



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life



Australian Government

ANNUAL REPORT
2015/16

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ISSN 1030-522X

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JUDBURRA NATIONAL PARK

OUR VISION ...

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

OUR VALUES...

are informed by the values of the Aboriginal people of our region and are consistent with Commonwealth standards.

WE AIM TO...

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



CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS REPORT	vi	PART 3: THE YEAR IN REVIEW	44
2015-16 HIGHLIGHTS	1	ANTHROPOLOGY BRANCH REVIEW	45
NEW APPOINTMENTS	3	Dispute Conciliation	46
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY	5	Royalty Reform	48
FROM OUR CHAIRMAN	7	Royalty Enquiries	49
FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	10	Road Works	49
		Repatriation	50
		Land Claims	50
PART 1: ABOUT US	14	YARRALIN HANDBACK CEREMONY	52-55
OUR COUNCIL	19	KENBI HANDBACK CEREMONY	56-59
Full Council Membership	22	SEA COUNTRY	60
Full Council Meetings	25	ANTHROPOLOGY REGIONAL PROFILES	63
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	28	Darwin/Daly/Wagait/Wadeye Region	65
Members	28	Ngukurr & Borroloola Barkly Region	65
Meetings	32	West Arnhem Land Region	66
Regional	33	Central Arnhem Land Region	67
OUR PEOPLE	34	North East Arnhem Land Region	67
Administration	34	Katherine Region	68
Structure	35	Victoria River District Region	68
Branch overview	36	Kakadu Coburg Region	71
		Mary River National Park Board	71
PART 2: OUR APPROACH	40	GIS SYSTEM SUPPORT	72
STRATEGIC THINKING	41	LAND INTEREST REFERENCES (LIR)	75
Corporate Plan 2015-2019	42	Outcomes	75
Strategic Plan 2015-2019	42	LIR Digitisation Report	75

NATIVE TITLE REPORT

Native Title: Quick Facts	78
Update on Continuing Claims Work	80
Township Consent Determinations	82
Continuing Work on Township Claims	84
Native Title Claims Litigation	84
Borrooloola Township	84
Native Title Sea Claims	84
Nomination of a Prescribed Body Corporate	84
Update on Continuing PBC Nomination Work	85

CARING FOR COUNTRY BRANCH OVERVIEW

Introduction	86
Our Approach – Working Together	87
Achievements	89
Partnerships	90
Fire Management	92
Indigenous Protected Areas	92
Information Technology – Data Collection, Mapping and Reporting	94
Training and Capacity Building	95
National Parks	96
Parks and Reserves: Joint Management	96
Looking Forward	99

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BRANCH OVERVIEW

Achievements	103
Challenges	104
Staff Profiles	105

LAND USE AGREEMENTS

Achievements	111
Challenges	111
Commercial Development	111
Telstra Communications	113

BRADSHAW PARTNERING INDIGENOUS LAND USE AGREEMENT

Bradshaw & Timber Creek Contracting & Resource Co Pty Ltd	115
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PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

Pastoral Industry Outlook	117
Indigenous Pastoral Program	118
Buffalo Industry Development	119
Challenges	120

MINERALS & ENERGY BRANCH OVERVIEW

Exploration Licences and Exploration Permits	124
Backlog of Exploration Applications and the Negotiating Period	125
Exploration Licences and Exploration Permits: Native Title Act 1993	127
Negotiating Minerals and Energy Agreements	128
Managing Minerals and Energy Agreements	128
Mining	130
Oil and Gas	131
Environmental Advice and Representation	133
Industry Conferences and Professional Training	134
Challenges for the Future	135

PUBLIC ADVOCACY SERVICES	137	INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY	148
GOOD CORPORATE STANDARDS	138	FLEET AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT	148
Administering Aboriginal Land Trusts	138	DELEGATIONS	148
Mediation and Dispute Resolution	139	WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT	149
Land and Water Access Permits	139	ANNUAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENT	151
Funeral and Ceremonial Fund	140		
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE APPROACH	141	PART 4A: ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT	159
Exemptions Granted by Finance Minister	141		
Insurance Premiums for Officers	141	PART 4B: NATIVE TITLE REPRESENTATIVE	
Risk Management and Ethics	141	BODY FINANCIAL REPORT	211
Related Entity Transactions	142		
Freedom of Information	142		
Advertising and Market Research	142		
Environmental Performance	142		
CONSULTANT PROCEDURES, COMPETITIVE TENDERING AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT	143		
Information Management	145		
Preserving the Past – Protecting the Present – Planning for the Future	145		
Achievements	145		
COMMITTEES	146		
Work Health and Safety Committee	146		
Enterprise Agreement Committee	146		
Enterprise Agreement Committee 2016-2019	147		
Audit Committee	147		

FIGURES

FIGURE 01: NLC'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE-FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW	6	FIGURE 18: LIR REQUESTS BY ACTIVITY 2015/16	74
FIGURE 02: NLC OFFICE LOCATIONS	18	FIGURE 19: LIR DIGITISATION PROGRESS REPORT	75
FIGURE 03: FULL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP, 2013-2016	22	FIGURE 20: LIR DIGITISATION PROCESS	76
FIGURE 04: FULL COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND ATTENDANCE RECORD 2015/16	25	FIGURE 21: NATIVE TITLE CLAIM STATISTICS	81
FIGURE 05: EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND ATTENDANCE RECORD 2015/16	32	FIGURE 22: PASTORAL CONSENT DETERMINATION PROCESS	81
FIGURE 06: REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND VENUES 2015/16	33	FIGURE 23: NATIVE TITLE WORK PROGRAM, CALENDAR YEAR 2016	83
FIGURE 07: NLC ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	35	FIGURE 24: DATA COLLECTION/GIS TRAINING CURRICULUM	94
FIGURE 08: NLC STAFF PROFILE 2015/16	39	FIGURE 25: S19 LAND USE EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST BY INDUSTRY TYPE	109
FIGURE 09: FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS – TREND	39	FIGURE 26: APPROVED S19 LAND USE AGREEMENTS BY INDUSTRY	109
FIGURE 10: DISPUTE LOCATIONS IN NLC REGION	47	FIGURE 27: MINERALS & ENERGY BRANCH CONSULTATIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES 2015/16	125
FIGURE 11: ROYALTY ENQUIRIES 2015/16	49	FIGURE 28: PETROLEUM EXPLORATION IN NLC REGION	126
FIGURE 12: DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINAL LIVING AREAS ACROSS NLC ANTHROPOLOGY REGIONS	63	FIGURE 29: MINERAL EXPLORATION IN NLC REGION	129
FIGURE 13: ABORIGINAL-OWNED LAND AND NATIVE TITLE INTERESTS	63	FIGURE 30: KNOWN HYDROCARBON (SHALE) POTENTIAL NLC REGION	132
FIGURE 14: NLC ANTHROPOLOGY REGIONS - ESTIMATED ABORIGINAL POPULATIONS	64	FIGURE 31: BREAKDOWN OF ROYALTY DISTRIBUTION PAYMENTS, 2015/16	139
FIGURE 15: INTERNAL REQUESTS FOR GIS SERVICES 2015/16	72	FIGURE 32: FUNERAL AND CEREMONY ASSISTANCE BY REGION 2015/16	141
FIGURE 16: LONG TERM TRENDS ON DEMANDS FOR GIS SERVICES	73	FIGURE 33: CONSULTANT EXPENDITURE 2015/16	143
FIGURE 17: GIS JOBS	73	FIGURE 34: AUDIT COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE	147
		FIGURE 35: PERFORMANCE RESULTS	153

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Northern Land Council Annual Report 2015/16 provides a comprehensive account of the Council's performance from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 in accordance with its responsibilities and obligations under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (referred to as the ALRA) and the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The Council's activities are guided by the leadership of the Full Council, (members were elected in November 2013 for a three-year term), and by the organisation's planning processes.

The Annual Report 2015/16 is divided into four parts:

1. About us: our land, our sea our life, our history, our clients and our organisational structure.
2. Our approach: shaping our future, which outlines our strategic approach and aspirations in terms of our goals, objectives and performance measurements.
3. The year in review: 2015/16, which presents the major issues and achievements for the reporting year.
4. 2015/16 financial reports, which present details on income and expenses for both the NLC as a Commonwealth entity and as a native title representative body.

As a Commonwealth body corporate, the NLC submits this report to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs for tabling in the Australian Parliament.

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NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL

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30 September 2016
Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion
Minister for Indigenous Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

In accordance with the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, the *Native Title Act 1993* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, we, the Accountable Authority of the Northern Land Council, are pleased to submit the Northern Land Council's 2015/16 Annual Report.

The Accountable Authority under Section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* is responsible for the preparation and content of this report in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule).

This report reviews the Northern Land Council's performance and illustrates the commitment and achievement of the council and our staff throughout the year.

We commend the report to you for presentation to the Australian Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

Samuel Bush-Blanas
CHAIRMAN

Joe Morrison
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

2015/16



MANDORAH FORESHORE

Highlights



LAND RIGHTS CLAIMS FINALISED

Two of the most outstanding claims under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, each dating back to the 1970s, have been put to rest. At Yarralin, title deeds to more than 50,000ha of land were handed to traditional Aboriginal owners on 14 June 2016. The claim was originally heard in September 1975 by the then Interim Land Commissioner. At Mandorah on 21 June, the Kenbi land claim, the most complex and bitterly fought claim in the history of the Land Rights Act, was finally realised when the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, handed over title deeds. The Kenbi claim was decided by the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Justice Peter Gray, in December 2000.

RIGHT TO TRADE AT BORROLOOLA

The Federal Court has recognised the rights of the Rumburriya Borroloola people (the Traditional Owners of Borroloola and members of the wider Yanyuwa group) to exclusive possession over vacant Crown land in the town, and to take and use

resources for any purpose including commercial purposes – a so-called “right to trade”. Justice John Mansfield handed down his decision in June 2016 and concluded that the right to take resources was not confined to taking for personal or communal purposes of a domestic or subsistence nature – as the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments urged: “There is no basis for concluding that the admitted right to take resources was confined in this way [or at all]”.

PRAWN FARM NEGOTIATIONS

The NLC continued consultations throughout the reporting year with native title holders over a proposal to build a huge prawn farm (“Project Sea Dragon”) on Legune Station in the far north-west of the NLC region. Perth-based Seafarms Group Ltd wants to negotiate an Indigenous Land Use Agreement to establish the “grow-out facility” over 1080ha, which would produce around 12,000 tonnes of Black Tiger prawns per annum.

ORD STAGE 3

The NT Government has abandoned its plans to seek extinguishment of native title over 4000ha on Spirit Hills Station, adjacent to the WA border, where it planned to establish the first stage (Ord3A) of the Ord River irrigation scheme. The Government is now seeking private sector interest to develop the whole of Stage 3 (14,500ha) on the Keep River Plain, in spite of objection from native title holders who want to protect sacred sites and dreaming tracks.

“This publication plays a critical role in putting issues facing Aboriginal people on the agenda...”

NATIVE TITLE DETERMINATIONS

The Federal Court, sitting over two days at Borroloola in November 2015, made native title determinations over nearly 40,000sq/km of land held under pastoral leases in the Gulf country. Justice John Mansfield granted exclusive native title over Greenbank, Manangoora, Spring Creek and Seven Emu pastoral leases; non-exclusive native title was determined over Pungalina, Wollogorang, Kiana, Calvery Hills, McArthur River, Walhallow, Mallapunyah Springs, Banjo and Gilnockie pastoral leases. The Judge thanked the NLC, the Northern Territory Government and the pastoralists for their work in getting the claims settled by consent.

NT ABORIGINAL SACRED SITES ACT

The NLC presented a wide-ranging submission to a panel of consultants engaged by the NT Government to review the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. The submission argued, inter alia, that the Ministerial right to override decisions of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) should be removed; that sacred site clearances were not unusually slow or otherwise onerous; that the independence of AAPA should be retained, and the Authority be properly funded; that criminal sanctions for breaches of conditions and damage to sites be beefed up; and that ignorance should not be a defence.

LAND RIGHTS NEWS RECOGNISED

The NLC's quarterly paper, Land Rights News (Northern Edition), was a finalist in the media section of the Australian Human Rights Commission's 2015 Human Rights Awards. Deputy Chairman Wayne Wauchope accepted the recognition at the Commission's annual awards ceremony in Sydney. The citation said: “This publication plays a critical role in putting issues facing Aboriginal people on the agenda, whether it be land rights and native title, or inequality and injustice”.

NEW APPOINTMENTS



Matthew Salmon

CARING FOR COUNTRY BRANCH MANAGER

Matt was born and raised in Queensland and has lived in northern and desert Australia for the past 25 years. For the past ten years he has played a major role in the design and development of land management and ranger programs in central Australia and most recently worked as the Director of Operations and Policy for Parks Australia with responsibility for Kakadu and Uluru National Parks.

Prior to this, he was the Aridlands Program Director for the international conservation organisation, The Nature Conservancy, building finance trusts for ranger groups with commercial and philanthropic partners.

Matt has also worked for the federal Environment Department, where he managed significant parts of the Indigenous Protected Area Program, and was involved in designing and establishing the successful Working on Country ranger program. He has also held roles with the Queensland Department of Premier and Cabinet and the University of Queensland.

NEW APPOINTMENTS



Joe Valenti

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Joe is a Certified Practising Accountant (CPA) and has a Bachelor of Business, majoring in accounting and a minor in law. He has undertaken additional post-graduate studies in accounting and management through Monash University and Curtin University.

His expertise has been in finance, accounting and senior management in large organisations including Curtin University, Wesfarmers/Bunnings Limited and

the R&I Bank (now Bankwest Limited). He has experience in Indigenous affairs through his involvement with the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University.

He is focused on introducing major reforms within the NLC's corporate management.



Dr Stephen Johnson

ANTHROPOLOGY BRANCH MANAGER

Stephen was appointed Manager of Anthropology in August 2015. He has an extensive background and experience of working with Indigenous people in Native Title and the ALRA, community and economic development, intellectual property research and application, land tenure and sustainable resource utilisation.

Dr Johnson was born and brought up in the Northern Territory, and has a long connection to the Top End, where most of his recent working life has been focused.

He holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Queensland and has published numerous articles on Indigenous knowledge, sustainable resource use, economic development and anthropology in general.

He has worked with Yanyuwa families around Borroloola for a large part of his life including three years as Ranger Coordinator of the li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Ranger Unit (SRU).

THE NLC'S ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY

The Northern Land Council's Accountable Authority, under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), comprises the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.

SAMUEL BUSH-BLANASI, CHAIRMAN NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL

Mr Bush-Blanasi is a Mayili man and resident of the Wugularr (Beswick) community in the Katherine region. He was educated in his own community before completing his studies at Kormilda College in Darwin.

This is his fifth term at the NLC.

He is also a board member of the Aboriginal Investment Group, and has a long record of service on boards of several other Aboriginal bodies.

JOE MORRISON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL

Mr Morrison was born and raised in Katherine and has Dagoman and Torres Strait Islander heritage. After completing school he gained a BA from the University of Sydney in Natural Resource Management.

Mr Morrison has more than 20 years research and development experience across northern Australia, and was founding Chief Executive Officer of the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The NLC is primarily funded through the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA), an account into which the Commonwealth Government pays an amount of money equal to the royalties paid from mining on Aboriginal land. These payments are made on an estimates and justification basis. The NLC is also a Native Title Representative Body under the *Native Title Act 1993*, and receives funding for native title matters. In addition to its core funding under the ABA and Native Title Act, the NLC receives funds from a number of separate special purpose grants.

The NLC is required to prepare audited financial statements for two separate accounting entities under two Acts of Parliament – the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the *Native Title Act 1993*. The NLC auditor is the Australian National Audit Office.

Financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Finance Minister's Orders and Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period. The full audited statements are reproduced at the end of this report.

A short summary of the NLC's overall financial performance for 2015/16 is shown on the following page.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

The NLC receives additional funding from a number of sources, including:

- Working on Country funding for ranger groups (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet)
- Real Jobs funding for ranger groups (Indigenous Land Corporation).

FIGURE 01: NLC'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE-FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

	2011/2012 \$'000	2012/2013 \$'000	2013/2014 \$'000	2014/2015 \$'000	2015/2016* \$'000
Revenue	37,021	35,419	36,869	41,203	39,596
Expenses	40,904	48,780	43,660	35,101	39,645
"Operating Surplus/(Deficit) before Capital investment"	(3,883)	(13,361)	(6,791)	6,102	(49)
Assets	27,955	15,629	11,294	15,011	15,948
Liabilities	6,236	7,492	8,019	5,634	6,620
Asset Revaluation Reserve	265	44	1,973	1,973	1,973
Cash Held	19,247	4,577	2,545	6,588	7,354
Net Increase/decrease in cash held	6,462	(13,361)	(2,032)	4,043	766

2015/16 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The NLC's operating surplus/deficit is dependent on external factors such as grant cycles and capital investment in infrastructure in particular financial years. Operating surplus is, by definition, an accounting term and does not refer to unexpended funds.

COMMONWEALTH COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

As a Commonwealth Authority, the NLC is subject to annual reporting orders issued by the Finance Minister under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, which stipulates that the NLC recovers costs regarding the provision of products or services where it is efficient to do so.

FEES

In accordance with subsection 37(2) of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, fees received for services by the NLC can be found at Note 4(a) of the Financial Statements (refer page 173).

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

There were no significant events pursuant to section 17BE(p) of the PGPA Rule 2014.

KEY CHANGES

There were no key changes to the state of affairs or principal activities of the NLC pursuant to section 17BE(p) of the PGPA Rule 2014.

AMENDMENTS TO ENABLING LEGISLATION

Two amendments to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 were enacted in 2015: under s19 (grant of headlease over township), and under s28 (delegation of a Land Council's functions or powers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporation) – refer to Chairman's report, pp 7,8.

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

There were no judicial decisions, no ministerial directions and general policies or decisions of administrative tribunals pursuant to section 17BE(q) and (r) PGPA Rule 2014.

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Mr Samuel Bush-Blanasi

Last year, NLC members and staff mourned the death on 7 August 2015 of one of our greatest leaders, former chairman Mr Wunungmurra. He was accorded a State funeral at Yirrkala on 5 September.

Mr Wunungmurra retired as chairman in late 2013, having served two, three-year terms. The whole NLC family remembers Mr Wunungmurra as a kind and gentle man, and I will miss his wise counsel.

He was a signatory to the 1963 Yirrkala Bark Petitions, and was a forceful advocate for Aboriginal rights. In his last report as Chairman, he wrote that land and culture underpinned the existence and survival of Aboriginal people, and he said the NT Aboriginal Land Rights Act had to be protected and preserved. His long-term vision was for the hard-won recognition of Aboriginal people and their land rights to be embedded in the Australian Constitution.

Only a few days before his death, Mr Wunungmurra was honoured during the Garma Festival at Gulkula as a Yolngu hero.

Also at the Garma Festival, I was pleased to attend a ceremony where the University of Melbourne honoured another former NLC chairman, Mr Galarrwuy Yunupingu, with the conferral of an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. The award was made in recognition of "the fire that he has lit within Australia: a fire that will blaze even brighter until Indigenous people secure their self-evident rights to property, their way of life, economic independence and control over their lives and the future of their children".

On the matter of recognition of Indigenous people in the Australian Constitution, I attended (with our CEO Joe Morrison) an important conference in Sydney on 6 July 2015, called by the Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, to progress a referendum. NLC members remain vitally interested in the issue of constitutional recognition. We have taken heart from the leaders of the Referendum Council that any meaningful change to the Constitution must include protection from discrimination.

Two amendments to the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, passed by the Commonwealth Parliament in the past year, were welcomed by both the Northern and Central Land Councils, and reflected a willingness by the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, to take account of our views.

The first amendment related to township leasing. The government's previous model, which vested leases in the Executive director of Township Leasing, was resisted by the two land councils because we believe it disempowers Traditional Owners. Senator Scullion's amendment allows for a head lease to be owned by Traditional Owners themselves, and satisfied our misgivings.

The second set of amendments related to the devolution of land council functions to local Aboriginal corporations and would have put the Minister as ultimate decision-maker. Again, Senator Scullion was prepared to accept our submissions; his eventual amendments still empowered local corporations, but removed himself from the role of decision maker.

I thank Senator Scullion for having been prepared to consult with us and accommodate our concerns.

Senator Scullion was in attendance at the community of Yarralin in the Victoria River District on 14 June, where he handed over title deeds to more than 50,000ha of Aboriginal land. He also attended a ceremony at Mandorah on Cox Peninsula a week later, where the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, handed over title deeds to the long-outstanding Kenbi land claim.

It was of great significance that both hand-back ceremonies occurred this year, the 40th anniversary of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. This year is also the 50th anniversary of the Wave Hill walk-off, and I look forward to an historic meeting to mark that event when the Northern Territory's land councils will meet at Kalkarindji.



PROCESSION AT STATE FUNERAL FOR MR WUNUNGMURRA AT YIRRKALA, SEPTEMBER 2015



TRADITIONAL OWNERS WITH NLC CHAIRMAN SAMUEL BUSH BLANASI OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT HOUSE, DARWIN, AFTER KENBI SETTLEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT, APRIL 2016: FROM LEFT, ZOE SINGH, RAYLENE SINGH, MR BUSH-BLANASI AND JASON SINGH

I have travelled widely across the NLC region in the past 12 months and engaged professionally with many of our constituents. I am also pleased to report that the two Full Council meetings which occurred in the past 12 months were held well beyond town boundaries – at Gulkula in November 2015 and Ngukurr in May 2016, which gave council members the opportunity to canvas local concerns. Our engagement with remote communities will be further enhanced as we expand our program of “regionalisation”.

I wish to record my thanks to John Daly, who retired last year for personal reasons as deputy chairman. John was an energetic and supportive deputy; he remained a member for the Darwin/Daly/Wagait region and continues to contribute to NLC business. The new deputy chairman is Wayne Wauchope who was elected by the council at Gulkula in November 2015. I also thank all members of the NLC Executive Council for their dedication and service over the past year.

And I thank all NLC staff who have worked so hard to achieve our work program targets and those who have provided support for our field activities. The handback ceremonies at Yarralin and Mandora were a great success because of good planning and logistics.

Finally, the three-year term of the present council will expire at the end of 2016, and arrangements are well under way for the election of a new 78-member council (five women will also be co-opted by the new council to achieve an equitable gender balance) which will meet for the first time in November.

Samuel Bush-Blanasi
CHAIRMAN

FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Joe Morrison



The 2015/16 reporting year has been an exceptionally busy time for the NLC.

It was fitting that two of the longest-running land claims in the NLC region were finally put to rest in 2016, the 40th anniversary of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.

At Yarralin on 14 June, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, handed over title deeds to more than 50,000ha of land to Traditional Owners.

The Yarralin claim by the Ngarinman people was heard by the Interim Land Commissioner, Justice Dick Ward, in September 1975, more than a year before the Land Rights Act was passed by the Commonwealth Parliament in December 1976. But the Interim Commissioner's recommendation was never acted on and the claim lay dormant until it was serendipitously revived in 1983, and finally settled by the NT Government in 2009.

At Mandorah on 21 June, the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull

MP, handed over title deeds to 52,000ha of Aboriginal land on Cox Peninsula – the Kenbi land claim. As well, another 13,000ha will be NT freehold, owned by Larrakia interests.

Kenbi was the most complex and bitterly fought claim in the history of the Land Rights Act; it was first lodged by the NLC in March 1979 and finally decided by the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Justice Peter Gray, in December 2000.

After extensive consultations, the final settlement of the Kenbi claim was announced at a press conference at Parliament House in Darwin on 6 April, attended by Senator Scullion and the Northern Territory Chief Minister, the Hon Adam Giles MLA.

I acknowledged then that the settlement did not have the support of all Larrakia families and that there was lingering unhappiness about Justice Gray's findings as to traditional ownership. But the NLC was keen to finalise the claim, lest it lapsed into limbo with a real prospect that it might never be settled.

At the Mandorah handback ceremony, NLC Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi noted the "great opportunities" that existed for economic development of land on Cox Peninsula by Aboriginal people.

To mark the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Land Rights Act, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies invited the NLC to co-host the annual National Native Title Conference in Darwin in the first week of June. The conference was well attended, and NLC staff delivered several papers.



NLC CEO JOE MORRISON (L) WITH THE INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS, COMMONWEALTH MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS, SENATOR THE HON NIGEL SCULLION, AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE, DARWIN, AFTER THE KENBI SETTLEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT, APRIL 2015

The newly appointment Chief Financial Officer, Joe Valenti has implemented a strategy to strengthen long term financial stability through tighter financial and budgetary management. This has led to significant improvements, with tighter fiscal controls and the provision of relevant timely financial reports. These improvements have assisted in a greater understanding of the NLC's financial position and in making better-informed management decisions.

Considerable reform is being undertaken to update processes, policy and systems. A major review of information, technology and communication will take place early in the next financial year. It is expected that this review will deliver significant efficiencies and increased productivity through modern and reliable systems.

I am pleased to report the audit committee has a full complement of members, including independent members with a diverse range of specialist skills. This has assisted in providing strong oversight of our audit,

governance and risk processes, but that will depend on budget allocations.

We have also continued to expand the NLC's extensive network of regional offices, and I look forward in the coming year to the establishment of the Community Planning and Development Unit. The unit will work in partnership with Traditional Owners to direct their own resources towards designing and implementing their own development projects. It aims to build self-reliance, strengthen communities and promote good governance through the participation of local people.

Finally, I want to thank all the hardworking NLC staff for their outstanding work during this particularly busy year. I look forward to serving the council and achieving the Strategic Plan.

Joe Morrison
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER





PART 1

LIMMEN BIGHT RIVER

About Us

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

HISTORY

There is nothing more fundamental to the Aboriginal understanding of self and society than our relationship with the land and the sea. In 1973, the Australian Parliament appointed Justice Edward Woodward to conduct a Commission of Inquiry into the appropriate way to recognise Aboriginal land rights in the Northern Territory. The Parliament was responding to lobbying from Aboriginal people, especially in the Northern Territory, for the recognition of their land rights.

In 1963, the Yolngu people of east Arnhem Land presented the Commonwealth Parliament with a bark petition, protesting about plans to use a great swathe of their land for bauxite mining. The petition remains on display at Parliament House, Canberra. The immediate-past Chairman of the NLC, Mr Wunungmurra (who passed away 7 August 2015), was a signatory to that petition. He was present in July 2013 at a celebration which marked the 50th anniversary of its presentation at Rika Park, Yirrkala.

Calls for the recognition of land rights were rising across the Top End during the 1960s. In 1966, Gurindji stockmen and their families walked off the Wave Hill Station. What began as a dispute over pay and conditions escalated into a demand for land rights and thousands of Aboriginal people elsewhere took up the land rights cause in different ways. This led to an historic national referendum in 1967, where 91% of the

people of Australia voted to give the Australian Parliament the power to make laws with respect to Aboriginal people.

The NLC was established in the second half of 1973 in response to Justice Woodward's first report. Initially, the Council's role was to assist the Commission by ascertaining the views of Aboriginal people and advocating for our interests. Following the enactment of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA), the NLC became an independent statutory authority responsible for assisting Aboriginal people in the northern region of the Northern Territory to acquire and manage traditional lands and seas.

The establishment and ongoing support of the four Land Councils in the Northern Territory – Tiwi, Anindilyakwa, Central and Northern – are important manifestations of Parliament's commitment to reconciliation with the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory.

Nearly 40 years on, the NLC remains an important body through which Aboriginal people of the Top End can make their voices heard on a range of issues which impact on our lands, seas and communities. The ALRA continues to be a strong foundation on which to build social, cultural and economic growth for Traditional Owners. The NLC is also the representative body for the purposes of the Native Title Act 1993, and in this capacity the NLC also represents Aboriginal people living on the Tiwi Islands and on Groote Eylandt.

OUR ROLE

The NLC is an independent body corporate of the Commonwealth, responsible for assisting Aboriginal peoples to acquire and manage their traditional lands and seas.

The NLC is committed to 'enhancing Aboriginal people's social, political and economic participation' and this is reflected through the policies and decisions of the Full Council.

The NLC region is unique, and the organisation continues to focus on supporting and fostering new and innovative projects and developments that underpin prosperity in remote Aboriginal communities. To 'enhance' Aboriginal peoples' 'participation', we must be responsive to opinion, build capacity, encourage leadership and develop equitable and balanced outcomes. We adopt best practice and apply precautionary principles. The mechanisms for achieving this are the promotion, protection and advancement of Aboriginal peoples' rights and interests through strong leadership and good governance.

The NLC continues to show that it is ideally placed to manage the increasing demands of governments, private enterprise and Aboriginal communities to establish services and business enterprises on Aboriginal lands. The NLC continues to enhance Aboriginal participation and equity in major developments.

Aboriginal culture is diverse and rich, our lands and waters are resource rich, and the NLC is a major contributor to Aboriginal affairs and the economy in the Northern Territory.

"The NLC is committed to 'enhancing Aboriginal people's social, political and economic participation ...'"

NLC'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The role and purpose of the NLC is driven by its enabling legislation – the ALRA and the *Native Title Act 1993* – and the views of our stakeholders, both of which are reflected in our Vision, Guiding Values, Goals and Objectives (outlined in Part II of this Annual Report).

A full explanation of our legislative obligations and how these are being addressed is provided in the NLC's Corporate Plan 2015/16–2018/19.

See NLC's website: www.nlc.org.au

WHOM WE SERVE

Our values are informed by the values of the Aboriginal people of our region. We act in accordance with these values at all times.

With those values in mind, the diversity of skills and experience of staff help to build strong relationships and effective partnerships and we undertake to:

- 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 accountable to the people we represent.
- Act 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.

TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Since the enactment of the ALRA and the Native Title Act, approximately 50% of land in the Northern Territory has become legally Aboriginal-owned, including 85% of the Territory's coastline. A large proportion of the remaining land mass is subject to native title.

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

About 36,000 Aboriginal people live in the region, and 80 percent live in regional and remote areas – in nearly 200 communities ranging in size from small family outstations to communities with populations around 3000.

The majority of Aboriginal people in the NLC region speak an Aboriginal language as their first language. Many are multi-lingual, and English is often way down the list of everyday languages.

Customary law continues to be practised in many communities within the region.

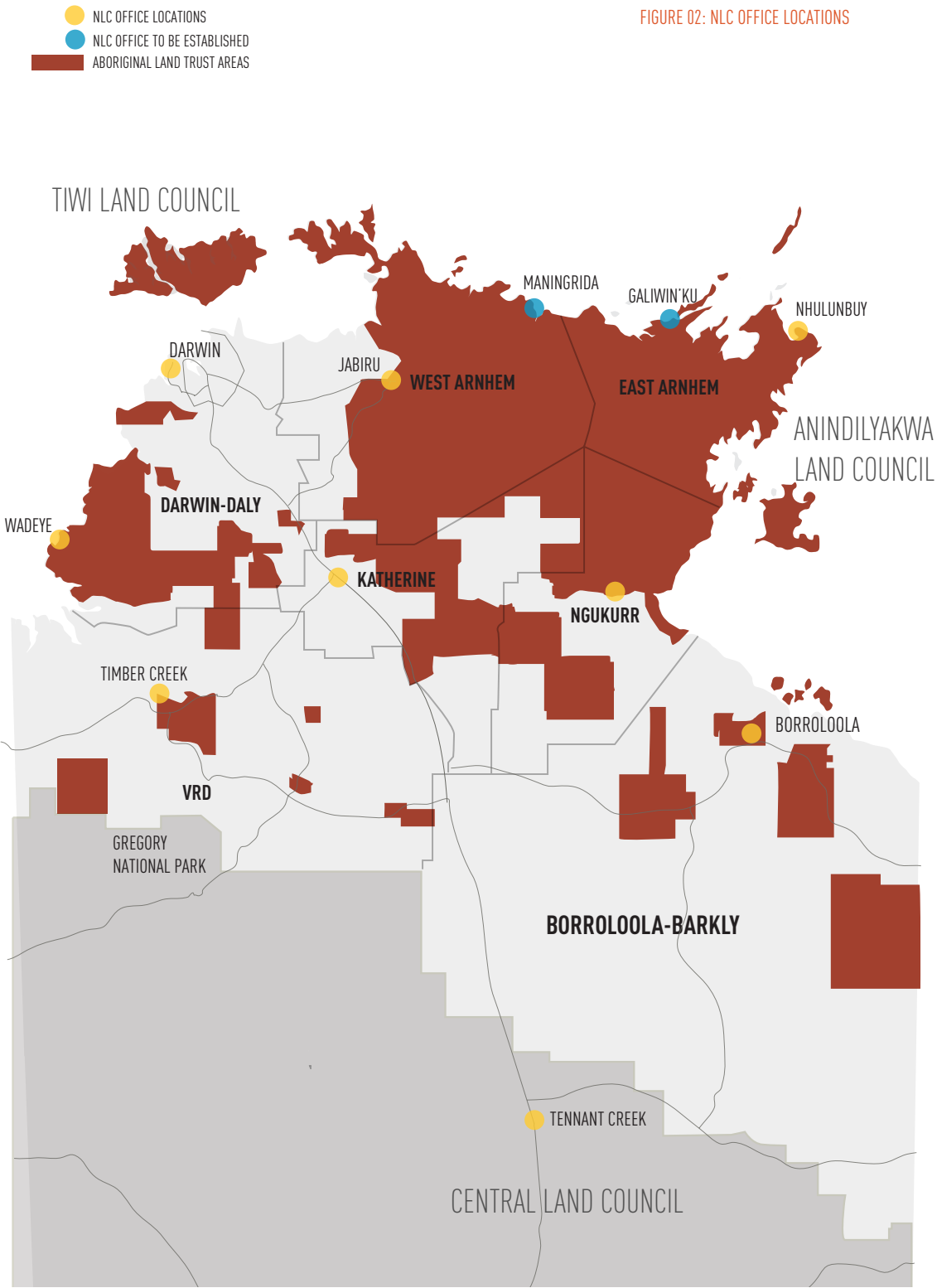
Many major resource developments are taking place on Aboriginal and native title lands. These developments have included the construction of gas pipelines, army training areas, national parks and pastoral activities. Mining and petroleum exploration and development projects continue to increase business for the NLC in terms of acting on behalf of Traditional Owners. The challenge for the NLC is to ensure that social, economic and cultural opportunities and benefits flow to Aboriginal people from these developments.

Aboriginal people are keen to participate in planning and development activities while at the same time protecting our cultural integrity.

REGIONS

The NLC is divided into seven regions, as shown on the map following (Figure 02) – Darwin/Daly/Wagait, West Arnhem, East Arnhem, Katherine, VRD, Ngukurr and Borroloola-Barkly. Each region is represented by a regional council and a regional Executive Member is elected to sit on the NLC's Executive Council.

The NLC has offices beyond Darwin, located in Katherine, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy, Timber Creek, Tennant Creek, Ngukurr, Borroloola and Wadeye.



OUR COUNCIL

The responsible Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, approves the method of choosing members of the NLC, including the community and/or outstation area represented. Section 29 of the ALRA provides that an Aboriginal person who is a Traditional Owner or a resident living within the NLC region may nominate for membership of the NLC Full Council.

The Minister has nominated the 52 community areas in the NLC region that members can be nominated to represent. Seventy eight members, plus five co-opted women positions, make up the NLC Full Council. Members are nominated for a three-year term.

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the NLC were elected at a Full Council meeting in Darwin in November 2013. John Daly resigned as Deputy Chairman in September 2015; the Full Council elected Wayne Wauchope to succeed him in November 2015.

Along with members nominated from each of the seven regions, the Chairman and Deputy comprise the NLC's nine member Executive Council. The Chair is an executive director and an employee of the NLC. The Deputy is a non-executive director who becomes an executive director during the Chairman's absence. Individual members have an important role in keeping the Full Council informed of the opinions and priorities of their Aboriginal constituents.

The Full Council shapes the policy and strategic direction of the NLC. The Full Council's powers under the ALRA include responsibility for approving exploration and petroleum licence applications, and section 19 land use agreements. The Council has delegated some of its decision-making powers to the Executive and Regional Councils. In June 2015, the NLC's Full Council meeting voted to delegate approval of section 19 agreements to the Executive Council, providing the means for agreements to be processed more promptly. The Executive meets six times a year outside of the bi-annual Full Council meetings, so there will now be at least eight opportunities a year to consider such agreements.

The Executive Council is responsible for managing business between Full Council meetings. Each Full Council, Executive and Regional Council meeting receives operational and financial reports from NLC branch managers, to provide direction for staff to meet performance objectives and targets. Induction and training sessions are provided to all new and returning council members. The sessions extend to members' roles on boards and committees. Capacity building also occurs during council meetings when reports are delivered by branch managers and when various experts are invited to deliver special presentations.



FULL COUNCIL MEETING, NGUKURR, MAY 2016



FIGURE 03: FULL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP, 2013-2016

DARWIN/DALY/ WAGAIT	WARD
Bill Risk (Executive)	Darwin
Bill Danks	Darwin
Graham Kenyon	Darwin East
James Sing**	Darwin West
Les Waters	Darwin South
Margaret Daiyi	Darwin South West
Donna Sullivan	Daly River
Matthew Shields	Daly River North
John Sullivan	Daly River West
John Daly (Deputy Chair)	Daly River South
Elizabeth Sullivan	Pine Creek
John Wilson	Peppimenarti
Wally Minjin	Palumpa
Leslie Smiler	Port Keats
Cyril Ninnal	Port Keats North

BORROLOOLA/ BARKLY	WARD
Leonard Norman (Executive)	Borrooloola
Keith Rory*	Borrooloola
Jack Green	Borrooloola
Timothy Lansen	Nicholson River
Richard Dixon	Robinson River
David Harvey	North Barkly
Shannon Dixon	Murraraji
Brian Limerick	Alexandria
Deceased Member	Brunette Downs
Elaine Sandy	Elliott
Gordon Noonan	Rockhampton Downs
John Finlay	Wombaya
Jason Bill	Muckaty
Hazel Shadforth	Women's Co-opted
VACANT	Women's Co-opted

VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT	WARD
Raymond Hector (Executive)	Pigeon Hole
George King	Yingawunarri
George Campbell	Yarralin
Shadrack Retchford	Amanbidji
Jack Little	Bulla
Larry Johns	Timber Creek
Elaine Watts*	Women's Co-opted
VACANT	Women's Co-opted

WEST ARNHEM	WARD
John Christophersen (Executive)	Coburg
Bunug Galaminda	Waruwi
Jenny Inmulugulu	Waruwi
Jonathan Nadji	Kakadu
Dean Yibarbuk	Gunbalanya
Wayne Wauchope* (Deputy Chair)	Gunbalanya
Otto Dann	Gunbalanya
Matthew Ryan	Maningrida
Victor Rostron	Maningrida
Helen Williams	Maningrida
Julius Kernan	Maningrida
Matthew Ngarlbin	Minjilang

FIGURE 03: FULL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP, 2013–2016 (CONT.)

EAST ARNHEM	WARD
Banambi Wunungmurra	Yirrkala
Yananymul Mununggurr	Yirrkala
Dhuwarrwarr Marika	Yirrkala
Jabani Lalara	Blue Mud Bay
Jonathon Nunggumajbarr	Blue Mud Bay
Don Wininba	Galiwinku
David Djalangi (Executive)	Galiwinku
Jason Guyula	Galiwinku
Kenny Djekurra Guyula	Galiwinku
Wesley Bandi Bandi	Gapuwiyak
Bobby Wunungmurra	Gapuwiyak
David Marpiyawuy	Milingimbi
Richard Dadarr Barakal	Milingimbi
David Warraya	Ramingining
David Rumba Rumba	Ramingining
Djawa Yunupingu*	Ski Beach
Caroline Dhamarrandji	Women's Co-opted

*ABA Members

KATHERINE	WARD
Samuel Bush-Blanasi (Chair)	Beswick
Helen Lee (Executive)	Barunga
Bill Harney	Katherine
Lisa Mumbin*	Katherine
Desmond Roberts	Weemol
Lloyd Murray	Bulman
Clive Roberts	Mataranka/Djimbra

NGUKURR	WARD
Virginia Nundhirribala (Executive)	Numbulwar
Timothy Wurramara	Numbulwar
Faye Mangurra	Numbulwar
Peter Lansen	Nutwood/ Cox River
Keith Farrell	Hodgson Downs
Grace Daniels*	Urapunga
Walter Rogers	Ngukurr
Gregory Daniels	Ngukurr
Gordon Nawundulpi	Ngukurr

EXECUTIVE MEMBER JOHN CHRISTOPHERSEN SPEAKING AT FULL COUNCIL MEETING AT NGUKURR, MAY 2015, WITH FELLOW WEST ARNHEM MEMBERS JENNY IMMULUGULU AND BUNUG GALAMINDA



Two meetings of the NLC Full Council were held in 2015/16: the 111th at Gulkula, 16-20 November 2015; and the 112th at Ngukurr 16-19 May 2016.

FIGURE 04: FULL COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE RECORD 2015/16

DARWIN/DALY/ WAGAIT	PROXY 111 th	PROXY 112 th
Bill Risk (Executive)		
Bill Danks	Absent	
Graham Kenyon		
Les Waters		Absent
Margaret Daiyi		
Donna Sullivan		Absent
Matthew Shields		
John Sullivan		
John Daly		
Elizabeth Sullivan		
John Wilson		
Wally Minjin		
Leslie Smiler		
Cyril Ninnal	Absent	
James Sing	Harry Sing	

BORROLOOLA/ BARKLY	PROXY 111 th	PROXY 112 th
Leonard Norman (Executive)	Jonathan Miller	
Timothy Lansen	Absent	
Jack Green	Jason Green	
David Harvey		
Hazel Shadforth		Absent
Richard Dixon		Noeleen Raggett
Keith Rory		Absent
Brian Limerick		Absent
Shannon Dixon		
Member Deceased		
Elaine Sandy	Jeffrey Dixon	
Gordon Noonan		Absent
John Finlay		
Jason Bill	Ricky Green Jason Allum	Absent

FIGURE 04: FULL COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND ATTENDANCE RECORD 2015/16 (CONT.)

WEST ARNHEM	PROXY 111 th	PROXY 112 th	NGUKURR	PROXY 111 th	PROXY 112 th
John Christophersen (Executive)	Absent		Virginia Nundhirribala (Executive)	Absent	
Bunug Galaminda			Timothy Wurramara	Sherita Nundhirribala	Absent
Jenny Inmulugulu	Absent	Absent	Faye Mangurra	Samuel Daylight	
Jonathon Nadji	Christopher Galaminda	Absent	Peter Lansen		
Dean Yibarbuk			Keith Farrell		
Wayne Wauchope (Deputy Chair)			Grace Daniels	Absent	
Otto Dann	Absent		Walter Rogers	Absent	
Matthew Ryan	Absent		Gregory Daniels	Absent	
Victor Rostron		Absent	Gordon Nawundulpi	Absent	
Julius (Clint) Kernan	Absent				
Helen Williams					
Matthew Ngarlbin (Cooper)					

FIGURE 04: FULL COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND ATTENDANCE RECORD 2015/16 (CONT.)

