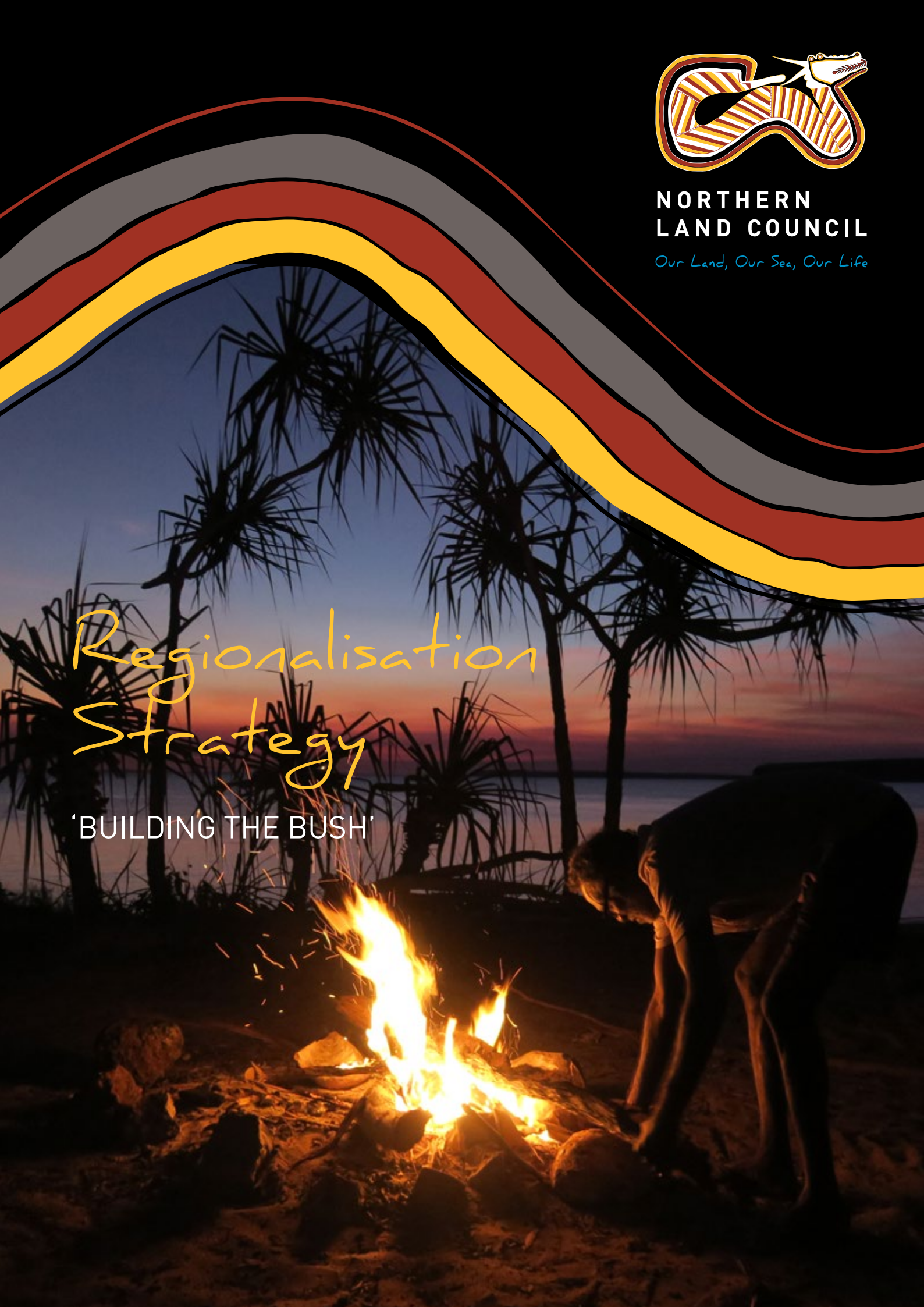
NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Regionalisation Strategy

'BUILDING THE BUSH'



Contents

Introduction	3
Shaping our future	6
Who we are	7
What we do	8
Our Land and People	9
Our Structure	12
Our Staff	13
Our Region and Offices	15
Regionalisation Strategy	16
What is Regionalisation?	16
Regionalisation Vision	17
Why Regionalisation?	17
What our Leaders say about Regionalisation	18
Regional Workload Demands	19
How will it happen?	34
What will it look like?	41
What are the benefits?	46
How will we measure?	46
Future Planning?	46
SWOT Analysis	47
Threats/Risks and Mitigation Strategies	48
Annexure A (NLC's Regional 20 year population projection)	50

Cover photo: NLC staff member Don Winimba Gananbark at Nyinyikay, East Arnhem Land.

Introduction

The Northern Land Council (NLC) has undertaken significant change over the past five years and is continuing to develop strategic initiatives to ensure that it continues to operate in the most effective, efficient and responsible manner for our constituents in the Top End of the Northern Territory.

In recent times there have been a growing number of major resource developments and commercial activities taking place on Aboriginal land. These include:

- minerals and energy exploration projects;
- infrastructure relating to railway, gas pipeline and army training areas;
- national parks;
- a significant increase in residential and commercial lot leasing;
- enhanced natural resource management; and
- pastoral activities.

The NLC operating environment is unique, and it is important that the organisation continually adapts to support and foster new and innovative projects and developments that will underpin prosperity in remote Aboriginal communities.

In order to support appropriate development and investment in our regions to make them stronger, more resilient and prosperous, the NLC has prepared a Regionalisation Strategy – 'Building the Bush' in line with NLC Corporate Plan 2016-2020 and the NLC Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

This regionalisation strategy will help build NLC's regional capacity to more quickly achieve operational objectives and key organisational goals. These will underpin our future as a sustainable organisation with the ability to meet challenges further into the 21st century whilst embedding our standing as a major grassroots Aboriginal organisation.

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Samuel Bush-Blanasi

At the NLC we provide a service to a very large geographical area and the vast majority of Aboriginal people we represent and consult with reside in remote communities and regional towns. Nearly all consultations with our people about activities affecting their land occurs on country or a community close by.

NLC's staffing arrangements in the regions outside of Darwin where most of our meetings take place for too long has been minimal so the local capacity to work with our people has been limited. In 2016, our Full Council set a goal to develop a Regionalisation Strategy with an aim to build stronger prosperous regions and communities by strengthening our regional services to be more responsive to meet the needs of our countryman, and other stakeholders and industry who want to do business with Aboriginal people on their country.

After reviewing where we are at with workload pressures, factoring in where our people live, looking at our current infrastructure and staffing profile. NLC have now completed our Regionalisation Strategy which we have called 'Building the Bush'. This is a 10 year plan to develop infrastructure and service capabilities in key strategic locations based on need, establishing a network of regional service hubs that provide a good space to work, allowing NLC to place sufficient resources in regions to facilitate engagement with our communities, and this will put our organisation in a strong position to attract capable staff that will provide high quality services to our people and stakeholders for many years to come.

Samuel Bush-Blanasi,
Chairperson of the Northern Land Council

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

Marion Scrymgour

Our people want a Land Council that is closer to them – so that's the commitment we are all working to deliver.

The Northern Land Council (NLC) has a long, proud history of fighting for Aboriginal people across all of our seven regions. The NLC is the pivotal organisation in the land rights story – the story of returning country to its people.

We must never forget that history. Our task is to build on those monumental achievements and take our Land Council forward into a new era.

To do that requires listening to our Members and listening to our communities so that we hear what the future of the NLC needs to look like. But we need to move beyond words.

The message our Members have given is that we need to move the focus of the NLC to where most of our people live and where the next generation of economic opportunities can be realised – in our regions.
Our elected Members believe that progressively decentralising services and responsibilities from Darwin to the regions will improve the delivery of our statutory functions, make our organisation stronger and will deliver immediate financial benefits and create long-term social and economic benefits.

I agree with our Members. As CEO, it is clear to me that this Regionalisation Strategy – building and strengthening our regions – is central to the strategic direction and long-term sustainability of our organisation. The NLC must look beyond Darwin and the Berrimah line. The NLC must invest in building our capability and infrastructure in our regions, and that includes focusing on growing staff numbers outside of Darwin.

It will be up to all of us here at the NLC to work together to deliver a Land Council that underpins that importance to our people. This commitment will be more than mere words. Our actions will be driven by Traditional Owners and Native Title Owners across all our regions with our Regional Council Members.

I look forward to taking on that significant challenge in working together with our staff, Council Members and Communities. If we stand as one we can achieve this together.

Marion Scrymgour,
CEO of the Northern Land Council

Shaping Our Future

KEY ACTION AREAS OF REGIONALISATION

1. Our People

- Ensuring appropriately resourced offices to support growth and enhance capacity to meet challenges and demands from projected activities in regional areas.
- Strengthening the NLC's presence in regional areas to serve our constituency, with a focus on recruiting and retaining local people to access skills development and strengthen ties between the NLC and communities.

2. Delivering our services

- Streamline internal processes to facilitate transition of core services to regional areas whilst maintaining a centralised administration.
- Focus on regional social, economic and community development actions.
- Focus on developing and securing long-term ranger and caring for country programs.
- Align and incorporate NLC community development strategies with regional business practices.

3. Improving our Infrastructure

- Infrastructure development to support the expansion and enhancement of regional office structures in concert with decentralisation, in order to accommodate projected staffing profiles and improve accessibility for constituents/stakeholders.

Who we are

The NLC is an independent statutory authority of the Commonwealth, under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. It is responsible for assisting Aboriginal peoples to acquire and manage their traditional lands and seas in the northern part of the Northern Territory. Aboriginal culture in our jurisdiction is diverse and remains strong, our lands and waters are resource rich, and the NLC is a major contributor to Aboriginal affairs and the Territory's economy.

The NLC is also a native title representative body and one of its key objectives is to fulfil its responsibilities for Aboriginal people under the Native Title Act 1993.

The NLC is committed to 'enhancing Aboriginal people's social, political and economic participation'. This is reflected through the directives of our elected council, set out in the NLC strategic plan 2016-2020 and the NLC Corporate Plan 2016-2020. In order to 'enhance' Aboriginal peoples' 'participation', we must continue to be responsive to opinions, build capacity, encourage leadership and develop equitable outcomes for Aboriginal people living in our regions.

The NLC continues to show that it is ideally placed to manage the increasing demands of governments, private enterprise and Aboriginal communities to establish services and business enterprises on Aboriginal lands. We continue to achieve this through enhancing Aboriginal participation in economic development in rural and remote Australia and will be a key stakeholder and enabler in Northern Development.

The NLC Full Council endorsed the Regionalisation Strategy - 'Building the Bush' at Jabiru in December 2019.

Photo 1 – NLC Full Council at Jabiru, December 2019

What we do

OUR AIM

To achieve enhanced social, political and economic participation and equity for Aboriginal people through the promotion, protection and advancement of land rights and other rights and interests.

OUR VISION

To have the rights and responsibilities of every Traditional Owner recognised and to ensure that Aboriginal people benefit economically, socially and culturally from secure possession of their lands, seas and intellectual property.

OUR MISSION

To assist Aboriginal people in the north of the Northern Territory to acquire and manage their traditional lands and seas, through strong leadership, advocacy and management.

OUR VALUES

We will:

- Consult with and act with informed consent of Traditional Owners in accordance with Land Rights Act;
- Communicate clearly with Aboriginal people, taking into account the linguistic diversity of the region;
- Respect Aboriginal law and tradition;
- Be responsive to Aboriginal people's needs and effectively advocate for their interests;
- Be accountable to the people that we represent;
- Behave in a manner that is appropriate and sensitive to cultural differences;
- Act with integrity, honesty and fairness;
- Uphold the principles and values of social justice; and
- Treat our stakeholders with respect.

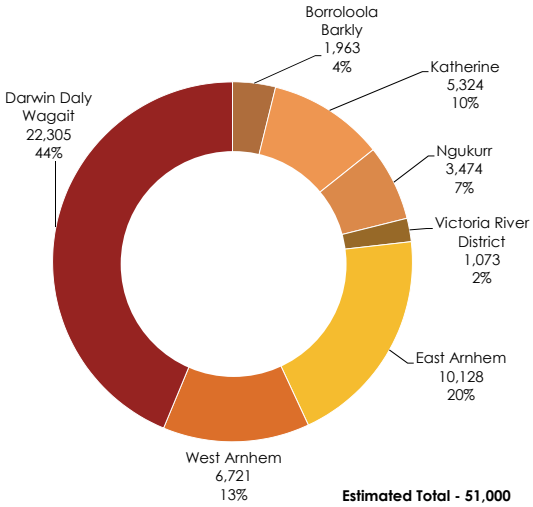
Our Land and People

Since the enactment of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 50% of the land in the Northern Territory and 85% of the coastline have become legally Aboriginal-owned. Most of the remaining land mass is subject to native title interests.

The NLC's key constituents are the Traditional Owners within its region.

2016 ABS statistics indicated that approximately 51,000 Indigenous Australians live in the NLC region. Some 75 percent of our people reside in regional and remote areas, in nearly 200 discrete communities ranging in size from small family outstations to communities with populations around 3,000.

