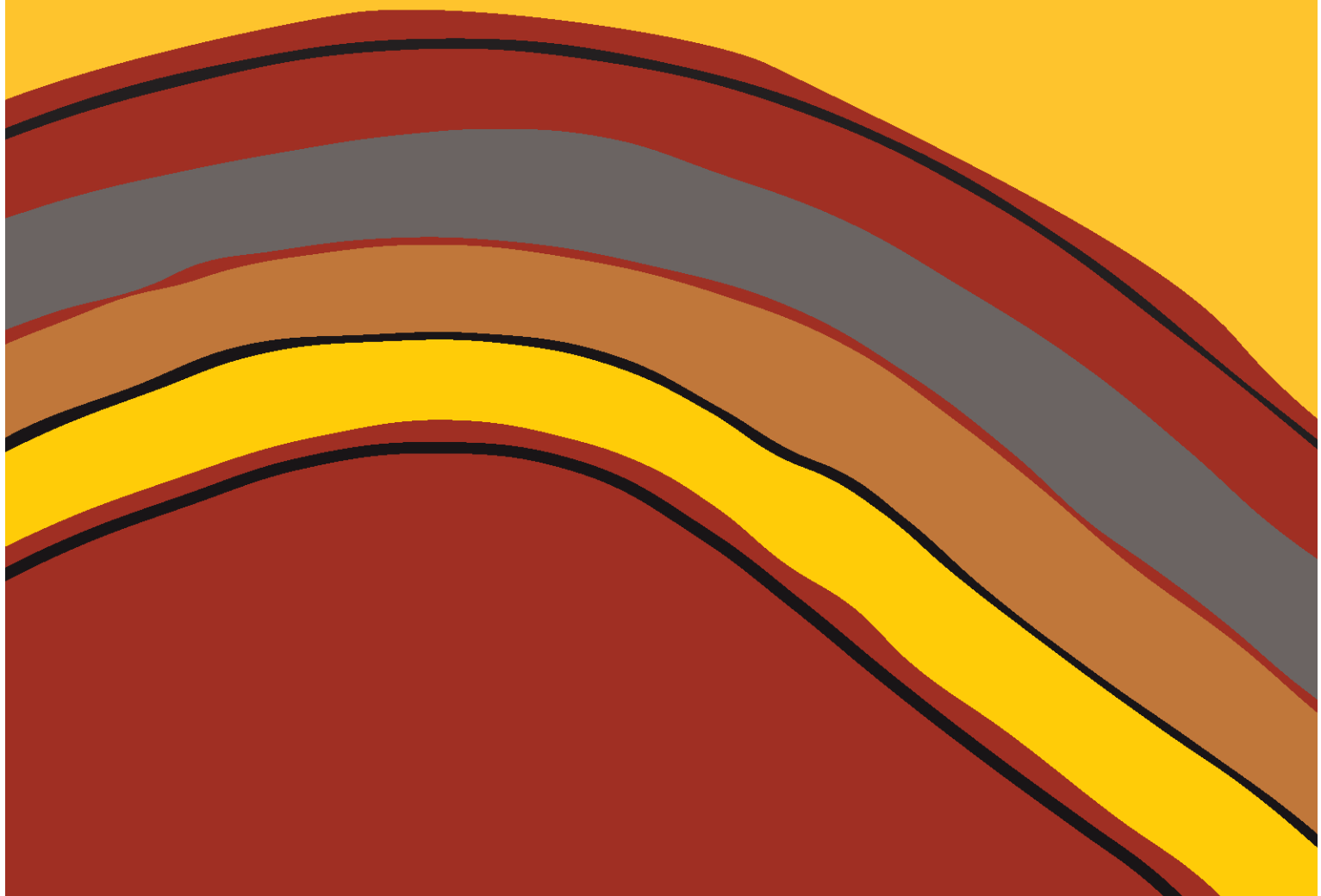


**NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PLAN**  
2018/19 to 2021/22



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## FOREWORD

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

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

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

The purpose of the plan is to provide information about the significant activities which the NLC will undertake over a period of four years, 2018/19 to 2021/22. The plan describes our purposes, what we will do to achieve those purposes and how we will know that we have achieved them. The attainment of the goals laid out in this document will, to a large extent, depend on future budget provisions.

