Australian placements – Work with the Project Partners and individual winners to secure tailored Australian work placements in 2010 and brokering current relationships with Major Performing Arts Organisations, Arts Infrastructure and Strategic Partner organisations.

Research and Evaluation – Contribute to the methodology and process.

To be read in conjunction with Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference and Project Objectives documents.

ACCELERATE: Australian Indigenous Creative Leadership Programme

Project Objectives

ACCELERATE aims to:

Redress the under-representation of Indigenous Australians in roles of influence in the creative industries and the resulting misrepresentation, exploitation and mishandling of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

It will achieve this by:

1. Delivering a tailored programme of leadership training and professional placements in Australia and the UK for Indigenous creative leaders who are accomplished in their art form, well respected by their community and professional peers and poised to take the next step in their careers.
2. Equipping future Indigenous creative leaders with the confidence, high-level social entrepreneurship skills and international networks to drive the representation of their own culture internationally and locally.
3. Strengthening the already existing network between Australia and the UK for creative exchange.
4. Promoting the value of Indigenous creative leadership via a high-profile Marketing and Communications Framework in Australia and the UK.
5. Ensuring the recipients' experiences are effectively fed back to Australian cultural organisations via an Australian internship programme.
6. Ensuring that structures are developed to provide ongoing professional support for recipients.
7. Fostering platforms and pathways to promote the value of Indigenous knowledge and learning methodologies in the Arts.
8. Engaging with similar leadership development initiatives in the UK and Australia to build knowledge in the area of leadership development for culturally diverse arts leaders.
9. Pooling the expertise and networks of the project partners to secure the best outcomes for the Programme.

2009 Outcomes

- To deliver a tailored programme of leadership training and professional placements in the UK and Australia for three Indigenous creative leaders in October/ November 2009.
- To rigorously review and evaluate the Programme by March 2010 and to make any necessary changes for subsequent years, including the inclusion of other creative forms.
- To achieve positive publicity for the Programme in Australia and the UK.

To be read in conjunction with Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference and Project Governance documents.

APPENDIX 5: ACCELERATE OVERVIEW 2009–2016

2009: Proof of concept

Key Partners	Participants	UK Mentors & Key Host Organisations	Participant Meetings	Leadership Learning	Programme Leadership
<p>British Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Australia Council for the Arts</p> <p>The University of Melbourne through the Wilin Centre</p> <p>Airline Partner: Virgin Atlantic</p>	<p>Tina Baum Alisa Duff Peter White</p>	<p>Lancaster University</p>	<p>A New Direction British Council Pitt Rivers Museum V&A Museum National Museums of Scotland London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games</p>	<p>Wilin Centre Lancaster University</p>	<p>Rebecca Matthews, Director, British Council (Chairperson) Kirsten Freeman, Deputy Director, British Council Alex Doyle, Strategy Project Manager, ATSI Arts, Australia Council Michelle Evans, Head of the Wilin Centre (WC), The University of Melbourne (UM) Sam Cook, Partnerships Manager, WC, UM Sue Davies, WC, The PR Exchange</p>

2011

Key Partners	Participants	UK Mentors & Key Host Organisations	Participant Meetings	Leadership Learning	Programme Leadership
<p>British Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Australia Council for the Arts</p> <p>Airline Partner: Virgin Atlantic</p>	<p>Barbara Bynder Marilyn Miller Kyle Morrison Kevin O'Brien Sharon Paten Alick Tipoti</p>	<p>Hilary Carty, Independent Consultant John McGrath, Artistic Director, National Theatre Wales</p>	<p>Akram Khan Dance Arts Council England Barbican Art Gallery British Council British Museum DanceEast, Ipswich Glasgow Museum Globe Theatre Kneehigh Theatre Museum, Libraries & Archives Council Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, Cambridge National Museums Scotland National Theatre Wales Pitt Rivers Museum Sampad, Birmingham Siobhan Davies Dance Company Tamasha Theatre Company, London Tate Liverpool University College London University of Oxford Whitechapel Gallery</p>	<p>Pre-UK Visit Residential (Sydney) UK Intensive Action Learning (Aust. & UK) Mentoring (UK)</p>	<p>Kirsten Freeman, Deputy Director, British Council Nick Marchand, Director, British Council in Australia Alisa Duff, Programme Manager ATSI Arts, Australia Council for the Arts Nicola Turner, UK Consultant, NT Creative Arts</p>