Pie Graph 1 – Indigenous Population by Regional Area (ABS 2016)



Pie Graph 1 – Indigenous Population by Regional Area (ABS 2016)

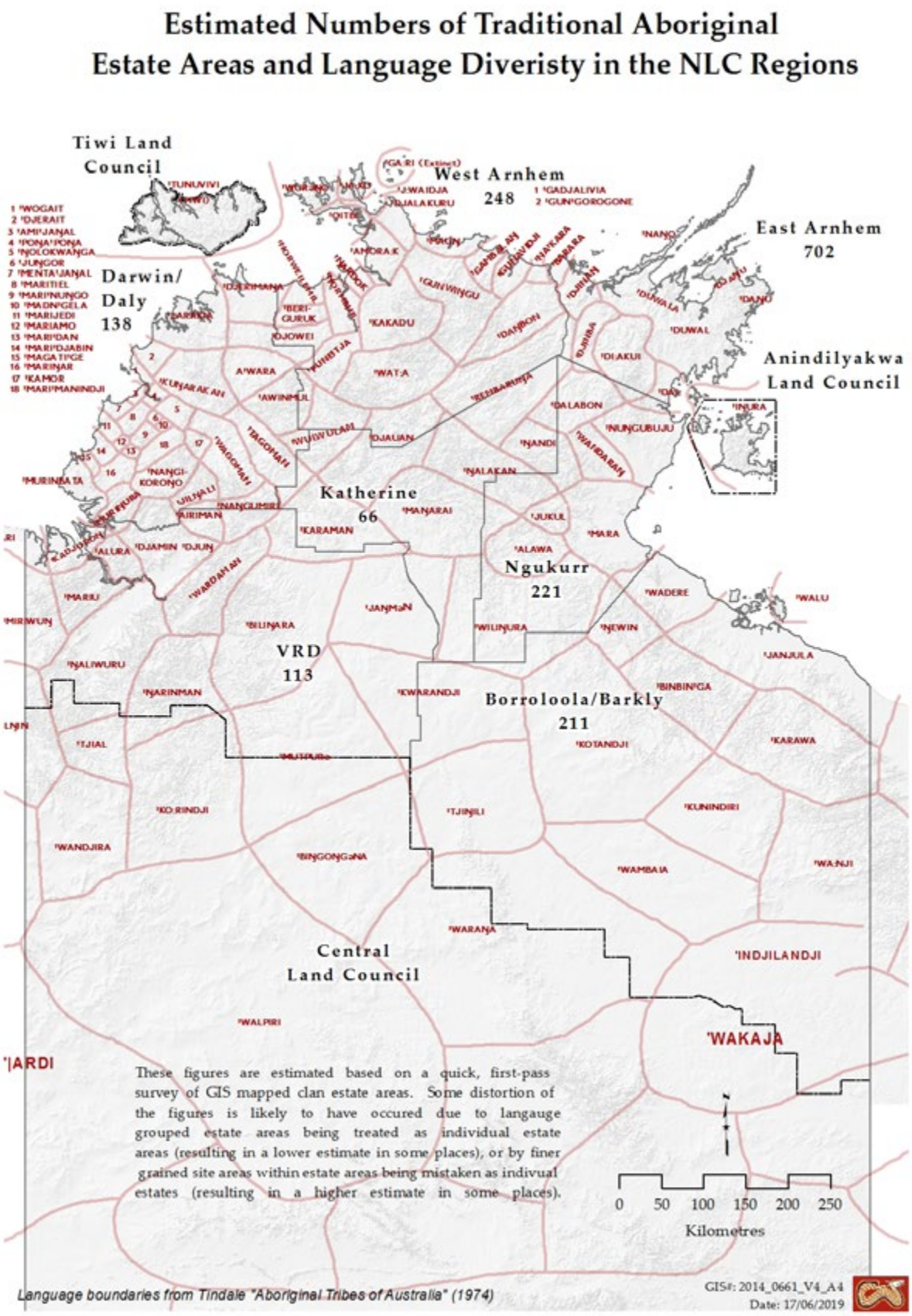
DIVERSITY

Aboriginal cultures are complex and diverse and have developed and evolved over millennia. Scientific evidence suggests that our people have had continuous occupation of their land and sea for up to 65,000 years. This puts the Indigenous cultures of Australia in a unique and special place as having the oldest living cultural history in the world.

Aboriginal peoples identify themselves through their land and sea, kinships, relationships, language, stories, ceremony and responsibilities. In the NLC region alone there are more than 60 regional languages and dialects and anthropological studies suggests that there are approximately 1,700 Traditional Owner clan estate areas.

A large percentage of our people continue to live in larger Aboriginal communities or towns close to their homelands or remain on country in an outstation on their clan estate. There are more than 200 occupied homeland communities in the NLC region.

Photo 2 – Yolngu dancers at the Garma Festival at Gulkula, 2016

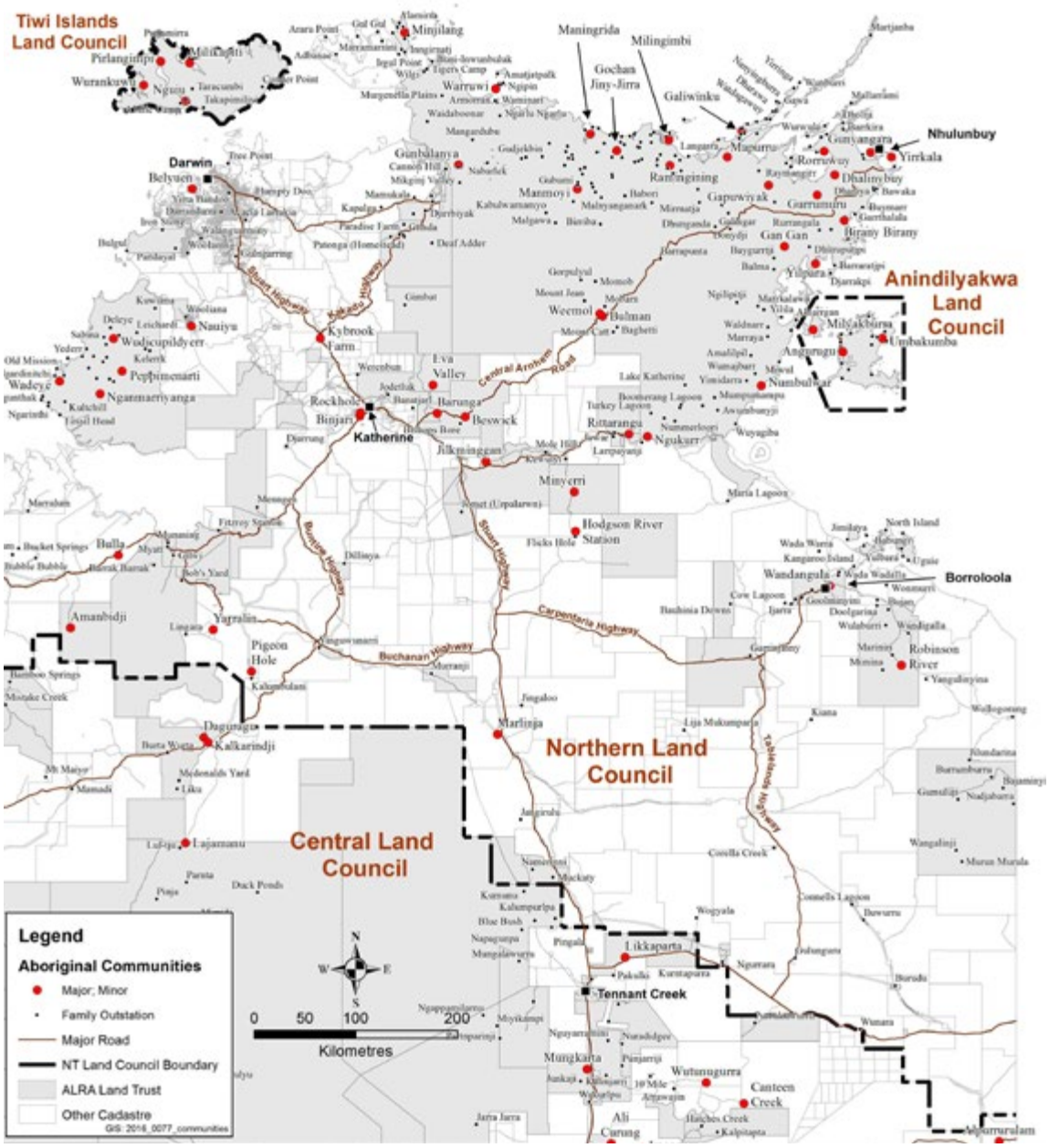


Map 1 – Estimated number of Traditional Owner estates per region and Language Diversity

FUTURE GROWTH

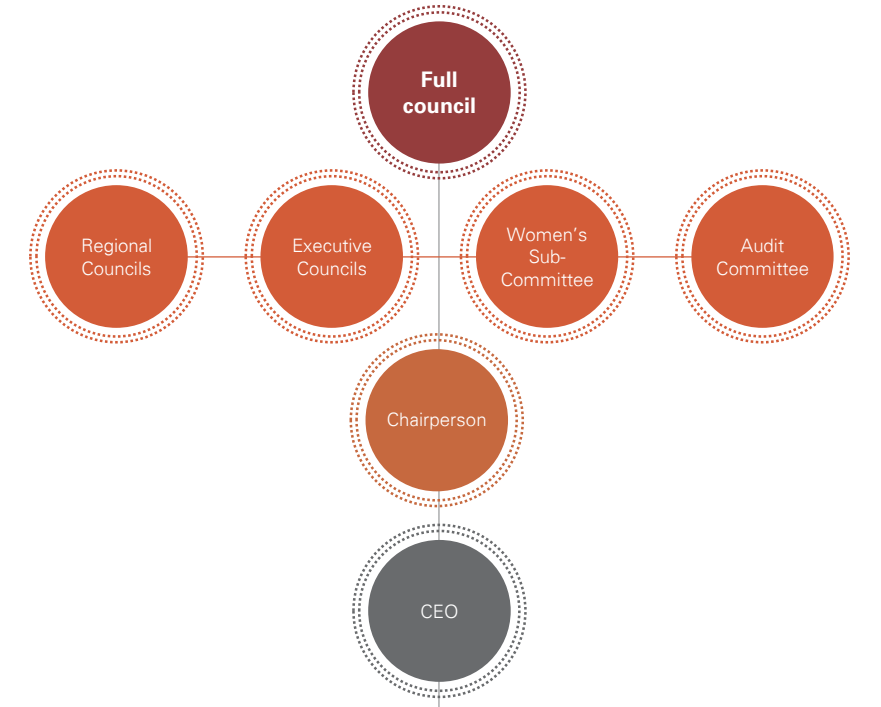
According to the ABS and Northern Territory Government, the Northern Territory's estimated population growth rate for all Indigenous persons is currently 0.9 percent. Applying this rate of growth linearly to all of the NLC's regions would see the total Indigenous population rise from 51,000 in 2016 to approximately 57,000 by 2028. **Annexure A** provides a 20-year population projection for the towns and communities in the NLC regions.

It is likely that towns such as Wadeye, Maningrida and Galiwin'ku will increase their share of this growing population due to a higher than average rate of population in these towns. These town's projected populations that will exceed those of the existing Territory towns of Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek, in less than two decades. Another key demographic and challenge for the NLC is that just under 55 percent of our constituents are under the age of 25 years.



Map 2 – NLC Region with Towns, Aboriginal communities and Homelands

Our Structure



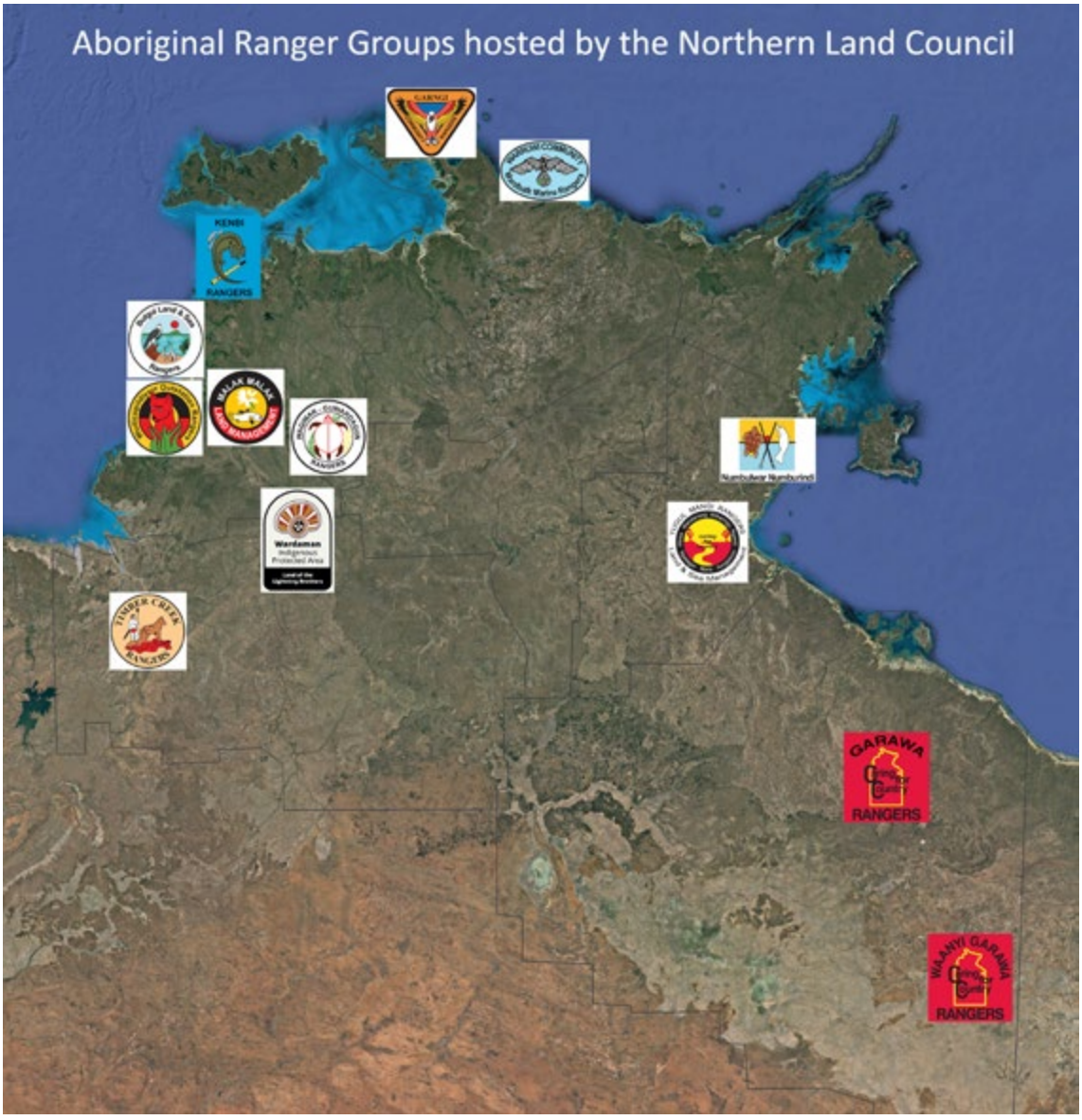
Executive & Council Services	Governance, Policy & Reporting		
Land & Law	**Community & Regional Services**	**Financial Services**	**People Services**
Legal Services	Regional Development	Finanance & Audit	Human Resources & Employee Relations
Land Claims	Regional Office Network	Information Communication & Technology	Change Management
Native Title	s19 Land Use Applications & Agreements	Travel Services	Learning & Development
Agreement Compliance & Litigation	Meeting Logistics & Permits	Property & Fleet Management	Work Health & Safety
Anthropology	Caring for Country	Risk Management	Information Management
Dispute Resolution	Ranger Programs	Procurement	Administration Services
Land Interest Register & Mapping	Learning on Country	Royalties	
Minerals & Energy	Joint Management Parks		
Exploration Licences & Applications	Community Planning & Development		
Mine Management & Legacy Mines	Stakeholder Management & Special Projects		

Our Staff

The NLC is a large organisation with more than 253 dedicated staff to fulfil its aim to achieve equitable outcomes for Traditional Owners and Caring for Country programs.

Indigenous employment at the NLC is very high compared with other agencies: just over 50 percent of our employees are Indigenous.

The Caring for Country program is the largest of the NLC's Branches, with approximately 130 staff supporting and working in 12 ranger groups across the NLC's regions.



Map 3 – Location of Caring for Country Aboriginal Ranger Groups

The core functions of the NLC are funded by the Australian Government via the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) and Native Title Program Funding. Around 135 staff are funded by these funding streams; an additional 9 staff are funded by income generated from minerals & energy activities.

Although most of the people we need to consult with reside regionally and most of our activity occurs in regional or remote areas, a large percentage of our staff continues to work in our central office in Darwin.

