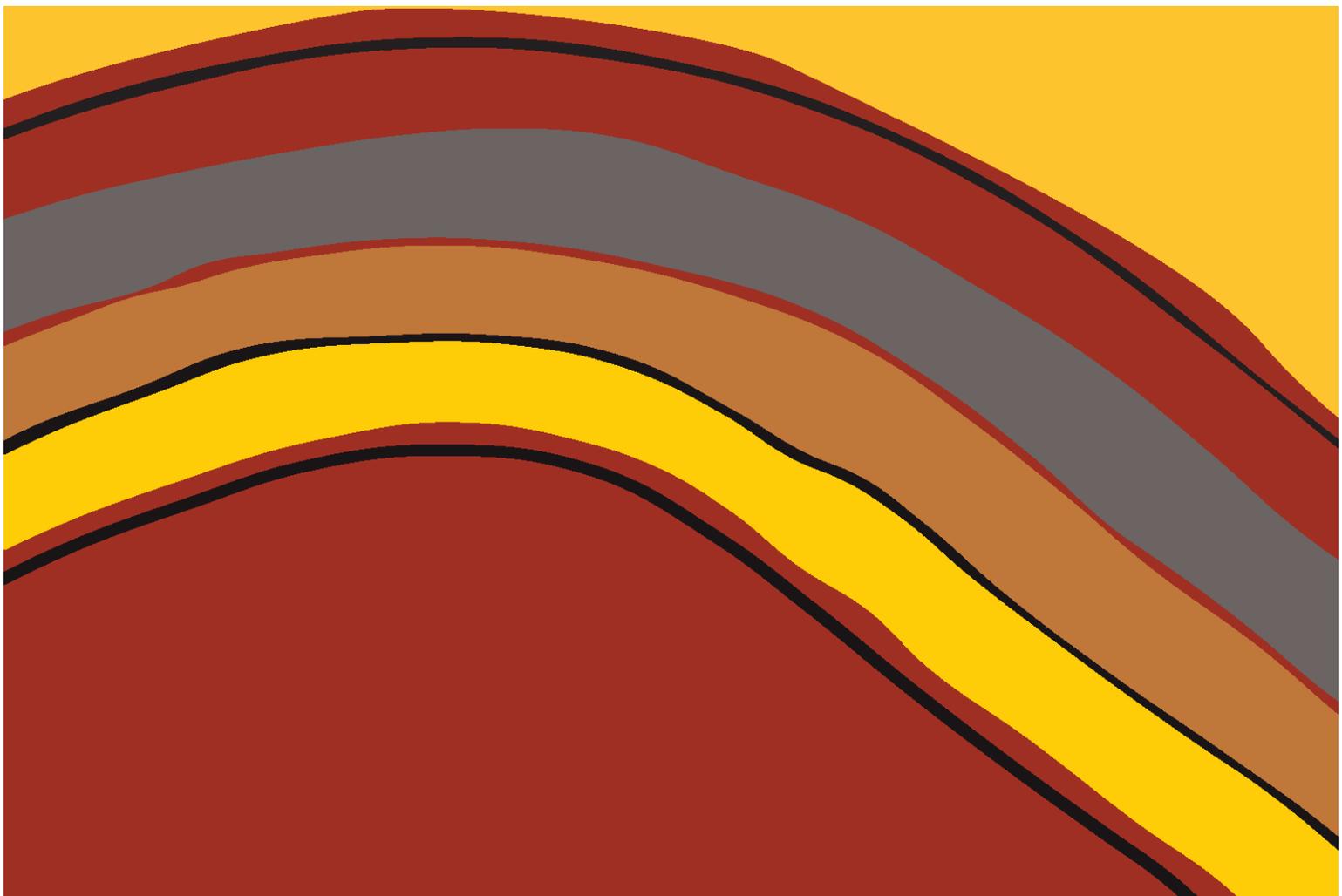




**NORTHERN
LAND
COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PLAN
2019/2020 to 2022/23**



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FOREWORD

The Northern Land Council (NLC) has a proud history of service to traditional owners of Aboriginal land in the Top End of the Northern Territory 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 develop and implement this 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, 2019/20 to 2022/23. 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:

