



**Evaluation of The Torch  
Indigenous Arts in Prisons & Community  
Programs**

Final Report

March 2019



## Terminology

In this report the terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are used in relation to specific policy and program names. The terms Koorie and Koori in general refer to Aboriginal people from the south-eastern part of Australia. The terms Aboriginal and Indigenous are used more broadly. In this report the range of terms used embrace all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Australia.

## Acknowledgements

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This evaluation would of course not have been possible without the participation of all stakeholders who willingly gave us their time to share their stories and views of The Torch program. We especially thank the program participants themselves who generously shared their stories and experiences of being part of this unique program.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

From April to December 2018, EMS Consultants completed a process and outcomes evaluation of the Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community Program (IAPC) delivered by The Torch.

The IAPC program accords with research highlighting the significant role cultural and arts programs can play in connecting or reconnecting Indigenous prisoners with their culture.

The program supports the development of self-esteem, confidence and resilience to the re-offending cycle through cultural strengthening and artistic expression.

Participant rehabilitation is assisted through the generation of opportunities for Indigenous offenders to reconnect with family and culture, foster new networks and to pursue educational and vocational avenues upon release.

The evaluation was intended to build on the initial evaluation of the program undertaken in 2012 and explore issues including program uptake, marketing and sales of artworks, program strengths and limitations and areas for improvement.

The evaluation process included a mixed method approach to data collection and analysis including a review of program administrative processes, analysis of program data, interviews with In-Prison and In-Community participants, and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders including Torch Board and staff members, Corrections Victoria staff (including prison staff), funding bodies and partners and TAFE Arts Teachers delivering programs in prison settings. Throughout the evaluation 82 stakeholders were interviewed/consulted.

### **Conclusions**

Conclusions from the evaluation include that:

1. The program is clearly effective in providing participants an opportunity and forum for cultural exploration, expression and strengthening.
2. The program is effective in supporting the development and strengthening of participant creative skills.
3. The program is clearly effective in improving the social and emotional wellbeing of participants.
4. The program is effective in increasing the understanding of participants about the arts industry and arts opportunities
5. Participation in the program has the potential to improve the financial stability of participants but not everyone is able to achieve this outcome.
6. More work is needed to enable The Torch to confidently measure the impact of the IAPC on recidivism rates

### **Evaluation Findings**

#### Program Achievements

There has been significant growth (approximately 30%) in the IAPC Program since 2015. As at 30/6/18, there were a total of 267 participants in The Torch programs. These included 188 participants in The Torch In-Prison program (representing approximately one quarter (27.4%) of all Indigenous prisoners in Victoria's prisons) and 79 participants in the In-Community program.

The annual Confined exhibition, the key public event of the program, has also grown significantly since 2015 in reputation and size (from 147 artworks in 2015 to 192 in 2018) as have artwork sales (from \$16,200 in 2015 to \$262,062 in 2018).

### Participant Outcomes

Benefits of participation for both In-Prison and In-Community programs were identified as:

- Improvements in participant social and emotional wellbeing
- Cultural connection and strengthening
- Development of artistic skills
- Creating hope for a different/ positive future away from prison
- Financial gain

The majority of In-Community participants (92%) confirmed that being part of the program has helped them stay out of the justice system. Importantly, data gathered on 2017-18 participants in the In-Community program who had been in the program for over 12 months, indicated only 11% had returned to prison. (In 2016-17, the recidivism rate for Aboriginal prisoners in Victoria was 53.4% compared to 42.8% for their non-Aboriginal counterparts).<sup>1</sup> Other stakeholders also praised the program for providing the support needed to lead participants to a path away from prison and keep them from re-offending.

### Strengths and Growth Areas

Strengths of the program identified by evaluation participants included:

- The program being led, designed and delivered by Indigenous artists
- The cultural resources developed and sourced for participants
- The support and encouragement provided to participants by Arts Officers
- Opportunities for participants to exhibit and sell artwork
- The Aboriginal Art Policy Model (developed by Corrections Victoria and The Torch)
- The Confined Exhibition showcasing participant artworks
- The support provided to In-Community participants to settle back into community
- Linking participants into other exhibitions/ art industry opportunities

Areas for growth where limitations were identified included:

- Increasing the number of Arts Officers
- Increasing one on one time available for individual participants in the In-Prison program
- Exploring regional exhibition opportunities
- Formally documenting program guidelines for both programs
- Finding ways to increase consistent engagement with In-Community participants

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<sup>1</sup> Corrections Victoria Data Warehouse, ABS 4517.0 Prisoners in Australia, 2017

- Finalising Indigenous representation on the Board
- Continuing to develop organisational capability in relation to data collection, monitoring and reporting
- Increasing formal collaboration/ partnerships with other programs for Indigenous people in the justice system.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

Prior to the evaluation process, The Torch embarked on activities and initiatives to improve both the IAPC Program and the organisation's capacity to effectively deliver the program, many of which have been captured in The Torch's Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

These have been considered in making suggestions for improvement.

It should also be noted, that the consultations highlighted some issues impacting The Torch programs, which are not the direct responsibility of The Torch, but could be addressed with a broader system response.

#### **Recommendation 1**

*Program staff, particularly Arts Officers, are provided training in trauma informed practice and the benefit of art in healing trauma.*

#### **Recommendation 2**

*The In-Prison and In-Community program models are formally documented.*

#### **Recommendation 3**

*The Torch develops guidelines / an information kit for program participants so they are clear about the program scope and what they can expect from their participation.*

#### **Recommendation 4**

*In addition to planned marketing and promotion strategies The Torch consider ways to continue building the program brand and showcasing its successes.*

#### **Recommendation 5**

*The Torch develops a staff wellbeing program to ensure the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health of staff is supported.*

## BACKGROUND

### Aboriginal Over-Representation In The Criminal Justice System

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders continue to be over-represented in the justice system. First Nations Australians make up less than 3% of the Australian population yet represent 27% of the national prison population.<sup>2</sup> In 2017 in Victoria, Aboriginal people made up almost 9% of the Victorian prison population despite accounting for only 0.6% of the Victorian adult population. They are more likely to be on remand and be serving a shorter prison sentence, with many Aboriginal men and women discharged having spent less than a year in prison.

Aboriginal prisoners are also more likely to have had a prior period of imprisonment (65.1% compared to 48.6% of non-Aboriginal prisoners). Re-offending contributes significantly to the rates of Aboriginal over-representation. Lower proportions of Aboriginal offenders on supervised orders successfully complete their orders compared with non-Aboriginal offenders, which is a major contributor to the rate of re-offending. More broadly, socioeconomic factors such as homelessness, financial stress, social and economic exclusion and limited access to culturally-appropriate substance abuse treatment programs and poorer educational outcomes all contribute to failing to complete orders and recidivism.

### Victoria's Prison Population

Since 1977 the prison population in Victoria has continually increased from 1488 to 7,668 by June 2018. In 2018, 685 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were imprisoned representing 9% of all prisoners. Not only are Indigenous people over-represented in the prison system, their rate of imprisonment is increasing at a faster rate than non-Indigenous prisoners – 11.6% compared to 6.4%. Table 1 below shows the most recent statistical information about Victoria's prisoners.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1: Victoria's Prison Population**

Prison location	30-Jun-17	30-Jun-18	% change
Barwon Prison	452	415	-8.2%
Beechworth Correctional Centre	200	151	-24.5%
Dhurringile Prison	314	234	-25.5%
Fulham Correctional Centre	858	766	-10.7%
Hopkins Correctional Centre	723	668	-7.6%
Judy Lazarus Transition Centre	17	18	5.9%
Langi Kal Kal Prison	316	258	-18.4%
Loddon Prison	682	648	-5.0%
Margoneet Correctional Centre	835	823	-1.4%
Melbourne Assessment Prison	299	236	-21.1%
Metropolitan Remand Centre	872	878	0.7%
Port Phillip Prison	1,076	1,073	-0.3%
Ravenhall Correctional Centre	0	934	NA
Dame Phyllis Frost Centre	460	494	7.4%
Tarrengower Prison	47	72	53.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,151</b>	<b>7,668</b>	<b>7.2%</b>

<sup>2</sup> Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Plan, Justice Health and Corrections Victoria, 2015

<sup>3</sup> Sentencing Advisory Council – Statistics, Website [www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/statistics/sentencing-statistics/victoria-prison-population](http://www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/statistics/sentencing-statistics/victoria-prison-population) cited November 2018

Male prisoners	6,644	7,102	6.9%
Female prisoners	507	566	11.6%
<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners</i>	<i>612</i>	<i>685</i>	<i>11.9%</i>
<i>Prisoners aged less than 25 years</i>	<i>859</i>	<i>880</i>	<i>2.4%</i>
<i>Unsentenced prisoners</i>	<i>2,224</i>	<i>2,711</i>	<i>21.9%</i>

Source: Corrections Victoria, 2018

Those who have been incarcerated previously are at higher risk of re-offending.<sup>4</sup> In 2016-17, the recidivism rate for Aboriginal prisoners in Victoria was 53.4% compared to 42.8% for their non-Aboriginal counterparts.<sup>5</sup>

Koorie prisoners also experience higher rates of mental illness, substance abuse and dependence disorders than non-Aboriginal prisoners. These rates of poor mental health have significant post-release implications with Aboriginal prisoners particularly at high risk of both mental health related incidents and criminal activity resulting in re-incarceration in the weeks following release.<sup>6</sup>

### The Aboriginal Justice Agreement

The *Aboriginal Justice Agreement* is the formal agreement between the Victorian Government and the Aboriginal community to work together to reduce Aboriginal contact with the criminal justice system and improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. Over the last 18 years and through all phases of the Agreement (including the recently released Phase 4 – Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja) there have been clear goals to:

- Reduce the number of Aboriginal people entering the criminal justice system
- Reduce the number of Aboriginal people progressing through the criminal justice system; and
- Reduce the number of Aboriginal people returning to the criminal justice system<sup>7</sup>

Phase three of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA3) specifically identified poor mental health as a key driver of Aboriginal contact with the criminal justice system.

The *Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Plan – Justice Health and Corrections Victoria* was an initiative of AJA3. The Plan recognises the fundamental role of culture, community and spirituality in Aboriginal wellbeing and aims to support such connections.

The Plan involves:

- Investing in programs that strengthen cultural identity, address trauma, build resilience and promote positive social and emotional wellbeing
- Increasing cultural awareness and building the capacity of the prison system to respond to the health and well-being needs of Aboriginal prisoners

<sup>4</sup> Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja – Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 4, 2018, p17

<sup>5</sup> Corrections Victoria Data Warehouse, ABS 4517.0 Prisoners in Australia, 2017

<sup>6</sup> Olgoff, J., Cutajar, M., Adams, K., Thomas, S, and Halacas, C., Koori Prisoner Mental Health and Cognitive Function Study, 2013

<sup>7</sup> Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja – Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 4, op cit, p10

- Embedding Aboriginal cultural values in policies, programs and services for Aboriginal prisoners
- Strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal community organisations to support and create linkages for effective transition
- Improving the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of mental health and wellbeing services to inform future service delivery

Priority Area 1 of the *Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Plan* focuses on prevention and health promotion and has 3 objectives:

- 1.1 Improve access for Aboriginal prisoners to community support agencies and programs that focus on strengthening connection to culture, building resilience and healing trauma
- 1.2 Increase opportunities for Aboriginal prisoners to connect to Country and strengthen their spirituality
- 1.3 Increase understanding and awareness of mental health through culturally appropriate prevention, promotion and early intervention information

Under this priority the Victorian government specifically acknowledged the contribution to, and the impact of The Torch Program in relation to these objectives and supports the Statewide Indigenous Arts in Prison and Community Program across Victoria's prisons run by The Torch. The program is recognised for its unique contribution to helping Aboriginal offenders connect to culture, ancestry, spirituality, land, family and community through art.

It should also be noted that since this evaluation commenced the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 4 – Burra Lotjpa Dungulundja (2018) has been released. Burra Lotjpa Dungulundja incorporates the Victorian Government's commitment to self-determination, recognising that "self-determination is the only policy approach to produce effective and sustainable outcomes for Indigenous peoples around the world." (p 6). To promote Aboriginal self-determination and provide further support to reduce over-representation the Andrews Labor Government has committed \$40.3m to support initiatives including the continuation and the expansion of The Torch programs with a further \$2.2m investment over the next three years.

### **The Torch**

The Torch has been delivering the Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community (IAPC) Program for over seven years. Since June 2011 The Torch has been providing art and cultural and arts support to Indigenous offenders and ex-offenders in Victoria.

The IAPC program accords with research highlighting the significant role cultural and arts programs can play in reconnecting Indigenous prisoners with their culture.

The program supports the development of self-esteem, confidence and resilience to the re-offending cycle through cultural strengthening and artistic expression.

The program aims to assist rehabilitation by generating opportunities for Indigenous offenders to reconnect with family and culture, foster new networks and to pursue educational and vocational avenues upon release.

The objectives of The Torch Indigenous Arts in Prisons & Community Program are:

- Through art, cultural and arts vocation support, provide a forum for cultural exploration, expression and strengthening for members of the Indigenous community who are incarcerated; and
- Through supporting creative skills and connection to culture, work with participants to find a new way forward on their return to community and reduce recidivism.

There are three main components of the program:

- 1) The ***In-Prison component*** is run in 15 Victorian correctional facilities. Incarcerated Indigenous men and women are supported to learn more about their language group, culture and country and provided support with art skills development.
- 2) The ***In-Community (Post-release) component*** supports those who have been released from prison and assists in their integration back in to the community. It encourages participants to continue to build their cultural knowledge, confidence and art practice. Support is provided to assist participants to foster new networks, new vocational opportunities and encourage post-release pathways.
- 3) The ***Economic Development component*** includes providing participants with opportunities to earn income through the promotion, licensing and sale of artworks. The Torch curates exhibitions and maintains a physical and on-line gallery. Post-release participants are engaged to install and promote exhibitions which develops arts industry skills and networks. The annual Confined exhibition has been a flagship of The Torch program for several years and is the key visual arts event for the City of Port Phillip's Yalukit Willam Ngargee Festival.