The number of ABA, Native Title, and Minerals and Energy activities funded staff based in Darwin compared with those in regional offices are in the pie chart 2 (right hand side).

The aim of regionalisation is to de-centralise this structure and increase the numbers of staff working in our different regions. This will enhance services to our constituents and provide the broader benefits of a stronger regional presence to Aboriginal people within the NLC's service area.

Pie Graph 2 – Location of staff positions funded by ABA and Native Title

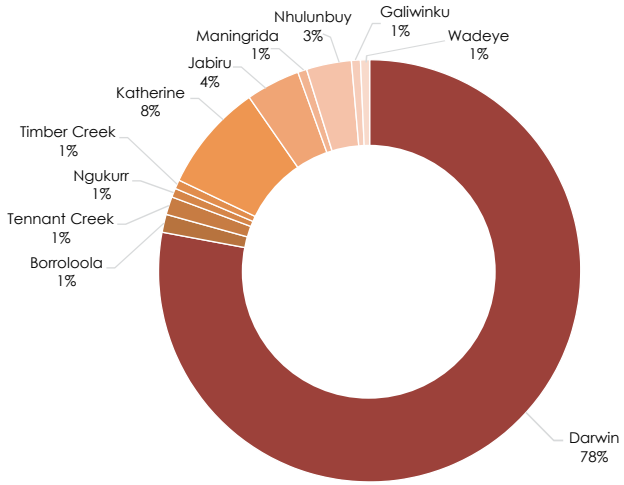
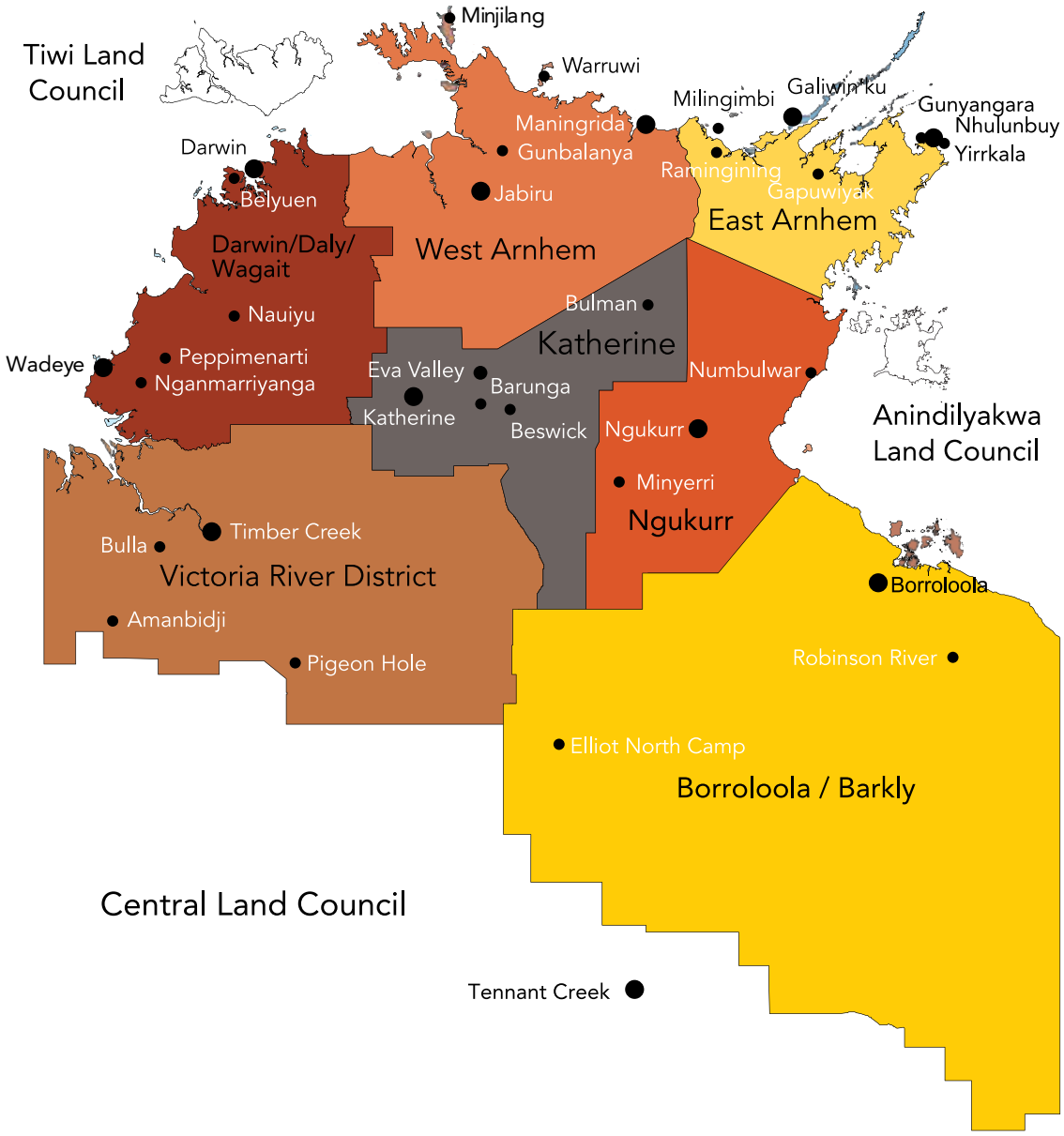


Photo 3 – NLC staff doing consultations with Traditional Owners, Galiwinku

Our Region and Offices

The NLC is divided into seven regions: Darwin-Daly-Wagait, West Arnhem, East Arnhem, Katherine, Victoria Daly Region, Ngukurr and Borroloola-Barkly. Each region is represented by a Regional Council; a member from each Regional Council is elected to sit on the NLC's Executive Council.

The NLC has regional offices located in Darwin, Katherine, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy, Timber Creek, Tennant Creek, Ngukurr, and Borroloola. It has also established community offices in Wadeye, Maningrida, and Galiwinku.



Map 4 –NLC regions and the locations of NLC offices and Aboriginal communities

Regionalisation Strategy

The NLC's focus on regionalisation has been developed in the context of meeting the challenges and taking advantage of the changing social, political, cultural, economic and environmental landscape of our regions.

NLC Strategic Plan 2016-2020 identified regionalisation as one of the key Goals for 2016-2020:

Implement a regionalisation strategy with appropriate investment

The NLC is currently working to achieve this goal through planning to shift operations from Darwin head office to regional offices while maintaining a central administration.

WHAT IS REGIONALISATION?

Regionalisation is more than moving resources out from Darwin to the regions. A stronger regional presence resulting from improved and expanded infrastructure, more local staff and improved service delivery capacity will allow the NLC to better support Aboriginal communities with efficient and locally responsive services. This improvement in local knowledge and relationships will drive the development and augmentation of services that are required and demanded by constituents and stakeholders.

The NLC currently has a limited staff presence and capacity in its regional offices and much of the work in the regions is completed by drive or fly-in, fly-out staff from Darwin. A more consistent and localised presence will enable a more timely and efficient delivery of services, as well as fostering a better understanding of local issues and improved relationships between NLC staff, constituents and other regional stakeholders.

STRATEGIC GOALS OF REGIONALISATION

Regional Devolution

- Transition services to the regions while maintaining centralised administration
- Maintain appropriately resourced infrastructure to support growth
- Support regionally based staff with greater responsibility
- Develop local teams and better utilise local resources
- Deliver locally responsive services to locations where there is a need for greater on-ground support

Aboriginal Empowerment

- Establish closer stakeholder relationships with Aboriginal individuals and organisations
- Build capabilities to support participation in local planning and decision-making by all Aboriginal constituents
- Allocate resources in accordance with the priorities of Aboriginal people
- Recognise regional diversity and adapt service delivery solutions to local circumstances

Economic Development

- Align community development strategies with regional business practices
- Develop capabilities in business and enterprise development
- Establish enterprises on Aboriginal lands and support local projects to create strong and prosperous communities
- Close the gap in wealth, income and employment and reducing the reliance of Aboriginal people on government.

REGIONALISATION VISION

The NLC regionalisation strategy will result in stronger regional offices that will provide Aboriginal members and business stakeholders with efficient and locally responsive regional services.

WHY REGIONALISATION?

Regionalisation is an important goal because it will have significant flow-on effects in achieving other key goals such as regional economic development planning, resetting the relationship with Traditional Owners and growing ranger and caring for country programs.

In 2016, NLC conducted a series of workshops at regional council meetings to consult on how it can best work on behalf of its constituency. The key responses included the need for the following:

- More staff allocated and working within regions;
- More engagement from NLC with community;
- Regional staff to be given more responsibilities;
- Stronger regional presence (people and infrastructure); and
- Training of regional staff to complete tasks that are currently undertaken by visiting field staff from Darwin.

In order for the NLC to best achieve its vision, it needs to provide more effective resources and an appropriate level of delegation to regional offices and regional councils. It has been developing a range of strategies to improve regional management and information flow between the central office and regional offices, as part of an organisation-wide process of regionalisation.

These strategies mark a shift in focus so that the NLC can meet regional challenges as they arise.
The flexibility of decentralising activities means that:

- local issues are effectively dealt with locally; and
- local issues do not disproportionately drain centralised resources, as there will be sufficient devolution of authority to make decisions.

The NLC is aware that regionalisation means more than simply moving resources from Darwin to the regions and amending delegation authorities. It is a process of upgrading competence and training of staff to enhance capacity (particularly in governance matters), as well as re-designing communication protocols and systems, improving ICT systems, and improving support for local land and sea programs, economic development and cultural maintenance.

PRINCIPLES FOR STRENGTHENING OUR REGIONS

1. **Recognise regional differences and community aspirations in change**
   Communities grow and develop according to their strengths and aspirations.
2. **Focus on growing stronger NLC regions**
   Improve infrastructure and services and support new developments and opportunities on Aboriginal land.
3. **Deliver targeted actions**
   Enhance regional workforces and generate economic development opportunities through new developments and/strengthen existing caring for country and ranger programs.

Photo 4 – Bulgul Rangers with Charles Darwin University doing pig collaring for research

What our Leaders say about Regionalisation

DJAWA YUNUPINGU

Traditional Owner; Gumatj Clan, Director Gumatj Corporation and Executive NLC Member for East Arnhem.

NLC have been fighting for Yolngu Rights for over 40 years and has been the body that has protected and supported Yolngu and country. Strengthening our body and widening NLC's footprint by placing more staff in communities to work on country with Yolngu will help build a better understanding of our issues and bind our relationships so we can work more closely on local issues and resolve them with local solutions. Building stronger regions will go a long way to helping us meet the challenges we face today and place us in a good position for the future with developing and looking after our people, land and seas.

LISA MUMBIN

Jawoyn Traditional Owner, NLC Council Member, Chairperson of the Jawoyn Association

For a long time I have been a strong supporter and advocate for improving services to Aboriginal people around Katherine and in the bush. NLC's Regionalisation Strategy is our plan to improve services to our mob. A stronger local regional presence will provide better services to Aboriginal people and stakeholders in our region and will help support our communities to grow and prosper.

RONALD LAMILAMI

Traditional Owner; Mayurrulidj Clan and Executive NLC Member for West Arnhem.

Most of our countryman live in the bush so NLC having a stronger regional presence will help provide better services to our communities and empower our people.

TOBIAS NGANBE

Traditional Owner; Kardu Yek Kinmu Clan, Chairperson of Thamarrurr Development Corporation and NLC Regional Council Member for Darwin Daly Wagait

The Kardu people in the Thamarrurr Region and the rest of the West Daly Region are talking and planning to develop our land to help families' live better lives by establishing our own clan family business on country. We see the Northern Land Council as the body that must support our goals and aspirations in our region. For that to happen we need a strong NLC Officer that we can work with daily to keep up to date on what is happening in this part of the Territory. A greater NLC presence is essential to the development and protection of our country.

Regional Workload Demands

The functions of the NLC include:

- to ascertain and express the wishes of Traditional Owners;
- to protect the interests of Traditional Owners; and
- negotiate with persons wanting to obtain an estate or interest in land on behalf of Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people interested in the land.

A comprehensive review of our activities can be found in the NLC's Annual Report. A large percentage of Traditional Owners live in rural or remote communities not too far from their homeland or clan estates; so by the very nature of our business, a large percentage of our consultations are held in remote communities, rural towns or on country.

Recommended regionalised staffing models are based on workload pressures, constituent and stakeholder demands. The following areas provide a snapshot of the work that the NLC currently manages across its seven distinct regions:

LAND CLAIMS

There are currently 38 unresolved land claims under the Lands Right Act that need to be finalised, 22 relate to the inter-tidal zones and beds and banks of rivers. The unresolved claims are at various stages of progression and include:

- 5 claims subject to contested hearings;
- 16 claims that have been recommended for grant but not finalised;
- 12 claims subject to settlement negotiations with the NT Government; and
- 5 claims for which claim materials are still being prepared.

NLC has made submissions to the Aboriginal Land Commissioner's review of detriment issues relating to land claims previously recommended for grant but not finalised. Of those claims, 12 relate to the beds and banks of rivers and/or intertidal zones within the NLC's region. Key detriment issues included impacts on recreational fishing, access and use of claim areas by neighbouring pastoral stations, commercial fishing, mining and exploration, tourism and fishing tour operators.

LAND USE AGREEMENTS (Section 19 ALRA)

The NLC negotiates land use leases and licences on Aboriginal land under the ALRA which are considered and approved by the Council if relevant statutory requirements are met. These requirements importantly include that the Traditional Owners of the land concerned understand the nature and purpose of the grant and, as a group, consent to it; and that any Aboriginal community or group affected has been consulted and has had an adequate opportunity to express its view, and that the Land Council is satisfied that the terms and conditions of any grant of an estate or interest are reasonable.

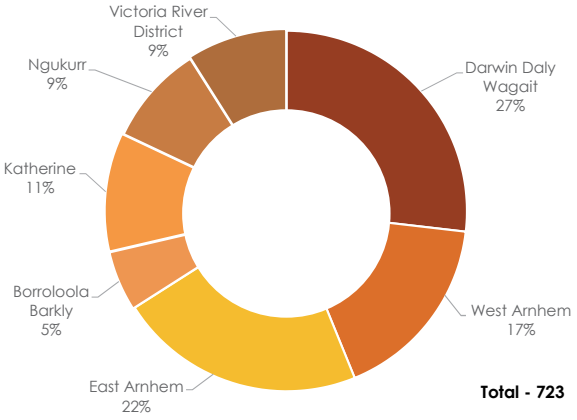
Since the Commonwealth's compulsory five-year lease acquisition over Aboriginal land expired in August 2012, property not underpinned by a lease arrangement reverted back to the Aboriginal Land Trust. It is the policy of both Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments that assets on Aboriginal land be underpinned by secure tenure arrangements. Government policy on tenure arrangements has brought about a large number of s19 ALRA agreements in Aboriginal communities across the NLC region. Leasing agreements include public housing, education and training facilities, police stations, health centres, crèches, safe houses, essential services infrastructure, government employee housing, workshops, ranger stations, housing, and commercial operations.