EAST ARNHEM	PROXY 111 th	PROXY 112 th
David Djalangi (Executive)		
Yananymul Mununggurr		
Dhuwarrwarr Marika	Absent	
Banambi Wunungmurra	Absent Day 1	Absent
Jabani Lalara		Absent
Jonathon Nunggumajbarr		Absent
Don Wininba	Absent	Johny Gurrum Gurrum
Jason Guyula		
Kenny Djekurra Guyula		Absent
David Marpiyawuy		Absent
Richard Dadarr Barakal		
David Rumba Rumba	Absent	
David Warraya		
Wesley Bandi Bandi		Absent
Bobby Wunungmurra	Absent Day 1	Absent
Djawa Yunupingu		
Caroline Dhamarrandji		

VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT	PROXY 111 th	PROXY 112 th
Raymond Hector (Executive)		Absent
George Campbell	Absent	Absent
George King	Absent	Attended Day 1
Jack Little	Lisa Mununggurr	Absent
Larry Johns		
Shadrack Retchford		
Elaine Watts		

KATHERINE	PROXY 111 th	PROXY 112 th
Samuel Bush- Blanasi (Chair)		
Helen Lee (Executive)		
Bill Harney	Absent	Absent
Clive Roberts		Absent
Desmond Lindsay	Absent	
Lisa Mumbin		
Lloyd Murray	Christopher Gordon	Absent

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

MEMBERS



KATHERINE REGION

Samuel Bush-Blanasi

CHAIRMAN

Samuel Bush-Blanasi is a Mayili man and resident of the Wugularr (Beswick) community in the Katherine region. He was educated in his own community before completing his studies at Kormilda College in Darwin. Mr Blanasi thanks his father (the late Mr David Blanasi) for his education, and says his father instilled in him strong cultural and traditional values. Mr Blanasi is a prolific artist who brings a wealth of administrative

and social experience to the NLC. This is Mr Blanasi's fifth term at the NLC. He is the immediate past Deputy Chairman, and was previously an NLC member during the 1990s. Mr Blanasi is also a board member of the Aboriginal Investment Group, and has a long record of service on boards of several other Aboriginal bodies.



DARWIN DALY/WAGAIT/REGION

John Daly

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (RESIGNED SEPTEMBER 2015)

John Daly was born in Darwin at the old Darwin hospital. He was born and bred on the Daly River where he's lived and worked all his life. John was Chairman of the NLC from 2005–2007 and is passionate about what he wants to achieve for his people. "What we want is independence from the government bureaucratic machine to run our lands and our financial affairs so we can make good sound decisions for our people.

We just want our countrymen to achieve the best that they can via jobs and business opportunities on Aboriginal land. You've got to be passionate for these things otherwise there's no point in being in organisations such as ours. You have got to have it to live it."



WEST ARNHEM REGION

Wayne Wauchope

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (ELECTED NOVEMBER 2015)

Wayne Wauchope was brought up at Croker Island. At 17 he joined the Army and signed up to 7 Independent Rifle Company, which grew into Norforce in 1981. He later attended Batchelor College for three years, but, for cultural reasons, he gave up his studies towards an associate diploma in community management. He has served as a member of local government councils in West Arnhem and was elected to the ATSIC West Arnhem regional council in 2003.



BORROLOOLA/BARKLY REGION

Leonard Norman

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Leonard Norman has been a member of the NLC since the mid-1990s. This is his second term as Executive Member of the Borroloola Barkly region. He grew up in Borroloola and was educated in his home town and at St John's College, Darwin. He is a Yanyuwa elder who lives in Borroloola and works as a sea ranger with the li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Ranger Unit. Leonard has also served on

community bodies, as deputy chairman of Gulf Health and as a member of the Mawurli and Wirriwangkuma Aboriginal Corporation. He holds strong views on the need to educate young people about the vision of the NLC and the work it does for Traditional Owners across the Top End of the Northern Territory.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

MEMBERS



DARWIN/DALY/WAGAIT REGION

Bill Risk

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Bill Risk was born and educated in Darwin and is a member of the Larrakia language group. Bill is a director of Imparja Television, and NAAC, and chairman of Darran Darra Aboriginal Corporation. He is also a committee member of the Buffalos Football Club. Bill says his long experience as an executive member has given him the opportunity to represent his region and be part of the processes that affect Aboriginal peoples' lands, seas and lives.



EAST ARNHEM REGION

David Djalangi

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

David Djalangi was born at Milingimbi and was educated at the mission at Elcho Island. After schooling, David joined his dad in the fishing industry and spent three years working the seas, after which he turned his hand to mechanics. As an elected member of the NLC Executive, David is passionate for his people's voice to be heard. He strongly believes in his culture and his family's land.



KATHERINE REGION

Helen Lee

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Helen Lee is affiliated with the Ngalkban clan and lives at Barunga. She was elected to the Full Council in 2003. Helen has a strong administrative background, having worked with the Jawoyn Association, Burridj Aboriginal Group Training, and the Barunga Community government Council. Helen is keen to promote women's issues and wants to assist Aboriginal people develop economic enterprises on homelands.



NGUKURR

Virginia Nundhirribala

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Virginia was born at Ngukurr, her grandfather's country, and was schooled at Numbulwar. She has been involved with the NLC since 2010 and is one of two women on the Executive, something she is proud of. "This is good because as a woman we're just as strong as the men; we've got to have a voice for our people, too." Virginia has strong views on what she hopes to achieve as an Executive Member.

"I want to help my people to live a better way, to save our country and to work with government, making a strong community and through our culture to make it strong so that culture can live. The NLC is a part of that, and it is helping us with our culture and the land and to look after it properly. That's very important to me."



VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT

Raymond Hector

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Born in Darwin in 1970, Raymond Hector was schooled at Kormilda College. He was a health worker for 15 years at his home in Pigeon Hole. As an elected member of the NLC Executive, Raymond, from the Billarna people, said his position on the Council has given him the confidence that he is representing his people in the best possible way. He has vowed to keep working hard to help his people in the care and control of land.



WEST ARNHEM REGION

John Christophersen

EXECUTIVE MEMBER

A member of the Murran Group, Cobourg Peninsula, John was born in Darwin. He has family ties into Kakadu, is a former NLC staff member, and a long-term council member from the mid-1980s to the early 2000s. He has devoted most of his work to marine and coastal policy issues, and remains a vocal advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples in local, national and international forums.

FIGURE 05: EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND ATTENDANCE RECORD 2015/16

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Eleven Executive Council Meetings were held during the reporting period.

MEETING	DATE	LOCATION	ATTENDEES	APOLOGIES
173rd	22nd August 2015	NLC Office 60 Smith Street	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector, Helen Lee, John Christophersen, John Daly, Virginia Nundhirribala, Leonard Norman David Djalangi	
174th	5th October 2015	Darwin NLC Office 45 Mitchell Street Darwin/ Teleconference	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Helen Lee, John Christophersen, Virginia Nundhirribala, Leonard Norman, David Djalangi	Raymond Hector, Bill Risk
175th	15th November 2015	Gulkula, Nhulunbuy	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector, Helen Lee, Virginia Nundhirribala, David Djalangi, Leonard Norman	John Christophersen
176th	24th – 25th February 2016	NLC Office 45 Mitchell Street Darwin	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Wayne Wauchope, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector, Helen Lee, John Christophersen, John Daly, Virginia Nundhirribala, David Djalangi, Leonard Norman	Leonard Norman Thursday afternoon
177th	21st March 2016	NLC Office 45 Mitchell Street Darwin	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Wayne Wauchope, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector, Helen Lee, John Christophersen, John Daly, Virginia Nundhirribala, David Djalangi, Leonard Norman	Bill Risk afternoon, Raymond Hector afternoon
178th	12 – 13th May 2016	NLC Office 45 Mitchell Street Darwin	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector, Helen Lee, John Christophersen, Virginia Nundhirribala, David Djalangi	Leonard Norman

FIGURE 06: REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND VENUES 2015/16

REGIONAL COUNCIL

Two Regional Council meetings were scheduled in each region during the reporting period. The details of each of these meetings are set out in the table below.

REGION	DATE	LOCATION
Darwin Daly Wagait	23rd – 24th September 2015	Kununurra *
	22nd – 24th March 2016	West Daly Regional Council Office, Wadeye **
East Arnhem	13th – 14th October 2015	Walkabout Lodge, Nhulunbuy
	26th – 27th April 2016	CDU Campus, Nhulunbuy
Katherine	9th – 10h September 2015	Maningrida *
	15th – 17th March 2016	NLC Office, Katherine **
Borroloola Barkly	7th – 8th October 2015	NLC Office, Tennant Creek
	12th – 14th April 2016	Borroloola Hotel Motel, Borroloola **
West Arnhem	9th – 10h September 2015	Maningrida*
	15th – 17th March 2016	NLC Office, Katherine**
Ngukurr	27th – 28th October 2015	NLC Office, Katherine
	12th – 14th April 2016	Borroloola Hotel Motel, Borroloola **
Victoria River District	23rd – 24th September 2015	Kununurra *
	22nd – 24th March 2016	West Daly Regional Council Office, Wadeye **

*combined Katherine/West Arnhem RCM 9th – 10th September 2015

*combined Darwin/Daly/Wagait and VRD RCM 23rd – 24th September 2015

**combined Borroloola Barkly/Ngukurr RCM 12th – 14th April 2016

**combined Katherine/West Arnhem RCM 15th – 17th March 2016

**combined Darwin/Daly/Wagait and VRD RCM 22rd – 24th March 2016

OUR PEOPLE

ADMINISTRATION

The NLC's Full Council, the supreme governing body, comprises 83 members; 78 are elected every three years from across the NLC's seven regions, and five women are co-opted. The present Full Council elected the Chairman and Deputy Chairman at its first meeting in December 2013.

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

The Full Council represents the rights and priorities of the 36,000-plus Aboriginal people within the NLC region. It shapes policy and strategic directions and considers most agreements regarding the use of Aboriginal land on behalf of Traditional Owners.

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

The Executive Council appoints the Chief Executive Officer who has day-to-day responsibility for administrative operations. The CEO works closely with the Chairman and the Executive Council.

Seven branches support the CEO:

- Secretariat: provides support to the CEO and Chairman and to the NLC's elected arms

- Legal: provides legal advice to the administrative and elected arms
- Anthropology: identifies and consults with Traditional Owners in order to secure and protect rights in land
- Regional Development: oversees the NLC's network of nine regional offices beyond Darwin and provides logistics support for consultations required under the Aboriginal Land Rights and Native Title Acts
- Caring for Country: hosts and provides administrative support for land and sea Ranger Groups and supports joint management of national parks and management of Indigenous Protected Areas
- Minerals & Energy: provides advice to enable Aboriginal people to understand and consider proposals to explore/mine for minerals or petroleum products on their land
- Corporate Services: delivers financial, IT, human resource and administrative support, including fleet and property asset management to all branches.

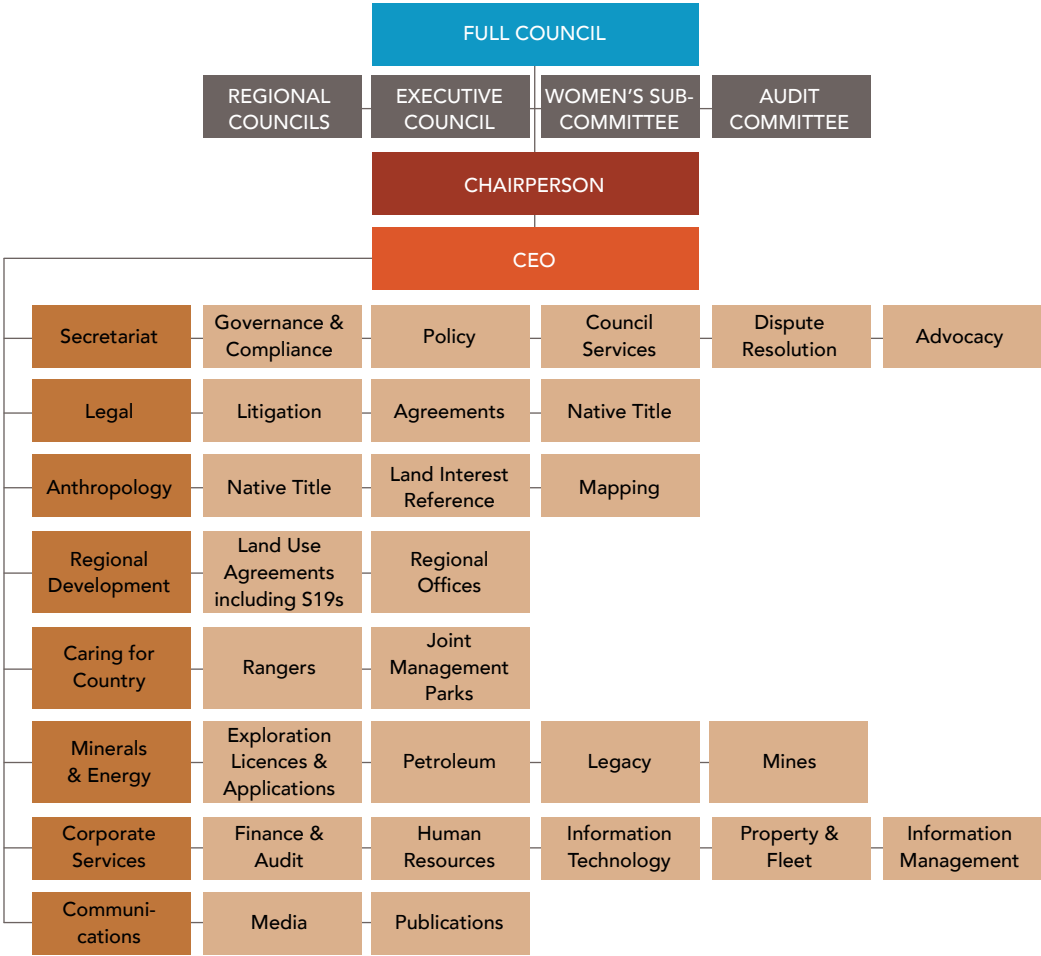
The CEO is responsible for the leadership and management of the organisation, implementing Full Council decisions, driving the NLC's strategic direction, setting priorities and enforcing sound corporate governance.

STRUCTURE

The diagram below (Figure 07) illustrates the NLC’s structure. Some of the NLC’s key stakeholders include:

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

FIGURE 07: NLC ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



BRANCH OVERVIEW

ANTHROPOLOGY



Dr Stephen Johnson

BRANCH MANAGER

Dr Stephen Johnson was appointed Manager of Anthropology in August 2015.

The branch employs regional anthropologists, mapping professional and administrative staff. A key objective of the NLC is to assist Aboriginal people to obtain and/or acquire property rights. This branch contributes to those outcomes by undertaking, with other branches, land claims, native title claims and other acquisition support.

Cultural heritage, site clearances and geographic information services are essential elements to facilitate effective consultations. The Land Interest Reference Register informs staff as to whom they need to consult.

CARING FOR COUNTRY



Matthew Salmon

BRANCH MANAGER

Mr Matthew Salmon was appointed the Manager Caring for Country in April 2016.

The tasks of this branch include the joint management of parks, Caring for Country ranger programs and land and sea management.

MINERALS & ENERGY



Rhonda Yates

BRANCH MANAGER

This branch receives and processes exploration, mining and petroleum applications and manages environmental and rehabilitation matter relating to grant tenements.

CORPORATE SERVICES



Joe Valenti

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Mr Joe Valenti was appointed to the new role of Chief Financial Officer in November 2015.

The branch provides the financial administration, manages operational funding and oversees the corporate compliance of the organisation to meet strategic planning outcomes. The branch includes the follow sections – finance, royalties, human resources, information management, information technology, property and asset management.

LEGAL



Michael O'Donnell

PRINCIPAL LEGAL OFFICER

The Legal branch provides legal advice and representations to the NLC, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal corporations on matters including agreements, litigation and law reform.

SECRETARIAT



Leanne Liddle

SENIOR POLICY OFFICER (RESIGNED APRIL 2016)

The Secretariat branch works closely with the CEO and Chairman and provides administrative support, co-ordinates council meetings, and liaises with council members. The branch also leads research and policy development. The jobs and career services unit is part of the Secretariat branch.

BRANCH OVERVIEW

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Jonathan McLeod

MANGER NORTH

The branch manages the regional office network, Indigenous pastoral program and section 19 land use agreements. It also processes applications for permits and funeral grants. Jonathan McLeod covers Darwin/Daly/Wagait, West Arnhem, East Arnhem, regions.



Rick Fletcher

MANAGER SOUTH

The branch manages the regional office network, Indigenous pastoral program and section 19 land use agreements. It also processes applications for permits and funeral grants. Rick Fletcher covers the Katherine, Ngukurr, Borroloola Barkly and Victoria River District regions.

COMMUNICATIONS



Murray McLaughlin

The Communications Unit handles inquiries from news media, and publishes statements and publications like Land Rights News (Northern Edition).

FIGURE 08: NLC STAFF PROFILE 2015/16

	POSITIONS	ATSI
Secretariat	13	9
Corporate Services	38	17
Minerals & Energy	9	2
Regional Development	42	25
Caring for Country	20	3
WOC	79	77
ILC	11	9
Anthropology	25	5
Legal	16	2
TOTALS	253	149

FIGURE 09: FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS – TREND



PART 2



Our Approach

Shaping our Future



STRATEGIC THINKING

The NLC's strategic direction takes account of the changing social, political, cultural, economic and environmental landscape of our region, and the opportunities it presents.

Our planning framework incorporates:

- *Corporate Plan* – a four-year plan of our high level initiatives to achieve our strategic goals and objectives
- *Strategic Plan* – a four-year overview of our vision, goals, values and objectives
- *Business Plans* – annual plans that outline key activities and actions in each branch of the NLC that will deliver our goals and objectives.

These plans are reviewed annually and may be amended as required to reflect changing strategic priorities.

The planning framework enables the Chief Executive Officer, Leadership Group, Full Council members and the Executive and Regional Councils and staff to be regularly informed on progress and performance to achieve our strategic goals and objectives and, where necessary, take corrective action to ensure initiatives are on track.

CORPORATE PLAN 2015–2019

The Corporate Plan 2015–2019 presents the NLC's goals and objectives, based on the organisation's legislative responsibilities (under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the *Native Title Act*), and our identified Vision and Values.

Our goals and objectives are translated into actions across the NLC's operational areas.

Our seven key goals, espoused in the Corporate Plan, are:

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

The plan is the vehicle to achieve our corporate mission: to have an experienced and capable organisation that effectively serves Aboriginal peoples' interests in the Northern Territory's land, waters and seas.

The NLC's focus during this four year period is to target improved governance support to the Council, support the Council in policy development, increase community engagement and delivery accessible and efficient services to Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory.

"The NLC is committed to delivering our strategic objectives that will see Aboriginal people benefit..."

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015–2019

This four-year Strategic Plan covers the period 2015–2019 and is informed by legislative responsibilities, strategic directions, views expressed by Executive and Full Council members, Regional Councils and NLC administration on our goals and strategies.

The objectives of this four-year Strategic Plan are:

- To serve as a document that sets out medium-term, high-level, strategic directions for the Executive and Full Council members, Regional Councils and the Chief Executive Officer.

- To establish a platform for the Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with the Leadership Group and staff, to set, monitor and review annual priorities and actions outlined in the Corporate Plan alongside detailed business plans for each operational area.
- To provide a communication tool to inform stakeholders, governments and the general public on the strategic direction of the NLC over the next four years and recognition of achievements.

The NLC is committed to delivering

our strategic objectives that will see Aboriginal people benefit economically, socially and culturally from the secure possession of our land, waters and seas in the top end of the Northern Territory.

The Strategic Plan provides high-level direction and is complemented by more detailed planning documents, specifically the Corporate Plan and Business Plans for each operational area of the NLC.



NLC OFFICERS CONSULT AT WADEYE WITH DIMININ CLAN MEMBERS OVER STORE LEASE.

PART 3



Aerial view of a winding river through a dense green mangrove forest, with a sandy beach and ocean visible in the background.



The Year in Review

ANTHROPOLOGY BRANCH OVERVIEW

Over the past few years, the Anthropology Branch has seen a marked increase in workload, without additional resources. The branch has had to cope with an exponential rise in all forms of agreement making – from mining tenement to shop lease – in combination with other pressing duties to Traditional Owners around Land Rights and Native Title.

The dedication of staff and resilience of Traditional Owners have been impressive, and reform is well underway in collaboration with constituents, council members, staff, the Executive, the courts and, increasingly, Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments. Changes will continue as new challenges arise.

The Anthropology Branch is looking to address several key challenges:

1. **Dispute Conciliation:** Under Part III, Section 25 (2) of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, the Land Council facilitates conciliation and resolution (wherever possible) where territorial or other disputes occur.
2. **Royalty Reform:** The branch is overwhelmed with issues around the disbursement of royalties to the point where it often proves difficult to undertake the anthropological enquiries necessary to produce meaningful ethnographic data. The branch has introduced a

number of efficiency gains while reform continues apace.

3. **Community Development:** Expressions of interest for future investment from Traditional Owners are increasing. In response, the Land Council has embarked on an ambitious but practical pathway toward providing options to adequately accommodate such requests.

These challenges are interdependent – resolution of one being reliant on the other – and will require a comprehensive approach. In many cases, without the resolution of disputes, there can be no disbursement of funds and without a viable option for community development, future investment is jeopardised.

DISPUTE CONCILIATION

BACKGROUND

The NLC provides representation and services to more than 36,000 Aboriginal constituents across the top end of the Northern Territory. In some areas, ownership of certain tracts of land is subject to contest, often where European settlement has been concentrated and accompanied by widespread dispossession and dislocation.

Many disputes of this nature are long standing and at risk of becoming intractable. In some cases, existing tensions have been exacerbated by the "Intervention" and the imposition of compulsory acquisition five-year leases in communities. While the NLC cannot arbitrarily resolve such disputes – that should remain the preserve of Traditional Owners – the organisation does have an obligation under Part III, Section 25 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* to facilitate conciliation.

In addition, there are royalty payments pending in many of these areas of dispute which cannot be disbursed (as per Part III, Section 35 (4A, 4B) of the Act) until those disputes are resolved. In some cases these delays, where substantial monies are involved, serve to inflame existing tensions and sometimes give cause for complaint against the NLC. More significantly, a failure to resolve these matters disadvantages all interested parties in the short term and in some cases precludes the possibility of implementing longer-term community development plans, especially where Traditional Owners

have clearly expressed a desire for future economic investment and engagement.

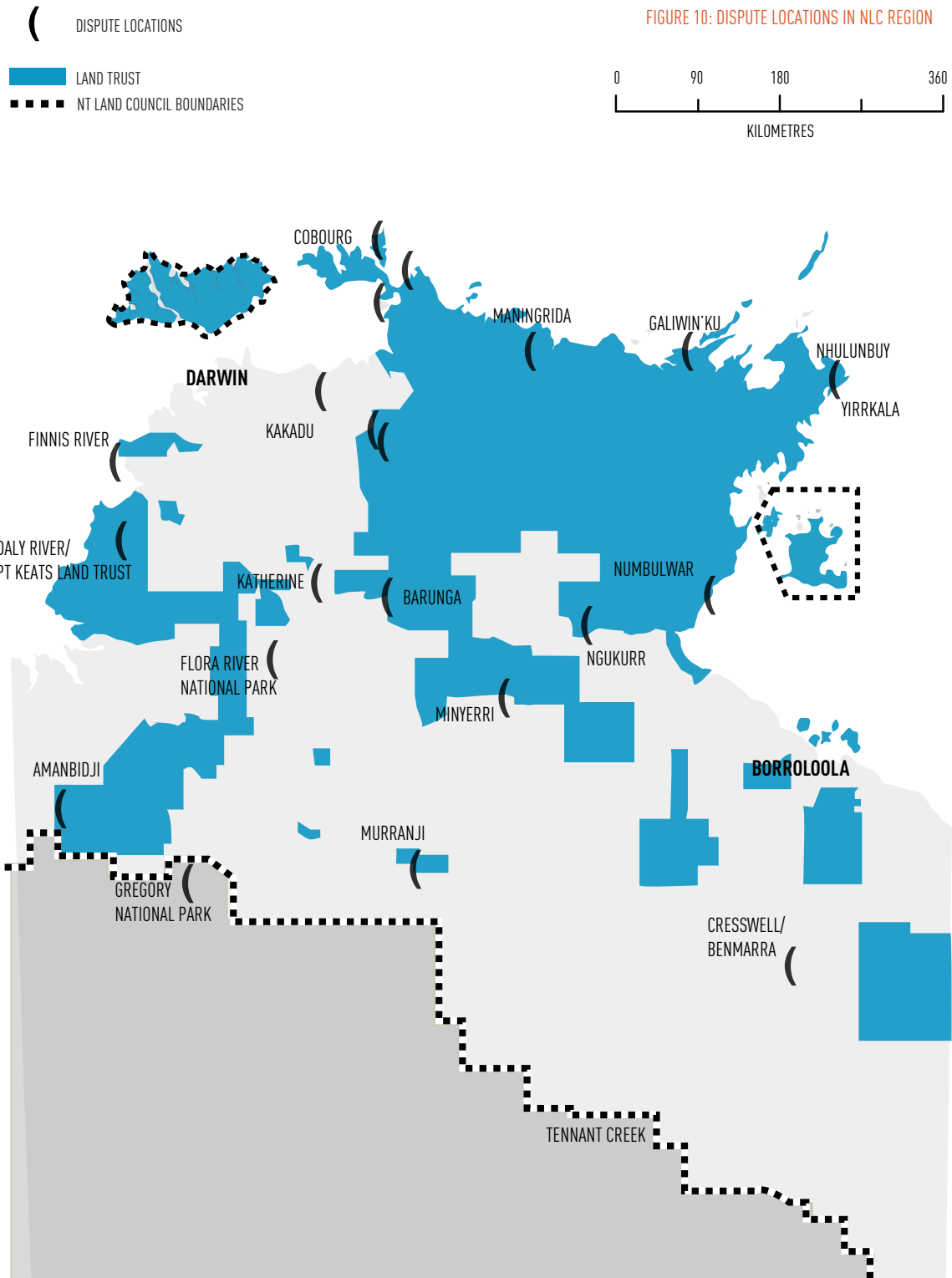
The NLC is committed to providing conciliation in these matters wherever possible. However, the widespread, sometimes protracted and increasingly complex, nature of many disputes is beyond the organisation's current capacity to mediate.

PURPOSE

Against this background, the NLC has identified key areas of dispute in order of priority, with a view to providing effective conciliation by end of the 2016/17 year. As noted above, this will require substantial additional resources and a targeted strategic approach. Criteria for assessment include:

- Gauging dispute intensity levels (with a view to individual and group safety and well-being);
- determining the comparative duration of disputes;
- recording disbursement amounts and the duration of payment delays, where relevant;
- drafting a strategy for mapping country in alignment with traditional interests and aspirations;
- evaluating the likelihood of achieving resolution; and
- considering any disposition towards investment and future community development.

The NLC has identified three specific 'target' areas for conciliation where preliminary discussions have already taken place. For reasons of confidentiality these are not disclosed in this report.



STRATEGY

Many of these issues arise where various family and clan interests are delineated with the imposition of arbitrary boundaries and "lines on maps". Often a function of anthropological and other community or government mapping exercises, this imposition is also a consequence of demands around leasing agreements and the like, which are based on non-Indigenous concepts of tenure and "boundedness". In these cases already existing tensions are often inflamed when substantial sums of money are at stake.

To mediate such concerns, the Anthropology Branch is working with Traditional Owners to approach the relationship of people with place more as one based around a constellation of significant sites - often subject to some degree of negotiation, but seldom locked within fixed boundaries. Articulating these Indigenous perspectives with imposed demands for geographical precision (in a non-Indigenous sense) continues to pose challenges.

SCOPE

This year, the proposed project encompassed the three 'target' areas identified above. Conciliation will incur substantial research, travel, accommodation and meeting costs, as well as the employment of an independent consultant in some cases. Although these disputes are complex and resolution will not be easy, a

concerted effort as proposed gives cause for optimism. Success will also further hone the NLC's future strategic approach to the many remaining dispute issues within the organisation's jurisdiction. Resolution will also provide a platform for a proposed Community Development Unit and associated programs to be implemented in collaboration with Traditional Owners.

ROYALTY REFORM

As noted above, branch resources are stretched to the limit in meeting the demands of an increasing number of royalty disbursements across the NLC jurisdiction. This diversion from core anthropological business threatens detriment to the interests of Traditional Owners unless change is enacted. While a review of existing systems is complete and reforms are being implemented, the branch has embarked on an efficiency drive to make the most of current processes, including:

- the appointment of two dedicated royalty officers and a "one stop shop" for royalties;
- the introduction of a royalty "hotline";
- the systematic updating of banking and other personal details;
- a bi-annual meeting of finance and anthropology staff to determine status and scheduling;
- the drafting of a comprehensive communication strategy;
- the prioritisation of staff attendance at disbursement planning meetings;

- obtaining clear direction as to the role of council members regarding royalty issues;
- a call for standing instructions to be reviewed only every two to three years;
- a case-by-case assessment of requests for payment on behalf of third parties;
- standing instructions to permit the retention of monies on request – usually payable within six months of receipt in accordance with the Act (Part III, Section 35, Para 2) – to enable investments by Traditional Owners where such expressions of interests are made;
- the formulation of policy around disbursement issues and meeting protocols.

Close cooperation and communication across branches and, most significantly with constituents, has proven essential in realising these improvements. The level of success so far pays testament to a will for reform and an appetite for development.

ROYALTY ENQUIRIES

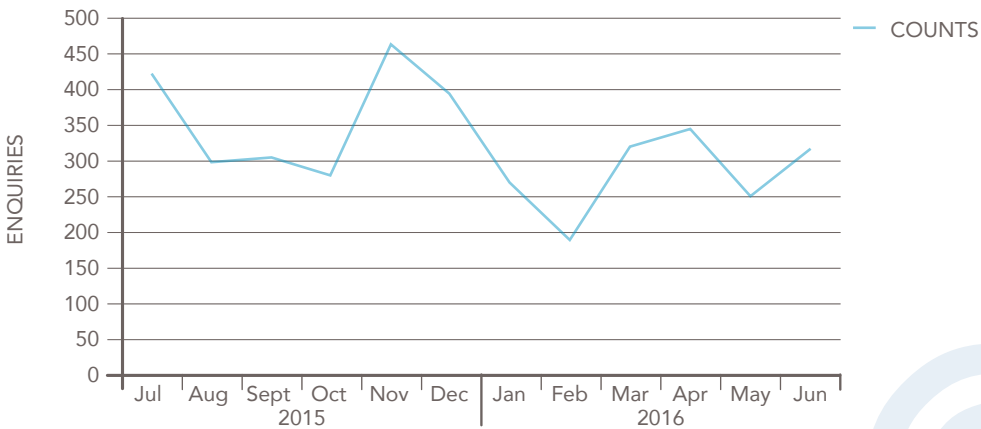
In October 2014, a two-person team was set up to administer all royalty enquiries. This reporting year, the team received 3844 enquiries directly relating to royalties. See table below.

ROAD WORKS

Good roads are critical for development and everyday living. The NT Government has programs across the NLC region to upgrade roads and to build bridges and other essential infrastructure. These programs include finalising agreements for gravel extraction across the entire NLC region. Consultations are being carried out to ensure these upgrades are in accordance with the wishes of Traditional Owners.

A major concern for Traditional Owners is the abuse of the permit system. With improving access through country to fishing and other desirable locations, Traditional Owners are increasingly concerned about the negative impact of increased traffic. Illegal fishing, hunting and unauthorised access to

FIGURE 11: ROYALTY ENQUIRIES 2015/16



outstations causes great distress for families. Strengthening the current permit system remains a priority for the NLC and will require the co-operation of the NT Government and Police to minimise disruption caused by increasing traffic on improved roads.

REPATRIATION

The NLC continues to support the return of human remains to communities. Our goal is to ensure communities are consulted and informed about returns and to facilitate good outcomes for museums and Traditional Owners.

Through an exhibition at the National Museum of Australia in December 2015, members of the Cobourg communities in West Arnhem contributed to a display of artefacts from the British Museum's collection held in London. Guided by communities, the Canberra exhibition ensured Indigenous voices provided rich testimony about the manufacture of artefacts, technology and the fundamental connection of people to place. The exhibition also revealed the history and questionable acquisition of sensitive material objects by various agents (including the Royal Navy) acting on behalf of the British Museum.

The NLC continues to work with governments to build relationships with national and international museums and institutions to have people brought home and to raise a greater appreciation and ownership of history.

LAND CLAIMS

In addition to providing a pathway for the grant of secure estates or interests in Aboriginal land, a central purpose of the *Aboriginal Land rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA) is to provide for the granting of land in the NT for the benefit of Traditional Owners.

The Act provides that Aboriginal people may make a claim to unalienated Crown land outside of gazetted town areas, and land in which all estates and interests are owned by, or on behalf of Aboriginal people, such as Aboriginal-owned pastoral leases. One of the NLC's key functions is to assist Aboriginal people who have a traditional claim to an area of land to pursue a claim.

"Both the Kenbi and Yarralin lands and waters have been handed back to Traditional Owners in the past year."

The ALRA established the office of the Aboriginal Land Commissioner whose functions include consideration of claims to land by Aboriginal groups. Research and logistics for land claims are the primary responsibility of the Legal, Anthropology and Regional Development branches.

Against this background, many land claims have been successfully settled by the NLC. Only a small number remain, mostly to smaller areas which include the beds and banks of rivers. With respect to the latter, over this reporting period, several long standing claims have moved closer to finalisation and a number have been settled.

Research into the Fitzmaurice River beds and banks is complete, with a draft report submitted and awaiting resolution by Traditional Owners of a few questions. Additionally, the Legune/ Victoria River beds and banks claim has been submitted and is awaiting a response from the NT Government.

Both the Kenbi and Yarralin lands and waters have been handed back to Traditional Owners in the past reporting year. Kenbi was a particularly complex claim and resulted in a protracted and sometimes acrimonious struggle. The successful settlement was testament to the tenacity of Traditional Owners

and the dedication of NLC staff.

Finalising the Kenbi settlement required a comprehensive site survey in cooperation with the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority to finalise a fishing and recreational access map of the coastline and a number of significant sites.

In summary, the Anthropology branch has embarked on a project to prioritise unresolved ALRA claims and bring them to conclusion. These include Upper Daly beds and banks and others where extensive research has already been completed.



IN THE FRONT ROW AT KENBI HAND-BACK CEREMONY, 21 JUNE 2016: FROM LEFT, TRADITIONAL OWNER RAYLENE SINGH, PRIME MINISTER THE HON MALCOLM TURNBULL MP, TRADITIONAL OWNER JASON SINGH, FORMER ABORIGINAL LAND COMMISSIONER PETER GRAY AND NLC CHAIRMAN SAMUEL BUSH-BLANASI



YARRALIN

14 JUNE 2016





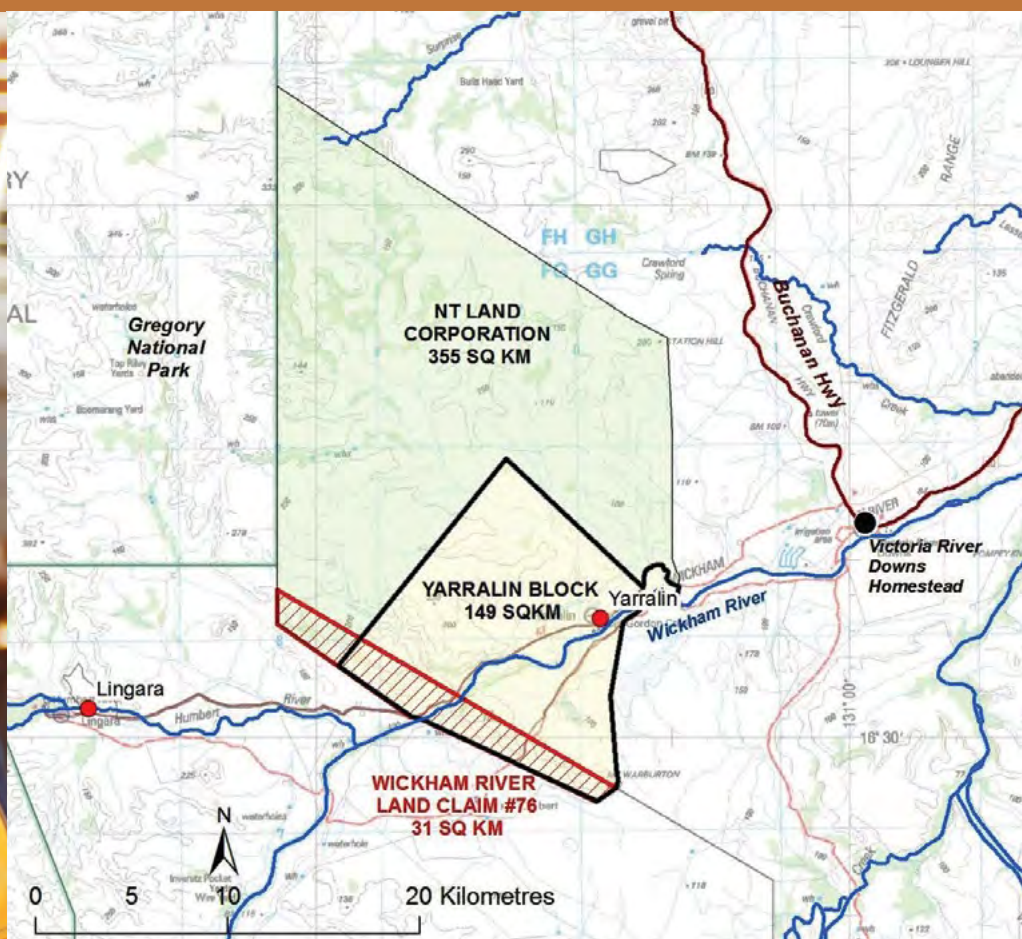
YARRALIN



Hundreds of residents from the Victoria River district crowded into the small community of Yarralin on 14 June 2016 for a ceremony to mark the presentation of title deeds to more than 50,000 hectares of land – more than 40 years after the Traditional Owners lodged a claim to the land under the then nascent Northern Territory Aboriginal land rights legislation proposed by the Labor government of Gough Whitlam.

The Commonwealth Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, handed over the title deeds on behalf of the Commonwealth, and thanked the Traditional Owners for their perseverance and patience in fighting for the land claim.

After the handover of title deeds on 14 June 2016, Aboriginal people own more than 50,000 hectares of land at Yarralin, and to the north, under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.



It comprises two blocks:

- *The original Yarralin block (14,950 hectares) to which the Ngarinman Yarralin Community Incorporated gained title in the mid-1980s. The body went broke in the mid-1990s, and the title to the land at Yarralin rested after then with the NT Commissioner for Consumer Affairs.*
- *A block (35,500 hectares) immediately to the north of the Yarralin block, which was previously owned by the NT Land Corporation and was therefore not able to be claimed under the ALRA. During settlement of the Wickham River land claim, the NT Government decided in 2009 to hand over the block as Aboriginal land.*

The land handed back totals 50,310 hectares - 140 hectares less than the combined land area of the two blocks, because land for public roads has been excised.



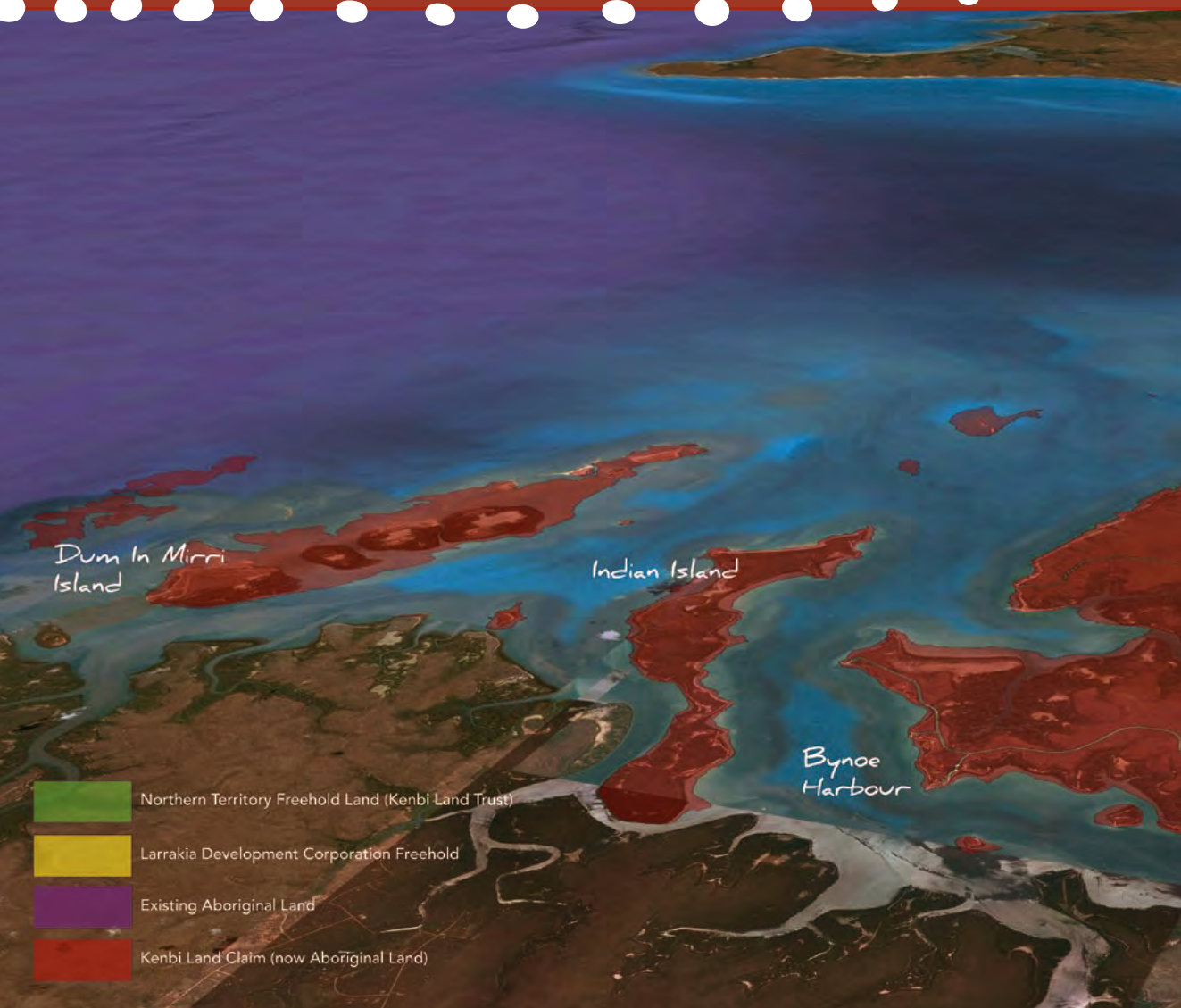
KENBI

21 JUNE 2016





KENBI



Around 1000 people gathered on 21 June 2016 on the foreshore at Mandorah, a ferry ride across the harbour from Darwin, to witness the handover of title deeds to the Kenbi land claim – more than 37 years after the Northern Land Council lodged the claim with the then interim Aboriginal Land Commissioner.

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, handed over the deeds, packaged in paperbark harvested on Cox Peninsula the day before from what is now Aboriginal land.



THE THEN ABORIGINAL LAND COMMISSIONER, JUSTICE PETER GRAY, RECOMMENDED IN 2000 THAT THE RIGHTS OF TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL OWNERS TO MOST OF THE LAND AT COX PENINSULA BE RECOGNISED.

