

Mara Art Aboriginal Corporation
YAMAJI ART

4 November 2013

Mayor Ian Carpenter
City of Greater Geraldton
63 Cathedral Avenue
Geraldton WA 6530
council@cgg.wa.gov.au

Dear Mayor Carpenter,

We write this letter to address the need for capacity funds for Mara Art Aboriginal Corporation trading as Yamaji Art. Initially, the plan was to apply for a community grant, but through a miscommunication with a City of Greater of Geraldton employee, the movement of the date to accommodate the National Election was not clearly understood and the date for the grant was missed. Unfortunately, due to a slowdown in the market and cuts of funding from our biggest funder, has found Yamaji Art struggling to maintain the basic fiscal requirements for the organization. One of the primary budget issues is the rent of the current space in Campbell House in the Bill Sewell Complex; Yamaji Art has called the Bill Sewell Complex home for the last five years and has enjoyed the benefits of the central location and the neighbouring traffic from the Geraldton Visitor's Centre. In the last 12 months Yamaji Art has also moved from the small premises in Victoria House to the whole ground floor of Campbell House. The larger premises has allowed the organization to grow, as well as including a gallery space, storage, admin offices, and a production space for the artists. This has allowed Yamaji Art to also develop a tourism program; tourists find the gallery space attractive and seek out the space. We are therefore requesting assistance of \$50,000 in order to stabilise our locational issues and to continue our artistic/cultural programs which are firmly placed within the creative and tourism industries and opportunities within the City of Greater Geraldton.

The development of the gallery and production spaces also has the capacity to generate funds for the organization, as rental spaces for other artists and art activities. In addition to the already mentioned tourism market that is already being tapped into, Yamaji Art feels passionately that continued development of the Aboriginal Art Tourism market will benefit the organisation greatly. The concern is not having enough money to capitalize on the potential market that is currently available, as mentioned earlier there has been a downturn in the Fine Art market and cuts to our biggest Federal Funder has meant that currently the organization only has enough funds to cover basics with artists development.

In the last five years Yamaji Art has worked hard on developing a name in the Fine Art Market and tourism market. We have been successful in touring exhibitions both nationally and internationally. We recently obtained a Deadly nomination in 2013 for Science Award of the Year, and completed the very popular Emu Eggs on the Foreshore project with the City of Greater Geraldton, and have a website that attracts hits from all over the world. Now that Yamaji Art has laid down the ground work it would be so disappointing to see it all for not due to minor budget issues that could be worked through with our external community partners. Yamaji Art has not received recurrent funding from the City of Greater Geraldton, but is a favourite destination for visiting dignitaries and tourists alike. Yamaji Art has a similar if not larger scope and reach than ACDC Community Gallery that receives recurrent funding from the City; both art organizations are jewels to the City and should be similarly treated.

Our Corporation has a vital role in maintaining and developing the cultural footprint for the Midwest Region, especially in the City of Greater Geraldton. In the past we have also invested heavily into the Mullewa Women's Arts Groups growth through the provision of arts materials, arts professional workshops and inclusion in art exhibitions locally, state-wide, nationally and internationally. Our Corporation is very proud of all the achievements to date and having contributed to promoting the regions Aboriginal arts and culture to wider audiences in Australia and internationally.

The board and staff of Mara Art Aboriginal Corporation - Yamaji Art hope that this a continuation of the strong relationship the City of Greater Geraldton and Yamaji Art have been developing over the years, and see this being a mutually beneficial project.

The Board are willing to present to the Board of Councillors on the operations of Yamaji Art and its current position, should this opportunity become available in support of this request.

Regards

Allison Yearwood
For Board of Directors,
Mara Art Aboriginal Corporation