- Installation of modern and efficient information, communication and technology ICT hardware, providing faster, safer and secure ICT capabilities;
- A new HR and payroll system; and
- Upgrade of the financial system structure, budgeting and reporting capabilities;

The NLC is progressing development of:

- Contract management software and processes;
- A contemporary permit system, including compliance measures;



- An efficient end-to-end process for land use management and disbursements; and
- Policies, programs and processes to support Aboriginal groups who wish to use their income generated from Land Use and other agreements for broad and lasting community benefit



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

We, as the Accountable Authority of the Northern Land Council, present the 2019/20 Northern Land Council Corporate Plan, which covers the financial years 2019/20 to 2022/23 (a period of four years), as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Marion Scrymgour

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Samuel Bush-Blanas

CHAIRPERSON

1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of the NLC is to enable and assist Aboriginal people within the NLC region to acquire and manage their land and waters, protect sacred sites and culture and promote broad and sustainable economic and community development.

We work with Aboriginal people to care for country, support their self-determination and roles in governance and decision-making processes and to protect, manage and promote their rights, interests and aspirations from the secure possession of their lands and waters. Our role is to give Traditional Aboriginal Owners a strong voice and agency over their lives, cultures and futures.



1.3 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 ALRA, the NLC is 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 either subject to, or available for, claim under the ALRA or the Native Title Act 1993 (Native Title Act). In the NLC region there have been 73 determinations recognising the existence of native title, two (2) negative determinations and one successful application for native title compensation. The Top End Default PBC/CLA Aboriginal Corporation is the agent PBC for all 73 positive 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 Owners.

The NLC's constituents are the Traditional Owners and Aboriginal residents within its area, which is divided into seven regions. 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* 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 the NLC's statutory functions include:

- Facilitation and Assistance - to prepare native title applications and assist native title interest holders in proceedings concerned with applications, future acts, agreements, rights of access and other matters;
- Certification - to certify applications for Native Title determinations and to certify the registration of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs);
- Dispute Resolution - to promote agreement between constituents and mediate disputes;
- Notification - to ensure that persons with a possible native title interest are informed of future acts and of the time limits for responding;
- Agreement making- to be a party to ILUAs;
- Internal review - to have and promote a process by which constituents can review decisions and actions of the NLC.

The ALRA and native title recognition provide a strong foundation on which to build social, cultural and economic growth for Traditional Aboriginal Owners from the secure possession of their land and waters.

Consequently, the NLC is directed to dealing with increased expressions of interest for access to and use of Aboriginal land. On average, \$50 million per annum in revenue is generated from land use agreements in the NLC region, yet two-thirds of the NLC's constituents living in regional and remote areas continue to be disadvantaged in terms of social, economic and health indicators against non-aboriginal norms.