The organisation is committed to achieving savings and efficiencies through a regime of rigorous management and financial controls, improved systems and access to accurate, informative and timely data for better quality decision making. The NLC has achieved significant progress towards:

- (i) Installation of modern and efficient ICT hardware, providing faster, safer and secure ICT capabilities;
- (ii) A new HR and payroll system;
- (iii) Upgrade of the financial system structure, budgeting and reporting capabilities;

The NLC has also commenced projects to address:

- A. Contract management software and processes;
- B. An introduction of a contemporary permit system;
- C. An efficient end-to-end process for land use management and royalties.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

We, as the Accountable Authority of the Northern Land Council, present the 2018/2019 Northern Land Council Corporate Plan, which covers the financial years 2018/19 to 2021/22 (a period of four years), as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Joe Morrison

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Samuel Bush-Blanas

CHAIRPERSON



## 1.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL

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

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

A large proportion of the remaining land and seas are subject to ALRA and Native Title land claims. There are 69 determinations recognising the existence of native title in the NLC region and two (2) determinations that native title does not exist. The Top End Default PBC/CLA Aboriginal Corporation is the agent PBC for 69 determinations of native title. The NLC Executive from time to time comprises both the members and Directors of the Top End Default PBC/CLA Aboriginal Corporation

The ALRA and native title recognition provide a strong foundation on which to build social, cultural and economic growth for Traditional Aboriginal Owners.

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

The NLC is also the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) pursuant to the *Native Title Act 1993 (Native Title Act)* for the Northern Territory's northern region, covering approximately 605,819 square kilometres of land, including the Tiwi Islands and Groote Eylandt, the Ashmore and Cartier Islands Territory and the seas of the Northern Territory coast to the boundary of Australia's exclusive economic zone (200 nm)

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



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

The NLC also has functions under the following legislation: the *Aboriginal Land Act (NT)*, *Cobourg Peninsular Aboriginal Land, Sanctuary and Marine Park Act 1996 (NT)*, *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*, *Atomic Energy Act (Cth)*, *Water Act (NT)* *Kenbi Land Trust Act (NT)*, *Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act*, *Nitmiluk (Katherine Gorge) National Park Act 1989 (NT)*, *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 (NT)*, *Pastoral Land Act 1992 (NT)*, *Special Purpose Leases Act 1953 (NT)* and the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 2006 (NT)*.