2012

Key Partners	Participants	UK Mentors & Key Host Organisations	Participant Meetings	Leadership Learning	Programme Leadership
<p>British Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Australia Council for the Arts Create NSW (formerly Arts NSW) Arts Queensland Arts Victoria Department of Culture and the Arts, WA</p> <p>Airline Partner: Virgin Atlantic</p>	<p>Jane Harrison Nicole Monks Alison Page Rita Pryce Lily Shearer Gina Williams</p>	<p>Hilary Carty, Independent Consultant Lisa Goldman, Theatre Director Tania Holland, Arts Professional Liz Margree, People Create Louise Taylor, Arts Professional Brendan Keaney, Director, Greenwich Dance Agency John McGrath, Artistic Director, National Theatre Wales</p>	<p>100% Open Aberystwyth University Actors Workshop Architecture Foundation Arts Council England Barbican Centre Battersea Arts Centre Border Crossings Brighton Fringe Festival British Council Craft Scotland Culture Label Cultural Enterprise Office English National Ballet School Fuel, London Hewlett Packard iShed Make/Works Resonance FM Retail Culture Serious Music Sherman Theatre, Wales Studio Toogood Studio Weave The Albany The Eden Project, Cornwall National Theatre Wales Royal Court Theatre Room 13, Scotland Southbank Centre, London Tamasha Theatre Company, London The Design Embassy The Place Thomas Heatherwick Tricycle Theatre, London V&A Museum Wales Millennium Centre ZooNation Dance Company</p>	<p>Pre-UK Visit Residential (Manly, NSW) UK Intensive Action Learning (Aust. & UK) Mentoring (UK)</p>	<p>Kirsten Freeman, Deputy Director, British Council Nick Marchand, Director, British Council in Australia Tahli Corin, Project Coordinator, British Council in Australia</p> <p>ATSI Arts, Australia Council for the Arts Nicola Turner, UK Consultant, NT Creative Arts</p>

2013

Key Partners	Participants	UK Mentors & Key Host Organisations	Participant Meetings	Leadership Learning	Programme Leadership
<p>British Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Australia Council for the Arts Create NSW (formerly Arts NSW) Arts Queensland Arts Victoria Department of Culture and the Arts, WA</p> <p>Telecoms & Media: British Telecom Starling Media NITV</p> <p>Airline Partner: Virgin Atlantic</p>	<p>Solomon Booth Ron Bradfield Jnr. Michael Cook Andrea James Kimberley Moulton</p>	<p>Hilary Carty, Independent Consultant John McGrath, Artistic Director, National Theatre Wales Mark Sealy MBE, Director, Autograph ABP Lleucu Siencyn, Chief Executive, Literature Wales Virginia Tandy, OBE, Independent Consultant</p>	<p>ACAVA Acme Studios Arts Admin Autograph ABP Belfast Print Workshop Beyond the Border Border Crossings Festival British Council British Museum Complicité Creative Scotland Eisteddfod of Wales Forced Entertainment Fuel, London Engage Gecko Theatre International Slavery Museum Junction, Cambridge Literature Wales Marlborough Contemporary Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, Cambridge National Museums Liverpool National Theatre Scotland National Theatre Wales Pitt Rivers Museum RichMix, London Royal Court Theatre Royal Academy of Arts Saffron Walden Museum Serpentine Gallery The Photographer's Gallery Tate Modern Traditional Music Forum University of the Arts Visible Fictions Theatre Company Welsh Language Commission V&A Museum</p>	<p>Pre-UK Visit Residential (Melbourne) UK Intensive Action Learning (UK) Mentoring (UK & Post Visit)</p>	<p>Kirsten Freeman, Deputy Director, British Council Nick Marchand, Director, British Council in Australia Tahli Corin, Project Coordinator, British Council in Australia</p> <p>ATSI Arts, Australia Council for the Arts</p> <p>Nicola Turner, UK Consultant, NT Creative Arts</p>

