



**NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL**  
CORPORATE PLAN  
2015/16–2018/19



*Cover: Dancers at 2015 Garma Festival  
at Gulkala, East Arnhem Land.*

*Above: Men's camp, Full Council  
meeting, Barunga, June 2015.*

*Left: Traditional Owners Gerard Meeyai (left)  
and Teddy Carlton at a sacred site in the  
proposed Ord 3A buffer zone, near the WA border.*



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*Above: NLC Full Council members with staff and visiting guests at Barunga, June 2015.*

*Left: Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion receives gift at land hand-back ceremony, Borroloola, May 2015.*



## FOREWORD

The vision of the Northern Land Council is 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 people benefit socially, culturally and economically from the secure possession of our land, waters and seas.

In working towards our vision we recognise as a key article by which the organisation accords, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – specifically the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

Our corporate mission is to have an experienced and capable organisation that effectively serves Aboriginal peoples' interests in the Territory's land, waters and seas – one that is fully focused and committed to achieve our strategic goals over the next four years.

Our focus is now, more than ever, sharper, targeting further development on Aboriginal lands and waters including the introduction of an Community Development Unit, the reform of the Royalty system, and the preparation of a development prospectus for the region. We will provide increased governance support to the Council. We will increase community engagement and deliver more accessible and efficient services to Aboriginal people of the NLC region.

In the quest for continuous improvement we will embark on a project to review our organisation's structure to ensure it is best placed to successfully meet the challenges ahead. In the coming year, we will also review our policies and procedures including our financial systems to ensure we deliver effective and efficient corporate management and good governance.

We are confident that by successfully delivering on our Corporate Plan we will take positive and meaningful steps to realise our vision for the NLC and, as a consequence, we will all take pride in our achievements.

Joe Morrison  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Samuel Bush-Blanasi  
CHAIRPERSON



# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

We as the accountable authority of the Northern Land Council, present the 2015/2016 Northern Land Council Corporate Plan, which covers the financial years 2015/16 to 2018/19 (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-Blanasi  
CHAIRPERSON

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL

The Northern Land Council is an independent statutory authority of the Commonwealth. In 1976 the Parliament of Australia passed the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA) which is our enabling legislation. Under this Act, we are responsible for assisting Aboriginal peoples in the Top End of the Northern Territory to acquire and manage our traditional lands and seas. Since the Act was passed approximately 50 percent of the land in the NT has become Aboriginal land in addition to 85 percent of the coastline. A large proportion of the remaining land and seas is subject to Native Title.

For nearly 40 years, the NLC has remained an important body through which the Aboriginal people of the Top End make our voices heard on the whole range of issues which impact on our lands, seas and communities. The ALRA continues to be a strong foundation on which to build social, cultural and economic growth for Traditional Owners.

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

The NLC's key constituents are the Traditional Owners within its region. About 36,000 Aboriginal residents, with 80 percent living in regional and remote areas – in nearly 200 communities ranging in size from small family outstations to communities with populations around 3000.

The majority of Aboriginal peoples in the NLC region speak an Aboriginal language as their first language. Many are multi-lingual, and English is often a secondary language. Customary law is vibrant and alive within the region and constitutes the primary rules by which people conduct their lives.

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

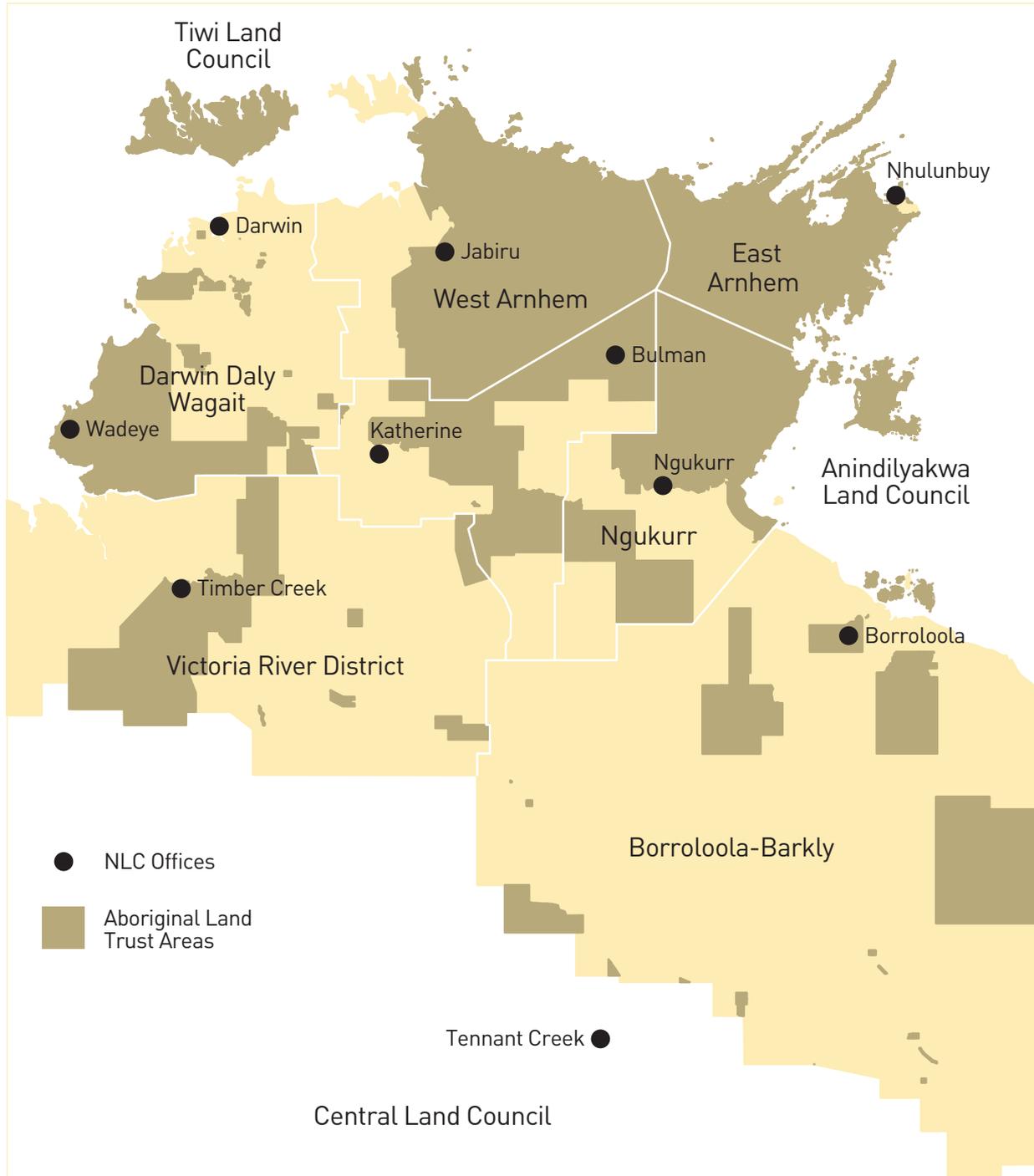
- To facilitate and assist native title holders to make native title applications
- To respond to proposed future acts and negotiate agreements including Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs)
- To assist to resolve disputes between constituents about native title applications, future acts, ILUAs or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

The NLC combines its native title functions with its other statutory functions to increase administrative efficiency and flexibility.