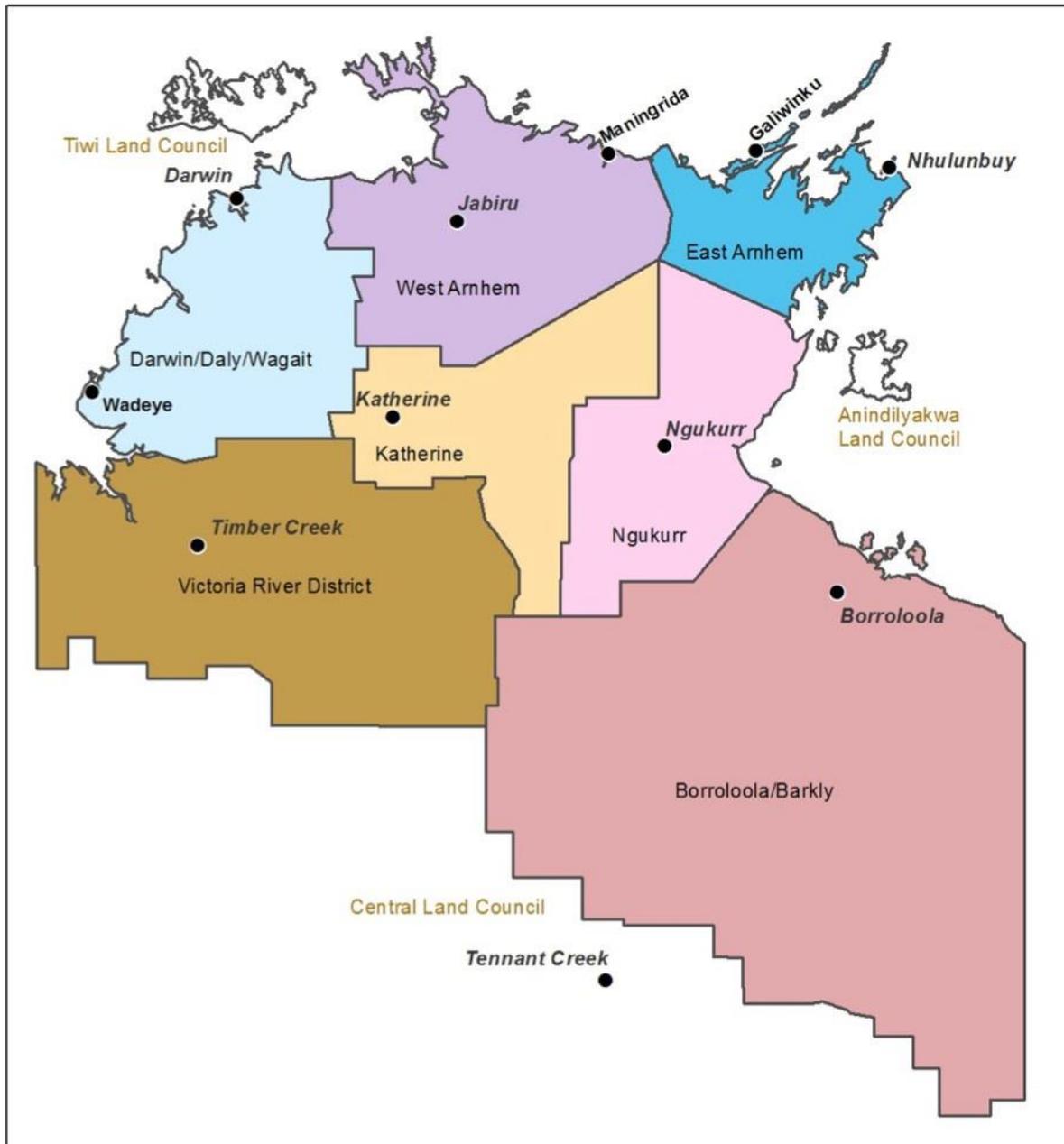
Until recently, the primary mechanism for disbursement of benefits derived from land use agreements was through individual distributions, which typically provide only short-term benefit to particular families and has contributed little by way of benefit to overall social betterment.

The NLC has sought to address these issues by the development of policies and programs that align with its statutory responsibilities that aim to build stronger, more resilient and sustainable communities and to thereby improve health and wellbeing, education and employment outcomes within the NLC region.