2014

Key Partners	Participants	UK Mentors & Key Host Organisations	Participant Meetings	Leadership Learning	Programme Leadership
<p>British Council Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Australia Council for the Arts Create NSW (formerly Arts NSW) Arts Queensland Creative Victoria (formerly Arts Victoria) Department of Culture and the Arts, WA</p> <p>Telecoms & Media: BT Global Services Starling Media NITV</p> <p>Airline Partner: British Airways</p>	<p>Jacob Boehme Clotilde Bullen Carly Lane Lucy Simpson</p>	<p>Claire Antrobus, Independent Consultant Hilary Carty, Independent Consultant Gus Casely-Hayford, Curator & Presenter Liz Margree, People Create Louise Taylor, Arts Professional John McGrath, Artistic Director, National Theatre Wales Mark Sealy MBE, Director, Autograph ABP</p>	<p>Arnolfini Gallery Belfast Mural tours British Council British Council NI British Museum Border Crossings Blenheim Palace Brazen Studios Bush Theatre Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Cockpit Arts Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow Connecting Design Crafts Council Creative Scotland Delphina Foundation Derry/Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013 Dovecot Studios Engage English National Ballet Goldsmiths, University of London Glasgow School of Art Happy Museums Iniva London Design Festival Live Art Development Agency Make Work Manchester School of Art Midlands Arts Centre National Theatre Wales Pitt Rivers Museum Royal Court Theatre Ruthin Craft centre Spike Island University of the Arts, London Vital Exposure</p>	<p>Pre-UK Visit Residential (Victoria) UK Intensive Action Learning (UK) Mentoring (UK & Post Visit)</p>	<p>Kirsten Freeman, Deputy Director, British Council Helen O'Neil, Director, British Council in Australia Alex Doyle, Australia Council for the Arts and Project Manager 2014 ATSI Arts, Australia Council for the Arts Nicola Turner, UK Consultant, NT Creative Arts</p>

2015

Key Partners	Participants	UK Mentors & Key Host Organisations	Participant Meetings	Leadership Learning	Programme Leadership
<p>British Council Capacity Building, Australia Council for the Arts Create NSW (formerly Arts NSW) Arts Queensland Arts Victoria Department of Culture and the Arts, WA</p>	<p>Teagan Colishaw Marcus Corowa Angela Flynn Emma Loban Carly Sheppard</p>	<p>Claire Antrobus, Independent Consultant Hilary Carty, Independent Consultant Gaylene Gould, Independent Consultant Mark Sealy MBE, Director, Autograph ABP Mark Wright, Director, People Create</p>	<p>All or Nothing Aerial Dance Theatre Australia High Commission Autograph ABP Barbican Centre Border Crossings British Council British Museum Brighton Festival Cambridge Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology Central St. Martins Design Museum Edinburgh International Festival English National Ballet School Fashion Revolution Fashion Textile Museum Festivals Edinburgh Glasgow Museums Hofesh Shechter Company In Between Time King's Place Lasercut Works London International Festival of Theatre London College of Fashion London Jazz Festival Manchester Metropolitan University Manchester School of Art National Museum of Scotland Natural History Museum nitroBEAT Nottingham Trent University Pitt Rivers Museum Punchdrunk Ravensbourne Higher Education Institute Rich Mix Serious Music Siobhan Davies Dance Southbank Centre Spitalfields StopGap Dance Tate Modern Texfusion The Albany The Junction, Cambridge University College London University of Essex V&A Museum Walk the Plank WoW Festival, Southbank</p>	<p>Pre-UK Visit Residential (Sydney) UK Intensive Mentoring (UK & Post Visit)</p>	<p>Kirsten Freeman, Deputy Director, British Council Helen O'Neil, Director, British Council in Australia Alison Murphy-Oates, Project Manager, British Council in Australia (2014/15) Erica McCalman, Project Manager, British Council in Australia (from Sept 2015) Capacity Building, Strategic Development and Advocacy, Australia Council for the Arts Nicola Turner, UK Consultant, NT Creative Arts</p>

