



**NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL**

# **CORPORATE PLAN**

2016/17 to 2019/20



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## FOREWORD

The Northern Land Council has a proud history extending over four decades. Its genesis was as an agency to help Aboriginal people in the Top End engage with the Woodward Commission, established in 1973 to inquire into land rights in the Northern Territory.

The NLC became a Commonwealth statutory authority in January 1977 when the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* came into effect. Its roles and responsibilities have much expanded in the years since, and the NLC today is the largest Indigenous representative organisation in Australia, with more than 250 employees (nearly 60 per cent of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent).

Statutory reporting requirements have also increased over time, including the need, under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, to produce this Corporate Plan.

The purpose of the plan is to provide information about the significant activities which the NLC will undertake over the four years, 2016/17 to 2019/20. The plan describes our purposes, what we will do to achieve those purposes and how we will know that we have achieved them.

The NLC is having to cope with an increasing workload in a climate of budget constraint, and the attainment of the goals laid out in this document will, to a large extent, depend on future budget provisions.

It should be noted, though, that the organisation is committed to achieving savings and efficiencies through a regime of rigorous management and financial controls, and improved systems (although, the installation of new systems such as for IT and distribution of royalties is itself dependent on funds being available).

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

We, as the Accountable Authority of the Northern Land Council, present the 2016/2017 Northern Land Council Corporate Plan, which covers the financial years 2016/17 to 2019/20 (a period of four years), as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.



Joe Morrison

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Samuel Bush-Blansi

CHAIRPERSON

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL

The Northern Land Council (NLC) is an independent statutory authority of the Commonwealth, enabled by the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA), an Act of the Commonwealth Parliament.

Under the Act, we are responsible for assisting Aboriginal peoples in the Top End of the Northern Territory to acquire and manage their traditional lands and seas. Since the Act was passed, more than 50 percent of the land in the NT has become Aboriginal land, in addition to approximately 85 percent of the coastline.

A large proportion of the remaining land and seas is subject to Native Title.

The ALRA is a strong foundation on which to build social, cultural and economic growth for Traditional Owners.

The NLC's constituency is a representation of the Traditional Owners within its jurisdiction. There are seven regions within the NLC's jurisdiction. The NLC constituency has about 36,000 Aboriginal residents, 80 percent of them living in regional and remote areas in about 200 communities ranging in size from small family outstations to communities with populations of about 3000 people. The majority of these people speak an Aboriginal language as their first language. Many are multi-lingual, and English is often a secondary language. Customary law is alive and vibrant and constitutes the primary rules by which people continue to conduct their lives.