Photo 5 – Wakal Bengkunh Traditional Owners meeting with NLC, Wadeye

It is estimated that there are just over 4,100 lots or parcels of land across the 27 discrete medium-to-large Aboriginal communities on Aboriginal land in the NLC region. These lots alone represent a significantly large lease management portfolio. There are approximately 500 plus parcels of land in these 27 communities with no registered interests and our 3 largest Aboriginal communities, Galiwinku, Maningrida and Wadeye, have more than 400 lots each.

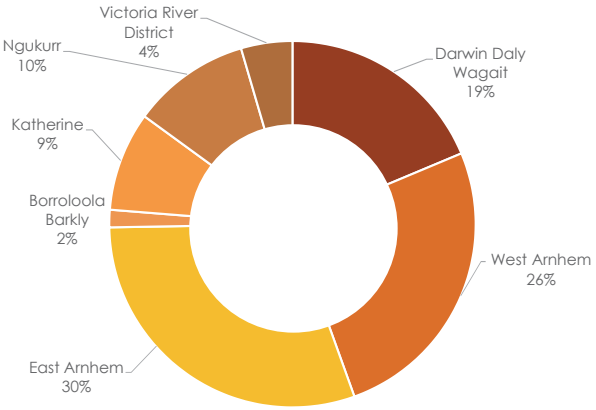
NLC's s19 ALRA lease/licensing workload continues to increase, and so does the need for agreement compliance activities. The following graphs provide an indication of where this work is by region.

s19 Land Use Agreements



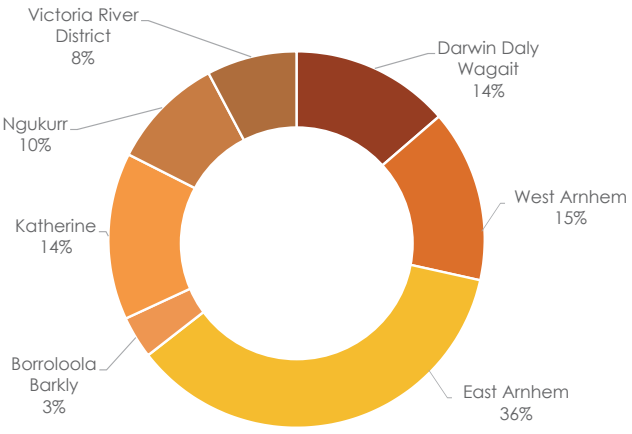
Total - 723

Parcels of land under s19 Land Use Agreement



Parcels of Land under a LUA - 3,687

Outstanding s19 Land Use Expressions of Interest by land parcel



Total - 413

NATIVE TITLE

The Native Title Act 1993 introduced a statutory scheme for the recognition of native title in areas where Aboriginal groups have been able to maintain a traditional connection to land and where the actions of governments have not otherwise extinguished their prior title. The Act provides for the recognition of pre-existing rights to land and waters, the making of future acts and the resolution of claims for compensation.

The NLC is the Native Title Representative Body for the Top End of the Northern Territory and also does this work for the Tiwi Islands and Groote Eylandt. As a Native Title Representative Body under the Act, the NLC's key statutory functions are:

- to facilitate and assist native title holders to make native title applications;
- to respond to proposed future acts and negotiate Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) or other agreements according to the consultation and consent provisions under the Act; and
- To assist to resolve disputes between constituents over native title applications, future acts, ILUAs or other native title matters.

There are currently 72 granted native title determinations, 28 active native title determination applications; 4 are non-claimant applications filed by the NT Government and another filed separately by an Aboriginal group. The NLC has instructions to act in the balance of these native title claims. There are also 18 future applications to be considered for pastoral leases for which research has not commenced.

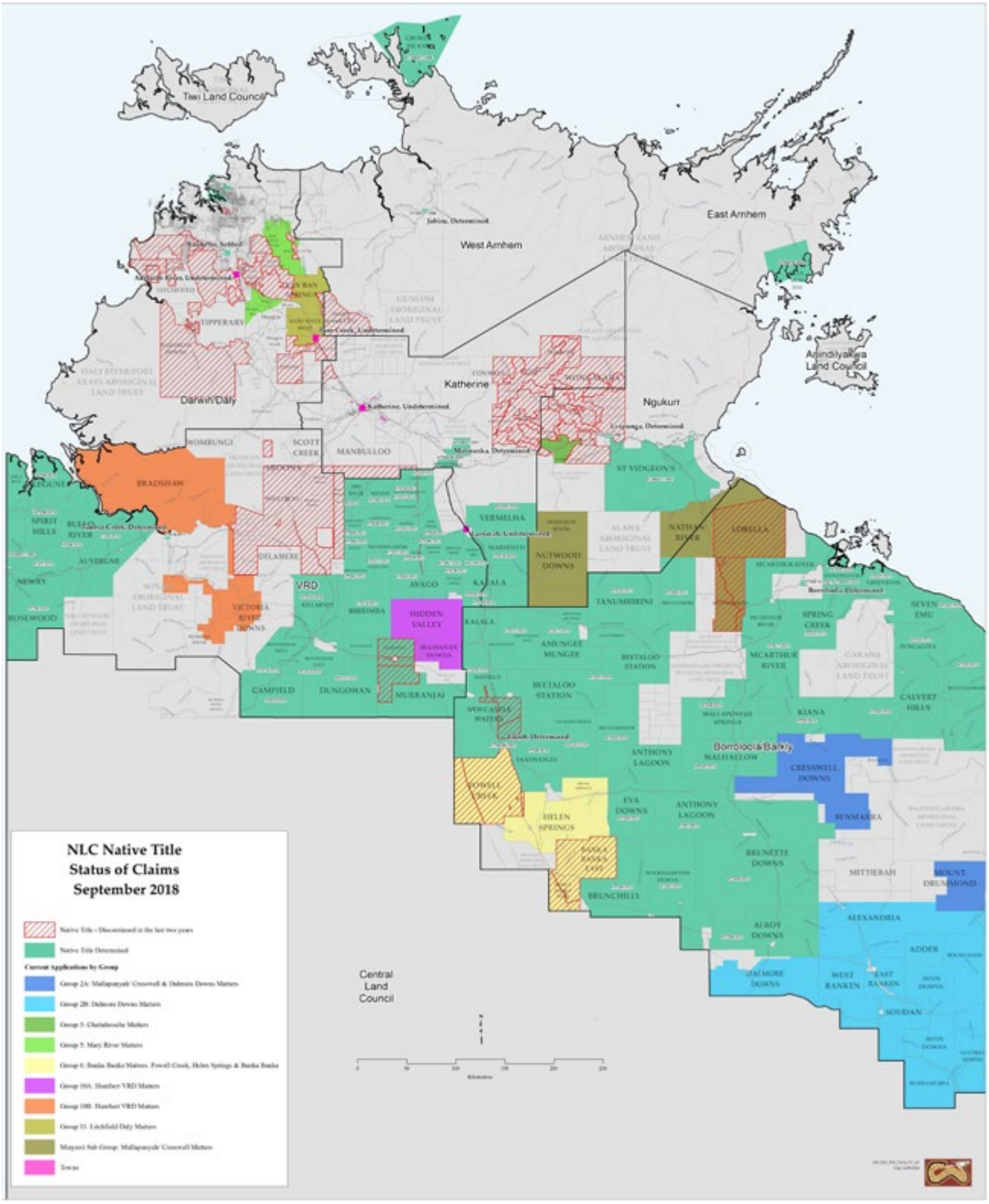
After a determination of native title, native title holders must nominate a Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) to manage their native title rights as required under the Native Title Act 1993. A PBC is a corporation that holds or manages native title for the whole native title group. A PBC's primary role is to give legal force to native title rights and interests held by the group, especially by enabling binding agreements about land to be executed. Proponents such as governments and companies must deal with the nominated PBC.

The NLC has created and manages a corporation called the Top End Default PBC which can be used by native title holders where there has been a successful native title claim. Top End Default PBC performs the PBC role holding the rights as recognised by the commonwealth, primarily executing agreements on the instructions and directions of native title holders.

Aboriginal associations or corporations whose only role is to hold title in remote regions find it difficult to comply with annual reporting requirements set out in the Corporation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2006. The NLC does this work through the Top End Default PBC, providing services for more than 170 native title holding groups, resulting from 69 determinations.

Photo 6 – Native Title consent determination hearing at Tingkkarli, near Tennant Creek

Photo7 – Native Title Holders celebrating the signing of the Project Sea Dragon ILUA, Kununurra 2018



Map 5 – Map of NLC Native Title Status of Claims

MINERALS & ENERGY

Industry Sector

The minerals sector has long been a stalwart of the Northern Territory economy and although the Territory's economy has diversified over time, the minerals sector continues to play an important role, providing a significant source of government revenue, employment and other economic and social benefits. Minerals exploration expenditure in the Northern Territory for the 2018-19 financial year was reported at $131.9 million, the highest figure for any financial year since 2011-12.

The onshore petroleum sector has maintained a presence in the NT since 1985, but more generally in the Central Land Council Region. The construction of the 1673km Amadeus to Darwin Gas Pipeline has supplied gas for electricity generation in major centres across the NT for more than 20 years. More recently the construction of gas export facilities in Darwin Harbour and the continuation of exploration activities in the Beetaloo Basin following the lifting of the moratorium on hydraulic fracturing have bolstered the contribution of the onshore gas sector to the economic prospects of the Territory.

Although minerals and energy projects have the potential to provide significant economic benefits, it is imperative these projects are developed in a manner that is in harmony with, and respectful to, Aboriginal culture and tradition. If not regulated and managed appropriately resource development projects also have the potential to cause detrimental environmental and social impacts. The utmost care must be taken to ensure all attendant risks are either avoided or mitigated to an acceptable level and that Aboriginal people are effectively engaged throughout the life of a project from planning through to rehabilitation and closure.

In accordance with this strategy it is critical the majority of benefits that accrue from the exploitation of natural resources are realised in the local communities and broader region in which they are located. This is especially important in the Territory given the large population of Aboriginal people who reside in the regions where almost all of the NT's minerals and energy resources are located.

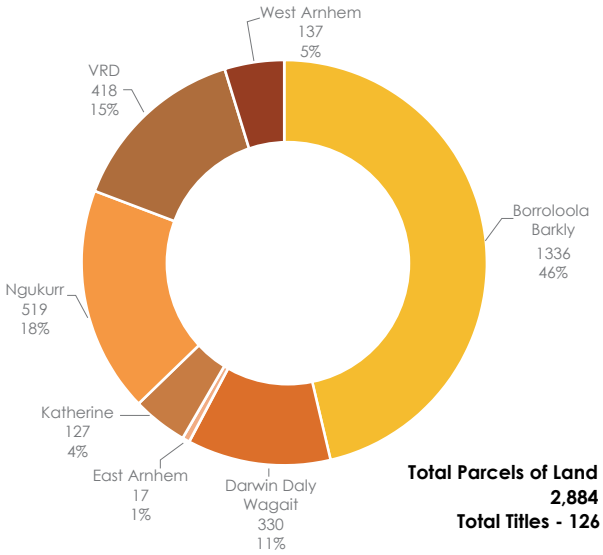
Workload Pressures

The NLC deals with applications for minerals and petroleum exploration and granted tenements on Aboriginal land and where native title applies. An agreement is normally negotiated only after exploration has commenced and then only if an economically viable mineral or petroleum deposit is discovered.

Agreements negotiated between the NLC and resource companies include contractual obligations which the NLC monitors to ensure these obligations are met. This is achieved through compliance activities that include financial and contractual obligations, annual work program consultations, routine inspections and audits of work being undertaken and by seeking to address any concerns that might be raised during the life of a project.

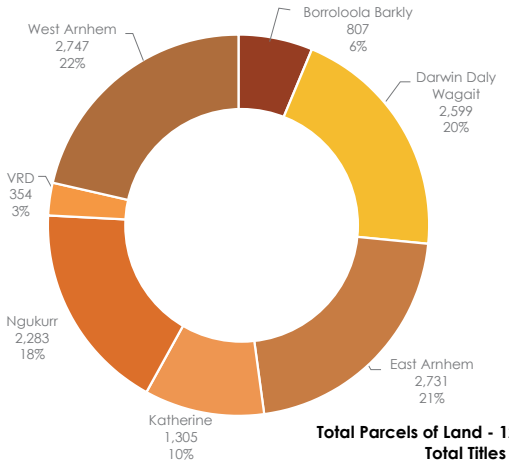
The following graphs quantify by region the current minerals and petroleum exploration projects that have granted tenements or are at the application stage.

Granted Minerals & Energy Title Agreements on both Native Title and Aboriginal Land



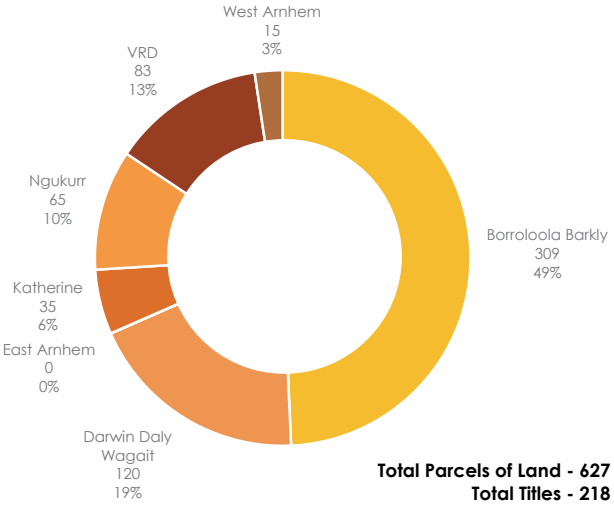
Total Parcels of Land - 2,884
Total Titles - 126

Minerals & Energy Titles under Application on both Native Title and Aboriginal Land



Total Parcels of Land - 12,826
Total Titles - 337

Expedited Minerals Title Applications & Grants for Native Title Land



Total Parcels of Land - 627
Total Titles - 218

Note: The Expedited Procedure is a fast-tracking process for the grant of some tenements that are seen to have minimal impact on native title. If the government party believes the grant of a tenement invites the expedited procedure, this is stated in the notice and the right to negotiate will not apply. A native title party can object to the grant of a tenement being fast-tracked once they receive a government notice (called a 'section 29 notice') of intention to do a future act, which asserts that the proposed act attracts the expedited procedure.

MINING

The following major mines operate in the NLC region:

- Alcan Gove mine which produces bauxite near Nhulunbuy;
- Bootu Creek mine which produces manganese near Tennant Creek;
- McArthur River mine near Borroloola which produces a zinc/lead/silver concentrate; and
- Ranger uranium mine near Jabiru, which has ceased mining and is preparing for rehabilitation and closure, but continues to produce uranium oxide from existing stockpiles.