In conjunction with The Torch in 2016, the Victorian government developed the Aboriginal Art Policy Model that allows Indigenous men and women participating in The Torch IAPC program to sell their artworks while still in custody. This policy was developed in response to research released by the Victorian Ombudsman in 2015. This research showed cultural learning, instilled through artistic practices, would be a successful strategy in addressing the high recidivism rates for Indigenous offenders and lead to greater post release reintegration outcomes through improving post-release employment options.

Under the Aboriginal Art Policy Model, a major percentage of the money received for artworks sold is held in Trust by the Department of Corrections until the participant is released from prison. The Torch charges no commission on sales and 100% of the sales proceeds are passed onto the participant.

The sale of artworks, particularly since the launch of the Aboriginal Art Policy Model is making a significant difference to the financial well-being of participants.

## EVALUATION OVERVIEW

### Why Evaluate?

In 2012 an evaluation of The Torch programs was undertaken. That evaluation focused on whether or not the program was effective in:

- Addressing the needs of Indigenous prisoners
- Supporting a deeper understanding of arts best practice amongst prisoners, their families and prison program staff
- Increasing prisoners and former prisoners' understanding of vocational arts opportunities
- Supporting Indigenous leadership and community wellbeing through the arts
- Supporting a connection/re-connection to culture amongst prisoners and former prisoners
- Strengthening participants' art practice.

During the evaluation 12 program participants – 6 In-Prison and 6 post-release (In-Community) – were interviewed along with 8 Aboriginal Liaison Officers/ Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers in prisons and 4 other stakeholders.

Though there were some challenges/ constraints in undertaking the evaluation the findings of the evaluation provided a solid platform for moving forward. The findings indicated:

Prisoner and former prisoner interviews participating in the program faced four key challenges:

- Systemic trust and anger issues.
- Experiences of disconnection from their cultural identity
- Estrangement from family and community
- Economic insecurity after being released from prison

Those interviewed saw that The Torch program had been effective in responding to these challenges by engendering:

- An increased sense of well-being and confidence
- New levels of trust that many of the artists had not experienced before
- Opportunities for cultural reconnection
- Pre-release skills and exploration of post-release career opportunities
- Improved participation in other prison programs
- Increased awareness of arts and culture among prison staff and the wider community
- A new level of support with its inside/outside approach
- Better relationships with family and the wider community

Other stakeholders involved in the evaluation process, particularly the Corrections Aboriginal Liaison Officers and Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers, noted that participation in the program helped prisoners gain a greater interest and focus on other prison-based programs and activities including educational activities.

Whilst not a specific focus of the evaluation, it was concluded that given the lower levels of recidivism of prisoners participation in the program compared to other prisoners there is potentially significant economic benefits to be gained.

Since the 2012 evaluation The Torch has continued to grow and has demonstrated positive outcomes for Indigenous offenders inside prison and upon their release back into the community.

Anecdotal feedback from many stakeholder groups including program participants continues to indicate that the program is making a tangible difference to the lives of participants, their families and communities including:

- reducing the incidence of re-offending,
- re-connecting participants to culture, families and community,
- connecting participant to education and employment and
- contributing to financial independence.

The number of participants in both the In-Prison (IP) and In-Community (IC) programs has grown and the reach within the prison system has increased. In 2015, the program was running in 12 correctional facilities supporting 156 participants. The In-Community program was supporting 50 participants. In total 206 Indigenous prisoners were participating in both programs. In 2018, this number had increased to 15 correctional facilities with a total of 267 men and women being supported in both In-Prison (188) and In-Community programs (79). Overall, the number of participants in the program has increased by 30%. The number of staff has also increased (from 3.4 EFT positions in 2015 to 4.8 EFT positions in 2018) to support the growing number of participants including increases in the number of Arts Officers, as well as staff to support the administrative, finance, research, curatorial and marketing and promotional functions of the organisation.

Changes to systems and processes have also been implemented to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of program management, delivery, monitoring and reporting.

The Torch is anticipating further growth over the next few years following its recent success in securing further government and philanthropic funding to support the expansion of both the In-Prison and In-Community programs.

To support continued growth and achieve sustainability into the future it is critical that The Torch continues to demonstrate its effectiveness through building a strong evidence base. It is timely, therefore, to review and reflect on The Torch's achievements as well as establish a strong foundation for ongoing evaluation of the contribution The Torch program makes to reducing the over-representation of Indigenous people in the prison system. Recognising this fact, The Torch commissioned EMS Consultants in 2018 to undertake an independent process and impact evaluation of the program to assess the implementation, reach, uptake and impacts of the Program against its aim and objectives and to make suggestions for its continued improvement.

## **Relevant Evaluation Frameworks**

In undertaking the evaluation the consultants acknowledged the existence of both The Torch's own Project Logic as well as the Evaluation Framework of Corrections Victoria. Both of these "frameworks" have been relevant to the design of the evaluation methodology. The Corrections Victoria Evaluation Framework has been included given their significant investment in The Torch. These frameworks are summarised below.

**Table 2: The Torch Project Logic**

Activities (Process)	Outputs (Process)	Impacts	Outcomes (Impacts)
<p>Liaise with Corrections Victoria Staff</p> <p>Provide arts based activities within Victorian prisons</p> <p>Provide post release support to participants</p> <p>Promote the aims of the program broadly within the sector</p> <p>Conduct art exhibitions</p> <p>Promote the sale of artists' work</p>	<p>Prison-based activities (number of activities, number of participants, characteristics of participants)</p> <p>Post-release activities (number of activities, number of participants, characteristics of participants)</p> <p>Artistic works produced by participants</p> <p>Marketing of the program and art works</p> <p>Sales of artistic works (number and value)</p>	<p>Participants engage with arts based activities</p> <p>Participants develop and improve their artistic skills</p> <p>Participants develop deeper engagement with culture and country</p> <p>Participants develop increased self-confidence and self-identity</p> <p>Participants develop increased understanding of the arts industry and vocational opportunities</p> <p>Participants have a vocational pathway</p> <p>Program/ art works are marketed and community is aware</p> <p>Community members purchase art works</p>	<p>Participants have greater financial security post release</p> <p>Reduced recidivism among program participants</p>

In terms of the Corrections Victoria Evaluation Framework the evaluation design has attempted to address the indicators highlighted in green and yellow below: (green – definitely, yellow – somewhat).

**Table 3: Corrections Victoria Evaluation Framework**

Short Term		Long Term	
Prisoners' days are filled with meaningful and structured activities	Number of prison incidents decreases and good order is maintained	Improved prisoner outcomes (e.g. receive and comply with parole conditions, security ratings)	The safety of prisoners and prison staff improves
Risk factors associated with reoffending decrease prior to release (knowledge, skills, behaviour and motivations)	Risk factors associated with re-offending decrease post-release (behaviour and conditions)	Reduction in risk factors associated with reoffending is maintained	Reduction in frequency and severity of reoffending post-release
Prisoners are supported to transition from prison into community	Enhanced family/ community connectedness		Community safety increases
Prisoners' motivation and capacity to access community-based service providers post-release increases	Prisoners are more likely to engage with community-based service providers	Prisoners' engagement with community-based service providers is maintained	Savings associated with reduced prison operating cost and improved prisoner outcomes
			Community confidence in the prison system improves
<p><b>External influences:</b> Attitudes of employers, landlords and the community towards prisoners. Availability of social housing and community-based support services. Other risk factors for future offending (that are outside the influence of Corrections Victoria), participation in other prison programs (not in scope) and the impact of these programs. Factors affecting the Australian economy. Other programs delivered by criminal justice and human services agencies that impact on crime and safety.</p>			

## Evaluation Process

The evaluation process has included a mixed method approach to data collection and analysis including a review of program administrative processes, analysis of program data, interviews with In-Prison and In-Community participants, and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders including Torch Board and staff members, Corrections Victoria staff (including prison staff), funding bodies and partners and TAFE Arts Teachers delivering programs in prison settings.

The key questions/ issues addressed were:

### **Program – Process Evaluation**

- Characteristics of Program participants
- Who access the program, who doesn't
- What activities are being provided by the Program in each setting (prison and community), and the extent of participation in these activities
  - Prison-based activities (number of activities, number of participants, characteristics of participants)
  - Post-release activities (number of activities, number of participants, characteristics of participants)
  - Post-release support to participants
- How successfully the Program and art works are promoted and marketed and sales maximized:
  - Promotion and marketing of the program and arts works
  - Art exhibitions (number of activities)
  - Sales of artistic works (number and value)

### **Program – Impact Evaluation**

- The extent to which the Program is supporting the development and strengthening of participant creative skills
- The extent to which the Program provides a forum for cultural exploration, expression and strengthening among participants
- The extent to which the Program increases the understanding of participants about the arts industry and arts opportunities
- The extent to which the Program contributes to self-expression, self-identity and self-confidence, and connection to culture and country
- The extent to which the Program contributes to social and emotional wellbeing and financial stability

### **Program – Strengths, Limitations, Potential Improvements**

- Participant views on the In-Prison and In-Community programs – strengths and limitations
- Stakeholder views on the In-Prison and In-Community programs – strengths and limitations
- How the Program contributes to reductions in recidivism
- How the Program can be improved to increase its reach and impact (prison and/or post release components; promotion and marketing)

## METHODOLOGY

The evaluation project has been undertaken in a number of stages.

1. Completion and submission of two Ethics Applications to Corrections Victoria and the Department of Justice and Regulation.
2. Planning and promoting the project to Corrections Victoria to engage their support to facilitate access to In-Prison program participants
3. Working with Torch staff, including ex-program participants employed by The Torch, to develop consultations guides, promotional materials and engage the support and consent of Torch program participants to be involved in the evaluation (participation was voluntary)
4. Interviews with In-Prison program participants conducted by two Indigenous consultants in five prisons – Ravenhall (5), Dame Phyllis Frost (4), Langi Kal Kal (4), Hopkins (6), Kareenga (3)
5. Interviews with In-Community program participants (13) and past program participants (4) by phone and face to face
6. Consultations with a range of other key stakeholders including Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers, other Corrections Victoria staff, funding bodies and partners, TAFE Arts Teachers<sup>8</sup>, Torch Board members and Torch staff
7. Entering information from program participant interviews into an on-line survey tool (Survey Monkey) to enable the efficient collating of data
8. Analysing data and developing suggestions for program improvements
9. Report development and presentation to the CEO and Board members

Copies of consent forms, the generic Participant Information Sheets and interview/consultation questions are provided in the appendices to this report.

Stakeholder consultations were undertaken from April to the end of November 2018.

Each In-Community and past-program participant was provided with a \$30 gift card to thank him or her for participating in the evaluation process. In-Prison program participants were informed that at the end of the consultation process the Consultants would provide all In-Prison program participants, regardless of whether they participated in the evaluation process, with fine line brushes. This occurred at the end of October 2018.

Stakeholders consulted are summarised in table 4.

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<sup>8</sup> Five TAFE Arts Teachers delivering Indigenous Arts Programs in Prisons were interviewed. These teachers were delivering programs in Loddon, Middleton, Fulham, Hopkins, Langi Kal Kal, Dame Phyllis Frost, Margoneet, Barwon, Kareenga, Melbourne Remand Centre

**Table 4: Stakeholders consulted**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Stakeholder Consulted</b>
22	<b>In-Prison Program Participants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face interviews</li> </ul>
13	<b>Post-Release Program Participants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone and face to face interviews</li> </ul>
4	<b>Past Program Participants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone and face to face interviews</li> </ul>
7	<b>The Torch Staff</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face interviews</li> </ul>
5	<b>The Torch Board</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 face to face interview</li> <li>• Board focus group</li> </ul>
23	<b>Corrections Staff</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face interviews, focus groups and meetings with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Naalamba Ganbu and Nerrlinggu Yilam, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Branch</li> <li>○ Deputy Commissioner Operations and Deputy Commissioner Offender Management</li> <li>○ Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3	<b>Funding Bodies and Partners</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face interviews with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gandel Philanthropy</li> <li>○ City of Port Phillip</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5	<b>TAFE Prison Arts Program Teachers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face and phone interviews</li> </ul>
<b>82</b>	<b>Total Number of Stakeholders Consulted</b>

## Qualifications to the Evaluation

### ENGAGING IN-COMMUNITY AND PAST PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

As was the case in the 2012 evaluation of The Torch program, the consultants found it difficult to secure interviews with In-Community and past program participants, despite a well organised and robust process led by Torch staff. This process involved initial phone contact with potential participants by The Torch Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to explain the project and gain their consent to be involved. As a result 20 In-Community and 11 past participants agreed to be part of the evaluation project.

Of the 20 In-Community program participants (2 of whom had participated in the initial evaluation) who gave permission for the consultants to contact them to interview them, 13 were finally contacted and interviewed – a 65% success rate.

Out of 11 past participants who gave permission for the consultants to contact them to arrange an interview only 4 ended up participating - only a 36% success rate.

For the purpose of reporting, and where possible, responses from these two groups have been combined.

### CASE STUDIES

In the evaluation design there was an intention to provide three case studies to supplement information gathered through the consultation process. While verbal agreement was secured from three In-Community and past program participants to participate in the case study process, participant circumstances and time constraints eventually made this impossible.

### DATA SYSTEMS

For the purpose of this evaluation some of the characteristics of participants that could have been useful in developing an overall participant profile were either not being captured by The Torch or there were restrictions on accessing that information from Corrections Victoria e.g. dates of imprisonment and release. At the time of the evaluation The Torch was embarking on a significant upgrade of its data systems including integration of participant and sales databases. During the evaluation process the consultants worked with the Finance and Operations Manager of The Torch to determine what participant data should be collected to enhance future evaluations and these are being addressed progressively. These include additions/improvements to program enrolment forms and the implementation of new data sharing protocols with Corrections Victoria.