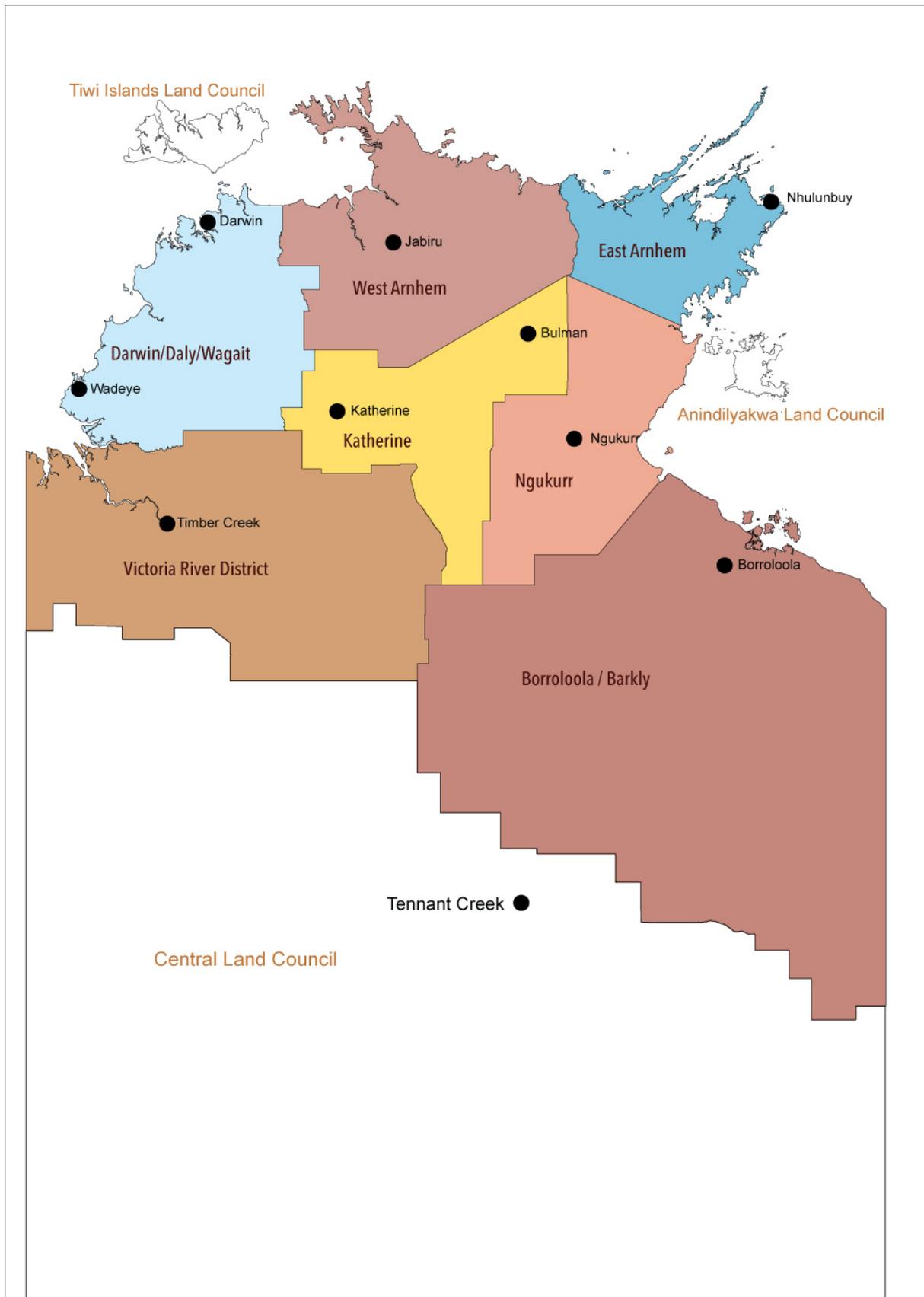
The NLC is also the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) pursuant to the *Native Title Act 1993* for the Northern Territory's northern region, covering approximately 605,819 square kilometres of land, including the Tiwi Islands and Groote Eylandt.

As an NTRB under the *Native Title Act 1993*, the NLC's statutory functions are to:

- facilitate and assist native title holders to make native title applications;
- respond to proposed future acts and negotiate agreements including Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs); and
- assist to resolve disputes between constituents about native title applications, future acts, ILUAs or other native title matters.

The NLC also has functions under the following legislation: the *Aboriginal Land Act* (NT), *Cobourg Peninsular Aboriginal Land, Sanctuary and Marine Park Act 1996* (NT), *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth), *Mining Management Act 2015* (NT), *Mineral Titles Act 2016* (NT), *Petroleum Act 2016* (NT), *Geothermal Act 2016* (NT), *Environmental Assessment Act 2013* (NT), *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth), *Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) National Park Act 1989* (NT), *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* (NT), *Pastoral Land Act 1992* (NT), *Special Purpose Leases Act 1953* (NT) and the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 2006* (NT).

### 1.3 OUR LOCATIONS AND OFFICES



## 1.4 OUR STRUCTURE

The NLC's supreme governing body is the Full Council of the Northern Land Council, made up of 83 members; 78 Councilors are elected every three years from across the NLC's seven regions, and five women are co-opted to make the full complement of 83 members. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman are elected by the Full Council. The Council has also established a nine-member Executive Council and seven Regional Councils. The Executive Council comprises a member appointed from each of the seven regions, plus the Chair and Deputy Chair.

The Full Council represents the rights and priorities of Aboriginal people within the NLC region. It shapes policy and strategic direction and, in accordance with the ALRA, approves agreements for the use of Aboriginal land on behalf of Traditional Owners.