The NLC also has functions under the following legislation: *Cobourg Peninsula Aboriginal Land, Sanctuary and Marine Park Act 1996* (NT), *Lands and Mining Tribunal Act 2012* (NT), *Mining Act 2011* (NT), *Mineral Titles Act 2010* (NT), *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 Full Council, the supreme governing body, comprises 83 members – 78 are elected every three years from across the NLC's seven regions, and five women are co-opted. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman are elected by the Full Council.

Below the Full Council is a nine-member Executive Council which comprises the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, plus a member elected from each of the seven regions.

The Full Council represents the rights and priorities of the 36,000-plus Aboriginal people within the NLC region. It shapes policy and strategic directions and approves agreements regarding 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 administrative operations. The CEO works closely with the Chairman and the Executive Council.

The CEO is responsible for the leadership and management of the organisation, implementing Full Council decisions including policies, driving the NLC's strategic direction, setting priorities and enforcing sound corporate governance.



*Right: NLC Full council Meeting, Barunga, June 2015.*



### Seven branches support the CEO:

1. **SECRETARIAT:** provides policy and strategic support to the CEO and Chairman and to the NLC's elected arms.
2. **LEGAL:** provides sound legal advice to the administrative, elected arms and Traditional Owners.
3. **ANTHROPOLOGY:** identifies and consults with Traditional Owners in order to secure and protect their rights in land.
4. **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** oversees the NLC's network of nine regional offices beyond Darwin and provides logistics support for consultations required under the Aboriginal Land Rights and Native Title legislation.
5. **CARING FOR COUNTRY:** hosts and provides administrative support for land and sea Ranger Groups and supports joint management of National Parks.
6. **MINERALS & ENERGY:** provides advice to enable Aboriginal people to understand and consent to (or refuse) proposals to explore/mine for minerals or petroleum products on their land.
7. **CORPORATE SERVICES:** delivers financial, IT, human resource and administrative support, including property and fleet asset management to all branches.

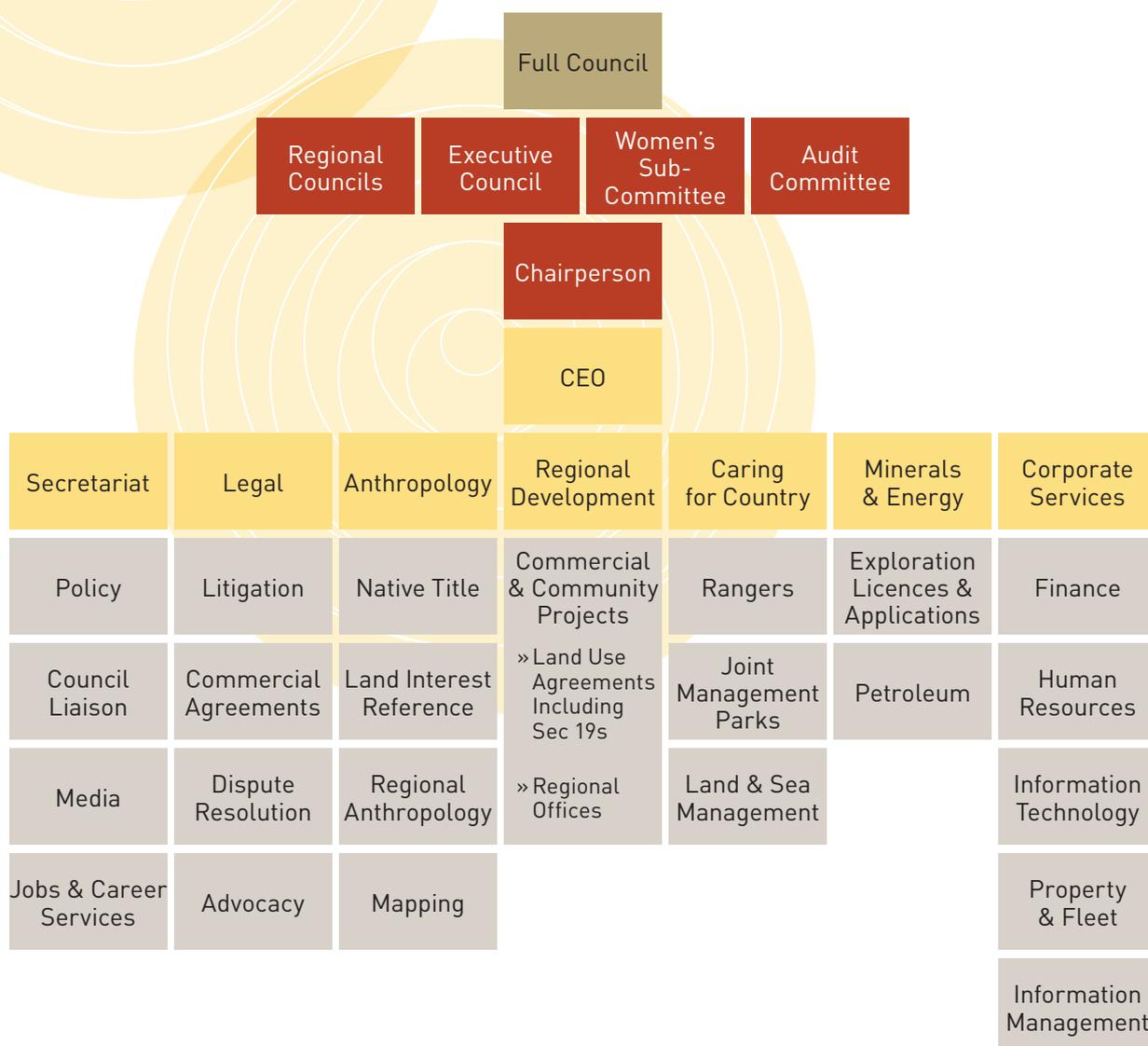
### Two specialist committees are included in the organisational structure, as follows:

- The **WOMEN'S SUB-COMMITTEE** deals with the priorities and issues relevant to Aboriginal women in the region
- The **AUDIT COMMITTEE** places a corporate lens on the delivery of good governance within the organisation.

Our relationship with government and non- government organisations are critical to our ability to deliver on our Goals and Objectives.

Some of these key stakeholders include:

- Australian Government
- Northern Territory Government
- Local Government Shires
- Industries: Mining, Pastoral, Tourism and Fishing
- Businesses
- Non-Government Organisations
- Aboriginal Organisations
- Other Land Councils.