IN THE YEARS AFTER THEN, THE NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL NEGOTIATED WITH THE NORTHERN TERRITORY AND COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENTS TO REACH A SETTLEMENT WHICH OPENED UP ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES WHILE PRESERVING CULTURAL TIES TO THE LAND. THE NLC ALSO UNDERTOOK EXTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND THE AFFECTED LARRAKIA FAMILY GROUPS AND THE BELYUEN COMMUNITY.

THE OUTCOME IS THAT 52,000 HECTARES (COLOURED BROWN ON THE MAP ABOVE) ARE NOW ABORIGINAL LAND UNDER THE ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT 1976; 13,000 HECTARES (COLOURED GREEN) WILL BE NT FREEHOLD, OF WHICH 20% (COLOURED LIGHT GREEN) WILL BE GRANTED TO THE LARRAKIA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

Organising the ceremony was a huge logistics job for NLC staff. Ferries and buses were chartered to transport invitees to Mandorah. A bough shelter was built to display a series of illustrated panels which traced the long history of the land claim.

Before he handed over the title deeds to the Kenbi land claim, the Prime Minister said the occasion was "a celebration and a commemoration - a day to celebrate what has been achieved but also to remember what has been lost".



TRADITIONAL OWNER TOBIAS NGAMKE EXPLAINS TERMS OF THE MOYLE INTERTITLE ACCESS AGREEMENT, WITH NLC STAFF

SEA COUNTRY

The NLC has been working for many years with Traditional Owners to improve their rights to control access and use of resources on sea country.

In 2008 the High Court found (*Gumana vs The Northern Territory*) that the *Fisheries (Northern Territory) Act 1988* did not apply within the boundaries of Aboriginal land granted under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA), including the tidal waters over their land from the high water to low water mark (the intertidal zone). Anyone entering tidal waters and rivers for any purpose without permission from the relevant land trust would be in breach of the ALRA (s70), whether or not they hold a licence to fish.

The “Blue Mud Bay decision” affected 84% of the Northern Territory’s coastline, a culturally, environmentally and economically rich landscape.

The decision has implications for fishers and other users who access the

area for recreational or commercial purposes. Some had built livelihoods understanding they had access to the intertidal area. To deal with this issue, the Northern Territory Government has been pursuing permit-free access arrangements to tidal waters.

To date, an interim fishing access arrangement has been in place for stakeholders, through the NT Government, to negotiate with Traditional Owners for longer term access arrangements to provide security for both industry and Traditional Owners.

The interim arrangement was granted in 2007 under a s19 ALRA agreement, which gives a licence to all fishers to take fish from Aboriginal tidal waters. A permit was also issued under s5 of the ALRA and gives a right of entry to Aboriginal tidal waters. The interim arrangement has been extended 11 times since 2007 and the current extension will expire on 31 December 2016.

The interim licence and permit applies to all intertidal waters over Aboriginal Land except where Traditional Owners have rejected the NT Government's offer for settlement. So far, only two areas, both within the Darwin/Daly/Wagait region, have rejected offers, requiring licence and permit through application to the Northern Land Council. One area is the Upper Finniss River, relevant to the Delissaville Wagait Larrakia Aboriginal Land Trust; the second is from Cape Scott to Dooley Point, relevant to the Daly River Port Keats Aboriginal Land Trust.

Five areas have settled 20-year agreements with the NT Government to provide access to recreational and commercial operators in tidal waters over Aboriginal land without applying for a permit (<http://www.fishing.nt.gov.au/agreements.html>). Those areas are:

1. Malak Malak ALT for Daly River area: 1 July 2012 to 2032.
2. Narwimbi, Wurrulbi & Wurrulbi No.2 ALTs for the Yanyuwa area (Sir Edward Pellew Islands Group and lower McArthur River) area: 1 July 2012–2032.
3. Daly River Port Keats ALT for Anson Bay area from the mouth of the Daly River to Cape Scott: 1 January 2013–2033.
4. Arnhem Land ALT for Nhulunbuy area: 1 January 2014–2034.
5. Daly River Port Keats ALT for the Thamurrurr Area (Hyland Bay and Moyle River): 1 July 2014–2034.

The Arnhem Land ALT for the Iwaidja Armurduk area (Mini Mini and Murgnella Rivers south of Coburg Peninsula) settled a three year agreement in July 2013, which expired on 30 June 2016. Traditional Owners have given in-principle agreement to the NT Government for access until 1 July 2017. The NLC is working with the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries to finalise terms under the new agreement. The key activities and outputs delivered this year to support Aboriginal sea country rights and interests include:

SUBMISSIONS

- Northern Territory Biosecurity Strategy 2015-2025, 16th September 2015.
- Australian Government Productivity Commission on Inquiry into the Regulation of Australian Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture, 15 April 2016.

ADVISORY

- Mud Crab Fishery Management Advisory Committee to the Minister; meetings 9 November 2015.
- Barramundi Fishery Management Advisory Committee to the Minister; meeting 18 November 2015.
- Offshore Snapper Fishery Advisory Committee to the Minister; meeting 10th November 2015.

RESEARCH

- Daly River Bank Erosion Study, commenced 1 April 2015.
- Business opportunities and impediments for Aboriginal community development in supportive fishing industries for the Roper River to Robinson River area in the Northern Territory: proposal accepted for funding by Fisheries Research and Development Corporation June 2016 (yet to commence).

FORUMS

- Third National Indigenous Fisheries Research, Development and Extension Forum, Fisheries Research Development Corporation, 8-9 March 2016.
- National Native Title Conference paper – *What lies beyond the high tide mark?*, 2 June 2016.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

- Daly River Bank Erosion Study Steering Committee: inaugural meeting 2 September 2015; 2nd meeting 25 May 2016.
- Wurrahiliba Management Committee: inaugural meeting 18-19 August 2015.
- NLC Sea Country Working Group: inaugural meeting 1-2 October 2015.
- Iwaidja Armurduk Management Committee: inaugural meeting 13-14th October 2015.

CONSULTATIONS

- Nhulunbuy Intertidal Agreement, 11 August 2015.
- Iwaidja Armurduk Intertidal Agreement, 13-14 October 2015; 21 April 2016; 22-23 June 2016.
- Anson Bay Intertidal Agreement, 5-6 April 2016.
- Thamarrurr Intertidal Agreement, 28 June 2016.

Over the next year the NLC will continue to assert Aboriginal rights and interest in all its interactions with governments, industries and other interest groups seeking access to Aboriginal lands and waters and use of resources with a key focus on intertidal rights and issues.

ANTHROPOLOGY REGIONAL PROFILES

FIGURE 12: DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINAL LIVING AREAS ACROSS NLC ANTHROPOLOGY REGIONS

REGION	MAJOR	MINOR	TOWN CAMP	FAMILY OUTSTATION	TOTAL
Borroloola Barkly	2	3	6	68	79
Central Arnhem	2	3		50	55
Darwin Daly	8	2	7	47	64
East Arnhem 1	5	2		43	50
East Arnhem 2	2	6		39	47
East Daly Waters	1	1		1	3
Kakadu			1	20	21
Katherine	3	2	2	10	17
VRD	2	5	2	15	24
West Arnhem	4	1		47	52
West Daly Waters		1	1	6	8
TOTAL	29	26	19	346	420

FIGURE 13: ABORIGINAL-OWNED LAND AND NATIVE TITLE INTERESTS

REGION	ARLA LAND TRUST (ALT)	NATIVE TITLE INTERESTS (NT)	OTHER
Borroloola Barkly	18%	76%	6%
Central Arnhem	100%		0%
Darwin Daly	47%	24%	29%
East Arnhem 1	100%		0%
East Arnhem 2	100%		0%
East Daly Waters	26%	73%	1%
Kakadu	29%	18%	53%
VRD	27%	67%	6%
West Arnhem	100%	0%	0%
West Daly Waters	14%	76%	10%

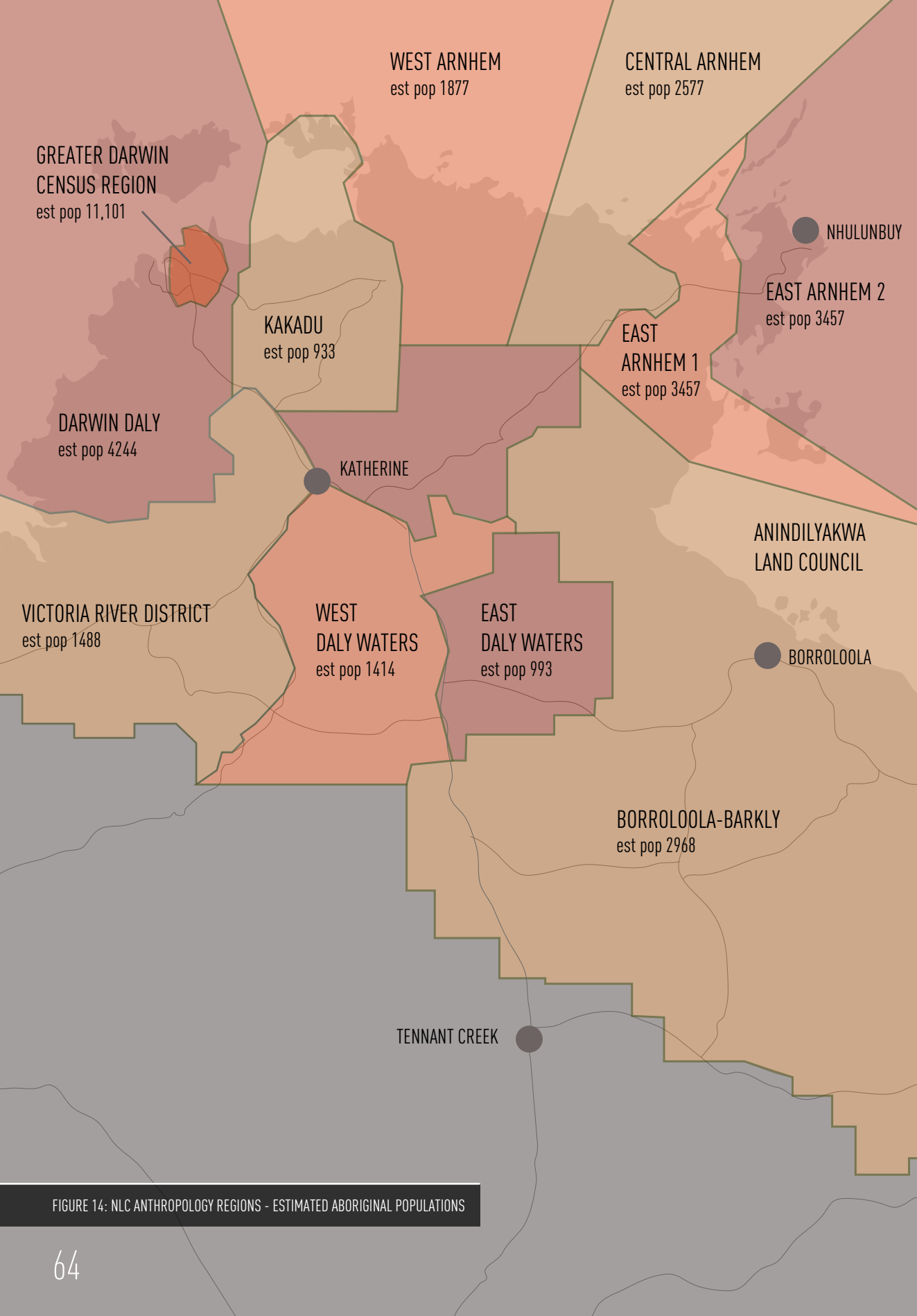


FIGURE 14: NLC ANTHROPOLOGY REGIONS - ESTIMATED ABORIGINAL POPULATIONS



KENBI DANCERS AT THE OPENING IN DARWIN OF THE 2016 NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE CONFERENCE, CO-HOSTED BY THE NLC AND THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

DARWIN/DALY/WAGAIT/WADEYE REGION

The land tenure of this anthropology region includes these Land Trusts:

- Daly River Port Keats
- Malak Malak
- Upper Daly
- Wagiman No.1 & No.2
- Finniss River
- Delissaville, Wagait Larrakia
- Gurundju Aboriginal

Pastoral and native title land interests make up approximately 40 percent of the region, with a wide range of activities undertaken: crocodile egg collection on several Land Trusts; a number of native title and agreement meetings ongoing; a number of environmental rehabilitation programs in train; and ongoing Blue Mud Bay negotiations.

In addition, an increasing range of mineral extraction, mustering and other agreements are either settled or in process.

NGUKURR & BORROLOOLA BARKLY REGION

The Borroloola Barkly region contains regional offices at Ngukurr, Borroloola and Tennant Creek. It takes in the eastern and southern extents of the NLC region, from the Barkly Tableland in the south to the southern reaches of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust in the north.

The 2015/16 financial year saw a continuation of oil and gas exploration in the Beetaloo Basin area.

The energy infrastructure company Jemena was awarded a contract by the NT Government in late 2015 to build a pipeline for the export of gas to eastern states. Consultations and surveys with Traditional Owners and site custodians have ensured that sacred sites and areas of cultural significance are avoided by the proposed work programs. The consultations are being undertaken with the Central Land Council because the proposed route of the pipeline passes through the jurisdictions of both land councils.

In response to concerns about hydraulic fracturing, the NLC has convened meetings with Traditional Owners potentially affected by oil and gas exploration, to hear their concerns and ensure they are fully informed about benefits and risks.

Traditional Owners have supported the incorporation of the SE Arnhem Land Indigenous Protected Area into the Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (ALFA) project. This will see carbon credits being produced from seasonal burning regimes by Yugul Mangi and Nuumbulwar Rangers.

Most land use agreements in the region are in and around Ngukurr. Also, there is growing interest by pastoralists in Aboriginal land around the Carpentaria Highway, and Traditional Owners are keen to join grazing licence agreements.

Traditional Owners and the NT Government have made an agreement

to allow construction of new bridges over the Roper and Wilton rivers, and another stage of the upgrade of the Roper Highway through the Mangarrayi Aboriginal Land Trust. Consultations also continue about gravel pits on Numbulwar Road and Wollogorang Road.

WEST ARNHEM LAND REGION

The West Arnhem Land anthropology region covers the western part of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust, extending from the border of the Kakadu National Park in the west to east of the Liverpool and Mann Rivers, including the islands of Croker and South and North Goulburn. Major communities include Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Minjilang and Warruwi. There are many family outstations across the region, most of them located along rivers or parts of the coast.



COBOURG LAND CLAIM MEETING. FRONT ROW: RONNIE WARALUDJ, NLC CHAIRMAN SAMUEL BUSH BLANASI AND MATTHEW NGARLBIN; STANDING: RONALD LAMI LAMI, SOLOMON COOPER AND NLC LAWYER JASMIN ONUS

CENTRAL ARNHEM LAND REGION ANTHROPOLOGY

The Central Arnhem Land anthropology region falls across the NLC's North East Arnhem Land and West Arnhem Land regions. The major communities are Milingimbi and Ramingining, with many outstations along the Blyth and Cadell Rivers and the Arafura Wetlands. The Katherine, East Arnhem and West Arnhem regional offices all provide support to the region.

The Central Arnhem Land anthropologist works closely with the Commercial Projects and Development Branch to undertake consultations with Traditional Owners about Section 19 Agreements. A large buffalo mustering proposal and several significant tourism agreements have been settled in the past year, including the establishment of the Outback Spirit camp at Murwangi.

The buffalo mustering agreement will provide income for Traditional Owners and help reduce the feral buffalo population in and around the Arafura Wetlands, where they cause significant damage. Reduced buffalo numbers have contributed in recent years to an increase in crocodile nesting grounds, and more income for Traditional Owners from crocodile egg collection.

NORTH EAST ARNHEM LAND REGION

The East Arnhem anthropology region includes most of the East Arnhem NLC region, and the northernmost parts of the Ngukurr NLC region. Traditional Owners for East Arnhem are Yolngu people, with Nunggubuyu clans in the southern parts. The region includes areas of cultural significance such as Blue Mud Bay, Gove Peninsula, the Mitchell Ranges and Elcho Island.

Oil and gas extraction through hydraulic fracturing continues to be a big issue in East Arnhem Land, and a large tenement covers much of the region. Consultations have highlighted a range of Traditional Owner opinions on 'fracking', and there's been intense discussion about the need to protect important water resources.

Compensation payments for leases in major communities arising from the Northern Territory Emergency Response (the "Intervention") have been ongoing and Traditional Owners are taking more time to consider options. An increasing number of lease agreements between Traditional Owners and proponents (government, shires and businesses) who wish to occupy lots in communities have been facilitated by the NLC. In some cases, Traditional Owners have had to decide between multiple proponents who want leases over the same lots.

KATHERINE REGION

The Katherine anthropology region covers the southwest portion of the Arnhem Aboriginal Land Trust, and also encompasses the whole of Beswick, Jawoyn, Manyallaluk and Mangarrayi Aboriginal Land Trusts. To the east, the region extends over pastoral leases, including Goondooloo, Moroak, Mountain Valley, Flying Fox and Mainorou. The region is bordered on the far west side by the Stuart Highway and Pine Creek; Katherine township straddles both the West Daly Waters and Katherine anthropology regions. Communities include Barunga, Manyallaluk, Beswick, Jilkminggan, Bulman and Weemol; a number of outstations are dotted throughout the region.

In recent years Traditional Owners have been concerned about increasing numbers of visitors to festivals and the resulting impact on the landscape. Over the 2015/16 reporting period, the NLC has undertaken an environmental assessment, with cultural input from Traditional Owners who have stressed the importance of their spiritual connection to the site and their use of the land to forage and fish.

Native title matters have also been important. In particular, the NLC will conduct research and consultation towards finalising a native title claim over the township of Katherine.

VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT REGION

ORD 3.

Consultations over this reporting period continued for the development of the Ord 3 irrigation scheme. At the close

of last year the NT Government had proposed to first develop a smaller area identified as Ord 3A, but changed course. In March 2016, the government now wants a private investor to develop the whole Ord 3 scheme. It proposed to negotiate with preferred proponents in June/July 2016 and to execute an agreement by the end of July.

SEA DRAGON

Consultations continue regarding the Sea Dragon prawn farm at Legune Station, proposed by Sea Farms Pty, Ltd. In December 2015, Traditional Owners visited the company's prawn farm at Cardwell. Site clearance work on Legune Station has commenced, under cover of a Memorandum of Understanding between the NLC and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) and a number of significant sites are being investigated and recorded in close cooperation with Traditional Owners. At a meeting in Wadeye, Traditional Owners asked Sea Farms to delay a request for a Non Pastoral Use Permit until clearance work is completed.

BEDS & BANKS

Extensive research into beds and banks claims for the Fitzmaurice and Legune/Victoria River is now complete. The Legune claim has now been submitted, and the Fitzmaurice claim has been drafted and is close to submission pending clarification from Traditional Owners of outstanding questions.

This year there have been five main pastoral lease consultations (Wubalawun, Amanbidji, Fitzroy, Myatt and Menggen) on Aboriginal Land Trusts.



TRADITIONAL OWNER MAURICE SIMON VISITS
SEA FARM'S PRAWN FARM AT CARDWELL



NLC ANTHROPOLOGIST JOHN LAURENCE DESCRIBES
THE SEA DRAGON PROJECT ON LEGUNE STATION

Wubalawun and Myatt are in the final stages of consultation and the NLC will help Traditional Owners to secure employment opportunities. Amanbidji (or Nagarungaru Aboriginal Land Trust) has entailed lengthy consultations over the past 18 months.

Further consultations for the Fitzroy pastoral lease are planned for the end of August 2016, and will include an assessment of environmental recommendations within the agreement.

Last year, meetings were held with Traditional Owners concerning the Jones Cattle company's compliance with the five-year-old Menggen pastoral lease agreement. In June 2016, the Traditional Owners decided that the company had not complied with the terms of agreement and must vacate the property. The company has since been served a notice to leave and is currently in the process of removing their cattle.

NATIONAL PARKS

Clean skin cattle in Judbarra/Gregory National Park have caused hazards to traffic on the Victoria Highway. Police have instructed Parks and Wildlife to deal with the situation and consultations have been held with Traditional Owners about mustering cattle from the whole park. Further meetings will need to be scheduled in the next year.

LAND HAND BACK

On 14 June 2016, Traditional Owners of Yarralin gained title to more than 50,000ha of land after waiting for more than 40 years. Many people who had worked at Yarralin attended the handback ceremony. In the next reporting year the NLC will begin consultations on leases within the township.



A PAINTING OF TIMBER CREEK BY ALAN GRIFFITHS THAT WAS INCLUDED IN EVIDENCE IN THE TIMBER CREEK NATIVE TITLE COMPENSATION CASE



MARY RIVER NATIONAL PARK BOARD MEMBERS

COMPENSATION CASES:

WALARI TREES

In 2012, sacred trees at the Bullita Campground were damaged during brush clearing works by a contractor to the Parks and Wildlife Commission. In November 2013, the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority conducted a successful prosecution in relation to the damage. The Anthropology Branch has been involved in facilitating communication and consultation with the custodians and traditional owners of this site, while the NLC continues to advocate for their interests in respect of site damage.

TIMBER CREEK

The Anthropology branch has played a significant role in facilitating native title holder participation in the proceedings in the Timber Creek Compensation Case (Griffiths v NTG & Ors (NTD 18 of 2011), including assisting their attendance at trial in Darwin in April.

KAKADU-COBOURG REGION

The Kakadu-Cobourg anthropology region is located between the Darwin hinterland and West Arnhem Land. The region includes a number of jointly managed National Parks, some on Aboriginal land, others under Native Title. They all attract large numbers of tourists.

The challenge is to balance the impact of visitors with the protection of natural and cultural heritage. The NLC supports Traditional Owners to achieve best

outcomes from joint management by conducting consultations and monitoring decisions so that Board members can confidently report on Traditional Owners' views.

MARY RIVER NATIONAL PARK BOARD

Consultations have been held for tourism ventures and the sustainable collection of wildlife (crocodile eggs, banteng and buffalo) which will provide employment opportunities and allow people to manage their own country.

This year, for the first time, a Traditional Owner of Garig Gunak Barlu National Park was granted an agreement to operate a hunting safari business, providing income and employment as well as managing an introduced species.

A number of fishing safari agreements - Jarbu Lodge on Croker Island and Darwin Barra Fishing Tours in the Mini Mini Creek area (including Endyalgout Island) - have expired and new agreements need to be negotiated.

Fishing and hunting safaris help in the monitoring of illegal access and activity.

Negotiations are continuing on the Blue Mud Bay agreement for coastal areas and the intertidal parts of creeks between the northern border of Kakadu and the southern border of Gurig.

With two land claims (Cobourg Land Claim no 6 and the Kakadu Repeat Land Claim) in the final stage of completion, work is continuing to manage disputes and implement effective decision making processes. It is anticipated the handback of lands in both parks will follow.

GIS SYSTEM SUPPORT

The NLC has a team that provides Geographic Information System (GIS) services, representing an intersection of hardware, software, data, procedures and people. The system stores, analyses and represents geographic information. GIS has a team of four staff, with occasional casual extras, four workstations, a server dedicated to web mapping applications and two large-format plotters for maps. The team source data from a range of other agencies and are also responsible for the maintenance of corporate mapping datasets, such as section 19 agreements, work program clearances in mining exploration areas, and native title projects.

THE YEAR IN A SNAPSHOT

The past financial year has been significantly busy. The job tally reached 970, a 38% increase on the five-year average tally of 698. The GIS team was able meet the mapping demand because it has developed clear and streamlined procedures. However, a significant portion of this year's database and software development program had to be put off because of the cartographic output. Peak months for the year were October 2015 and April 2016, because of following full Council meetings. Requests by branch were typically spread across the major operational units - Mining, Legal and Anthropology branches, and the section 19 team (commercial development).

FIGURE 15: INTERNAL REQUESTS FOR GIS SERVICES 2015/16

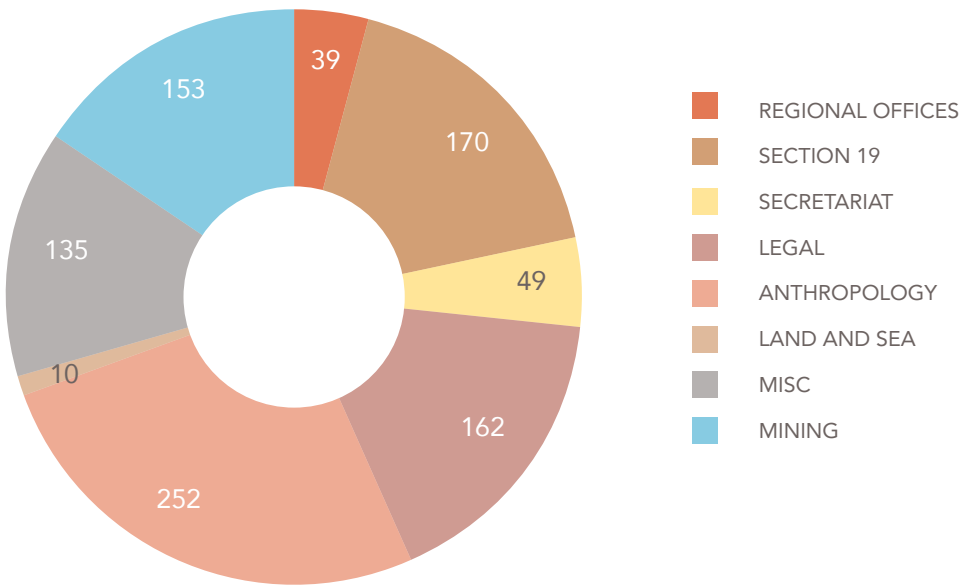


FIGURE 16: LONG TERM TRENDS ON DEMANDS FOR GIS SERVICES

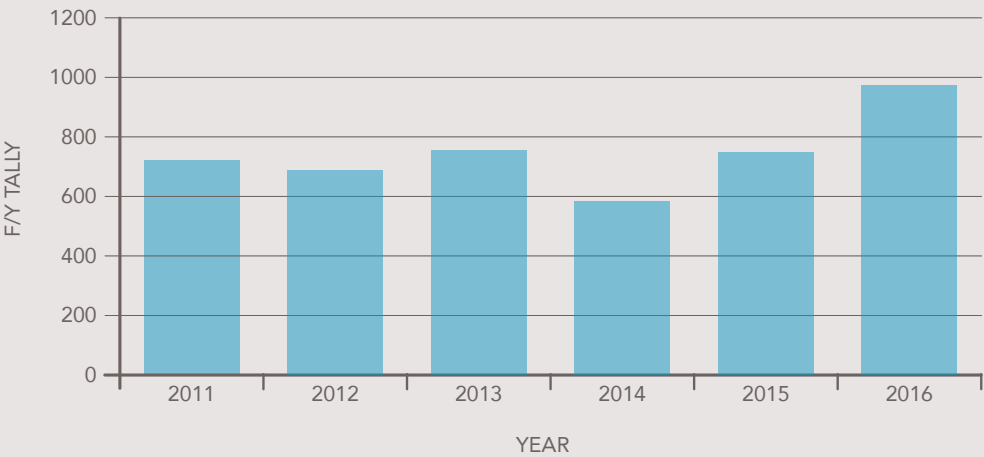
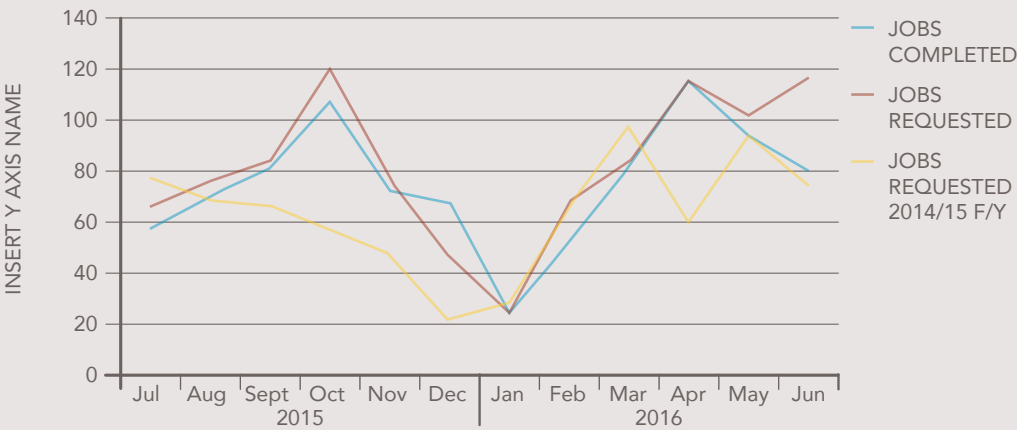


FIGURE 17: GIS JOBS





MILINGIMBI DANCERS AT THE 2016 NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE CONFERENCE IN DARWIN, CO-HOSTED BY NLC AND THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

LAND INTEREST REFERENCES (LIR)

OUTCOMES

A total of 407 requests were lodged, with 319 significant releases completed this financial year, being a substantial increase compared with the previous year.

Land Interest References (LIRs) are registered each year for those with an interest in using any Aboriginal land or waters. All requests are recorded and processed, and the table on page 73 (Figure 18) provides a breakdown of activities completed.

LIR DIGITISATION REPORT

Since 2006, the Anthropology branch has designed and implemented enterprise database management systems to support growing demand on research outputs. Central to this

has been the development solution that stores documents and maps electronically, with a full text index on the documents stored within.

Many documents are held as hard copies, thus an ongoing task over the past few years has been the scanning and optical character recognition (OCR) of hardcopy documents.

There are a total of 29,402 documents held in the LIR, of which 24,948 now exist in electronic format, with a total of 6711 documents digitised this past reporting year.

As well, 4613 new documents were submitted to the LIR, each requiring geographic and ethnographic indexing - a considerable administration burden.

FIGURE 19: LIR DIGITISATION PROGRESS REPORT

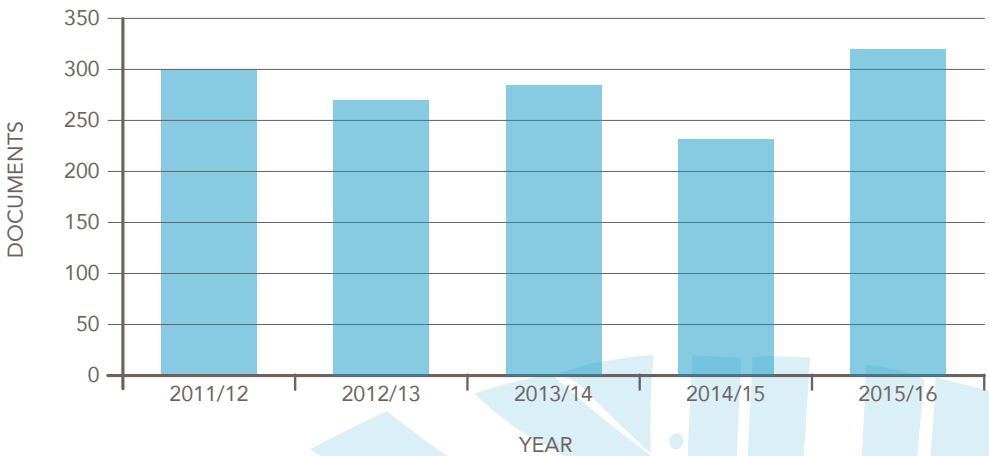
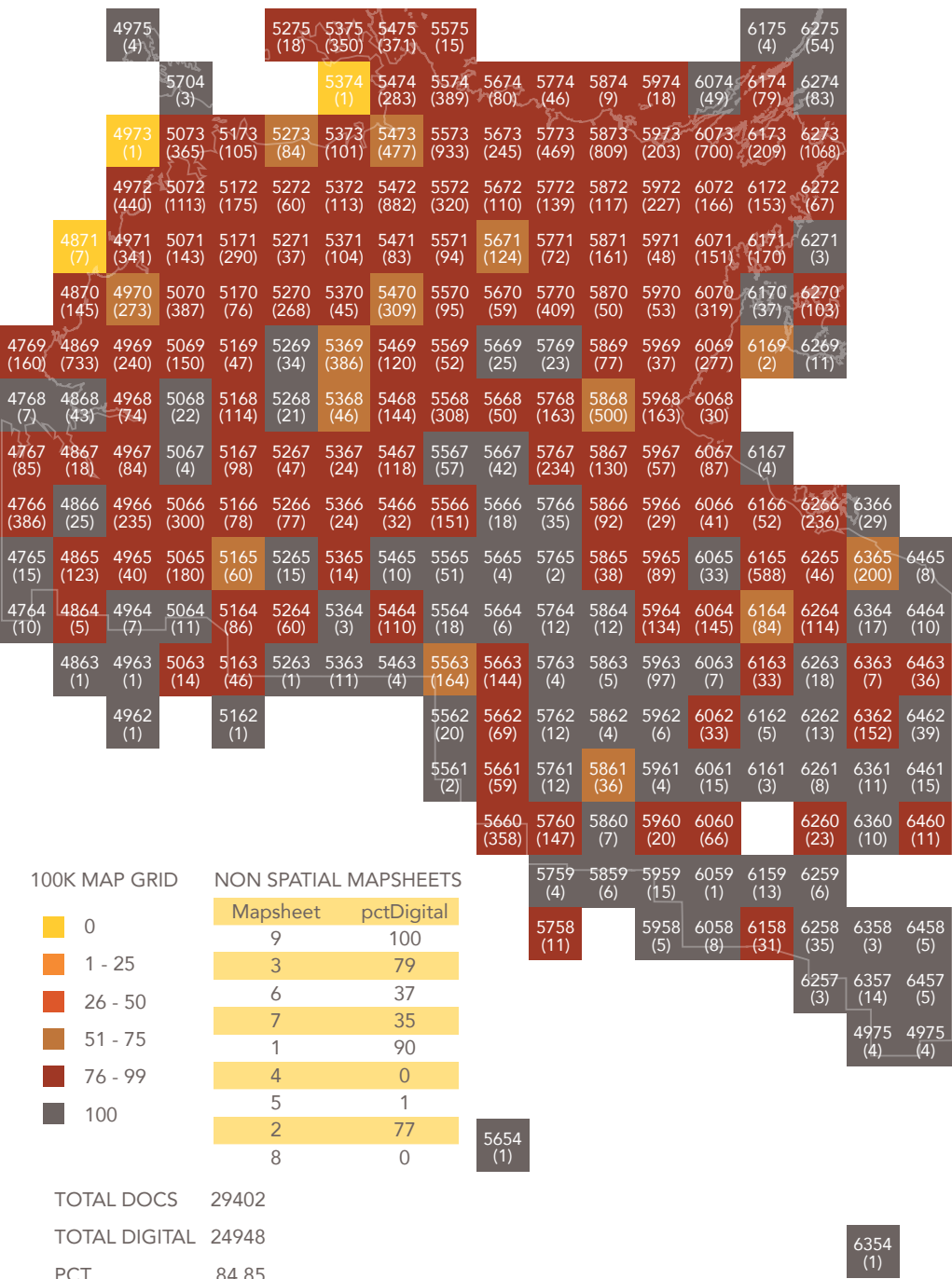


FIGURE 20: LIR DIGITISATION PROCESS





DANCERS CELEBRATE THE DETERMINATION OF NATIVE TITLE OVER A CLUSTER OF PASTORAL LEASES IN THE GULF COUNTRY, AFTER A SITTING OF THE FEDERAL COURT AT BORROLOOLA ON 26 NOVEMBER 2015.

NATIVE TITLE REPORT

A key NLC objective is to fulfil its responsibilities as a native title representative body under the Native Title Act 1993.

THE NATIVE TITLE ACT

In 1992, for the first time, the High Court of Australia recognised the common law native title land rights of Australia's Indigenous peoples (Mabo No 2). The *Native Title Act 1993* introduced a statutory scheme for the recognition of native title in areas where Aboriginal groups have been able to maintain a traditional connection to land and where the actions of governments have not otherwise extinguished their prior title. The Act provides for the recognition of pre-existing rights to land and waters, the making of future acts and the resolution of claims for compensation.

Native title, as recognised under the Native Title Act, differs from western forms of title in three significant ways:

1. It is premised on the group or communal ownership of land, rather than on individual property rights.
2. It recognises and registers rights and interests in relation to areas of land and waters that pre-date British sovereignty, rather than a formal grant of title by government.
3. It may coexist with forms of granted statutory title, such as pastoral leases, over the same tracts of land.

Native title thus exists in a complex legal, administrative and cultural environment of intersecting and sometimes conflicting interests. The NLC is committed to resolving native title claims through negotiation and mediation, rather than litigation, where possible. Since 2010, the NLC has been part of a Federal Court initiative aimed at settlement of native title determination applications over Northern Territory pastoral leases.



JUSTICE JOHN MANSFIELD WITH NATIVE TITLE HOLDERS, AFTER A SITTING OF THE FEDERAL COURT AT BORROLOOLA, NOVEMBER 2015

NATIVE TITLE: QUICK FACTS

- Native title is a set of rights and interests in relation to land or waters including exclusive possession in some cases.
- Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) are agreements between native title holders and others about the management and use of land and waters. They can be made before or after a determination that native title exists or where there is no native title application at all.
- The NLC is the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) for the Territory's northern region, covering approximately 570,000 square kilometres of land, including the Tiwi Islands and Groote Eylandt.
- As a Native Title Representative Body under the Native Title Act 1993, the NLC's key statutory functions are:
 - to facilitate and assist native title holders to make native title applications;
 - to respond to proposed future acts and negotiate ILUAs or other agreements according to the consultation and consent provisions under the Act; and
 - to assist to resolve disputes between constituents about native title applications, future acts, ILUAs or other native title matters.
- The NLC combines its native title functions with its other statutory functions to improve administrative efficiency and provide flexibility.
- The NLC's work with claimant groups to settle native title determination applications over the Territory's townships and pastoral leases is an intensive, accelerated process that has resulted in 49 successful consent determinations since 2010. This compares with eight successful determinations within the region between 1998 and 2009.

UPDATE ON CONTINUING CLAIMS WORK

The NLC has lodged claims over most of the available areas in the Northern Territory.

A significant part of the NLC's native title claims workload comes via the Federal Court ordered Pastoral Consent Determination Schedule which requires in excess of 125 pastoral lease areas be progressed to consent determination via a "short form" consent determination process as part of the Federal Court initiative to settle native title determination applications in the NLC region. The NLC region Federal Court ordered Pastoral Consent Determination Schedule is one of the country's largest and most ambitious Federal Court native title backlog projects.

In late 2009 the legal representatives of the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth, the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association and the NLC came together under the auspices of the Federal Court to explore options to resolve the native title status of pastoral leases in the NLC region. At that juncture each claim was taking upwards of five years to determine, meaning that it was likely some of the existing claims would outlive most living claimants, party representatives and court officers.

In 2010 the parties agreed to resolve all pastoral claims going forward on the basis of a short form approach to the provision of:

1. anthropological evidence in support of the native title claim group's connection to the relevant pastoral lease; and

2. evidence of the construction or establishment of public works and pastoral improvements on that lease.

In addition, it was agreed that a fresh native title claim is lodged over each individual pastoral lease and earlier claims lodged over the same lease are removed.

Pastoral leases are grouped into 13 clusters of claims according to general geographical groupings and staggered for progressive completion. The NLC implements an annual program of research and consultations with claimants across large and remote geographic areas. This work requires the preparation of connection and tenure materials by NLC staff and anthropological and legal consultants and a series of meetings with the claimant group.

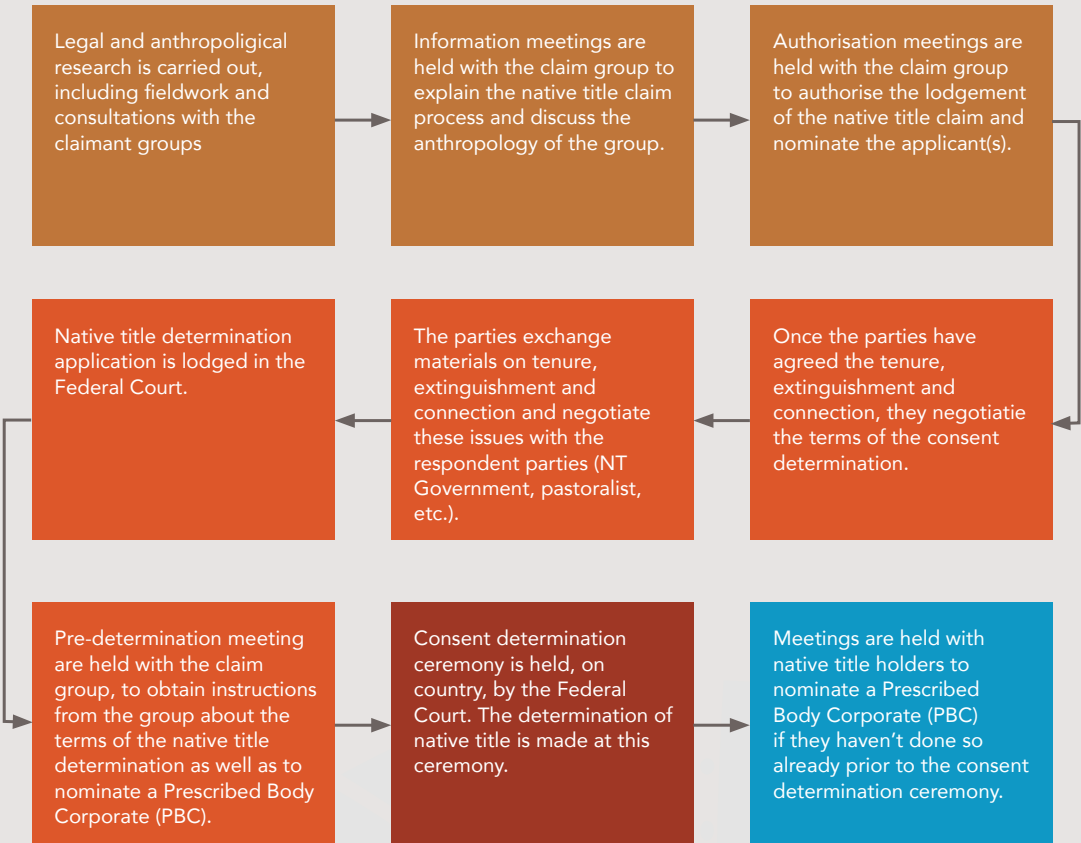
In November 2015 the NLC saw the successful consent determinations handed out over 13 Pastoral Leases in the NLC region: 11 in the Borroloola Barkly region in Groups 1 & 9 (Mallapunyah/Cresswell Matters – Kiana, McArthur River, Calvert Hills, Mallapunyah, Walhallow, Spring Creek, Pungalunga, Woologorang, Seven Emu, Greenbank and Manangoora Pastoral Leases) as well as two in the Katherine Region in Group 8 (Gilnockie and Banjo pastoral leases).

In the coming reporting period, the NLC intends to continue progressing pastoral claims in accordance with the Federal Court ordered Pastoral Consent Determination Schedule. In the 2015/16 reporting period the NLC anthropology and legal branches, along with the Federal Court, have prioritised a number of native title projects. These are the

FIGURE 21: NATIVE TITLE CLAIM STATISTICS

Active Claimant Applications	As at 1 July 2015	174
	As at 30 June 2016	88
New Claimant Applications	Filed 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016	2
New Compensation Applications	Filed 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2015	-
Non-Claimant Applications	Filed 1 July 2015– 30 June 2016	-
Determinations of Native Title	1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016	72

FIGURE 22: PASTORAL CONSENT DETERMINATION PROCESS



Katherine Township claim, the Larrimah Township claim and the remaining Group 6 pastoral lease claims (Banka Banka, Powell Creek and Helen Springs pastoral leases). Timelines have been, or will shortly be, provided to the Federal Court outlining the timeline for progression of those five claims throughout 2016/17.