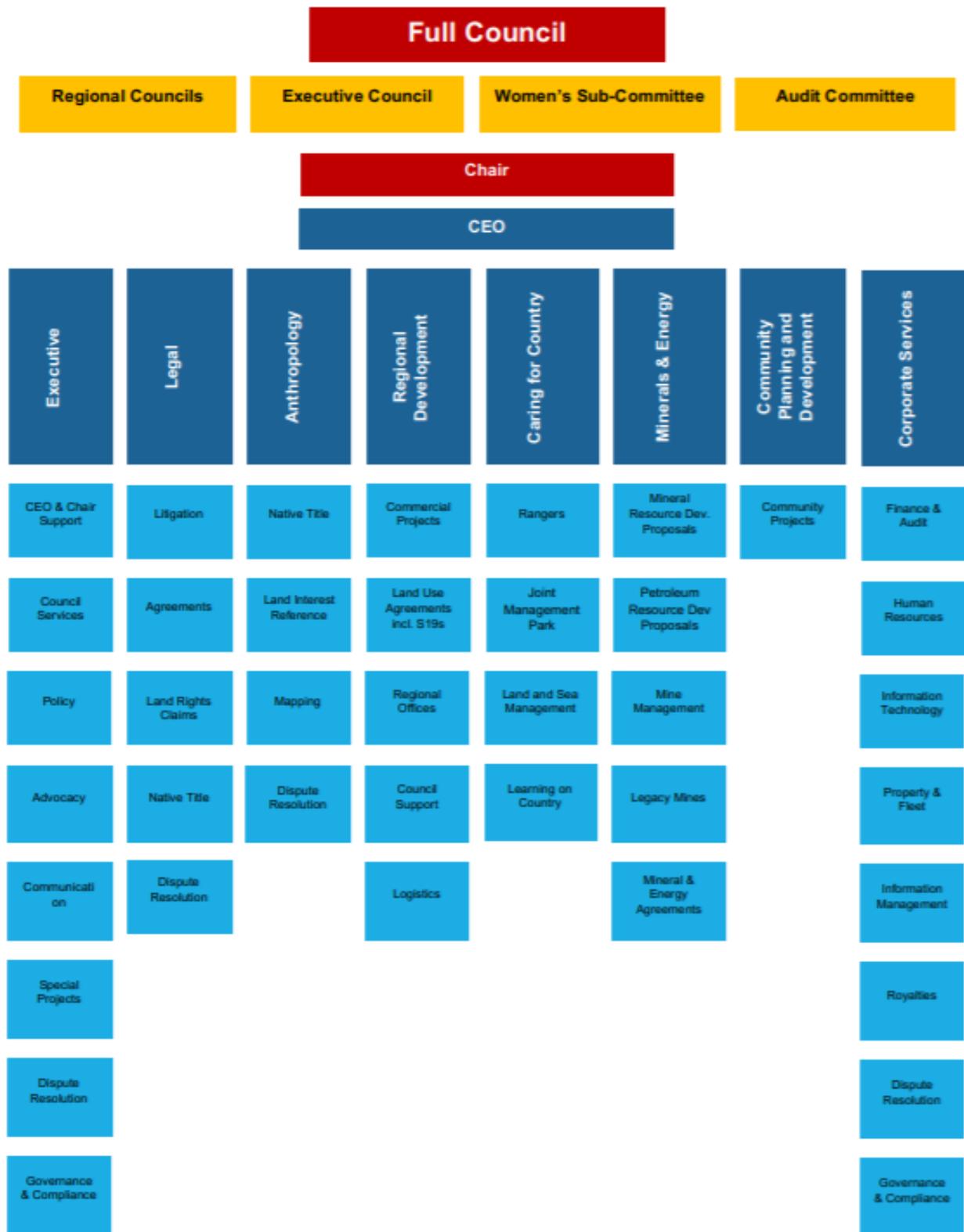
The NLC also has functions under the following legislation: the *Aboriginal Land Act (NT)*, *Cobourg Peninsular Aboriginal Land, Sanctuary and Marine Park Act 1996 (NT)*, *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*, *Atomic Energy Act (Cth)*, *Water Act (NT)* *Kenbi Land Trust 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)*.



1.4 OUR LOCATIONS AND OFFICES



1.5 OUR STRUCTURE



The NLC's 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 the NLC's policy and strategic directions.

The Full Council has delegated some decision-making powers to the Executive Council, the seven Regional Councils and the Chief Executive Officer, including the power to authorize certain Aboriginal land use proposals.

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, maintaining sound corporate governance. Each of the NLC regions is represented by a Regional Council that meet twice a year (between Full Council meetings) and on the first day of each Full Council meeting.