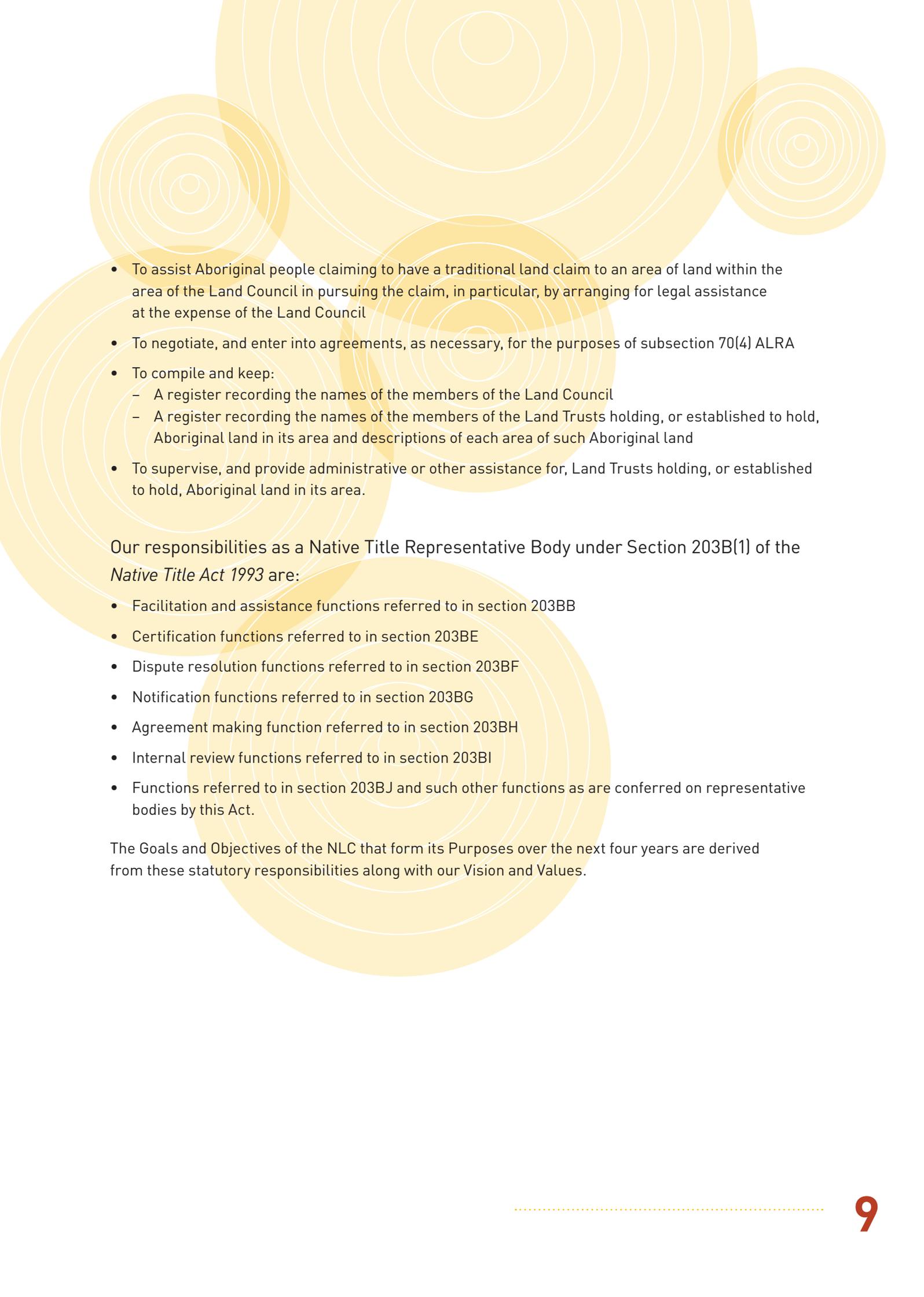


## 2 PURPOSES

The purposes of the NLC over the next four years derive from the enabling legislation the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the *Native Title Act 1993*.

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

- To ascertain and express the wishes and the opinion of Aboriginal people and other affected people 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
- To protect the interests of traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginal interests in, Aboriginal land in the area of the Land Council
- To assist Aboriginal people 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
- 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
- Where the Land Council holds in escrow a deed of grant of land made to a Land Trust under section 12 of ALRA:
  - 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
  - Until those estates or interests have been so acquired, to negotiate with those persons with a view to the use by Aboriginal people of the land in such manner as may be agreed between the land Council and those persons
- 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
  - Where the land is the subject of an application referred to in paragraph 50(1)(a) – on behalf of the traditional Aboriginal owners of that land or on behalf of any other Aboriginal person interested in the land
- To assist Aboriginal people 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
- 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

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- To assist Aboriginal people 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 at the expense of the Land Council
  - To negotiate, and enter into agreements, as necessary, for the purposes of subsection 70(4) ALRA
  - To compile and keep:
    - A register recording the names of the members of the Land Council
    - 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
  - To supervise, and provide administrative or other assistance for, Land Trusts holding, or established to hold, Aboriginal land in its area.

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

- Facilitation and assistance functions referred to in section 203BB
- Certification functions referred to in section 203BE
- Dispute resolution functions referred to in section 203BF
- Notification functions referred to in section 203BG
- Agreement making function referred to in section 203BH
- Internal review functions referred to in section 203BI
- Functions referred to in section 203BJ and such other functions as are conferred on representative bodies by this Act.

The Goals and Objectives of the NLC that form its Purposes over the next four years are derived from these statutory responsibilities along with our Vision and Values.



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## 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 we 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 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
- Proudly reflect the corporate image of the organisation.

## 2.2 OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT ESPOUSED AS GOALS

The best and most concise way we can enunciate a Purpose Statement and incorporate our numerous statutory responsibilities and our stakeholder mandates is to provide these as our Goals over the next four years.

Our Goals for the period 2015/16–2018/19 are:

1. Advocate, protect and acquire Aboriginal property rights and interests in our traditional lands, waters and seas through land claims and the native title process.
2. Ensure the sustainable use and management of natural and cultural resources on Aboriginal lands.
3. Protect Aboriginal sacred sites, places and objects of significant cultural heritage.
4. Support Aboriginal people to maintain sustainable communities, outstations and healthy lives.
5. Facilitate economic opportunities that lead to viable and sustainable regional commercial activities and development in the regions.
6. Advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people to raise broader community awareness of the role and vision of the NLC.
7. Operate in accordance with best practice and reporting standards and obligations.

*Right: NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi (right) with Central Land council Chairman Francis Kelly, at CLC Council meeting, Haasts Bluff, August 2015.*





## 3 ENVIRONMENT

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### 3.1 OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The NLC operates within the following environment:

#### GEOGRAPHIC

- Operations have to be carried out over approximately 605,819 square kilometres, plus (for NTRB purposes) 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 not well served in terms of roads and communications infrastructure
- The area of operation is within the wet-dry tropics of Australia and in the wet season from November to April 93% of the annual rainfall occurs
- In the wet season 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 above has a substantial impact on the work of the NLC, in particular affecting travel and communications issues where the costs of providing core services, including travel and accommodation, telephone and internet services, costs of meetings and consultation with Traditional Owners, and recurring as well as capital motor vehicle expenses, can be disproportionate.

## SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND REGULATORY

- Over the last several years, various governments' initiatives such as the Intervention and the advent of super shires have, led to an increase in activity of core functions for the NLC, especially in increasing land use agreements
- Since the passing of ALRA approximately 50 percent of the land in the NT has become Aboriginal land in addition to 85 percent of the coastline, with growing administration of land use agreements on those lands and seas
- A large proportion of the remaining land mass is subject to Native Title claims which have to be pursued
- The Blue Mud Bay decision has led to the increasing need for the NLC to consult with Traditional Owners on the affected areas and reach agreements in regard to those areas
- The minerals and energy boom in Australia's economy has led to an increasing number of proponents wishing to explore on Aboriginal lands
- The increasing attention of governments arising from the call of Aboriginal interests to find meaningful employment for Aboriginal people, as well as the need for economic development in the communities, is leading to a greater focus on sustainable economic development on Aboriginal lands.

The above significantly impacts on the resources of the NLC – human and financial resources in particular – required to meet the increasing demand. The implications are that there needs to be not only an increase in human resources to meet the demand, but also an increase in capacity and capability to increase efficiency of outcomes. The difficulty is that the funding of the NLC will need to reflect the increased demand for core services. If the funding is not sufficient, there is a real risk to effectively manage and deliver our services in an acceptable and timely manner.



*Right: Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion (left) with NLC Chief Executive Officer Joe Morrison.*



### 3.2 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE

Strengths and weaknesses represent internal factors that may affect performance. The NLC is able to respond to these factors either fully, or in some cases partially if they are external issues.

Opportunities and threats represent external factors where the organisation can attempt to mitigate risks that arise, but which cannot be fully responded to in the circumstances.

The following table represents the major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the NLC:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Improvement in HR systems	Insufficient training and development of regional offices and staff
Change management in process	Training across the organisation
Regional office structures	Royalty structures
Strong representation and Council structure	Not enough staff, and not enough staff of required skill
Strong consultation processes providing free, informed and prior consent	Not fully funded to react to expectations of Traditional Owners
Successful Ranger programs can create NLC presence in communities	Succession planning and mentorship
	Technology and other equipment is dated
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Royalties for Traditional Owners to use in their economic development	Insufficient funding
Change in demographics – increasing Aboriginal population can create critical mass	Changes in demographics – increasing Aboriginal population not able to be serviced
Young people’s expectations	Non-viability of some shires
Involvement with education/knowledge systems/mapping tools/technology	Viability of some local organisations
Collaborations and partnerships	Impact of mining and shale gas

## 4 PERFORMANCE

The relationship between our Goals as Purposes, implemented to achieve target Objectives, and the Strategies/Activities we will pursue over the next four years in order to achieve the Goals and Objectives, are as follows:

### GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

#### GOAL 1:

Advocate, protect and acquire Aboriginal property rights and interests in our traditional lands, waters and seas through land claims and the native title process.

#### OBJECTIVES:

- To ensure recognition, protection and respect for the cultural integrity of Aboriginal people
- To promote constitutional recognition of Aboriginal people and associated rights
- To protect intellectual property rights, traditional knowledge, practice and customs
- To ensure broad representation and local decision-making processes are observed and achieved
- To assist Aboriginal people to obtain or acquire property rights over our traditional land, waters and seas.

### ACTIVITIES (STRATEGIES)

#### STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 1:

Continue to process ALRA and NTA responsibilities in relation to acquiring and protecting Aboriginal property rights, improving systems and resources to increase efficiency in these processes year by year.

#### STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 2:

Resource the Secretariat and other branches to enable the NLC to provide enhanced policy and advocacy with cultural integrity along with the protection of intellectual and cultural rights.



## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL 2:

Ensure the sustainable use and management of natural and cultural resources on Aboriginal lands.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To ensure access to Aboriginal land is managed effectively and efficiently
- To assist Traditional Owners to manage land, sea, and natural resources country in a sustainable manner
- To reassert and exercise the inherent rights and interests of Traditional Owners to play a leading role in the control and management of their marine and coastal environments
- To ensure that the Blue Mud Bay case benefits the entire NLC constituency
- To recognise that traditional ecological knowledge requires protection and is an integral part of western science which must be included in all scientific research and outcomes
- To ensure that carbon farming initiatives operate under agreements to benefit ranger group operations including Traditional Owners.

## ACTIVITIES (STRATEGIES)

### STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 3:

Maintain and strengthen the capabilities of Ranger Groups.

## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL 3:

Protect Aboriginal sacred sites, places and objects of significant cultural heritage

### OBJECTIVES:

- To support Aboriginal people to maintain and protect our sacred sites and cultural heritage
- To assist Aboriginal people with cultural mapping, site clearances and site registrations
- To provide Land Interest References as requested by staff
- To create maps for project consultations and formal land use and mining agreements
- To liaise with Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority in relation to site protection
- To support Aboriginal people to enjoy, practise and maintain our cultural activities
- To liaise with institutions to repatriate sacred objects and human remains
- To process funeral and ceremonial applications in accordance with NLC policies.

## ACTIVITIES (STRATEGIES)

### STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 4:

Develop and implement better GIS mapping capabilities and develop a cultural mapping capability and database.

### STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 5:

Develop formal protocols to regularly liaise with Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and other institutions.



*Right: Dancers at land hand-back ceremony, Borroloola, May 2015.*



## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL 4:

Support Aboriginal people to maintain sustainable communities, outstations and healthy lives.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To assist Traditional Owners to achieve healthy and sustainable lives in communities and outstations
- To assist Aboriginal people to achieve greater community development by facilitating access to leadership and governance programs, resources, infrastructure and government services, and economic and social development
- To enter into partnership arrangements with, and to support Aboriginal Corporations and Associations within the NLC region
- To provide inductions to new staff, Executive and Full Council members and Regional Councils, including, where appropriate, the facilitation of leadership and governance training sessions
- To encourage and support Full Council members to attend, facilitate and if requested, chair forums
- To develop and promote policies to achieve skilled and gender representation on external boards, forums and committees
- To advocate for better service delivery, roads, infrastructure and telecommunications in remote areas

## ACTIVITIES (STRATEGIES)

### STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 6:

Create a Community Development Unit to assist and facilitate Traditional Owners to gain access to resources to economically and socially develop their own groups, and to support Aboriginal Corporations and Associations in their development.

### STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 7:

Develop and implement policies and procedures to improve leadership and governance, skill and gender representation, and leadership engagement with shires, government organisations and other NGOs.

## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

## ACTIVITIES (STRATEGIES)

### OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED):

- To facilitate engagement and active participation in decision-making and policy-making roles within local government shires, government and non-government organisations
- To support the development of youth in governance including leadership roles aimed at:
  - supporting youth attendance and engagement at forums and meetings
  - identifying potential young leaders for structured training and mentoring for future leadership roles
  - developing cadetship programs for youth across the NLC
  - creating professional employment opportunities within the NLC
- To support and improve service delivery of NLC business including our infrastructure.



