



PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Exhibit 4

The content of this exhibit is in video format
please click on the link to view

[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: Hi. Bec Mac here for Popsart. I am in the beautiful city of Perth in Western Australia and I'm about to talk to one of Western Australia's most loved and successful and incredible artists. His name is Peter Farmer, and here he is. Hi, Peter. How are you going?

Peter Farmer: Good. How are you?

Bec Mac: Fabulous. Thanks so much for making time to talk to me, because I want to chat about this project, which is for the City of Perth. It's called *Historic Heart*. Can you talk us through what you've been doing here, Peter?

Peter Farmer: Yes. Basically, what they've been doing is putting it up around the streets of the city of Perth and just making it look more beautiful in that way with Aboriginal artwork—and not only Aboriginal artwork but different artwork as well—and the opportunity just to put something up in the city I think was really great.

Bec Mac: Beautiful. Now you've just been working with Professor Jimmy Choo designing shoes. How did that come about?

Peter Farmer: I met him through a friend, and when I met him I took some artwork just to show him. He liked a few ideas, so we got in contact again and really worked too on doing a design for a shoe. He actually got my design and put it on a shoe, and I feel really good.

Bec Mac: They look amazing; I love them. I wouldn't mind a pair actually. I think I'd look good in those. Recently, Chanel brought out a boomerang. This is a whole different scenario. How did you feel when you saw that?

Peter Farmer: No, I never really had a look at it, but I'm not quite sure what to think about that.

Bec Mac: I guess they just did it as a fashion piece with no consultation with the community or any artists. You've worked with Jimmy, and I guess that comes to the question of what we're talking about: fake art and how it impacts on the community and yourself. How do you see the impact of fake Aboriginal art and Torres Strait Islander art?

Peter Farmer: I think if you don't converse with your elders in your community or a person that we look up to as an elder—that's where we get most of our culture and stories from, so if I'm not talking to them or any member of the community I think it's wrong—you're not on track when you do produce a piece of artwork, because it's not original.

Bec Mac: So consultation is crucial on that level of preserving culture. But, also, what's the impact economically on the community if, like, 80 per cent of souvenirs are fake?

Peter Farmer: I think it has just taken away from our culture and our work itself, because we're out there trying to make a dollar like everybody else. We do believe our culture's very strong in what we do, and when we teach it to different people in the community they love it. But you'll get someone else who'll come along who doesn't know anything about it, and that's wrong; they shouldn't do it at all. I feel really strongly that it shouldn't happen, but we have people who think they know everything and they know our culture, but they don't.

Bec Mac: How important is it to make it illegal—to change the law in parliament—so that this can't happen?

Peter Farmer: I hope they change it, because there are a lot of things happening; other people are getting away with it and leaving us blackfellas on the outer. It's something that, if it's really there and it's in writing, I think is a big step for us Noongar—Aboriginal people.

Bec Mac: Yes, totally. What more can we do to promote and support Indigenous artists and Torres Strait Islander artists as a society and a culture?

Peter Farmer: I think it's just more movement within the communities and different states and a lot of people getting more involved, especially the artists, and really taking it to the next level.

Bec Mac: Yes, because you collaborate with heaps of different organisations. Didn't you recently design the design for the footy team?

Peter Farmer: Yes, the West Coast Eagles. I met with the Indigenous worker there, Phil Narkle, and we spoke to the players as well. My concept was: I spoke to the players, and they really wanted certain colours, and I went away and worked with it and came back. And they were happy with the final design. So, yes, it's always good to have a one-on-one and talk to people to know what they want.

Bec Mac: Was that process easier because the football code already had someone who could liaise with you directly?

Peter Farmer: Yes. I think it made it much easier for me to go in and talk to the footy club itself with an Indigenous person there, and I thought that was really good.

Bec Mac: I think, for organisations to work in best practice with Indigenous artists, to have someone that's the liaison or from the community is a really great practice.

Peter Farmer: Yes, I think it is. I think we need very strong people or a person to work with the community and the wider community to bring forth what we want as an Aboriginal group and how we see what our culture and everything brings to us. We're all happy to share our knowledge and all that in the right way that we do share it.

Bec Mac: And, as a community, what can we also do to work to stop fake art happening?

Peter Farmer: Buy the original stuff that we, the people, produce. I think you get more enjoyment and feel more at ease when you buy an original piece of artwork that's done by an Aboriginal person. It's got the meaning and the story that goes with it.

Bec Mac: Thank you so much. We've had a few little interruptions—and we've had this really noisy truck here—but we've powered on. It's been lovely to meet you, and thank you. Peter Farmer: check out his work.

Peter Farmer: Thank you very much.