The NLC's operations are managed by eight branches:

- **EXECUTIVE:** provides policy, communications advice and strategic support to the CEO and Chair, and to the NLC's elected arms and makes all necessary arrangements for the conduct of Full, Executive, Regional Council and sub-committee meetings.
- **LEGAL:** provides legal and policy advice to all branches of the NLC, the Full Council and Executive Council, the Top End Default PBC/CLA Aboriginal Corporation and other Aboriginal incorporated bodies, conducts land claims under ALRA and the Native Title Act and negotiates land use, mineral and petroleum agreements on Aboriginal and native title lands.
- **ANTHROPOLOGY:** conducts research and consults with Traditional Aboriginal Owners in order to identify and secure their rights in land and sea and also takes advice from Traditional Aboriginal Owners concerning the disbursement of 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, manages the Learning on Country Program and supports joint management of National Parks.
- **MINERALS & ENERGY:** provides information to enable Traditional Aboriginal Owners to understand the nature and potential impacts of mineral and petroleum resource development proposals on their lands. Minerals and Energy Branch manages the monitoring and implementation of obligations provided for under NLC Minerals and Energy exploration and production agreements.
- **COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT:** uses a framework that supports traditional owners to drive their own development for broad and lasting benefits from the funds generated from land use agreements. CP & D uses processes that support Aboriginal capacity, control and group cohesion towards planning and decision-making processes. It enables the NLC to manage disbursements of funds received from agreements for the betterment of Aboriginal communities.
- **CORPORATE SERVICES:** delivers financial, information technology, human resource, information management and administrative support to the other branches, including fleet and facilities management.

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 NLC's constituents live in about 200 scattered communities ranging in size from small family groups to settlements of up to 3,000 people.

The geographic and social environments within which the NLC operates have substantial impacts on our work, affecting travel and communications, and the costs of providing core services remotely can be disproportionate to servicing urban and regional settings.

The remote geography and culturally diversity of the NLC's region provides a challenging area within which to work, particularly concerning resource allocation for :

- 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;
- Delivering culturally appropriate information;
- The variety and number of meetings to ensure integrity of informed decision-making processes; and
- Capital and recurring motor vehicle expenses, and wear and tear on those 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 relation to the increased requirement for land use agreements;
- The consequential increase in funds generated from land use agreements have required a fundamental shift in NLC policies and programs to give agency to Aboriginal groups to secure broad and sustainable community benefits;
- The demanding policy environment brought about by successive governments contributes to additional workloads for NLC staff and the Council. The NLC is expected to acquit an increased number of functions with no proportionate increase in staff or resources;
- 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 – all of which is in the NLC area. 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 the 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.
- Over the next 12 months the NLC will develop a comprehensive plan to fully realise the potential of its regionalization strategy and meet the increasing need for our services from constituents and stakeholders alike.



4. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

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

STRENGTHS (NLC has full or partial control of these factors)	WEAKNESSES (NLC has full or partial control of these factors)
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 of relevant staff to reinforce the stress-points caused by increasing demand.	Low staff retention rates, succession planning and professional mentorship and development pathways require attention. A review of NLC consultation materials related to mineral and energy matters has commenced. Training of staff is required and will require specific budget allocation.



OPPORTUNITIES (NLC has variable control over these factors)	THREATS (NLC has variable control over these factors)
<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 one of the Northern Territory's 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>The Community Planning and Development Branch facilitates localized development for traditional owners and affected communities and provides support for Aboriginal groups to plan and control use of their funds for broad and sustaining community benefit..</p>	<p>Funding for strategic planning to carefully grow the program and for on-going operations may not be sufficient to meet the needs of the program and growing demands from communities for community development programs.</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 result in an increased call on non-core NLC services. Burgeoning youth population brings different aspirations for the present and future.</p>
<p>Younger people's expectations about education, employment, and economic opportunities, as well as improvements to social and health services – are 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.



5. 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 reports to the Full Council.



6. PERFORMANCE

The NLC is four 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 ICT;
- (iii) Planning, performance and engagement – The introduction of a planning framework consisting of a strategic plan, corporate plan and branch business plans; and
- (i) Reviewing the structure, management and resourcing of all branches.