Research and fieldwork will also continue for 12 proposed native title claims over pastoral leases in Group 2 (Mittiebah, Mount Drummond, Alexandria, Dalmore Downs, West Ranken, East Ranken, Adder, Rocklands, Soudan, Avon Downs, Burramurra and Austral Downs pastoral leases). Information and authorisation meetings are also intended to be held in respect of each of those 12 claims in the 2016/17 financial year. Further, continued research and Traditional Owner consultations will occur for the remaining leases in Groups 1 & 9 (Benmarra, Cresswell Downs, Nathan River, Lorella, Hodgson River and Nutwood Downs). It is envisaged that those claims will proceed to consent determination in the 2016/17 or 2017/18 years.

While the Federal Court ordered Pastoral Consent Determination Schedule has resulted in a significant acceleration of the rate at which claims are resolved, this work continues to require the NLC to commit significant resources to progress these claims, the short form work process being no less complex than longer-term claims work and far more intensive.

The NLC acknowledges the strength, support and patience of Traditional Owners as we work with the Northern Territory, pastoralists and other parties to settle native title across the NLC region.

TOWNSHIP CONSENT DETERMINATIONS

The NLC also undertakes intensive work on township native title claims as part of the Federal Court initiative to settle native title determination applications in the NLC region via consent determination.

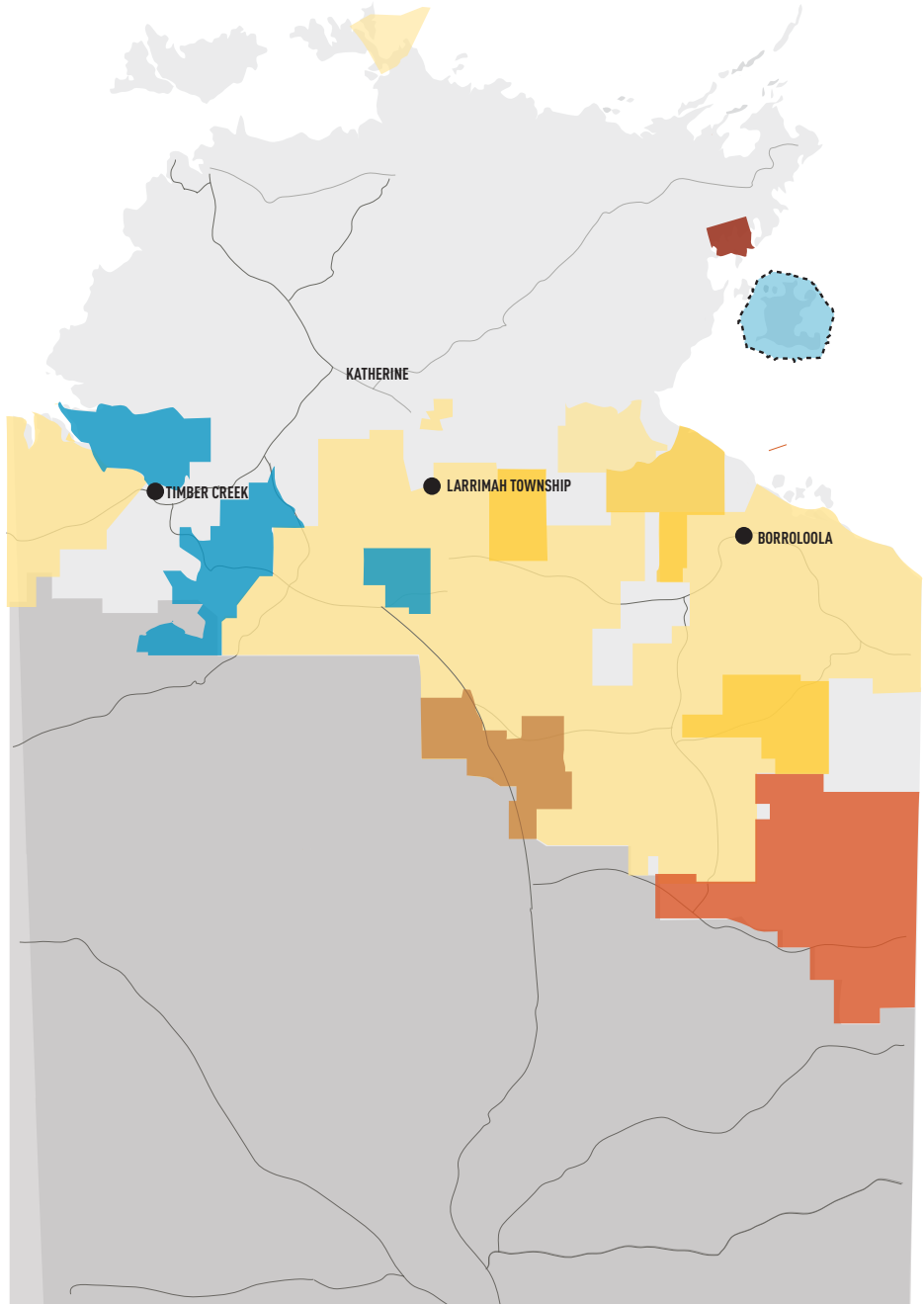
In the reporting period, the NLC continued meetings with claimants and conducted anthropological research for the Katherine Township Native Title Claim and for the Borroloola Township Native Title Claim. Anthropological materials for the Borroloola Township Native Title Claim were finalised and largely accepted by the parties in the previous reporting period. On 30 June 2016 Justice Mansfield handed down a decision in the Borroloola township native title claim, recognising that native title existed in the Town of Borroloola including exclusive native title rights existing in a number of lots within the Township itself, and acknowledging that the Rhumburriya people of Borroloola also possessed a right to take and use resources for any purpose including commercial purposes—colloquially described as the “right to trade”. This is a significant legal outcome for the native title holders and is the first time a native title right to take and use resources for any purpose including commercial purposes has been found to exist in the Northern Territory.

There was a ceremonial sitting of the Federal Court in Borroloola on 11 August 2016 where the determination of native title over the Town of Borroloola was handed down.

Priority is now to be given to progressing native title claims over the towns of Katherine, Larrimah, Adelaide River and Pine Creek.

- TOWN NTC AREA
- GROUP 2: ADDER, ALEXANDRIA, AUSTRAL DOWNS, AVON DOWNS, BURRUMURRA
- GROUP 10: BRADSHAW, BUCHANAN DOWNS, DELAMERE, HIDDEN VALLEY
- GROUP 9: HODGSON RIVER, NUTWOOD DOWNS, LORELLA, BENMARRA, CRESWELL DOWNS
- GROUP 6: BANKA BANKA, HELEN SPRINGS, POWELL CREEK
- GROOTE EYLANDT NTC
- DETERMINED CLAIMS AWAITING NOMINATION OF PBC
- COMPLETED CLAIMS

FIGURE 23: NATIVE TITLE WORK PROGRAM,
CALENDAR YEAR 2016



CONTINUING WORK ON TOWNSHIP CLAIMS

Anthropological research and legal work will continue on the Katherine Township claim and the Larrimah Township claim, with a finalised connection report expected by the end of August in respect of Larrimah.

Meetings will also be held in the next reporting period in respect of Adelaide River and Pine Creek to re-commence discussions with native title holders for the progression of these claims. Anthropological work is not expected to begin in the 2016 – 2017 financial period.

NATIVE TITLE CLAIMS LITIGATION

The NLC continues to work on native title determination applications subject to litigation.

BORROLOOLA TOWNSHIP

In January and February of 2016 the Federal Court heard evidence in Borroloola, Adelaide and Darwin in respect of the Borroloola Township claim. As noted above, judgement was handed down on 30 June 2016 recognising native title in the town of Borroloola.

NATIVE TITLE SEA CLAIMS

As the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) for Groote Eylandt and the surrounding seas, the NLC has been conducting further anthropological and legal work in consultation with the Anindilyakwa Land Council for the Groote Eylandt Native Title Sea Claim. In June of 2015 NLC Anthropology and Legal met with the Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC) to discuss the progression of the claim

and Traditional Owner expectations and considerations of the Native Title Process on Groote Eylandt. The meeting was also a good opportunity for the NLC and the ALC to discuss working together and to begin planning further work for the next reporting period.

A request for a sea claim in waters off Maningrida is also under active consideration. The NLC has already successfully litigated two native title sea claims being the Croker Island (Yarmirr) and Blue Mud Bay No. 2 determinations.

NOMINATION OF A PRESCRIBED BODY CORPORATE

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

The NLC has developed a corporation called the Top End Default PBC which can be used by native title holders as a PBC where there has been a determination of native title. The members of the Top End Default PBC are the members from time to time of the NLC Executive Council. If native title holders choose, the Top End Default PBC will perform the PBC role – which is primarily executing agreements on the instructions and directions of native title holders.



NATIVE TITLE HOLDER AND NLC MEMBER KEITH RORY WITH JUSTICE JOHN MANSFIELD, AFTER A SITTING OF THE FEDERAL COURT AT BORROLOOLA, NOVEMBER 2015

The Top End Default PBC is merely an option for native title holders who have had their native title determined. There is no obligation on native title holders to “opt in” to the Top End Default PBC. Furthermore, if nominating the Top End Default PBC to manage its native title rights and interest, the native title group can later decide to “opt out” and develop its own PBC when ready to do so.

The rationale behind the creation of the Top End Default PBC was to assist those native title groups located in remote areas where there might be little or no substantial development agreements which could have provided capacity – financial and otherwise – to handle the administrative requirements of running a corporation. The NLC’s experience is that a PBC can rapidly lapse into non-compliance with reporting requirements under the Corporation (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (CATSI Act) (Cth). Aboriginal associations or corporations whose only role is to hold title in remote regions and which do not generate income or employ staff understandably have

difficulty in maintaining documentation (including as to membership and office bearers) and complying with annual reporting requirements. In turn, non-compliance results in prosecution and deregistration of the corporation. It is in recognition of these difficulties that the NLC created the Top End Default PBC as an available interim measure.

UPDATE ON CONTINUING PBC NOMINATION WORK

In this reporting period, the NLC put considerable time and resources into consulting widely with native title holders on nominating a PBC to hold their native title rights and interests. A total of 33 native title groups were consulted. The respective native title holders, in relation to each of the matters below, pursuant to s 57(2)(a)(i) of the Native Title Act, decided to nominate the Top End Default PBC as the PBC for their native title determinations.

There now remains only one determined claim in the NLC region without a nominated PBC.

CARING FOR COUNTRY BRANCH OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The land and sea country that the NLC supports Traditional Owners to manage is some of the most intact and biologically diverse in Australia. It includes places like Kakadu, the Arafura Swamp and the soon to be declared South East Arnhem Land Indigenous Protected Area which are all globally significant in their own right. The NLC actively supports the work of Aboriginal people to maintain their cultural obligations to care for this land and sea country. Responsibility for much of this work rests with the Caring for Country Branch.

Across the NLC region the Branch provides environmental and support services to Traditional Owners who

actively manage 210,000 km² of land and 2,072 km² of water. The Caring for Country Branch helps Traditional Owners plan for the future health of their country and report on the effectiveness of their efforts. NLC-supported land management techniques combine the best of traditional knowledge and contemporary science to conserve culture and protect biodiversity. This creates a unique synthesis of management approaches, which are widely recognised as amongst the most effective and innovative available.

Through Ranger and Indigenous Protected Area Programs, National Parks joint management partnerships, land management based enterprise



MIMAL RANGERS UNDERTAKING EARLY DRY SEASON BURNING



MIMAL RANGER DUDLEY LAWRENCE



MALAK MALAK RANGERS PREPARING A FIRE PLAN AT THE REGIONAL WESTERN TOP END FIRE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

and research partnerships, the NLC Caring for Country team employs more than 130 Indigenous land managers. Supporting this effort is a small team of Darwin-based staff who provide IT, data management, reporting, training and youth and women's engagement functions.

This year the branch has supported 17 individual ranger groups, overseen the declaration of new Indigenous Protected Areas, promoted a focus on increasing the engagement of women and young people in the work we do and committed to streamlining and improving the support services we provide to people on the ground.

OUR APPROACH - WORKING TOGETHER

It is a key objective of the NLC to assist Traditional Owners to manage cultural, land, sea and natural resources in a sustainable manner. The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognise

that Indigenous people are intrinsically entwined with water and land. Our land and sea managers and others working in the Caring for Country Branch are guided by the values and aspirations of the custodians of Indigenous law and culture. These principles underpin the operations of the NLC Caring for Country Branch, which actively supports Traditional Owners to establish grass-roots land and sea management initiatives across the network of remote homelands, stations and community centers.

The Caring for Country Branch and the programs we help run respect cultural law and traditional knowledge, skills and practices, and encourage interaction with western science research, theory and practice in an effort to maintain biodiversity and the sustainable use of wildlife. Land and Sea managers also provide important environmental services for partner organisations. The NLC has widely developed relationships that enable Traditional Owners to engage in cost recovery contracts as a step towards improved wellbeing.

CASE STUDY

FEE FOR SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS – FISHERIES CONTRACTS



GUMURR MARTHAKAL RANGERS TAKE A BREAK DURING BIODIVERSITY SURVEYS

The Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (DPIF) continues to support the development of a number of NLC sea ranger groups to conduct patrols on sea country through financial support and the provision of training. The Garngi-Mardbalk ranger groups and the Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar groups receive financial grants in return for the provision of fisheries patrols and reports in their areas of operation. There are also a number of ranger groups that have developed strong working relationships with the DPIF staff and Water Police staff outside of the grant program and similarly this is leading to better compliance and enforcement outcomes on country. The relationship between the DPIF, Water Police and ranger groups has resulted in stronger working ties on country and has led to a number

of successful operations in apprehending parties in breach of the Fisheries Act and ALRA. The financial support has led to the selected NLC groups now being in a position where they all have suitable in-survey vessels to conduct patrols along with support to complete the necessary training to skipper the vessels. Further training in Cert II and II for Fisheries Compliance training has been conducted for a number of rangers in 2015-16 and this new role for qualified rangers will be developed in collaboration with the relevant government agencies. We look forward to continuing the development of these important agency collaborations and working relationships and hope to expand the number of sea ranger groups that are supported by DPIF under this grant scheme in the future.

ACHIEVEMENTS

RANGERS

The NLC currently supports 17 Indigenous ranger groups through funding from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) and the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC). Through the Working on Country program, the NLC was funded to support the direct employment of up to 63 FTE Indigenous rangers, four senior cultural advisers and an Indigenous Administration trainee.

While full time workers constitute the majority of our workforce, a significant number of additional Traditional Owners were engaged as casual staff to support the ranger groups during peak workloads or to provide cultural advice during 2015/16. Our network of casual rangers is an important part of fieldwork, especially contributing to peak dry season fire and weed management. For all participants, but young people and women in particular, casual work provides the opportunity to experience ranger work.

This year the Caring for Country Branch reintroduced a women and youth engagement coordinator. This is a direct response to ongoing requests from senior Traditional Owners for us to improve participation from these under-represented groups. It also provides the NLC and others with a pool of experienced land managers from which to draw fulltime workers.

Through the Real Jobs NT program, the ILC provided funding to support up to 12 FTE Indigenous rangers across three ranger groups, three coordinators and a program coordinator. Currently

we have three operational ranger groups supported under the ILC Real Jobs Program: Kenbi, Yantjarrwu and Timber Creek, each with four FTE ranger capacity. This program is structured with minimal operational funding and we are currently exploring a number of avenues for additional support for the ranger groups for both increasing number of ranger positions and additional operational funding.

“Through the Real Jobs NT program, the ILC provided funding to support up to 12 FTE Indigenous rangers across three ranger groups...”

At present the groups are involved in a vast array of land and sea management programs including fire management and early dry season burning, marine debris collections and coastal surveys, marine species surveys and fishery patrols, sacred site management and knowledge transfer through involvement with school groups. The groups are also actively involved in fee-for-service activities and cost recovery research programs with government agencies such as the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (DPIF), biosecurity surveillance with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) and large-scale land rehabilitation through the Department of Finance (i.e. the Cox Peninsula Remediation project). The finalisation of the Kenbi land claim after

37 years has been a hugely significant event for the Kenbi rangers, not just due to the hard work conducted in running the handback ceremony on Cox Peninsula with more than 1000 people attending and the national press gathered, but also due to the fact that two of four Traditional Owners in the Tommy Lyons group are employed as rangers in the Kenbi ranger group.

In combination, these programs protect and care for 104,300km² of land (i.e. more than five times the size of Kakadu National Park) and extensive areas of coastline on behalf of Traditional Owners, to the benefit of all Australians. These programs also provide well-developed career pathways and real jobs for in excess of 130 Indigenous Australians. This year we worked closely with Numbulwar and Mimal rangers to rebuild capability. We are proud to say that these groups, which experienced some operational issues in the past, are back operating more successfully than ever.

PARTNERSHIPS

The NLC has developed a suite of local, regional, Territory and national partnerships that support the development and delivery of the various ranger group activities. Key program partners, in addition to PM&C and the ILC, include the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources which provides fee-for-service agreements for biosecurity surveillance activities, the NT Government Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (which provides fee-for-service agreements for sea country patrols, fisheries compliance monitoring and

training with the assistance of the NT Water Police), and the Department of Land and Resource Management agencies. This includes the Weeds Management Branch which has provided technical advice regarding weed control and funding for aerial surveys of Weeds of National Significance (WONS), and research scientists who provided advice regarding threatened species management and biodiversity surveys.

“These programs protect and care for 104,300km² of land and extensive areas of coastline on behalf of Traditional Owners...”

We also facilitate partnerships with providers who are looking for opportunities for young people to try land management work as a possible career path. For this reason we have chosen in 2015/16 to trial partnerships with some CDP providers, with NLC ranger groups hosting participants in Ramingining and Timber Creek. Given that existing ranger programs are fully subscribed, we are also using partnerships with similar providers to facilitate women’s participation. While CDP and similar programs are not a replacement for real ranger jobs, they can provide a supplementary labour pool for ranger groups and allow participants to trial ranger work, build experience and fill ranger jobs when vacancies occur.

CASE STUDY

NUMBULWAR RANGERS



NUMBULWAR AND YUGUL MANGI RANGERS UNDERTAKING EARLY DRY SEASON BURNING ACROSS THE PROPOSED SOUTH EAST ARNHAM LAND IPA

The Numbulwar ranger group based in Arnhem Land was re-established in November 2015, having been forced into abeyance for the previous three years due to a lack of infrastructure funding to provide a ranger base and ranger coordinator accommodation. In November last year, the NLC managed to negotiate a ranger base and temporary accommodation with the Numbulwar Homelands Association and recruit a ranger coordinator on a short-term casual basis. A longer term S19 lease was approved in April 2016 and a full time ranger coordinator was appointed in June. The group has employed six full and part time positions and up to six casuals when the work requires, equally men and women.

They have been working independently and with the Yugul Mangi rangers, busy on a range of activities protecting cultural sites, managing weeds, doing dry season burning and a lot of training. A new vessel will be arriving in August to conduct regular fisheries compliance patrols.

Consultations for the South Eastern Arnhem Land IPA were completed in May and the application for the dedication of the IPA was submitted by the NLC to the Commonwealth Government in June. An IPA Advisory Committee comprised of Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Traditional Owners now oversees the IPA and both ranger groups.

Territory NRM (TNRM) continued to be an important program partner in 2015/16 through its development of the Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan in consultation with ranger groups and assistance with on ground projects. In 2015/16, the Wagiman Rangers received support for the development of strategic fire plans for the Wagiman Land Trust and aerial and on ground burning. This project was undertaken in partnership with the ILC Fish River Station managers and helped to protect key sites and mitigate against wildfire excursion from the Land Trust. The Arafura Ranger groups received support to control Olive hymenachne in the Arafura Swamp and training in pig trapping. TNRM also assists the Bulgul rangers with ongoing surveys and management of Mimosa and feral pigs as part of the Finniss/Reynolds catchment project through support from the Department of the Environment.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

The NLC has provided leadership and support in the area of fire management for remote communities. In partnership with other ranger groups, NAILSMA as a key partner, a number of NGOs and government agencies, the NLC is involved in the development and operation of carbon abatement work. Through the collective efforts of rangers and partner agencies and with the support of Northern Territory pastoralists, a significant reduction in wildfire activity has been achieved. Additionally, planned early burning regimes are creating optimal conditions for plant biodiversity, supporting a greater number of species and age classes within plant communities. Early

burning involves a growing number of community-led traditional burning patrols along ancient trails providing an opportunity for community members of all ages to spend valuable time on country with rangers and old people.

INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS

Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) are a globally recognised Indigenous developed way for people to meet their aspiration to care for country long term and participate in the National Reserve System. Through funding from the Department of the Environment administered by PM&C, the NLC assisted with the establishment of three Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs). This included the Ganalanga Mindibirrira IPA in the Waanyi Garawa Land Trust; and the proposed South-East Arnhem Land IPA (awaiting dedication). The Ganalanga Mindibirrira IPA and the Marthakal IPA in North East Arnhem Land (hosted by the Marthakal Homelands Aboriginal Corporation) were both declared in 2016. The IPA work requires extensive consultation and research work in collaboration with consultants, scientists, government agencies and NGOs. Tamarind Planning Consultants, the Australian National University Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), Bush Heritage Australia and the Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation have all been important partners of the NLC in the progression of these IPA consultation projects. Bush Heritage Australia is working with the NLC to partner in the development of a Healthy Country Plan for the Arafura Swamp.

CASE STUDY

GANALANGA MINDIBIRRINA IPA



The Ganalanga- Mindibirrina Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) was declared by the Waanyi and Garawa people over the entire Waanyi Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust, an area of some 11,000 square kilometres in the southern Gulf of the NT.

It is being managed in accordance with IUCN category VI (Managed Resource Protected Area) for the conservation of biodiversity and associated cultural resources, guided by the Ganalanga-Mindibirrina Plan of Management.

Len Cubby, senior traditional owner for Wallace Creek, told the story of their long fight for their land and struggle to get resources to look after their country and outstations. Jack Green and Eugene Escott also spoke about how the journey to establish the ranger group and the IPA has been a very long one, and how hard it was to get help to deal with all the late season wildfires that were damaging to country.

The first IPA meetings taking place back in 2005 at Siegel Creek. Since then, the

Traditional Owners and the Waanyi/ Garawa Rangers have worked tirelessly to record their vision for country and establish priorities and complete the Plan of Management for the IPA. A key part of their vision was the establishment of the Waanyi and Garawa Ranger group, which has been supported by the NLC since 2008 through funding from the Australian Government Working on Country program. The rangers will continue to work every day in accordance with the IPA Plan and under the guidance of Traditional Owners to help keep culture strong, protect important sites, record and pass on cultural knowledge, look after the special plants and animals, and control the threats that may damage them- like late-season fires and the introduction of weeds and feral animals.

The Ganalanga Mindibirrina IPA was officially recognised by the Australian Government on 29 September 2015, and now forms part of Australia's National Reserve System.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY—DATA
COLLECTION, MAPPING AND REPORTING

The Caring for Country branch provides ongoing ICT training and support to all 17 NLC Ranger groups in asset and equipment acquisition, coordination of routine repairs and maintenance, and providing required on site and remote support including:

- Documentation of ranger group ICT needs and budget preparation.
- Providing training in the use of ICT equipment, including GIS/Mapping Software and other data management tools (e.g. I Tracker, Google Earth, ...).

- Production of DVDs and other educational materials regarding ranger projects.
- Providing general day-day ICT support and troubleshooting.
- Assisting with the collection and management of data and preparation of reports.

The NLC receives funding through Working on Country (WoC) for a dedicated Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Officer position. The ICT Officer visits each of the 17 ranger groups once a year at least, and is in contact with the rangers on a daily basis to provide ongoing support.

FIGURE 24: DATA COLLECTION/GIS TRAINING CURRICULUM



2016 has seen the ongoing implementation of an IT Data Collection, Mapping and Reporting Curriculum Program. This has been put in place to guide the Rangers with the use of required Software through the production of 25 video tutorials (e.g., for hand-held GPS use, Mapping Software).

The curriculum gives the rangers a better understanding of all processes involved in data collection and data management.

The IT Data Collection, Mapping and Reporting Curriculum gives the Rangers a pathway to learn the skills required to provide accurate and comprehensible reports to the Caring for Country Branch, to the Traditional Owners and to their community.

The deployment of the GPS Garmin Virb cameras has been well received by all groups (one camera delivered per group). This allows the rangers to easily capture Geotagged photos and videos facilitating the reporting of the activities undertaken by the rangers on the ground. Training and video tutorials have been provided. The Garmin Virb camera is another data collection device used alongside the Cyber Tracker units, handheld GPS units and standard cameras.

In collaboration with the NLC WHS Officer, an assessment of the emergency communication system was conducted; new satellite phones and personal location beacons were deployed in June.

The second part of 2016 will see the start of one innovative project using remote sensing technology to create Vegetation Mapping of selected areas within some

ranger groups working areas. This will be used for better detection and discrimination of invasive weeds.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

During 2015/16, \$257,730 was provided though the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) \$64.1 to assist with, and deliver training to the 17 ranger groups hosted by the NLC. Much training was related to Work Health and Safety, and included accredited training in areas such as First Aid, Quad Bikes, Chemicals, Chainsaws, and Coxswain. Non-accredited fire training, held in conjunction with Bushfires NT, was conducted at Jabiru in February for two groups - one for men and one for women. Participants were drawn from Numburindi, Yugul Mangi, Garngi and Mardbalk.

Senior Rangers, Ranger Coordinators, and Program Support Staff met for Ranger Workshops at Darwin and Katherine during March for the opportunity to discuss issues and share experiences. This workshop allowed for improved ranger group management and communication.

Eight rangers were involved in undertaking a Certificate III Ranger Compliance through a pilot training program. The program was delivered in three blocks held in Darwin and Batchelor by the Australian Maritime and Fisheries Academy. It is envisaged that through the proposed regulations due in January 2017, under the Northern Territory Fisheries Act (2016), rangers holding the Certificate III will be eligible to be considered as Fisheries Officers.

NATIONAL PARKS

The Northern Land Council has a statutory responsibility to protect and advocate for the interests of Traditional Owners of land and sea within its jurisdiction. This includes estates leased by the NT and Australian governments and included in the national reserve estate for conservation of natural and cultural values and tourism purposes. Approximately 44.6% of the NT's national parks and conservation reserves in the NLC region are Aboriginal owned and jointly managed. The NLC works closely with Traditional Owners and the NT Parks and Wildlife Commission and Parks Australia to support and deliver joint management outcomes.

Jointly managed parks are a major resource for the NT and Traditional Owners. Opportunities in joint management can be significant but require adequate resources. Traditional Owners continued to work to build relationships and partnerships with governments and community and industry.

The NLC is focused on assisting Traditional Owners to:

- Engage more effectively with Parks and Wildlife Commission NT and Parks Australia by providing third party technical advice and advocacy.
- Make informed decisions relating to natural and cultural resource use and management.
- Assess the social, cultural, environmental and economic implications of legislation and proposals affecting parks and reserves.

- Protect and enhance traditional law and cultural practices.
- Pursue employment and business development opportunities.
- Manage and resolve disputes.
- Carry out statutory requirements of ALRA and Native Title under joint management.

PARKS AND RESERVES: JOINT MANAGEMENT

KAKADU

Parks Australia completed the Management Futures Project, which aimed to review and improve management arrangements for the park to ensure better outcomes for Traditional Owners. The results of this review are now being implemented with the assistance of the NLC.

The NLC has now successfully negotiated to have funding reinstated for three years until 30 June 2019 for a dedicated joint management officer from Parks Australia. This position was filled within the first week of the funding agreement.

The NLC completed the election of the next Board of Management for the park, which will hold office for five years from December 2016. The NLC is also beginning to work with Traditional Owners and stakeholder groups to develop Indigenous carbon farming for the park. If successful, this will deliver significant economic and cultural opportunities to Traditional Owners.

JUDBARRA/GREGORY NATIONAL PARK

The Judbarra/Gregory National Park Joint Management Committee conducted their annual meeting at Timber Creek in March 2016. Although working in a limited financial environment the joint management partners have maintained positive relationships with Traditional Owners and stakeholders of the Park, working towards building capacity and opportunities for employment opportunities within the Park. Ongoing Flexible Employment Program and traineeships with Parks and Wildlife have provided employment opportunities for Traditional Owners in the 2015/16 financial year, which will continue in the 2016/17 financial year.

Several scientific permits had been issued in the 2015/16 financial year, although most of the work is to be undertaken early 2016/17. The NLC has ensured that Traditional Owner engagement is at the forefront of these expeditions.

Similarly, tourism opportunities within Judbarra/Gregory National Park remain promising for Traditional Owner engagement and employment.

Two Joint Management Committee members were funded by the NLC to attend the National Native Title Conference in June at the Darwin Waterfront, with member Lorraine Jones also a guest speaker at the conference. Opportunities to engage younger Traditional Owners and Joint Management Committee members provide for greater exposure and capacity building, leading to better outcomes for the management on Park and employability.

GIWINING / FLORA RIVER NATURE RESERVE

The Joint Management partners met in August 2015 and in April 2016. With the small amount of funding that the Park receives for employment and ongoing costs, the Park has been

YANTJARRWU RANGERS ON PATROL TO CLEAR GHOST NETS AND RUBBISH FROM THE COASTLINE BETWEEN CAPE SCOTT AND THE MOUTH OF THE LITTLE MOYLE RIVER - PART OF THEIR FEE-FOR-SERVICE WORK WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND WATER RESOURCES TO MAINTAIN BIOSECURITY



utilising opportunities to engage FEP and Wardaman Rangers to ensure works are completed. Unfortunately, due to flooding, the Park was not opened for the end of 2015/16 and the Joint Management partners agreed to keep the Park closed until after the next wet season. This should enable the Park to be open next year, with better facilities and safer areas for tourists.

The key objective for the Joint Management Officer is to maintain a close relationship with Joint Management Committee members, Traditional Owners and surrounding stakeholders to ensure opportunities for indigenous employment.

ADELAIDE RIVER CONSERVATION RESERVES

The Joint Management partners held their annual meeting in September 2015. Employment remains a focus for Traditional Owners, but there are limited opportunities for flexible employment.

Safety has been a concern for the Joint Management Committee with more hunters using the designated Hunting Reserves. The Joint Management Committee has been discussing ways to improve the situation and are now looking at re-instating existing levee banks from the rice growing days of the 1950s, to hold more surface water and re-establish magpie goose habitat, which should in turn provide more space for hunters and improving safety.

MARY RIVER NATIONAL PARK

Two Joint Management Committee meetings were held during this financial year with a number of business activities occurring within the Park.

In March, the Parks and Wildlife Indigenous Engagement Unit organised chainsaw training for some committee members and youth, with 12 people participating. The NLC provided logistical support and lunches for the training.



IRENE AND RHONDA HENRY, READY TO PROTECT THEIR SACRED SITES AFTER RECEIVING NT GOVERNMENT FLEXIBLE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FUNDING FOR WEED MANAGEMENT.



GARIG GUNAK BARLU NATIONAL PARK - ROBERT CUNNINGHAM AND SOLOMON COOPER PROUD OF THEIR KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL CLEAN BEACHES AWARD.

Two Traditional Owners, Darryl and Darryl Junior Tambling, attended the National Native Title Conference at Darwin in June, sponsored by the NLC Joint Management Unit.

The Flexible Employment Program this year supported the women working on country at the women's sacred site doing weed control. Funding limited participation, but it is hoped that this can be expanded or rotated in the future to include more family members.

After a successful apprenticeship several years ago, another apprenticeship was supported and recruited from the Traditional Owner group, Robert Goodman is now working and diligently studying his certificate in Conservation and Land Management.

GARIG GUNAK BARLU (COBOURG) NATIONAL PARK

In September 2015, Traditional Owners met at Knuckey Lagoon to consider the Cobourg Land Claim. They agreed on their terms, and work is underway to settle the claim.

Solomon Cooper, Chairman of the Cobourg Peninsula and Marine Park Board, is the first Traditional Owner to successfully secure a Hunting Safari Operational Agreement within the Park; more recently, another affiliated Indigenous operator, Dwayne Wauchope, also secured a Hunting and Fishing Operational Agreement.

Garig Gunak Barlu National Park won the Cultural Award for the Keep Australia Beautiful, Clean Beaches Awards in August last year. In June this year, Garig also won the Innovation Award in the Territory Ranger

Awards for its new planning tool, the Integrated Conservation Strategy.

TJUWALIYN (HOT SPRINGS) PARK

The new Joint Management Committee for the park met for the second time in April 2016 to consider the annual management plan. The committee hopes to complete a culturally branded infrastructure project with ABA funding sourced by the NLC by the end of 2016. This will be the beginning of developing improved tourism infrastructure in the park. Negotiations for a long-term lease agreement with the NT government continue.

LOOKING FORWARD

The NLC's new Strategic Plan identifies improved support for and growth of Caring for Country programs as a key issue. To achieve this, the Caring for Country Branch will, during the 2016/17 year, undertake a review of its structure and operation with the intent of better meeting the expectations of Traditional Owners in the region. This will include extensive consultation with our principal stakeholders and partners.

The NLC ranger program in its current iteration has been operating since 2007/08 and will soon be in its 10th year. Previously administered by the Australian Department of the Environment and now the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the program has been widely acknowledged and independently verified as an outstanding success. The NLC ranger program is funded under five agreements. These arrangements have allowed NLC and other ranger groups to plan for the long-term,

secure additional funding on the basis of long-term certainty and permitted participants to undertake long-term career development. The current round of ranger funding agreements terminates on 30 June 2018 and arrangements after this time are yet to be announced. The NLC will, continue to lobby to secure long-term funding arrangements, growth of the program, streamlining of reporting arrangements and improved consolidation of related programs.

SEA COUNTRY MANAGEMENT

A key focus of the NLC has been to assert Aboriginal rights and interests in the management of sea country relevant to access and use of its resources. A number of areas support this progress including the NLC Sea Country Working Group, the Wurrahiliba Management Committee, the Iwaidja Armurduk Management Committee and working with the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries to further the role of Land and Sea Rangers in providing services to sea country management in relation to fisheries and compliance.

SEA COUNTRY WORKING GROUP

The Sea Country Working Group (SCWG) was initiated at the 110th Full Council Meeting in June 2015. The purposes of the SCWG are to assess existing knowledge and learned experiences and identify gaps to deal with a range of sea country interests and issues. The aim is to implement a framework to support participation in the management, control of access and economic development of sea country and its resources.

The SCWG convened its first meeting in October 2015 and quickly identified

the need to resolve the interim fishing access arrangement. This arrangement has been extended 11 times since the Federal Court decision on the Blue Mud Bay case in 2007. This current extension expires on 31 December 2016 and provides little benefit to Traditional Owners in terms of supporting their right to control access to their sea country. The SCWG is made up of members of the Full Council and aims to continue a dialogue with the Full Council.

IWAIDJA ARMURDUK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Iwaidja Armurduk Management Committee has been established under the terms of their intertidal agreement with the NT Government for the Mini Mini and Murgellen Rivers area south of Cobourgh peninsula.

The Committee convened its first meeting 13-14 October 2015. Government and stakeholders met with nominated Traditional Owners to discuss a range of issues and interests.

Vision statement: *"The committee provides us with an opportunity to balance our ideas, about our country and interests. It will enable us to manage our country, look after its resources and take part in industry. It will hopefully create jobs for Rangers to monitor and manage our country into the future."*

The committee aims to meet again under its new intertidal agreement with the NT Government, with a focus on furthering participation in the management of sea country.

WURRAHILIBA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Wurrahiliba Management Committee has been established under the terms of their intertidal



KENBI RANGERS INSTALL NLC PERMIT SIGN ON COX PENINSULA, AFTER KENBI LAND HANDBACK

agreement with the Northern Territory Government for the Sir Edward Pellew Islands and McArthur River areas.

The Committee has determined to engage interests from the mouth of Roper River south to the mouth of Robinson River seawards to encompass the area of the management of the li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers.

The Committee convened its first meeting 18-19 August 2015. The purpose was to start a dialogue on local aspirations for management, foster networks and develop strategic advice on coastal and marine related research and policy priorities for the region with governments, industry, research entities and stakeholder groups.

“Not a lifestyle choice, it’s our way of life.”

The Committee agreed to consider key opportunities to:

- enhance the role and resources for Rangers as managers.
- support the next generation through programs and initiatives.
- establish long term monitoring of water quality of the McArthur River mine.
- examine regional development opportunities for supporting fisheries industries.
- look at feasibility or business case of holding a fishing licence.

The NLC has since been successful with a funding submission to the Fisheries Research Development Corporation for research that examines business opportunities and impediments for Aboriginal community development in supportive fishing industries for the Roper River to Robinson River area in the Northern Territory.

In the next year, the NLC will work to secure consent of Traditional Owners for the project before commencing delivery of the project over the next 18 months.



YANTJARRWU AND MALAK MALAK RANGERS DO COXSWAINS TRAINING, SUPPORTED BY CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BRANCH OVERVIEW

The Regional Development Branch comprises the regional office network and support operations. According to ABS statistical (2011) nearly 70 percent of all Indigenous people in the NLC Region live outside of the greater Darwin area. NLC regional offices are the first point of contact for most rural and remote Aboriginal people accessing NLC services. The branch has 41 positions with staff currently working across nine sites and include

- 29 regional based positions located in Katherine, Timber Creek, Ngukurr, Borroloola, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek and Wadeye.
- Defence Liaison position funded by the Department of Defence and based at Timber Creek to assist with the implementation and monitoring of the Bradshaw ILUA.
- Telstra Liaison position funded by Telstra to assist with accelerating Aboriginal land access and management of Telstra infrastructure leases.
- Pastoral Engagement position funded by the National Indigenous Pastoral Enterprise (NIPE) to assist in the implementation of the Indigenous Pastoral Program (IPP) Strategic and Operational Plan.
- 12 positions based in Darwin to directly support all regional offices, coordinate regional programs

and provide services to the Darwin/Daly/Wagait region.

A key part of the regional office network team is to support on country projects by:

- Assisting the coordination of consultations.
- Progressing expressions of interest for land use agreements and licences.
- Monitoring compliance with agreements.
- Processing permits & funeral applications.
- Supporting the Full Council and Regional Councils.

Just over 65 percent of all staff employed in the Regional Development team are Indigenous, and a large percentage of our people are recruited locally and have close ties to the region they work in. The regional network also engages up to 20 local Aboriginal casual employees to assist with projects as needed.

Future expansion activities include freeing up two regional positions late in the year and establishing a permanent office presence at both Galiwinku and Maningrida in 2016/17; both communities have 2,000-plus Aboriginal residents and the NLC regularly does business at both these locations as it is the home of Traditional Owners from numerous clan estates within the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past 12 months the Regional Development Branch achieved the following;

- Organised more than 100 s19 ALRA land use and mining consultations involving more than 3,000 Traditional Owners and affected Aboriginal groups.
- Supported all on-country consultations for native title and royalty distributions.
- Processed a high percentage of land access permits.
- Assisted the assessment of all s19 ALRA Land Use Expressions of Interest.
- Assisted the administration of funeral/burial applications.
- Supported the logistics and running of Regional Council and Full Council meetings.
- Coordinated and managed the Wickham River (Yarralin) and Kenbi handback ceremonies, involving hundreds of participants.

CHALLENGES

A majority of all NLC staff outside the Caring for Country branch are based in Darwin; however, a significant percentage of all Aboriginal people represented by the NLC live in the bush. A key challenge for the NLC is to develop a regionalisation plan so it is in a position to shift resources and strengthen services to locations of high need.

Continuous investment in upgrading regional office infrastructure, communication and information technology infrastructure and software is critical to keeping regional services effectively accommodated and up to date with efficient and modern day business practices in a progressively changing work environment.

Important regional office service hubs like Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Jabiru will need to be carefully reviewed with a long term plan to addressing infrastructure, human resource and service delivery needs. Large Aboriginal communities like Wadeye, Maningrida and Galiwinku are not only service hubs to outlying areas, they have growing populations with more than 8,000 Aboriginal residents in total.

STAFF PROFILES

Kevin Neade

**SENIOR PROJECT OFFICER
BORROLOOLA/BARKLY
TENNANT CREEK OFFICE**

BACKGROUND

I was born in Camooweal, Queensland and pretty much grew up there as a child. I attended high school in Mount Isa and then went on to work at a number of cattle stations as a ringer. I went to Newcastle Waters in 1983 for a holiday to see my brother, got work, and fell in love with my wife, Rosemary, a Traditional Owner and now teacher at Newcastle School. I am a father and grandfather.

I have worked in a few different areas: Gurungu Council in Elliott, ATSIC Council Chairperson, Barkly Shire, and for the last 4-5 years I have been the NLC Senior Project Officer looking after the Barkly Region.

INDIGENOUS CONNECTIONS

My family background is I'm a Waanyi man from my mum's side and our Traditional Lands are in the Barkly area. My wife is a Jingili person from around Beetaloo.

INTERESTS

I'm a family man and love spending time with my wife, children and grandchildren. I like to go camping, hunting and I am a passionate sporting person who gets involved with the local Barkly Football Competition.



WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING AT THE NLC?

NLC is a very challenging job, it's also very interesting, and there is never a dull moment. The Barkly Region is a big area. I have to do a lot of travel so NLC can talk to people about their land and issues affecting them. I get a lot of headaches from my job but the best of all is there is a lot of job satisfaction as well. People we deal with have been fighting for years to get their rights acknowledged and to see this finally happen is a real good thing. When you help people in the bush it makes me feel proud to have played a part in it.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FOR NLC IN THE FUTURE?

Providing stronger support for people in the bush, especially for places like the Barkly and Borroloola. Also, helping countryman take advantage of local business and employment opportunities, so that they can enjoy the benefits of their land.

STAFF PROFILES

Richard Singh

PROJECT COORDINATOR
LAND USE, EAST ARNHEM
DARWIN OFFICE

BACKGROUND

Born in Alice Springs and grew up in Darwin. I am a born and bred Territorian, a nephew of long serving CLC Director David Ross and Grandson of Blek Bala Mujik front man Apak Miller. Diehard Richmond, Queensland and Holden supporter.

I completed year 12 at Dripstone High School and went on to complete certificate III in Business Administration traineeship with Human Services Training Advisory Council (HSTAC), I have been employed at the NLC since 2004. Started off as a Project Officer based in Nhulunbuy, later progressing to become the Regional Coordinator in Nhulunbuy from 2010–2012. Transferred back to Darwin in 2012 as a S19 Project Coordinator for East Arnhem and still currently working in this position.

INDIGENOUS CONNECTIONS

Mother's mother – Pintubi Lurritja
Mother's father – Kaytetye
My father is of Indian and South Sea Islander decent.

INTERESTS

Family is everything, as well as getting out and about and meeting new people. Too many people have their heads buried in their phones or computers and can't take time out of there day to say hello or good morning. I'm happiest when I'm



fishing, hunting, watching AFL, travelling and advancing Aboriginal affairs.

WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING AT THE NLC?

Pressure cooker on steroids, but have wonderful colleagues that make assisting Traditional Owners with their aspirations much more enjoyable and worthwhile. There are day to day challenges that you have to rise to and overcome and I feel that the NLC has been doing this on a continued basis for a long time.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FOR NLC IN THE FUTURE?

Assisting Traditional Owners with their aspirations for working and living on country, as well as becoming the driving force of management and economic development on their lands. Being exposed to some ignorant narrow-minded people in Australia drives me as an individual to making sure these views are countered with articulated positive facts/views with the hope of finding a sensible medium.