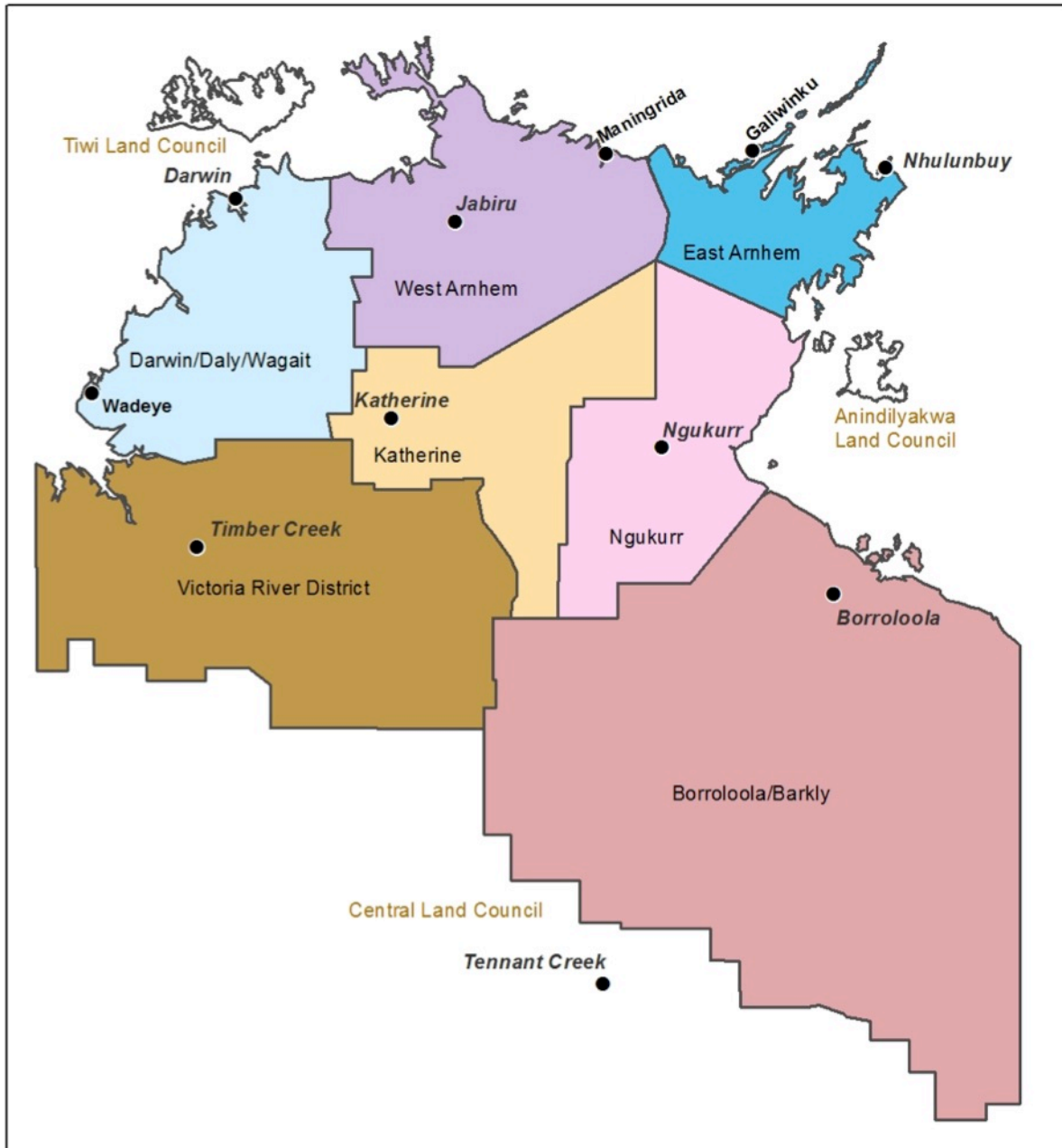
## 1.3 PURPOSE

The purpose of the NLC is to enable and assist Indigenous people within the NLC region to acquire and manage land and seas, protect sacred sites, culture and promote economic and community development.

We work with Indigenous people to care for country and protect, manage and promote the rights, interests and aspirations of the first peoples of our region. Our role is to give Traditional Aboriginal Owners a strong voice and to ensure their property rights are both protected and enabled.

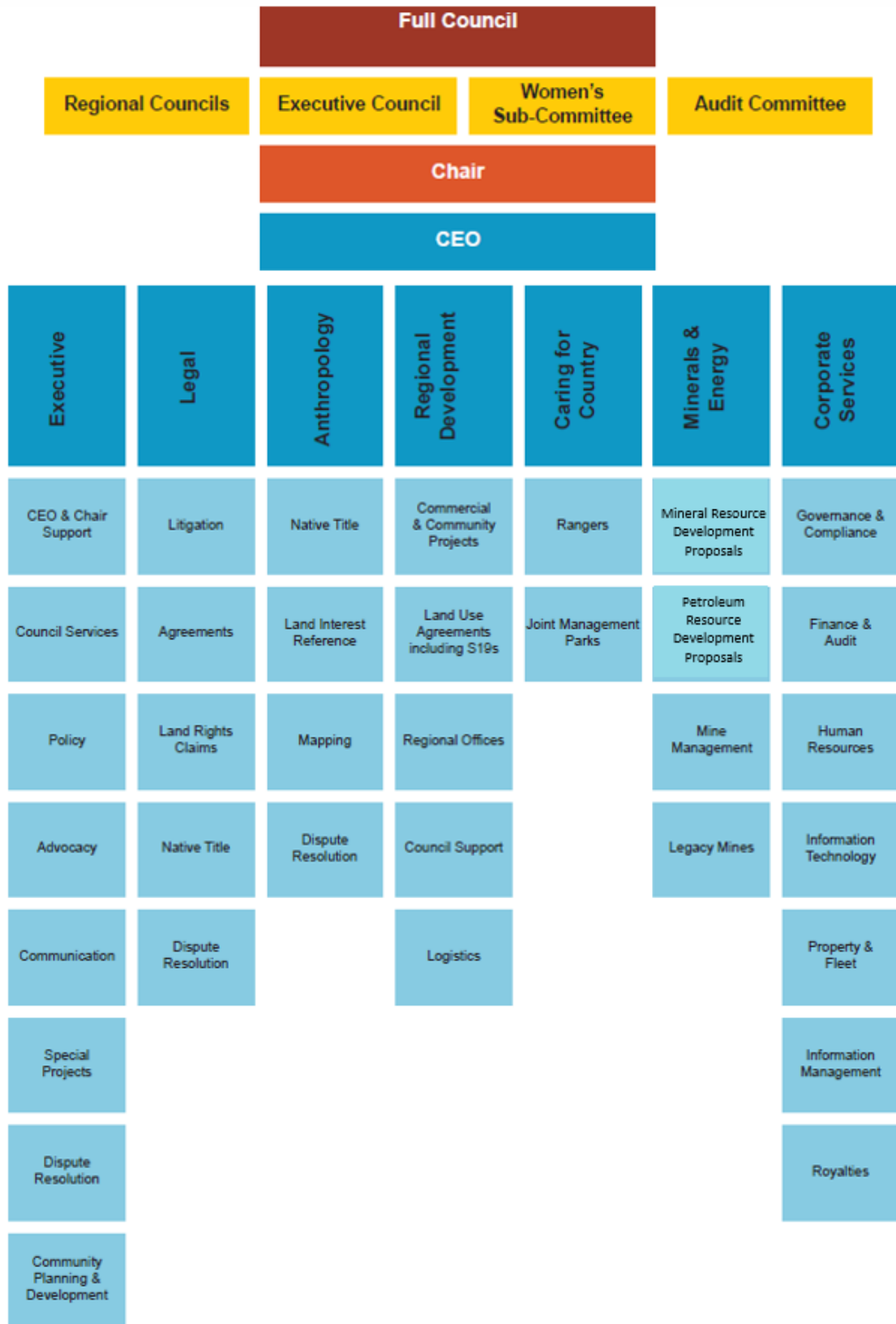


## 1.4 OUR LOCATIONS AND OFFICES





# 1.5 OUR STRUCTURE



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

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

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

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

The NLC's operations are managed by seven branches:

- **EXECUTIVE:** provides policy, communications advice and strategic support to the CEO and Chair, and to the NLC's elected arms.
- **LEGAL:** provides legal and policy advice to the Council, to Native Title holders, conducts Land Rights and Native Title claims, negotiates commercial, mining and other agreements and maintains a database of and repository for all agreements and keeps the common seals of the Aboriginal Land Trusts that own Aboriginal Land under ALRA.
- **ANTHROPOLOGY:** identifies and consults with Traditional Aboriginal Owners in order to secure and protect their rights in land and also takes instructions from Traditional Aboriginal Owners concerning the disbursement of royalty payments accruing through various land use agreements, in accordance with functions defined in the ALRA and Native Title Act (NTA).



- **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** oversees the NLC's network of ten regional offices beyond Darwin, which include Katherine, Timber Creek, Ngukurr, Borroloola, Tennant Creek, Jabiru, Maningrida, Wadeye, Nhulunbuy and Galiwinku. These offices provide, amongst other tasks, logistics support for consultations required under the ALRA and NTA.
- **CARING FOR COUNTRY:** hosts and provides administrative support to land and sea Ranger Groups, provides policy support and advice on land and sea management issues and supports joint management of National Parks.
- **MINERALS & ENERGY:** provides advice to enable Traditional Aboriginal Owners to understand the nature and purpose of mineral and petroleum resource development proposals on their lands and manage Traditional Aboriginal Owner engagement and participation relating to environmental impacts.
- **CORPORATE SERVICES:** delivers financial, information technology, human resource, information management and administrative support to the other branches, including fleet and facilities management. Corporate Services is also responsible for corporate compliance under the *PGPA Act* and the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*.

Two specialist committees are included in the NLC structure:

- The Women's Sub-Committee: a sub-committee of the Full Council to facilitate discussions, priorities and issues relevant to Aboriginal women in the NLC region.
- The Audit Committee: comprises three independent members (including an independent Chairperson) and two NLC council representatives. The committee oversees good governance and the management of risk.

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

- Australian Government;
- Northern Territory Government;
- Regional Councils and Local Authorities (Local Government);
- Industries: Mineral, Petroleum, Pastoral, Tourism and Fishing;
- Businesses;
- Non-Government Organisations.



## 2. OUR VISION AND GUIDING VALUES

### Our Vision

A Territory in which the rights and responsibilities of every Traditional Owner are recognised and in which Aboriginal people benefit economically, socially and culturally from the secure possession of their lands, seas and intellectual property.

### Our Guiding Values

We will:

- Consult with and act with the informed consent of Traditional Owners in accordance with the ALRA
- Communicate clearly with Aboriginal people, taking into account the linguistic diversity of the region
- Respect Aboriginal law and tradition
- Be responsive to Aboriginal peoples' needs and effectively advocate for their interests
- Be open, transparent and accountable
- 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
- Treat our stakeholders with respect



## 3. ENVIRONMENT

### 3.1 OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

#### Geographic

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

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

The challenging and remote geography impacts the costs of:

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

#### Social, Economic and Regulatory

- Over the past few years, various government initiatives - such as the Commonwealth Intervention, the introduction of the super shires and the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia - have led to a significant



growth in demand for the NLC's core functions, especially in increasing land use agreements;

- The demanding policy environment brought about by successive governments contributes to additional workloads for NLC staff and the Council;
- Extensive mineral and petroleum activities have led to additional pressure on staff resources for dealing with large scale and highly technical projects such as hydraulic fracturing and major infrastructure projects;
- Since the passing of the ALRA, approximately 50 percent of land in the Northern Territory has become Aboriginal freehold land in addition to 85 percent of the coastline;
- A large proportion of the remaining land mass is subject to Native Title.