The Full Council has delegated some decision-making powers to the Executive Council and to the seven Regional Councils.

The Executive Council appoints the Chief Executive Officer who has day-to-day responsibility for the NLC's administration and operations. The CEO works closely with the Chairman and the Executive Council and is responsible for implementing Full Council decisions, policies and strategies, and enforcing sound corporate governance.

The NLC's operations are managed by seven branches:

- **SECRETARIAT:** provides policy, communications advice and strategic support to the CEO and Chairman, and to the NLC's elected arms.
- **LEGAL:** provides legal advice to the administrative and elected arms, and to Traditional Owners.
- **ANTHROPOLOGY:** identifies and consults with Traditional Owners in order to secure and protect their rights in land.
- **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** oversees the NLC's network of nine regional offices beyond Darwin and provides logistics support for consultations required under the ALRA and Native Title Act.
- **CARING FOR COUNTRY:** hosts and provides administrative support to land and sea Ranger Groups, provides policy support and advice on land and sea management issues and supports joint management of National Parks.
- **MINERALS & ENERGY:** provides advice to enable Aboriginal people to understand the nature and purpose of mineral and petroleum resource development proposals on their lands and manage potential environmental impacts.
- **CORPORATE SERVICES:** delivers financial, IT, human resource and administrative support to the other branches, including fleet asset management. Corporate Services is also responsible for corporate compliance under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act* and the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*.

Two specialist committees are included in the NLC structure:

- The WOMEN'S SUB-COMMITTEE of the Full Council deals with the priorities and issues relevant to Aboriginal women in the region.
- The AUDIT COMMITTEE, with an independent Chairperson, oversees good governance and the management of risk.

Our relationships with government and non- government organisations are important for delivering our goals and objectives. Some of these key stakeholders include:

- Australian Government;
- Northern Territory Government;
- Local Government Shires;
- Industries: Mineral, Petroleum, Pastoral, Tourism and Fishing;
- Businesses;
- Non-Government Organisations.

## 2. PURPOSES

The purposes of the NLC over the next four years are prescribed by the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the *Native Title Act 1993*.

Our responsibilities are laid out under Section 23(1) of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*:

- To ascertain and express the wishes and the opinions of Aboriginals living in the area of the Land Council as to the management of Aboriginal land in that area and as to appropriate legislation concerning that land; and
- To protect the interests of traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginal interests in, Aboriginal land in the area of the Land Council; and
- To assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites on land (whether or not Aboriginal land) in the area of the Land Council; and
- To consult with traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginals interested in, Aboriginal land in the area of the Land Council with respect to any proposal relating to the use of that land; and
- Where the Land Council holds in escrow a deed of grant of land made to a Land Trust under section 12:
  - To negotiate with persons having estates or interests in that land with a view to the acquisition of those estates or interests by the Land Trust; and
  - Until those estates or interests have been so acquired, to negotiate with those persons with a view to the use by Aboriginals of the land in such manner as may be agreed between the Land Council and those persons; and
- To negotiate with persons desiring to obtain an estate or interest in land in the area of the Land Council:
  - where the land is held by a Land Trust--on behalf of traditional Aboriginal owners (if any) of that land and of any other Aboriginals interested in the land; and
  - where the land is the subject of an application referred to in subsection 50(1)(a)--on behalf of the traditional Aboriginal owners of that land or on behalf of any other Aboriginals interested in the land; and
- To assist Aboriginals in the area of the Land Council to carry out commercial activities (including resource development, the provision of tourist facilities and agricultural activities), in any manner that will not cause the Land Council to incur financial liability or enable it to receive financial benefit; and
- For land that is a community living area and in the area of the Land Council--to assist the owner of the land, if requested to do so, in relation to any dealings in the land (including assistance in negotiating leases of, or other grants of interests in, the land); and
- To assist Aboriginals claiming to have a traditional land claim to an area of land within the area of the Land Council in pursuing the claim, in particular, by arranging for legal assistance for them at the expense of the Land Council; and
- To negotiate, and enter into agreements, as necessary, for the purposes of subsection 70(4); and
- To compile and keep:
  - a register recording the names of the members of the Land Council; and