2016

Key Partners	Participants	UK Mentors & Key Host Organisations	Participant Meetings	Leadership Learning	Programme Leadership
<p>British Council Capacity Building, Australia Council for the Arts Create NSW (formerly Arts NSW) Arts Queensland Arts Victoria Department of Culture and the Arts, WA Arts NT (formerly Department of Arts and Museums NT)</p>	<p>Kamarra Bell Wykes Travis De Vries Glenn Iseger Pilkington Francoise Lane Jonathon Saunders Jilda Andrews</p>	<p>Hilary Carty, Independent Consultant Liz Margree, People Create Beatrice Mayfield, Textile Designer Diane Morgan, Producer, nitroBEAT Mark Sealy MBE, Director, Autograph ABP Rich Warren, Director, Encounters Festival Devinda De Silva, Head of Collaboration (Participation) National Theatre Wales Fin Kennedy, Artistic Director, Tamasha Theatre</p>	<p>Aardman Animation Arnolfini Gallery Arthur Cox Ltd Australia High Commission Autograph ABP Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art Be A Man, Southbank Centre British Council British Council Wales British Museum Camden People's Theatre City of Edinburgh Museums Clothworkers Centre Cockpit Arts Connecting Design Creative Scotland Dovecot Studios Edinburgh Film Festival Edinburgh International Festival Edinburgh Fringe Society Eisteddfod of Wales Engage Festivals Edinburgh Gaelic Scotland Glasgow School of Art Happy Museums ICA, London Improbable In Between Time & Team Iniva Liberty Liverpool Biennial London International Film Festival Loves Animation Make Work Manchester Animation Festival Manchester International Festival Museum of English Rural Life Nexus Interactive Arts Pilot Theatre Theatre Iolo Scottish International Storytelling Festival Spike Island Tamasha Theatre Company The Audience Agency The Design Museum University of the Highlands & Islands Victoria & Albert Museum Vital Exposure Wales International Storytelling Festival Wellcome Collection William Morris Gallery</p>	<p>Pre-UK Visit Residential (Sydney) UK Intensive Mentoring (UK & Post Visit)</p>	<p>Helen O'Neil, Director, British Council in Australia Erica McCalman, Project Manager, British Council in Australia, including for Yirama Yangga-na international First Nations event Capacity Building, Strategic Development and Advocacy, Australia Council for the Arts Nicola Turner, UK Consultant, NT Creative Arts</p>

APPENDIX 6: LEADERSHIP INTENSIVE INDICATIVE PROGRAMME 2012

DAY 1 : 22 June Friday

11.00 - 12.30

- WELCOME TO COUNTRY
- INTRO FROM BCA
- CONTRACTING
- INTRODUCTIONS TO EACH OTHER
- EXPECTATIONS?
- SEEKING?

MARK & RUTH **NEW**

13.30 - 14.45

- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
- DEFINING LEADERSHIP
- LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT & FOLLOWERSHIP
- LEADERSHIP STYLES
- 9 BOX MODEL

MARK & RUTH **NEW**

15.00 - 17.30

- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
- LOSADA AND VBB'S
- TEAM TASK
- INTRO OF HERO'S JOURNEY

MARK & RUTH **NEW**

DAY 2 : 23 June Saturday

Version 3

10.00 - 11.15

- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
- REVIEW AND REFLECTIONS
- STORIES

MARK & RUTH **NEW**

11.30 - 12.30

- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

MARK & RUTH **NEW**

13.30 - 15.30

- INTRO TO ACTION LEARNING
- Tahli to attend

RUTH **NEW**

16.00 - 17.00

- UK BRIEFING
- Ruth to observe

NICOLA & KIRSTEN **NEW**

13.30 - 15.30

- FOLLOW UP WORK : insights and challenges
- NEW EXPERIENCES
- CRITICAL LEARNING
- WHAT NEXT?

MARK & KIRSTEN **ALUMNI**

16.00 - 17.00

- FOLLOW UP WORK : insights and challenges
- NEW EXPERIENCES
- CRITICAL LEARNING
- WHAT NEXT?

MARK **ALUMNI**

ALUMNI TO FACILITATE A 60 MINUTE TOP TIPS SESSION PRIOR TO DINNER

DAY 3 : 24 June Sunday

9.00 - 10.00

- Q&A ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS: NEXT STEPS

KIRSTEN & NICOLA **NEW**

9.00 - 10.00

- FACILITATED REVIEW SESSION
- NEW INPUT?