### CAPTURING “RECIDIVISM”

The term recidivism originates from the Latin *recidere*, which means to fall back. It is often used interchangeably with others such as repeat offending or reoffending. In the criminological literature it has been variously described as ‘the reversion of an individual to criminal behaviour’ (Maltz 1984: 1), the ‘return of a prisoner to custody’ (SCRGS 2006), the ‘reappearance of a juvenile in court’ (Victorian Department of Human Services 2001) or the, ‘reconviction of a drug court participant’ (Payne 2005). Although the technical elements of each definition may vary, there is one common theme that underpins them – recidivism is generally used for describing repetitious criminal activity, and a recidivist offender is an individual who engages in such activity.<sup>9</sup>

Recidivism as measured by Corrections Victoria refers to re-offending that results in a return to corrective services (either prison or community corrections) with a new

<sup>9</sup> Payne, J. “Recidivism in Australia – Findings and Future Research, Australian Institute of Criminology, 2007.

correctional sanction within two years of release from prison. Though slightly different, the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013-2018 includes a headline indicator to "reduce the proportion of Aboriginal people who return to prison within two years of release". "Reducing recidivism" is often cited as an indicator of success in relation to programs such as The Torch but historically has proven difficult to measure.

For the purposes of this evaluation, Corrections Victoria agreed to provide recidivism rates for Torch program participants to allow comparison with recidivism rates to the broader Indigenous prisoner population however, only if individual participants gave express permission for this information to be released to The Torch. Permission was provided by evaluation participants (through the Consent Form) but was not possible to gain for all Torch program participants without the Arts Officers contacting each person individually and obtaining their written permission.

In the case of evaluation participants, a request was made to Corrections Victoria for this information in relation to In-Community and past program participants. Given the total sample size was only 15 and of these 11 had not been out of prison for at least two years it was not possible to provide a meaningful rate of recidivism.

Data available within The Torch data systems is currently limited and, to some extent, the impact of the program on recidivism is still reliant on staff knowledge of participant circumstances. Torch staff were able to provide accurate data on the 2017-18 participants in the In-Community program in relation to "return to prison" and this data has been presented in the report. This is considered a good start to understanding what is needed to update the internal client data systems to allow accurate reporting on recidivism going forward.

Discussions have been held with The Torch staff to assist in determining what data can be gathered from program participants to allow Torch staff to report on re-offending rates going forward. An amendment to program enrolment forms has also been suggested which will require program participants to give permission for Corrections Victoria to use their personal data to provide The Torch with an overall recidivism rate for all Torch program participants. This data would be provided to The Torch as a single overall figure and would not identify individual participant reoffending incidents.

### **PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK**

This report aims to be true to feedback and views expressed by participants about The Torch program. Initial discussions with The Torch CEO about some of the feedback provided, revealed some issues that need to be taken into account when considering evaluation participant views including:

- Some criticisms/ suggestions for improvement to The Torch In-Prison program were based on participants' overall art program experiences but were issues out of the control of The Torch e.g. provision of art supplies in prisons.
- Some participants specifically gave feedback on the "assessment and selection" processes of artworks for the Confined Exhibition even though the program intention is to include any artwork which participants want to submit. In practice, Arts Officers may select a different work than the one the participant prefers. This can be due to size restrictions and/or quality of work. Choosing works is complex particularly when there are 200 or more in the exhibition. Decisions are always contextualised with the interests of both the individual and the exhibition as a whole taken into account.

These criticisms may indicate there is either a misunderstanding on the part of some participants about the Confined exhibition guidelines and/or the practice of Arts Officers is not always consistent. As a result some participants have formed a view that their work is “judged” before being accepted into the annual Confined Exhibition even though this is not actually what happens.

## **PROCESS EVALUATION FINDINGS**

### **The Torch Program Participants**

As at 30/6/18, there were a total of 267 participants in The Torch programs. These included 188 participants in The Torch In-Prison program (representing approximately one quarter (27.4%) of all Indigenous prisoners in Victoria’s prisons) and 79 participants in the In-Community program.<sup>10</sup>

In-Prison program participants were comprised of 164 men (92.6%) and 24 women (7.4%), while In-Community program participants were comprised of 66 men (83.5% and 13 women (16.5%).

### **Prison Based Activities**

The Torch is run in 15 prisons across Victoria. All Arts Officers are Indigenous and attend prisons on average every 3 – 4 weeks. Participants are provided with:

- cultural resources developed and/or sourced by The Torch to enable them to learn about their family, language, country and cultural heritage; and
- conceptual and technical advice and feedback on artistic styles.

In most prisons The Torch Arts Officers work in with TAFE Indigenous Arts Programs which are delivered weekly. These programs are run by TAFE Art Teachers, supply participants with art supplies (managed by each prison) and provide a dedicated arts space. The program offers participants the opportunity to obtain a Certificate II in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts.

While there is no formal relationship/ connection between the TAFE Indigenous Arts Program and The Torch In-Prison program, the TAFE teachers and Torch Arts Officers know each other and work together in each prison to schedule times for The Torch Arts Officers to attend the TAFE Indigenous Arts Program. That time is provided to The Torch Arts Officers to work with participants who are interested in being a part of The Torch Program and develop specific cultural artistic skills and participate in the Confined Exhibition.

The Torch Arts Officers work with interested prisoners to sign them up for the program, provides cultural resources, provide advice and feedback on art, assess artwork for the Confined Exhibition and advise participants on pricing, licensing and other arts industry issues.

In between visits the participants can contact The Torch Arts Officers through the Aboriginal Wellbeing Officer.

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<sup>10</sup> Final estimates of program participants as at 31/12/18 are 220 In-Prison participants and 80 In-Community participants. (Strategic Plan – 2018-2021).

## Community Based Activities

Arts Officers support program participants who have transitioned from the In-Prison program to the In-Community program post-release.

At the time of the evaluation two Arts Officers were supporting In-Community program participants face to face, by phone and through other means. In addition, the CEO was also providing remote support to some participants.

Participants are provided with an art supply kit when they commence to encourage them to continue their art practice. They are provided with support and advice to continue to build their cultural knowledge, confidence and art practice. They are also provided with support to connect to arts industry networks and encouraged to pursue exhibition opportunities. Arts Officers can also support participants to connect into services to help them find accommodation, training and employment opportunities and other services they may need to settle successfully back into community.

## Program Achievements

There has been significant growth (approximately 30%) in the IAPC Program since 2015. As at 30/6/18, there were a total of 267 participants in The Torch programs. These included 188 participants in The Torch In-Prison program (representing approximately one quarter (27.4%) of all Indigenous prisoners in Victoria's prisons) and 79 participants in the In-Community program.

Over the same time period the number of participants submitting work to the annual Confined Exhibition has also significantly increased (52%) with the number of artworks displayed increasing by almost a third (31%).

**Table 5: Growth of the program 2016-2018**

<b>Program Participants</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>Growth %</b>
In-Prison	156	153	188	<b>21%</b>
In Community	50	68	79	<b>58%</b>
Total participants	206	221	267	<b>30%</b>
<b>Confined Exhibition</b>				
Confined Exhibition artworks	147	165	192	<b>31%</b>
Confined Exhibition participants	113	145	172	<b>52%</b>

\* Financial year figures provided by The Torch

## IN-PRISON PROGRAM COMPONENT

Table 6 depicts prison visits by The Torch Arts Officer in the last 3 years, which overall have increased by 29% from 314 in 2015/16 to 406 in 2017/18. This increase is significant especially given there being no commensurate increase in staffing during this time.

**Table 6: Prison Visits by The Torch Arts Officers, 2016 - 2018**

<b>Prison</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Barwon	25	28	35
Dhurringile/ Beechworth	11	16	21
Dame Phyllis Frost	42	79	74
Fulham	41	32	26
Hopkins	36	33	63
Kareenga	0	11	23
Langi Kal Kal	11	17	15
Loddon	34	17	24
Marngoneet	44	10	22
Middleton	21	31	16
Melbourne Remand Centre	12	59	19
Port Phillip	33	46	51
Ravenhall	0	2	12
Other	4	10	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>406</b>

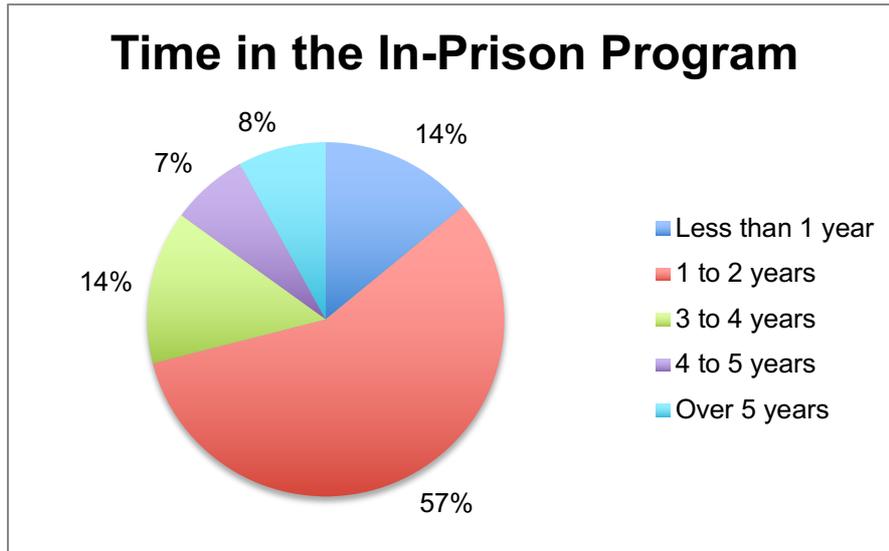
Other includes Correctional Facilities where cell size in 2017-2018 was less than 5

Women currently make up 13% of participants in The Torch In-Prison program with most of them incarcerated in Dame Phyllis Frost. In 2017-18 they received 18% of visits from The Torch Arts Officers.

**Table 7: In-Prison participants and prison visits by gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Number of men visited	143	126	164
Number of visits to male prisons	275	307	332
Number of women visited	13	27	24
Number of visits to women prisons	39	84	74
<i>Total number of participants visited</i>	<i>156</i>	<i>153</i>	<i>188</i>
<i>Total number visits to prison</i>	<i>314</i>	<i>391</i>	<i>406</i>

Typically, In-Prison program participants have been involved in The Torch for between 1-2 years (57%).



#### **IN-COMMUNITY PROGRAM COMPONENT**

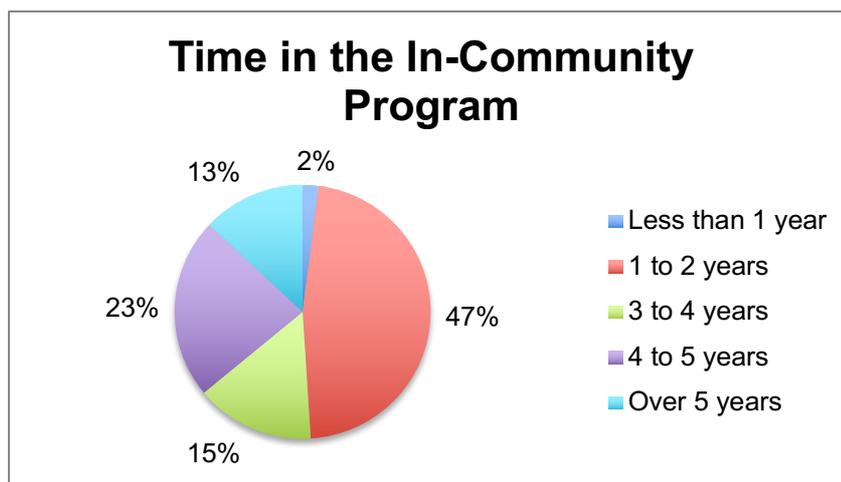
Community contact/visit numbers include physical visits to artists as well as phone calls and emails that are about making art. In reality In-Community program Arts Officers engage more often with each participant through general catch-ups or checking-in chats and/or helping artists link to other community services.

Women made up 18% of In-Community participants in 2017-2018 receiving 17% of the total visits from Arts Officers.

**Table 8: In-Community participant visits by gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Number of men visited	44	59	66
Total number of visits to male participants	115	129	199
Number of women visited	6	9	13
Number of visits to female participants	12	13	40
<i>Total number of participants visited</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>79</i>
<i>Total number of visits to all participants</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>142</i>	<i>239</i>

Typically, In-Community program evaluation participants have been involved in The Torch for between 1-2 years (47%) with a further one in five (23%) having been in the program for 4 to 5 years.



### RETURN TO PRISON

To estimate return to prison rates, data was obtained from The Torch's database for the participants in the In-Community program during 2017-18. Only data for participants who had been in the program for over 12 months was extracted. Using the data available and the knowledge of The Torch staff about participants' current circumstances, return to prison rates were calculated. A total of 66 participants were in this cohort, 10 of whom were women and 56 men. It was not possible to corroborate this data from Corrections Victoria due to privacy concerns, however there is a high level of confidence from Torch staff and the evaluators that this information accurately reflects the current situation for this cohort of The Torch participants.

**Table 9: Return to prison rates, In-Community program participants 2017-18**

Time in In-Community Program	Number of participants	Number returning to prison 2017-18	% Returning to jail during 2017/18
1- 2 years	23	3	13%
3-4 years	13	1	8%
4-5 years	15	2	13%
5 years+	15	1	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11 %</b>

These results are very positive with 89% of cohort participants remaining out of prison during this time period with the return to prison rate for men being 9% and women 20%.

Even more encouraging is that when only those participants that had been in The Torch In-Community program for over 2 years are considered (n=43), the percentage who returned to jail in 2017-18 was only 9%.<sup>11</sup> Compared to a recidivism rate for Indigenous prisoners of 53.4% and non-Indigenous prisoners of 42.8% (2016-17) this result is impressive.