- a register recording the names of the members of the Land Trusts holding, or established to hold, Aboriginal land in its area and descriptions of each area of such Aboriginal land; and
- To supervise, and provide administrative or other assistance for, Land Trusts holding, or established to hold, Aboriginal land in its area; and

Our responsibilities as a Native Title Representative Body under Section 203B(1) of the *Native Title Act 1993* are:

- the facilitation and assistance functions referred to in section 203BB;
- the certification functions referred to in section 203BE;
- the dispute resolution functions referred to in section 203BF;
- the notification functions referred to in section 203BG;
- the agreement making function referred to in section 203BH;
- the internal review functions referred to in section 203BI;
- the functions referred to in section 203BJ and such other functions as are conferred on representative bodies by this Act.

Our purposes as prescribed above are added to by our Vision and Values.

## 2.1 OUR VISION AND GUIDING VALUES

### OUR VISION

To have the land and sea rights of Traditional Owners and affected Aboriginal people in the Top End of the Northern Territory recognised and to ensure that Aboriginal peoples benefit socially, culturally and economically from the secure possession of our land, waters and seas.

### OUR GUIDING VALUES

We will:

- Promote the cultural integrity of the Full Council and its membership to the broader Aboriginal community;
- Consult with and act with the informed consent of Traditional Owners in accordance with the ALRA and the NTA;
- Acknowledge the linguistic and cultural diversity of the region and communicate clearly and effectively with all Aboriginal people;
- Respect, promote and support Aboriginal law, tradition and practice;
- Be responsive to Traditional Owner needs and advocate on Aboriginal peoples' behalf;
- Be open, transparent and accountable;
- Behave in a manner that is appropriate and sensitive to cultural differences;
- Uphold the principles and values of social justice, and act with integrity, honesty and fairness;
- Treat our stakeholders with respect; and
- Proudly reflect the corporate image of the organisation.

## 3. ENVIRONMENT

### 3.1 OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

#### Geographic

- The NLC operates across an area of approximately 605,819 square kilometres, plus (for NTRB purposes) the surrounding seas including the Tiwi Islands and Groote Eylandt;
- This area takes in a wide variety of landscapes from desert country to vast wetland systems, tropical savannah and coastal regions;
- Substantial parts of the region are poorly served in terms of roads and communications infrastructure;
- The area of operation is within the wet-dry tropics of Australia and, about 93% of the region's annual rainfall occurs in the wet season (from November to April), when many of the constituent populations are accessible only by charter flights;
- The constituents live in about 200 scattered communities ranging in size from small family groups to settlements of up to 3,000 people.

The environment has a substantial impact on the work of the NLC, affecting travel and communications, and the costs of providing core services can be disproportionate to servicing urban settings.

The challenging and remote geography impacts the costs of:

- Travel & accommodation;
- Communications, including telephone and internet services;
- Housing and accommodation for regional and visiting staff;
- Meetings and consultation with Traditional Owners in remote places with scattered populations; and
- Capital and recurring motor vehicle expenses, and wear and tear on these vehicles.

#### Social, Economic and Regulatory

- Over the past few years, various government initiatives - such as the Intervention, the introduction of the super shires and the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia - have led to a growth of the NLC's core functions, especially in increasing land use agreements;
- The demanding policy environment brought about by successive governments contributes to additional workloads for NLC staff and the Council;
- Extensive mining activity leads to pressure on staff resources for dealing with large scale and highly technical projects such as hydraulic fracturing;
- Since the passing of ALRA, approximately 50 percent of land in the NT has become Aboriginal freehold land in addition to 85 percent of the coastline;
- A large proportion of the remaining land mass is subject to Native Title.

All the above matters impact significantly on the NLC's resources (human and financial resources, in particular) required to meet increasing demands for processing third parties as well as advocating for the interests of the NLC constituents.

As the volume of core work increases, there is a corresponding need for increased capacity to meet demand. While recent efficiency initiatives have delivered savings, increased funding is needed to meet the growing demand for services; otherwise, the efficiency of those services may be compromised.