*Right: NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi, NT Chief Minister Adam Giles and NLC Executive Council member Raymond Hector at Barunga Festival June 2015.*



## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL 5:

Facilitate economic opportunities that lead to viable and sustainable regional commercial activities and development in the regions.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To develop and promote an economic prospectus that leads to sustainable development
- To strengthen the NLC's commercial advocacy and negotiating capabilities, relationships including partnerships
- To secure economic opportunities from minerals and energy development projects and other industries
- To facilitate regional scoping studies that guide economic development with viable business plans
- To secure economic, social and cultural benefits for Traditional Owners from developments taking place on Aboriginal land
- To negotiate agreements that provide economic and business opportunities
- To develop employment and training plans in partnership with industry and government stakeholders, and facilitate the implementation of these plans
- To generate training and employment pathways through agreements and partnerships
- To increase training opportunities that lead to long term careers
- To efficiently process exploration and mining licence applications and provide accurate advice on potential environmental impacts and benefits

## ACTIVITIES (STRATEGIES)

### SEE STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 1:

Continue to process ALRA and NTA responsibilities in relation to the making of commercial agreements and land use agreements, improving resources and capabilities.

### STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 8

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.

## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

## ACTIVITIES (STRATEGIES)

### OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED):

- To ensure consultations with Traditional Owners adopt best practice to gain informed consent
- To empower Aboriginal people to carry out commercial activities and build sustainable enterprises
- To actively support the establishment of Aboriginal organisations, businesses and commercial entities
- To negotiate Aboriginal involvement in commercial s19 ALRA Land Use Agreements and maintain current engagement and benefits from industry sectors including but not limited to crocodile, safari hunting, pastoral and environmental services
- Increase the number of s19 ALRA land use agreements
- To support the development of tourism related activities, commercial fishing, pastoral, transport and infrastructure, housing/ accommodation and other enterprises within the regions including outstations.



*Right: Traditional party at land hand-back ceremony, Borroloola, May 2015.*



## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL 6:

Advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people to raise broader community awareness of the role and vision of the NLC.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people and to express Aboriginal peoples' views
- To lobby, advocate and maintain professional relationships with industries, governments, businesses and other stakeholders
- To provide up to date information on issues affecting Aboriginal people through the NLC's Land Rights News and other publications
- To use digital technology as a communication, feedback and consultation tool
- To expand the organisation's reach using social media and the NLC's website
- To raise public awareness of the NLC's statutory role
- To maintain a public profile through media releases, press conferences and the building of networks
- To market and promote the NLC "brand"
- To strengthen the role of the North Australian Indigenous Land & Sea Management Alliance Limited (NAILSMA)
- To maintain alliance with Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT)
- To establish Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with other relevant Statutory Authorities.

## ACTIVITIES (STRATEGIES)

### STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 9

To develop and implement a comprehensive communications and public relations policy to provide opportunities for advocacy and the provision of information, including the establishment of MoUs with other Statutory Authorities.

## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL 6:

Operate in accordance with best practice and reporting standards and obligations.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To assist Aboriginal Land Trusts to act in accordance with ALRA and other relevant legislation
- To be an employer of choice and an equal opportunity provider
- To provide and operate within a safe working environment in accordance with the *Work Health & Safety Act (Cth) 2011*
- To strictly comply with ALRA, the NTA and the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act (Cth) 2013 (PGPA)
- To adopt community development initiatives to assist royalty recipients to identify options for expenditure, investment and governance arrangements
- To ensure that Full Council resolutions that direct Aboriginal Land Trusts to enter into contractual arrangements/agreements will not be subject to legal challenges
- To facilitate and provide relevant information at all NLC meetings and ensure that Traditional Owner decisions are made in accordance with local traditional decision-making processes.

## ACTIVITIES (STRATEGIES)

### STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 10

Strengthen, develop, and implement relevant policies and procedures that will strengthen the governance and management of the organisation.



#### 4.1 PERFORMANCE PER REPORTING PERIOD AND MEASUREMENT

The Performance of the NLC strategies/activities to be pursued over the next four years, and their measurement, are laid out by each strategy/activity below.

The Delivery Strategies and Measurements of Performance for the future years 2016/17–2018/19 are subject to change, and will likely change to incorporate actual performance and new factors when the corporate plan for those years are being prepared in future.

The organisation is prepared to report on the 2015/16 Measurements at the end of 2015/16.

**STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 1:** Continue process ALRA and NTA responsibilities in relation to acquiring and protecting Aboriginal property rights, improving systems and resources to increase efficiency in these processes year by year.

**INTENDED RESULT:** Fulfil the responsibilities of s23(1) of the ALRA and s203B(1) of the NTA efficiently.

**DELIVERY STRATEGY:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to the agreement of the ABA budget bid, fully resource the Legal and Anthropology Branches of the NLC</li> <li>Finalise 20% of remaining ALRA land claims</li> <li>File, litigate or settle Native Title claims in accordance with the Court schedule</li> <li>Consult with Traditional Owners and negotiate Land Use Agreements and other commercial agreements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise 20% of remaining ALRA land claims</li> <li>File, litigate or settle Native Title claims in accordance with the Court schedule</li> <li>Consult with Traditional Owners and negotiate Land Use Agreements and other commercial agreements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise 20% of remaining ALRA land claims</li> <li>File, litigate or settle Native Title claims in accordance with the Court schedule</li> <li>Consult with Traditional Owners and negotiate Land Use Agreements and other commercial agreements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise 20% of remaining ALRA land claims</li> <li>File, litigate or settle Native Title claims in accordance with the Court schedule</li> <li>Consult with Traditional Owners and negotiate Land Use Agreements and other commercial agreements.</li> </ul>

MEASUREMENT:

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Legal and Anthropology Branch vacant positions filled</li> <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>	<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>	<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>	<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>



Right: Spearthrowing competitors at 2015 Barunga Festival.



**STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 2:** Resource the Secretariat and other branches to enable the NLC to provide policy and advocacy will cultural integrity along with the protection of intellectual and cultural rights.

**INTENDED RESULT:** Cultural integrity, intellectual property rights, traditional knowledge, practice and customs are recognised and protected.

**DELIVERY STRATEGY:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to the agreement of the ABA budget bid, fully resource the Secretariat Branch</li> <li>• Promote constitutional recognition of Aboriginal people and associated rights</li> <li>• Identify key policies required to protect intellectual property, traditional knowledge, practice and customs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop key policies in accordance with review of protection of rights from 2015/16.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement advocacy in accordance with key policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of compliance with key policies.</li> </ul>

**MEASUREMENT:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Secretariat Branch positions filled</li> <li>• Assisted in the organisation of a “convention” into constitutional recognition</li> <li>• Completed work plan to develop key policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed key policies and strategies or work plans to implement, advocate and prosecute.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of work plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Aboriginal intellectual property rights to show that there has been improved protection over last four years.</li> </ul>

**STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 3:** Maintain and strengthen the capabilities of Ranger Groups.

**INTENDED RESULT:** Traditional Owners are better able to manage our land, sea and natural resources in a sustainable manner.