<sup>11</sup> While in both cases (in program over 12 months and in program for over 2 years) the return to prison rate was higher for women the sample sizes are small and caution needs to be taken in interpreting the data.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM COMPONENT

### Marketing of Program and Art Works

The Torch promotes and shares artwork created through the program through a range of annual and one off exhibitions and events. Annual exhibitions include Confined, *Dhumbuda Munga: Talking Knowledge* and Deakin University Downtown gallery exhibitions. The Torch is proactive about creating opportunities for artists to engage with the broader art community.

The Torch also:

- Curates individualized promotions and stock room appointments for organisations and private buyers based on enquires through the organisation
- Continually builds its subscriber base and uses Electronic Direct Mail to engage with supporters, past buyers and subscribers to promote key events and products
- Has an increasing social media presence on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook through which artwork, the program and key news can be promoted and followers redirected to their online store
- Produces two calendars annually for sale
- Gives artists the opportunity to license their artworks for a fee which promotes their artwork to a broader audience.

In 2018 The Torch launched its new website which includes an online gallery to promote and sell artworks created through the program. The Torch currently has over 100 items for sale including paintings, emu eggs, scarfs, boomerangs, baskets and necklaces.

### Art Exhibitions

The Confined Exhibition is the flagship exhibition of The Torch held annually and for several years a key part of the City of Port Phillip's *Yalukit Willam Ngargee Festival*. The 2018 exhibition held at the Carlisle Street Art Space was the largest Confined exhibition with 192 artworks. This included works from 172 men and women who, at the time, were in or had recently been released from prisons in Victoria.

Each year The Torch contributes a selection of 10-15 artworks to the Koorie Heritage Trust Awards. In 2013, two of The Torch's artists were selected to contribute artwork to National Gallery of Victoria's *Melbourne Now* exhibition.

In 2018 The Torch contributed artwork to St Vincent's Art Gallery's Reconciliation Week exhibition and Norton Rose Fulbright's *Raw* exhibition. The Torch worked with La Trobe Community Health to support one artist in a solo exhibition at Central Square Shopping Centre in Ballarat. The Torch also identifies strategic opportunities for the organisation to contribute artwork to a range community NAIDOC and Reconciliation week exhibitions.

### Licensing of Artwork

The Torch licenses artwork on behalf of artists in The Torch's program, with 100% of the usage fee going directly to the artists. Artwork is licensed by a number of government and private organisations for a range of purposes including publications, merchandise and calendars. The economic benefits for participants are presented in table 10.

**Table 10: Economic benefits for participants 2015-2018**

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Exhibitions	1	4	6	6
Artworks sold	20	84	207	240*
Sales figures	\$16,200	\$120,000	\$225,404	\$256,000*
Artworks licensed	4	20	50	31*
Artwork license fees	\$3,850	\$10,500	\$22,985	\$30,000*

Source: Torch Strategic Plan 2018-2021

\* Estimated at end of December 2018

The average sale price per artwork sold was just over \$1000 with artist's "income" derived from sales in the Confined exhibition being almost \$1500.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> This figure is an estimate only based on the number of participants submitting work to the exhibition in Confined 9 (172) though it needs to be noted that some artists can have 3-4 works exhibited while others may only have 1.

## IMPACT EVALUATION FINDINGS

### Profile of Program Participants Involved in the Evaluation Project

**Table 11: Evaluation Participants**

Number of Evaluation Participants	
In-Prison	22
In-Community	13
Past Participants (no contact with Torch relating to making art in last 12 months)	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

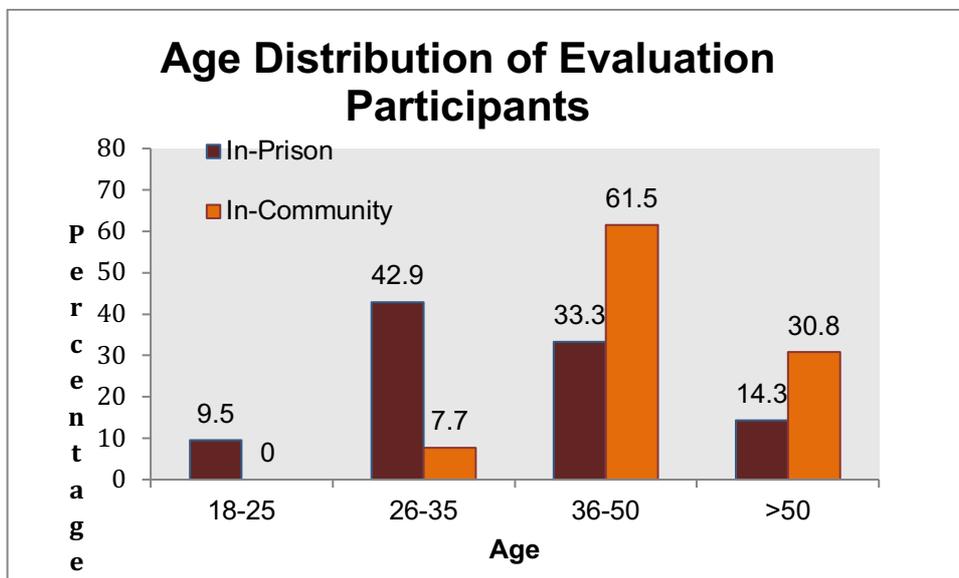
NB: 2 evaluation participants had participated in the previous evaluation in 2012.

Of the thirty-nine evaluation participants, seven were female (18%) – four in the In-Prison and three in the In-Community programs.

Only one person out of the 35 participants in the In-Prison and In-Community programs had not yet submitted their art for the annual Confined exhibition.

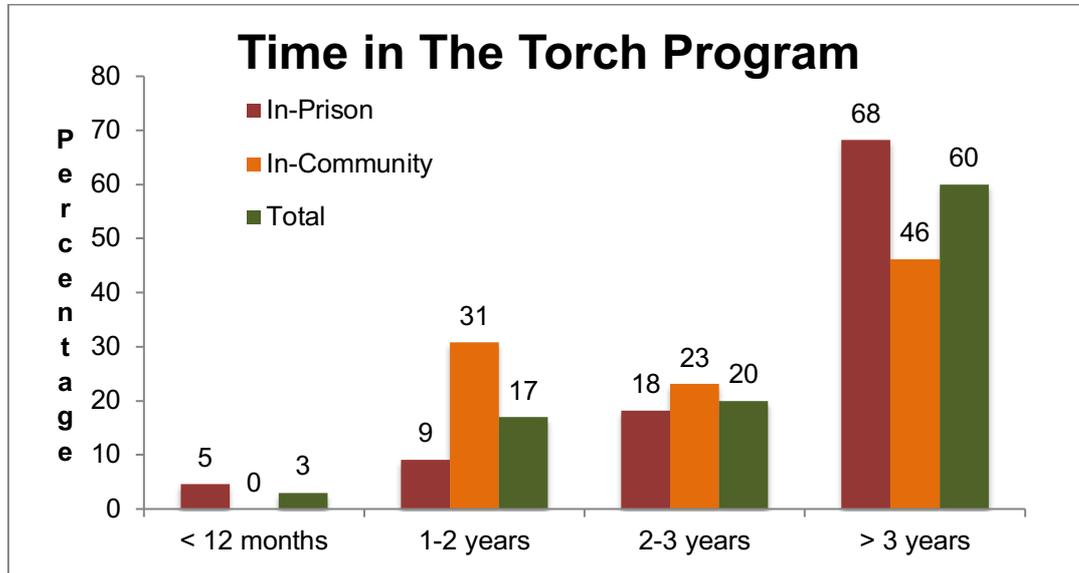
#### AGE OF EVALUATION PARTICIPANTS

The age of evaluation participants in the In-Prison program was typically 26-35, while those in the In-Community program was typically 36-50 with a significant proportion (31%) aged over 50.



### TIME IN THE TORCH PROGRAM

Most of the evaluation participants (60%) had been in the program for over 3 years – 68% for In-Prison participants compared to just under half (46%) for In-Community participants.



### HOW EVALUATION PARTICIPANTS FOUND OUT ABOUT THE TORCH

Respondents were asked how they found out about The Torch program (multiple answers were allowed).

#### *In-Prison Evaluation Respondents*

Prison staff members are a significant source of information about The Torch Program with 40% of respondents indicating they found out about the program from them with 60% hearing directly about the program from The Torch Arts Officer. A few other sources of information mentioned included:

- Other prisoners
- TAFE Arts Teacher
- Family
- Other prisoners

#### *In-Community Evaluation Respondents*

The Torch Arts Officer (In-Prison) is the main source of information for people participating in The Torch's In-Community program (83%). Prison staff were also a significant source of information when prisoners were close to or being released (40%).

### WHY EVALUATION PARTICIPANTS GET INVOLVED IN THE TORCH

Reasons for getting involved in The Torch programs provided by evaluation participants included:

- To learn more about Aboriginal art (26%)
- To practice/ improve art skills (21%)
- To be part of cultural activities (21%)
- To help with exhibiting and selling art (17%)
- To be involved with others (16%)

There were noticeable differences in responses from In-Prison and In-Community participants in relation to why they were involved with The Torch. A third (32%) of In-Community participants cited their involvement was about practicing/improving their art skills compared to a quarter (23%) of In-Prison participants. Conversely In-Prison participants were more likely to mention that the reason they were involved was for exhibiting and selling their art – 20% compared to 10% of In-Community participants.

Others comments included:

- Fills the time, helps deal with boredom in prison
- It keeps me calm, helps me with my mental health
- To learn more about culture and history

All other stakeholders were asked what they knew or had observed about the reasons participants get involved in The Torch.

Corrections staff specifically commented that the reasons Indigenous prisoners get involved in the program were to:

- Sell art and make money that can be saved up for when they get return to community
- Connect to other Indigenous prisoners – *“It brings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners together like a brotherhood”.* (AWO)

In addition, they mentioned that making art was something prisoners could do for their families and that the Courts often look on participation in Arts programs favourably at the time of parole as evidence that prisoners are engaging positively. Portfolios or photos of artwork can be considered in consideration of parole. *“It is a positive way for the Magistrates to connect with prisoners around their art.”* (AWO)

Other stakeholders also noted that Indigenous prisoners are likely to get involved in Arts programs to:

- Join in with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners to learn about and connect to culture
- Exhibit and sell their art to make money.

## **Participant Experiences in The Torch Programs**

### **EXTENT TO WHICH THE TORCH PROGRAMS MEET PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS**

The Torch Program has overwhelmingly met participant expectations. All In-Community evaluation participants (100%) indicated the program has met their expectations while almost three quarters (77%) of all evaluation participants currently in the In-Prison program felt the same.

The most commonly cited reasons for participants indicating the program had met their expectations included:

- Opportunities to sell paintings and make money
- Learning about art and culture
- Support provided by The Torch – advice on art, provision of supplies, no judgement, welcoming attitude of Torch staff
- Participating helps to manage negative thoughts and behaviour, building confidence
- Participating helps with improving health and spiritual and emotional wellbeing
- Makes things a little easier in prison

*“I only have good things to say about it [The Torch]. My time inside went by so fast because I had something to occupy my mind and keep me focused... I did it because I loved the art and doing the paintings.” (IC)*

For those who indicated the program only partially met or did not meet expectations, things mentioned included that they would like to see the Arts Officers more often or that they weren’t getting the support they needed for developing their art. One participant said, *“I want to paint what I am feeling, but we are not encouraged to do that, they only want a certain type of painting.”* Another mentioned the income generated from sales was important to him and others but that he would like to see the Arts Officer more often and would also like help having his paintings taken out of the prison for storage, otherwise *“the prison officers just take it away.”*

### **WHAT PARTICIPANTS LIKE ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

Participants were asked what they liked about the program. Answers from In-Prison and In-Community program evaluation respondents were similar.

**Table 12: What evaluation participants like about The Torch program (multiple responses allowed)**

<b>What participants like about The Torch</b>	<b>In-Prison %</b>	<b>In-Community %</b>
Talking with, and spending time with the Arts Officer	86	100
Getting involved in cultural activities	95	92
Something interesting/ meaningful to do	95	85
I learned a lot about my culture and art	86	100
I developed/ discovered my art skills	86	100
Helps me relax	100	100
Helps me feel better about myself	95	100
Helps me feel more connected to my culture	90	92
Helps my mental health/ SEWB	86	100
I was able to exhibit / sell my art	90	92

Clearly, involvement in The Torch programs provides multiple benefits for participants, all of which are highly valued.