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. Acquire, protect and manage traditional lands and waters within the NLC's region in accordance with the NLC's statutory functions;
2. Facilitate Community Development initiatives so as to protect and develop Aboriginal use of land and seas and secure lasting community benefits.
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 and allocating tasks 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. Continuous improvement of the NLC's policies and procedures to achieve efficiency and best practice governance.

The delivery strategies and measurements of performance for the future years 2019/20 to 2022/23 are subject to change depending on circumstances and the operational environment at the time, and will likely change to incorporate actual performance in past years and new factors emerging when the corporate plan for those years is prepared.

Delivery strategies and measurements of performance **2019/20 to 2022/23**

Priority 1: Acquire, protect and manage traditional lands and waters within the NLC's region in accordance with the NLC's statutory functions

Delivery Strategy: 2019/20 to 2022/23

- Allocate financial and personnel resources to all NLC branches, especially the Legal, Anthropology, Minerals and Energy and Regional Development branches to ensure that expressions of interest to acquire and use traditional lands are prosecuted efficiently and in a timely manner.
- Prosecute Land Rights Act and Native Title claims.
- Identify and prioritise protracted issues and areas of dispute and facilitate effective mediation and conciliation measures in order of need.
- Through the management of available resources, consult with Traditional Owners and negotiate Land Use Agreements, permit access arrangements and other commercial agreements.



Measurement:			
2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management identification of priorities across the NLC and the allocation of the financial and personnel resources to relevant branches to support them. • ALRA Land Claims and Native Title claims completed in accordance with relevant court timetables. • 50 land use agreements per calendar year. • Minerals and Energy Branch convene ten (10) consultations to progress minerals and petroleum applications per calendar year. • All branches participate in and provide advice to the NLC internal reform process including permits, finance, disbursements and IT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management identification of priorities across the NLC and the allocation of the financial and personnel resources to relevant branches to support them. • Land Claims and Native Title claims completed in accordance with relevant court timetables. • 50 land use agreements per calendar year. • Minerals and Energy Branch convene ten (10) consultations to progress minerals and petroleum applications per calendar year. • All branches participate in and provide advice to the NLC internal reform process including permits, finance, disbursements and IT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management identification of priorities across the NLC and the allocation of the financial and personnel resources to relevant branches to support them. • Land Claims and Native Title claims completed in accordance with relevant court timetables. • 50 land use agreements per calendar year. • Minerals and Energy Branch convene ten (10) consultations to progress minerals and petroleum applications per calendar year. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management identification of priorities across the NLC and the allocation of the financial and personnel resources to relevant branches to support them. • Finalisation of all ALRA claims including beds and banks claims. • Native Title claims completed in accordance with court timetables. • 50 land use agreements per calendar year. • Minerals and Energy Branch convene ten (10) consultations to progress minerals and petroleum applications per calendar year. •

Priority 2: Facilitate Community Development so as to protect and develop Aboriginal use of land and seas and secure broad and lasting community benefits.

Delivery Strategy: 2019/20 to 2022/23

- Continue to develop and grow the Community Planning and Development (CP & D) Unit to assist and facilitate Traditional Owners' to take control over the use of funds from land



use agreements for broad and lasting community development.

- Deliver development of a robust monitoring and evaluation system that provides regular assessment of CP & D's value over the next three years (2019-2022).
- Develop and implement a strategic plan for CP & D to set the direction and carefully grow the program over the next five years (2010 – 2025).
- 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.

Measurement:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CP & D Program is being implemented with communities across five of the NLC's seven regions subject to Traditional Owners opting to participate. • The CP & D five years strategic plan is developed and implemented. • First year of the three year Monitoring Program for CP & D is reported. • Complete the preparation of the economic prospectus for the test region. • Legal Branch facilitate and advise on development of project and implementation agreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CP & D Program is being implemented with communities across five of the NLC's seven regions. • CP & D implements and reports on delivery of its five year Strategic Plan. • Second year of the CP & D three year Monitoring Program is reported. • Commence marketing of the economic development opportunities on Aboriginal lands to third parties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CP & D Program is being implemented across all of the NLC's seven regions. • Implementation of the CP & D's five year Strategic Plan is reported. • Final year of the three year CP & D Monitoring Program and the Monitoring & Evaluation System is developed. • Continue marketing of the economic development opportunities on Aboriginal lands to third parties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CP & D Program is being implemented across all of the NLC's seven regions. • Implementation of the CP & D's five year Strategic Plan is reported. • CP & D undertakes an evaluation of its processes and projects using the fully developed CP & D Monitoring & Evaluation System with recommended improvements and scope. • Continue marketing of the economic development opportunities on Aboriginal lands to third parties.