**DELIVERY STRATEGY:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the review of the Caring for Country Branch which is likely to provide recommended action on training and operations of ranger groups, management activities of IPAs and jointly managed parks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement all recommended actions of the Caring for Country Branch review</li> <li>Specifically implement ongoing training and development of ranger groups</li> <li>Review carbon-farming arrangements to ensure these initiatives benefit Traditional Owners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain management and development of ranger groups</li> <li>Maintain activities of management of IPAs and joint managed parks</li> <li>Implement new initiatives to support carbon farming arrangements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain management and development of ranger groups</li> <li>Maintain activities of management of IPAs and joint managed parks.</li> </ul>

**MEASUREMENT:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the Caring for Country Branch is completed and endorsed by Executive Council</li> <li>Organisation of bi-annual ranger conference.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All recommended actions of the Caring for Country Branch review</li> <li>Review of carbon farming initiatives completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caring for Country activities are maintained</li> <li>Organisation of bi-annual ranger conference</li> <li>Recommended actions from review of carbon farming implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caring for Country activities are maintained.</li> </ul>



**STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 4:** Develop and implement better GIS mapping capabilities and develop a cultural mapping capability and database.

**INTENDED RESULT:** The NLC develops a mapping capability and database to assist in protecting sacred sites and other areas of significance, and to provide information to assist in the maintenance of Native Title as well as other protection of interests in land and land use.

**DELIVERY STRATEGY:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to agreement of the budget bid, provide upgrades to GIS equipment, fill the GIS officer position, and provide training on GIS to staff</li> <li>• Prepare a work plan to compile maps and references as required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commence consultations with Traditional Owners and mapping and cultural mapping surveys in accordance with work plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete mapping and cultural mapping surveys in accordance with work plan</li> <li>• Complete database and the ability to provide Land Interest References as requested by staff</li> <li>• Complete maps database for project consultations and formal land use and mining agreements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and improve databases.</li> </ul>

**MEASUREMENT:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIS activity resources are acquired</li> <li>• Work plan for GIS activities endorsed by Executive Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations with Traditional Owners completed</li> <li>• 50% of work plan completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance of work plan completed</li> <li>• Databases (as identified by original work plan) completed and available for access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of databases used for Native Title work, land use agreements work, protection of sacred sites.</li> </ul>

**STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 5:** Develop formal protocols to regularly liaise with Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and other institutions.

**INTENDED RESULT:** Aboriginal people are supported in the maintenance of sacred sites, and the recovery and/or maintenance of objects of significant cultural heritage.

**DELIVERY STRATEGY:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review NLC policies in regard to sacred sites, repatriation of sacred objects and human remains, and funeral and ceremonial applications;</li> <li>Develop protocols when liaising with AAPA and other institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiate and agree protocols when liaising with AAPA</li> <li>On an as needs basis, identify institutions which possess sacred objects and human remains and prepare a liaison schedule to negotiate and repatriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain protocols</li> <li>On an as needs basis, identify institutions which possess sacred objects and human remains and prepare a liaison schedule to negotiate and repatriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain protocols</li> <li>On an as needs basis, identify institutions which possess sacred objects and human remains and prepare a liaison schedule to negotiate and repatriate.</li> </ul>

**MEASUREMENT:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of policies completed and amendments or new policies endorsed by Executive Council</li> <li>Protocols for liaising with AAPA endorsed by Executive Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protocols for liaising with AAPA agreed with AAPA and implemented</li> <li>12 month work plan for liaising with institutions in possession of sacred objects and human remains is implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An end of year assessment of operation of liaison with AAPA completed and agreed by NLC and AAPA</li> <li>12 month work plan for liaising with institutions in possession of sacred objects and human remains is implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An end of year assessment of operation of liaison with AAPA completed and agreed by NLC and AAPA</li> <li>12 month work plan for liaising with institutions in possession of sacred objects and human remains is implemented.</li> </ul>



**STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 6:** Create a Community Development Unit to assist and facilitate Traditional Owners to gain access to resources to economically and socially develop their own groups, and to support Aboriginal Corporations and Associations in their development.

**INTENDED RESULT:** Aboriginal people are able to achieve greater community development and sustainable lives in their communities.

**DELIVERY STRATEGY:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scope out the role of a Community Development Unit</li> <li>Test the function of a Community Development Unit by assisting community development in one community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource and implement a Community Development Unit within NLC</li> <li>Implement the work of the Community Development Unit in three NLC regions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the work of the Community Development Unit in the remaining four NLC regions, including the monitoring of the economic prospectus (see Strategy/Activity 9).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review operations and outcomes of the Community Development Unit;</li> <li>Continue monitoring of the implementation of the economic prospectus (see Strategy/Activity 9).</li> </ul>

**MEASUREMENT:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Development Unit is scoped and tested in one community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Development Unit is in existence and functioning, and implemented in three regions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Development Unit is functioning in all the NLC's seven regions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of operations is completed with recommended improvements and scope.</li> </ul>

**STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 7:** Develop and implement policies and procedures to improve leadership and governance, skill and gender representation, and leadership-engagement with shires, government organisations and other NGOs.

**INTENDED RESULT:** Aboriginal people gain in leadership and governance experience to better lead organisations and advocate for services.

**DELIVERY STRATEGY:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete all internal Policies and Procedures in relation to governance</li> <li>• Prepare a training and development program for Regional, Executive, and Full Council members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement governance training for Councillors</li> <li>• Develop youth development policies</li> <li>• Develop policy to encourage the development of Aboriginal employees into professional qualifications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and implement a program to support Councillors to attend, facilitate and/or chair forums, shires and other NGOs.</li> </ul>	

**MEASUREMENT:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance Policies and Procedures completed</li> <li>• Training and Development program for Councillors endorsed by Full Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors have attended at least one training seminar in the year</li> <li>• Youth Development policies completed and endorsed by Full Council</li> <li>• Aboriginal Professional Development policy endorsed by Full Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors have attended at least one training seminar in the year</li> <li>• Youth Development policies implemented</li> <li>• Aboriginal Professional Development policy implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors have attended at least one training seminar in the year</li> <li>• At least 20% of NLC professional employees are Aboriginal.</li> </ul>



**STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 8:** 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.

**INTENDED RESULT:** Traditional Owners are able to participate in economic activities on their lands on equal terms as land owners and obtain benefits from those activities.

**DELIVERY STRATEGY:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope and commence the preparation of an economic prospectus for the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the preparation of the economic prospectus for the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commence marketing of the economic development opportunities on Aboriginal lands to third parties</li> <li>• Implementation of the economic prospectus is monitored by the Economic Development Unit (see Strategy/ Activity 7).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development Unit to continue monitoring the implementation of the economic prospectus.</li> </ul>

**MEASUREMENT:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A scope for the economic prospectus has been endorsed by Executive Council</li> <li>• 10% of the communities of the NLC regions have been consulted on their requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The balance of the communities have been consulted on their requirements and the economic prospectus is completed and published.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least five economic initiatives identified by the economic prospectus commenced.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 10 economic initiatives identified by the economic prospectus commenced.</li> </ul>

**STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 9:** To develop and implement a comprehensive communications and public relations policy to provide opportunities for advocacy and the provision of information, including the establishment of MoU's with other Statutory Authorities.