*“I’ve been able to develop my own style of painting and I’ve sold some work. It makes you feel good about yourself. Doing art is therapeutic. I start in the morning and before I realise it the day is over. If I had known about this years ago, I would have started a long time ago and may not have gone to jail. Painting is a lot about the journey.” (IC)*

*“[It] helps my depression and helps a lot with my mental health, the money for me is just an extra.” (IC)*

*“Being part of Confined makes you feel happy on the inside. It’s good to see your work in the booklet and then in the exhibition – it’s magic to see.” (IC)*

*“I feel good inside. I look forward to doing my art and the exhibitions.” (IP)*

*“Gives me sanity.” (IP)*

*“When I do my art it’s like a mood stabilizer. It helps me stay focused and I feel more settled. I’d rather do my art than see a Counsellor.” (IP)*

*“It opens up business opportunities as well, and maybe in the future as well.” (IP)*

*“It brings to life my culture. Doing art keeps me out of trouble in here. It also gives us exposure for us in jail [as artists] because we can’t just go into a gallery and sell art.” (IP)*

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PART OF CONFINED**

Being part of The Torch art exhibitions, particularly Confined, is hugely important for participants. While making money is an important result (mentioned by 77% of evaluation participants), it was the least important reason cited. Other impacts cited more frequently included:

- Building confidence
- Being recognised as an artist
- Feeling pride
- Feeling strong as an Aboriginal person

*“I felt wanted, special and unique. When you do art you expect to just like it yourself, when other people like it, it feels great.” (IP)*

*“When I get the Confined book and I see my mob at the exhibition it makes me feel proud even though I can’t attend. Just knowing they are there makes a big difference. I think it surprises them that I can do art and then sell it.” (IP)*

*“It made me feel like part of the community.” (IC)*

## **Participant Outcomes**

### **BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS AS A RESULT OF BEING PART OF THE TORCH**

The major themes emerging from consultations with evaluation participants in relation to the benefits resulting from involvement in The Torch programs include:

- Improvements in participant social and emotional wellbeing
- Cultural connection
- Development of art skills
- Providing an opportunity for a positive future
- Financial benefits

Comments made by program participants (in order of importance) were:

Benefit	In-Prison	In-Community
<b>Improved SEWB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top of the world</li> <li>• Happy</li> <li>• On-purpose</li> <li>• Belonging</li> <li>• Hope, optimism</li> <li>• Energised</li> <li>• Self-respect</li> <li>• Strong</li> <li>• Psychological release</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident</li> <li>• Art is part of healing journey</li> <li>• Good for me</li> <li>• Keeps me alive</li> <li>• Proud</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally connected</li> <li>• Strong identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connection to culture and history</li> <li>• Builds connections to mob, family and community</li> </ul>
<b>Development of Art Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping/ mentoring younger ones in prison</li> <li>• Encouraged and encouraging</li> <li>• Comfort zones pushed</li> <li>• Helping each other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouragement offered by Kent</li> <li>• Exhibition opportunities</li> <li>• Explore / express stories through art</li> </ul>
<b>Belief in a Positive Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking about other things – other than prison – future, positive things</li> <li>• Transfers you to another place</li> <li>• Learn to be patient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get involved with things/ contribute</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to make money</li> <li>• Developed belief that art could be a financially viable future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to make money</li> </ul>

*“Staying in touch with Uncle Ray means a lot. He is a good support. Without him I may not be here.” (IC)*

*“It’s picked up my self-esteem and stopped me being a loner. I want to talk about my art and images and be able to tell people the stories about my art. This helps me realise my path and journey.” (IP)*

*“Just being able to do art one day a week allows me to connect to other prisoners. The art space is a very safe space where we get to practice our art and culture and share stories. It’s very special.” (IP)*

*“I’ve gained strength of courage and I look at life differently. I’m not just a number, I am a person. Confined helped me shift my thinking. It helps me to connect to my culture, it’s a big thing and is what I paint about – my culture.” (IC)*

*“It’s good to feel like you belong, a sense of belonging is a big thing for me. I’ve never felt like I belonged anywhere up until now.” (IC)*

Other stakeholders offered similar views in relation to the benefits gained from participating in The Torch Programs. They particularly commented on:

- The importance of connecting or re-connecting to culture
- The pride of both the participants and their families when the participants can both exhibit and sell their work
- The opportunity for participants to think about a future not connected to the justice system
- The benefits to mental health/ SEWB

*“Participants have an opportunity to think about and get more in touch with culture, learn design techniques, animals, totems and styles. This can provide a chance for participants to think more positively about their lives and future.”  
(Partner organisation).*

Other stakeholders also identified the importance of participants’ sense of identity being one that is not about their crime, but rather about their culture and story expressed through their art. It allows participants to feel connected to culture and country even if they are “jailed up”.

Similarly, for those participants who may not have had any or much connection to their culture before getting involved, The Torch gives them an opportunity to learn about their culture and the artistic styles of their tribe/ mob, gives them credibility, a voice and makes them feel connected even if they “sit outside the community”.

The process of developing art for exhibitions is also considered important. The need to research, read, and learn from others in order to paint often replaces other more negative behaviour in prison and in community. Participants also begin to think differently about their situation and their future. They can start to plan a future, starting with planning for the next exhibition. For some, success in their painting also gives them confidence to participate in other prison-based programs. It breaks the cycle of thinking that prison is the only future they may have.

Some stakeholders, particularly Corrections staff, spoke of the program providing a safe place from the prison environment which is otherwise a harsh place to be. For some the therapeutic benefits are significant. A lot of prisoners have experienced trauma in their lives and continue to be impacted by depression, anxiety, anger and suicidal thoughts. Participation in the program *“allows them to think about and do things other than think about their trauma and harming themselves”.* (AWO)

*“Prison is such a harsh place but when they are in the art room the world doesn’t seem so harsh. It opens up conversation about lots of things, even the future. Prison is not really a place where you can feel like a human being and be respected. Doing art gives them real joy or happiness, though I’m not sure if these are the right words, the feelings might be a lot deeper.” (TAFE Arts Teacher)*

In addition, participation can also help break down tensions and help build relationships between prisoners and Corrections staff including Managers. Conversations can focus on the artwork rather than individual behaviour or other prison related issues.

In relation to the In-Community program participants, other stakeholders also mentioned the importance of the art-kit provided after release from prison. The kit is

particularly important to ensure participants can continue their art practice and stay connected to The Torch program which otherwise may not happen because of the cost of continuing their art in the face of competing financial priorities. The support of The Torch staff in both continuing to advise and mentor on art style as well as connecting participants to exhibition and sales opportunities were also seen as invaluable.

### IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

The major themes emerging from consultations with evaluation participants in relation to how their involvement in The Torch programs helped improve their relationships with family and community included:

- Being recognised as an artist
- Knowing and connecting to family
- Building relationship skills

Comments made by program participants (in order of importance) were:

	In-Prison	Post-Release (In-Community and past program participants)
<b>Being seen as an artist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Painting for my family/ children</li> <li>• Telling my family my story through my painting</li> <li>• Sending paintings home to family – art is displayed in family homes helping family feel connected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not just a prisoner, seen as an artist by family</li> </ul>
<b>Knowing and connecting to family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program (through resources) helps participants to learn about family and mob</li> <li>• Learnt about family – can have conversations with family members about family connections</li> <li>• Send money to families and that helps maintain connection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps participants to have conversations with family members about history and mob</li> <li>• Increases sense of belonging</li> </ul>
<b>Building relationship skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn patience</li> <li>• Develop respect for Elders, community and family</li> <li>• Become role models to family members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidence to get involved in community</li> <li>• Become more non-judgmental towards other family members</li> </ul>

*“When I send art home it gives the family a lift and they can see something I’ve done. Mum says to people “my son did this and proudly puts my art on the wall”.” (IP)*

*“I’m able to show my son I can do this, can sell my work and send money back home to support the family.” (IP)*

*“I think it helps them [participants] to become a lot closer [to family]. I think their family would be proud of them because of their art works. I think they are able to build better networks into the community.” (IC)*

*“Painting through stories brings people closer together, it’s about connections, being closer to family. It keeps you in touch with your past and the present. Building the connections is part of healing.” (IC)*

*“Art is a cultural key that can help reintegrate the prisoners back into community in a positive way and they can then contribute to their community and they can pass on the cultural knowledge, connections and art skills onto their kids.” (AWO)*

**CHANGES FOR PARTICIPANTS AS A RESULT OF BEING PART OF THE TORCH**

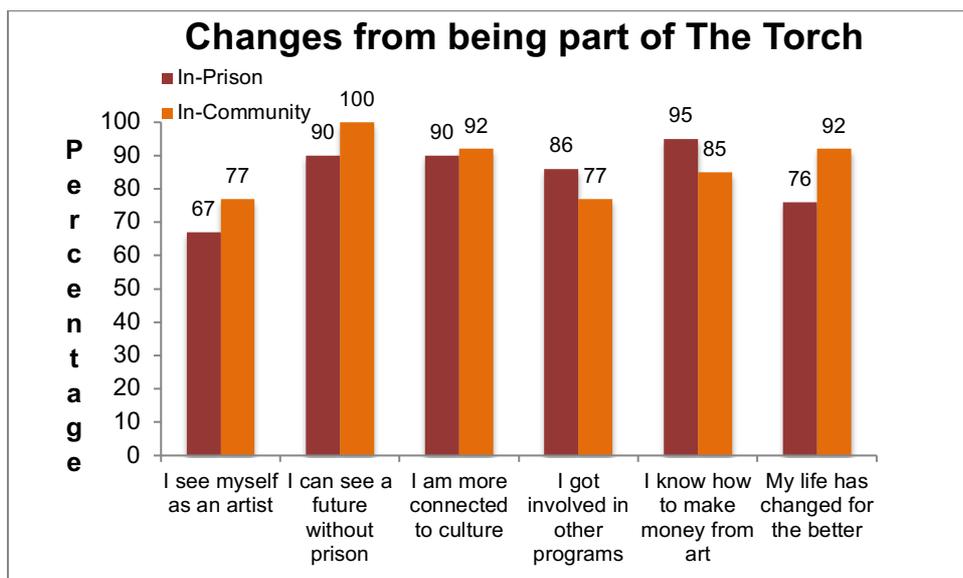
Program evaluation participants were asked about what had changed for them as a result of being part of The Torch programs.

The most frequently cited change was “seeing a future without prison” followed by “being more connected to culture”.

Seeing themselves as an artist was the least cited answer, but the consultants observed that for many evaluation participants art was still seen as something they did rather than part of their identity as a person. Nevertheless, a number who have had success and recognition through exhibitions such as Confined are starting to see themselves differently.

*“What is an artist? I see myself as an Elder who shares art. I know I can make money from my art... My life has changed for the better...I use it as a tool for myself and keeps me in perspective and in line. It is like water finds its own level. That is me and my art.” (IP)*

*“I suppose I see myself as an artist. It’s a strange feeling.” (IC)*



## ART ON THE OUTSIDE

All In-Prison evaluation participants were keen to continue their art once released from prison.

Overwhelmingly (95%) said they would continue with The Torch. Other sources of support that participants thought they would access included:

Local Aboriginal Co-op	75%
Aboriginal Men's Group	65%
Family and Friends	60%
Aboriginal Arts Organisation	55%
Aboriginal Gathering Place	35%
Healing Service	35%
Koorie Heritage Trust	35%
Other Arts Programs	30%
Creative Victoria	25%
Aboriginal Women's Group	10%

Some indicated they didn't really know how to get in contact with other organisations other than The Torch and indicated they would like Kent (CEO) and Paul (In-Prison Arts Officer) to help with the contact.

Participants in the In-Prison program were also asked how what they have learned from being part of The Torch program will help them with their art on the outside. Participant responses generally reflected three main themes.

The first relates to financial issues including:

- Knowing the business side of things and being able to sell artwork to make money to support themselves and their families
- Understanding how the potential for being financial independent would enable them to stay "off the path to jail"

The second theme relates to how art has facilitated learning around culture, mob and connection to family and community and how to share that with others.

*"It will help me teach other people learn about their culture and how to express their emotions." (IP)*

Thirdly, participants commented on how engaging in art has helped them manage their stress and stay positive.

*"I now know that when I get stressed, if I practice my art, I know how to re-focus and get back on the straight and narrow. Why would I throw away these new skills when I know how to use them." (IP)*

The Torch participants in the In-Community program were very positive about how ongoing involvement in the program is helping them to continue to develop their art. Their feedback in the main related to:

- Being more knowledgeable about art styles and techniques
- Developing a habit of regular practice / developing art
- The Torch Arts Officers helping participants address issues in their lives, which gives them the space to practice art
- Developing a passion for continuing to do art and improve as an artist

*"I want to always strive to make improvement and be the best I can. I want to stand out as an artist. I want my art to stand out at the exhibition and be noticed. Painting every day helps you change and getting feedback from Ray is very important. It's really positive and makes me feel good." (IC)*

### **REDUCING RECIDIVISM**

The majority (92%) of participants in the In-Community program confirmed that being part of the program has helped them stay out of the justice system. Comments provided included:

*"It gives me something to think about and plan for when I'm doing my art, it shifts my thinking away from other distractions." (IC)*

*"It provides me with more opportunity to think about things I can do that links to the arts. I can now see if I apply myself, I can work in this space and make a living." (IC)*

*"I look forward to painting each day and it keeps me focused and grounded, otherwise I think I'd look for other distractions. I've got a family now and I'm too old to be going in and out of jail. I'm done." (IC)*

*"It's because of the support that you get from Uncle Ray and Kent, it's a big deal. The guidance they give you to help with your art is really good. The program helps you stay out of prison. If I didn't have it, I'd be back in jail." (IC)*

Feedback from other stakeholders, particularly the AWOs/ ALOs also supported the contention that participation in The Torch program keeps people from re-offending. One AWO commented *"it is one of the best programs for Indigenous prisoners we have."*

It was generally felt that if In-Prison program participants continued with the program after they were released from prison and they were able to continue to make money from their art and/or gain employment in other fields they were much more likely not to re-offend. Learning patience and planning while in the In-Prison program were also thought to help participants post-release to work more successfully with Koorie service providers and Koorie organisations were more likely to work with them to help them reintegrate into community because of the positive attitude they had developed.

Other stakeholders indicated that they believed the program was helping to reduce re-offending but acknowledged that the evidence still needs to build to be able to conclude this irrefutably. During the consultations there were many examples given of success for individual participants including staying out of the justice system, gaining success as independent artists (exhibiting and sales), and reintegrating into community including securing accommodation and gaining employment.

*"I have seen guys blossom when they get out. There are two or three guys that have stayed out of prison and exhibited in prestigious exhibitions e.g. NGV, Museum Victoria, Shepparton Art Gallery." (TAFE Arts Teacher).*

*"Long-time serious offenders can change over time but it might take five, six or seven years. Staying connected to The Torch helps. Some men with anger, alcohol and other drug issues are able, over time, to make different decisions, plan, and replace old habits with new ones." (The Torch Staff member).*

## HOW PARTICIPANTS FELT ABOUT REINTEGRATING INTO COMMUNITY

Three quarters (77%) of In-Community participants also mentioned that through The Torch they had been able to connect into services they needed to reintegrate into the community and build a network with other artists.