Several other smaller-scale mines operate in the NLC Region, including:

- Gulkula bauxite mine, near Yirrkala/ Nhulunbuy;
- Frances Creek iron ore mine near Pine Creek (currently in care and maintenance);
- SIL80 ilmenite mine near Minyerri;
- Northern Territory Iron Ore Mine near Minyerri (currently in care and maintenance);
- Roper Bar Iron Ore Mine near Ngukurr (preparing to recommence operations);
- Mount Todd gold mine (currently in care and maintenance); and
- numerous gold-producing mines in the Pine Creek region;

NLC is also monitors mine closure and rehabilitation activities at the following sites:

- Newmont Copper Mine (former Woodcutters), near Batchelor;
- Former Redbank Sandy Flat Copper Mine on Wollogorrang Station in the Borroloola Region;
- Former Rum Jungle Uranium Mine Site, near Batchelor; and
- Nabarlek Uranium Mine Site, near Gunbalanya.

ONSHORE PETROLEUM

In September 2016, the Northern Territory Government (NTG) announced a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing of onshore unconventional reservoirs including the use of hydraulic fracturing for exploration, extraction, production and including Diagnostic Fracture Injection Testing. Later that year the NTG announced an independent Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing of Onshore Unconventional Reservoirs in the Northern Territory; investigating the environmental, social and economic risks and impacts of hydraulic fracturing (commonly known as fracking) of onshore unconventional gas reservoirs and associated activities.

Final Report for the Independent Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory was released on 27 March 2018. It determined that provided all 135 recommendations in the Report are adopted and implemented, the environmental, social, health, cultural and economic risks associated with hydraulic fracturing of shale reservoirs could be reduced to an acceptable level. NTG accepted all recommendations of the Independent report and ceased the moratorium on unconventional shale gas developments in the Northern Territory on the 17 April 2018.

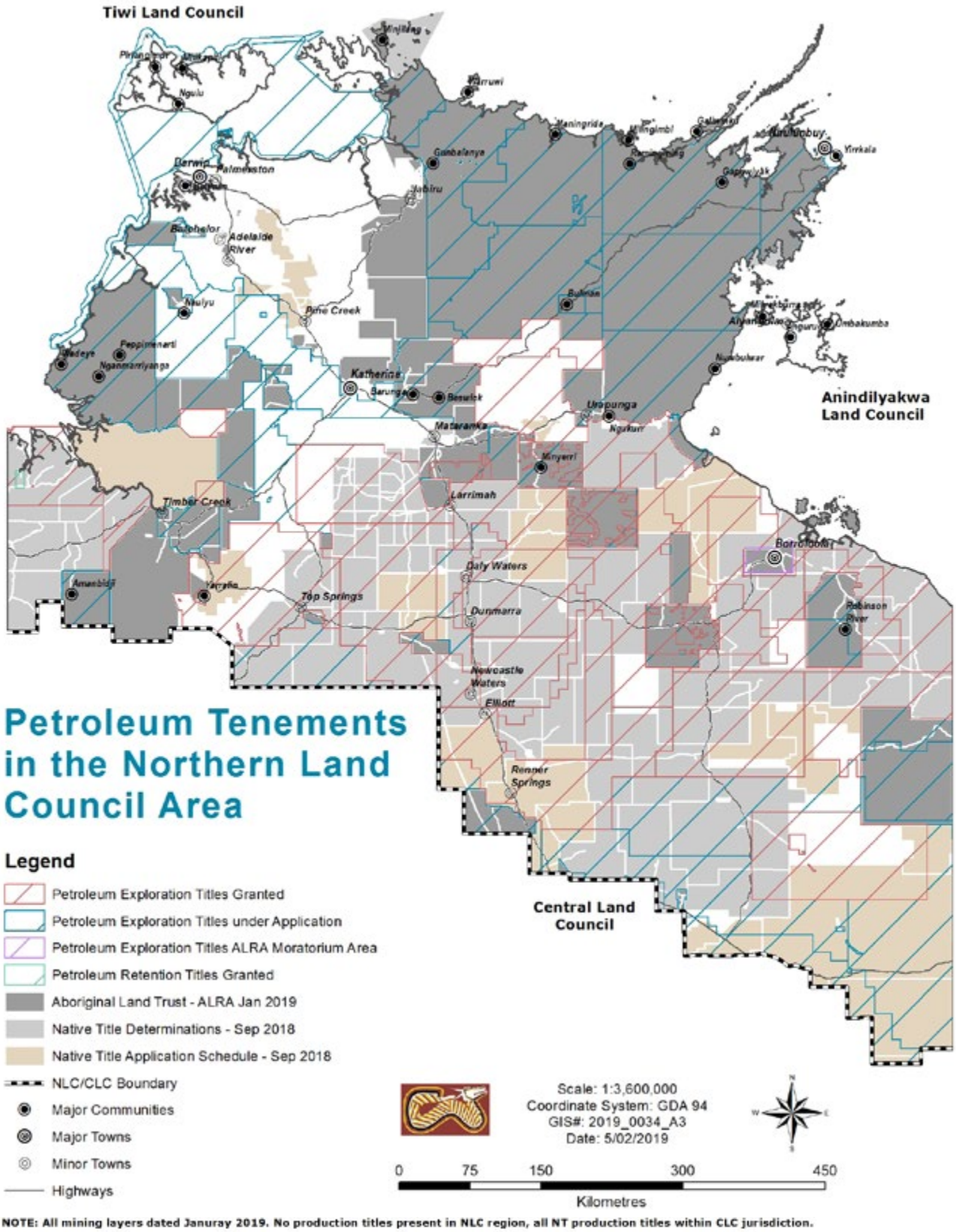
Subsequent to lifting of the moratorium, onshore petroleum exploration has recommenced in the NT. Onshore petroleum exploration activity is expected to increase significantly over the coming years as explorers aim to prove up commercial reserves on the path to potential production. Currently there is no onshore oil and gas production in the NLC Region.

Potential of an emerging Onshore Petroleum Sector

The potential of the onshore shale gas sector in the Northern Territory is estimated to be significant. A large portion of the Territory's onshore petroleum resources occur in the Beetaloo and greater McArthur Basins. Initial exploration results suggest the Beetaloo Basin could be a world-class resource comparable to many of the top producing US shale gas basins. Exploratory drilling has confirmed the prospectivity and high-yield potential of the Beetaloo Basin. Between them the Beetaloo and McArthur Basins account for around 50 per cent of the more than $500 million spent on onshore petroleum exploration in the NT since 2010.

Although the potential of these basins requires further work before its commercial viability can be assessed; the opportunities for Native Title Holders, Traditional Aboriginal Owners, and Aboriginal Businesses to work with the onshore oil and gas sector are available now. As interest and investment in onshore gas exploration in the Territory is expected to continue to grow over the coming years there is significant potential for these opportunities to expand in the prospective onshore gas regions as the industry further develops.

Photo 8 – Traditional Owners inspect a piece of white ochre on the Jemena Pipeline



Map 6 – Map of Petroleum Tenements in the NLC Area

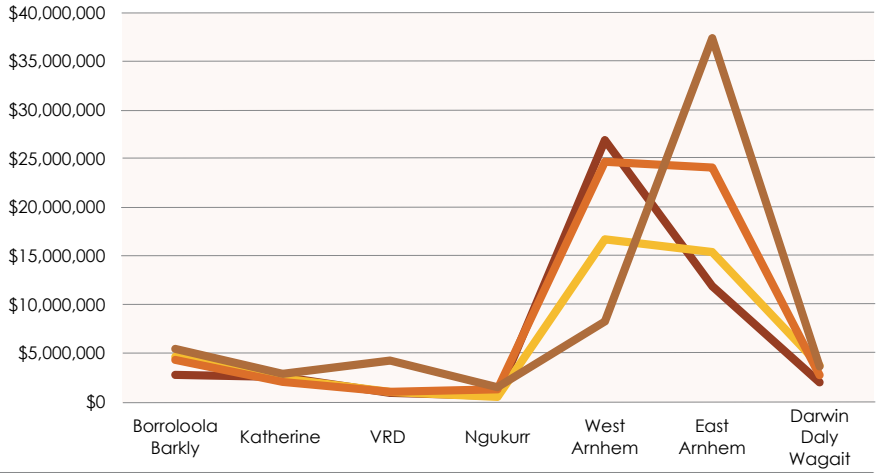
ROYALTIES

The NLC manages the receipt and disbursement of royalty monies derived from activities on Aboriginal land. The NLC maintains a royalty trust account that receives monies on behalf of individuals and associations of Aboriginal people in accordance with section 35 of the ALRA. Funds are disbursed within six months of receipt and in accordance with the terms of the trust, NLC distributes rents, payments and royalties payable to Traditional Owners and royalty receiving associations.

Taking instructions and the distribution of royalties and payments are an intensive process. Distributions are made as per instructions from Traditional Owners in accordance with traditional decision-making processes. The NLC also assists groups to resolve disputes over distributions.

Over the past four years the NLC has received, on average, more than $54 million dollars per annum into the royalty trust to distribute for the benefit of Traditional Owners.

Annual Royalty Receipts by Region



	Borroloola Barkly	Katherine	VRD	Ngukurr	West Arnhem	East Arnhem	Darwin Daly Wagait
2015/16	$2,802,849	$2,580,411	$951,898	$635,123	$26,930,163	$11,921,508	$2,028,132
2016/17	$4,660,875	$2,439,968	$1,050,348	$534,914	$16,730,193	$15,424,579	$3,772,999
2017/18	$4,330,163	$2,064,751	$1,056,968	$1,313,590	$24,699,937	$24,108,059	$2,771,253
2018/19	$5,471,673	$2,901,564	$4,273,690	$1,529,044	$8,289,972	$37,408,236	$3,679,155

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Endorsed by NLC Full Council in November 2016, the NLC Community Planning and Development (CP&D) Framework supports Aboriginal land-owning groups to use payments from land use agreements to drive their own development and secure lasting benefits from their land, waters and seas. The framework approaches community development as a set of principles and a process that builds Aboriginal capacity, ownership and control and makes Aboriginal groups or communities stronger through the achievement of social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes.

To facilitate this, the CP&D Program employs staff experienced in community development to support the application of CP&D principles and processes across the organisation's functions.

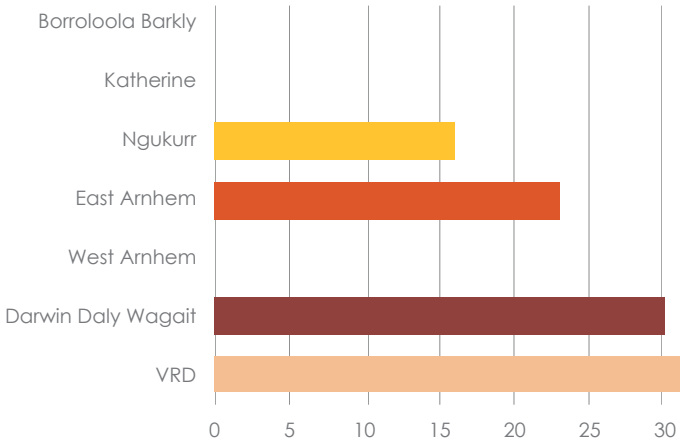
Community development works best when groups of people take action together, based on their ideas of what is important, and their knowledge of how to solve problems in their community. This work is guided by an eight-step process that brings people together to do good planning, make informed decisions about those plans, make sure they happen, and then review if the plans achieved their objectives and what lessons have been learnt along the way.

In 2018/19, the CP&D Program was working in eight locations with Traditional Owner groups that had put around $6.5M of their income from land use agreements aside for a range of community development projects. Relevant to the early stage of the program, of those eight locations, CP&D is so far working in four of the seven NLC regions. The following graph quantifies by region the percentage of total income set aside for community development.

Photo 09 – Community Planning & Development consultation with Traditional Owners, Ngukurr 2019

The CP&D Program is mostly funded from the Aboriginal Benefits Account through the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). That funding supports seven staff positioned in Darwin working in a range of roles, including Project Officers, Program administration and Program monitoring and evaluation. A further position is based in Kununurra and funded by Seafarms Ltd under its Indigenous Land Use Agreement with NLC. This position supports affected Native Title Holders develop their community aspirations and generate benefits from the proposed development of a large prawn farm at Legune Station near the Northern Territory border.

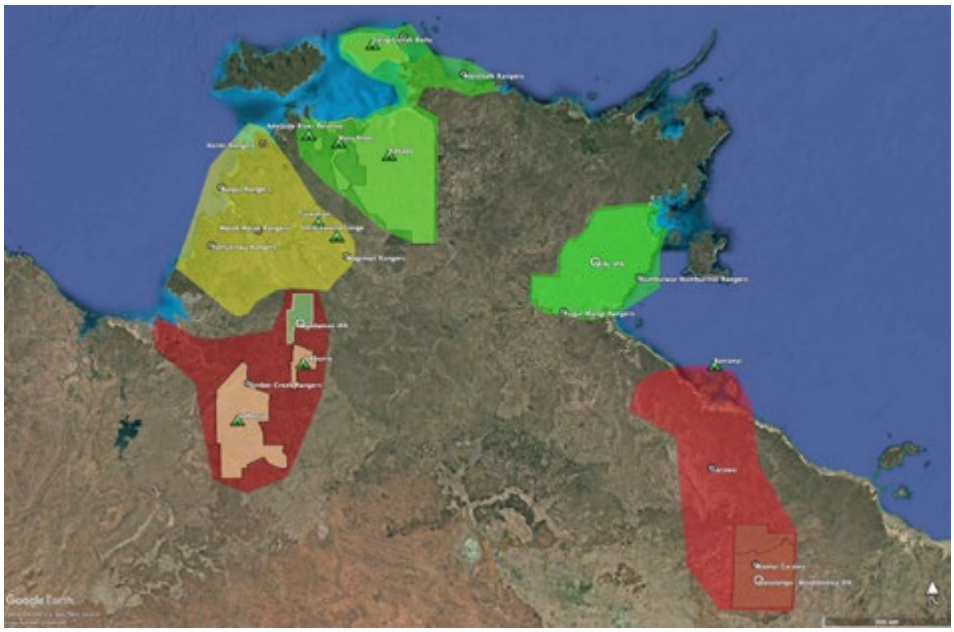
Percentage of total income set aside - Community Development Projects



CARING FOR COUNTRY

Traditional Owners in the NLC region have responsibility for some of the most intact, biologically diverse and culturally rich savannah landscapes in the world. The NLC actively supports the work of Aboriginal custodians to maintain their cultural obligations to care for this land and sea country, and provides environmental and related support services to Traditional Owners who actively manage in excess of 210,000 square kilometers of land and sea country.

The branch helps Traditional Owners plan for the future health of their country and report on the effectiveness of their efforts. In 2018/19, the NLC directly supported 12 individual ranger groups, three Indigenous Protected Areas, 100-plus Aboriginal rangers and continues to assist with the establishment of new savanna burning carbon abatement projects and other contract opportunities for individual ranger programs.