### 3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

An environmental scan using an examination of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats produces the following table.

<b>STRENGTHS (NLC has full or partial control of these factors)</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES (NLC has full or partial control of these factors)</b>
Change Management is continuing to create efficiencies and improve governance. However, each stage of the Change Management process is slow because of the need to prioritise the budget to the more urgent demands.	Capacity-building across the organisation is required, but restricted budgets have meant that this is not prioritised as highly as it should be.
Improvement of Financial Management systems has allowed management to better control the NLC's finances and assets and find efficiency dividends.	Reform of royalty systems continues – but, without a significant injection of funds, improvement is limited by capacity.
Regional Office structures can be further developed, to allow a devolution of systems and services to the regions where activities take place and Aboriginal people live.	Not enough staff, and not enough staff of required skills – this factor is a funding issue as well as one of the availability of skilled staff.
A strong and engaged Full Council, Regional Councils, and Executive Council structure means that policy and strategy is derived from the constituents upwards.	Not fully funded to react to expectations of Traditional Owners – the NLC has only partial control because the annual budget is beyond its control, while prioritisation of the budget leads to strain in other areas of NLC operations.
The NLC has a proven consultation process for obtaining free, prior and informed consent of traditional owners. This can be further developed but needs additional funding for more capacity to reinforce the stress-points caused by increasing demand.	Succession planning and mentorship still requires attention.
Successful ranger programs and Community Development initiatives can enhance the NLC's presence in communities and the delivery of better services	Outdated technology and other equipment. This is being reviewed and will be updated in instalments.

<b>OPPORTUNITIES (NLC has little or no control over these factors)</b>	<b>THREATS (NLC has little or no control over these factors)</b>
A Community Planning and Development Unit can facilitate localised development for traditional owners and the affected community.	Insufficient funding for start-up and on-going operations.
Change in demographics – increasing Aboriginal population could lead to increasing opportunities for Aboriginal people, but will certainly lead to increased demand for services.	Non-viability of some Shires and Aboriginal Corporations will mean a call on non-core NLC services.
Younger people’s expectations about education, employment, and economic opportunities, as well as improvements to social and health services – beyond the control of the NLC, but could lead to a massive demand for NLC services.	Impact of mineral and petroleum development and production in particular.

The above factors have been considered when formulating strategies.

## 4. PERFORMANCE

The Performance and Measurement Framework of the NLC over the next four years is laid out in the table below.

The detailed Goals, Objectives and Strategies of the NLC's Strategic Plan have been categorised into five long term priorities:-

1. The prosecution of the NLC's ALRA and NTA responsibilities to acquire and protect Aboriginal property rights;
2. Facilitating Community Development so as to protect and develop Aboriginal use of land and seas;
3. Maintaining and continuing to strengthen Ranger groups on country to further protect and maintain Aboriginal land and seas;
4. Develop and maintain a comprehensive communications system to facilitate the provision of information and advocacy of Traditional Owners' interests; and
5. Continually improving the NLC's policies and procedures to achieve efficiency and best practice governance.

The delivery strategies and measurements of performance for the future years 2017/18 to 2019/20 are subject to change depending on circumstances and the environment at the time, and will likely change to incorporate actual performance in past years and any new factors emerging when the corporate plan for those years are being prepared.

<b>Prosecute ALRA and NTA responsibilities to acquire and protect Aboriginal property rights.</b>			
Delivery Strategy:			
2016/17 to 2019/20			
Resource the Legal and Anthropology Branches (subject to budget) to provide capacity in Human Resources and systems so that the legislative responsibilities can be prosecuted efficiently and in a timely manner.			
Update GIS Mapping capabilities.			
Through the management of the available capacity, continue the prosecution of Land Rights claims, and the court schedule of Native Title claims.			
Through the management of available capacity, consult with Traditional Owners and negotiate Land Use Agreements and other commercial agreements.			
Provide policy and advocacy for cultural integrity and protection of intellectual and cultural rights.			
Measurement:			
2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal and Anthropology Branch vacant positions filled in accordance with the budget for the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal and Anthropology Branch vacant positions filled in accordance with the budget for the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal and Anthropology Branch vacant positions filled in accordance with the budget for the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal and Anthropology Branch vacant positions filled in accordance with the budget for the</li> </ul>