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

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



## 3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

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

<b>STRENGTHS (NLC has full or partial control of these factors)</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES (NLC has full or partial control of these factors)</b>
Change Management continues to create efficiencies and strengthen governance. However, each stage of the Change Management process is slow because of the need to prioritise the budget to the more urgent demands.	Capacity-building across the organisation is required, but restricted budgets have meant that this is not prioritised as highly as it could be.
Improvement of Financial Management systems has allowed management to better control the NLC's finances and assets and find efficiency dividends.	Reform of royalty systems continues – but, without a significant injection of funds, improvement is limited by capacity.
Regional Offices can be further developed, to allow a devolvement of systems and services to the regions where activities take place and Aboriginal people live.	Not enough staff, and not enough staff of the required skill set. Inefficient and outdated infrastructure – these factors are a funding issue as well as one of the availability of skilled staff.
A strong and engaged Full Council, Regional Councils, and Executive Council structure means that policy and strategy is derived from the constituents upwards.	Not fully funded to react to the broad expectations of Traditional Owners – the NLC has only partial control because the annual budget is beyond its control, while prioritisation of the budget leads to strain in other areas of NLC operations. The move to a 3 year budget cycle from 2017/18 onwards for ABA funds will partially assist in managing budget shortfalls.
The NLC has a proven consultation process for obtaining free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners. This can be further developed but needs additional funding to enhance capacity to reinforce the stress-points caused by increasing demand.	Succession planning and mentorship requires attention.



<b>OPPORTUNITIES (NLC has little or no control over these factors)</b>	<b>THREATS (NLC has little or no control over these factors)</b>
<p>Successful ranger programs and Land and Sea Management initiatives can enhance the NLC's presence in communities and the delivery of better services, including improving the relationship between the community, Traditional Owners and the NLC.</p> <p>NLC is a major employer of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</p>	<p>Insufficient levels of funding to address local program capacity needs. Demand for rangers outstrips the available funds to increase the numbers of rangers. A number of groups lack dedicated ranger base facilities and coordinator housing.</p> <p>Aged fleet and other assets and equipment beyond economic repair requiring replacement – these are critical WHS issues.</p>
<p>A Community Planning and Development Unit can facilitate localised development for Traditional Owners and the affected community.</p>	<p>Funding for on-going operations may not be sufficient to meet already growing demands from communities.</p>
<p>Change in demographics – increasing Aboriginal population could lead to increasing opportunities for Aboriginal people, but will certainly lead to increased demand for services.</p>	<p>Non-viability of some Shires and Aboriginal Corporations will mean a call on non-core NLC services.</p>
<p>Younger people's expectations about education, employment, and economic opportunities, as well as improvements to social and health services – beyond the control of the NLC, but could lead to a positive demand for NLC services.</p>	<p>Third party developments and public policy such as the Northern Development White Paper. Impact of mineral and petroleum development and production in particular, and projects identified as a major projects status.</p>

The above factors have been considered when formulating strategies.





## 4. RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

The organisation's risk oversight and management system is designed to provide appropriate information to the Accountable Authority at appropriate times. To ensure risk oversight and management remains current, a risk consultant was engaged in 2017/18 to update the risk and fraud management plans and update the NLC risk register.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The Audit Committee will report to the Full Council.



## 5. PERFORMANCE

The NLC is three years into a wide-ranging reform agenda covering almost all aspects of the governance and administration of the Council. In broad terms this includes:

- (i) The operations of Council – initiatives to monitor and assess councillor's performance and manage complaints have been initiated. A stakeholder survey was conducted in 2017/18;
- (ii) Administration and services delivery – Implementing extensive reform agenda across all administrative functions, with progress having been achieved in corporate planning and reporting, financial reporting, internal governance through the operations of an Audit Committee, systems and process upgrades in human resources, records management and information communication technology (ICT);
- (iii) Planning, performance and engagement – The introduction of a planning framework consisting of a strategic plan, corporate plan and branch business plans; and
- (iv) Reform of the management structure of some branches including the legal branch.

The introduction of the reform agenda will assist in the NLC's ability to measure and report performance results. More importantly, the NLC Corporate Plan will move towards reporting on impact rather than output in future years.

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

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

1. The prosecution of the NLC's ALRA and NTA responsibilities to acquire and protect Aboriginal property rights;
2. Facilitating Community Development so as to protect and develop Aboriginal use of land and seas;
3. Maintaining and continuing to strengthen Ranger groups on country to further protect and maintain Aboriginal land and seas;



4. Facilitate arrangements to provide a more responsive and efficient Permit System to organise, manage and document licensed access to Aboriginal Land under ALRA.
5. Introduce improved processes to manage land use agreements and distribution arrangements and lift internal capability by tracking activities through one consolidated system.
6. Develop and maintain a comprehensive communications system to facilitate the provision of information and advocacy of Traditional Owners' interests; and
7. Continually improving the NLC's policies and procedures to achieve efficiency and best practice governance.

The delivery strategies and measurements of performance for the future years 2018/19 to 2021/22 are subject to change depending on circumstances and the environment at the time, and will likely change to incorporate actual performance in past years and any new factors emerging when the corporate plan for those years are being prepared.