Priority 3: Maintain and continue to strengthen Ranger groups on country to further protect and maintain Aboriginal land and seas

Delivery Strategy: 2019/20 to 2022/23

- Strengthen the capabilities of Ranger Groups through training and capacity building.
- Additional funding and program partnerships developed to facilitate improved capacity and operations of Ranger groups, management activities of IPAs and jointly managed parks.
- 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.
- Consolidate and integrate expanded Learning on Country Program including development of a sustainable funding strategy.



2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for Country Branch programs are endorsed and implemented in accordance with approved plans (subject to funding). • 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. • Complete the development of the Career Pathways Framework, aimed at providing career progression and equal employment opportunities for all Caring for Country employees. • Implementati-on and developmentof Learning on Country program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capabilities of Ranger groups and IPAs are managed in accordance with approved plans (subject to funding). • Commence the Implementation of the Career Pathways Framework. • Implement the Women's Engagement Strategy. • Implementati-on and development of Learning on Country program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capabilities of Ranger groups and IPAs are managed in accordance with approved plans (subject to funding). • Implement the Career Pathways Framework. • Implement the Women's Engagement Strategy. • Monitor the development of Learning on Country program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capabilities of Ranger groups and IPAs are managed in accordance with approved plans (subject to funding). • Implement the Career Pathways Framework. • Implement the Women's Engagement Strategy. • Assessment and development of Learning on Country program



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: 2019/20 to 2022/23

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:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management Unit is in place, functioning, and supporting Permit Reform. • Consultations lead to arrangements where areas have automated permit processing. • Subject to Traditional Owners opting to participate, streamline access arrangements for fishing permits. • Permit Management System governance and policy framework is fully implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First release of new Permit System • Further arrangements to extend areas with automated permit processing will provide certainty for fishers and other water users in the intertidal zone. • Growing body of trend data on visitor numbers, activities and feedback will inform Ranger activities on permit risks and compliance hot spots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Permit Reform Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy • Complete annual Permit Management evaluation report. • Continue to consult with Traditional Owners and stakeholders to refine permit management, policy and process, and consolidate benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to consult with Traditional Owners and stakeholders to refine permit management, policy and process, and consolidate benefits. • Based on local priorities and visitor preferences, collaborate with NLC's Community Planning & Development Unit to promote Aboriginal-led business proposals & development.



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: 2019/20 to 2022/23

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:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management Unit is functional, and supporting LUMAR project. • Policy framework is agreed for Contracts, Trust Accounting and Projects. • ALRA s.35 Disbursements Policy approved. • Trust Accounting Module is fully implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment functions enhanced. • Contract and Project policy & procedures agreed. • Most Contract and Project functions implemented. • Project management functions implemented. • New Delegation and organisational structure agreed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key performance indicators (KPIs) on Contracts, Projects and Disbursements agreed. • Contracts and Project functions fully implemented • KPIs are reported regularly • Additional operational processes are automated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project review and evaluation. • KPIs are enhanced and used to manage resource allocation and performance.



Priority 6: Develop and maintain a comprehensive communications system to facilitate the provision of information to, and advocacy of, Traditional Owners' interests.

Delivery Strategy: 2019/20 to 2022/23

- 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:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Rights News published on time. • Press releases or speeches at forums are published, advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC. • Develop and enhance the NLC's social media presence in order to facilitate information dissemination and relationships with constituents. • Finalise the NLC Communications Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Rights News published on time. • Develop, refine and enhance the NLC's social media presence in order to facilitate information dissemination and relationships with constituents. • Press releases or speeches at forums are published advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Rights News published on time. • Develop, enhance and refine the NLC's social media presence in order to facilitate information dissemination and relationships with constituents. • Press releases or speeches at forums are published advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Rights News published on time. • Develop and enhance the NLC's social media presence in order to facilitate information dissemination and relationships with constituents. • Press releases or speeches at forums are published advocating Aboriginal rights and the role of the NLC.