Nearly all (84%) also spoke about being better able to connect into community events, feeling more positive about getting a job, and having improved social and emotional and wellbeing. Most importantly, participants (92%) spoke about feeling positive about their future.

However, it was also acknowledged that being released from prison can be very challenging for some offenders as they often have many complex issues they need to deal with and don't always have the time or "head space" to continue with their art.

*"In the prison it [the program] has an impact because they get involved in paintings. Though I have seen when they are out it is not having much of an impact because they need more support. They can go off in different directions." (IC)*

## STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM

Strengths of the program identified by evaluation program participants were:

- The cultural resources provided including the books and research undertaken for participants about the art styles of their mob/tribe
- Opportunities to learn about culture and art
- The respect and encouragement given to participants by The Torch staff
- The program being led, designed and delivered by Indigenous staff
- Staff who are supportive, non-judgmental and trustworthy
- Opportunities provided to exhibit (both through Confined and other exhibitions) and sell art
- Opportunity to socialize and connect with others in the program
- Art supplies provided to participants as they commence in the In-Community program
- The support provided to settle people back into community after release

*"The support I get [from the Arts Officer]. Getting to do my artwork and working with Uncle Ray Thomas and Kent Morris. They are amazing people. They keep us strong and give me the confidence to keep doing my art. It helps keep me and my family strong. Uncle Ray has had a big impact on me and I'd be lost without his support." (IC)*

Other stakeholders thought the strengths of the program were:

- The ability of the CEO to engage others and tell a compelling story about The Torch
- Board members who are well networked and able to attract funding and support for The Torch
- Skilled and passionate staff
- The Arts Officers being experienced and respected artists in their own right
- The one on one support provided to participants to build skills and practice styling
- The Aboriginal Art Policy Model allowing participants to earn money from their art while in prison

- The reputation of The Torch and recent growth in funding support
- Cultural booklets and other resources provided to participants (which also help TAFE Arts Teachers)
- The financial gains for *all* participants from selling their art with no commission fees
- The help provided to participants in prison to connect with each other, reduce negative behaviour and break down barriers between participants and Prison staff
- The Confined Exhibition:
  - providing an opportunity for participants to exhibit art
  - its reputation and ability to increase awareness of the arts industry and the broader community about the over-representation of Indigenous people in the justice system
- The quality of the art being produced and exhibited through Confined (which has increased over the years)
- The Confined Booklet – a source of pride for participants and their families showcasing and acknowledging participants as artists
- Older/ more experienced participants becoming role models and supporters of other participants both the In-Prison and In-Community programs
- The continuity of support for participants as they transition from In-Prison to In-Community programs
- The opportunity for licensing of artworks
- Linking participants into other exhibitions e.g. Deakin, Koorie Heritage Trust

## LIMITATIONS OF THE PROGRAM

Limitations of the program identified by evaluation program participants were generally around three main issues including:

- Not having enough access to Arts Officers
- Wanting more opportunities for exhibiting and selling art each year
- The need for clear and constructive feedback on what “art styles” are appropriate for Torch exhibitions.

The issues mentioned by In-Prison evaluation participants were:

- The need for more visits to prisons by the Arts Officers
- The need for more Arts Officers including a female Arts Officer
- Prison visits generally needing to be longer allowing more time to be spent with each prisoner
- More exhibition opportunities each year for In-Prison participants would be valuable
- The process for selection of artworks for Confined needs to be clearer – (some participants indicated they “feel judged and not good enough” even though this is not the program’s intention)

*“The program needs some clear criteria so we know what we are working toward assisting us as we prepare our work [for exhibitions].” (IP)*

For In-Community evaluation participants, comments were also provided about:

- The need for more staff (Arts Officers)
- The current Torch gallery and office space being too small

Other stakeholders involved in the evaluation felt the current limitations of the program related to:

- **Program Delivery**

- The need for more staff to meet increasing demand and provide an adequate service to all prisons across the State
- In-Prison participants have indicated to AWOs and TAFE Arts Teachers that they would like to see the Arts Officer more times during the year - there seems to be a “rush” in the lead-up time to the Confined exhibition and *“it sometimes feels like Confined is driving the program”*
- More time is needed for one-one-one support for participants for them to work on technique and style more intensely
- “Class size” in most prisons are too large limiting both the time and space for one-on-one private feedback - when “negative” feedback is provided in a group setting it can have a harmful impact on participants
- The need for clear selection criteria or explanation about how art is chosen for exhibitions
- The venue space for the Confined exhibition needs to be larger
- Currently, all exhibitions are held in and around Melbourne with no regional exhibitions offered at this point in time
- If there is no AWO or TAFE Arts program in a prison, The Torch program can be difficult to deliver
- A clearer relationship/ collaboration between The Torch program and the TAFE Arts programs run in prisons would be beneficial to the overall art class experience of participants
- Many In-Prison participants don’t understand the difference between TAFE run Arts Program and The Torch Program and see them as part of the same thing
- Currently there are limits to the type of art that can be done – mostly it is restricted to painting and it would be helpful if additional art forms could be incorporated
- There is a need for clear service / program guidelines in both programs
- The In-Community program outcomes are not clear or measurable, making evaluation difficult
- Recidivism is a difficult indicator to capture in a meaningful way and perhaps isn’t the best measure of success for the program
- Connection to, and ongoing engagement with In-Community participants can be challenging

- **Organisational Capability**

- The Torch premises are becoming too small –dedicated space for artists (post-release), gallery, office and storage space is needed
- The organisation is growing fast and needs clear strategic direction (note: the strategic plan has recently been completed)
- A lot of participants are still reliant on Kent, the CEO for art advice and support
- Connections with Indigenous organisations around the State could be strengthened
- Indigenous representation on the Board is important and potentially a risk in terms of attracting future funding and reputation (Note: the Board is already in the process of recruiting Indigenous Board members)

- **Role of Other Justice Programs and Policies in Supporting The Torch Programs**
  - The majority of TAFE Arts Teachers are non-Indigenous and are “thrown in” - they don’t have the cultural/ art knowledge they need to support work done with prisoners by Torch staff
  - Inconsistent supply of art materials across the prison system means that some participants in The Torch program in some prisons are disadvantaged
  - Improved information sharing with Corrections Victoria so that The Torch can initiate contact with In-Prison participants when they are released rather than relying on participants contacting The Torch would be helpful (Note: this is currently being addressed)
  - Lack of “wrap around” service support for participants post-release – the role of The Torch in relation to other service agencies needs clarification

## **SUMMARY OF PROGRAM IMPACTS**

The evaluation brief included four key indicators to measure the impact of The Torch program against. These included:

1. The extent to which the Program provides a forum for cultural exploration, expression and strengthening among participants
2. The extent to which the Program supports development and strengthening of participant creative skills
3. The extent to which the Program contributes to social and emotional wellbeing and financial stability
4. The extent to which the Program increase the understanding of participants about the arts industry and arts opportunities

For the purpose of assessing how well these indicators are being met each of these is addressed separately. Please note that we have separated the indicators of social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) and financial stability in our analysis.

### **THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROGRAM PROVIDES A FORUM FOR CULTURAL EXPLORATION, EXPRESSION AND STRENGTHENING AMONG PARTICIPANTS**

The program is clearly effective in providing participants an opportunity and forum for cultural exploration, expression and strengthening.

Evaluation participants from all stakeholders commented positively about the impact the program has on cultural identity and connection. Without a doubt it is a key benefit of the program for participants. The In-Prison program is particularly important in this regard, playing a critical role especially for participants who may not have much knowledge or connection to their culture and country. Many evaluation respondents commented on the fact that participation in the In-Prison program can be a place where their connection to culture starts. It does so, not only through the artistic guidance and advice provided by The Torch Arts Officers, but also through the “space” where art is made. As one stakeholder said:

*“It provides a culturally safe environment for brothers and sisters. The don’t need to feel shame, nervous or scared – it is a space where they can just connect.”*

Many stakeholders including participants, prison staff and TAFE teachers also told us that the program enables those participants who are connected to culture and are experienced in their art to support and encourage new participants by sharing their stories and cultural knowledge as well as helping with art techniques and styles.

### **THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROGRAM SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF PARTICIPANT CREATIVE SKILLS**

All evaluation stakeholder groups provided positive feedback on the capacity of the program and its staff to support the development of participant artistic and creative skills. This was true for both In-Prison and In-Community participants. In-Community participants in particular benefit from one-on-one support from the Arts Officers when they need it and the value of being able to work with such experienced and renowned artists was consistently mentioned.

Having said this, The Torch has a clear focus on developing artistic skills that are true to participants' culture and country. While advice and guidance is provided to everyone in relation to cultural knowledge and artistic technical skills, design and interpretation it appears that participants appear are not encouraged to create art in styles that they do not have sufficient cultural connection and understanding of, nor the ability to convey the intricacies of symbols via the story that accompanies the artwork/s.

During the evaluation process the consultants did receive feedback that not all program participants go down a path of painting in their cultural style. For some participants who are new to art there can be a tendency to "copy" other styles such as dots. For some there is a tendency to paint in styles that they know "sell" in the market and for others it is a matter of painting in styles (often non-traditional) that they simply "like" to paint.

The issue of whether The Torch should accommodate non-authentic cultural painting was raised by some stakeholders with no consensus emerging around this issue during the consultations. There was a general sentiment from respondents that all Indigenous prisoners need to be able to participate in art if it helps their mental health and social and emotional wellbeing and should not be discouraged to paint "for themselves". This is an issue that the consultants believe needs further discussion, and possibly one that could be had within or led by Naalamba Ganbu Nerrlinggu Yilam, the unit in Corrections with carriage of leading the design, implementation and monitoring of Correction Victoria's policies, programs and services aimed at reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal people within the Victorian correctional system.

### **THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROGRAM CONTRIBUTES TO THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF PARTICIPANTS**

All evaluation participants confirmed that participation in The Torch program improved social and emotional wellbeing.

Program participants in both programs overwhelmingly indicated that the program helps them relax, helps them feel better about themselves and helps with their mental health and social and emotional wellbeing. Some spoke about art taking them to another place where they could forget about being in prison, that it filled the time in a positive way and stopped them thinking negative thoughts. Being able to submit to the Confined exhibition was particularly important for building self-esteem and pride, strengthening relationships with family on the outside and creating hope

about a future other than prison. Having their artwork exhibited at Confined captured in the Confined booklet was also a great source of pride both for participants and their families.

Other stakeholders with direct involvement with program participants also shared stories of how the program impacts participants in a positive way. Prison staff talked about program participation helping to reduce negative behaviour, improving relationships between participants and between prisoners and prison officers, helping participants to learn patience and building participant confidence to get involved in other prison-based programs.

### **THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROGRAM INCREASES THE UNDERSTANDING OF PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THE ARTS INDUSTRY AND ARTS OPPORTUNITIES**

In-Prison participants build their knowledge of exhibiting, and “what sells” in the market. Being part of the TAFE Arts program also helps build their understanding of the arts industry.

In-Community participants clearly have opportunities post-release that are not available for In-Prison program participants and through the guidance and advice of their Arts Officer can learn about issues such as getting funding to support their work, exhibiting in both Aboriginal and mainstream galleries and getting involved in arts networks.

Having said this, the consultants believe there is more that could be done around this measure particularly in the In-Community program in relation to identifying other artistic and creative courses/programs and connections to other Aboriginal artists to further strengthen skills, self-expression, self-identity and self-confidence and connection to culture and country.

### **THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PROGRAM CONTRIBUTES TO FINANCIAL STABILITY**

Participation in the program has the potential to improve the financial stability of participants but not everyone is able to achieve this outcome.

For those in the In-Prison program the benefits of participating in the Confined exhibition include being able to provide financial support to their partners and family while they remain in prison as well as saving some money to support themselves at the time of release. These are benefits that would not otherwise be the case if Aboriginal prisoners were not participating in The Torch In-Prison program.

However, financial gain is not the same as financial stability and it is not possible to conclude that financial stability is an outcome for all Torch program participants. There are individual examples of where In-Prison participants transition into the In-Community program and continue to develop their art in ways which provide them with a viable income. Likewise, we understand that some In-Prison and some In-Community participants develop their skills and confidence sufficiently to make their way as successful artists without staying connected to The Torch. The Torch may well be the catalyst for the artistic success of some participants, but not all participants will end up making a living and achieving financial stability.

Nevertheless, the Aboriginal Art Policy Model is an important part of the program, providing a positive incentive for program participants in prison and needs to be retained and continue to be monitored and evaluated as a key contributor to participants being able to make a choice about their pathway away from prison.

