Animal fibres

Fur and human hair are used mainly for making ritual and other items to adorn the body. Initiated men from the Pitjantjatjara people used to wear head bands made from spun human hair. Today they have replaced these with red woollen head bands.

Human hair and animal fur were also woven into a variety of personal items. Pitjantjatjara men wore belts made from hair. They carried personal objects in tightly woven string bags and small tools around in these belts which were made from 28 strands of spun hair. Each strand was 60 centimetres long and was twisted double to strengthen it.

Head bands were often made to wear during important ceremonies.

This man is spinning human hair to make string.
The Pitjantjatjara women wore skirts made from hair and fur, which looked rather like small aprons. They also made head pads from hair and fur which they wore when balancing wooden bowls on their heads.

Pitjantjatjara women spin hair and fur by hand by rolling it on their thighs and then winding it onto a spinning frame. Single strands of string are then spun into a tight two-ply thread by reversing the direction of the original spinning twist. Nowadays Pitjantjatjara women use these same spinning techniques to make woollen thread from which they weave woollen bags and blankets.