Map 7 - Caring for Country Map of the geographical area that Ranger Programs cover

Photo 10 – Mardbalk Senior Ranger James Marawul, teaching junior rangers, Goulburn Island

Learning on Country

The Learning on Country Program incorporates a combination of Cultural, Traditional and Western scientific based learning activities, providing an educational experience enabling remote Indigenous students to walk strong and proud in both Aboriginal and Western cultures.

The program provides school students with an opportunity to learn 'on country' through a partnership of knowledgeable Senior Traditional Owners, Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers, Vocational Education and Training (VET) packages and School teachers.

A key focus is to develop the capacity, knowledge and confidence of enrolled school students. Using this culturally responsive approach the Program aims to support and develop students on a pathway to cultural empowerment and Ranger based employment. Integrating activities into the school curriculum to promote and develop literacy, numeracy, experiential learning and critical thinking skills.

The Program is funded by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and managed by the Northern Land Council. Partner Agencies are the School and Ranger groups responsible for the local delivery of the Program and together commit to:

- Increase school attendance, retention and engaging students through to Year 12;
- Increase transition rates to further education, VET based training and employment;
- Increase inter-generational transmission of Indigenous knowledge and customary practice among Indigenous students; and
- Develop a strong partnership between Ranger groups, schools and local community to deliver a culturally responsive, secondary school curriculum that integrates Indigenous and Western knowledge systems.

Sea Country

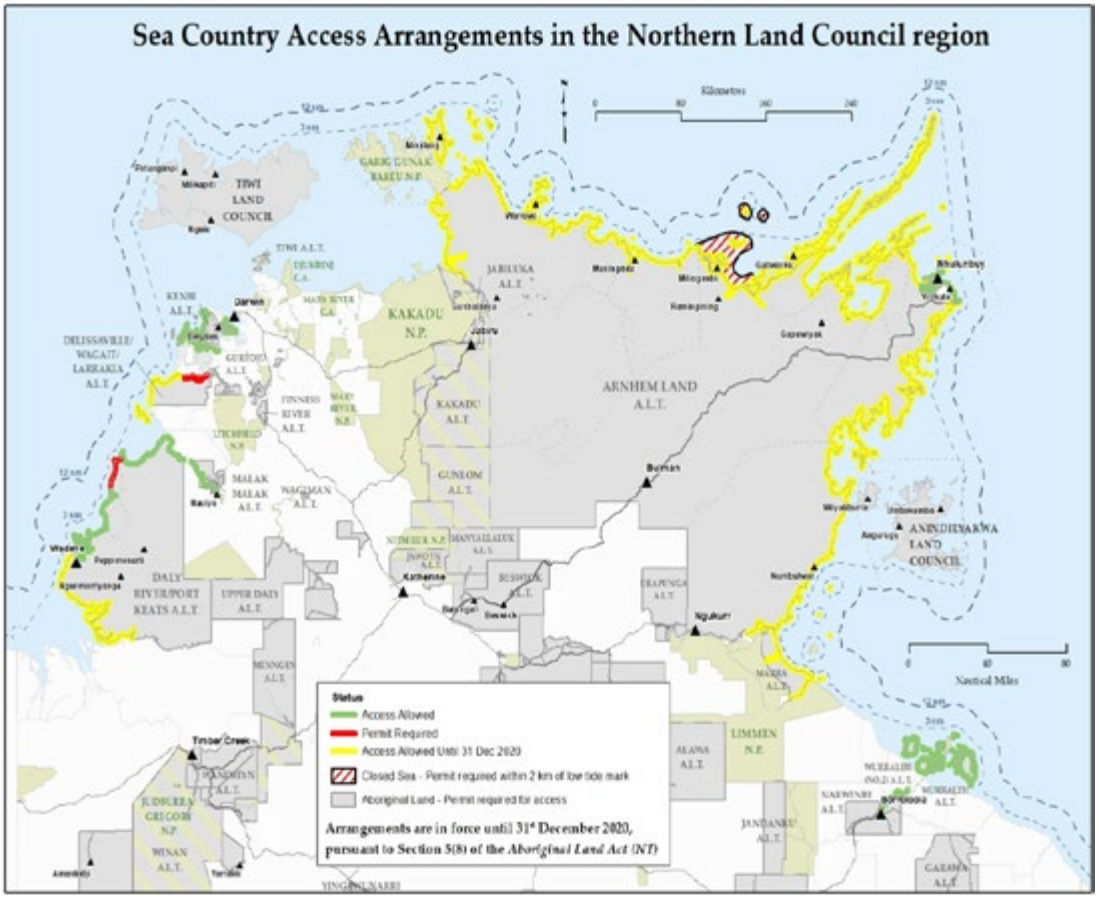
In 2008, the High Court determined that the Fisheries (Northern Territory) Act 1988 did not apply within the boundaries of Aboriginal land granted under the ALRA, including the tidal waters over their land from the high water to low water mark (the intertidal zone). This is commonly referred to as the Blue Mud Bay case.

In 2007 an 'interim' (short-term) agreement among relevant Aboriginal Land Trusts, the NLC and the NT Government was made to allow continued recreational and commercial fishing access to tidal waters over Aboriginal land. The intent of the original interim arrangement was to settle a long-term and comprehensive access arrangement.

From 2011 the NT Government through the NLC has successfully negotiated seven agreements with Traditional Owners in coastal areas with 'high value' fishing activity. Between 2012 and 2014, six intertidal access agreements were settled to provide access to recreational and commercial operators to fish in tidal waters over Aboriginal land without the need to apply for a permit; the seventh agreement followed settlement of the Kenbi land claim in 2016.

For the rest of the coast, after 10 years and 11 extensions of the 'interim' agreement, the NLC issued on 24 December 2016 a Public Notice, pursuant to section 5(8) of the Aboriginal Land Act, stating that it would not renew the interim agreement. The NLC has since issued two six-month waivers, followed by a 12 month waiver up until the 31st December 2018. On 28 June 2019, the NLC entered into a Heads of Agreement together with NT Government, NT Seafood Council, Amateur Fishermen's Association NT, and NT Guided Fishing Industry Association, regarding a framework to permanently settle Blue Mud Bay associated issues. The NLC has extended the waiver through until 31 December 2020 in order to give the parties time to implement key aspects of the Heads of Agreement and to provide operational certainty to fishermen while settlement arrangements are put in place.

The Blue Mud Bay decision recognises that 84% or the Northern Territory's 6,050km of coastline is Aboriginal-owned.



Map 8 – Sea Country map of Northern Territory coastline

Major Projects

Key projects that the NLC has worked on with Traditional Owners, native title holders, Government and industry over the past 3 years include:

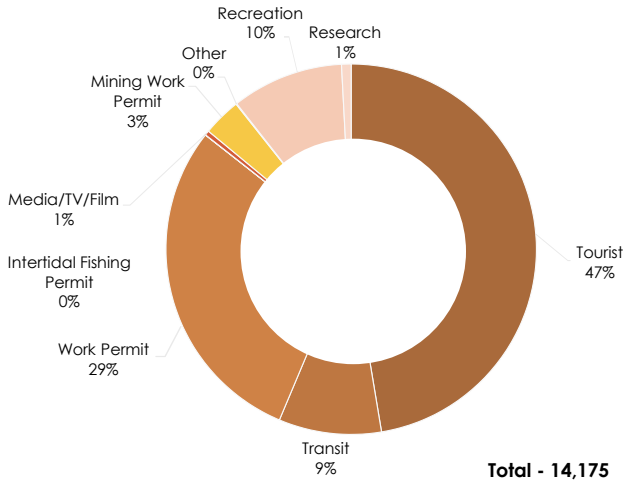
- **Jemena Pipeline** – a 622km gas pipeline from the Stuart Highway near Tennant Creek to Mount Isa.
- **Gunyangarra Township Lease** – first township lease to a Traditional Owner corporation near Nhulunbuy.
- **Project Sea Dragon** – a large-scale prawn farm at Legune Station near the NT and Western Australia border which may end up having 10,000 hectares developed for producing prawns for year-round export.
- **Rocket Launching Site** – in the East Arnhem region, at a site near Gulkula, about a half-hour drive from Nhulunbuy.
- **Future of Jabiru** – key stakeholders engaged to secure the future of township beyond mining.
- **Gove Peninsula Futures** – key stakeholders have committed to working together to achieve a positive future for Nhulunbuy and the Gove Peninsula post mining for the benefit of Yolngu land owners, local communities, businesses and industry.

Permits

The ALRA made Aboriginal land private land, and regulated the entry of persons without estates or interests in the land or traditional rights in the land. The NLC manages access to Aboriginal land via a permit system. People apply for permits to access Aboriginal land through the NLC, which seeks approval from permit delegates for each application. The NLC issues more than 14,000 permits annually.

Data for permits issued by type for 2018/19 are provided below.

Permits Issued in 2018/19

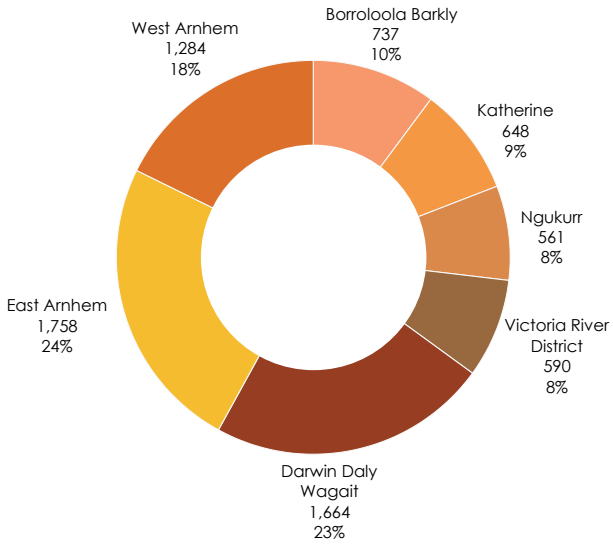


Total - 14,175

Logistics

A large part of the NLC's work is to get Traditional Owners and affected peoples to consultation meetings held on country. Over the past 12 months the Regional Development Branch successfully managed the logistics for 346 s19 ALRA land use, native title, royalty distribution, ABA Homelands Project, community planning and development, minerals and energy consultations that involved 7,242 Traditional Owners and affected Aboriginal peoples meeting at 147 different locations.

Logistical Effort: Number of Traditional Owners and Affected people consulted in 2018/19 - 7,242



How will it happen?

The NLC is actively managing growth across our regions by preparing a regional planning framework and comprehensive infrastructure program for the delivery of local services.

A large majority of the NLC staff are based in Darwin, but a significant percentage of Traditional Owners whom the NLC services live in the bush. A major challenge for the NLC is to develop a regionalisation strategy so it is in a position to shift resources to strengthen services in locations where there is need for on-ground support and advocacy for managing land and seas. We expect that this will be realised through the following streams of action:

GOVERNANCE

Implementing governance changes within the NLC will help to realise the benefits of regionalisation. By aligning investments in infrastructure with planning and services we will be able to develop our regions.

Recognising and harnessing regional differences will be a cornerstone of the regionalisation efforts and will enable actions to be tailored to meet the growth needs and aspirations of different regions, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. With a stronger focus on driving work priorities and fulfilling the needs of the regional offices in a bottom-up way, we will strengthen our standing within communities and among our constituents, which will improve the lives of Aboriginal Territorians.

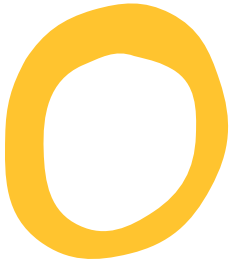
A desktop review of workflow/outputs and projected activities underpins the support of the regionalisation policy with a focus on:

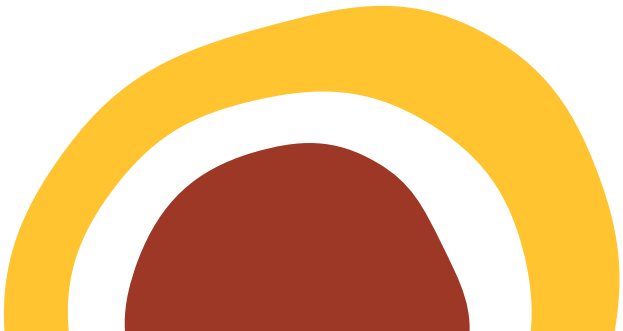
Human Resources

- Recruiting and retaining local staff with a focus on skills development.
- Restructuring current positions to support workforce redeployment with a graded transition to regional areas.
- Detailing the scope of projected workforce activities to ensure resources are appropriately redirected.
- Reducing costs to undertake core business within the regions.

Management

- Streamlining internal management processes to devolve authority.
- Developing regional social, economic and community action plans.





PROPOSED RESTRUCTURE

The NLC will continue to review staffing models in accordance with emerging priorities, with a focus on strengthening regional staffing profiles. Evidence of existing and projected workloads for future years, suggests that the minimum basic staffing requirement for each regional office is the following:

- **Katherine** – a regional service hub supporting four NLC regions would require up to 25 full time staff, including a regional manager, project and administrative staff, pastoral unit, a dedicated logistics team, anthropology and legal services, minerals and energy and up to 6 staff managing caring for country programs. Currently the Katherine office has 14 staff with no place-based legal, anthropology or minerals and energy staff.
- **Nhulunbuy** – up to 10 full time staff including a regional manager, project and administrative staff, minerals and energy, anthropology and legal services. Currently the Nhulunbuy regional office has 5 staff with no place-based legal services or minerals and energy staff.
- **Jabiru** - up to 11 full time staff including a regional manager, project and administrative staff, anthropology, minerals and energy, and caring for country programs. Currently the Jabiru Regional Office has 7 staff.
- **Maningrida, Wadeye, and Galiwinku** – a regional project officer at each location.
- **Ngukurr & Timber Creek** – a regional coordinator and an administrative / logistics officer at each location.
- **Borroloola & Tennant Creek** – Up to 6 staff working within the Borroloola Barkly region including a regional manager (with the current and future workload pressures this position should be best placed in Tennant Creek) to coordinate activity across the largest geographical region, a regional coordinator (based in Borroloola) to assist with the delivery of projects and consultations, at least one project officer and an administrative / logistics officer at each location.

Photo 11 – Katherine Regional Office an old building with limited room for growth

Potential staffing model of Regional Service Hubs

Providing that appropriate office accommodation and sufficient staff housing could be secured at Nhulunbuy and Jabiru, workforce demands justify the following staffing arrangements, with potential for further growth arising from Community Planning and Development Unit activities, increasing demands on agreement compliance activities and major project developments.