## **Delivery strategies and measurements of performance 2017/18 to 2020/21**

<b>Priority 1: Prosecute ALRA and NTA responsibilities to acquire and protect Aboriginal property rights.</b>
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Delivery Strategy: 2018/19 to 2021/22
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- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource the Legal, Anthropology and Regional Development Branches (subject to budget) to provide capacity in Human Resources and systems so that legislative responsibilities can be prosecuted efficiently, compliantly and in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Update GIS Mapping capabilities.</li> <li>• Through the management of available capacity, continue the prosecution of Land Rights and Native Title claims.</li> <li>• Adequately resource the Anthropology Branch to identify and prioritise protracted issues and areas of dispute and facilitate effective mediation and conciliation measures in order of need.</li> <li>• Through the management of available resources, consult with Traditional Owners and negotiate Land Use Agreements, permit access arrangements and other commercial agreements.</li> <li>• Provide policy and advocacy for cultural integrity and protection of intellectual and cultural rights.</li> </ul> |
|--|



Measurement:			
2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anthropology Branch vacant positions filled in accordance with the budget for the year.</li> <li>• 10% of remaining ALRA land claims finalised.</li> <li>• Native Title claims completed in accordance with Court schedule.</li> <li>• 50 land use agreements per calendar year.</li> <li>• One (1) exploration, mining or petroleum agreements per calendar year.</li> <li>• Legal Branch participate in and provide advice to the NLC internal reform process including permits, finance, royalties and IT.</li> <li>• Legal Branch provide contract advice (20) to NLC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anthropology Branch vacant positions filled in accordance with the budget for the year.</li> <li>• Finalisation or substantial progress of intertidal zone and/or beds and banks land claims by 31 December 2019.</li> <li>• Native Title claims completed in accordance with Court schedule.</li> <li>• 50 land use agreements per calendar year.</li> <li>• One (1) exploration, mining or petroleum agreements per calendar year.</li> <li>• Legal Branch participate in and provide advice to the NLC internal reform process including permits, finance, royalties and IT.</li> <li>• Legal Branch provide contract advice (20) to NLC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anthropology Branch vacant positions filled in accordance with the budget for the year.</li> <li>• Finalisation of all ALRA claims including beds and banks claims.</li> <li>• Native Title claims completed in accordance with Court schedule.</li> <li>• 50 land use agreements per calendar year.</li> <li>• One (1) exploration, mining or petroleum agreements per calendar year.</li> <li>• Legal Branch participate in and provide advice to the NLC internal reform process including permits, finance, royalties and IT.</li> <li>• Legal Branch provide contract advice (20) to NLC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anthropology Branch vacant positions filled in accordance with the budget for the year.</li> <li>• Native Title claims completed in accordance with Court schedule.</li> <li>• 50 land use agreements per calendar year.</li> <li>• Five (5) exploration, mining or petroleum agreements per calendar year.</li> <li>• Legal Branch participate in and provide advice to the NLC internal reform process including permits, finance, royalties and IT.</li> <li>• Legal Branch provide contract advice (20) to NLC.</li> </ul>

**Priority 2: Facilitate Community Development so as to protect and develop Aboriginal use of land and seas.**

Delivery Strategy: 2018/19 to 2021/22

- Create a Community Planning and Development Unit to assist and facilitate Traditional



<p>Owners' access to resources to economically and socially develop their own groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In partnership with other branches develop and promote an "economic prospectus" for the region, identifying the demand, capability and opportunities for Traditional Owners to participate in economic development on their lands.</li> </ul>			
Measurement:			
2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Planning and Development Program is being implemented in five of the NLC's regions subject to Traditional Owners opting to participate.</li> <li>Complete annual CP&amp;D monitoring report.</li> <li>Complete the preparation of the economic prospectus for the test region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Planning and Development Unit is being implemented in all seven of the NLC's regions subject to Traditional Owners opting to participate.</li> <li>Complete annual CP&amp;D monitoring report.</li> <li>Commence marketing of the economic development opportunities on Aboriginal lands to third parties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of CP&amp;D Program outcomes completed with recommended improvements and scope.</li> <li>Continue marketing of the economic development opportunities on Aboriginal lands to third parties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CP&amp;D Program is being implemented and delivering outcomes across the NLC's regions subject to Traditional Owners continuing to opt in.</li> <li>CP&amp;D review recommendations implemented.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Priority 3: Maintain and continue to strengthen Ranger groups on country to further protect and maintain Aboriginal land and seas</b></p>
<p>Delivery Strategy: 2018/19 to 2021/22</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the capabilities of Ranger Groups through training and capacity building.</li> <li>Additional funding and program partnerships developed to facilitate improved capacity and operations of Ranger groups, management activities of IPAs and jointly managed parks.</li> <li>Indigenous land and sea management groups (Rangers) undertake a portfolio of activities and work on all major cultural, environmental and biodiversity issues in the NT, including fire management, feral animal and weed control, biodiversity monitoring and threatened species protection. They also work on border protection threats, including quarantine control and the illegal movement of people and goods, including foreign fishing.</li> </ul>
Measurement:



2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring for Country Branch programs are endorsed and implemented in accordance with approved plans (subject to funding).</li> <li>• Commence the implementation of the Women's Engagement Strategy. This aims to identify barriers to women's employment and implement strategies developed in consultation with community elders and women rangers.</li> <li>• Complete the development of the Career Pathways Framework, aimed at providing career progression and equal employment opportunities for all Caring for Country employees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capabilities of Ranger groups and IPAs are managed in accordance with approved plans (subject to funding).</li> <li>• Commence the Implementation of the Career Pathways Framework.</li> <li>• Implement the Women's Engagement Strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capabilities of Ranger groups and IPAs are managed in accordance with approved plans (subject to funding).</li> <li>• Implement the Career Pathways Framework.</li> <li>• Implement the Women's Engagement Strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capabilities of Ranger groups and IPAs are managed in accordance with approved plans (subject to funding).</li> <li>• Implement the Career Pathways Framework.</li> <li>• Implement the Women's Engagement Strategy.</li> </ul>

**Priority 4: Facilitate arrangements to provide a more responsive and efficient Permit Management System to organise, manage and document licensed access to traditional lands and waters.**

Delivery Strategy: 2018/19 to 2021/22

Create a Permit Reform Team to address the aspirations for permit reform from Traditional Owners and other stakeholders who recognise that current conditions and access arrangements constrain safety, tourism and investment, and the effective monitoring, control and deterrence of illegal and dangerous activity by visitors on Aboriginal land and waters.

The Permit Reform Team will:

- Facilitate Traditional Aboriginal Owner decisions about who visits their land and the circumstances under which access is permitted



- Design, build and implement a modern Permit Management system
- Grow confidence about Traditional Aboriginal Owner agency in managing visitors, leading to a more welcoming attitude to visitors and investment with the right controls.

Develop and promote Permit Reform to connect permit holders with Aboriginal Traditional Owners and help them be safe and informed, understand their obligations and responsibilities as visitors, and participate in mutually beneficial opportunities and experiences while on country.

Measurement:

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management Unit is in place, functioning, and supporting Permit Reform.</li> <li>• Consultations lead to arrangements where areas have automated permit processing.</li> <li>• Subject to Traditional Owners opting to participate, streamline access arrangements for fishing permits.</li> <li>• Permit Management System governance and policy framework is fully implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further arrangements to extend areas with automated permit processing will provide certainty for fishers and other water users in the intertidal zone.</li> <li>• Develop Permit Reform Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy.</li> <li>• Growing body of trend data on visitor numbers, activities and feedback will inform Ranger activities on permit risks and compliance hot spots.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete annual Permit Management evaluation report.</li> <li>• Continue to consult with Traditional Owners and stakeholders to refine permit management, policy and process, and consolidate benefits.</li> <li>• Based on local priorities and visitor preferences, the team will collaborate with NLC's CP&amp;D Unit to promote Aboriginal-led business proposals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to consult with Traditional Owners and stakeholders to refine permit management, policy and process, and consolidate benefits.</li> </ul>

**Priority 5: Introduce improved processes to manage land use agreements and disbursement arrangements and lift internal capability by tracking activity through one consolidated system.**

Delivery Strategy: 2018/19 to 2021/22

The Land Use Management and Royalties (LUMAR) project will provide:

- A more responsive and consistent approach to land use agreements.
- Trackable actions on contractual activities and variations and more effective oversight





of Proponent billing and commitments.

- More timely management of disbursement arrangements aligned with beneficiary preferences.
- Optimised schedule for consultation projects.
- The means to measure efficiency and effectiveness and drive improvements.

The aim of the LUMAR Project is to:

- Increase efficiency by tracking land use management and disbursement arrangements through one consolidated system.
- Increase effectiveness by implementing productivity tools and consistent processes.
- Increase transparency so that information about NLC's activities in the management of Contracts is shared securely.
- Increase compliance with legislative requirements by building financial and operational controls into systems, eg ALRA s35.

The team has defined business processes and definitions. Policy framework and detailed procedures and business rules will be agreed in 2018/19.

Measurement:

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management Unit is functional, and supporting LUMAR project.</li> <li>• Trust Accounting Module is fully implemented.</li> <li>• Policy framework is agreed for Contracts, Disbursement Arrangements and Consultation Projects</li> <li>• Deliver a more fit-for-purpose enterprise-level database.</li> <li>• Contract functions implemented.</li> <li>• Disbursement arrangements implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project management functions implemented.</li> <li>• Delegation and organisational structure is in place.</li> <li>• Extensive change management is undertaken to build capability and consistency.</li> <li>• Contract governance and policy is fully implemented.</li> <li>• Disbursement Arrangement governance and policy is fully implemented.</li> <li>• Key performance indicators (KPIs) on Contracts, Disbursement Arrangements and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits realisation is measured</li> <li>• Consultation Project governance and policy is fully implemented.</li> <li>• KPIs are reported regularly</li> <li>• KPIs are used to manage resource allocation and performance</li> <li>• Additional operational processes are automated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits realisation continues</li> <li>• Project evaluation and review</li> </ul>



	Consultation Projects are agreed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project evaluation and review</li> </ul>		
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**Priority 6: Develop and maintain a comprehensive communications system to facilitate the provision of information for and provision of advocacy of Traditional Owners' interests. Ensure rangers and IPAs have effective local governance.**

Delivery Strategy: 2018/19 to 2021/22

- Develop and implement a communications and public relations plan.
- Organise events, and prepare resources and publications, publish the Land Rights News quarterly; develop a program of media releases and press conferences around issues of the day.
- Maintain the alliance with Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (AP ONT).
- Regularly liaise with Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and other institutions.