<p>year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10% of remaining ALRA land claims finalised</li> <li>• Native Title claims completed in accordance with Court schedule</li> <li>• 75% of Land Use Agreements on foot are completed in the year.</li> </ul>	<p>year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% of remaining ALRA land claims finalised</li> <li>• Native Title claims completed in accordance with Court schedule</li> <li>• 75% of Land Use Agreements on foot are completed in the year.</li> </ul>	<p>year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% of remaining ALRA land claims finalised</li> <li>• Native Title claims completed in accordance with Court schedule</li> <li>• 75% of Land Use Agreements on foot are completed in the year.</li> </ul>	<p>year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% of remaining ALRA land claims finalised</li> <li>• Native Title claims completed in accordance with Court schedule</li> <li>• 75% of Land Use Agreements on foot are completed in the year.</li> </ul>
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<b>Facilitate Community Development so as to protect and develop Aboriginal use of land and seas</b>			
Delivery Strategy:			
2015/16 to 2019/20			
<p>Create a Community Planning and Development Unit to assist and facilitate Traditional Owners access to resources to economically and socially develop their own groups, and to support Aboriginal Corporations and Associations in their development.</p> <p>Develop and promote an “economic prospectus” for the region, identifying the demand, capability and opportunities for Traditional Owners to participate in economic development on their lands.</p>			
Measurement:			
2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Planning and Development Unit is created and model tested with one Aboriginal group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Planning and Development Unit is in existence and functioning, and implemented in three regions.</li> <li>• Scope and commence the preparation of an economic prospectus for the test region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Planning and Development Unit is functioning in all the NLC’s seven regions.</li> <li>• Complete the preparation of the economic prospectus for the test region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of operations is completed with recommended improvements and scope.</li> <li>• Commence marketing of the economic development opportunities on Aboriginal lands to third parties;</li> </ul>

**Maintain and continue to strengthen Ranger groups on country to further protect and maintain Aboriginal land and seas**

Delivery Strategy:

2016/17 to 2019/20

Strengthen the capabilities of Ranger Groups through training and capacity building.

Continual improvement of operations of Ranger groups, management activities of IPAs and jointly managed parks.

Measurement:

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to funding, Caring for Country Branch review and plans endorsed and implementation commences</li> <li>• Capabilities of Ranger groups and management of IPAs and managed parks meet best practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capabilities of Ranger groups and management of IPAs and managed parks meet best practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capabilities of Ranger groups and management of IPAs and managed parks meet best practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capabilities of Ranger groups and management of IPAs and managed parks meet best practice</li> </ul>

**Develop and maintain a comprehensive communications system to facilitate the provision of information for and provision of advocacy of Traditional Owners' interests**

Delivery Strategy:

2016/17 to 2019/20

Develop and implement a communications and public relations plan.

Organise events, and prepare resources and publications, publish the Land Rights News quarterly; develop a program of media releases and press conferences around issues of the day.

Maintain the alliance with Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT).

Regularly liaise with Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and other institutions.

Measurement:

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Rights News published on time.</li> <li>• Press releases or speeches at forums are published, advocating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Rights News published on time.</li> <li>• Press releases or speeches at forums are published advocating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Rights News published on time.</li> <li>• Press releases or speeches at forums are published advocating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Rights News published on time.</li> <li>• Press releases or speeches at forums are published advocating</li> </ul>

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<b>Continuously improving the NLC's Policies and Procedures systems for more efficiency and best practice governance.</b>			
Delivery Strategy:			
2016/17 to 2019/20			
Develop, implement, and continually improve policies and procedures that will strengthen the governance and management of the organisation, so that NLC operates in accordance with best practice principles and meets all statutory reporting obligations in order to provide its Aboriginal constituents with responsive, transparent governance and administration.			
Measurement:			
2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous year's Financial Statements are submitted and published on time.</li> <li>• Policies and procedures are implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All external and internal audit recommended actions are completed.</li> <li>• All filings are completed on time.</li> <li>• Policies and procedures are reviewed annually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All external and internal audit recommended actions are completed.</li> <li>• All filings are completed on time.</li> <li>• Policies and Procedures are reviewed annually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All external and internal audit recommended actions are completed.</li> <li>• All filings are completed on time.</li> <li>• Policies and Procedures are reviewed annually.</li> </ul>

## 5. CAPABILITY

The long term strategies that the NLC will implement in each of the four years covered by this corporate plan have been detailed in the previous chapter.