		Katherine		Nhulunbuy		Jabiru	
Branch	Position	2019	Future Outlook	2019	Future Outlook	2019	Future Outlook
Regional	Branch Manager / Regional Manager (Negotiated Contract / SOGB)	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Regional Coordinator/ Project Coordinator (SOGC/SOGB)	1	2	-	1	-	1
	Senior Project Officer / Senior Administration Officer (ASO6)	2	2	-	-	-	-
	Project Officer (ASO5)	-	-	2	2	1	1
	Project / Logistics/ Admin Officer (ASO4)	2	2	-	1	1	1
	Logistics/ Admin Officer (ASO3)	4	4	1	1	1	1
	Admin Officer (ASO2)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Anthropology	Anthropologist	-	3	1	2	1	2
Legal	Solicitor	-	1	-	1	-	-
Caring for Country	Program Coordinator	1	2	-	-	-	1
	Project Officer	2	2	-	-	-	1
	Joint Parks Officer	1	2	-	-	1	2
Minerals & Energy	Project Officer	-	2	-	1	1	1
Total		**14**	**25**	**5**	**10**	**7**	**11**
Total increase of staff per Regional Office		**+ 11 staff**		**+ 5 staff**		**+ 4 staff**	

Regional Market Constraints and Opportunities

Unfortunately a number of our current service sites, including Katherine and Nhulunbuy, do not have the capacity to accommodate the required number of staff to service their regions in a regionalised model. Independent advice from a leading real estate company has indicated that the local commercial property market in both towns has limited or no suitable office sites to accommodate our existing staff requirements or potential growth. The NLC's best option in the current market is to purchase suitably sized parcels of land and construct office premises that suit its requirements

The NLC has found it difficult to lease suitable office accommodation at community service sites (Galiwinku, Maningrida, and Wadeye), as the market for this type of infrastructure in Aboriginal communities in the Top End is quite limited.

The NLC has had to rely on make-shift, substandard office facilities with short term sub-leasing arrangements which can be difficult to manage in communities which are significantly short of adequate infrastructure. The NLC could be asked to vacate at short notice.

Galiwinku, Maningrida, and Wadeye are key community service sites, they are the 3 largest Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and nearly 25% of all Aboriginal people that NLC service are within an hour's drive or in close proximity to these communities. The three communities are regional service hubs and local Aboriginal residents hail from numerous clan estate groups across a much broader area. By the way of example:

- **Galiwinku** - is a home to 20-plus clan groups in the area in and around Arnhem Bay and up through the Wessel Islands.
- **Maningrida** - is a home to 30-plus clan groups in the area covering up to 40,000 square kilometers in the Central Arnhem region.
- **Wadeye** - is a home to 22-plus clan groups in the area known as the Thamarrurr region that covers about 20,000 plus square kilometers.

Photo 12 – Don Wininba, Galiwinku Project Officer in front of NLC's sub-leased (6m x 3m) office demountable

Photo 13 – Julie Roy, Yogul Mangi Ranger managing vegetation around rock art site

INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY - 'BUILDING THE BUSH'

Infrastructure development to support the expansion and enhancement of regional offices to accommodate projected staffing profiles and improve accessibility for constituents/stakeholders is a second key focus of the regionalisation strategy.

The NLC has identified the need to undertake a phased approach with a view to establishing purpose-built regional service hubs, community service sites and supported staff accommodation.

Priority Sites

The NLC has a long-term plan to upgrade regional servicing capacity through the establishment of regional service hubs and community service sites, based on the concentration of work activities and future needs.

The plan requires resources and time and the NLC proposes a staged approach to be delivered in four stages, the first being a pilot project and then allowing some flexibility to respond to potential infrastructure requirements brought on by Major Projects.

STAGE 1
Plan, secure investment and complete in 1 to 3 years

STAGE 2
Plan, secure investment and complete in 2 to 4 years

STAGE 3
Plan, secure investment and complete in 3 to 5 years

STAGE 4
Plan, secure investment and complete in 5 to 10 years

MAJOR PROJECTS

The staged approach and sites are listed in regional priority order; however, with land availability, emerging need, workload demands, major project considerations, and cost benefit analysis the NLC needs to be flexible with shifting these priorities to accommodate the best interest of Aboriginal people, our community, regions and regional development needs:

STAGE – 1 Project

1. Katherine

- Independent market research completed for land availability, office market sales and leasing.
- Schematic plans and cost estimates for regional office completed – plans based on securing a developed vacant Crown lot that has not been released.
- Parcel of land secured, Lot 3472 Chardon Street, Katherine.

2. Darwin

- Independent market research completed for land availability and office market sales.
- Parcel of land to be secured.
- Schematic plans and cost estimates for the central office completed.
- Purpose-built facility would provide an opportunity to reduce the Darwin office size and overall leasing footprint in Darwin, as the NLC currently leases four sites (2 offices and 2 Industrial sites.
- Long-term savings to the Aboriginals Benefit Account would be significant over the life of a purpose built facility.

STAGE 2

3. Wadeye, Maningrida and Galiwinku

- Parcels of land in each community to be secured via lease under s19 of the ALRA.
- Schematic sketch plans and cost estimates for community office and staff accommodation completed.
- Building the northern infrastructure opportunities through NT Government shared office arrangements to be explored.

4. Nhulunbuy

- Independent market research completed for land availability, housing market and office market sales and leasing.
- Parcel of land to be secured.
- The decommissioning of the Rio Tinto Alcan G3 workers camp on a large parcel of land in Nhulunbuy provides future development opportunities.
- Schematic plans and cost estimates for regional office completed.

STAGE 3

5. Jabiru

- West Arnhem is the second most populous remote region and has one of the highest regional workloads. With the mining and processing of Uranium at the Ranger site coming to an end in the next few years it will be important to consider the NLC's future at Jabiru with a view to strengthening support to the broader region, maximising potential opportunities, and monitoring the extensive rehabilitation activities at the mine.
- NLC have been actively participating in the 'Future of Jabiru' discussions and exploring potential office and staff accommodation options. The future size of the town, availability of services, and access to office accommodation and staff housing will go a long way in determining the regional presence.

6. Tennant Creek

- Upgrading facilities at Tennant Creek and possibly Elliott will improve services to remote constituents across a vast area, and help to attract and retain skilled staff. The Beetaloo Basin, in the Barkly Region close to Elliott is reported to be the Territory's most prospective onshore basin for unconventional gas extraction. Exploration activities in the region will continue to increase so improving services to this area will be critical to NLC operations and negotiations with Aboriginal land owners.
- Infrastructure requirements investigated.
- Schematic plans and cost estimates to be completed.

STAGE 4

7. Borroloola, Ngukurr, and Timber Creek

- Upgrading facilities at Ngukurr, Borroloola, and Timber Creek will improve services to remote constituents across a vast area, and help to attract and retain skilled staff.
- Infrastructure requirements investigated.
- Schematic plans and cost estimates to be completed.

MAJOR PROJECTS

It will be important for the NLC to remain flexible and adaptable in order to meet workforce demands required to service a number of potential major projects that have been flagged where NLC's current presence is limited.

These projects include:

- **Project Sea Dragon, Legune Station** – a large scale, integrated land-based prawn aquaculture project in the VRD region with up to 10,000 hectares dedicated to producing high quality prawns for the export market. This would be the largest prawn farm in the Southern Hemisphere and would create significant business and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the VRD and Kimberly regions.
- **Beetaloo Basin, Barkly Region** - is reported to be the Territory's most prospective onshore basin for unconventional gas extraction. Origin Energy, a major energy provider in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, has indicated that test results confirm the Beetaloo region's outstanding shale gas potential. Further exploration and appraisal activities are in progress and this could potentially be a major resource project that creates significant business, employment and wealth creation opportunities for Aboriginal people across the Northern Territory.
- **Sun Cable Project** - a proposed $20 billion Solar Farm power project in the Barkly Region is in the early stages of planning. The project proposes to deliver one of the largest solar farms in the world with an array of solar panels spread across 15,000 hectares and backed by battery storage. On completion the Sun Cable Project would provide electricity to the Northern Territory grid with the vast majority of the energy to be exported to Singapore via a cable network. This exported power is envisaged to supply up to a fifth of Singapore's energy needs.

PILOT PROJECTS

Katherine and Darwin Regional Service Hubs

Katherine and Darwin developments will support the governance strategy of regionalisation by establishing two of our key service hubs. To date, design services for purpose built regional office hubs have been commissioned with preparation of architectural, structural, plumbing and electrical schematic design plans (sketch plans) to design level, including site development. The concept plans at each location include contingency options, constructability (materials) and general cost estimates (including construction, office fit-out and other expenses), and life cycle cost analysis.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The NLC proposes to approach the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) for co-contribution support for land purchase to accompany an Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) submission for the infrastructure development. With up-front conditional support from ILSC, the NLC believes it will be strongly placed to secure project funding from the ABA and other government agencies.

In effect, this will reduce ABA expenditure on future long-term leasing costs. A purpose built facility with scheduled maintenance has a usable life of at least 40 years and ABA funds spent on leasing could be better applied to the benefit of Aboriginal people living in the Territory.

Photo 14 – Bradshaw & Timber Creek Contracting Company, working at the Bradshaw Field Training Area, through the Bradshaw Partnering ILUA from Department of Defence

What will it look like?

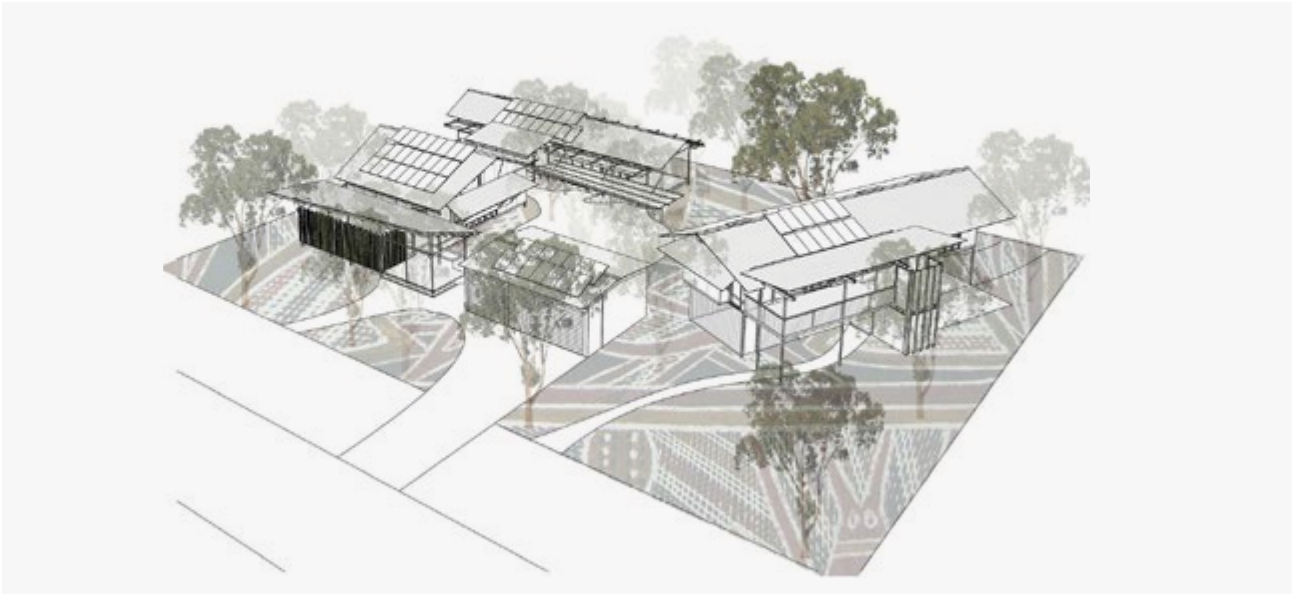
KATHERINE REGIONAL OFFICE – CONCEPT PLAN

DARWIN – PROPOSED HEAD OFFICE CONCEPT PLAN

DARWIN – PROPOSED HEAD OFFICE LAYOUT

NLC DARWIN: PROPOSED HEAD OFFICE
OFFICE LAYOUT 2
22.08.2018

GALIWINKU, MANINGRIDA, AND WADEYE – CONCEPT PLAN



NHULUNBUY REGIONAL OFFICE - CONCEPT PLAN

What are the benefits?

Regionalisation will generate a number of benefits for Aboriginal people within the NLC region and will benefit both the NLC and its constituents in the following ways:

- Immediate productivity gains for the NLC and improved program service delivery through improved efficiencies (office functionality and proximity of resources for program delivery);
- Improved purpose-built infrastructure to foster a collaborative work environment for NLC staff and to meet Work Health and Safety standards;
- Providing a central depot for regional offices to manage and store resources for the delivery of programs under Caring for Country (ranger groups) and Indigenous pastoral programs;
- Long-term investment in infrastructure will ultimately enable a more strategic redistribution of future ABA funds to other Aboriginal-focused initiatives rather than on-going office leases; and
- Support for opportunities to create intergenerational equity and productivity from Aboriginal-owned lands.

The regionalisation strategy provides a template that will make our regions better places to live, work and visit, and create stronger, more resilient and prosperous communities. We anticipate that this strategy will inform future workforce plans within regions and will support the growth of the NLC's Community Planning and Development unit.

How will we measure?

The progress of implementing regionalisation will be regularly reviewed and reported in NLC plans and updated in our corporate plan and strategic plans.

FUTURE PLANNING

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.

In recent years the Australian Government has supported Land Council's with broader roles; which has included delivering the Learning on Country program, ABA Homelands Project consultations and an expanded role in supporting the delivery of Aboriginal Housing Initiatives.

The trend that the NLC has experienced over the last 5 to 10 years is that there is a growing appetite for development on Aboriginal land, it is anticipated that Land Council's workloads will continue to experience growth in a range of industry sectors and this will open up numerous economic, community and regional development opportunities for a large number of Aboriginal people in our regions.

Photo 15 – ABA Homelands Project consultations at Langarra, Howard Island, East Arnhem

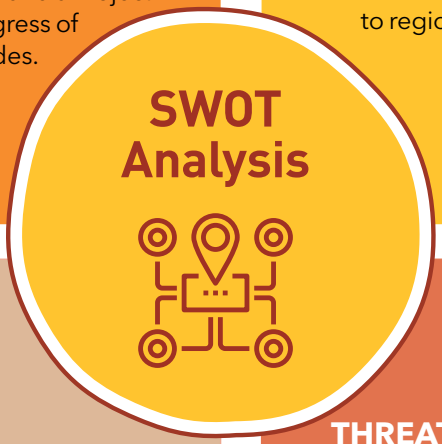
SWOT Analysis

STRENGTH

- NLC supports a regionalisation agenda.
- Constituents have a strong presence in the NLC regions.
- A large percentage of NLC's work occurs in the regions outside of Darwin.
- NLC is one of the peak Aboriginal representative bodies and has established Regional Councils.
- In recent years NLC has embarked on major reforms to improve and expand our performance, systems and services. The Chief Financial Officer and a Project Manager monitor the progress of system and service upgrades.

WEAKNESS

- Current administrative systems are not integrated and may not be inadequate to support a regionalised approach.
- Current infrastructure is largely inadequate and unsuitable for regionalisation.
- Internal organisational processes are poor.
- Regional offices are largely understaffed and struggle to secure long-term, skilled operators.
- Failure to attract skilled professional staff to regional location.



OPPORTUNITIES

- To strengthen the regional presence and provide more efficient services to constituents and business stakeholders.
- Restructure the organisation to best suit the needs of constituents and workforce demands.
- Australian Government supports decentralisation of Commonwealth entities and the regionalisation of services.