Measurement:

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Rights News published on time.</li> <li>• Press releases or speeches at forums are published, advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC.</li> <li>• Finalise the NLC Communications Strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Rights News published on time.</li> <li>• Press releases or speeches at forums are published advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Rights News published on time.</li> <li>• Press releases or speeches at forums are published advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Rights News published on time.</li> <li>• Press releases or speeches at forums are published advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC.</li> </ul>

**Priority 7: Continuously improving the NLC's Policies and Procedures systems for more efficiency and best practice governance.**

Delivery Strategy: 2018/19 to 2021/22

- Develop, implement, and continually improve policies and procedures that will strengthen the governance and management of the organisation, so that NLC operates in accordance with best practice principles and meets all statutory reporting obligations in order to provide its Aboriginal constituents with responsive, transparent governance



and administration.

- Take account of and implement recommendations of ANAO Performance Audit: (a) develop and maintain an action plan to monitor the progress of reform initiatives and projects, and (b) develop a communications strategy to inform staff of changes.

Measurement:

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultant to complete council and stakeholders' satisfaction surveys.</li> <li>• Further refine Members Handbook (Code of Conduct).</li> <li>• Previous year's Financial Statements are submitted and published on time.</li> <li>• Policies and procedures are implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement improvements based on consultants' surveys.</li> <li>• All external and internal audit recommended actions are completed.</li> <li>• All filings are completed on time.</li> <li>• Policies and procedures are reviewed annually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to monitor outcomes and maintain improvements. All external and internal audit recommended actions are completed.</li> <li>• All filings are completed on time.</li> <li>• Policies and Procedures are reviewed annually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to monitor outcomes and maintain improvements.</li> <li>• All external and internal audit recommended actions are completed.</li> <li>• All filings are completed on time.</li> <li>• Policies and Procedures are reviewed annually.</li> </ul>



## 6. CAPABILITY

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

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

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

### Human Resources

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

In order to provide the human resources required, the NLC will need to fill all identified vacancies, source staff with more experience and applicable skills, program professional training and development, and specifically attract and retain professionally qualified Aboriginal people. To achieve this objective NLC have established a panel of ATSI Employment Providers who will be advised of all vacancies at NLC as a matter of process. Further, NLC are working towards an MOU with the APSC Indigenous Capability Unit. This will enable NLC to access Indigenous graduates and promote vacancies through the APSC Jobs-board and also expose NLC Indigenous leaders to forums and professional development opportunities with the APSC that may not be available in the NT.

### Information and Communications Technology

The NLC has overcome the issue of ageing equipment and this year is replacing unsuitable software. Based on the recommendations from 2016/17 information, communication and technology (ICT) review by EY Consulting the NLC has follow the roadmap for the establishment of modern, efficient and capable ICT solutions for the NLC.



The challenge over the next four years is to ensure that the needs of the organisation for specialist software such as a permit application, a more integrated geographic information system, and specially configured enterprise resource planning software are met in order to implement its strategies.

Funding from the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) is sought in 2018-19 for the LUMAR project so that the contract and project management functions can be implemented on a more fit-for-purpose enterprise-level database and extensive change management is undertaken to build capability and consistency.

To support the increasingly digital workload, information assets will need to be maintained through support, maintenance and regular upgrades, in order to maintain an efficient information technology.

## **Information Management**

An upgrade of TRIM 7.1 to HPE Content Manager 9.1 in June 2017 has strengthened the NLC's information management capabilities. Staff have undertaken training however further training is require to enable staff to utilise the full potential and capability of the new system. A major project to re-sentence all NLC files from the 1970s to 2012 is currently underway. This includes culling temporary files and electronically digitising necessary records before transferring them to the National Archives of Australia.

## **Budgetary Resources**

The NLC's funding is derived mainly from the ABA, Native Title and Working on Country funding streams, as well as some other grant-funded activities.

While ABA funding has increased over the last three years, the activity arising from the number of Land Use Agreements and land/native title claims being administered has substantially increased, beyond the level of additional funding received.

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



Similar, the ability to address Native Title backlogs is severely restricted without the appropriate level of funding.

## **Capital and Infrastructure Resources**

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

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