## HOW THE PROGRAM CAN BE IMPROVED

### Participant Views

For In-Prison participants the main areas identified for improvement included:

- More visits from Torch Arts Officers
- Longer visits and more one on one advice and feedback
- Clearer direction on how art is selected for the Confined exhibition
- More than one exhibition a year

Other suggestions made included:

- Improved storage space for In-Prison participants' artworks
- Bigger art spaces / bigger building to show art
- Art Teachers (TAFE) need training and better understanding of culture and art styles
- More staff especially a Women's Arts Officer
- In-Community Arts Officers could do work with prisoners prior to release, to give them better support for continuing with The Torch after release
- Some different sessions from visiting artists – not just The Torch Arts Officer

For In-Community and Past Participants the main areas identified for improvement included:

- Extending the program through an increase in the number of Arts Officers in located in different areas in Victoria
- Including a range of other activities in the program including:
  - Opportunities to meet/ network with other Indigenous artists
  - Group-based tutorial days
  - Artist workshops (over several days)
  - Excursions to galleries and other exhibitions
- Increasing connection to Aboriginal spaces e.g. Co-ops – if programs can be run in Co-ops there is greater chance that *“the guys will get access to other supports and get back on track and reintegrate”*

Other suggestions included:

- More exhibitions throughout the year
- More resources – art supplies and cultural books
- Provide men and women who have been through the program with mentoring and coaching so they can become role models and support other participants
- More promotion and marketing the program *“to get the word out about how the program changes lives”*

### Other Stakeholder Views

Other stakeholder suggestions for program improvements included:

- More Arts Officers
- Visiting artist program and greater involvement of Elders in In-Prison program
- Improved integration/ linkage with Indigenous programs delivered In-Prison (AJA4 initiatives and other already established programs)
- Better coordination within Corrections Victoria of timing of visits across the range of Indigenous programs that are delivered in prisons
- Clearer communication/ transparency needed about the scope of the In-Community program

- Opportunities for In-Community program participants – workshop activities, exhibitions in galleries in metro and regional Victoria
- Training for Torch staff in trauma-informed practice to support them to work with participants who have experienced trauma and understand the triggers (including “negative feedback”/ criticism). They may also need support and coaching
- Cultural training for TAFE Arts Teachers
- Improved linkages with established programs and networks e.g. post-release programs (e.g. VACRO, VACCA) housing, drug and alcohol, training and employment, men’s behaviour change programs to enable The Torch staff to appropriately advise participants post-release how to link into the supports they need
- Stronger relationships with other arts organisations and Philanthropic organisations supporting the arts
- Improved relationships and networking with other relevant Indigenous organisations
- Establish arrangements/ partnerships with other organisations to purchase artworks e.g. Koorie organisations (ACCOs), Koori Courts, hospitals, Councils, residential and commercial developers.
- Better data capture, recording and reporting
- Develop success measures for the program (review recidivism as a key indicator of success)
- Improved infrastructure (office, gallery, artist workshop space, storage space)
- Indigenous representation on the Board (Note: being addressed).

In summary, feedback from program participants and other stakeholders indicates that the main growth areas where limitations were identified include the need to:

- Increase the number of Arts Officers
- Increase one on one time available for individual participants in the In-Prison program
- Explore regional exhibition opportunities
- Formally document program guidelines
- Finalise Indigenous representation on the Board
- Continue to develop organisational capability in relation to data collection, monitoring and reporting
- Increase formal collaboration with other programs for Indigenous people in the justice system to contribute to better “wrap around” support particularly post-release

## **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

The suggestions for improvement to The Torch detailed below have been made on the understanding that:

- The Board has recently completed a new Strategic Plan for the next three years with a focus on:
  - Extending the reach of both the In-Prison and In-Community programs and building organisational capacity
  - Strategic partnerships

- Establishing the Melbourne Torch Gallery (new premises)
- Expanding operations beyond Victoria
- The Torch is embarking on a recruitment strategy to strengthen program management and increase the number of Arts Officers in prisons (at the time of writing 2 additional Arts Officers had been employed) and the In-Community based program (including the employment of a female Arts Officer to work in Dame Phyllis Frost and Tarrengower prisons and to provide post-release support).
- The In-Community Arts Officer currently working in Gippsland has taken on an extended role to provide support to the In-Prison program at Fulham prison.
- The Torch is planning to work with Corrections Victoria to develop and deliver cultural workshops in prisons beyond painting and to include activities such as basket weaving, object making etc.
- The Torch is in the process of identifying additional exhibition opportunities to compliment the Confined exhibition.
- A body of work is in progress to improve sales and marketing of art produced through the program including on-line purchasing.
- The Torch is working with Corrections Victoria to improve data sharing to enable tracking of participants within the prison system and to facilitate Torch contact participants on release from prison.
- Work is underway within The Torch to enhance and integrate its artwork and customer relationship database and develop an evaluation framework to improve data collection processes and systems and assist in more accurate program monitoring and reporting.
- The Board is actively recruiting to extend its own membership to include Indigenous representation.
- The Torch is actively exploring alternative, larger space for the Confined art show given the continued growth in the number of works exhibited.
- In the next 12 months The Torch will embark on identifying a new location with better office space, gallery and storage facilities.

All of this work places The Torch in a strong position to address issues raised through the evaluation and continue to strengthen program delivery and outcomes. It should also be noted, that the consultations highlighted some issues impacting The Torch programs, which are not the direct responsibility of The Torch, but could be addressed with a broader system response.

### **Recommendation 1**

*Program staff, particularly Arts Officers, are provided training in trauma informed practice and the benefit of art in healing trauma*

Currently The Torch's Arts Officers are recruited based on their experience in the arts, education and community development experience. The consultants believe

that training for all Arts Officers to increase their capability and skills in relation to working with people who have or are experiencing trauma will be beneficial given that a significant number of Indigenous prisoners have been exposed to high levels of social adversity, trauma and health problems.<sup>13</sup>

## **Recommendation 2**

*The In-Prison and In-Community program models are formally documented*

Documenting the program model will help guide Arts Officers in the delivery of the program and ensure consistency in how programs are delivered in both the In-Prison and In-Community programs.

## **Recommendation 3**

*The Torch develops guidelines/ an information kit for program participants so they are clear about the program scope and what they can expect from their participation.*

Feedback through the evaluation indicated that not all participants are clear about aspects of the program including how artwork is selected and how many artworks can be submitted to each exhibition. Guidelines/ an information kit should include:

- *Program purpose and values*
- *Objectives of the program*
- *Program scope*
- *Program delivery – visits, advice, resources, feedback, etc*
- *Relationship to other programs e.g. TAFE Arts Program*
- *Information on Aboriginal art styles and protocols – the do’s and don’ts of painting (a snapshot)*
- *The Confined exhibition*
- *The Art Policy and options around how sales proceeds can be used*
- *Looking after your art*

Guidelines will help participants and other stakeholders to understand the purpose of the program, what it delivers (support, advice, feedback, exhibition opportunities) and what participants can expect to achieve through participation.

## **Recommendation 4**

*In addition to planned marketing and promotion strategies The Torch consider ways to continue building the program brand and showcasing its successes.*

## **Recommendation 5**

*The Torch develops a staff wellbeing program to ensure the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health of staff is supported.*

Through the evaluation the consultants heard and observed that The Torch staff can experience the “heaviness” of working with clients who have or who are experiencing trauma in their lives. It is well known that professionals working with traumatized clients can experience vicarious trauma, becoming stressed or burned out. This may not only impact their own mental health but also interfere with the quality of their work and interactions with The Torch participants e.g. through experiencing grief, rage, loss of empathy, and feelings of helplessness. Consideration should be given to providing training and support in self-care as well as sourcing supports outside of the

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<sup>13</sup> A study in 2013 by Ogloff, Patterson, Cutajuar, Adams, Thomas and Halacas found that 72% of Indigenous men and 92% of Indigenous women in prison had received a life time diagnosis of mental illness (compared to 45% in the general population). The most prevalent illnesses included major depressive episodes and post-traumatic stress disorder.

organisation to assist with counselling, healing and other wellbeing programs.

## CONCLUSION

The Torch Indigenous Arts In Prison and Community program is an important program, having positive impacts on participants and making a real difference to participant lives.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, cultural concepts such as connection to land, culture, spirituality, ancestry and family and community are common protective factors which can serve as sources of resilience and can moderate the impact of stressful circumstances on social and emotional wellbeing.<sup>14</sup>

The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA Phase 4) specifically identifies that Aboriginal prisoners and offenders should be provided opportunity to strengthen cultural identity and increase their connection to family, community and country in order to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the justice system. The Victorian Government is investing in a number of programs across the Corrections and Justice system to address incarceration and recidivism rates. The *Indigenous Arts In Prison and Community Program* managed, designed and delivered by The Torch plays a critical role in this space and is beginning to be able to demonstrate very positive outcomes in terms of reducing the chances of returning to jail for some participants, particularly those in the In-Community program.

This evaluation project has built on the evaluation of The Torch programs conducted in 2012 examining quantitative program data and involving an extended consultation process with a wide range of stakeholders.

The results of this evaluation have confirmed the findings of the previous evaluation including that The Torch continues to contribute to:

- improved social and emotional well-being – building self-esteem, confidence and hope in a more positive future
- enabling participants to re/connect to culture and strengthen cultural identity
- some participants being able to pursue a career in art
- raising awareness amongst prison staff and the broader community about Indigenous incarceration and the role that cultural strengthening through art can make a difference and change lives

In addition, it can be concluded that:

- The program is clearly effective in providing participants an opportunity and forum for cultural exploration, expression and strengthening.
- The program is effective in supporting the development and strengthening of participant creative skills.
- The program is clearly effective in improving the social and emotional wellbeing of participants.

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<sup>14</sup> Zubrick, S.R., Dudgeon, P., Gee, G., Glaskin, B., Kelly, K., Paradies, Y., Scrine, C. & Walker, R.; *Social Determinants of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing*, in Purdie, N., Dudgeon, P., & Walker, R, (eds) 2010, Working Together, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Practices and Principles, Department of Health and Ageing, Commonwealth of Australia, Page 81

- The program is effective in increasing the understanding of participants about the arts industry and arts opportunities
- Participation in the program has the potential to improve the financial stability of participants but not everyone is able to achieve this outcome.
- More work is needed to enable The Torch to confidently measure the impact of the IAPC on recidivism rates

All evaluation participants said it was “really important” for this program to continue.

### **SEWB**

*“It’s imperative it keeps going. If it didn’t happen, we would all go mental. It gives us something positive to do and think about and keeps us sane and out of trouble.” (IP)*

*“It builds stronger people. It helps a lot of people inside and out.” (IC)*

*“It makes a difference to the guys lives. Most of the men are lost and then when they are connected to their culture through art, positive things happen, you build pride and makes you feel good.” (IC)*

### **Cultural strengthening and social connection**

*“The Torch program creates a safe space for us to gather and do our art and connect to each other and our culture.” (IP)*

*“It’s very important to continue the program. It gives us a voice. “Inside” is a community of its own. We speak through our art and reinforce our sense of community – it gives us a voice.” (IP)*

*“Very important for the program to continue, it’s a no brainer. Without The Torch you become disconnected. The program provides opportunities to talk about art and share stories, helping to connect to the outside world and helping to connect back to culture and community.” (IC)*

*“The program helped me and it will help others just like me. You can’t underestimate the change that comes when you take part in the program. It changes you once you get to interact with cultural knowledge and start to paint your own stories.” (IC)*

### **Economic development**

*“It’s very important. Without The Torch we wouldn’t be able to sell our paintings.” (IP)*

*“It has to continue. It’s good to have some money on the side for when we get out.” (IP)*

In the time since the last evaluation The Torch has continued to grow and is now facing the next stage of its development with a significant increase in government and philanthropic funding for the next three years. This injection of financial investment reflects the increased recognition and acknowledgement of the program’s contribution to offender outcomes and will allow the organisation to respond effectively to the ongoing growth in program demand.

The IAPC program continues to gain traction and the learnings to date are important, highlighting the need to keep building on and improving the existing program activities and finding new opportunities to develop additional program activities in both the In-Prison and In-Community components. Reviewing and strengthening the way the program impacts are measured is an important piece of work ahead to ensure The Torch can confidently demonstrate that participants can walk out of prison with a stronger cultural identity, strong arts practice and capacity to reform themselves and lead a more positive life.

## **APPENDICES**

1. Sample Participant Information Sheet
2. Sample Consent Form
3. Interview/ Consultation Questions



## **Evaluation of The Torch Indigenous Arts in Prison and Community Program Participation Information Sheet**

### **Introduction**

We are inviting you to take part in this evaluation because you have been involved with The Torch Program. This information sheet tells you about the evaluation so you can decide if you want to be involved.

If, after you have read it (or had it read to you), you have any questions about the project, please talk to one of the members of our research team. Contact details are at the end of this sheet.

### **1. Who is involved in this research project? Why is it being conducted?**

EMS Consultants has been engaged by The Torch to undertake this evaluation. Karen Milward (Yorta Yorta) and Brian Stevens (Gunai) will be undertaking interviews with participants. The Torch Program has three parts.

- The program that is run in Victorian prisons to help Aboriginal prisoners learn more about their language group, culture and country and the Indigenous arts industry.
- Post release support to help participants reintegrate back into the community. It helps them to continue to build their cultural knowledge, confidence and artistic skills.
- The program's promotion and marketing which includes the annual Confined exhibition and other exhibitions. The exhibitions give Program participants a chance to show and sell their artworks and tell their stories.

### **2. Why have I been invited to take part in the evaluation?**

You have been invited to participate because you have been a participant in the program and we think your experience and thoughts about the Program will help us to make sure we continue to improve what we do.

### **3. What am I expected to do?**

We would like you to take part in a one-on-one interview with members of our Research Team. It will take about an hour. We only want to know what you think about the program and its activities.

During the evaluation process you do not need to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. If you want to, you can choose to stop the interview at any time.

### **4. What is the Participant Consent Form?**

If you want to be part of the evaluation, you will need to complete the **Participant Consent Form**, so you can confirm your interest in taking part. We will give you a signed copy of this form to keep. This form will also be signed by the researcher/s and an independent witness. You will need to give your signed consent form to one of the researchers before you start.

### **5. Do I have to take part?**

Taking part is entirely up to you. If you decide to participate, then change your mind, you may leave and/or withdraw your comments at any time without giving a reason. Your decision will not affect your relationship with The Torch or Corrections Victoria.

### **6. What happens to the information I provide?**

The EMS Consultants research team will be the only people to see the information you provide. We are committed to protecting your privacy in line with legislation (Privacy and Data Protection Act). We will manage the information you provide in a secure and confidential way.

The researchers will write a report on the evaluation findings for The Torch that will also be provided to Corrections Victoria and other funding bodies that support the work of The Torch. Nothing that identifies you will be included in any reports, presentations or papers from the project.

You can withdraw from being involved in the evaluation at any time before it is completed. If you do, we will delete all of your information and not include it in any way in any reports that are produced.

**7. Are there any risks or benefits from participating?**

Being part of the evaluation process will not help you directly. However, the information you give will be very helpful in assisting The Torch to improve the program and build the evidence about how programs like The Torch can contribute to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners.