THREATS

- Failure to attract sufficient funding and support to develop the regionalisation strategy.
- IT, communication and administrative systems are not adequate to support regionalisation.
- Staff resistance to change.
- Management of multi-disciplinary staff and resources in a regional context.
- Staff housing is inadequate or non-existant.
- Staff conditions are not supportive of a regionalised approach.

Threats / Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Risk:
Secure sufficient funding and support to undertake the Regionalisation project.

Mitigation:
Individual projects will be professionally costed for the delivery at each location. Projects will be completed on a site-by site-basis with independent market research and an emphasis will be placed on securing sufficient funds.

Focus on establishing a diverse set of revenue streams.

Failing to secure the necessary funds for each site could result in the project being scaled back, proposed infrastructure modules re-prioritised, and work scope changed.

Risk:
IT, communication and administrative systems are not adequate or in place to support regionalisation.

Mitigation:
A highly skilled project manager has recently been engaged to oversee the design and delivery of IT, communication and administrative systems to support an integrated administrative system (a huge task). However, the NLC has recently gone through a significant change management process to improve its operations. Any infrastructure development is at least three years away and it is anticipated that appropriate systems will be in place well before a building is ready to be occupied.

Risk:
Staff resistance to change.

Mitigation:
Develop a communication and change management plan to inform staff of the benefits of regionalisation. Assign a senior position and HR to engage with staff whose positions are affected by proposed changes. Factoring in staff turnover, it is likely through natural attrition that positions would be re-assigned to other locations as they become vacant. New recruitment would be place-based, minimising the impact on staff.

Risk:
Management of multi-disciplinary staff and resources in a regional context.

Mitigation:
The NLC to review the role of senior management positions in regional service hubs and define responsibilities so that professional and multi-disciplinary staff are appropriately managed and supported in the regional context. Regions to have autonomy to manage budgets and resources, so that offices are resourced adequately and regional priorities are established.

Risk:
Staff housing is generally poor, or non-existent.

Mitigation:
Staff housing is critical to a regionalisation agenda, especially where there is a limited housing market. Inadequate housing in regional and remote locations often compromises the ability to recruit good staff and limits employment choices. In some regional and remote locations, the NLC finds it extremely difficult to fill positions with skilled labour, without appropriate accommodation. Staff housing will be considered in each stage of the project (with the exception of Darwin and Katherine) and factored in funding applications.

The NLC's management of assets is improving and a dedicated asset officer now oversees the management of infrastructure, leading to more regular inspections of assets. The NLC plans to implement a scheduled preventative maintenance program.

Risk:
Staff conditions are not supportive of a regionalised approach.

Mitigation:
In November 2018, the Fair Work Commission approved the NLC's Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. After years of negotiations the new agreement has closed the gap between NLC, other land councils and government agencies on staff work conditions. NLC's staff conditions are supportive of a regionalised approach; however, this will need to be reviewed regularly alongside staff accommodation conditions and providing fair subsidized rental arrangements for regional and remote operations.

Annexure A

NLC's Regional 20 year population projection

NTG utilising ABS statitical data in 2016 indicated the Indigenous population for the NT will grow by 0.9% per annum.

Darwin Daly Wagait

Yearly Projections		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Year	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**2035**	**2036**
Greater Darwin	**8,252**	8,327	8,401	8,477	8,553	8,630	8,708	8,786	8,865	8,945	9,026	9,107	9,189	9,272	9,355	9,439	9,524	9,610	9,696	9,784	9,872
Palmerston	**5,323**	5,371	5,419	5,468	5,517	5,567	5,617	5,668	5,719	5,770	5,822	5,874	5,927	5,981	6,034	6,089	6,144	6,199	6,255	6,311	6,368
Darwin Rural	**3,136**	3,164	3,193	3,221	3,250	3,280	3,309	3,339	3,369	3,399	3,430	3,461	3,492	3,523	3,555	3,587	3,619	3,652	3,685	3,718	3,751
Adelaide River - Batchelor	**443**	447	451	455	459	463	467	472	476	480	485	489	493	498	502	507	511	516	521	525	530
Belyuen - Cox Peninsula	**382**	385	388	392	395	399	403	406	410	414	417	421	425	429	433	436	440	444	448	452	456
Douglas-Daly	**183**	185	186	188	190	191	193	195	197	198	200	202	204	206	208	209	211	213	215	217	219
Emu Point	**105**	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125
Nauiyu Nambiyu	**426**	430	434	438	442	446	450	454	458	462	466	470	475	479	483	488	492	496	501	505	510
Nganmarriyanga(Palumpa)	**510**	515	519	524	529	533	538	543	548	553	558	563	568	573	578	583	589	594	599	605	610
Peppimenarti	**205**	207	209	211	213	215	217	219	221	223	225	227	229	231	233	235	237	239	241	244	246
Pine Creek	**211**	213	215	217	219	221	223	225	227	229	231	233	235	237	239	241	244	246	248	250	252
Wadeye & Outstations	**3,129**	3,157	3,205	3,253	3,301	3,351	3,401	3,452	3,504	3,557	3,610	3,664	3,719	3,775	3,831	3,889	3,947	4,006	4,066	4,127	4,189
Total	**22,305**	**22,506**	**22,709**	**22,913**	**23,119**	**23,327**	**23,537**	**23,749**	**23,963**	**24,179**	**24,396**	**24,616**	**24,837**	**25,061**	**25,286**	**25,514**	**25,744**	**25,975**	**26,209**	**26,445**	**26,683**

East Arnhem

Yearly Projections		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Year	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**2035**	**2036**
Gapuwiyak & Outstations	**1,315**	1,327	1,339	1,351	1,363	1,375	1,388	1,400	1,413	1,425	1,438	1,451	1,464	1,477	1,491	1,504	1,518	1,531	1,545	1,559	1,573
Laynhapuy - Gumatj Homelands	**629**	635	640	646	652	658	664	670	676	682	688	694	700	707	713	719	726	732	739	746	752
Galiwinku	**2,753**	2,778	2,803	2,828	2,854	2,879	2,905	2,931	2,958	2,984	3,011	3,038	3,066	3,093	3,121	3,149	3,177	3,206	3,235	3,264	3,293
Marthakal Homelands	**484**	488	492	497	501	506	510	515	519	524	529	534	538	543	548	553	558	563	568	573	582
Gunyangara	**300**	303	306	309	311	314	317	320	323	326	329	332	335	338	341	344	347	350	353	356	359
Nhulunbuy	**661**	667	673	679	685	691	698	704	710	717	723	729	736	743	749	756	763	770	777	784	791
Milingimbi	**1,617**	1,631	1,646	1,661	1,676	1,691	1,706	1,722	1,737	1,753	1,768	1,784	1,800	1,817	1,833	1,849	1,866	1,883	1,900	1,917	1,934
Ramingining	**1,129**	1,268	1,424	1,598	1,795	2,015	2,262	2,540	2,852	3,202	3,596	4,037	4,533	5,090	5,715	6,417	7,204	8,089	9,083	10,198	11,450
Ramingining - Milingimbi Outstations	**295**	331	372	417	469	526	591	663	745	836	939	1,054	1,184	1,329	1,492	1,676	1,881	2,112	2,372	2,663	2,990
Yirrkala	**945**	1,061	1,191	1,337	1,501	1,686	1,893	2,125	2,386	2,679	3,008	3,378	3,793	4,258	4,781	5,368	6,027	6,768	7,599	8,532	9,580
Total	**10,128**	**10,219**	**10,311**	**10,404**	**10,497**	**10,592**	**10,687**	**10,783**	**10,880**	**10,978**	**11,077**	**11,177**	**11,277**	**11,379**	**11,481**	**11,585**	**11,689**	**11,794**	**11,900**	**12,007**	**12,115**

West Arnhem

Yearly Projections		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Year	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**2035**	**2036**
Jabiru - Marrakai - Kakadu	**678**	684	690	696	703	709	715	722	728	735	741	748	755	762	768	775	782	789	796	804	811
Maningrida & Outstations	**3,309**	3,339	3,369	3,399	3,430	3,461	3,492	3,523	3,555	3,587	3,619	3,652	3,685	3,718	3,752	3,785	3,819	3,854	3,888	3,923	3,959
Cobourg Peninsula-Demed Homelands	**479**	484	488	492	497	501	506	510	515	520	524	529	534	539	543	548	553	558	563	568	573
Gunbalanya	**1,375**	1,388	1,400	1,413	1,425	1,438	1,451	1,464	1,477	1,491	1,504	1,518	1,531	1,545	1,559	1,573	1,587	1,601	1,616	1,630	1,645
Mamadawerre	**0**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manmoyi	**60**	61	61	62	62	63	63	64	65	65	66	66	67	68	68	69	69	70	71	71	72
Minjilang	**312**	314	317	320	323	326	329	332	335	338	341	344	347	350	353	356	360	363	366	369	373
Warruwi	**507**	512	516	521	526	531	535	540	545	550	555	560	565	570	575	580	585	591	596	601	607
Total	**6,721**	**6,781**	**6,842**	**6,904**	**6,966**	**7,028**	**7,092**	**7,156**	**7,220**	**7,285**	**7,351**	**7,417**	**7,483**	**7,551**	**7,619**	**7,687**	**7,756**	**7,826**	**7,897**	**7,968**	**8,040**

Ngukurr

Yearly Projections		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Year	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**2035**	**2036**
Numbulwar and Outstations	**959**	967	976	985	994	1,003	1,012	1,021	1,030	1,039	1,049	1,058	1,068	1,077	1,087	1,097	1,106	1,116	1,126	1,137	1,147
Minyerri	**822**	829	837	844	852	859	867	875	883	891	899	907	915	923	932	940	948	957	966	974	983
Rittarangu	**180**	182	184	185	187	189	190	192	194	195	197	199	201	203	204	206	208	210	212	214	216
Yugul Mangi Outstations	**6**	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7
Ngukurr	**1,508**	1,521	1,535	1,549	1,563	1,577	1,591	1,606	1,620	1,635	1,649	1,664	1,679	1,694	1,709	1,725	1,740	1,756	1,772	1,788	1,804
Total	**3,474**	**3,505**	**3,537**	**3,569**	**3,601**	**3,633**	**3,666**	**3,699**	**3,732**	**3,766**	**3,800**	**3,834**	**3,869**	**3,903**	**3,938**	**3,974**	**4,010**	**4,046**	**4,082**	**4,119**	**4,156**

Katherine

Yearly Projections		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Year	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**2035**	**2036**
Barunga	**458**	463	467	471	475	479	484	488	492	497	501	506	510	515	520	524	529	534	539	543	548
Bulman - Weemol	**362**	365	368	372	375	379	382	385	389	392	396	399	403	407	410	414	418	422	425	429	433
Elsey Roper - Surrounds	**68**	69	70	70	71	72	72	73	74	74	75	76	76	77	78	78	79	80	80	81	82
Jilkminggan	**407**	410	414	418	422	425	429	433	437	441	445	449	453	457	461	465	469	474	478	482	486
Manyallaluk	**122**	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	131	132	133	134	135	137	138	139	140	142	143	144	145
Mataranka - Mulggan	**143**	144	145	146	148	149	150	152	153	155	156	157	159	160	162	163	165	166	167	169	171
Wugular (Beswick)	**720**	726	733	739	746	753	759	766	773	780	787	794	801	809	816	823	831	838	846	853	861
Katherine (inc. Town Camps)	**3,045**	3,073	3,100	3,128	3,156	3,185	3,213	3,242	3,271	3,301	3,331	3,361	3,391	3,421	3,452	3,483	3,515	3,546	3,578	3,610	3,643
Total	**5,324**	**5,372**	**5,421**	**5,470**	**5,519**	**5,568**	**5,619**	**5,669**	**5,720**	**5,772**	**5,824**	**5,876**	**5,929**	**5,982**	**6,036**	**6,090**	**6,145**	**6,200**	**6,256**	**6,313**	**6,369**

VRD

Yearly Projections		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Year	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**2035**	**2036**
Amanbidji (Mialuni)	**102**	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122
Bulla	**109**	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	124	125	126	127	128	129	130
Timber Creek	**165**	166	168	169	171	172	174	176	177	179	180	182	184	185	187	189	190	192	194	196	197
Timber Creek - Surrounds	**126**	127	128	129	130	132	133	134	135	136	138	139	140	141	143	144	145	146	148	149	150
Pigeon Hole	**131**	133	134	135	136	137	139	140	141	142	144	145	146	148	149	150	152	153	154	156	157
Walangeri Outstations	**77**	78	78	79	80	80	81	82	83	83	84	85	86	86	87	88	89	90	90	91	92
Yarralin	**363**	367	370	373	377	380	383	387	390	394	397	401	405	408	412	416	419	423	427	431	435
Total	**1,073**	**1,083**	**1,093**	**1,103**	**1,112**	**1,122**	**1,133**	**1,143**	**1,153**	**1,163**	**1,174**	**1,184**	**1,195**	**1,206**	**1,217**	**1,228**	**1,239**	**1,250**	**1,261**	**1,272**	**1,284**

Borroloola Barkly

Yearly Projections		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Year	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**2035**	**2036**
Barkly Tablelands - Outstations	**186**	188	189	191	193	194	196	198	200	201	203	205	207	209	211	213	215	216	218	220	222
Elliott Surrounds - Outstations	**81**	82	82	83	83	83	83	84	84	85	85	86	86	86	86	87	87	88	88	89	89
Elliott	**418**	422	422	425	425	429	429	433	433	437	437	441	441	445	445	449	449	453	453	457	457
Borroloola	**935**	943	943	952	952	960	960	969	969	978	978	987	987	995	995	1,004	1,004	1,013	1,013	1,023	1,023
Robinson River (Mungoorbada)	**302**	305	305	307	307	310	310	313	313	316	316	319	319	321	321	324	324	327	327	330	335
Mabunji - Mungoorbada Outstations	**228**	230	230	232	232	234	234	236	236	238	238	240	240	243	243	245	245	247	247	249	249
Total	**1,963**	**1,981**	**1,999**	**2,016**	**2,035**	**2,053**	**2,072**	**2,091**	**2,109**	**2,128**	**2,148**	**2,167**	**2,186**	**2,206**	**2,226**	**2,246**	**2,266**	**2,287**	**2,307**	**2,328**	**2,349**

Yearly Projections		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Year	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**	**2030**	**2031**	**2032**	**2033**	**2034**	**2035**	**2036**
Combined Total	**50,989**	**51,448**	**51,911**	**52,378**	**52,850**	**53,325**	**53,805**	**54,290**	**54,778**	**55,271**	**55,769**	**56,271**	**56,777**	**57,288**	**57,804**	**58,324**	**58,849**	**59,378**	**59,913**	**60,452**	**60,996**

Prepared utilising ABS 2016 population estimates, and the Northern Territory Government's forecast Indigenous population growth of 0.9%.

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Cover Image: Nyinyikay, East Arnhem