

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life
ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



**NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL**



Australian Government

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OUR VISION, OUR VALUES, OUR MISSION.

OUR VALUES

We will:

- Consult with and act with the informed consent of Traditional Owners in accordance with the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*
- 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
- Behave in a manner that is appropriate and sensitive to cultural differences
- Act with integrity, honesty and fairness
- Uphold the principles and values of social justice
- Treat our stakeholders with respect.

OUR VISION

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

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.



Dry Billabong & Black Cockatoos
- Photo by Kathrine Carver

About this report



The Northern Land Council's (NLC) Annual Report 2019-20 provides a comprehensive account of its performance from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 in accordance with its obligations under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, the *Native Title Act 1993* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (referred to throughout this document as the ALRA, the NTA and the PGPA Act, respectively).

The Annual Report 2019-20 is divided into five parts:

- **About Us:** Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life; history; our people and organisational structure
- **The Year in Review:** Our achievements and challenges for the reporting year
- **Corporate Governance and Management**
- **Financial Statements:** details on income and expenses for both the NLC as a Commonwealth entity, its subsidiaries and as a native title representative body
- **Appendices and references.**

The NLC submits this report to the Minister for Indigenous Australians for tabling in the Australian Parliament.

Black cockatoos gather in the hundreds here at Dry Billabong on Wagiman no.2 ALT. It is also a nesting site for brolga. We go to this billabong to work on eradicating Parkinsonia weed. It is a favourite place for feral buffaloes, donkeys.



*Umbrawarra Gorge
- Photo by Kathrine Carver*

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GPO Box 1222, Darwin NT 0801

Physical location of the NLC offices following street names:

REGION	LOCATION	ADDRESS	PHONE	FAX
Darwin/Daly/ Wagait	Darwin	45 Mitchell Street Darwin NT 0800	(08) 8920 5100	(08) 8920 5255
	Wadeye	Lot 776 Murin Air Terminal Wadeye NT 0822	(08) 8980 1917	No number at present
West Arnhem	Jabiru	3 Government Building, Flinders Street Jabiru NT 0886	(08) 8938 3000	(08) 8979 2650
	Maningrida	Lot 735 Maningrida NT 0822	0456467984	
East Arnhem	Nhulunbuy	Endeavour Street Nhulunbuy NT 0880	(08) 8986 8500	(08) 8987 1334
	Galiwin'ku	Lot 78 Nurruwurrnhan Road Galiwin'ku NT 0822	(08) 8970 5025	
Katherine	Katherine	5 Katherine Terrace Katherine NT 0850	(08) 8971 9899	(08) 8972 2190
Ngukurr	Ngukurr	Balamurra Street Ngukurr NT 0852	(08) 8977 2500	(08) 8975 4601
Victoria River District	Timber Creek	43 Wilson Street Timber Creek NT 0850	(08) 8974 5600	(08) 8975 0664
Borrooloola Barkly	Borrooloola	Mara Mara Camp Robinson Road Borrooloola NT 0854	(08) 8975 7500	(08) 8975 8745
	Tennant Creek	178 Paterson Street Tennant Creek NT 0860	(08) 8962 1884	(08) 8962 1636

**NORTHERN
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Letter of transmittal

The Minister for Indigenous Australians,
the Hon Ken Wyatt AM,
MPPO Box 6022,
House of Representatives,
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*, I am pleased to submit the Northern Land Council's 2019-20 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.

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

I commend the report to you for presentation to the House of Representatives, Parliament House.

Yours sincerely

Samuel Bush-Blanas
CHAIRMAN

Marion Scrymgour
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NLC'S ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY

NLC Accountable Authority, under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), comprises the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer.



CHAIRMAN
Samuel
Bush-Blanasi

Samuel Bush-Blanasi is a Mayili man and his mother is from Blue Mud Bay. He is a 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 was mentored by Raymond Fordimail in Wugularr, learning the skills required to become a successful administrator. Mr Blanasi is an artist who has a long history of community service and a wealth of social experience. This is Mr Blanasi's seventh term at the NLC with a third term as Chairman.



**CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER (CEO)**
Marion Scrymgour

Ms Marion Scrymgour took up the CEO's position in April 2019, becoming the first woman CEO of any land council in the Northern Territory. She was born and raised in Darwin. Her mother was a Tiwi Islander and her father was a member of the Stolen Generations, who was taken from his parents at Ti Tree in Central Australia.

After attending St Mary's Catholic Primary School and O'Loughlin College, Ms Scrymgour went on to enjoy a successful career as a health service administrator in Katherine. In 2001, she was elected Member of the Legislative Assembly for the seat of Arafura, which covers the Tiwi Islands. Ms Scrymgour became the first Indigenous woman in parliament and later became the first Indigenous leader of an Australian government in history when she was made Deputy Chief Minister. She retired from politics at the 2012 election.