MARK **ALUMNI**

10.00 - 12.30

- EXPERIENCE OF ACTION LEARNING

RUTH **NEW**

10.00 - 12.30

- EXPERIENCE OF ACTION LEARNING

MARK **NEW**

10.00 - 12.30

- FACILITATED REVIEW SESSION
- ROLE OF ALUMNI
- PLANNING THE NEXT STEPS

KIRSTEN **ALUMNI**

13.30 - 15.30

- EXPERIENCE OF ACTION LEARNING

RUTH **NEW**

13.30 - 15.30

- EXPERIENCE OF ACTION LEARNING

MARK **NEW**

15.45 - 16.15

- SUMMARY AND CLOSE

ALL **NEW**

APPENDIX 7: SHIFT CHANGE 2015–2017

Activity	Rationale
1. Leadership Development and UK Programme	<p>British Council will continue to develop and refine the successful two-stage programme, made up of the Leadership Intensive and a tailored trip to the UK.</p> <p>Focus on connecting with alumni more at the announcement and weekend intensive, working intensely with UK consultant Nicola Turner on securing more substantial or longer placements for individuals with organisations in the UK.</p>
2. Converting the UK Experience	<p>Upon return from the UK, ACCELERATE participants are highly motivated to drive change, as recorded in their annual evaluations. The 12 months upon return from the UK is a critical time to consolidate their experience, alongside already busy professional careers or artistic practice. Support to convert the expansive thinking ACCELERATE encourages, to the realities of making change once back home will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an intensive within the 12 months following the UK trip, either as a standalone group or with the entire national cohort • additional sessions with UK mentors via telephone/Skype upon return from the UK • matching with additional Australian-based mentors, in a pilot programme that aims to provide guidance on the direction of their professional activities from both local and international perspectives.
3. Alumni – Leadership Development	<p>Biannual national leadership development (2015) The 2015 national intensive is designed and driven by alumni to identify and address pressing issues (conflict resolution, career pathways etc.) and remain responsive and engaging.</p> <p>Biannual group-based leadership development (2014 / 2016) In 2014, each State chapter came together for an intimate and specifically tailored two-day leadership intensive. It was a sustainable model, which aimed to activate and strengthen State-based networks while still providing opportunity for individual and collective development. Pending further consultation with the alumni, the British Council will co-ordinate State (or smaller group-based) intensives again in 2016.</p> <p>Train-the-trainer Alumni have expressed the strong desire to be formally trained in the tools they have experienced through the ACCELERATE programme. Seizing on their commitment to expand their skills as facilitators, alumni will have the opportunity to train with Mark Wright and Ruth Cook to empower them to then influence or facilitate sessions in future annual ACCELERATE intake programmes, and connect more with incoming participants.</p>
4. Alumni – Artistic Practice and International Collaboration	<p>ACCELERATE Alumni International Collaboration Fund Seed investment for alumni to generate UK/Australian artistic collaborations, for example: residences or collaborative projects delivered either in the UK or Australia; or small scale touring in the UK. \$15,000 to be granted in each round, with funds matched by an outside source.</p>

Activity	Rationale
5. Alumni – Critical Thought Leadership	<p>VOICES* (2016 / 2017) In 2016 and 2017, VOICES (working title) will explore <i>leadership through arts and culture</i>. Curated and moderated by ACCELERATE alumni to host presentations, provocations and discussions with selected national and international guest speakers joining the ACCELERATE alumni. Developed in an equal collaboration between the British Council in Australia and a working party of ACCELERATE alumni, integrating the core value of mutuality, VOICES will privilege Indigenous voices and issues in the arts and creative sectors, with content driven by the working party, curator/s, other contributors, and participants. Indigenous principles and philosophies of caring for land and sea, maintenance of language and lore, and respect for elders, ancestors and history, will dictate the design of the event.</p> <p>The VOICES event aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage a wider audience in the complexity and richness of Indigenous culture in a contemporary setting • empower the ACCELERATE alumni to be thought leaders and to build their profiles nationally and internationally • provide a platform for international discussion around Indigenous leadership in the arts and creative industries • present a diverse range of Indigenous speakers and artists from around the world, utilising the British Council's networks.
Desired Outcomes	<p>The above initiatives will ensure the momentum from the initial ACCELERATE experience continues to inform, challenge and inspire the alumni, making them dynamic leaders of their organisations, communities and sectors. In addition to the outcomes of the existing ACCELERATE programme, the direct outcomes of an expanded programme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a minimum of 32 alumni by the conclusion of 2016 with deepened State, national and international connections • ACCELERATE State Chapters (NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia) and Year Chapters, providing local support, State-based lobbying and identifying and supporting future ACCELERATE participants • strengthened support on return to Australia with continuing mentorship and group development • guaranteed ongoing Leadership Development through State/group-based and national leadership intensives, providing both individual and collective development opportunities • an annual thought leadership event that provides a platform for discussion around International First Nations arts and leadership • expanded profile and influence of alumni through public platforms, such as VOICES • empowered alumni driving their own initiatives including international collaboration, local activities, thought leadership, representation to government and the corporate sector etc. • nine UK/Australian projects that have directly grown out of the ACCELERATE programme • five alumni formally trained as facilitators to drive development in their own communities and networks via Action Learning / Leadership Development.

* VOICES was the working title at the early planning stage. The actual events were later titled as: 'Yirama Yangga-na' (meaning 'Spirit Singing' in English) in 2016 and 'Marram-nganjinu Biik-gurrin' (meaning 'We are Country') in 2017.

