Lauren Moss  
Minister for Tourism and Culture  

**Missing artwork discovered after 35 years**  

13 December 2016  

A 44 year old painting by Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri that was presumed missing following many years of extensive searches has been discovered in the most unexpected of places.

With an estimated value of $100,000 – $150,000, records of the 1972 artwork; *Untitled (Travelling Dreaming)* show that the painting was loaned to the Chief Minister’s office sometime after 1978, then disappeared in 1981.

By chance, during a recent routine meeting, Director of Arts NT Angela Hill, identified the artwork (often referred to as a Papunya Board) hanging in the new Tourism and Culture headquarters in Darwin City.

This was later confirmed by Northern Territory art historian Anita Angel who identified the work as an early board painting by artist Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri.

The Department of Tourism and Culture Chief Executive Officer Alastair Shields said he found the artwork in an old store room and put it on display in his office.

"The office needed a little bit of life and colour, however, I had no idea that I was hanging a prized piece of Northern Territory art," Mr Shields said.

"I was shocked to learn it was a one-of-a-kind Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri painting that had been missing for 35 years, last seen in the Chief Minister’s Office in 1981."

Minister for Tourism and Culture Lauren Moss said the discovery was a great find for the art community and the family of Mr Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri.

"Quite simply, this is a wonderful moment of luck that brings a terrific end to a 35 year mystery," Ms Moss said.

"Although a very unusual mode of discovery, I’m very pleased to hand this incredible piece of Territory history to its rightful home – The Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory."

The Papunya Board (picture attached) shows radiating lines which indicate a journey and the circular forms are sit-down places. The bottom two Ceremonial Men are singing a bush tucker song and the
The top two figures are not singing at all. The curved linear pattern represents bush tucker, and the key features are roundels for campfires in a travelling sequence.

The artwork, *Untitled (Travelling Dreaming)* will now be returned to its rightful home at the Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory and will join other magnificent artworks in the exhibition *Tjungungutja: Early Papunya Paintings* opening in July 2017.

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[Artwork attachment]