After working for several years for the Australian Red Cross, Ms Scrymgour returned to Katherine's Wurli Wurlinjang Aboriginal Corporation as its CEO and was elected chairperson of the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory. In November 2013, Ms Scrymgour became the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recipient to be awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Sydney from the Faculty of Health Sciences.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

The NLC is primarily funded through the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA), an account into which the Australian 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 the *Native Title Act*, the NLC receives funding under a number of separate grants.

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

Financial statements that apply for the reporting period 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).

The full audited statements are reproduced from Part 4: Financial Statement.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

NLC receives additional grant-based funding from a number of sources. The major external funding sources include:

- Indigenous Ranger Program – National Indigenous Australians Agency
- Real Jobs funding for ranger groups – Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC).

COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

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

FEES

For fees under subsection 37 (2) of the ALRA please refer to Appendices 2 (Compliance Index).



*Fergusson River
- Photo by Kathrine Carver*

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2019-20

Northern Land Council (NLC) recorded an operating surplus of \$5.8M in 2019-20. In comparison, the surplus for 2018-19 was \$2.7M. Increase in expenditure is in line with the increase in revenue, except for some grants that were received in year 2019-20 but the expenditure will be incurred in 2020-21.

In 2019-20, NLC's operating result is \$5.2M favourable compared with the annual forecast, with an actual surplus of \$5.8M compared with a budgeted surplus of \$0.6M. Majority of this variance is due to income relating to different funding taken forward to the next financial year (originally budgeted for in 2019-20). Similarly, the expense relating to this funding was not incurred this year. It is merely timing difference as income and expenditure were budgeted this year but will be incurred in next financial year. The difference between actual and budgeted revenues was partly reduced due to recording income from a grant in 2019-20 whose expenditure is budgeted to be incurred next year.

Comparison to previous year and budget

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2019-20					
	ACTUAL 2019-20 \$M	ACTUAL 2018-19 \$M	VARIANCE \$M	BUDGET 2019-20 \$M	VARIANCE \$M
Income	65.1	58.0	7.1	70.6	(5.5)
Expenses	59.3	55.3	4.0	70.0	(10.7)
Surplus/Deficit	5.8	2.7	3.1	0.6	5.2

Figure 1

NET RESULT

INCOME

In 2019-20, there was an overall increase in funding of \$7.1M (12.2%) compared with 2018-19. Funding can vary significantly from year to year depending on a number of factors, such as the number of major projects being undertaken, litigation matters and the availability of funds in general from various sources.

Figure 2 compares the change in income from 2018-19 with 2019-20 and the actual and budgeted results for 2019-20:

REVENUE: 2018-19 Actual v 2019-20 Actual v 2019-20 Budget (\$K)

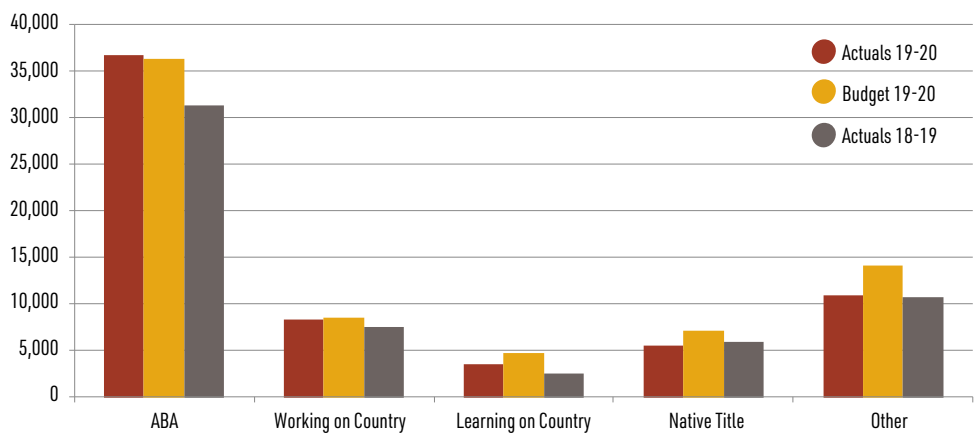


Figure 2

In 2019-20, 56% of NLC’s income was via ABA funding (54% in 2018-19 as well), Native Title percentage has gone down to 8% (10% in 2018-19), while the Indigenous Ranger Program percentage of 13% is the same as in 2018-19. The Learning on Country funding stream has increased to 6% (4% in 2018-19). Other funding, which includes grants for numerous projects, recoverable works and minor sundry incomes, has gone down to 17% (19% in 2018-19).