The NLC's capability to deliver outcomes is based on the following resources:

- Human Resources;
- Information and Communications Technology;
- Budget;
- Capital and infrastructure resources.

### Human Resources

The NLC's human resources capabilities rely on hard working and experienced staff. The NLC continues to be under-resourced in terms of personnel numbers (capacity) as well as the skills and abilities required (capability). While the latter can be met through appropriate training and upskilling, the former depends on the annual budget from government.

In order to provide the human resources required, the NLC will need to fill all identified vacancies, access staff with more experience and required skills, program professional training and development, and specifically attract professionally qualified Aboriginal people.

### **Information and Communications Technology**

The NLC continues to deal with the issue of ageing equipment and unsuitable software. In 2016/17 the NLC has commissioned a review by EY to identify solutions.

The challenge over the next four years is to ensure that the needs of the organisation for specialist software such as GIS mapping software and specially configured Enterprise Resource Planning software are met in order to implement its strategies. This will also require regular upgrading of hardware and other systems in order to maintain an efficient information technology resource to support the increasingly digital workload.

### **Budgetary Resources**

The NLC's funding is derived mainly from the Aboriginals Benefit Account and from the Native Title funding streams, as well as some other grant-funded activities.

While ABA funding has not increased in real terms, the activity arising from the number of Land Use Agreements and land claims being administered has substantially increased over the past six years.

The NLC therefore continues to face constraints from the increasing activity, as against the annual ABA funds. The risk if these budgetary resource requirements are not met is that the implementation of some strategies will be delayed.

### **Capital and Infrastructure Resources**

Due to the geographic environment in which the NLC operates there is a requirement for significant investment in motor vehicles. Motor vehicles are used mostly off-road and their values depreciate fast.

There is a need to acquire more vehicles and replace them regularly in order to for the NLC to increase its work capacity. The NLC's strategy is to mitigate cost by replacing vehicles regularly before their trade-in values depreciate.

## 6. RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

The organisation's risk oversight and management system is designed to provide appropriate information to the Accountable Authority at appropriate times.

The NLC's risk oversight and management system is based on a risk management plan and risk-mitigation strategies, including consideration of:-

- Risk avoidance (e.g. avoidance of the activity that gives rise to the risk).
- Risk transfer (e.g. insurance).
- Risk mitigation (limit of the activity)
- Monitoring of identified risks and how these are being handled on a regular basis.
- Ensuring identified risks are written into the job descriptions of relevant staff, clearly setting out responsibility and accountability.

A key part of the risk management strategies is the incorporation of strong financial and management controls as part of the financial policies and procedures, including authorised delegations and computer controlled procurement and payment policies.

The NLC's Audit Committee has oversight of risk management. The Audit Committee has a majority of independent members and meets at least four times a year. As part of regular reviews, the Audit Committee will consider whether there are risks additional to those in the register that need to be assessed and managed, and whether existing strategies to manage risk need to be modified.

The Audit Committee also has oversight of financial management and compliance with statutory reporting responsibilities.

The NLC's Internal Audit Charter ensures that the Internal Audit function will be contracted to an independent public accounting firm, independent of management. The scope of the Internal Auditor will be to play an active role in:-

- Developing and maintaining a culture of accountability;
- Facilitating the integration of risk-management into day-to-day business activities and processes; and
- Promoting a culture of cost-effectiveness and self-assessment.

The scope of internal auditing activity includes, but is not limited to, the examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and internal controls, as well as the quality of performance in carrying out assigned responsibilities to achieve the NLC's goals and objectives.

The Audit Committee will report to the Executive Council once a quarter.