APPENDIX 8: REFLECTING AND ADAPTING, 2009–2013

Early Partnership Change

As part of the pilot programme in 2009, the British Council partnered with the Wilin Centre, Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts and Music, The University of Melbourne. An Indigenous provider, it was expected that the Wilin Centre would bring a range of expertise, in particular Indigenous Leadership, protocols, pastoral care and mentoring, through the various educational programmes offered by the Wilin Centre. (See Appendix 4: Terms of Reference.) Unfortunately, the evaluation following the pilot programme revealed several shortcomings. Feedback from participants was that a qualitative engagement had not been delivered, particularly in terms of quality of service and pastoral care for participants. It was regrettable that the partnership had not proven as fruitful as expected, and the British Council could not, in such circumstances, continue beyond the initial engagement.

The decision to engage with proven leadership expertise from the UK was consistent with the UK focus of the programme, and Nicola Turner, who had worked with the UK's Cultural Leadership Programme was contracted to support the programme delivery. Nicola had been in Australia early in 2010, invited by the British Council to talk about the development of cultural leadership provision in the UK to State arts boards, the Australia Council and other key stakeholders.

Adjusting the Application Process

In 2011 and 2012, the application process included a two-stage delivery, with the ambition of: providing valuable leadership learning for a large group of applicants, increasing understanding of what leadership means in UK and Australian contexts; building the capacity for participants to envision their own leadership paths; introducing UK partners to the Australian context; and contributing to the shaping of the UK programmes (2012 Evaluation Report).

Unquestionably, this provided strategic insights for all taking part, however, it also had the impact of creating a cohort of disappointed aspiring applicants, and it was felt that this might negatively impact future cohorts. The application process was, therefore, streamlined to one stage for 2013.

Advised by the alumni, 2013 also saw the shift in vocabulary with a conscious effort to replace the term Indigenous with their preferred vocabulary of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or First People.

'I did the intensive, the Hero's Journey, and then I went home – and I thought, "If I don't do anything else at this point, I feel like I've won lotto". It actually unlocked something and I don't know what I'm going to do, but when I find that out, I know exactly how to go about it now.'

2012 PARTICIPANT

'The main thing that came out of that work with Ruth was a working group, where you feel comfortable talking to each other and taking each other's advice. Before, purely out of confidence and not having the right framework, I felt unsure, so I wouldn't open up as much. It was instrumental for me.'

2011 PARTICIPANT



ACCELERATE 2016 alumni. Image: Barbara McGrady.

Acting on Action Learning

2011 and 2012 additionally included the provision of Action Learning, delivered by UK specialist Ruth Cook of Action Learning Associates. Based around clear questions and self-reflection/solution finding, this element of the programme received mixed reviews from participants.

The methodology of open questions worked really well for some participants, allowing them a space in which to explore some of the highly challenging questions that came up through the programme – both personal and professional (see Section 4.1 in the main evaluation report). For others, this process of questioning was perceived to be challenging.

'After the first or second day, I understood the psychology behind it... You ask people questions and they come up with their own answers and resolve their own problems. Whereas, if you try to tell someone something, they're probably going to shut down and not really listen. It is more acceptable if you answer your own questions.'

2013 PARTICIPANT

It is instructive to note that action learning was identified as contributing significantly to the harmonisation of the early cohorts, who had experienced its methodology as part of the first intensive 'on their territory' in Australia, where it evidently formed part of the critical unpacking and bonding process (Ruth Cook, Action Learning Associates). In 2013 and 2014, when introduced in London, this pivotal moment in time had already passed, and the process felt less comfortable for some of the group, already handling the new challenges and experiences of the UK.

Responding to the needs of participants, the programme was adapted to increase the level of culturally-focused support before the UK visit, and to place greater emphasis on individual mentoring and pastoral care – helping participants to anticipate some of the issues that might be faced in the UK.

Simultaneously, appreciating the proven value of action learning, alumni were invited to train as action learning facilitators. The training took place with four alumni in Australia in 2016; they, themselves, saw the potential for using action learning both within their own communities and within the developing movement of First Peoples.

'I think as Indigenous people, we grapple with thinking of ourselves as leaders in our own communities, and the different set of responsibilities that it entails. Some segment that acknowledges and explores that at the beginning would be useful, because many of us had to get beyond that before we could really take on the lessons that were on offer'

Perhaps one of the previous participants could speak to that theme. Part of it is about not approaching leadership from an individual but a collective perspective, having the authority from your communities.'

2012 PARTICIPANT