STAFF PROFILES

Errol Thorne

**SENIOR PROJECT OFFICER,
DARWIN/DALY/WAGAIT
DARWIN OFFICE**

BACKGROUND

I currently work in the Darwin/Daly/Wagait Region. I was initially employed with the NLC as a Staff Development Officer and then moved into the position of Government Services Officer with the Regional Development Branch.

INDIGENOUS CONNECTIONS

I am a Noongar man, born in Boddington, Western Australia. I have lived in the Northern Territory for some time, and have resided at Palmerston since 1989. I am married with five Children and eight grandchildren. I have been fortunate to have made many lifelong friendships through working with the NLC, both with staff and the Traditional Owners from all regions.

INTERESTS

Fish feeding, West Coast Eagles, being with family, Basketball and Football; however, I enjoy most sports.



WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING AT THE NLC?

My work in the NLC over a number of years and roles has been the most rewarding experience in my whole working career. I have met some great people, and been to some of the best locations in Australia.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FOR NLC IN THE FUTURE?

This is such a unique work environment, and I enjoy every minute of it. Future challenges include working with Traditional Owners extensively on what they want to see happen on their land.

LAND USE AGREEMENTS

Aboriginal lands and sea in remote Australia are rich in biodiversity and other natural resources and have the potential to deliver substantial economic outcomes. A core function of the NLC is to express the wishes of Traditional Owners. In terms of economic development, this is carried out through section 19 (s19) land use agreements under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory Act 1976) (ALRA)*. The NLC carries out consultations and negotiations on behalf of Traditional Owners with third parties who seek commercial activities on Aboriginal land.

The NLC must ensure that any land use proposal is reasonable, that the appropriate landowning group is provided the opportunity to make an informed decision in accordance with its traditional decision making processes, and that affected Aboriginal people are also given an opportunity to express their views about a particular land use application.

Prior to taking land use proposals to the Traditional Owners for consideration, multi-disciplinary teams within the NLC, comprising regional support staff, lawyers, anthropologists and external experts, undertake a rigorous assessment.

Once informed consent is reached, the NLC considers the proposal and may direct the appropriate Aboriginal Land Trust to enter into a licence or lease agreement with the proponent.

Business and economic development in remote parts of the NT can be impeded by a number of factors. Some

proposals may provide insufficient detail; land use proposals may cover an area that affects multiple clan estate groups and therefore consultations and logistics of bringing the decision makers together can be complex; and seasonal factors also dictate when and where community consultations can be held.

A large percentage of consultations occur during the dry season (April to October), and this limited window of opportunity puts pressure on both NLC staff and constituents in relation to planning and holding meetings as well as meeting legislative timeframes.

The range of micro enterprises, private businesses, government and community development initiatives continues to increase and NLC is focused on aiding development of enterprises on Aboriginal land. The benefits for Aboriginal owners, community members and stakeholders of securing s19 ALRA leases include:

- Secure tenure – for Traditional Owners, public housing tenants, proponents (government and commercial) and investors (financial institutions).
- Secure rental returns administered by the NLC and subject to protections in the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, with rates typically determined by the Valuer General.
- A consistent approach to leasing on Aboriginal land, whereby proponents are familiar with NLC processes and procedures, providing certainty for investment.

FIGURE 25: S19 LAND USE EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST BY INDUSTRY TYPE

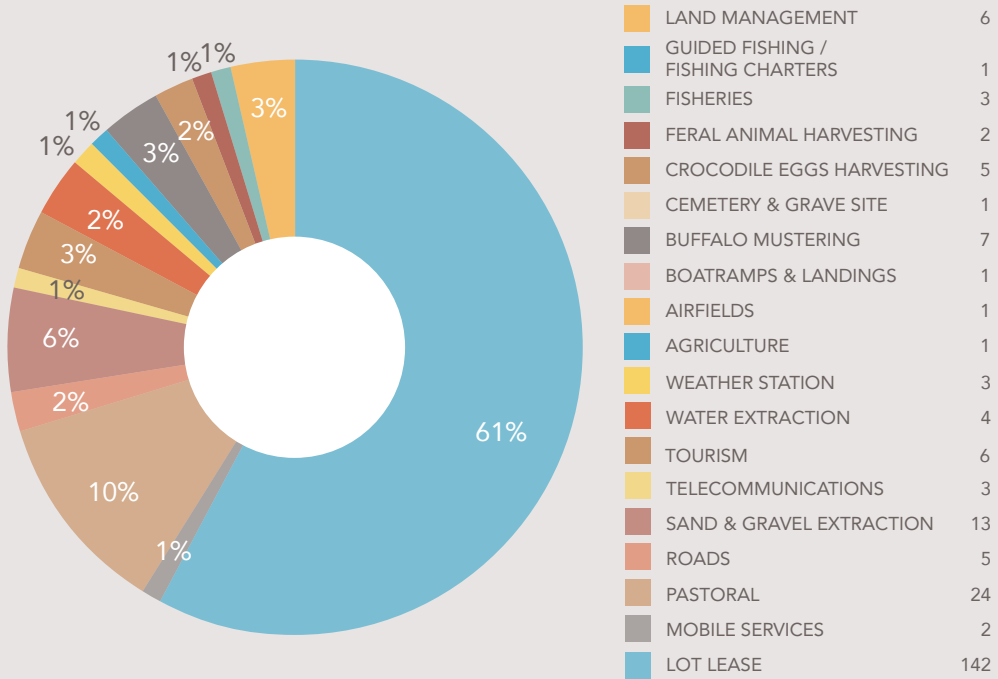
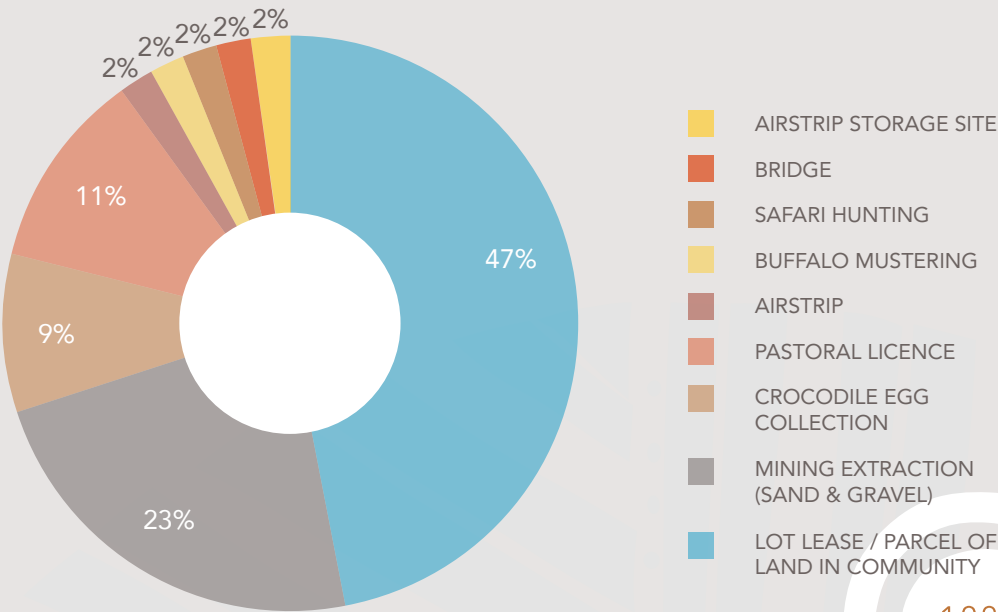


FIGURE 26: APPROVED S19 LAND USE AGREEMENTS BY INDUSTRY



Since the Commonwealth's compulsory five-year leases over Aboriginal land expired in August 2012, all property not underpinned by a lease arrangement reverted back to Aboriginal Land Trusts.

The Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments require their assets on Aboriginal land to be underpinned by secure tenure arrangements. This policy has required the approval of a large number of s19 ALRA agreements in Aboriginal communities across the NLC region. Leasing arrangements include public housing, education and training facilities, police stations, health centres, crèches, safe houses, essential services infrastructure, government employee housing, workshops, ranger stations, and commercial operations.

It is estimated that across the 27 discrete

medium-to-large Aboriginal communities on Aboriginal land in the NLC region there are more than 4000 lots or parcels of land. The three largest Aboriginal communities - Galiwinku, Maningrida and Wadeye - each have more than 400 lots.

To manage effectively the volume of leasing on Aboriginal land, the NLC has established a custom-built electronic database called the Land Information Management System (LIMS) that registers and tracks the progression of s19 land use expressions of interests up to the agreement and compliance stage.

LIMS is being developed to manage the whole-of-life activities of negotiated land use agreements. Capturing and collating critical information assists the NLC's planning; it predicts future workload demands, manages resources



NORTH EAST ARNHEM RANGERS FORUM MAY 2016

effectively, and significantly enhances the quality and quantity of information presented to Traditional Owners about activities occurring on their land.

The NLC received 231 s19 Land Use Expressions of Interest over the past financial year across a range of industries; just over 60% of all applications were to secure a parcel of land in an Aboriginal community. Lot lease applications included expressions of interest for residential accommodation, industrial areas, retail stores, essential service sites, schools, office accommodation, and health infrastructure. On average, the NLC receives a Land Use expression of interest every working day.

The cost of the travel, and logistics to progress s19 Land Use expressions of interest this financial year was approximately \$350,000. Funds for this activity were derived from ABA grant funds, user-pay contributions and a special one off grant of \$25,000 from the NT Government to assist offset the significant costs involved with progressing buffalo mustering applications.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since 1 July 2015, the Executive Council and Full Council approved 47 s19 ALRA land use agreements. Just under half of the approved agreements were s19 ALRA leases obtained for parcels of land in Aboriginal communities. The income generated through these lease agreements continues to stimulate local economies in Top End communities and will produce a range of economic, cultural and social benefits for Traditional Owners.

CHALLENGES

The increasing number of s19 ALRA land use agreements and expressions of interests over the past four years has required significant resources to progress and manage a rapidly growing land use management portfolio. As part of a continuous improvement strategy, the NLC has streamlined lease management processes and procedures, strengthened multi-disciplinary teamwork, enhanced the logistics and meeting capabilities of Regional Offices, and investigated enhancements to whole-of-life lease application software with both integrated financial management and Geographic Information Systems. Lease management efficiencies will assist the NLC to work closely with Traditional Owners to harness economic and community development opportunities.

Progressing s19 ALRA land use applications to the consultation stage with Traditional Owners has significant cost implications. Strengthening user pay systems through cost recovery guidelines will be critical to improving the NLC's business efficiency, productivity and responsiveness.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Economic development provides the foundation for genuine opportunities for Aboriginal people with attendant cultural and social benefits. Section 23(1) of the ALRA empowers the NLC to assist Aboriginal people to carry out commercial activities (the NLC itself does not profit).

Currently, Aboriginal people in the NLC region suffer high levels of disadvantage,

a situation which is not likely to change without long term strategic investment. The NLC is a key agency in facilitating economic development on Aboriginal lands, with statutory responsibility for an area of more than 210,000 square kilometers of Aboriginal land as well as 85% of the coastline.

NLC faces many challenges in building sustainable enterprises on Aboriginal land because most former reserve land and land obtained under the ALRA has low commercial productivity. Services and essential infrastructure are also poor in remote locations. Exceptions include areas where minerals have been found, and where nature-based tourism can be developed. As populations increase, small to mid-size food and retail operators increasingly see attractive business opportunities in Aboriginal communities. A range of industries from horticulture to agri-forestry and pastoral enterprises are also in development and the environmental sector provides real opportunities for Aboriginal enterprises.

As a result of the Blue Mud Bay High Court decision, entry into the commercial fishing industry also presents commercial and economic opportunities. The long-term focus, however, is on developing the capacity of Traditional Owners:

- To participate in the mainstream economy.
- To take advantage of commercial opportunities arising from developments on Aboriginal land.
- To develop long-term sustainable Aboriginal enterprises in the pastoral industry, timber works, aquaculture, feral animal management and harvesting, CO2 (fire) abatement programmes, mining operations, railways and pipelines, gas and major infrastructure development.

Additional funding has enabled the organisation to deliver long-term targeted commercial assistance programs. The funding has had a significant impact on the success of Australian and Northern Territory Government initiatives in economic and commercial development.



WAGIMAN AND FISH RIVER RANGERS AT THE WESTERN TOP END FIRE PLANNING MEETING



YUGUL MANGI & NUMBULWAR RANGERS PARTICIPATING IN COXSAINS TRAINING, SUPPORTED BY CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY



TELSTRA TOWER KATHERINE

TELSTRA COMMUNICATIONS

Since July 1997, the NLC has maintained a business relationship with Telstra by which the company funds a dedicated Telstra Liaison position to help the provision and ongoing maintenance of communication infrastructure on Aboriginal land.

Having a liaison officer embedded within the NLC gives Telstra a single entry point for permits and site clearance applications, lease compliance and renewals, and allows for enquiries from Traditional Owners about Telstra infrastructure on their land to be efficiently handled.

The NLC Telstra Liaison Officer is Mr Malcolm Que Noy, a Larrakia man. He has worked in telecommunications for more than three decades across the Northern Territory and has a wealth of technical and business knowledge.

The NLC provides information and advice to Telstra contractors and its clients about services, contacts, procedures and land access. More than 100 work permits were issued to enable work on Telstra infrastructure on Aboriginal land. Major works included the following:

- Replacement of 20km of optic fibre in the VRD region.

- Fibre optic cable relocation at both the Roper and Wilton Rivers for the proposed new bridges.
- Three new tower replacements due to corrosion caused by extreme weather.
- Site survey on the Buchanan Highway and VRD region for a future mobile network tower and the pit remediation project to replace/repair damaged and unsafe Telstra pits in most remote Aboriginals communities across the NLC region.

Telstra has significant and vital infrastructure under lease on Aboriginal land that includes a large number of radio repeater sites and NBN optic fibre regional huts.

This year Telstra and the NT Government committed to a \$30 million, three-year infrastructure agreement for the Telstra Mobile Black Spot program that will provide a new mobile base station for the Minjilang community on Croker Island, as well as 3G/4G mobile equipment upgrades to a large number of other Aboriginal communities.

Telstra is planning to upgrade telecommunications services to Bulman, Weemol, Minyerri, Yarralin, Manyallaluk and Timber Creek.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL ERIC DOUGHERTY (US MARINE CORPS) WITH BRADSHAW AND TIMBER CREEK CONTRACTING AND RESOURCE COY DIRECTORS LORRAINE AND JOSEPHINE JONES, IN FRONT OF SUPER STALLION HELICOPTER



BRADSHAW AND TIMBER CREEK CONTRACTING AND RESOURCE COY ROAD CONSTRUCTION CREW

BRADSHAW PARTNERING INDIGENOUS LAND USE AGREEMENT

The Department of Defence's Bradshaw Field Training Area (BFTA), a former cattle station, is located near Timber Creek within the Victoria River District (VRD). Purchased in 1996, it is one of the Australian Defence Force's (ADF) largest military training areas. BFTA covers approximately 870,000ha, bound to the north by the Fitzmaurice River, to the west by the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf, by the Victoria River to the south, and to the east by pastoral properties.

The Department of Defence negotiated the Bradshaw Partnering Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the NLC and Traditional Owners. The agreement has been in place since July 2003 and has provided the NLC with recurrent funding to support a liaison officer at Timber Creek to assist Traditional Owners to implement and monitor the Bradshaw Partnering ILUA, in consultation with ADF personnel.

Over the past decade, special emphasis has been placed on developing the capacity of Traditional Owners to participate effectively in cultural maintenance, business activities, training and employment, and promote Aboriginal employment opportunities.

This has led to the Traditional Owners establishing their own business, Bradshaw and Timber Creek Contracting & Resource Co Pty Ltd. The business has taken advantage of the unique contracting opportunities afforded by the BFTA and is now in a position to take on a range of contracts or fee-for-service activities with the Department of Defence, US Marines Corps (USMC), local and NT governments and larger Defence contractors.

BRADSHAW & TIMBER CREEK CONTRACTING & RESOURCE CO PTY LTD

The Company was established in June 2008 by a number of senior Traditional Owners, helped significantly by Daniel Jones, a Traditional Owner and the original manager who had a vision to provide employment opportunities for Aboriginal people on their own country.

Effectively, the company started from a zero financial and asset base, with little business expertise. The NLC's Bradshaw liaison officer helped its early establishment, and this continuing support has enabled the company to achieve its success through sheer hard work and determination. It remains 100% Indigenous managed and operated, headed by a board of six directors who are all Traditional Owners from the Bradshaw/VRD area.

From the start, good contractual performances and a reliable workforce demonstrated that the company could be competitive.

The early work included pulling down hundreds of kilometres of redundant fencing, and the first contracts were won using hired equipment. On-the-job-training and persistence led to more complex contracts at BFTA and beyond. The ADF helped with mentoring and support, and its commitment to the ILUA and local Indigenous participation has been critical.

Since 2008, the company's workload has broadened. Activities now include roadworks, firebreaks, weed and waste and management, erection and dismantling of military tents, installation and maintenance of water infrastructure

and general support for training exercises. Joint Ventures with larger civil works companies have involved road repairs at BFTA, Delemare Air Weapons Range and Kangaroo Flats Training Area.

In the 2015/16 financial year, the company supported large joint ADF and USMC military exercises, Koolendong and Talisman Sabre, which involved more than 5000 personnel, Super Stallion and Cobra attack helicopters and a host of heavily armored vehicles. With only five full-time Aboriginal employees, the company had to hire an extra 15 local Aboriginal men in the first half of the year; for the two large exercises, eight local Aboriginal women were hired to provide cleaning services.

Through the administrative assistance of the NLC's Regional Development team, the company secured funding of just over \$2 million from the Aboriginals Benefits Account for the purchase of equipment

and a workers village for local employees.

There new equipment includes two John Deere 125 HP tractors with Gason winged slashers, plus a IVECO Trakker 6x6 truck - a multi-functional unit with four different body types including a vacuum tank, tipper, swing lift, a flat-top body plus a quick and easy dismount system. The new equipment has enhanced roadside slashing, grading and waste management capabilities. The company has secured further contracts based on this increased capacity, creating further opportunities for local Aboriginal employment.

The company has partnered with large companies and smaller Aboriginal companies in Elliott and Katherine to secure a variety of different contracts. It now has a strong asset base and a good reputation for reliability and value.



BRADSHAW AND TIMBER CREEK CONTRACTING AND RESOURCE COY MANAGER DANIEL JONES, AT SITE OF ROAD REPAIR JOB

PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

There are currently 41 pastoral land use agreements on Aboriginal land within the NLC region, covering approximately 44,261km². These parcels of land carry about 116,000 head of cattle, and the total value of annual returns to Traditional Owners is estimated around \$2.4 million.

Much of the value to Traditional Owners of pastoral land use agreements is offset by infrastructure development; overall, the infrastructure component is around 60% and includes upgrades to infrastructure like fences, yards, and stock watering facilities. To ensure that infrastructure is delivered according to agreement schedules, the NLC is required to undertake regular compliance checks to ensure that infrastructure is completed to industry standards, within scheduled timeframes, and maintained throughout the life of the agreement.

The NLC's pastoral team has industry-experienced staff to provide advice and undertake compliance checks across the pastoral properties in their jurisdiction. These checks are resource-intensive and not only look at infrastructure, but also monitor environmental degradation and animal welfare. Over the last 12 months, the NLC undertook 10 pastoral property compliance checks.

The total NT cattle herd is estimated to be around 2.2 million; cattle behind wire with a land use agreement on Aboriginal land in the NLC region make up approximately 5.3% of the NT herd.

PASTORAL INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

The northern cattle industry has continued to strengthen through strong demand from the live export trade to South East Asia and a growing meatworks demand. Industry concerns about the delayed allocation of import quotas from Indonesia have now been resolved and the market is again well-placed to expand.

Meat and Livestock Australia, in its "Industry Projections 2016", records that the Australian cattle herd is forecast to decline to 26.2 million head by June 2016; future projections indicate the national herd will continue to decline to 25.9 million head until 2017. Prices are likely to remain firm as a result of these lowering numbers and market competition.

"Remote and undeveloped areas of Aboriginal land will become increasingly attractive to large pastoral development. "

Cattle exported via the Darwin Port in the 2015 calendar year numbered 487,568 head – close to the previous year's record of 493,958 head.

A new export market has emerged in Cambodia, and it appears the demand from south east Asia for northern cattle will continue to grow through diversification. The optimistic outlook for the northern pastoral industry is resulting in significantly increased values in expressions of interest for pastoral grazing activities on Aboriginal Land.

Demand for northern cattle for live export markets, local and interstate meat processing and demand from areas emerging from drought conditions are expected to see prices for cattle remain at high levels for the next few years. Remote and undeveloped areas of Aboriginal land will become increasingly attractive to large pastoral development.

Australian Agricultural Company Limited (AACo), a leading provider of beef and agricultural products, has a \$90 million state-of-the-art meat processing facility on the outskirts of Darwin. This infrastructure significantly reduces transport costs for local producers and minimises carcass weight loss during transportation, so providing increased processing opportunities.

The NLC expects values from third party expressions of interest for pastoral activity on Aboriginal land to continue to increase for new country, and existing licence areas that come up for renewal. Due to the increasing capital requirements of pastoral operations, larger, well-run corporate pastoralists will be the main entities seeking to increase their operations by engaging with Traditional Owners to develop sustainable economic initiatives on Aboriginal land.

INDIGENOUS PASTORAL PROGRAM

NLC continues to be a partner in the Indigenous Pastoral Program (IPP) with the National Indigenous Pastoral Enterprises (NIPE), Central Land Council (CLC), NT Government, Australian Government, and NT Cattlemen's Association. The IPP partner organisations and, in particular, the NLC and CLC support and facilitate Indigenous pastoral activities across the Northern Territory.

IPP staff carried out a number of property consultations and provided support to nine properties including Mistake Creek (CLC Region), Twin Hill, Amanbidji, Palumpa, Wubalawun, Gunbalanya, Robinson River and Garrihiya, as well as Seven Emu Station which is an Indigenous-owned pastoral property in the Gulf Region.

IPP project work during the year involved infrastructure development on Indigenous pastoral areas, an Indigenous Cattlemen's Workshop at the Charles Darwin University campus in Katherine with 28 participants, as well as staff and presenters. The participants presented a range of experiences from their own properties, and received good information on pastoral business management and current Work Health and Safety requirements relating to pastoral operations.

The IPP supported Business Management Advisory Program activities for the Twin Hill Aboriginal Corporation and developed a range of support resources resulting from consultations with Indigenous pastoralists. Resources included updated map data, property assessments and advice on carrying capacities and rangeland assessments.

The last of five property Natural Resource Audits was completed during the reporting period. The completed audits inform pastoral operations of important natural resource values, sustainable carrying capacities on local land systems and establish rangeland monitoring sites where future management can be assessed and land condition trends established.

The IPP is currently supporting development of a re-emerging buffalo industry on Aboriginal land and the NT Government has committed resources to market development. IPP staff from the NLC, NT Government and NIPE collaborate extensively to support Indigenous pastoral development.

BUFFALO INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

The wild buffalo herd on Aboriginal land in Arnhem Land is estimated around 100,000 head - more than 90% of the NT buffalo population. The world buffalo population is estimated in excess of 150 million, so the NT herd is relatively small by comparison.

Buffalo market options are limited for live export and only a small number of local meatworks can process buffalo into marketable products. Additional uses for buffalo are safari hunting and pet meat.

The NT Government has invested in the development of the live export market for buffalo into Vietnam, and the NLC has received significant interest from proponents wanting to harvest buffalo on Aboriginal land. The NLC has developed several procedures,



GULIN GULIN BUFFALO COMPANY YARDS, BULMAN

including benchmarking proposals, to assist with the presentation of information to Traditional Owners.

The NLC continues to work closely with Traditional Owners, NT Government, and proponents to develop buffalo harvesting operations on land trust areas. Most of the prospective areas require extensive consultations with large numbers of local descent groups in order to reach informed decisions. The NT Government has given the NLC a \$25,000 grant towards offsetting the cost of facilitating consultations across large parcels of land in Arnhem Land with multiple clan estates.

Consultations have been carried out in the Katherine, East Arnhem and West Arnhem regions. Buffalo harvesting is expected to begin in 2016 around the Central Arnhem area as a result of consent given by relevant Traditional Owners at consultations in late 2015.

The NLC now has buffalo harvesting licence agreements over 15,282km² of Aboriginal land with two local Indigenous businesses. Consultations continue over five other areas of Aboriginal land, covering an estimated 11,194 km². Traditional Owners have agreed to the proposed mustering over half this land, and are considering the terms of an agreement before progressing to final approval. The NLC will continue to liaise extensively with Traditional Owners to further develop buffalo harvest and management strategies to reflect their long-term goals.

CHALLENGES

The role of the NLC pastoral officer is vitally important for Indigenous aspirations, to ensure that land use areas are appropriately maintained and infrastructure developed according to industry standards and the terms of each agreement. Compliance is resource-intensive and the overall management of pastoral activities has to deal with the day-to-day challenges of the industry. At present, only two dedicated NLC pastoral officers oversee monitoring and compliance matters that often require on-going brokering and dispute resolution.

The NLC pastoral team and Traditional Owners have started to see the benefits of the work on existing pastoral grazing licences through improved sustainable grazing and infrastructure management. However, without appropriate surveillance over the entire suite of 41 grazing licences, there is a potential for Aboriginal assets and land to be degraded to the extent that opportunities for sustainable economic development from pastoral activities on Aboriginal land may not be able to be realised.

The NLC has acknowledged for many years that the unauthorised removal of cattle and buffalo from land trust areas is detrimental to the interests of Traditional Owners. Market prices are likely to continue to attract illegal mustering on Aboriginal land.

Recent news stories suggest that cattle theft is increasing, and the NT Cattlemen's Association has called for the Police to establish a Stock Squad to improve their investigations. The NLC wants to collaborate with stakeholders to minimise illegal mustering on Aboriginal land.



ROPER RIVER CROSSING



NLC MINING OFFICER GREG McDONALD AND LAWYER CHARLOTTE DEANS EXPLAIN HYDRAULIC FRACTURING TO TRADITIONAL OWNERS AT A MEETING AT MATARANKA

MINERALS & ENERGY BRANCH OVERVIEW

Minerals and energy project management is undertaken within a raft of Northern Territory and Commonwealth legislation – the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*, *Environmental Assessment Act*, *Minerals Titles Act*, the *Petroleum Act*, the *Geothermal Energy Act* and the *Mining Management Act*, at the Territory level – and the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (ALRA)*, the *Native Title Act* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. Combined, these laws create a framework that recognises the rights and interests of Traditional Owners through their continuous cultural connectivity and rights to the land, while providing a regulated structure through which resource development may progress if access to land is granted through the relevant Commonwealth Act.

All types of resource-based exploration and development projects pose a risk to the natural environment and to

Aboriginal culture, which may negatively impact on Aboriginal spirituality and connection to land (or places) and their cultural and social activities. The responsibility to protect culturally and environmentally sensitive areas from such risks is significant not only to Aboriginal people and the NLC, but also to the broader community. Conversely, the benefits that resource developments offer often prove vital to the economic and social development of remote communities. Therefore a careful balance must be achieved and Traditional Owners must be in a position to decide whether or not they wish to have these developments on their land.

More than 90% of the NLC region is currently covered by applications to explore for minerals, petroleum and geothermal energy and throughout 2015/16, the NLC continued to receive new applications to explore for mineral and energy resources. In addition, the NT Government has begun to turn its

mind towards developing significant infrastructure projects linked to production and transport of gas from the Northern Territory to other jurisdictions.

The NLC strives to protect Aboriginal culture and rights by ensuring Traditional Owners can make informed decisions about proposed minerals and energy projects, including the development of project infrastructure. The NLC achieves this by various means, including facilitating meetings between Traditional Owners and resource companies, and providing technical advice and representation during operations and production. The NLC also ensures that Aboriginal concerns remain paramount when a project is being closed and rehabilitated. The NLC also has a role in advocating for Traditional Owners by pressing the Aboriginal viewpoint in various submissions to environmental impact assessments, amendments to legislation and other regulatory documents that may affect the resources sector. Many resource-based development proposals, including exploration proposals, contain complex technical information. Where the project is to be developed on land subject to the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA) it is crucial that the NLC establishes whether the Traditional Owners have given free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) to exploration and/or production and have approved access to any affected land or granted tenement(s).

Under the principles of FPIC, the NLC has a responsibility to ensure that all information is communicated effectively to Traditional Owners to ensure they

understand the nature and purpose of a proposed project, and to provide an opportunity for them to communicate concerns about the proposal. To be fully effective, affected Aboriginal groups must also be adequately represented during the decision-making process. This process requires the NLC to maintain a high level of technical expertise, knowledge and skills across a number of fields, the key elements of which are:

- correct identification of the Traditional Owners, native title parties, estate groups and affected people for land located within an area of proposed development;
- organisation of on-country consultations either on or near the proposed project area;
- effective communication of the technical information related to a proposed resource development project, its timeframes, commercial opportunities, and potential environmental, social and cultural risks, costs and benefits;
- ensuring that all relevant information is presented in an objective, unbiased and fair manner;
- negotiation of agreements suited to a specific resource project(s) and its proponent(s), Traditional Owners, native title parties, estate groups, target minerals or hydrocarbon and other factors; and
- planning and management of the relationships between stakeholders which develop during the life of a project.

EXPLORATION LICENCES AND EXPLORATION PERMITS: PART IV ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS ACT

Under the ALRA, the Northern Territory Minister for Mines and Energy cannot approve a project unless the Traditional Owners have given their free, prior and informed consent. This requires the NLC to present all information relevant to the proposed project to Traditional Owners and to determine if consent has, or has not, been given. The NLC's statutory obligations start once an explorer lodges an application for consent under section 41, Part IV of the Act. These obligations remain in place until the application is finalised or withdrawn.

Each year, the NLC processes and manages a large number of applications for mineral-based Exploration Licences (ELs) and petroleum-based Exploration Permits (EPs). One core responsibility of the NLC under Part IV of the ALRA is to facilitate the annual exploration activities for granted minerals ELs and petroleum EPs on receipt of the annual work program from the relevant Company.

To achieve outcomes for all applications and work-related activities, the NLC uses a six-step consultation process:

1. Initial on-country consultations to establish if Traditional Owners wish to reject the application or if they wish to enter into negotiations towards an exploration agreement;
2. On-country cultural surveys of sacred sites and estate group boundaries, combined with defined areas that need to be protected

under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. This is usually done in conjunction with negotiations about the contents of a draft legal agreement applicable to the land that may be made available for exploration;

3. Final on-country consultations to allow Traditional Owners to consider and formally accept or refuse the application and its associated agreement;
4. If an agreement is consented to, delivery of ministerial approval, execution of agreement and formal notification necessary for the grant of the mineral exploration licence or petroleum exploration permit;
5. Once the agreement has been executed and the application is granted by the Northern Territory Government, the proponent company is then obliged to present its proposed exploration activities to Traditional Owners at a specially convened work program meeting. These meetings are a contractual obligation and occur annually, although additional meetings are required if significant changes are subsequently made to an approved work program; and
6. Assess and distribute financial benefits arising from projects (granted tenements) to the Traditional Owners of the project area.

In 2015/16 the NLC conducted a total of 65 activities, including on-country consultations and audits, related to 44 separate minerals and petroleum

exploration and mining projects (including closure and legacy mine-related projects) located on land subject to the ALRA. In addition, a number of on-country meetings relating to minerals and energy on Aboriginal freehold land had to be cancelled or postponed during the reporting year due to several factors, including:

- some companies either deferred or did not implement an exploration work program;
- some companies chose not to progress their tenement applications; and
- cultural reasons, funerals and other external factors.

The statistics provided here do not fully reflect the complexity and vastness of some exploration proposals, especially some of the large petroleum tenements.

Nor do they accurately reflect the human, financial and logistical resources required to conduct on-country consultations in remote locations.

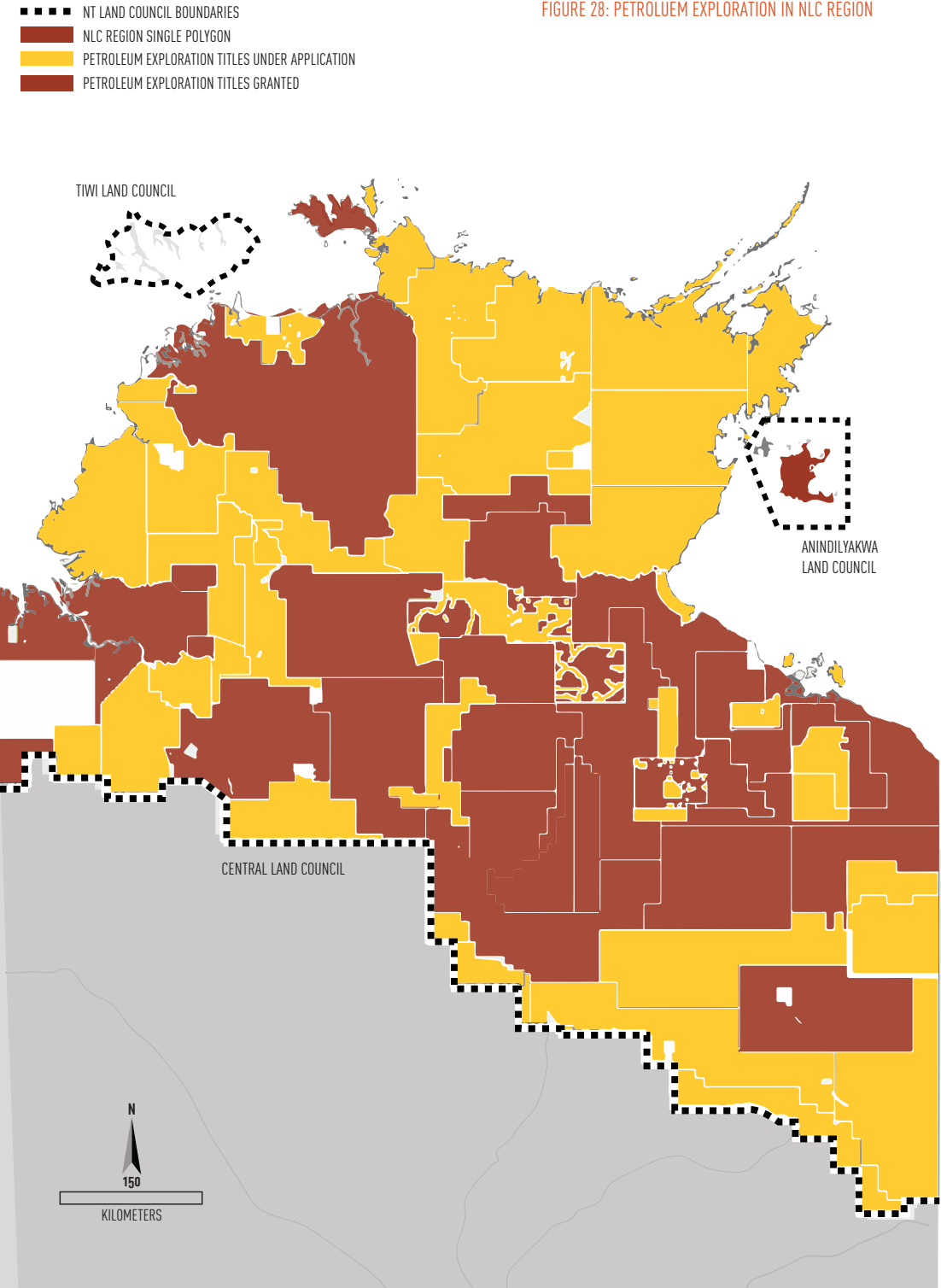
BACKLOG OF EXPLORATION APPLICATIONS AND THE NEGOTIATING PERIOD

At the end of the 2015/16 reporting period, the NLC carried a backlog of 283 active exploration applications (including minerals and energy titles) over Aboriginal freehold land under the ALRA. Most of the outstanding applications were inactive and not pursued by the companies concerned. Reflecting global markets and the downward trend in petroleum and mineral commodity prices, the NLC continues to receive fewer applications than in previous years.

FIGURE 27: MINERALS & ENERGY BRANCH CONSULTATIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES 2015/16

CONSULTATION TYPE	NO. OF PROJECTS	NO. OF CONSULTATIONS
Tenements processed under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act		
Applications for Minerals and Energy Exploration Titles	13	18
Granted Minerals and Energy Exploration Titles	24	32
Liaison Committee Meetings	4	10
Tenements processed under the Native Title Act		
Applications for Minerals and Energy Exploration Titles	1	1
Granted Minerals and Energy Exploration Titles	3	6
Liaison Committee Meetings	4	6
TOTAL – ALL MINERALS AND ENERGY CONSULTATIONS	50	73

FIGURE 28: PETROLUUM EXPLORATION IN NLC REGION



EXPLORATION LICENCES AND EXPLORATION PERMITS: NATIVE TITLE ACT 1993

The NLC is a native title representative body under the provisions of the Native Title Act, and, as part of its responsibility, deals with applications for minerals and energy exploration and with granted minerals and energy tenements over land on which native title applies. Many of the applications for minerals exploration are considered by the Northern Territory Government to have minimal environmental and social impact and as such are quickly granted under an expedited procedure. In these cases, an agreement is normally negotiated only if the project proponent finds an economically viable deposit. An application for a Mineral Lease (ML) to develop a mine is then lodged with the Government and attracts the right to negotiate under the provisions of the *Native Title Act*.

A tenement area (or boundary) of a petroleum exploration permit application can co-exist simultaneously with mineral titles administered by Northern Territory legislation – the *Minerals Titles Act*, the *Petroleum Act*, and the *Geothermal Energy Act* (including Exploration Licences, Mineral Leases or other mineral-related titles).

As stated above, petroleum exploration activities automatically attract the procedural right to negotiate an exploration agreement under the *Native Title Act*. Many petroleum exploration permit applications and granted petroleum exploration permits pose significant logistical challenges when it comes to conducting on-country

consultations, as they generally cover vast tracts of land in remote regions and involve numerous Traditional Owners and estate groups.

To achieve outcomes for all applications and work-related activities made under the *Native Title Act*, the NLC uses a five-step consultation process, similar to that where the ALRA applies.

1. An information meeting to advise native title parties of the project and its potential impacts and to take instructions regarding negotiation of an agreement;
2. On-country cultural surveys of sacred sites and estate group boundaries, combined with defined areas that need to be protected under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. This is usually done in conjunction with negotiations about the contents of a draft legal agreement applicable to the land that may be made available for exploration. However, for larger petroleum projects, these surveys may be done after grant in response to work programs submitted to the NLC in order to better match the areas being actively explored;
3. On-country consultations to advise native title parties of the agreement and to take instructions regarding the agreement;
4. Once the agreement has been executed and the tenement granted by the Northern Territory Government, the proponent company is then obliged to present its proposed exploration activities to Traditional Owners at a specially convened work program meeting. These meetings

are a contractual obligation and occur annually, although additional meetings are required if significant changes are subsequently made to an approved work program; and

5. Assess and distribute financial benefits arising from projects to Traditional Owners.

In 2015/16 the NLC conducted a total of 13 activities on native title lands, including on-country consultations and audits, related to 8 separate minerals and petroleum exploration and mining projects (including closure and legacy mine-related projects) located on land where native title rights exist.

A number of on-country meetings relating to minerals and energy on both native title land and Aboriginal freehold land had to be cancelled or postponed during the reporting year due to several factors, including:

- some companies either deferred or did not implement an exploration work program;
- some companies chose not to progress their tenement applications; and
- cultural reasons, funerals and other external factors.

NEGOTIATING MINERALS AND ENERGY AGREEMENTS

The NLC continues to identify and address Aboriginal disadvantage through positive financial and social outcomes facilitated by negotiation of fair and equitable resource exploration, development and related infrastructure agreements. In recent years, there has been a focus on

securing longer lasting benefits in these agreements, such as development of local infrastructure, and employment and business opportunities. Benefits that may flow from these agreements include, but are not limited to:

- Traditional Owner and native title party participation in the exploration planning and approvals process through sacred site protection, liaison committees and annual work program meetings;
- Mineral and petroleum companies working together with Aboriginal people to ensure that sacred sites and culturally sensitive areas are protected during the conduct of approved exploration activities;
- Local employment, business development and provision of project/industry-specific training programs; and
- Provision of exploration compensation payments.

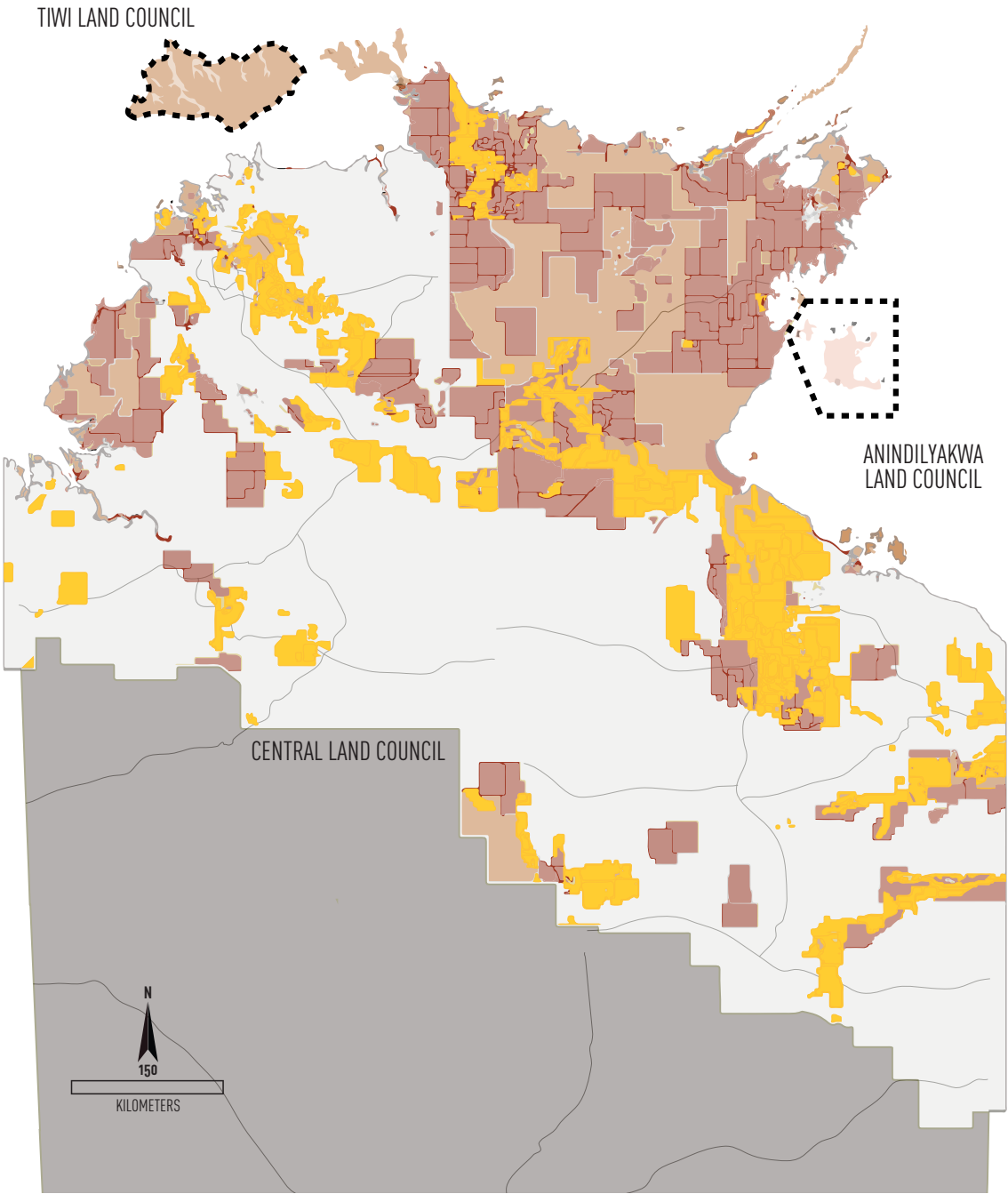
In addition, these agreements recognise the nexus between Aboriginal culture, spirituality and the natural environment. All agreements contain commitments to protect Aboriginal sacred sites, cultural heritage and the natural environment through existing legislation. In many instances companies have committed to activities that go beyond legislated requirements or current industry leading practice standards.