**INTENDED RESULT:** Advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal people is improved and more information is available to the public and to the NLC's constituents about rights and issues.

**DELIVERY STRATEGY:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organise events, and prepare resources and publications about the 40th Anniversary of the ALRA</li> <li>Publish the Land Rights News quarterly</li> <li>Develop a program of media releases and press conferences</li> <li>Maintain the alliance with Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT)</li> <li>Identify appropriate Statutory Authorities with which to develop MoUs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish the Land Rights News quarterly</li> <li>Continue the program of media releases and press conferences</li> <li>Strengthen the role of the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd (NAILSMA) within the NLC's land management role</li> <li>Maintain the alliance with Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT)</li> <li>Negotiate MoUs with other Statutory Authorities</li> <li>Develop a social media and internet communications protocol.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish the Land Rights News quarterly</li> <li>Continue the program of media releases and press conferences</li> <li>Maintain the alliance with Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT)</li> <li>Use digital technology (social media, internet, messaging and digital communications) as a communication, feedback and consultation tool.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish the Land Rights News quarterly</li> <li>Continue the program of media releases and press conferences</li> <li>Maintain the alliance with Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT)</li> <li>Use digital technology (social media, internet, messaging and digital communications) as a communication, feedback and consultation tool.</li> </ul>



MEASUREMENT:

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The 40th anniversary of ALRA is commemorated with events and publications</li><li>• Land Rights News is published on time</li><li>• At least six major press releases or speeches at forums are released in the year advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC</li><li>• Endorsed list of Statutory Authorities with which MoUs need to be developed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land Rights News is published on time</li><li>• At least six major press releases or speeches at forums are released in the year advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC</li><li>• MoUs with other Statutory Authorities established</li><li>• NAILSMA is involved in the training, management and assessment of ranger groups</li><li>• Social media protocols established.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land Rights News is published on time</li><li>• At least six major press releases or speeches at forums are released in the year advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land Rights News is published on time</li><li>• At least six major press releases or speeches at forums are released in the year advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC.</li></ul>

**STRATEGY/ACTIVITY 10:** Strengthen, develop, and implement more policies and procedures that will strengthen the governance and management of the organisation.

**INTENDED RESULT:** The 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.

**DELIVERY STRATEGY:**

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to acceptance of the ABA budget bid, fill management vacancies including Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer and support finance and administrative staff</li> <li>• Complete all efficiency and structural reviews as detailed in the internal change management 'Action Plan'</li> <li>• Complete all policies and procedures in respect of financial management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully implement the recommended actions of all the efficiency and structural reviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct first bi-annual review of governance and management.</li> </ul>	



*Right: NLC Deputy chairman John Daly at Human Rights Commission property rights roundtable, Broome.*



MEASUREMENT:

2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Management vacancies are filled</li><li>• Internal change management action plan actions are completed</li><li>• Internal Auditor is appointed</li><li>• Previous years Financial Statements are submitted and published on time.</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></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></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></ul>



## 5 CAPABILITY

The key strategies and plans the NLC will implement in each of the four years covered by this corporate plan have been detailed in the previous chapter.

This chapter will discuss the capabilities of the NLC in implementing those strategies, assessing current capabilities and how these may have to change in order to ensure efficient implementation of the strategies.

The NLC's current capability to deliver outcomes is based on its resources, as follows:

- Human Resources
- Information and Communications Technology Resources
- Budgetary Resources
- Capital and Infrastructure Resources.

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### HUMAN RESOURCES

Currently, NLC's Human Resources relies on hard-working and experienced staff. However, the organisation does face issues of under-resourcing in terms of numbers of personnel as well as staff being properly trained to do their jobs well.

The organisation is currently undergoing a series of reviews to identify the required skill-sets for identified positions.

Over the next four years, incorporated into the strategies discussed earlier the organisation will need to fill all the identified vacancies, access staff more experienced in business and commerce, complete the Enterprise Agreement negotiations, program professional training and development, and create human resources policies that will make the NLC an employer of choice, specifically attracting professionally qualified Aboriginal people.

*Left: NLC anthropologist Chris Brown left) at native title discussions about Ord Stage 3A irrigation scheme with Traditional Owners (from left) Laurie Roberts, Teddy Carlton, Gerard Meeyai and Ronnie Carlton.*



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## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

A review of the ICT resources has been completed but not yet endorsed by Council. This has shown that while there are cost-savings and efficiencies that can be gained in this area, the organisation is facing the issue of ageing equipment and unsuitable software.

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 the regular upgrading of hardware and other systems in order to maintain an efficient information technology resource to support the increasingly digital work of the NLC.

The above changes have been built into the strategies in chapter 4 of this corporate plan.

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## BUDGETARY RESOURCES

The funding for the NLC is derived mainly from the Aboriginal Benefits Account and from the Native Title funding streams, as well as some other grant-funded activities.

Recently in preparing for the ABA budget bid for 2015/16 it was noted that while ABA funding had not increased in real terms, the level of activity arising from the number of Land Use Agreements and land claims being administered had substantially increased over the past 5 years.

As a result of its enabling legislation, the NLC is not able to carry out for-profit activities to provide additional funding, although it is able to recover costs from proponents of land use. In the longer term, once the constituent communities have developed their own sustainable economic development, there may be some scope for fee-for-service arrangements for services outside of the legislative functions.

In short, there are budgetary restraints on the NLC. The risk is, if these budgetary requirements are not met, that the implementation of some of the strategies will be delayed, and in particular the ability of the NLC to meet its statutory responsibilities efficiently or in any manner of success will be at risk.

## CAPITAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESOURCES

The NLC's office space and facilities are adequate and not requiring more than the usual replacement and addition of minor items of furniture.

Due to the geographic environment in which the NLC operates there is a significant requirement for investment in motor vehicles. As a result of the operating environment motor vehicles are used off-road and this can depreciate these vehicles faster than their on-road equivalents.

As a result of the strategies in regard to economic development, as well as the increased activity in core legislative functions, there will be an increasing need to acquire more vehicles and replace them regularly. The replacement of older vehicles is also a necessity to ensure that the NLC provides a safe workplace environment for staff who use those vehicles.

The NLC's strategy in regard to increasing capital needs will be to attempt to mitigate cost by replacing vehicles regularly before their trade-in values significantly depreciate.



*Right: VRD Regional council meeting, Timber Creek, April 2015.*



## 6 RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

The organisation's risk oversight and management systems will be implemented in such a way as to provide appropriate information to the Accountable Authority at the appropriate times.

The risk oversight and management systems will be consistent over the four years covered by this corporate plan except where indicated below.

The NLC's risk oversight and management systems will be based on a risk management plan that identifies risks logged into a risk register, prioritises them, and develops strategies to manage the risks.

These risk management strategies include 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 any relevant staff, clearly setting out responsibility and accountability.

A key part of the risk management strategies is the incorporation of strong financial controls as part of the financial policies and procedures. These include procedures such as delegations and authorities, separation of duties, and computer controlled systems and procurement and payment policies.