As a way of thanking everyone who contributes to the project (regardless of whether you personally decided to get involved or not) the researchers have committed to support The Torch to purchase fine line brushes which will be made available to **all current participants** once the evaluation is completed.

**8. What else do I need to know?**

If you want to take part, please do not tell us anything about illegal activities that have not been finalised in court. If you do, the researchers may have to give that information to government agencies and courts.

The interviewers also have to tell their supervisors (The Torch) if you tell them that you have or you are thinking about hurting yourself or someone else so that relevant services can be informed (including the police if necessary) to support you and others and ensure everyone stays safe.

As part of the research, the researchers will be requesting information about you from Corrections Victoria. This information, which is about your involvement in the justice system since your involvement with The Torch program, will only be provided in a de-identified form back to the researchers. Information specifically about you will not be identifiable in any way.

**9. Who should I contact if I have any questions?**

One of the members of our research team would be happy to help if you have any questions or concerns relating to participation in this evaluation. It is important you understand what the research involves before make up your mind. We will discuss any questions you may have.

Members of the research team who will be conducting the interviews are:

- 1) Mr Brian Stevens – EMS Consultants on 0448 332 197 or
- 2) Ms. Karen Milward – EMS Consultants on 0407 048 631 or
- 3) Ms. Deb Blaber – EMS Consultants on 0411 403 826

<i>If you have any concerns about the evaluation process, please contact:</i>	<i>If you are not satisfied with the response of the evaluators to your questions or answers, please contact:</i>
Kent Morris CEO The Torch Phone: (03) 9042 1236 Email: <a href="mailto:ceo@thetorch.org.au">ceo@thetorch.org.au</a> In writing: 46 St Kilda Road, St Kilda, VIC, 3182	Department of Justice and Regulation The Secretary Human Research Ethics Committee Phone: (03) 8684 1514 Email: <a href="mailto:ethics@justice.vic.gov.au">ethics@justice.vic.gov.au</a> In writing: Level 24, 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000.

**Thank you for taking the time to consider taking part in the evaluation of The Torch Program. This information sheet is for you to keep. If you do not wish to participate, please ignore this information sheet.**



## Consent Form

If you have any questions about this form, please ask one of the EMS Consultants research team members.

I (print name) \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in the evaluation of The Torch Indigenous Arts in Prisons and Community Programs conducted by EMS Consultants on behalf of The Torch.

The researcher and/or my chosen support person has discussed the evaluation study with me. I have read (or had read to me) and kept a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and understand generally what is involved in this research. I have had the chance to ask questions about this research and have received answers that I have understood and am satisfied with. I agree to take part because:

1. I know what I am expected to do and what this involves.
2. The risks and inconvenience of being involved have been explained to me.
3. I am happy that all my questions have been answered fully.
4. I know the project may not help me directly.
5. I understand that I can withdraw from the evaluation process at any time without any questions.
6. I know I don't have to answer questions if I don't want to.
7. I know that I must not talk about any illegal activities that have not yet been finalised in court.
8. I understand that my participation will not affect the relationships I have with The Torch, Corrections Victorian or any service provider I use.
9. I can get a summary of the results of the evaluation study when it is completed.
10. I understand that the researchers will be requesting information about me from Corrections Victoria and I consent for Corrections Victoria to provide that information back to the researchers in a way that will not identify me in anyway.
11. I know my personal information will be kept private.
12. I agree to the publication of results from this evaluation so long as details that might identify me are not included. (An example of the prime publication of this evaluation will be the Evaluation Report which will be available to The Torch strategic partners and anticipated to be available on The Torch website. Information on individual participants will not be identified in the publicly available report.)
13. I am satisfied with the explanation of the evaluation study as it affects me and my consent is freely given.

Signed by the participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by an independent witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Print name of independent witness in full) \_\_\_\_\_

Address of independent witness (*Professional or Home*): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by the researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions about this research please contact Deb Blaber, Principal Researcher, EMS Consultants, PO Box 15, Hampton, Vic, 3188: Phone 0411 403826. This research is being monitored by the Department of Justice and Regulation Human Research Ethics Committee. Any ethical concerns about the research can be referred to the Secretary, Department of Justice and Regulation Human Research Ethics Committee, Level 24, 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne Vic 3000. Tel: 8684 1514. [A signed and witnessed **copy must** be given to the participant.]

## Questions used in Interviews and Consultations

### 1. TORCH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Questions	Stakeholders
<b>What sort of art are you making now?</b>	In-Prison program participants  In-Community program participants  Past Participants
<b>What other cultural activities are you involved in?</b>	In-Prison program participants  In-Community program participants  Past Participants
<b>Where do you work on your art?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prison Art Room</li> <li>• In your own cell</li> <li>• Common area in prison</li> <li>• Not doing any art at the moment</li> </ul>	In-Prison program participants
<b>Where do you work on your art?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At home</li> <li>• Community space / ACCO</li> <li>• Other (specify).....</li> <li>• Not doing any art at the moment</li> </ul>	In-Community program participants  Past Participants
<b>When did you start making art?</b>	In-Prison program participants  In-Community program participants  Past Participants
<b>How did you find out about The Torch?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torch Arts Officer came to the prison and told me about it</li> <li>• Referred from other agency/ program</li> <li>• Someone told me about it</li> <li>• Prison staff told me about it</li> <li>• I participated in the program last time I was in prison</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	In-Prison program participants  In-Community program participants  Past Participants

Questions	Stakeholders
<p><b>Why did you get involved in the program?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People I knew were involved</li> <li>• To be part of cultural activities</li> <li>• To practice/ improve my art skills</li> <li>• To learn more about Aboriginal art practice &amp; styles</li> <li>• To help me exhibit and sell my art</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past Participants</p>
<p><b>How long have you been involved in the program?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 12 months</li> <li>• Between one and two years</li> <li>• Between two and three years</li> <li>• More than three years</li> </ul>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p>
<p><b>How long were you involved in the program?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 12 months</li> <li>• Between one and two years</li> <li>• Between two and three years</li> <li>• More than three years</li> </ul>	<p>Past Participants</p>
<p><b>Has the program met your expectations?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Partly</li> <li>• Didn't really have any expectations</li> </ul> <p><b>In what ways?/ Why not?</b></p>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past Participants</p>
<p><b>What do you like about the program?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The talking with/ spending time with the Arts Officer</li> <li>• Getting involved in a cultural activity</li> <li>• Something interesting / meaningful to do</li> <li>• I learned a lot about my culture and art from my mob</li> <li>• I developed/ discovered by art skills</li> <li>• Helps me relax</li> <li>• Helps me feel better about myself</li> <li>• Helps me feel more connected to my culture</li> <li>• Helps my mental health/ SEWB</li> <li>• I was able to exhibit/ sell my art</li> <li>• I can now make money from doing my art</li> <li>• Other, please specify:</li> </ul>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past Participants</p>

Questions	Stakeholders
<p><b>Have you exhibited your art through The Torch program (e.g. the annual Confined exhibition or other exhibitions)?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Not Yet</li> </ul> <p><b>If yes, what did it mean to you to be able to be part of the exhibition/s?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felt there was more meaning to my life</li> <li>• Built my confidence</li> <li>• I felt recognised as an artist</li> <li>• I felt proud of myself</li> <li>• I felt strong as an Aboriginal person</li> <li>• I made some money</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past Participants</p>
<p><b>What has been most valuable to you? (e.g. what have you most gained from being involved?)</b></p>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past Participants</p>
<p><b>Can you tell me what, if any, effect The Torch has had on you?</b></p>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past Participants</p>
<p><b>How does being involved in the program help people improve their relationships with their family and/or community?</b></p>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past Participants</p>
<p><b>Do you think it's had an impact on other prisoners? If yes, in what ways?</b></p>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past Participants</p>

Questions	Stakeholders
<p><b>Do you think you'll continue to work on art when you're released?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Not sure</li> </ul> <p><b><i>If yes, Where do you think you could get support to continue your art once you're out?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with The Torch post-release</li> <li>• Local Co-op</li> <li>• Gathering Place</li> <li>• Healing Service</li> <li>• Aboriginal Arts Organisation</li> <li>• Creative Victoria</li> <li>• Other Arts Programs</li> <li>• Koorie Heritage Trust</li> <li>• Aboriginal Men's Group</li> <li>• Aboriginal Women's Group</li> <li>• Family and friends</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul> <p><b><i>If no or not sure, Why do you feel that way?</i></b></p>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p>
<p><b>How is the program influencing your development as an artist?</b></p>	<p>In-Community program participants</p>
<p><b>Are you still making art?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p><b><i>If yes, what are you doing right now?</i></b>  <b><i>If no, why not?</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can't afford it (materials too expensive)</li> <li>• Have other priorities right now</li> <li>• No longer interested</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	<p>Past Participants</p>
<p><b>Why did you stop being involved in The Torch Program?</b></p> <p>No longer interested  Found it hard to access Arts Officers  The level of support offered was not enough  Did not connect well with Arts Officer  Linked into other arts programs/ networks which meet my needs  Other things in life got in the way  Fell back into old ways  Other</p>	<p>Past Participants</p>

Questions	Stakeholders
<b>How has the program influenced you as an artist?</b>	Past participants
<b>How do you think the things you've learned about working on your art, exhibiting, and selling your art will help you when you get out?</b>	In-Prison program participants
<b>How are the things you've learned about making, exhibiting, and selling your art helped you since you left prison?</b>	In-Community program participants  Past participants
<b>With The Torch's support, have you made other community links, or tapped into other programs, exhibitions or opportunities?</b>	Past participants
<b>What has changed for you as a result of being part of The Torch Program?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I see myself as an artist</li> <li>• I can see a future that doesn't involve prison</li> <li>• I feel more connected to my culture</li> <li>• I got involved in other programs in prison that helped me</li> <li>• I can make money from my art</li> <li>• I feel my life has changed for the better</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	In-Prison program participants
<b>Has continuing your art since prison helped you to stay out of the justice system?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <b>How/ why not?</b>	In-Community program participants  Past participants
<b>In what ways has being part of The Torch program helped you reintegrate back into community?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was able to connect into services needed to help settle back in</li> <li>• My relationships with family/ community improved/ are positive</li> <li>• I kept focused on something positive rather than going backwards</li> <li>• I had greater confidence/ self-esteem</li> <li>• I feel better connected to my culture and stronger in identity</li> <li>• It helped provide me with a source of income from sale of artwork</li> <li>• Helped me to build a network with other artist</li> <li>• Helped me get involved in relevant community events</li> </ul>	In-Community program participants  Past participants

Questions	Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I linked into training relevant to my art/ work/ financial goals</li> <li>• I felt motivated and confident about getting a job</li> <li>• I feel positive about my future</li> <li>• Helped with my Social and Emotional Wellbeing</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What has changed for you as a result of being part of The Torch Program?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I see myself as an artist</li> <li>• I can see a future that doesn't involve prison</li> <li>• I feel more connected to my culture</li> <li>• I got involved in other programs in prison that helped me</li> <li>• I can make money from my art</li> <li>• I feel my life has changed for the better</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	<p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past participants</p>
<p><b>What are the best things about The Torch program?</b></p>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past participants</p>
<p><b>What doesn't work so well in The Torch program?</b></p>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past participants</p>
<p><b>How could The Torch program be improved?</b></p>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p>
<p><b>How important is it for the program to continue?</b></p>	<p>In-Prison program participants</p> <p>In-Community program participants</p> <p>Past participants</p>

## 2. OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Questions	Stakeholders
<b>How are you involved with The Torch?</b>	Funders/ partners  Board Members  Torch Staff  AWOs/ ALOs  TAFE Arts Teachers
<b>How long have you been involved?</b>	Funders/ partners  Board Members  Torch Staff  AWOs/ ALOs  TAFE Arts Teachers
<b>Why did you decide to get involved?</b>	Funders/ partners  Board Members  Torch Staff  AWOs/ ALOs  TAFE Arts Teachers
<b>How have you been involved in promoting and supporting the Program in the prison/s you work in?</b>	AWOs/ ALOs  TAFE Arts Teachers
<b>What attracts prisoners to the program?</b>	AWOs/ ALOs  TAFE Arts Teachers
<b>Why do some prisoners choose not to get involved in the program?</b>	AWOs/ ALOs
<b>What benefits does the program provide to participants:</b> a) while they are in prison  b) after they are released from prison	Funders/ partners  Board Members  Torch Staff  AWOs/ ALOs

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
<b>What does the program offer prisoners that they otherwise would not experience during their stay in prison?</b>	Funders (Corrections) AWOs/ ALOs TAFE Arts Teachers
<b>What are the differences you see in Aboriginal prisoners who engage in the Program compared to those who don't?</b>	AWOs/ALOs
<b>What outcomes have you seen for participants in the program?</b>	Funders/ partners Board Members Torch Staff AWOs/ALOs
<b>Do you think the program has any impact on rates of recidivism/ re-offending for Aboriginal prisoners?</b>	AWOs/ALOs
<b>Why is this program important? To who?</b>	Funders/ partners Board Members Torch Staff
<b>What have you learned from working with Aboriginal prisoners engaged in the Program?</b>	AWOs/ ALOs TAFE Arts Teachers
<b>How would you rate your relationship with The Torch program staff?</b>	TAFE Arts Teachers
<b>What do you see as the strengths of The Torch program?</b>	Funders/ partners Board Members Torch Staff
<b>What are its limitations?</b>	Funders/ partners Board Members Torch Staff AWOs/ ALOs TAFE Arts Teachers

Questions	Stakeholders
<p><b>Do you have suggestions or ideas about how The Torch program could be improved?</b></p>	<p>Funders/ partners  Board Members  Torch Staff  AWOs/ ALOs  TAFE Arts Teachers</p>
<p><b>How important is it for the program to continue?</b></p>	<p>Funders/ partners  Board Members  Torch Staff  AWOs/ ALOs  TAFE Arts Teachers</p>