MANAGING MINERALS AND ENERGY AGREEMENTS

Agreements negotiated between the NLC and resource companies are legally binding and include contractual

- NT LAND COUNCIL BOUNDARIES
- MINERALS EXPLORATION TITLES UNDER APPLICATION
- MINERALS EXPLORATION TITLES GRANTED

FIGURE 29: MINERAL EXPLORATION IN NLC REGION



obligations for both the company and the Land Council. The NLC has a responsibility under these agreements, on behalf of its constituents, to ensure that companies meet their obligations and commitments. This is achieved through annual work program consultations, routine inspections of work being undertaken and addressing any concerns that Traditional Owners might raise during the life of a project.

During 2015/16, a large proportion of the NLC's minerals and energy consultations were held in response to mining, oil and gas work programs and matters related to mine closure or legacy mine issues emanating from existing mineral leases. The principal focus was on engaging Traditional Owners in cultural heritage management, exploration work and its planning, and auditing existing activities underway on various tenements across the region.

Initiatives such as the Commonwealth Government's "Developing the North" strategy and construction of the northern gas pipeline, connecting the Northern Territory's developing gas fields to Australia's eastern seaboard are likely to result in an increase in the quantity and types of agreement-related work required of the NLC over the coming years.

MINING

The NLC plays an important role in representing Traditional Owners and native title parties affected by mining, oil and gas ventures within its region. During 2015/16, this included providing advice and negotiating agreements, such as that for the Gulkula bauxite mine in north-east Arnhem Land (a wholly

Aboriginal-owned and operated mine).

There are two major operational mines in the NLC region:

- Rio Tinto Alcan Gove, which produces bauxite near Nhulunbuy in north-east Arnhem Land; and
- Xstrata McArthur River Mine, which produces a complex silver-lead-zinc ore near Borroloola.

Although mining has ceased and rehabilitation commenced at the Energy Resources Australia (ERA) Ranger Uranium Mine near Jabiru, the refinery continues to produce uranium oxide as it runs down its stockpiles. The NLC continues to monitor several other non-operational mines, including:

- Merlin Diamond mine near Borroloola
- Frances Creek Iron ore mine near Pine Creek which is in 'care and maintenance'
- Bootu Creek manganese mine near Bootu Creek which is in 'care and maintenance'
- Numerous gold-producing mines operating near Pine Creek
- Sherwin Iron's iron ore project near Minyerri
- Western Desert Resources' iron ore project near Ngukurr
- Australian Ilmenite Resources' ilmenite project near Minyerri

During 2015/16, the NLC, Traditional Owners and native title parties participated in various initiatives related to closure and rehabilitation of mines, including:

- Continuing to promote the interests of Mirarr Traditional Owners and their



MINING BRANCH STAFF MANAGE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN ALCOA AND TRDITIONAL OWNERS, MILINGIMBI, APRIL 2016

involvement in the development of closure criteria for the Ranger Uranium Mine through regular technical meetings with ERA, ERA's consultants and representatives of the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Governments;

- Representing Native Title Parties and working with Traditional Owners and the Northern Territory Government through the Redbank Working Group to address serious environmental issues associated with the former Redbank Copper Mine near Borroloola;
- Promoting the interests of the Finnis River Aboriginal Land Trust and its Traditional Owners during closure of the Newmont Copper Mine and rehabilitation works at the former Rum Jungle Uranium Mine, both near Batchelor. Important outcomes have included the finalisation of a Traditional Owner Strategic Management Plan and a high-level of Traditional Owner employment for rehabilitation at Woodcutters; and

- Representing the interests of Traditional Owners during ongoing rehabilitation at the former Nabarlek Uranium Mine, near Gunbalanya in western Arnhem Land.

OIL AND GAS

The Northern Territory Government believes that there are a large number of onshore areas where gas and/ or oil exists, either embedded in deep-seated shales, or as more conventional deposits that do not require controversial processes, such as horizontal drilling and high-pressure hydraulic fracturing to access. For example, several locations, such as the Beetaloo and McArthur Basins, have so far shown great promise for production of oil and gas. Since 2010, a total of 32 oil and gas tenements have been granted, two of which are on Aboriginal freehold land.

During 2015/16, the NLC placed a special emphasis on ensuring Traditional Owners' and native title parties' views on environmental and cultural protection were integrated into reviews of the

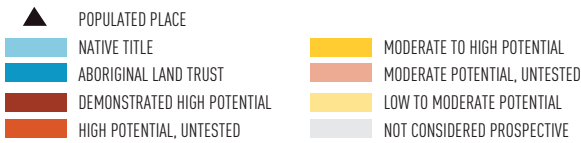
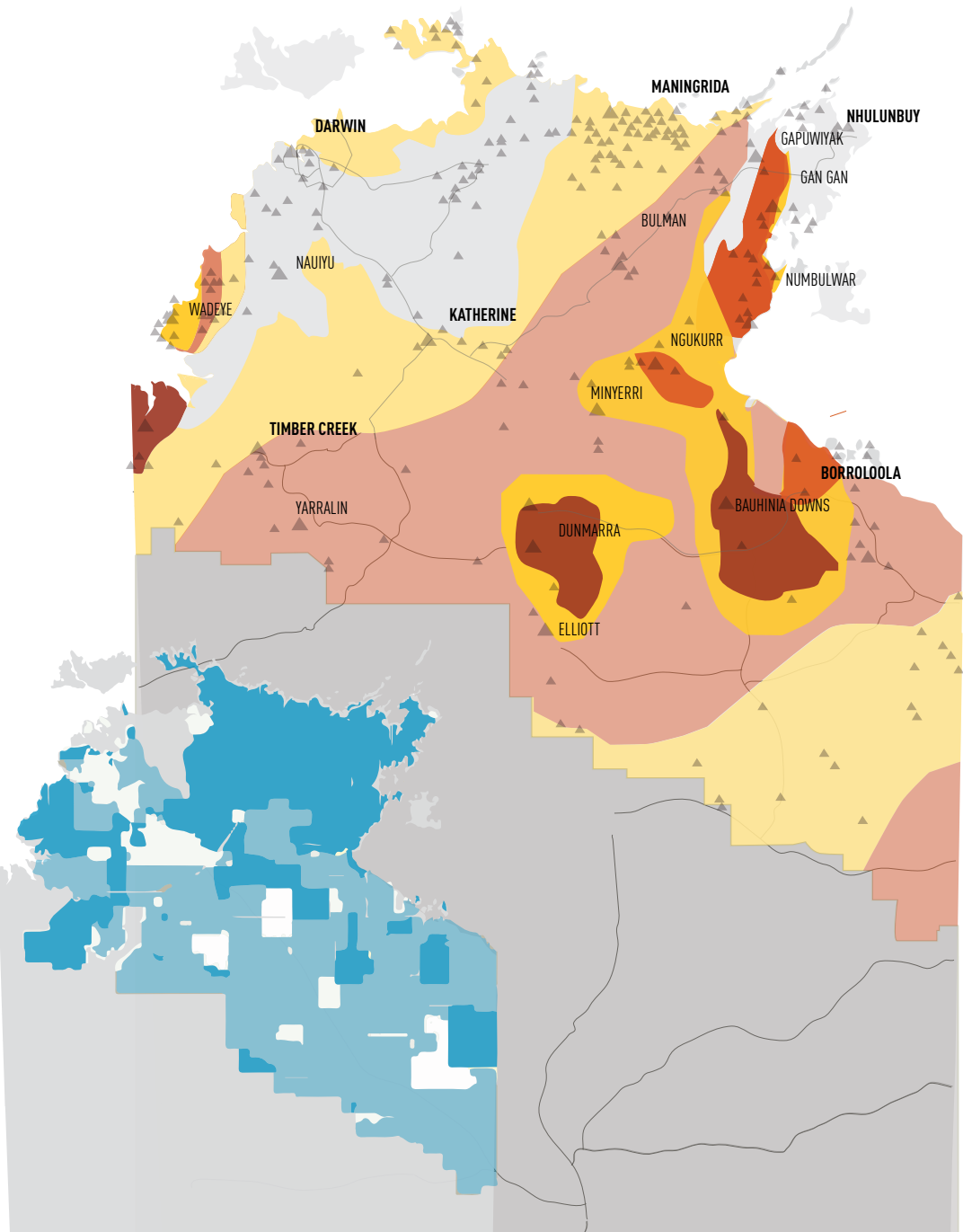


FIGURE 30: KNOWN HYDROCARBON (SHALE)
POTENTIAL NLC REGION



Petroleum Act, its regulations and industry-leading practice. As part of its commitment, the NLC has continued to update its research to ensure that the most accurate and best possible information is provided to Traditional Owners and native title parties during the decision-making process.

The NLC continued to facilitate engagement between native title parties, Traditional Owners and companies exploring for oil and gas. As a result, companies such as Pangaea, Origin, Santos and Imperial Oil and Gas undertook exploration activities (both at the preliminary and advanced stages), but many companies curtailed their efforts early in 2016 following the announcement of a potential moratorium on oil and gas exploration. The potential moratorium significantly slowed demand for on-country consultations by other petroleum explorers during 2016.

Negotiation over a right-of-way access for the Northern gas pipeline to run between Warrego in the Northern Territory and Mount Isa in Queensland commenced in early 2016. As the oil and gas industry in the Northern Territory matures, an increased level of infrastructure (roads, pipelines and processing and production plants) will be required.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION

Under the ALRA and the Native Title Act, the NLC has a responsibility to represent and support Aboriginal people with matters associated with land management. The NLC provides technical and environmental advice

about proposed minerals and petroleum exploration and production activities that may impact on their land. The NLC's responsibilities include liaising with project developers, governmental agencies, Traditional Owners and native title parties. The NLC may initiate its own environmental research or investigations and utilise its internal expertise, or engage specialist consultants as needed to ensure that leading practice and precautionary principles are observed and applied.

Over the course of this reporting period, the NLC represented Traditional Owners and native title parties at various scientific and technical forums (listed below). It is worth noting that a number of Traditional Owners and native title parties (or their associations) also participated on some of these committees:

- Alligator Rivers Region Technical Committee (ARRTC)
- Alligator Rivers Region Advisory Committee (ARRAC)
- Ranger, Jabiluka and Nabarlek Mine Site Technical Committees (MTCs)
- Ranger Uranium Mine Closure Criteria Working Groups
- Rum Jungle Liaison Committee and Working Group
- Woodcutters Mine Closure Liaison Committee
- Bootu Creek Manganese Mine Liaison Committee
- Redbank Mine Working Group

During the 2015/16 reporting year, the NLC provided Traditional Owners and native title parties with environmental advice and representation, or presented

formal submissions in response to publicly available documents in relation to the following proposed major developments and inquiries:

- Review of the Minerals Titles Act Discussion Paper;
- Draft Terms of Reference for the preparation of an EIS for the NT Link Project (Northern gas pipeline);
- Northern Territory Government's Oil & Gas Industry Development Strategy;
- Northern Territory Government's Balanced Environment Strategy;
- Draft Petroleum (Environment) Regulations;
- Draft Petroleum Act; and
- The Australian Senate Select Committee on Unconventional Gas Mining.

INDUSTRY CONFERENCES AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

To maintain a high level of technical expertise, knowledge and skills required to ensure the principles of FPIC are met, NLC staff participate in conferences, forums and seminars associated with the minerals and energy sectors. This allows the NLC to improve and develop its in-house expertise by investing in professional development of staff and remaining up to date with evolving technical research and practice related to environmental, production, processing and mine closure. On-going participation at industry conferences and targeted training for staff represent positive investments towards achieving the NLC's plans and improved outcomes from on-country consultations.

Staff attended the following industry forums and training seminars, which assisted in improving networks with project developers, government representatives and other stakeholders.

- Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA) Process Safety Module Training, Darwin, July 2015
- Mining the Territory Conference, Darwin, September 2015
- Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE) Unconventional Gas Conference, Sydney, September 2015
- Technical Meeting on Public and Community Acceptability of Uranium Mining and Milling, Vienna, Austria, December 2015
- Annual Geoscience Exploration Seminar (AGES) 2016, Alice Springs, March 2016
- Katherine Regional Exploration Mining Forum, Katherine, March 2016
- Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand – Northern Territory Division (EIANZ NT) Seminar on Strategic Impact Assessments, Darwin, April 2016.

Participation at forums of this type continues to inform the NLC about developments in the resources sector and to promote the interests of Aboriginal people in worldwide developments that relate to specialised areas such as stakeholder and cultural management in oil and gas exploration ventures and during mine operation, closure and remediation.

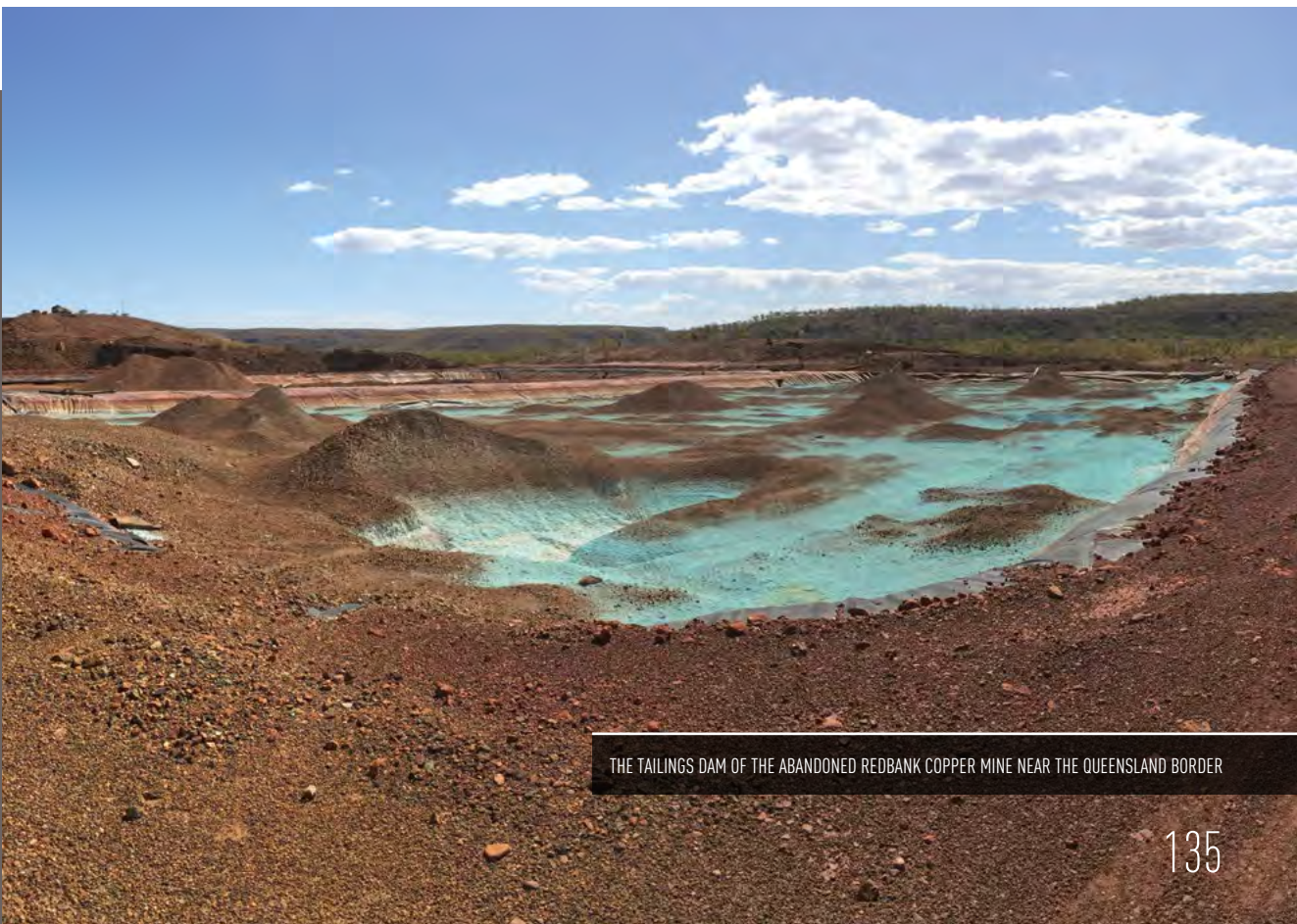
CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The NLC continues to confront various challenges in meeting a satisfactory level of outcomes related to the mineral, oil and gas sectors. The challenges most specific to the Minerals and Energy Branch include:

- Understaffing, which continues to result in resources being overly stretched, making allocation of staff across a number of competing interests difficult;
- An increase in the amount of closure planning and involvement in legacy mine management and auditing, emanating from current and former mine sites;

- Fewer opportunities to undertake fieldwork, brought on mainly by weather conditions that make it difficult to hold consultations during the wet season; and
- Increased frequency of concerns from Traditional Owners about how exploration companies are managing their fieldwork.

Significant effort is required to address these shortfalls to ensure that the NLC can meet its objective to act as an effective advocate for Traditional Owners and ensure benefits obtained from mining, oil and gas agreements are obtained with minimal impact to the environment or Aboriginal culture.



THE TAILINGS DAM OF THE ABANDONED REDBANK COPPER MINE NEAR THE QUEENSLAND BORDER

www.nlc.org.au

www.nlc.org

www.nlc.org.au

atholic University, on pages 12-15. The conduct of the Gove Land Rights case in 1968, which set the scene for the passage of the Land Rights Act.

PUBLIC ADVOCACY SERVICES

A key NLC objective is to provide and report information on issues affecting Aboriginal people throughout the region.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

A core responsibility of the NLC is to increase public awareness of the work and policies of the NLC and promote the views of Aboriginal people in its region.

The NLC's media unit has represented the organisation at various festivals, including Garma, Barunga and NAIDOC events. The unit was also closely involved in preparation and producing promotional material for the National Native Title Conference held in Darwin in June 2016, and for the land handback ceremonies at Yarralin and Mandorah (Kenbi).

The NLC is still planning a major upgrade of its website to give it a more modern look and make it more accessible.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION RESOURCES

The NLC produces a range of information and educational resources, and also produces Land Rights News – Northern Edition.

Land Rights News was first published in 1977 and is Australia's longest-running Aboriginal newspaper and is distributed free to Aboriginal communities across the NLC region. Four issues were produced during the reporting year – July and October 2015 and January and April 2016. Much of the material in

these issues focussed on the history of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* – 2016 being the 40th anniversary of the passing of the Act by the Commonwealth Parliament.

The paper was recognised as one of five finalists in the media section of the Australian Human Rights Commission's 2015 annual awards.

MEDIA MANAGEMENT

The media unit deals with a large number of enquiries from local, national and international news media.

The unit released several statements covering a range of topics, which are posted on the NLC's website.

The unit also oversees the issue of permits for news media persons to enter Aboriginal lands. Permission to film landscapes and interview members of local communities on Aboriginal lands is considered by Traditional Owners, and where these engagements are commercial in nature, a special agreement is negotiated.

GOOD CORPORATE STANDARDS

DISTRIBUTION OF ROYALTIES

A key NLC objective is to manage the receipt and disbursement of royalty monies to Aboriginal people in a responsible and appropriate manner.

The NLC maintains a royalty trust account that receives monies on behalf of individuals and associations of Aboriginal people in accordance with section 35 of the ALRA. The monies are disbursed in accordance with the terms of the Trust. The NLC makes distributions of rents, payments and royalties payable to Traditional Owners and royalty receiving associations and also administers the Ceremonial Purposes Fund.

Taking instructions and the distribution of royalties and payments is an intensive process. The primary responsibility for the co-ordination of meetings of Aboriginal landowners to determine distributions lies with regional office staff and anthropologists. The NLC also assists groups to resolve disputes over distributions.

OUTCOME

Under sections 15, 16 and 19 of the ALRA, income of \$15,903,000 was generated from Aboriginal land during 2015/16.

Distributions have been made as per instructions from Traditional Owners in accordance with traditional decision making processes. A total of 8,317 royalty payments were made during the course of the financial year totalling \$13,663,000.

ADMINISTERING ABORIGINAL LAND TRUSTS

A key NLC objective is to assist Aboriginal Land Trusts to act appropriately and in accordance with the ALRA.

Land Trusts are statutory bodies corporate that hold title to Aboriginal land under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act for the benefit of the Aboriginal people concerned, including Traditional Owners and Aboriginal persons who are entitled by tradition to use or occupy the land, whether or not that entitlement is qualified by place, time, circumstance, purpose or permission. Where land is granted in a deed of grant held in escrow by a Land Council, a Land Trust may acquire the estates and interests of other persons with a view of gaining the delivery of the title to the Land Trust. A Land Trust cannot exercise its functions in relation to land except in accordance with a direction given by the NLC.

Land Trusts usually comprise a Chairman and not fewer than three members who hold office for periods not exceeding five years. Land Trust members are usually Traditional Owners of the land held in trust.

The NLC assists Land Trusts in a number of ways including the secure storage of Deeds of Grant and Common Seals, administering and negotiating leases, receiving and distributing monies such as rents and royalty payments and the resolution and management of disputes.

FIGURE 31: BREAKDOWN OF ROYALTY DISTRIBUTION PAYMENTS, 2015/16

PAYMENTS	\$'000
Section 35(2) Statutory Royalties	\$13,262
Section 35(3) exploration and mining	\$13,663
Section 35(4) negotiated monies; rental and lease monies	\$17,130
Native title	\$1,632
TOTAL	\$45,687

MEDIATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

A key NLC objective is to support Traditional Owners to manage and resolve disputes.

With its abundant natural resources, the northern region of the Northern Territory has always supported a large Traditional Owner population. Demand for coastal land and sea access, farming development, the uranium and mineral resources, mining, large township development and water resource exploitation all confront the Traditional Owner population.

The social, economic and cultural gap can cause tension within and between groups. In addition, issues arise with regard to traditional ownership. There may be boundary disputes between groups, or intra-group disputes regarding membership, or both.

The NLC's functions include (under s25 of the ALRA, a duty to 'attempt the conciliation of disputes':

Where a Land Council is informed that there is, or there may arise, a dispute with respect to land in the area of the Council between persons to whom this section applies, the Land Council shall use its best endeavours by way of conciliation for the settlement or prevention, as the case may be, of that dispute.

The NLC is also the arbiter for the identification of the Traditional Owners.

LAND AND WATER ACCESS PERMITS

A key NLC objective is to ensure access to Aboriginal land is managed effectively and efficiently.

The ALRA made Aboriginal land private land, and regulated the entry of persons without estates or interests in the land or traditional rights in the land. Amendments to the Act that took effect in 2008 removed the need for certain people to obtain permits in certain circumstances, such as anyone in 'common areas' within 'community land'.

Community land refers to the five-year lease boundaries drawn around each of the communities prescribed in the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). Permits are no longer required for anyone entering communities by aircraft or boat so long as the landing place (for example airstrip or boat ramp) is not part of a private lease and so long as there are roads that provide access from the landing place to the community common areas. The Northern Territory Police have the power to fine and remove people in violation of permit requirements. No prosecutions may take place without the authorisation of the NLC.

In addition to opening specified areas to the public, without Traditional Owner consent, the new legislation allows specific government employees to enter and remain on Aboriginal land. These changes did not lapse at the conclusion of the five year NTER period. This statutory protection from prosecution should not be confused with a right to enter and remain on Aboriginal land without a permit – work permits should still be sought in all circumstances.

The NLC has proposed that the permit system be reinstated, while ensuring that government agents and journalists working in a professional capacity – for example, in order to attend court sessions – can enter Aboriginal land without a permit. Government employees and contractors engaged in extracurricular activities without a permit, such as hunting or motor biking, may still be prosecuted. The NLC encourages all members of the public to obtain permits, as movement records can be useful in the event of an emergency, or notification of road closures.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The NLC continues to provide information about permit requirements and efficiently processes applications. Permits are available for collection from regional offices and special arrangements can be made if permits can't be collected in person. In terms of the Blue Mud Bay decision, it is encouraging that individuals continue to apply on-line for permits which are issued automatically. Separate access consultations continue to focus on high recreation and commercial fishing areas of intertidal zone adjoining Aboriginal Land Trusts.

FUNERAL AND CEREMONIAL FUND

The NLC administers funeral and ceremonial assistance grants funded by the Aboriginals Benefit Account. The NLC Full Council recognises the increasing costs of charters, freight and coffin costs and the funeral and ceremonial policy enables Traditional Owners to apply for assistance to conduct funerals and ceremonies on country. Funeral and ceremonial assistance for 2015/16 are provided below.

FIGURE 32: FUNERAL AND CEREMONY ASSISTANCE BY REGION 2015/16

CONSULTATION TYPE	BURIAL	CEREMONY	TOTAL PER REGION
Borroloola Barkly	52	1	53
Darwin Daly Wagait	136	2	138
East Arnhem	116	2	118
Katherine	96	2	98
Ngukurr Numbulwar	38	1	39
Tennant Creek	15	1	16
Victoria River District	12	2	14
West Arnhem	124	5	129
TOTAL	589	16	605

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE APPROACH

A key NLC objective is to be accountable, transparent and open in all corporate dealings, and to operate with integrity, leadership and commitment.

The NLC's enabling legislation is the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. The responsible Minister for the 2015/16 reporting period is Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

The performance of Directors is informally reviewed by their peers. NLC staff provide corporate governance support, advice and training, when required.

EXEMPTIONS GRANTED BY FINANCE MINISTER

No exemptions were granted by the Finance Minister in regard to reporting requirements in 2015/16.

INSURANCE PREMIUMS FOR OFFICERS

No indemnity against liability has been given by agreement or other means to a current or former member of staff. Comcover provides general liability and professional indemnity insurance for NLC directors and officers and legal practitioners are covered by compulsory professional indemnity as required by the Northern Territory Law Society.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND ETHICS

NLC members are responsible for setting the policy and oversight of the risk management framework that integrates

the process for managing risk into the organisations governance, strategic planning, management, reporting processes, policies, and organisational culture to comply with the Australian/ New Zealand Risk Management Standard (AS/ANZ ISO 31000:2009).

The Leadership Group, including the Chief Executive Officer, is responsible for ensuring that management systems, processes and controls are in place to minimise risks and impacts to the organisation's strategic objectives and desired operational outcomes.

The Audit Committee is responsible for monitoring financial risk, compliance and financial performance in conjunction with the Leadership Group. The risk management framework is an evolving document and will be updated along with the 2015–2019 Strategic Plan. The Audit Committee Charter sets out the role and purpose of the Audit Committee who also act as an advisory body on the operation and financial management controls and reporting responsibilities of the organisation, oversee internal and external audit functions, and provide independent and objective assurance that the systems, processes and risk management strategies of the NLC are robust and comply with acceptable standards and government requirements.

During 2015/16, the Audit Committee was independently chaired by Mr Jon Webster, and attended by two independent members and two Executive Council members.

The Chief Financial Officer of the NLC attends Audit Committee meetings, but is not a member of the committee. The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) and HLB Mann Judd on behalf of the ANAO have a standing invitation to attend all Audit Committee meetings.

The NLC's Code of Conduct Policy and Council Member's Handbook outlines ethical behaviour standards at both personal and professional levels expected within the workplace. The NLC workplaces include an office environment and/or remote field environments. Each staff member is made aware of and has access to the Staff Code of Conduct on commencement, via the intranet and during reviews. Similarly, the Full Council members receive an induction and copy of the handbook, as well as a clear understanding of appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

RELATED ENTITY TRANSACTIONS

There were no payments for a good or service from another entity, or grants provided to another entity during the period. There were no loans or grants made to directors or director-related entities.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

NLC is exempt from reporting under the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

ADVERTISING AND MARKET RESEARCH

The NLC advertised during normal recruitment campaigns, released a number of media releases and published the Land Rights News paper. NLC members attended the Garma, NAIDOC and Barunga festivals to promote community awareness of its role and achievements. No market research, polling or direct mail activities were undertaken this financial year.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The key principles of ecologically sustainable development are considered in the key objectives of NLC's Corporate and Strategic Plans and are addressed throughout consultations and negotiations of land use proposals. In particular, the economic, environmental, cultural and political impacts are considered during all decision making processes at both Traditional Owner and Full Council levels. This includes the precautionary principle, and monitoring and compliance of environmental impacts of exploration and mining on the natural and cultural resources.

CONSULTANT PROCEDURES, COMPETITIVE TENDERING AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The procurement policy is consistent with the Commonwealth procurement principles.

During the reporting period, the NLC engaged the following list of consultants to do work in relation to the Council's functions and exercise of powers under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, as required under s.37(8).

FIGURE 33: CONSULTANT EXPENDITURE 2015/16

CONSULTANTS EXPENDITURE GREATER THAN \$10,000	\$
CONSULTANTS - LEGAL	
Appleby Consulting	\$28,512.08
Glacken, Sturt- (A J Dever Pty Ltd)	\$396,004.53
Glenn Miller Property Consultants	\$20,013.63
Graeme Hill	\$123,727.26
Justin Edwards	\$19,170.91
Keely T.P.	\$106,133.63
M3Property (Vic) Pty Ltd	\$84,885.00
Professor Jon Altman	\$43,600.00
SLM Corporate Pty Ltd	\$169,078.93
Sue Meaghan	\$83,935.64
Urbis Valuations Pty Ltd	\$66,055.25
Wendy Asche	\$26,188.18
	\$1,167,305.04

FIGURE 33: CONSULTANT EXPENDITURE 2015/16 (CONT.)

CONSULTANTS EXPENDITURE GREATER THAN \$10,000	\$
CONSULTANTS - ANTHROPOLOGISTS	
Anthropos Consulting	\$25,844.96
Bennetts Anthropological Consultancies	\$66,842.73
Culture And Heritage	\$35,402.36
Dr Philip Clarke	\$20,436.74
Frank Mckeown- Mckeown Ygoa & Associates Pty Ltd	\$99,193.27
Gay English Consulting	\$24,987.05
Jeffrey Stead Anthropological Consultant	\$49,545.45
Jitendra Kumarage	\$45,726.82
John Dymock	\$26,000.00
Keely T.P.	\$28,592.73
Walter Zukowski	\$135,000.00
	\$557,572.11
CONSULTANTS - OTHER	
Afortinvoice	\$21,360.00
BDO	\$100,518.00
Centrefarm/Topendfarm	\$30,525.45
Fire Stick And Associates Pty Ltd	\$18,818.40
Grant Sarra Consultancy Services	\$19,184.10
H T Masero	\$24,000.00
Menggen Ipa Survey	\$11,040.00
Nic Gambold	\$28,665.48
Opus International Consultants (Aus) Pty Ltd NT	\$68,221.37
OTS Management Pty Ltd	\$129,175.65
Savvy Community Devt Consult	\$10,421.82
SLM Corporate Pty Ltd	\$21,000.00
Terry Mahney	\$27,281.26
	\$510,211.53
TOTAL	\$2,235,088.68

The NLC leases the premises it occupies, therefore there are limitations in terms of influencing environmental management saving initiatives such as grey water recycling systems and alternative energy systems. However, practices to reduce waste management issues, increase recycling, and conserve energy through efficiencies of lighting, electrical appliances and refrigeration are always considered and where appropriate have been implemented.

Community based land management rangers are at the forefront of reducing the carbon footprint through on-ground savannah fire management systems including the sustainable use of wildlife resources, evasive species management and maintaining and conserving biodiversity. Some of those activities are described in the land and sea management section of this report.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

In consultation with the NLC, the National Archives of Australia (NAA) developed a Records Authority 2010/00643150 which sets out the requirements for managing records. This has required a significant commitment on NLC's behalf to manage records of its activities. The Authority is based on the identification and analysis of NLC's business by taking into account the legal and organisational records, management requirements and the interests of stakeholders and NAA.

The Authority also identifies those records that must be retained at NAA and specifies the minimum length of time that temporary records need to be kept. Under the Archives Act (Cth) 1983 the Authority permits the destruction of temporary records after the retention period has expired.

POLICY STATEMENT: PRESERVING THE PAST – PROTECTING THE PRESENT – PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In accordance with the policy, all information, both electronic and hard copy records provide evidence of NLC's business activities and transactions. True and accurate records are vital to the achievement of objectives, legal process and the corporate and cultural history of the organisation. NLC information management practices must comply with all relevant legislation, standards, Commonwealth Government policies and guidelines and the Commonwealth Protection Security Manual. No officer employed by NLC has the right to destroy records unless it is in accordance with the Archives Act, which requires an Authority to Destroy processed through the Information Management Unit and approved by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate.

Annual reviews of information management are required and reported to the NAA and this year we achieved a compliance rating of 3.28, a slight reduction from the previous year.

The main focus for the year was to convert data from old media formats (ie VHS, films, audio, photos, slides and negatives) to digital format for long-term preservation.

ACHIEVEMENTS

As indicated previously, this year, the NLC achieved an average compliance rating of 3.28 (out of a possible score of 5). The organisation received an overall ranking of 42nd across 166 Commonwealth agencies.

COMMITTEES

No new committees were appointed in accordance with section 29A of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. The current 29A committees are the Executive Council and the Regional Councils.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The WHS committee has eight members including the WHS co-ordinator and WHS officer who were seconded to the committee. The committee is active and meets regularly.

The role and responsibilities of the committee are articulated in the *Work Health Safety Act 2011* and the current committee is operating effectively under the legislative guidelines contained in the Act. The committee has been engaged with the introduction of new policies and procedures required under statutory obligations. The committee has provided timely advice to the CEO on WHS matters and is focused on improving the safety standards for all NLC employees to ensure a safe workplace and to be compliant under the legislation.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Joe Valenti (Chair)
- Greg McDonald
- Kirsty Kassman
- Jeffrey Yoelu
- Andrew Thomas
- Cindy Hoban
- Ian Amy
- Hidayat Nurslanis

ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT COMMITTEE

NLC salaries are substantially lower in comparison with organisations such as the Central Land Council, Northern Territory Public Service and the Australian Public Service for similar classifications.

The NLC Enterprise Agreement 2011 expired on 1 July 2013 and negotiations between employee representatives, the Community and Public Sector Union and NLC Management commenced on 18 June 2013. The NLC was in caretaker mode, with an acting CEO, to February 2014 which stalled progress on the Agreement.

In April 2015, the Enterprise Agreement process document was put on hold, after advice from the Minister. Negotiations recommenced in early 2016 and are on-going.

ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT COMMITTEE 2016

MANAGEMENT

- Joe Morrison
- Joe Valenti
- Cindy Hoban

CPSU AND STAFF

- Tamara Cole
- Rebecca Hughes
- Rebecca Sirilas
- Kirsty Kassman
- Crag Cartling

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The NLC has an Audit Committee in compliance with section 45 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and PGPA Rule section 17 Audit Committee for Commonwealth Entities.

The Audit Committee plays a key role in assisting the Council in respect of financial reporting, performance reporting, risk oversight and management, internal control and compliance with relevant laws and policies.

The functions of the audit committee include assisting the Council, management and the Accountable Authority to comply with obligations under the PGPA Act, providing a forum for communication between the Council, leadership group and external auditors.

FIGURE 34: AUDIT COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE

NAME	MEETINGS HELD	MEETINGS ATTENDED
Jon Webster (Independent Chair)	6	5
Angela Shima (Non-Executive Member)	6	6
Aswin Kumar (Non-Executive Member)	2	2
John Christophersen (NLC Executive Member)	6	3
Helen Lee (NLC Executive Member)	6	5

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

The Information Communication and Technology section has continued to deliver a high standard of service in spite of high workloads and a limited budget.

Key IT projects during 2015/2016 included upgrading internet access and speed to all regional offices, implementing offsite backup facilities, upgrading critical anti-virus software and installing 150 new computers on a three-year replacement program.

A major review of Information Communication and Technology will take place early next financial year and is expected to significant efficiencies with increased productivity through modern and reliable systems. It will also provide a long-term roadmap of the ICT requirements.

FLEET AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The NLC maintains a fleet of more than 100 vehicles including a range of four wheel drives, sedans, trailers and buses. The ranger program requires specialised vehicles like quad bikes and boats. The entire fleet is maintained to roadworthy and safe standards. The fleet is funded from several sources including ABA, native title or grant funding. All 4WD fleet vehicles are appropriately fitted out to operate both locally and remotely and in harsh environments.

The NLC occupies a number of remote offices and other property including ranger outposts that require maintenance.

A comprehensive review of the motor vehicle fleet was undertaken during 2015/16. The purpose of the Review was to provide recommendations for change with a focus on:

- Maintaining a modern, efficient and safe fleet
- Work Health and Safety commitments
- Identifying current and future vehicle requirements

DELEGATIONS

At its 110th meeting at Barunga in May 2015, the Full Council resolved that the 1996 delegations to the Executive Council be varied as follows:

1. The Executive shall have the power to direct a Land Trust to grant, transfer or surrender any estate or interest in land or any licence in respect of land under Section 19 of the Act where the proposed grant or other transaction is for a term not exceeding forty (40) years without regard to the amount of any payment or receipt and whether or not the transaction requires the consent of the Minister.
2. The Executive Council shall have the following powers:
 - (i) To consent to the grant of exploration licences under section 40 & 42(1)(a) of the Act and to enter into an agreement under section 40;
 - (ii) To agree upon terms and conditions under subsection 46(3); and
 - (iii) To enter into mining agreements under section 45(a).

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

INITIATIVES

NLC continued to work on self-improvement initiatives during the past year to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers and stakeholders.

- WHS committee meets every 3 months and provides valuable WHS information
- Test & tagging of all electrical appliances has been implemented
- A number of new emergency wardens were trained
- A safety handbook was designed for workers in the field
- Development and implementation of WHS policies, procedures and safe working practices
- Networking with Comcare and NT Worksafe to ensure compliance with the legislation.
- Networking with WHS organisations such as the Safety Institute and National Safety Council to ensure best practice
- Self-auditing in addition to compliance audits by external regulators

OUTCOMES

Injuries: NLC experienced low workplace injury rates and minimal work days lost due to workplace injuries. Only one serious workplace injury requiring admission to hospital and extended time off work occurred.

- Serious injuries requiring hospitalisation: 1
- Other Injuries requiring time off work: Nil

- Injuries requiring no time off work: 4
- Total lost time due to injury: 32 days

WORKER WELFARE

NLC provides access to an Employee Assistance Program for confidential counselling and mediation. The service provided 49 counselling sessions for workers in the year.

WORKERS COMPENSATION

There was one worker compensation claim during the year.

NOTIFIABLE INCIDENTS

NLC is required to inform the regulator Comcare when a notifiable incident occurs within the workplace. Only one notifiable incident was required to be reported during the year.

COMCARE AUDITS/INVESTIGATIONS

Comcare conducted an investigation into the notifiable incident which resulted in serious injury to a worker. As a result, Comcare issued three Provisional Improvement Notices for deficiencies in workplace policy documents and these deficiencies are being addressed by a working party appointed to carry out remedial actions. Comcare took no further action.

TRENDS

Motor vehicle accidents are the main cause of incident reports, representing 30% of all reported incidents.



LITCHFIELD

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Samuel Bush-Blanasi and Joe Morrison as the Accountable Authority of The Northern Land Council, present the 2015-16 annual performance statements of the Northern Land Council, as required under paragraph 39(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). In our opinion, these annual performance statements are based on properly maintained records, accurately reflect the performance of the entity, and comply with subsection 39(2) of the PGPA Act.

ENTITY PURPOSE

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

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

- To ascertain and express the wishes and the opinion of Aboriginals living in the area of the Land Council as to the management of Aboriginal land in that area and as to appropriate legislation concerning that land; and
- To protect the interests of traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginal interests in, Aboriginal land in the area of the Land Council; and
- To assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites on land

(whether or not Aboriginal land) in the area of the Land Council; and

- To consult with traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginals interested in, Aboriginal land in the area of the Land Council with respect to any proposal relating to the use of that land; and
- Where the Land Council holds in escrow a deed of grant of land made to a Land Trust under section 12:
 - To negotiate with persons having estates or interests in that land with a view to the acquisition of those estates or interests by the Land Trust; and
 - Until those estates or interests have been so acquired, to negotiate with those persons with a view to the use by Aboriginals of the land in such manner as may be agreed between the land Council and those persons; and
- To negotiate with persons desiring to obtain an estate or interest in land in the area of the Land Council:
 - where the land is held by a Land Trust on behalf of traditional Aboriginal owners (if any) of that land and of any other Aboriginals interested in the land; and
 - where the land is the subject of an application referred to in subsection 50(1)(a), on behalf of the traditional Aboriginal owners of that land or on behalf of any other Aboriginals interested in the land; and

- To assist Aboriginals in the area of the Land Council to carry out commercial activities (including resource development, the provision of tourist facilities and agricultural activities), in any manner that will not cause the Land Council to incur financial liability or enable it to receive financial benefit; and
- For land that is a community living area and in the area of the Land Council—to assist the owner of the land, if requested to do so, in relation to any dealings in the land (including assistance in negotiating leases of, or other grants of interests in, the land); and
- To assist Aboriginals claiming to have a traditional land claim to an area of land within the area of the Land Council in pursuing the claim, in particular, by arranging for legal assistance for them at the expense of the Land Council; and
- To negotiate, and enter into agreements, as necessary, for the purposes of subsection 70(4); and
- To compile and keep:
 - a register recording the names of the members of the Land Council; and
 - a register recording the names of the members of the Land Trusts holding, or established to hold, Aboriginal land in its area and descriptions of each area of such Aboriginal land; and

- To supervise, and provide administrative or other assistance for, Land Trusts holding, or established to hold, Aboriginal land in its area; and

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

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

Our purposes as described above are added to by our Vision and Values, which have been provided to us as our stakeholder mandate.