The oversight of risk is included in the Charter of the NLC's Audit Committee which includes a majority of members who are independent, and which meets at least four times a year. The Audit Committee will have oversight of the risk register and the implementation of the risk mitigation strategies developed from the risk register. As part of regular reviews, the Committee will consider whether there are additional risks that need to be assessed and managed, and whether existing strategies to manage risk need to be modified.

The Audit Committee will also oversee financial management and corporate compliance with statutory reporting responsibilities. As part of this function it will monitor the implementation of the strategies in this corporate plan and the reporting of performance in accordance with the PGPA Act.

The Audit Committee will be aided in their oversight by the appointment of an Internal Auditor, as well as having direct contact with the external auditor.

The NLC's Internal Audit Charter ensures that the Internal Audit function will be contracted to an independent public accounting firm and that it will be 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
- 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.

Internal audit activity may include the following focus areas:

- Compliance with legislative requirements
- Evaluating the adequacy of internal controls relating to finance, operations and information security
- Evaluating the reliability and integrity of information and the means to report such information
- Recording, control and safeguarding of assets and resources
- Evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness with which resources are employed
- Assisting management to identify risks and develop risk-management plans
- Evaluating governance processes.

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

*Right: Community meeting at Yarralin, VRD, May 2015, to discuss land claim and township leasing matters.*





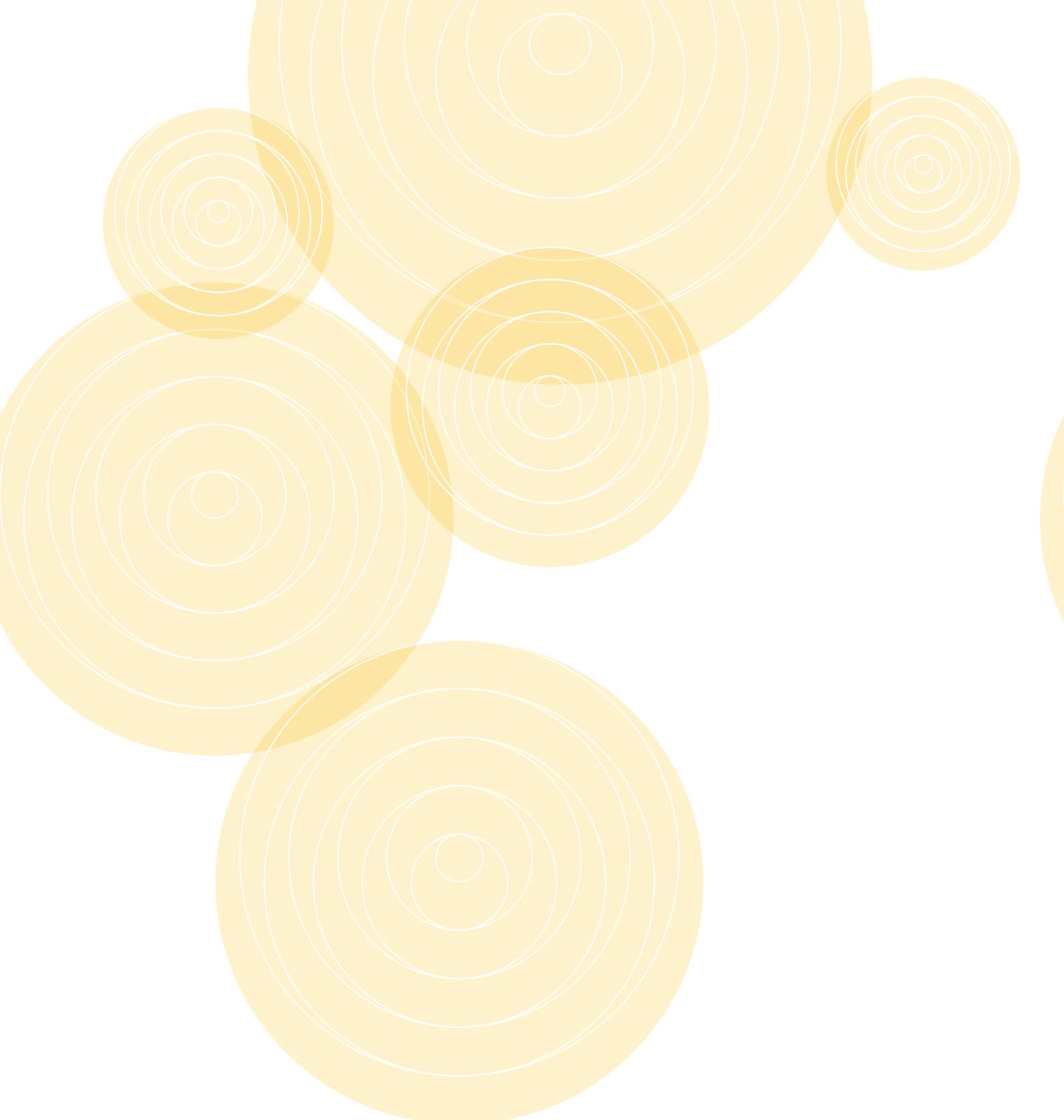
## 7 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABA	Aboriginal Benefits Account
AIG	Aboriginal Investment Group
Aboriginal Land	Land held by a Land Trust for an estate in fee simple; or land the subject of a deed of grant held in escrow by a Land Council. Aboriginal Land Trust established under ALRA. Section 5 sets out the functions of Land Trusts. Section 7 deals with membership of Land Trusts.
Land Use Agreements	Leases or licences for the use of or to carry out activities on Aboriginal land issued that are in accord with s19 of ALRA
Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs)	Native title agreements about the management and use of lands and waters between native title claimants/holders and other parties. Agreements reached through the native title negotiations process either before or after a native title determination is made.
Part IV Mining	Exploration and mining agreements that are entered into in accordance with Agreements the Part of ALRA
AAPA	Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority
ALRA	<i>Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976</i>
ANAO	The Australian National Audit Office is the auditor for NLC
APO NT	The Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory which is an alliance between Northern Land Council, Central Land Council (CLC), North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA), Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the NT (AMSANT), Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS)
PGPA	<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Legislation Act 2013</i> (previously the <i>Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997</i> )
Cth	Commonwealth Government and its agencies
PM&C	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (previously FaHCSIA)
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation

Land Council	An Aboriginal Land Council established in accordance with ALRA
LIR	Land Interest Reference
Mining Act	<i>Minerals Titles Act (NT) 2010</i>
NAILSMA	North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance
NT	Northern Territory
NTA	<i>Native Title Act (Cth) 1993</i>
NLC	Northern Land Council established under ALRA
SIR	Strategic Indigenous Reserve, an amount of water set aside in a water allocation plan for Indigenous people in a water allocation plan area to support future water trading and economic development
Traditional Owners (TO)	Has the same meaning as Traditional Aboriginal Owner – a local descent group of Aboriginal people who have common spiritual affiliations to a site on the land, being affiliations that place the group under a primary spiritual responsibility for that site and for the land; and are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to forage as a right over that land.



Right: NLC CEO Joe Morrison delivers keynote address at 2015 Garma Festival.



## **NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL**

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