Priority 7: Continuous improvement of the NLC's Policies and Procedures systems for more efficiency and best practice governance.

Delivery Strategy: 2019/20 to 2022/23

- 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:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant to complete council and stakeholders' satisfaction surveys. • Further refine Members Handbook (Code of Conduct). • Previous year's Financial Statements are submitted and published on time. • Identify key priorities for policy development, implementation and review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement improvements based on consultants' surveys. • All external and internal audit recommended actions are completed. • All filings are completed on time. • Identify key priorities for policy development, implementation and review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor outcomes and maintain improvements. All external and internal audit recommended actions are completed. • All filings are completed on time. • Identify key priorities for policy development, implementation and review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor outcomes and maintain improvements. • All external and internal audit recommended actions are completed. • All filings are completed on time. • Identify key priorities for policy development, implementation and review.



7. 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; and
- Capital and infrastructure resources.

Human Resources

The NLC's Human Resource team is focused on building an engaged, productive, skilled and suitably trained and experienced workforce. This is being achieved through initiatives including:

- the maintenance of a stable and harmonious industrial relations environment across the organisation;
- remuneration packages and benefits for employees that is on par with other public sector agencies;
- ongoing training and development opportunities, with a focus on online systems training, manager training and trainee (entry level) opportunities; and
- health and wellbeing initiatives to better support employees physical and mental health.

NLC is also a major employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people in the top end of the NT, with over 50% of our employees being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Our recruitment strategies are focused on supporting local employment and culturally appropriate service delivery in NLC offices in line with NLC's Regionalization Strategy. NLC is in the final stages of developing a Reconciliation Action Plan and has established relationships with local organizations who support employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates in the NT.

NLC are also working towards an MOU with the APSC Indigenous Capability Unit. This will enable NLC to reach Indigenous graduates, 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 ICT department has undergone a major reform process influenced by both internal and external recommendations. Based on the recommendations from 2016/17 information communication and technology (ICT) review by EY Consulting the NLC has followed the roadmap for the establishment of modern, efficient and capable ICT solutions for the NLC.

NLC has started investing in its ICT infrastructure in recent years which has established a foundation to build a federated network and fit-for-purpose IT architecture. The challenge over the next five years is to ensure that the NLC staff has ability to work remotely across the rural areas. By enabling mobile working capability will provide the ability for staff to work across all locations and offices to promote collaboration and innovation.

Funding from the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) was sought in 2018-19 for the Land Use Management Agreement Reform project so that the contract and project management functions can be implemented on a more fit-for-purpose enterprise-level resource planning system and extensive change management is undertaken to build capability with consistent process across all business areas and locations, enabling informed decision making through a single system.

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.

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

In line with the Government's Digital Transition Policy, NLC will move from a predominantly paper-based information management systems to digital information management. This means the majority of NLC records will be created, stored and managed digitally and where feasible paper records will be scanned to reduce the number of paper files.

The EDRMS is the primary recordkeeping system for NLC for the management of both physical and electronic records. NLC records (irrespective of format) store in shared drives, personal drives, email folder, local application and on backup disks or drives are not compliant with NLC recordkeeping obligations. The volume of digital information is growing and most of this will be unstructured information not data. To manage this information NLC will need to utilise technologies that automate the process of information governance.

The challenge over the next five years is to ensure NLC staff understand relevant legislation and policies for working with information and data and how they influence daily work and implement relevant procedures to enable all records to be managed within compliant systems. Training of NLC staff will continue and focus on user needs and how they interact with processes and systems when creating and using information and data.

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 development and implementation of some strategies will be delayed, which will have adverse impacts on the delivery and strategic development of programs and policies, and subsequently on the NLC's constituents.

Similarly, 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.