FIGURE 35: PERFORMANCE RESULTS

PERFORMANCE CRITERION	CRITERION SOURCE	RESULT AGAINST PERFORMANCE CRITERION
Continue to process ALRA and NTA responsibilities in relation to acquiring and protecting Aboriginal property rights, improving systems and resources to increase efficiency in these processes year by year	Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 231 ALRA s19 Land Use Expressions of Interest agreements • Approved 47 ALRA s19 land use agreements (LUAs) • A custom-built electronic database called the Land Information Management System (LIMS) has been developed to manage the whole of life activities and significantly enhances the quality and quantity of information presented to Traditional Owners regarding activities occurring on their land • 429 Land Use Agreements entered into LIMS, covering in excess of 3,000 discrete parcels of land. A number of historical LUAs are being sourced as part of an ongoing data entry project to ensure all LUAs are captured in the LIMS database • 13 Native Title applications determined • The area successfully claimed is approximately 40,000 square kilometres, and represents a significant 12% of all possible land claimable under the Native Title Act within the NLC region • An external consultant has been engaged to undertake a systems review and provide recommendations to improving ALRA and NTA systems
Resource the Secretariat and other branches to enable the NLC to provide policy and advocacy will cultural integrity along with the protection of intellectual and cultural rights.	Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat Branch is resourced within budget constraints and vacancies filled as soon as practical • A restructure of the Secretariat Branch has occurred • Key policies identified and currently under review

PERFORMANCE CRITERION	CRITERION SOURCE	RESULT AGAINST PERFORMANCE CRITERION
Maintain and strengthen the capabilities of Ranger Groups	Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of 104,300km² of land and sea country in the top end of the Northern Territory • Delivery of a significant training investment in excess of \$250,000 including eight CERT 3 completions in fisheries compliance, baseline WHS and environmental qualifications for all rangers during 2015/16 • Ranger workshops/forums held in Darwin and Katherine as planned • Declaration of Waanyi Gawara Indigenous Protected Area and the finalisation of the South East Arnhem Land Indigenous Propriated Area providing long term recognition for planned conservation approaches • Finalisation of the terms of reference for the Caring for Country Branch Review now anticipated to occur in 2016/17 (subject to funding) • Employment of more than 130 indigenous rangers in 2015/16
Develop and implement better GIS mapping capabilities and develop a cultural mapping capability and database.	Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully negotiate a significant upgrade to the software toolkit at a reduced cost • Significant workflows were developed to manage important corporate datasets in line with NLC operational procedures
Develop formal protocols to regularly liaise with Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and other institutions.	Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NLC, in collaboration with museums and Traditional Owners, is discussing and defining the roles and responsibilities of institutions towards developing a policy framework for the repatriation of sacred objects and human remains • The current funeral and ceremonial policy is still relevant and will be reviewed on the expiry of the current funding and grant acquittal process - that is, 31 December 2016 • As at 30 June 2016 no new policies were required to be endorsed by the Executive Council • NLC and AAPA continue to interact according to individual legislative responsibilities as required

PERFORMANCE CRITERION	CRITERION SOURCE	RESULT AGAINST PERFORMANCE CRITERION
Create a Community Development Unit to assist and facilitate Traditional Owners to gain access to resources to economically and socially develop their own groups, and to support Aboriginal Corporations and Associations in their development.	Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Planning and Development Unit was approved. Manager, Community Planning and Development Unit recruited, starting July 2016
Develop and implement policies and procedures to improve leadership and governance, skill and gender representation, and leadership-engagement with shires, government organisations and other NGOs.	Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A systematic review of internal policies and procedures commenced in 2015/16
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.	Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The preparation of an economic prospectus for the region commenced in 2015/16 An external consultant engaged to assist in the development of an economic prospectus

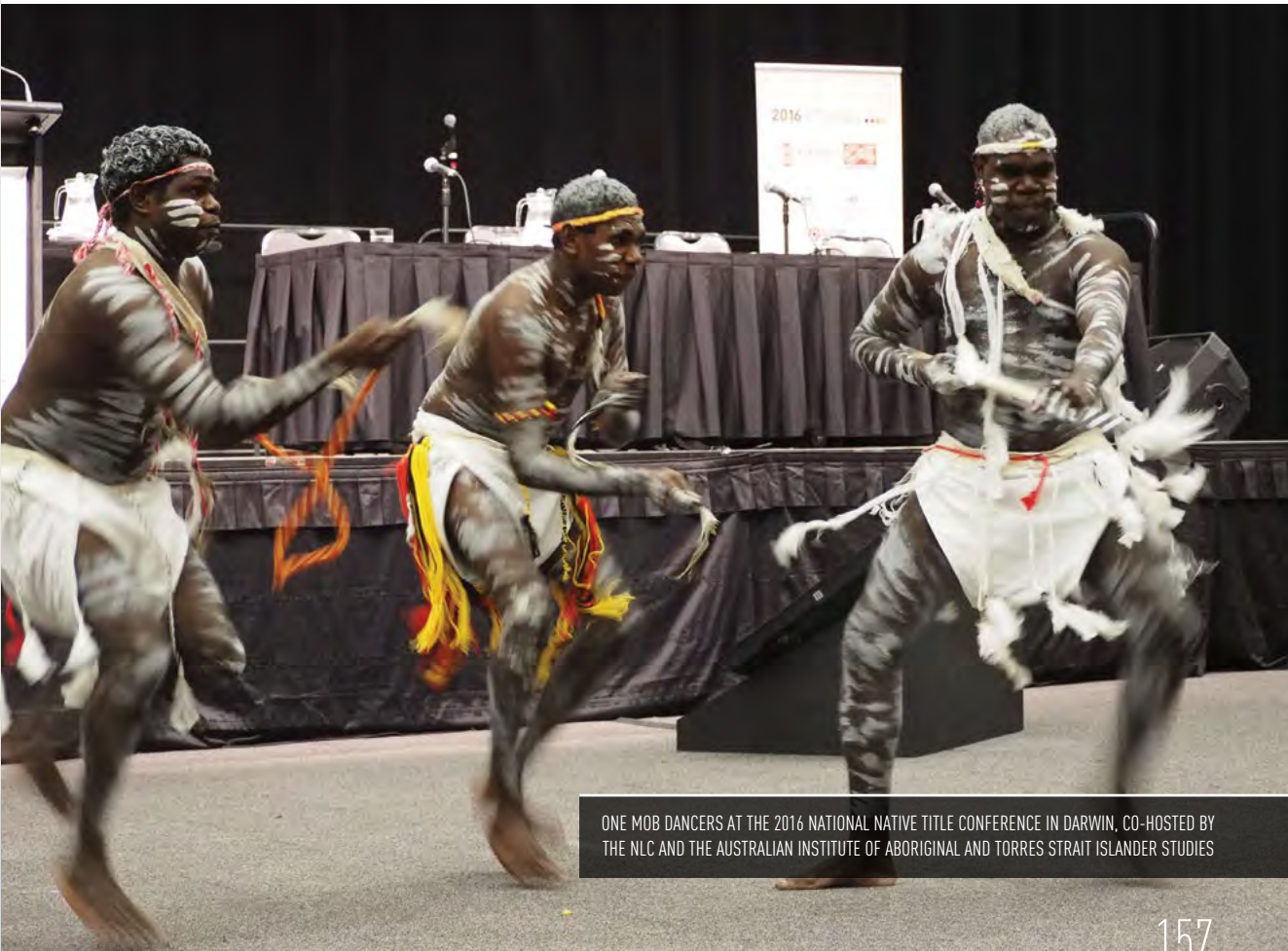
PERFORMANCE CRITERION	CRITERION SOURCE	RESULT AGAINST PERFORMANCE CRITERION
To develop and implement a comprehensive communications and public relations policy to provide opportunities for advocacy and the provision of information, including the establishment of MoU's with other Statutory Authorities	Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications and public relations policy drafted; implementation budget dependent • Four issues of Land Rights News published on time, much content focused on 40th ALRA anniversary • Publications produced for Kenbi & Yarralin handback ceremonies • Led co-hosting arrangements (with AIATSIS) for National Native Title Conference (NNTC) in Darwin, focused on 40th ALRA anniversary • Speeches prepared for NNTC, Kenbi & Yarralin handback ceremonies and Native Title determination ceremonies • Several press releases issued and posted on website • Alliance maintained with Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT) and press releases drafted
Strengthen, develop, and implement more policies and procedures that will strengthen the governance and management of the organisation	Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key skilled positions filled in 2015/16 including Chief Financial Officer, Management Accountant and Financial Accountant • A systematic review of internal policies and procedures commenced in 2015/16 • Previous year's Financial Statements submitted and published on time

ANALYSIS

The Northern Land Council implemented a series of reforms in 2015/16 to strengthen, improve and increase efficiency through a review and upgrade of systems, policies and processes. A major review of information, technology and communications will take place early in the next financial year. The audit committee has a full complement of members and a review of internal policy and procedures commenced in 2015/16. The establishment of a

Community Planning and Development Unit will assist and facilitate Traditional Owners to gain access to resources, in order to develop their own groups economically and socially, and to support Aboriginal corporations and associations in their development.

The Northern Land Council's purpose, activities and the environment in which it operates did not change significantly in the reporting period to materially impact its performance.



ONE MOB DANCERS AT THE 2016 NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE CONFERENCE IN DARWIN, CO-HOSTED BY THE NLC AND THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

PART 4a



Annual Financial Statement 2015/2016

PUBLIC GOVERNANCE, PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Auditor's report	160	Note 11: Provisions	190
Statement by the Directors, Chief Executive and Chief Financial officer	162	Note 12: Cash flow reconciliation	192
Statement of Comprehensive Income	163	Note 13: Contingent Assets and Liabilities	193
Statement of Financial Position	164	Note 14: Related Party Disclosures	194
Statement of Changes in Equity	165	Note 15: Senior Management Personnel Remuneration	195
Cash Flow Statement	166	Note 16: Remuneration of Auditors	196
Note 1: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies	167	Note 17: Financial Instruments	197
Note 2: Events after the Reporting Period	172	Note 18: Royalty Assets Held in Trust Account	200
Note 3: Expenses	172	Note 19A: Aboriginal Benefit Account Appropriations	203
Note 4: Own Source Income	175	Note 19B: ABA - Special Purpose Grant: Funeral and Ceremonial Activities	204
Note 5: Income tax expense (Competitive neutrality)	178	Note 19C: ABA - Top End Land and Sea Management Program - S64 (4)	206
Note 6: Fair Value Measurements	178	Note 19D: ABA - Top End Land and Sea Management Program - S64 (4)	208
Note 7: Financial Assets	182	Note 19E: ABA - Construct a Cultural Display Tjuwaliyn (Douglas) Hot Springs	209
Note 8: Non-Financial Assets	185		
Note 9: Payables	189		
Note 10: Unearned Revenue	190		

AUDITOR'S REPORT



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Minister for Indigenous Affairs

I have audited the accompanying annual financial statements of the Northern Land Council – Native Title Representative Body for the year ended 30 June 2016, which comprise:

- Statement by the Directors, Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Cash Flow Statement; and
- Notes comprising a Summary of Significant Accounting Policies and other explanatory information.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Northern Land Council – Native Title Representative Body:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*; and
- (b) present fairly the financial position of the Northern Land Council – Native Title Representative Body as at 30 June 2016 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

Accountable Authority's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The Chair and the Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Land Council – Native Title Representative Body are responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the rules made under that Act and are also responsible for such internal control as the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on my audit. I have conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. These auditing standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial

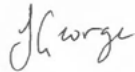
statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Accountable Authority of the entity, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have followed the independence requirements of the Australian National Audit Office, which incorporate the requirements of the Australian accounting profession.

Australian National Audit Office



Jodi George
Audit Principal

Delegate of the Auditor-General

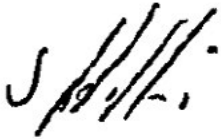
Canberra
30 September 2016

STATEMENT BY THE ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITIES AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER


In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2016 comply with subsection 42(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Northern Land Council will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the directors.



Samuel Bush-Blanasi
Chairman / Accountable Authority



Joe Morrison
Chief Executive Officer / Accountable Authority



Joe Valenti
Chief Financial Officer

30 September 2016

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

for the year ended 30 June 2016

NET COST OF SERVICES	NOTES	2016	2015
		\$'000	\$'000
EXPENSES			
Employee benefits	3A	21,563	18,233
Suppliers	3B	16,716	14,528
Depreciation	3C	1,000	893
Write-down and impairment of assets	3D	264	882
Loss on disposal of assets	3E	102	125
Other expenses	3F	-	440
Total Expenses		39,645	35,101
OWN-SOURCE INCOME			
Own-source revenue			
Sale of goods and rendering of services	4A	2,467	5,137
Interest	4B	232	114
Total own-source revenue		2,699	5,251
Gains			
Gain from sale of assets	4C	10	-
Reversals of previous asset write-downs and impairments	4D	374	-
Total gains		384	-
Total own-source income		3,083	5,251
Net cost of services		36,562	29,850
Revenue from Government- PM&C	4E	7,560	8,073
Revenue from ABA s64 (1)	4F	20,203	18,768
Revenue from Government-Special Purpose Grant	4G	8,749	9,111
Total revenue from Government		36,513	35,952
Surplus / (Deficit) attributable to the Australian Government		(49)	6,102
Total comprehensive income / (loss) attributable to the Australian Government		(49)	6,102

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as at 30 June 2016

	NOTES	2016	2015
		\$'000	\$'000
ASSETS			
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	7A	7,354	6,588
Trade and other receivables	7B	850	676
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS		8,204	7,264
Non-Financial Assets			
Land and buildings	8A	4,159	4,269
Property, plant and equipment	8A	3,282	3,396
Other non-financial assets	8B	303	82
Total non-financial assets		7,744	7,747
TOTAL ASSETS		15,948	15,011
LIABILITIES			
Payables			
Suppliers	9A	2,252	1,868
Other payables	9B	449	733
TOTAL PAYABLES		2,701	2,601
Unearned Revenue			
Advance Payments	10	728	-
TOTAL UNEARNED REVENUE		728	-
Provisions			
Employee provisions	11	3,191	3,033
Total provisions		3,191	3,033
TOTAL LIABILITIES		6,620	5,634

NET ASSETS		9,328	9,377
EQUITY			
Asset Revaluation Reserves		1,973	1,973
Retained surplus		7,355	7,404
TOTAL EQUITY		9,328	9,377

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY for the year 30 June 2016

	RETAINED EARNINGS		ASSET REVALUATION RESERVE		TOTAL EQUITY	
	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Opening balance						
Balance carried forward from previous period	7,404	1,302	1,973	1,973	9,377	3,275
Adjusted opening balance	7,404	1,302	1,973	1,973	9,377	3,275
Comprehensive Income						
Surplus (Deficit) for the period	(49)	6,102	-	-	(49)	6,102
Total Comprehensive Income	(49)	6,102	-	-	(49)	6,102
CLOSING BALANCE AS AT 30 JUNE	7,355	7,404	1,973	1,973	9,328	9,377

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

for the year ended 30 June 2016

	NOTES	2016	2015
		\$'000	\$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Sales of goods and rendering of services		2,641	5,559
Receipts from Government		40,032	37,639
Interest		232	114
TOTAL CASH RECEIVED		42,905	43,312
CASH USED			
Employees		(21,405)	(19,185)
Suppliers		(17,476)	(17,547)
Distribution of old s64(1) Funding		-	(440)
Net GST paid		(2,379)	(524)
Total cash used		(41,260)	(37,696)
NET CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	12	1,644	5,616
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Proceeds from sales of property, plant and equipment		98	247
TOTAL CASH RECEIVED		98	247

CASH USED			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(976)	(1,820)
Total cash used		(976)	(1,820)
Net cash /(used by) investing activities		(878)	(1,573)
Net (decrease) in cash held		766	4,043
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		6,588	2,545
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE REPORTING PERIOD	12	7,354	6,588

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL

The Northern Land Council is a representative body with statutory authority under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. It also has responsibilities under the *Native Title Act 1993* and the *Pastoral Land Act 1992*. It is a not-for-profit entity. The objectives of the Northern Land Council are to:

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

The Northern Land Council is a statutory authority formed within the provision of Section 21 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA). The Northern Land Council receives appropriations from the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) pursuant to ministerially approved estimates prepared in accordance with Section 34 of the Act and made available under Section 64 of the Act.

The Northern Land Council is structured to meet the following outcomes:

OUTCOME 1

Access to Aboriginal Land is managed effectively and efficiently.

OUTCOME 2

Traditional owners are assisted to manage their land, sea and natural resources in a sustainable manner.

OUTCOME 3:

To assist Aboriginal people to obtain or acquire property rights over their traditional land and seas.

OUTCOME 4

To secure economic, social and cultural benefits for traditional owners from developments taking place on Aboriginal land.

OUTCOME 5

Develop employment and training plans in partnership with industry and government stakeholders, and facilitate the implementation of these plans.

OUTCOME 6

Efficiently process exploration and mining license applications and provide accurate advice on potential environmental impacts and benefits.

OUTCOME 7

Empower Aboriginal people to carry out commercial activities and build sustainable enterprises.

OUTCOME 8

Advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people and express their views.

OUTCOME 9

Raise public awareness of the NLC's work and the views of Aboriginal people.

OUTCOME 10

Supporting Aboriginal people to maintain and protect their sacred sites and cultural heritage.

OUTCOME 11

Help Aboriginal people achieve their development potential by facilitating access to leadership and governance programs, resources, infrastructure and government services.

OUTCOME 12:

Receive and distribute statutory and other payments for Aboriginal people.

OUTCOME 13:

Assist Land Trusts' to act appropriately and in accordance with the ALRA.

OUTCOME 14:

Support traditional owners to manage and resolve disputes.

The funding conditions of the Northern Land Council are laid down by the ALRA, and any special purpose grant guidelines. Accounting for monies received from the ABA is subject to conditions approved by the Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

The continued existence of the Northern Land Council in its present form with its present programs is dependent on Government policy and on continuing funding by Parliament for the Northern Land Council's administration and programs.

1.2 BASIS OF PREPARATION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements and are required by section 42 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- a) Financial Reporting Rule (FRR) for reporting periods ending on or after 1 July 2014; and
- b) Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and in accordance with the historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position.

The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified.

Unless an alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard or the FRR, assets and liabilities are recognised in the statement of financial position when, and only when, it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the NLC or a future sacrifice of economic benefits will be required and

the amounts of the assets or liabilities can be reliably measured. However, assets and liabilities arising under executory contracts are not recognised unless required by an accounting standard. Liabilities and assets that are unrecognised are reported in note 3B.

Unless alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard, income and expenses are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income when, and only when, the flow, consumption or loss of economic benefits has occurred and can be reliably measured.

1.3 SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND ESTIMATES

No accounting assumptions or estimates have been identified that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period except doubtful debts for which provision of \$1,220,000 has been made in the current year.

1.4 NEW AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

Adoption of New Australian Accounting Standard Requirements

No accounting standard has been adopted earlier than the application date as stated in the standard.

The following new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations were issued prior to the signing of the statement by the accountable authority, chief executive officer and chief financial officer, were applicable to the current reporting period on the entity's financial statements:

STANDARD/ INTERPRETATION	NATURE OF CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY AND ADJUSTMENT TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AASB 2014-4 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation [AASB 116 & 138]</i>	<p>Amends AASB 116 <i>Property, Plant and Equipment</i> and AASB 138 <i>Intangible Assets</i> to provide additional guidance on how the depreciation or amortisation of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets should be calculated.</p> <p>The standard does not impact the financial statements.</p>

All other new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to sign-off date and are applicable to the current reporting period did not have a material effect, and are not expected to have a future material impact on the Northern Land Council's financial statements.

Future Australian Accounting Standard Requirements

The following new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations were issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board prior to the signing of the statement by the accountable authority, chief executive officer and chief financial officer , on the entity's financial statements for future reporting period(s):

STANDARD/ INTERPRETATION	APPLICATION DATE	NATURE OF IMPENDING CHANGE/S IN ACCOUNTING POLICY AND LIKELY IMPACT ON INITIAL APPLICATION
AASB 9 <i>Financial Instruments</i> (Dec 2014), AASB 2014-1 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards (Part E – Financial Instruments)</i> , AASB 2014-7 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9 (Dec 2014)</i>	1 Jan 2018	The final version of AASB 9 brings together the classification and measurement, impairment and hedge accounting phases of the IASB's project to replace AASB 139 <i>Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement</i> . This version adds a new expected loss impairment model and limited amendments to classification and measurement for financial assets. The impact of its adoption is yet to be assessed by the Northern Land Council.
AASB 15 <i>Revenue from Contracts with Customers</i> , AASB 2014-5 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB</i>	1 Jan 2018	AASB 15 outlines a single comprehensive model for entities to use in accounting for revenue arising from contracts with customers. It replaces several Standards and Interpretations, including AASB 111 <i>Construction Contracts</i> , AASB 118 <i>Revenue</i> , Interpretation 15 <i>Agreements for the Construction of Real Estate</i> , and Interpretation 18 <i>Transfers of Assets from Customers</i> . The impact of its adoption is yet to be assessed by the Northern Land Council.

All other new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to the sign-off date and are applicable to future reporting period(s) are not expected to have a future material impact on the Northern Land Council's financial statements.

NOTE 2: EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

There are no subsequent events that had the potential to significantly affect the ongoing structure and Financial Activities of the Northern Land Council.

NOTE 3: EXPENSES

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 3A: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		
Superannuation:		
Wages and salaries	18,556	15,929
Defined contribution plans	1,956	1,921
Leave and other entitlements	1,051	383
TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	21,563	18,233
NOTE 3B: SUPPLIERS		
Goods and services supplied or rendered		
Consultants	2,637	1,940
Stationery	323	291
Travel	2,693	2,283
Vehicle Expenses	1,278	1,260
Office Accommodation	914	856
IT/Communications	1,374	902
Payment to Grant Partners	1,877	1,906
Other	3,690	2,706
TOTAL GOODS AND SERVICES SUPPLIED OR RENDERED	14,787	12,144

	\$'000	\$'000
Other suppliers		
Operating lease rentals in connection with		
External parties		
Minimum lease payments	1,685	1,863
Workers compensation expenses	244	521
Total other suppliers	1,929	2,384
TOTAL SUPPLIERS	16,716	14,528

LEASING COMMITMENTS

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Operating Lease commitments		
Within 1 year	1,246	(1,779)
Between 1 to 5 years	1,261	(1,731)
More than 5 years	196	(266)
TOTAL OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS	2,703	(3,776)

Accounting Policy

The nature of operating leases relates to the leases for office accommodation and office equipment.

Lease payments are subject to annual increases in accordance with upwards movements in the Consumer Price Index. The initial periods of office accommodation leases are still current and each may be renewed for up to ten years at the Northern Land Council's option, following a once-off adjustment of rentals to current market levels.

Operating lease payments are expensed on a straight line basis which is representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the least assets.

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 3C: DEPRECIATION		
Depreciation		
Property, plant and equipment	450	446
Buildings and leasehold	550	447
TOTAL DEPRECIATION	1,000	893
NOTE 3D: WRITE-DOWN AND IMPAIRMENT OF ASSETS		
Impairment on Financial Instruments	264	882
TOTAL WRITE-DOWN AND IMPAIRMENT OF ASSETS	264	882
NOTE 3E: LOSS ON DISPOSAL OF ASSETS		
Proceeds from sale	98	247
Carrying value of assets disposed	200	372
TOTAL LOSS FROM ASSETS SALES	102	125
NOTE 3F: OTHER EXPENSES	-	
Distribution of old s64(1) Funding	-	440
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES	-	440

NOTE 4: OWN-SOURCE INCOME

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
OWN-SOURCE REVENUE		
NOTE 4A: SALE OF GOODS AND RENDERING OF SERVICES		
Rendering of services in connection with		
Related entities	248	316
External parties	2,219	4,821
TOTAL SALE OF GOODS AND RENDERING OF SERVICES	2,467	5,137

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when:

- a) the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred to the buyer;
- b) the Northern Land Council retains no managerial involvement or effective control over the goods;
- c) the revenue and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and
- d) it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the Northern Land Council.

Revenue from rendering of services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date. The revenue is recognised when:

- a) the amount of revenue, stage of completion and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and
- b) the probable economic benefits with the transaction will flow to the Northern Land Council.

The stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date is determined by reference to the proportion that costs incurred to date bear to the estimated total costs of the transaction.

Receivables for goods and services, which have 30 day terms, are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance account. Collectability of debts is reviewed as at the end of the reporting period. Allowances are made when collectability of the debt is no longer probable.

	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 4B: INTEREST		
Deposits	232	114
TOTAL INTEREST	232	114

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method as set out in AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement.

	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 4C: GAINS FROM SALE OF ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment		
Proceeds from sale	10	-
Carrying value of assets sold	-	-
TOTAL GAIN FROM SALE OF ASSETS	10	-

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Gains from disposal of assets are recognised when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

NOTE 4D: REVERSALS OF PREVIOUS ASSET WRITE-DOWNS AND IMPAIRMENTS		
Reversal of Impairment losses	(374)	-
TOTAL REVERSALS OF PREVIOUS ASSET WRITE-DOWNS AND IMPAIRMENTS	(374)	-

	\$'000	\$'000
REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT		
NOTE 4E: REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT - DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER & CABINET (PM&C)		
Native Title Program	4,958	3,664
Revenue from ABA s64 (4)	2,312	4,069
Others	291	340
	7,560	8,073
	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 4F: ABA S64 (1)		
PM&C - Revenue from ABA s64 (1)	20,203	18,768
	20,203	18,768
NOTE 4G: REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT- SPECIAL PURPOSE GRANTS		
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet	4,977	5,506
Indigenous Land Corporation	1,236	975
Department of Defence	164	157
Department of Environment	-	209
Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries	180	180
Department of Land Resource Management	1,623	1,915
Department of Agriculture & Water Resources	90	-
Others	479	169
	8,749	9,111

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Funding received or receivable from Government is recognised as Revenue from Government when the Northern Land Council gains control of the appropriation, except for certain amounts that are reciprocal in nature, in which case revenue is recognised only when it is earned.

Appropriations receivable are recognised at their nominal amounts.

NOTE 5: INCOME TAX EXPENSE
(COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY)

The Northern Land Council has been approved as a Public Benevolent Institution. The services of the Council are provided on a 'not-for-profit' basis. Therefore the Northern Land Council is not subject to the Australian Government's Competitive Neutrality policy.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Taxation

The Northern Land Council is exempt from all forms of taxation except fringe benefits tax (FBT) and the goods and services tax (GST).

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST except:

- a) where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office; and
- b) for receivables and payables.

Competitive Neutrality

The Northern Land Council does not provide services on a for-profit basis. Therefore the Land Council is not required to make Australian Income Tax Equivalent payments to the Government.

NOTE 6: FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

The following tables provide an analysis of assets and liabilities that are measured at fair value. The different levels of the fair value hierarchy are defined below.

Level 1: Quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the entity can access at measurement date.

Level 2: Inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.

Level 3: Unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Valuations are conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure that the carrying amounts of assets do not differ materially from the assets' fair values as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depends upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets

An independent valuer conducted the valuations and has provided a comprehensive review and valuation of all stated assets on 30 June 2014 for financial reporting purposes. This valuation was performed in accordance with all aspects of the relevant accounting, insurance and valuation framework, which includes (but is not limited to) the International Valuation Standards (IVS) 2011 which are endorsed by the Australian Property Institute, and AASB 116 Property, Plant and Equipment.

Extent of Investigation

The extent of investigation undertaken by the valuer in completing the valuation has included:

- collation of information from relevant parties regarding the subject property;
- undertaking research regarding the subject property;
- an inspection of the property and measurement of buildings where required, and;
- Undertaking market research in terms of values and/or costs of similar properties;

Valuation Approaches

AASB 13 recognises three valuation approaches to measure fair value:

- Market approach: based on market transactions involving identical or similar assets or liabilities.
- Income approach: based on future amounts (e.g., cash flows or income and expenses) that are converted (discounted) to a single present amount.
- Cost approach: based on the amount required to replace the service potential of an asset.

Adopted Valuation Method

In practice there are number of methods under each of these three primary approaches. In some cases it may be appropriate to use more than one approach or method in order to arrive at the valuation, especially where there is shortage of market data to fully support the use of one method.

For the purpose of this valuation for financial reporting purposes, the market approach has been adopted. Due regard has been given to sales of comparable properties.

Transfers

The Land Council deems any transfers between levels of the fair value hierarchy to have occurred at the end of the reporting period.

NOTE 6A: FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

	FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS AT THE END OF THE REPORTING PERIOD			CATEGORY (LEVEL 1, 2 OR 3)
	2016 \$'000	2015 \$'000		
Non-financial assets				
Land	299	299	Level 2	
Buildings	2,280	2,009	Level 2	
Leasehold improvements	1,580	1,961	Level 2	
Property, plant and equipment	3,282	3,396	Level 2	
Total non-financial assets	7,442	7,665		
TOTAL FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS OF ASSETS IN THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	7,422	7,655		

⁽¹⁾ The Independent Valuation was performed on 30 June 2014.

VALUATION TECHNIQUE (1)		INPUTS USED
	Market comparables	Observable prices or recent market transactions
	Market comparables	Observable prices or recent market transactions
	Depreciated replacement cost	Observable prices or recent market transactions
	Market comparables	Observable prices or recent market transactions

NOTE 7: FINANCIAL ASSETS

	2016	2016
	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 7A: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash on hand or on deposit	7,354	6,588
TOTAL CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	7,354	6,588

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents include:

- a) cash on hand
- b) demand deposits in bank accounts with an original maturity of 3 months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value.

	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 7B: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES		
Goods and Services receivables in connection with:		
External parties	1,623	1,550
TOTAL GOODS AND SERVICES RECEIVABLE	1,623	1,550
Grant receivables		
External parties	40	40
Related parties	293	173
TOTAL GRANT RECEIVABLES	333	213
TOTAL TRADE RECEIVABLES	1956	1763
Other receivables		
GST receivable from the Australian Taxation Office	114	243
Total other receivables	114	243
TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (GROSS)	2,070	2,006
Less impairment allowance		
Grants Receivable	(40)	(213)
Goods and services	(1,180)	(1,043)
GST	-	(74)
Total impairment allowance	(1,220)	(1,330)

TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (NET)	850	676
	\$'000	\$'000
Trade and other receivables (net) expected to be recovered:		
No more than 12 months	850	676
TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (NET)	850	676
Trade and other receivables (gross) aged as follows:		
Not overdue	697	409
Overdue by:		
0 to 30 days	35	550
31 to 60 days	40	244
61 to 90 days	148	106
More than 90 days	1,150	697
TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (GROSS)	2,070	2,006
Impairment allowance aged as follows:		
Not overdue	-	(24)
Overdue by:		
0 to 30 days	-	(384)
31 to 60 days	-	(119)
61 to 90 days	(127)	(106)
More than 90 days	(1,093)	(697)
TOTAL IMPAIRMENT ALLOWANCE	(1,220)	(1,330)

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Loans and Receivables

Trade receivables, loans and other receivables that have fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market are classified as 'loans and receivables'. Loans and receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment. Interest is recognised by applying the effective interest rate.

Effective Interest Method

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and of allocating interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset, or, where appropriate, a shorter period.

Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis except for financial assets that are recognised at fair value through profit or loss.

NOTE 7: FINANCIAL ASSETS (CONT.)

NOTE 7B: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (CONT'D)

Reconciliation of the impairment allowance:

	GOODS AND SERVICES 2016	GRANTS RECEIVABLES 2016	GST 2016	TOTAL 2016
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Movements in relation to 2016				
Opening balance	1,043	213	74	1,330
Amounts written off	-	-	-	-
Amounts recovered	(127)	(173)	(74)	(374)
Impairment of assets	264	0	0	264
CLOSING BALANCE	1,180	40	0	1,220
Movements in relation to 2015				
Opening balance	1,142	-	-	1,142
Amounts written off	(694)	-	-	(694)
Amounts recovered and reversed	-	-	-	-
Increase/(decrease) recognised in cost of services	595	213	74	882
CLOSING BALANCE	1,043	213	74	1,330

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period

NOTE 8: NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS

NOTE 8A: RECONCILIATION OF THE OPENING AND CLOSING BALANCES OF PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Reconciliation of the opening and closing balance of property, plant and equipment for 2016

	LAND	BUILDINGS	LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS	OTHER PP & E	TOTAL
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
As at 1 July 2015					
Gross book value	299	2,060	2,344	3,838	8,541
Accumulated depreciation	-	(51)	(383)	(442)	(876)
TOTAL AS AT 1 JULY 2015	299	2,009	1,961	3,396	7,665
Additions by purchase	-	325	113	537	976
Depreciation	-	(54)	(496)	(450)	(1,000)
Disposals - other	-	-	-	(200)	(200)
TOTAL AS AT 30 JUNE 2016	299	2,280	1,580	3,282	7,443
Total as at 30 June 2016 represented by:					
Gross book value	299	2,385	2,458	4,175	9,317
Accumulated depreciation	-	(105)	(878)	(892)	(1,875)
TOTAL AS AT 30 JUNE 2016	299	2,280	1,580	3,282	7,443

REVALUATIONS OF NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS

All revaluations are conducted in accordance with the revaluation policy stated in accounting policy below and at Note 6. On 30 June 2014, an independent valuer conducted the revaluations.

No indicators of impairment were found for land and buildings and leasehold improvements at year end.

No land, buildings or leasehold improvements are expected to be sold or disposed of within the next 12 months.

Reconciliation of the opening and closing balance of property, plant and equipment for 2015

	LAND	BUILDINGS	LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS	OTHER PP & E	TOTAL
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
As at 1 July 2014					
Gross book value	200	2,060	1,157	3,694	7,111
Accumulated depreciation	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL AS AT 1 JULY 2014	200	2,060	1,157	3,694	7,111
Additions by purchase	99	-	1,207	514	1,820
Depreciation	-	(51)	(396)	(446)	(893)
Disposals - other	-	-	(7)	(366)	(373)
TOTAL AS AT 30 JUNE 2015	299	2,009	1,961	3,396	7,665
Total as at 30 June 2015 represented by:					
Gross book value	-	2,060	2,344	3,838	8,541
Accumulated depreciation	299	(51)	(383)	(442)	(876)
TOTAL AS AT 30 JUNE 2015	299	2,009	1,961	3,396	7,665

ACCOUNTING POLICY**ACQUISITION OF ASSETS**

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken. Financial assets are initially measured at their fair value plus transaction costs where appropriate.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised as assets and income at their fair value at the date of acquisition, unless acquired as a consequence of restructuring of administrative arrangements. In the latter case, assets are initially recognised as contributions by owners at the amounts at which they were recognised in the transfer of Northern Land Council's accounts immediately prior to the restructuring.

ASSET RECOGNITION THRESHOLD

Purchases of property, plant and equipment are recognised initially at cost in the statement of financial position, except for purchases below the capitalisation threshold, which are expensed in the year of acquisition (other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total). The capitalisation thresholds values are:

Land: \$20,000

Buildings: \$20,000

Leasehold Improvements: \$5,000

Furniture and Equipment: \$5,000

Information Technology (Hardware): \$5,000

Information Technology (Software): \$5,000

Motor Vehicles: \$10,000

REVALUATIONS

Fair values for each class of asset are determined as shown below:

Asset class	Fair value measurement
Land	Market selling price
Buildings excluding Leasehold Improvements	Market selling price
Leasehold Improvements	Depreciated replacement cost
Other Property Plant and Equipment	Market selling price

Following initial recognition at cost, property plant and equipment are carried at fair value less subsequent accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Valuations are conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure that the carrying amounts of assets do not differ materially from the assets' fair values as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depends upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

Revaluation adjustments are made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment is credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that it reverses a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised in the surplus/deficit. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets are recognised directly in the surplus/deficit except to the extent that they reverse a previous revaluation increment for that class.

Any accumulated depreciation as at the revaluation date is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the asset restated to the revalued amount.

DEPRECIATION

Depreciable property, plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to the Northern Land Council using, in all cases, the straight-line method of depreciation.

Depreciation rates (useful lives), residual values and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current and future reporting periods, as appropriate.

Depreciation rates applying to each class of depreciable asset are based on the following useful lives:

	2016	2015
Buildings on Freehold Land	10 - 40 years	10 - 40 years
Leasehold Improvements	Lease term	Lease term
Office Furniture & Equipment	3 to 5 years	3 to 5 years
Motor Vehicles	3 to 10 years	3 to 10 years
Plant & Equipment	3 years	3 years

IMPAIRMENT

All assets were assessed for impairment at 30 June 2016. Where indications of impairment exist, the assets' recoverable amount is estimated and an impairment adjustment if the asset's recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount.

The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value less costs of disposal and its value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from the asset. Where the future economic benefit of an asset is not primarily dependent on the asset's ability to generate future cash flows, and the asset would be replaced if the Northern Land Council were deprived of the asset, its value in use is taken to be its depreciated replacement cost.

DERECOGNITION

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no further future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal.

NOTE 8: NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS (CONT.)

NOTE 8B: OTHER NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Other	14	13
Prepayments	289	69
TOTAL OTHER NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS	303	82
Other non-financial assets to be recovered No more than 12 months	303	82
	303	82

No indicators of impairment were found for other non-financial assets

NOTE 9: PAYABLES

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 9A: SUPPLIERS		
Trade creditors and accruals	2,252	1,868
TOTAL SUPPLIERS	2,252	1,868
Suppliers expected to be settled		
No more than 12 months	2,252	1,868
TOTAL SUPPLIERS	2,252	1,868

Settlement was usually made within 30 days.

	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 9B: OTHER PAYABLES		
Salaries and wages	92	564
Superannuation	292	148
Other	64	21
TOTAL OTHER PAYABLES	449	733

Total other payables expected to be settled		
No more than 12 months	449	733
TOTAL OTHER PAYABLES	449	733

NOTE 10: UNEARNED REVENUE

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Advance Payments	728	-
Total Unearned Revenue	728	-
Total Unearned Revenue expected to be settled		
No more than 12 months	728	-
TOTAL UNEARNED REVENUE	728	-

NOTE 11: EMPLOYEE PROVISIONS

Leave	3,191	3,033
Total employee provisions	3,191	3,033
Employee provisions expected to be settled		
No more than 12 months	2,235	2,137
More than 12 months	956	896
TOTAL EMPLOYEE PROVISIONS	3,191	3,033

ACCOUNTING POLICY

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Liabilities for 'short-term employee benefits' (as defined in AASB 119 Employee Benefits) and termination benefits due within twelve months of the end of reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

The nominal amount is calculated with regard to the rates expected to be paid on settlement of the liability.

LEAVE

The liability for employee benefits includes provision for annual leave and long service leave. The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that applied at the time the leave is taken, including the Northern Land Council's employer superannuation contribution rates, to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination.

Liabilities for current employee benefits expected within twelve months of the end of reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

NLC used the shorthand method to calculate the long service leave liability.

SUPERANNUATION

The Northern Land Council's staff can choose their own super fund with most members being with MLC. The entity makes employer contributions to the employees' defined benefit superannuation scheme at rates determined by the EBA. The liability of superannuation recognised as at 30 June represents outstanding contributions.

NOTE 12: CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Reconciliation of cash and cash equivalents as per Statement of Financial Position to Cash Flow Statement		
Cash and cash equivalents as per:		
Cash Flow Statement	7,354	6,588
Statement of financial position	7,354	6,588
DISCREPANCY	-	-
Reconciliation of net cost of services to net cash from/ (used by) operating activities:		
Net cost of services	(36,562)	(29,850)
Revenue from Government	36,513	35,952
Adjustments for non-cash items		
Depreciation /amortisation	1,000	893
(Gain) / Loss on disposal of assets	102	126
MOVEMENTS IN ASSETS AND LIABILITIES		
Assets		
(Increase) / decrease in net receivables	(303)	633
(Increase) / decrease in GST receivables	128	238
(Increase) / decrease in other assets	(221)	11
Liabilities		
Increase / (decrease) in other payables	(284)	(428)
Increase / (decrease) in unearned revenue	728	-
Increase / (decrease) in employee provisions	158	(829)
Increase / (decrease) in supplier payables	384	(1,129)
NET CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	1,643	5,617

NOTE 13: CONTINGENT ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Claims for damages or costs

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Contingent Liabilities		
Balance from previous period	250	160
New contingent liabilities recognised	-	90
Obligations expired	(90)	-
TOTAL CONTINGENT LIABILITIES	160	250

QUANTIFIABLE CONTINGENCIES

The above table contains \$160,000 of contingent liabilities disclosed in respect to claims for damages/costs (2015: \$250,000). The amount represents an estimate of the Northern Land Council's liability based on precedent cases. The Council is defending the claims.

The nature of decisions of the Northern Land Council means that at times the decisions are subject to dispute and judicial review. Specific information about legal matters is not disclosed where the information would be prejudicial to the Northern Land Council.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Contingent liabilities and contingent assets are not recognised in the statement of financial position but are reported in notes. They may arise from uncertainty as to the existence of a liability or asset or represent an asset or liability in respect of which the amount cannot be reliably measured. Contingent assets are disclosed when settlement is probable but not virtually certain and contingent liabilities are disclosed when settlement is greater than remote.

NOTE 14: RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

The Council Executive Members who held office during the year ended 30 June 2016 were:

Samuel Bush-Blanas	Chairperson
John Daly	Deputy Chairperson
Wayne Wauchope	Deputy Chairperson
Helen Lee	Executive
Bill Risk	Executive
John Christophersen	Executive
Raymond Hector	Executive
Leonard Norman	Executive
Virginia Nundhirribala	Executive
David Djalangi	Executive

Full Council elections were held in November 2013. The elections are held every three years to elect a new Full Council and Executive Council. The next elections will be held in November 2016.

There were no loans made to directors or other transactions with Directors or Director - Related Entities during the year.

NOTE 14A: DIRECTOR REMUNERATION

The number of Directors of the Northern Land Council included in these figures are shown below in relevant remuneration bands:

		2016	2015
\$	\$		
0	29,999	9	6
30,000	59,999	0	2
60,000	89,999	0	0
180,000	214,999	1	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF DIRECTORS IN THE NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL		10	9
TOTAL REMUNERATION RECEIVED OR DUE AND RECEIVABLE BY DIRECTORS		\$373,700	\$392,127

NOTE 15: SENIOR MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL REMUNERATION

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Short-term employee benefits:		
Salary	1,649,356	1,517,028
TOTAL SHORT-TERM EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	1,649,356	1,517,028
Post-employment benefits:		
Superannuation	200,892	205,310
TOTAL POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS	200,892	205,310
Other long-term employee benefits:		
Annual leave	134,249	134,120
Long-service leave	2,741	6,878
TOTAL OTHER LONG-TERM EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	136,990	140,998
Termination benefits:		
Termination payout	221,502	-
TOTAL TERMINATION BENEFITS	221,502	-
TOTAL SENIOR EXECUTIVE REMUNERATION EXPENSES	2,208,739	1,863,336

The total number of senior management personnel that are included in the above table are 11 (2015: 11 senior management personnel).

NOTE 16: REMUNERATION OF AUDITORS

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Remuneration to auditors for the reporting period are as follows:		
Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) - Statutory audit	74	84
HLB Mann Judd - Grant Audits	13	12
	87	96
The audit fees above report the costs associated with auditing each financial year. No other services were provided by the Australian National Audit Office.		

NOTE 17: FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
17A CATEGORIES OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS		
Financial Assets		
Loans and receivables		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	7,354	6,588
Trade and Other Receivables	809	507
Total Loan and Receivables	8,163	7,095
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS	8,163	7,095
FINANCIAL LIABILITIES		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Suppliers	2,252	1,868
Other payables	449	733
Total financial liabilities at amortised cost	2,701	2,601
TOTAL FINANCIAL LIABILITIES	2,701	2,601
17B NET GAIN OR LOSSES ON FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Loans and receivables		
Interest revenue	232	114
NET GAIN/(LOSSES) ON LOANS AND RECEIVABLES	232	114

17C FAIR VALUE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The carrying amount of the financial assets and liabilities is a reasonable approximation of fair value due to their short term nature.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Financial assets

The Northern Land Council classifies its financial assets as loans and receivables. The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the financial assets and is determined at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised and derecognised upon trade date.

Financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon trade date. Supplier and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

The Council only trades with recognised, creditworthy third parties. Exposure to credit risk is monitored by management on an ongoing basis. The Council holds no collateral to mitigate against credit risk.

