



PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Exhibit 3

The content of this exhibit is in video format
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[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/
House/Indigenous_Affairs/The_growing_presence_of_inauthen
tic_Aboriginal_and_Torres_Strait_Islander_style_art_and_craft/
Videos.](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Indigenous_Affairs/The_growing_presence_of_inauthentic_Aboriginal_and_Torres_Strait_Islander_style_art_and_craft/Videos)

Bec Mac: I'm here for the fake art campaign and I'm with Jade Balfour, a woman who knows a lot about how Indigenous work works within institutions and what is necessary to protect it.

Jade Balfour: I work for the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, the Aboriginal and Culture WA Unit.

Bec Mac: This is part of the collection you work with. Can you tell us a bit about this collection.

Jade Balfour: We have acquired Aboriginal artworks over the years to support the industry and to allow the public to experience and learn stories through the artworks. As custodians of the collection and of these precious artworks, we need to make sure that their integrity is preserved, the correct stories are told and the artists are properly represented.

Bec Mac: So this is one of the works. What's this work?

Jade Balfour: This is a work by Nada Ginny Bench—a Walmajarri woman and an artist who painted with Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency, which is in Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley region. It depicts her country, so the importance of this work is that you can see the topographical representations of country. It's really important to record the story of her country and where she grew up in her homeland.

Bec Mac: How does fake art impact on artists like this and their communities?

Jade Balfour: I suppose it takes away the integrity of the artists' work. The stories are also sacred, and there is the spirituality of whether they're dreaming stories or of their country. This is another one by Kija artist Kathy Ramsay who paints at Warmun Art Centre. It just means that their stories are tainted by fake artworks. For consumer confidence, it means that people are unsure of what they're buying and that affects the artist because people may question what they're buying—

Bec Mac: The authenticity.

Jade Balfour: Exactly—the authenticity. The majority of people want to make sure that they're buying ethically, so they may not purchase because they're worried about what they're purchasing. It works to disenfranchise everybody involved, so it's really important. The main thing is that artists are able to tell their stories with integrity and for that not to be taken away by people who are creating fake art.

Bec Mac: How important is it for this to go to parliament and become legislation?

Jade Balfour: Very important. I think that a lot of people in the industry have wanted this to happen for a long time, so it's good that it's finally reached federal level so that something can be done to regulate the fake art industry.

Bec Mac: What more can be done for Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to support and promote their work now?

Jade Balfour: In the sense of—

Bec Mac: What more can we do to support and promote real Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander arts and crafts?

Jade Balfour: I suppose that a lot of work is created in regional and urban settings, and I think that we can invest more to properly resource those industries. We can identify the different needs of urban communities versus regional communities and remote areas.

Bec Mac: They're very different, aren't they?

Jade Balfour: They are very different. You've got accessibility and geographical differences with remote areas. Sometimes urban settings in metro areas can be forgotten about. You've got Aboriginal artists practising here too in Noongar country. I think that maybe the campaign will assist by revisiting some of those issues that the artists and communities are facing.

Bec Mac: What can we, as a community, do to stop fake art? What's our responsibility? Putting it back to us, what can we actually enact or be vigilant about?

Jade Balfour: I think everybody's responsible. If you see fake art being produced and you don't call it out, you're complicit in that artwork being produced. Providing a mechanism for where to go and who to go to when you see it happening is the responsibility of the industry or whoever. If you—the general public—are in a shop and you see some fake Aboriginal art being produced, you can reasonably talk to the shop person who may have no idea about what's actually going on. It's about educating. We're all responsible for educating and being informed, and we need places to go to report it or speak up about it.

Bec Mac: Great. Thank you so much. It's been fantastic to meet you.

Jade Balfour: Nice to meet you. Thank you.