17E LIQUIDITY RISK

The Northern Land Council’s financial liabilities were suppliers and other payables. The exposure to liquidity risk was based on the notion that the Northern Land Council will encounter difficulty in meeting its obligations associated with financial liabilities. This is highly unlikely due to grants and government funding available to the council and internal policies and procedures put in place to ensure there were appropriate resources to meet its financial obligations.

The Council had no derivative financial liabilities in either the current or prior year.

17D CREDIT RISK

Credit risk refers to the risk that counterparty will default on its contractual obligations resulting in financial loss to the Council.

The Council is exposed to minimal credit risk as loans and receivables are cash and trade receivables. The maximum exposure to credit risk was the risk that arises from potential default of a debtor. This amount was equal to the total amount of trade receivables (2016: \$1,955,94 and 2015: \$1,764,433). The council has assessed the risk of the default on payment and has allocated \$1,220,633 in 2016 (2015: \$1,330,428) to an impairment allowance account.

17F MARKET RISK

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. It comprises interest rate risk, price risk and currency risk.

The Council held basic financial instruments that did not expose the Council to Currency risk and price risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in interest rates. The Council is exposed to interest rate risk primarily from cash at bank and short term deposits. The Council manages its interest rate risk by maintaining floating rate cash.

SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

Assuming the financial assets and liabilities at 30 June 2016 were to remain until maturity or settlement without any action by the Council to alter the resulting interest rate risk exposure, a change in the variable rates of 100 basis points (1 per cent) at reporting date would have the following effect on the Council's profit or loss and equity.

	Profit or Loss and Equity	
	100 Basis Points	100 Basis Points
	Increase	Decrease
	\$'000	\$'000
30 June 2016		
Financial assets – Cash and cash equivalents	74	-74
Net sensitivity	74	-74
30 June 2015		
Financial assets – Cash and cash equivalents	66	-66
Net sensitivity	66	-66

NOTE 18: ROYALTY ASSETS HELD IN TRUST

MONETARY ASSETS

The Northern Land Council maintains a Royalty Trust Account. Monies received on behalf of Associations of Aboriginal people and individuals in accordance with Section 35 of the ALRA, are held in the royalty trust account, and are distributed in accordance with the requirements of the Act. These monies are not available for other purposes and are not recognised in the financial statements of the Northern Land Council.

NON-MONETARY ASSETS

The Council had no non-monetary assets held in trust in both the current and prior reporting periods.

ROYALTY TRUST ACCOUNT - MONETARY ASSET

		2016	2015
		\$'000	\$'000
Total amount held at the beginning of the reporting period		41,356	39,648
Add	RECEIPTS		
	ABA Section 64 (3) Royalty Equivalents	15,468	10,954
	Section 15, 16 & 19 rental and lease monies	15,903	15,499
	Section 42, 43 and 44 mining Exploration negotiated monies	19,096	16,552
	Native Title	1,590	2,231
	Other monies	589	926
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	52,647	46,162
Less:	PAYMENTS		
	ABA Section 35 (2) Royalty Equivalents	(13,262)	(10,954)
	Section 35 (3) rental and lease monies	(13,663)	(14,227)
	Section 35 (4) negotiated monies	(17,130)	(14,395)
	Native Title	(1,632)	(1,633)
		(45,687)	(41,209)
	GST Paid to ATO	(2,912)	(2,892)

	Contract Administration	(293)	(354)
	Total amount held at the end of the reporting period	45,111	41,356
	CASH AT BANK	45,111	41,356
<p>The reporting requirements of the ALRA are detailed in section 37 (3) - (5), and refer to the application of monies received by the Northern Land Council under various sections of the Act, in particular under sub-section 64(3).</p>			

NOTE 18: ROYALTY ASSETS HELD IN TRUST (CONT'D)

Receipts under section 64(3), as referred in section 35(2):

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Opening balance	-	-
Funds received	15,468	10,954
Funds distributed to the following associations:		
Gumatj Aboriginal Corporation	(6,315)	(5,964)
Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation	(2,622)	(1,835)
Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation	(1,966)	(1,377)
Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation	(2,358)	(1,722)
Guyanggan Aboriginal Corp	-	(56)
Funds awaiting distribution	-	-
CLOSING BALANCE	2,206	-

Determination Pursuant to Section 35(2) *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*

Gove Rio Alcan project royalty equivalents received pursuant to Section 64(3)

The Northern Land Council determines pursuant to sub-section 35(2) that for the next 5 years (subject to any further determination within that period) amounts equal to all monies received under s.64(3) with respect to the Gove Alcan Project are to be apportioned and paid as follows:-

Gumatj Aboriginal Corporation 65%

Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation 20%

Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation 15%

Resolution Number: C110/4784

Note: This determination will expire on 17 June 2020.

Determination Pursuant to Section 35(2) *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*

Ranger Project royalty equivalents received pursuant to Section 64(3)

The Northern Land Council determines pursuant to sub-section 35(2) that for the next 5 years amounts equal to all monies received under s.64(3) with respect to the Ranger Project are to be paid to Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation.

Resolution Number: C 110/4785

Note: This determination will expire on 17 June 2020.

NOTE 19A: ABORIGINALS BENEFIT ACCOUNT APPROPRIATIONS

	ABA APPROVED ESTIMATES 2015/2016	ABA ACTUAL 2015/2016	ABA VARIANCE 2015/2016
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Surplus/(Deficit) as at 30 June 2015		(3,712)	
Balance carried forward		690	
Income			
ABA			
S64(1)	20,186	20,203	100%
TOTAL ABA INCOME	20,186	20,203	100%
Other			
Recoveries	2,904	866	30%
Other Activity Generated Income	247	190	77%
Interest	42	63	150%
Sale of Equipment	-	75	100%
TOTAL OTHER	3,193	1,194	37%
TOTAL INCOME	23,378	21,397	92%
Expenditure			
Salaries	13,096	12,465	95%
Operating	10,132	8,175	81%
Capital	150	104	69%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	23,378	20,744	89%
ABA surplus/(deficit) for the year		653	
Less: Carry forward 2016/2017		-	
ABA SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) AS AT 30 JUNE 2016		(3,059)	

NOTE 19B: ABA SPECIAL PURPOSE GRANT: FUNERAL AND CEREMONIAL ACTIVITIES

	2010/11 ACTUAL	2011/12 ACTUAL	2012/13 ACTUAL	2013/14 ACTUAL	2014/15 ACTUAL	2015/16 ACTUAL	TOTAL ACTUAL
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income							
Grant Income	-	500,000	500,000	500,000	340,379	290,788	2,131,167
Recoveries	1,231	-	2,980	-	-		4,211
TOTAL INCOME	1,231	500,000	502,980	500,000	340,379	290,788	2,135,378
Expenditure							
Borrooloola/ Barkly Region	5,126	40,933	64,429	26,295	43,285	25,755	205,824
Darwin/Daly Region	16,039	131,425	212,689	110,203	82,068	73,354	625,777
Jabiru Region	15,304	118,418	182,395	82,057	75,330	64,389	537,893
Katherine Region	19,542	97,477	80,050	65,739	56,049	75,100	393,956
Ngukurr Region	7,964	45,551	29,091	44,477	24,518	24,136	175,737
Nhulunbuy Region	16,443	154,743	135,477	77,804	66,735	83,503	534,706
Tennant Creek	2,054	13,325	33,747	11,826	14,486	12,276	87,715
Timber Creek (VRD) Region	6,706	28,932	33,962	14,545	15,441	19,215	118,801
Administration	77	1,833	3,653	(1,681)	1,400	-	5,282
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	89,255	632,637	775,493	431,266	379,312	377,728	2,685,691
Commitments							-
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(88,024)	(132,637)	(272,513)	68,735	(38,933)	(86,940)	(550,312)

NOTE 19C: ABA TOP END LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM - S64

	2009/10 ACTUAL	2010/11 ACTUAL	2011/12 ACTUAL	
	\$	\$	\$	
INCOME				
Grant Income - Operational	2,278,812	1,286,772	-	
Grant Income - Infrastructure	-	-	-	
Recoveries	-	6,600	37,270	
Total Income	2,278,812	1,293,372	37,270	
EXPENDITURE				
Acacia Larrakia Ranger Group	45,425	49,571	21,153	
Adjumarllarl Ranger Group	17,376	55,656	39,851	
SE Arafura/Gurwiling Ranger Group	50,877	141,455	16,306	
Asyrikarrak Kirim Ranger Group	44,165	42,881	72,282	
Warramunburr	984	57,709	706	
Bulgul Ranger Group	70,282	50,259	43,200	
Garawa & Waanyi Ranger Group	62,374	113,846	65,109	
Garngi Ranger Group	58,638	43,463	34,032	
Malak Malak Ranger Group	53,949	13,735	15,618	
Mardbalk Ranger Group	150,050	31,916	17,443	
Gumurr Marthakal Ranger Group	161,536	30,225	-	
Mimal Ranger Group	34,944	59,590	63,569	
Minyerri Ranger Group	-	-	-	
Numbulwar Ranger Group	2,461	19,186	23,137	
Timber Creek Ranger Group	25,885	56,723	34,438	
Wagiman Guwardagun Ranger Group	89,875	50,748	25,264	
Wanga Djakamirr Ranger Group	46,652	22,667	50,246	
Warramunburr Ranger Group	51,292	20,897	1,118	
Wudicupildiyerr Ranger Group	50,973	47,946	29,905	
Yugal Mangi Ranger Group	113,062	98,994	66,357	
Infrastructure Budget	-	-	422,018	
Kenbi (Belyuen)	-	-	18,168	
Bagala	-	-	124,803	
Gurruwiling				
Admin/Project Mgmt - NLC	20,809	172,546	491,146	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,151,608	1,180,013	1,675,870	
GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE	1,127,204	113,359	(1,638,600)	

	2012/13 ACTUAL	2013/14 ACTUAL	2014/15 ACTUAL	2015/16 ACTUAL	TOTAL ACTUAL
	\$	\$	\$	\$	
	-	-	2,156,466	-	5,722,050
	870,000	-	1,912,874	212,542	2,995,416
	-	16,927	(29,425)	415	31,787
	870,000	16,927	4,039,915	212,957	8,749,253
	-	-	-	-	116,149
	-	-	57,268	-	170,150
	-	101,481	54,467	4,430	369,015
	-	-	-	-	159,328
	-	-	-	-	59,400
	-	116,701	97,005	33,958	411,406
	-	111,458	133,864	5,353	492,004
	-	59,493	76,080	1,610	273,316
	-	37,617	43,815	1,555	166,290
	-	118,761	83,352	508	402,030
	-	-	-	-	191,761
	-	78,132	130,443	5,699	372,377
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	10,886	13,936	309	69,915
	-	39,724	-	-	156,769
	-	83,277	70,570	4,236	323,971
	-	33,916	43,228	-	196,710
	-	-	-	-	73,308
	-	12,969	-	-	141,793
	-	119,707	102,411	9,904	510,435
	275,954	73,107	1,475,944	429,367	2,676,389
	-	105,225	235	-	123,628
	-	25,970	26,993	-	177,766
		17,866	55,255	6,909	80,030
	-	-	-	-	684,501
	275,954	1,146,289	2,464,867	503,839	8,398,441
	594,046	(1,129,362)	1,575,048	(290,882)	350,812

NOTE 19D: ABA TOP END LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM - \$64

	APPROVED BUDGET OPERATIONAL	2015/16 ACTUAL	TOTAL
	\$	\$	\$
INCOME			
Grant Income - Operational Grant	2,311,580	2,311,580	2,311,580
Income - Infrastructure Recoveries			
Grant Income - Infrastructure	-	-	
Recoveries	-	370	370
TOTAL INCOME	2,311,580	2,311,950	2,311,950
EXPENDITURE			
Gumurr Marthakal Ranger Group	158,916	119,186	119,186
SE Arafura Catchment Ranger Group	97,846	127,564	127,564
Bulgul Ranger Group	139,463	149,739	149,739
Garawa & Waanyi Ranger Group	176,856	198,676	198,676
Garngi Ranger Group	133,232	135,222	135,222
Malak Malak Ranger Group	124,937	133,016	133,016
Mardbalk Ranger Group	147,492	140,976	140,976
Mimal Ranger Group	210,790	194,470	194,470
Numbulwar Ranger Group	217,106	272,091	272,091
Timber Creek Ranger Group	127,629	173,198	173,198
Wagiman Guwardagun Ranger Group	178,787	145,836	145,836
Wanga Djakamirr Ranger Group	122,903	116,448	116,448
Wudicupildiyerr Ranger Group	97,540	110,249	110,249
Yugal Mangi Ranger Group	191,646	222,372	222,372
Kenbi (Belyuen) Ranger Group	88,591	104,343	104,343
Gurruwiling Ranger Group	97,846	149,809	149,809
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2,311,580	2,493,195	2,493,195
GRANT FUNDS AVAILABLE	2,331,580	(181,245)	(181,245)

NOTE 19E: ABA -CONSTRUCT A CULTURAL DISPLAY TJUWALIYN (DOUGLAS) HOT SPRINGS

	2012/13 ACTUAL	2013/14 ACTUAL	2014/15 ACTUAL	2015/16 ACTUAL	TOTAL ACTUAL
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income					
Grant Income	10,000	35,000	-	28,000	73,000
TOTAL INCOME	10,000	35,000	-	28,000	73,000
Expenditure					
Motor Vehicle Expenses	-	273	(273)	-	-
Staff Travel	-	-	-	-	-
Audit & Acct. Fees	800	-	-	-	800
Telephone & Fax	-	-	-	-	-
Consultants Other	7,000	-	-	24,000	31,000
Minor Equipment Purchases	-	-	-	-	-
R&M Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	7,800	273	(273)	24,000	31,800
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	2,200	34,727	273	4,000	41,200

PART 4b



Native Title Representative Body Annual Financial Report 2015/2016

PUBLIC GOVERNANCE, PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT 2013 & NATIVE TITLE ACT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Auditor's report	210	Note 6: Financial Assets	224
Statement by the Directors, Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer	214	Note 7: Payables	226
Statement of Comprehensive Income	215	Note 8: Provisions	227
Statement of Financial Position	216	Note 9: Cash Flow Reconciliation	228
Statement of Changes in Equity	217	Note 10: Contingent Assets and Liabilities	229
Cash Flow Statement	217	Note 11: Directors and Senior Executive Remuneration	229
Note 1: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies	218	Note 12: Remuneration of Auditors	229
Note 2: Events after the Reporting Period	221	Note 13: Financial Instruments	230
Note 3: Expenses	221	Note 14: DPM&C Grant: Native Title Representative Services	232
Note 4: Income	222	Commonwealth Compliance Index	234
Note 5: Income tax expense (Competitive neutrality)	224	Glossary	238

AUDITOR'S REPORT



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Minister for Indigenous Affairs

I have audited the accompanying annual financial statements of the Northern Land Council for the year ended 30 June 2016, which comprise:

- Statement by the Accountable Authorities and Chief Financial Officer;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Cash Flow Statement; and
- Notes comprising a Summary of Significant Accounting Policies and other explanatory information.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Northern Land Council:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*; and
- (b) present fairly the financial position of the Northern Land Council as at 30 June 2016 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

Accountable Authority's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Land Council are responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the rules made under that Act and are also responsible for such internal control as the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on my audit. I have conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. These auditing standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the

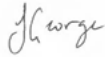
financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Accountable Authority of the entity, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have followed the independence requirements of the Australian National Audit Office, which incorporate the requirements of the Australian accounting profession.

Australian National Audit Office



Jodi George
Audit Principal

Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra
30 September 2016

NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL - NATIVE TITLE REPRESENTATIVE BODY STATEMENT BY THE ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

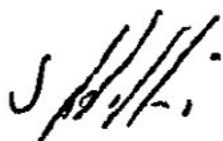
The Northern Land Council (NLC) is a Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) as prescribed in the *Native Title Act 1993* and a land council under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. Since being recognised as an NTRB, the NLC has performed the functions of the NTRB in association with other NLC functions.

While separate books and records are not maintained by the NLC for the NTRB, the revenue and expenditure is recorded as separate cost centres within the NLC financial books and records for the current year and assets and liabilities have been able to be separately identified as detailed in the financial statements.

In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2016 comply with subsection 42(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Body will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

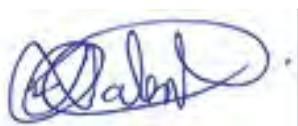
This Statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the directors.



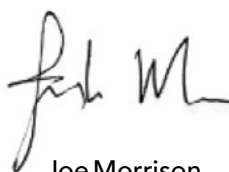
Samuel Bush-Blanasi
Chairman / Accountable Authority



Wayne Wauchope
Deputy Chairperson



Joe Valenti
Chief Financial Officer



Joe Morrison
Chief Executive Officer / Accountable Authority

30 September 2016

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
for the period ended 30 June 2016

	NOTES	2016	2015
		\$'000	\$'000
NET COST OF SERVICES			
EXPENSES			
Employee benefits	3A	2,575	2,593
Suppliers	3B	3,104	1,456
Write down and impairment of assets	3C	306	284
TOTAL EXPENSES		5,985	4,333
OWN-SOURCE INCOME			
Own-source revenue			
Sale of goods and rendering of services	4A	518	1,434
Interest	4B	52	24
Total own-source revenue		570	1,458
Gains			
Reversal of previous asset write downs and impairments	4D	404	-
Total gains		404	-
TOTAL OWN SOURCE INCOME		975	1,458
Net cost of services		5,010	2,875
Revenue from Government	4C	4,958	3,664
Surplus/(Deficit) attributable to the Australian Government		(52)	789
Total comprehensive income/(loss) attributable to the Australian Government		(52)	789

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as at 30 June 2016

	NOTES	2016	2015
		\$'000	\$'000
ASSETS			
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6A	2,401	2,311
Trade and other receivables	6B	225	160
Total financial assets		2,626	2,471
TOTAL ASSETS		2,626	2,471
LIABILITIES			
Payables			
Inter-entity payable	7A	910	663
Other payable	7B	231	269
TOTAL PAYABLES		1,141	932
PROVISIONS			
Employee provisions	8A	356	358
Total provisions		356	358
Total Liabilities		1,497	1,290
NET ASSETS		1,129	1,181
EQUITY			
Retained surplus		1,129	1,181
TOTAL EQUITY		1,129	1,181

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

for the period ended 30 June 2016

	RETAINED EARNINGS		TOTAL EQUITY	
	2016	2015	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
OPENING BALANCE				
Balance carried forward from previous period	1,181	392	1,181	392
COMPREHENSIVE INCOME				
Surplus (Deficit) for the year	(52)	789	(52)	789
Total comprehensive income	(52)	789	(52)	789
CLOSING BALANCE AS AT 30 JUNE	1,129	1,181	1,129	1,181

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

for the period ended 30 June 2016

	NOTES	2016	2015
		\$'000	\$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Receipts from Government		5,454	4,030
Sales of goods and rendering of services		518	1,371
Interest		52	24
TOTAL CASH RECEIVED		6,024	5,425
Cash used			
Employees		(2,753)	(2,697)
Suppliers		(2,686)	(1,362)
Net GST paid		(496)	(367)
Total cash used		(5,935)	(4,426)
Net cash from/(used by) operating activities	9	89	999
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		89	999
Cash and cash equivalent at the beginning of the reporting period		2,311	1,312
Cash and cash equivalent at the end of the reporting period	6A	2,401	2,311

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 OVERVIEW

The Northern Land Council (NLC) is a Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) as prescribed in the Native Title Amendment Act 1998 and a Land Council under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. Since being recognised as an NTRB, the NLC has performed the functions of the NTRB in association with other NLC functions. It is a not-for-profit entity.

The general functions of the NTRB are to:

- assist claimants in the preparation of anthropological and historical evidence in support of their claim applications;
- respond to 'future act' applications (for example, proposed mining on native title land or land subject to a registered native title claim)
- provide claimants with legal representation e.g. negotiations for Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs)
- act as mediators between the claimants and the Government

Proving native title is difficult and involves a lot of historical and anthropological research into the area involved in the native title claim. This is a time-consuming and resource-intensive process for NTRB field and community liaison officers, anthropologists, legal officers and research staff involved in preparing a claim, attending court, mediation and consultation. Other functions of NTRBs include certification, dispute resolution, consultation and notification and agreement making.

The NTRB is dependent on the continued release of these funds for its continued existence and ability to carry out its normal activities. The funding conditions of the NTRB are laid down by the Native Title Act, and any special purpose grant guidelines. Accounting for monies received from the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet (PM&C) is subject to conditions approved by the Land Rights Branch.

1.2 BASIS OF PREPARATION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements and are required by section 42 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 and section 203DC [4] of the Native Title Amendment Act 1998.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- a) Financial Reporting Rule (FRR) for reporting periods ending on or after 1 July 2014; and
- b) Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The NLC has prepared the statement of comprehensive income, statement of financial position and cash flow statement applicable to the NTRB operation and function. All NTRB account balances have been identified from within the NLC financial information system and accurately extracted from the NLC accounts, representing the completeness and existence of all assets and liabilities of the NTRB.

The NLC maintains an NTRB revenue and expenditure cost centre and the statement of comprehensive income is a complete and accurate record of NTRB revenue and expenditure.

The NTRB financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and in accordance with historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position.

The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified.

Unless an alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard or the FRR, assets and liabilities are recognised in the NTRB statement of financial position when and only when it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity or a future sacrifice of economic benefits will be required and the amounts of the assets or liabilities can be reliably measured. However, assets and liabilities arising under executor contracts are not recognised unless required by an accounting standard. Liabilities and assets that are unrecognised are reported in the contingencies note.

Unless alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard, income and expenses are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income when, and only when the flow, consumption or loss of economic benefits has occurred and can be reliably measured.

1.3 SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND ESTIMATES

No accounting assumptions or estimates have been identified that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period except doubtful debts for which provision of \$358,000 has been made in the current year.

1.4 NEW ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

Adoption of New Australian Accounting Standard Requirements

No accounting standard has been adopted earlier than the application date as stated in the standard.

The following new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations were issued prior to the signing of the statement by the accountable authority, chief executive officer and chief financial officer, were applicable to the current reporting period on the entity's financial statements:

STANDARD/ INTERPRETATION	NATURE OF CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY AND ADJUSTMENT TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AASB 2014-4 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation [AASB 116 & 138]</i>	Amends AASB 116 <i>Property, Plant and Equipment</i> and AASB 138 <i>Intangible Assets</i> to provide additional guidance on how the depreciation or amortisation of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets should be calculated. The standard does not impact the financial statements.

All other new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to sign-off date and are applicable to the current reporting period did not have a material effect, and are not expected to have a future material impact on the Northern Land Council's financial statements as a NTRB.

Future Australian Accounting Standard Requirements

The following new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations were issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board prior to the signing of the statement by the accountable authority, chief executive officer and chief financial officer, on the entity's financial statements for future reporting period(s):

STANDARD/ INTERPRETATION	APPLICATION DATE	NATURE OF IMPENDING CHANGE/S IN ACCOUNTING POLICY AND LIKELY IMPACT ON INITIAL APPLICATION
AASB 9 <i>Financial Instruments</i> (Dec 2014), AASB 2014-1 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards (Part E – Financial Instruments)</i> , AASB 2014-7 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9 (Dec 2014)</i>	1 Jan 2018	The final version of AASB 9 brings together the classification and measurement, impairment and hedge accounting phases of the IASB's project to replace AASB 139 <i>Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement</i> . This version adds a new expected loss impairment model and limited amendments to classification and measurement for financial assets. The impact of its adoption is yet to be assessed by the NTRB.
AASB 15 <i>Revenue from Contracts with Customers</i> , AASB 2014-5 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB</i>	1 Jan 2018	AASB 15 outlines a single comprehensive model for entities to use in accounting for revenue arising from contracts with customers. It replaces several Standards and Interpretations, including AASB 111 <i>Construction Contracts</i> , AASB 118 <i>Revenue</i> , Interpretation 15 <i>Agreements for the Construction of Real Estate</i> , and Interpretation 18 <i>Transfers of Assets from Customers</i> . The impact of its adoption is yet to be assessed by the NTRB.

All other new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to the sign-off date and are applicable to future reporting period(s) are not expected to have a future material impact on the Northern Land Council's financial statements.

NOTE 2: EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

There are no events that have occurred after reporting date that have been brought to account in the 2015/16 Financial Report.

NOTE 3: EXPENSES

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 3A: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		
Wages and salaries	2,134	2,134
Superannuation	261	290
Leave and other entitlements	179	169
TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	2,575	2,593
NOTE 3B: SUPPLIERS		
Goods and services		
Consultants	1,713	605
Stationery	69	26
Travel	495	256
Vehicles	115	128
Training	32	11
IT/Communications	76	121
Other	493	194
TOTAL GOODS AND SERVICES SUPPLIED OR RENDERED	2,993	1,341
Other suppliers		
Operating lease rentals		
Minimum lease payments	79	73
Workers compensation expenses	32	41
Total other suppliers expenses	110	115
TOTAL SUPPLIER EXPENSES	3,104	1,456

	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 3C: WRITE-DOWN AND IMPAIRMENT OF ASSETS		
Impairment/(reversal) on financial instruments	306	284
Total write-down and impairment of assets	306	284

NOTE 4: INCOME

OWN SOURCE REVENUE

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
OWN-SOURCE REVENUE		
NOTE 4A: SALE OF GOODS AND RENDERING OF SERVICES		
Rendering of services - external parties	518	1,434
TOTAL SALE OF GOODS AND RENDERING OF SERVICES	518	1,434

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when:

- a) the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred to the buyer;
- b) the Northern Land Council as an NTRB retains no managerial involvement or effective control over the goods;
- c) the revenue and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and
- d) it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the NTRB.

Revenue from rendering of services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date. The revenue is recognised when:

- a) the amount of revenue, stage of completion and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and
- b) the probable economic benefits with the transaction will flow to the NTRB.

The stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date is determined by reference to the proportion that costs incurred to date bear to the estimated total costs of the transaction.

Receivables for goods and services, which have 30 day terms, are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance account. Collectability of debts is reviewed as at the end of the reporting period. Allowances are made when collectability of the debt is no longer probable.

	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 4B: INTEREST		
Deposits	52	24
TOTAL INTEREST	52	24

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method as set out in AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement.

	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 4C: REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT		
REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT		
Revenue from Government: Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet Grant	4,958	3,664
TOTAL REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT	4,958	3,664

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Funding received or receivable from Government is recognised as Revenue from Government when the entity gains control of the appropriation, except for certain amounts that are reciprocal in nature, in which case revenue is recognised only when it is earned.

	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 4D: REVERSALS OF PREVIOUS ASSET WRITE-DOWNS AND IMPAIRMENTS		
Reversal of Impairment losses	(404)	-
TOTAL REVERSAL OF PREVIOUS ASSET WRITE-DOWNS AND IMPAIRMENTS	(404)	

NOTE 5: INCOME TAX EXPENSE (COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY)

The NTRB has been approved as a Public Benevolent Institution. The Services of the NTRB are provided on a 'not-for-profit' basis. Therefore the NTRB is not subject to the Australian Government's Competitive Neutrality policy.

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Taxation

The NTRB is exempt from all forms of taxation except fringe benefits tax (FBT) and the goods and services tax (GST).

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST except:

- a) where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office; and
- b) for receivables and payables.

Competitive Neutrality

The NTRB does not provide services on a for-profit basis. Under Competitive Neutrality arrangements, the NTRB is not required to make Australian Income Tax Equivalent payments to the Government.

NOTE 6: FINANCIAL ASSETS

	2016	2016
	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 6A: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash on deposit	2,401	2,311
TOTAL CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	2,401	2,311

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents include:

- a) cash on hand
- b) demand deposits in bank accounts with an original maturity of 3 months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of change in value.

NTRB cash is received into the NTRB bank account. All payments are made from the NLC operating account. On a regular basis the funds are transferred from the NTRB bank account to the NLC operating account for the value of payments on behalf of the NTRB.

	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 6B: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES		
Goods and Services		
Goods and services - external parties	583	617
TOTAL RECEIVABLES FOR GOODS AND SERVICES	583	617

	\$'000	\$'000
Less impairment allowance:		
Goods and services	(358)	(457)
TOTAL IMPAIRMENT ALLOWANCE	(358)	(457)
TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (NET)	225	160
Trade and other receivables (net) are expected to be recovered:		
No more than 12 months	225	160
TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (NET)	225	160
Trade and other receivables (gross) are aged as follows:		
Not overdue	189	24
Overdue by:		
Less than 30 days	-	392
30 TO 60 DAYS	-	94
61 to 90 days	146	106
More than 90 days	248	1
TOTAL TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (GROSS)	583	617
Impairment allowance aged as follows:		
Not overdue	-	(24)
Overdue by:		
Less than 30 days	-	(233)
30 to 60 days	-	(94)
61 to 90 days	(127)	(106)
More than 90 days	(231)	-
TOTAL IMPAIRMENT ALLOWANCE	(358)	(457)

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Loans and Receivables

Trade receivables, loans and other receivables that have fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market are classified as 'loans and receivables'. Loans and receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment. Interest is recognised by applying the effective interest rate.

NOTE 6: FINANCIAL ASSETS (CONT.)

NOTE 6B: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (CONT'D)

Reconciliation of the Impairment Allowance

	GOODS AND SERVICES 2016	TOTAL 2016
	\$'000	\$'000
Movements in relation to 2016		
Opening balance	457	457
Amounts recovered and reversed	(404)	(404)
Impairment allowance	306	306
CLOSING BALANCE	358	358

	GOODS AND SERVICES 2015	TOTAL 2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Movements in relation to 2015		
Opening balance	173	173
Amounts recovered and reversed	-	-
Impairment allowance	284	284
CLOSING BALANCE	457	457

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period

NOTE 7: PAYABLES

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
NOTE 7A: INTER-ENTITY PAYABLE		
Payable to Northern Land Council	910	663
NOTE 7B: OTHER PAYABLES		
Trade Payables	173	192
Salary and wages	10	63
Accruals	48	14
Total other payables	231	269
TOTAL PAYABLES	1,141	932
Inter-entity and other payables are expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months	1,141	932
Inter-entity and other payables	1,141	932

Settlement was usually made within 30 days.

NOTE 8: PROVISIONS

NOTE 8A: EMPLOYEE PROVISIONS

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Annual leave	184	209
Long service leave	172	150
Total employee provisions	356	358
Employee provisions are expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months	235	266
More than 12 months	121	92
TOTAL EMPLOYEE PROVISIONS	356	358

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Employee Benefits

Liabilities for 'short-term employee benefits' (as defined in AASB 119 Employee Benefits) and termination benefits due within twelve months of the end of reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

The nominal amount is calculated with regard to the rates expected to be paid on settlement of the liability.

Leave

The liability for employee benefits includes provision for annual leave and long service leave. The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that applied at the time the leave is taken, including the NTRB's employer superannuation contribution rates, to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination.

Liabilities for current employee benefits expected within twelve months of the end of reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

NTRB used the shorthand method to calculate the long service leave liability.

Superannuation

The NTRB's staff can choose their own super fund with most members being with MLC. The entity makes employer contributions to the employees' defined benefit superannuation scheme at rates determined by the EBA. The liability of superannuation recognised as at 30 June represents outstanding contributions.

NOTE 9: CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION

NOTE 9A: CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Reconciliation of cash and cash equivalents as per Statement of Financial Position to Cash Flow Statement		
Cash and cash equivalents as per:		
Cash Flow Statement	2,401	2,311
Statement of financial position	2,401	2,311
DIFFERENCE	-	-
Reconciliation of net cost of services to net cash from operating activities:		
Net cost of services	(5,010)	(2,875)
Add revenue from Government	4,958	3,664
Movement in assets and liabilities		
(Increase) / decrease in net receivables	(65)	96
Increase / (decrease) in employee provisions	(2)	(93)
Increase / (decrease) in inter-entity payables	246	93
Increase / (decrease) in other payables	(38)	114
NET CASH FROM (USED BY) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	89	999

NOTE 10: CONTINGENT ASSETS & LIABILITIES

QUANTIFIABLE CONTINGENCIES

The Northern Land Council as NTRB has undertaken an assessment of the reasonable potential liability arising out of litigation to which the NTRB is a party. As at 30 June 2016 the potential liability has been assessed as nil (2015: nil).

ACCOUNTING POLICY

Contingent liabilities and contingent assets are not recognised in the statement of financial position but are reported in notes. They may arise from uncertainty as to the existence of a liability or asset or represent an asset or liability in respect of which the amount cannot be reliably measured. Contingent assets are disclosed when settlement is probable but not virtually certain and contingent liabilities are disclosed when settlement is greater than remote.

NOTE 11: SENIOR MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL REMUNERATION

There were no director or executive remuneration payments made during the period with NTRB monies.

NOTE 12: REMUNERATION OF AUDITORS

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
Financial statement audit services provided to the Northern Land Council in regard to NTRB by the Australian National Audit Office:		
Fair value of the services provided		
Financial statement audit services	9	9
TOTAL	9	9

No other services were provided by the Australian National Audit Office.

NOTE 13: FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

	2016	2015
	\$'000	\$'000
13A CATEGORIES OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS		
Financial Assets		
Loans and receivables:		
Cash on deposit	2,401	2,311
Trade and other receivables	225	160
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS	2,625	2,471
Financial Liabilities		
Amortised Cost:		
Inter-entity payable	910	663
Other payables	231	269
TOTAL CARRYING AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL LIABILITIES	1,141	932
13B GAINS OR LOSSES ON FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Loans and receivables		
Interest revenue (see note 4B)	52	24
NET GAIN/(LOSS) LOANS AND RECEIVABLES	52	24

13C FAIR VALUES OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The carrying amount of the financial instruments is reasonable approximation of fair value due to their short term nature.

13D CREDIT RISK

The NTRB was exposed to minimal credit risk as loans and receivables were cash and trade receivables.

The carrying amount of financial assets recorded in the financial statements, net of any allowances for losses, represents the NTRB's maximum exposure to credit risk.

The NTRB trades only with recognised, creditworthy third parties. Exposure to credit risk is monitored by management on an ongoing basis.

The NTRB holds no collateral to mitigate against credit risk.

13E LIQUIDITY RISK

The NTRB's financial liabilities were payables. The exposure to liquidity risk was based on the notion that the NTRB will encounter difficulty in meeting its obligations associated with financial liabilities. This was highly unlikely due to government funding and mechanisms available to the entity and internal policies and procedures put in place to ensure there were appropriate resources to meet its financial obligations.

13F MARKET RISK

The NTRB held basic financial instruments that did not expose the entity to certain market risks, such as Currency Risk' and Other Price Risks.

13G INTEREST RATE RISK

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in interest rates. The NTRB is exposed to interest rate risk primarily from cash at bank and short term deposits. The NTRB manages its interest rate risk by maintaining floating rate cash.

SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

Assuming the financial assets and liabilities at 30 June 2016 were to remain until maturity or settlement without any action by the NTRB to alter the resulting interest rate risk exposure, a change in the variable rates of 100 basis points (1 per cent) at reporting date would have the following effect on the NTRB's profit or loss and equity.

	Profit or Loss and Equity	
	100 Basis Points	100 Basis Points
	Increase	Decrease
	\$'000	\$'000
30 June 2016		
Financial assets – Cash and cash equivalents	24	-24
Net sensitivity	24	-24
30 June 2015		
Financial assets – Cash and cash equivalents	23	-23
Net sensitivity	23	-23

NOTE 14: DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER & CABINET (PM&C) GRANT: NATIVE TITLE REPRESENTATIVE SERVICES

	2015/16 APPROVED BUDGET	2015/16 ACTUAL	2015/16 ACTUAL VS BUDGET	2015/16 ACTUAL VS BUDGET
	\$	\$	\$	%
INCOME				
Funds C/Fwd (2014-15 surplus)	488,401	488,401	-	0%
Funds C/Fwd (unspent @ June 2015)	185,000	185,000	-	0%
PM&C Funding - Operational	4,954,324	4,958,043	3,719	100%
Other Project Income	298,747	518,103	(219,356)	173%
Interest Income	52,068	52,068	-	100%
Supplementary Bid 2014/15 to be c/forward	683,000	683,000	-	100%
TOTAL INCOME	6,661,540	6,884,615	(215,637)	103%
EXPENDITURE				
Operational Salaries				
Corporate Staff (e.g. Accounting admin.)	89,693	89,693	-	100%
Project Staff (e.g. Legal, Anthropologists, field)	2,645,923	2,651,670	5,747	100%
Services				
Accommodation	72,930	72,930	-	100%
Motor Vehicles - Corporate	99,398	33,744	(65,654)	34%
Repair and Maintenance - Equipment	9,738	9,738	-	100%
Repair and Maintenance - Buildings	9,738	9,738	-	100%
Bank Charges	2,604	2,629	25	101%
Audit Fees	13,134	13,134	-	100%
Consultants - Attributable	1,440,745	1,713,112	272,367	0%
Communications, Telephones, Fax and IT	92,161	28,364	(63,797)	31%
Insurance	9,396	39,496	30,100	420%
Training and Development				
Governing Committee	9,138	7,989	(1,149)	87%
Staff	88,236	76,512	(11,724)	87%
Meeting Expenses				
Claimants	190,130	238,222	48,092	125%

Travel and Allowances				
Claimants	160,909	178,597	17,688	111%
Staff Travel - Corporate	19,865	-	(19,865)	0%
Staff Travel - Attributable	313,105	285,027	(28,078)	91%
Supplies and Consumables				
Office supplies & Consumables - Corporate	27,673	52,427	24,754	189%
Other Operational				
Recruitment & Relocation	17,503	26,062	8,559	149%
Security	4,543	4,543	-	100%
Computer Services	40,000	62,754	22,754	157%
Policy & Liaison	21,827	18,340	(3,487)	84%
Educational Resources - Land Rights	31,827	32,704	877	103%
Other				
NNTC Contribution	20,000	25,000	5,000	125%
Groote Eylandt Land & Sea Claim	150,000	-	(150,000)	0%
Contested Litigation - Borrooloola	218,987	-	(218,987)	0%
Contested Litigation - Timber Creek	710,155	-	(710,155)	0%
Native Title Conference	57,016	-	(57,016)	0%
Borrooloola Township Claim	66,980	-	(66,980)	0%
Contested Litigation - Nutwood Downs	28,186	-	(28,186)	0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	6,661,540	5,672,425	(989,115)	85%
Surplus (Deficit)	-	1,212,190	1,212,190	-
Carried Forward 2015/16 Projects	-	478,693	478,693	0%
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) AFTER COMMITMENTS	-	733,497	733,497	-

COMMONWEALTH COMPLIANCE INDEX

PUBLIC GOVERNANCE, PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RULE 2014

REQUIREMENT	PGPA RULE 2014	PAGE
Approval of Annual Report by Accountable Authority	s.17BB	vii
Enabling legislation	s.17BE(a)	141
Summary of objects and functions of the NLC	s17BE(b)(i)	16
Purposes of the NLC included in the corporate plan	s17BE(b)(ii)	42, 151-156
Responsible Minister	s.17BE(c)	141
Ministerial directions	s.17BE(d)	141
General Policy Orders	s.17BE(e)	6
Non compliance with a direction or order referred to in sections 17BE(d) and (e)	s.17BE(f)	NIL
Annual performance statement	s.17BE(g)	151
Statement of significance compliance with finance law	s.17BE(h) and (i)	5,6
Information about Accountability Authority	s.17BE(j)	
Organisational Structure	s.17BE(k)	35
Board Committees and their main responsibilities	s.17BE(m)	141
Corporate governance practices	s.17BE(m)	141,142
Related Entity Transaction	s.17BE(n) and (o)	142
Key changes to the authority's state of affairs or principal activities	s.17BE(p)	6
Operational and financial results	s. 17BE(p)	159
Amendments to authority's enabling legislation	s.17BE(p)	6

Significant judicial or administrative tribunal decisions	s.17BE(q)	NIL
Reports made about the authority	s.17BE(r)	NIL
Obtaining information from subsidiaries	s.17BE(s)	NIL
Indemnities and insurance premiums	s17BE(t)	141
Operational and financial results	s.46PGPA Act 2013	6, 151

OTHER REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

REQUIREMENT	PAGE
Work Health and Safety	149
Ecologically sustainable development and environmental performance	142
Advertising and Market Research	137

ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT 1976

REQUIREMENT	REFERENCE	PAGE
FEES Specify the total fees received for services provided by the land council: a) under Part IV (Mining); and b) under 33A for services prescribed by the regulations that it provides in performing any of its functions, whether in the reporting year or the previous year. Specify total fees received under s33B (other fees charged to the Commonwealth).	s37(2) 18	6
SECTION 35 DETERMINATIONS Include details of payments by the Council under Sec. 35 (2) or (3) and any determinations made by the Minister under Sec. 35 (6) made during the reporting year. Details of payments made by determination or otherwise under 35(2), 35(6), 35(4), 35(4B), 35(11), and 67B (6) must be provided and include, the recipient of the amount; the subsection under which the amount was paid; and the total of the amount paid.	s37(3) s37(4)	200, 201
DETAILS OF AMOUNTS HELD IN TRUST In respect of amounts paid to the Council and held in trust at the end of the year; provide details of the amount paid to Council and the year it was paid, the amount held in trust, and the mining operation concerned.	s37(5)	138, 139
DELEGATIONS If there is a delegation under s28, particulars of activities during the year related to any delegated functions or activities must be provided.	s37(6)	148
COMMITTEES If a committee has been appointed under s29A to assist the Council in relation to the performance of any of its functions or the exercise of any of its powers, detailed information of its activities must be included.	s37(7)	146, 147
CONSULTANTS Specify each consultant engaged by council during the year and the amount paid to each consultant. In order for comprehensive information to be reported details of the nature of work undertaken the total cost of the consultancy and the reasons why a consultant was required could be included in addition to the details required by this provision.	s37(8)	144

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AGREEMENTS

Land Use Agreements are generally leases or licences for the use of or to carry out activities on Aboriginal land issued in accordance with section 19 of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

Indigenous Land Use Agreements are native title agreements about the management and use of lands and waters between native title claimants/ holders and other parties. Agreements reached through the native title negotiations process either before or after a native title determination is made.

Part IV Mining Agreements Exploration and mining agreements are entered into in accordance with the Part of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976.

ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

ABA	Aboriginals Benefit Account
Aboriginal Land	Land held by a Land Trust for an estate in fee simple; or land the subject of a deed of grant held in escrow by a Land Council. Aboriginal Land Trust established under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. Section 5 sets out the functions of Land Trusts. Section 7 deals with membership of Land Trusts
ALRA	Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976
APO NT	Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory, an alliance of the Northern Land Council (NLC), Central Land Council (CLC), Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the NT (AMSANT), North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA),, and Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS)
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
CFI	Carbon Farming Initiative
CLC	Central Land Council established under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
PM&C	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
GIS	Geographic Information System
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia

ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
APP	Indigenous Pastoral Program
LIMS	The NLC's Land Information Management System
LIR	Land Interest Reference
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NLC	Northern Land Council established under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976
NTA	Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)
NIRB	Native Title Representative Body
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
SIR	Strategic Indigenous Reserve, an amount of water set aside in a water allocation plan for Indigenous people in a water allocation plan area to support future water trading and economic development
TNRM	Territory Natural Resource Management – an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works with landholders, industry and government to ensure sustainable management of our water, land, soils, plants and animals
Traditional Owners	Traditional Aboriginal Owners – a local descent group of Aboriginals who have common spiritual affiliations to a site on the land, being affiliations that place the group under a primary spiritual responsibility for that site and for the land, and are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to forage as or right over that land
WoC	Working on Country funding initiative of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
WoNS	Weeds of National Significance



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