Actual Revenue 2019-20

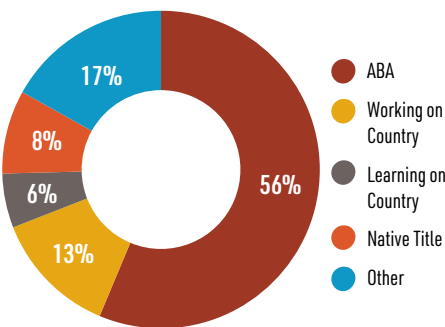


Figure 3

EXPENSES

Total expenses increased by \$4M in 2019-20 compared with 2018-19, which is in line with increased revenues. Figure 4 shows the change in expenses from 2018-19 to 2019-20 and the actual and budgeted results for 2019-20, while Figure 5 shows the 2019-20 expenditure in percentage terms.

EXPENDITURE: 2018-19 Actual v 2019-20 Actual v 2019-20 Budget (\$K)

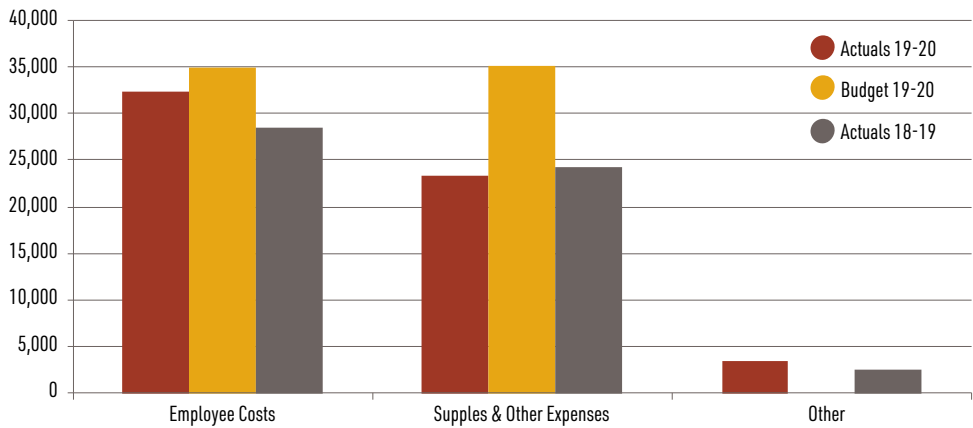


Figure 4

In 2019-20, NLC's employee costs accounted for 55% of total expenditure compared with 52% in 2018-19. Supplier and other expenses decreased to 39% in 2019-20 (down from 44% in the previous year) and other expenses, which include depreciation and amortisation, increased from 4% in 2018-19 to 6% in 2019-20.

Actual Expenses 2019-20

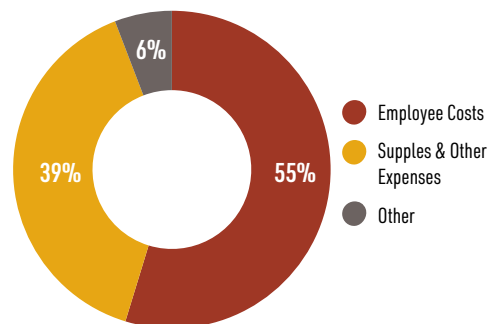


Figure 5

Message from the Chairman



When the COVID-19 virus quickly spread throughout Australia it was clear that this was a year like no other. Keeping our mob safe, informed and supported during the pandemic became the top priority for the Northern Land Council.

The NLC had a leading role, working closely with the NT Government, Police and health professionals to ensure health protections provided for under the Commonwealth Health Minister's Biosecurity Determination were effective.

The message to 'stay on country and care for family' was more than just words as the NLC partnered with the public and private sectors through facilitating programs such as the Commonwealth's emergency homelands assistance funding and through new relationships with local charities and Coles.

Our response to COVID-19 highlighted how Aboriginal Land Councils can undertake an active and integral role in mobilising support for First Nations people across their regions.

At the 121st Full Council Meeting at Jabiru in December 2019 we entered into a new term for elected members of the Northern Land Council. I congratulate all new and returning councillors who will serve for the next three years. In particular, our female council members who are enhancing the voice of women in Council deliberations.

All councillors will keep the CEO and staff accountable for delivering better outcomes for Aboriginal people within our region. We expect to see progress delivering on important major projects that build the bush through regionalisation, new economic opportunities and keep our languages and culture strong.

I thank the NLC members who have worked hard over the year to represent their communities and organisations, especially the members of the Executive Council for their leadership and working together during this very busy and challenging year.

I also thank the CEO and staff who have worked tirelessly to deliver services and in response to the unexpected impact of COVID-19.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Bush-Blanasi'.

Samuel Bush-Blanasi
CHAIRMAN



Message from the CEO



This has been a really tough year for our mob out bush.

When it became clear that Australia was facing a coronavirus pandemic, and that the NT was at risk along with everyone else, the NLC after health briefings from the NT Government Public Health Officials, the implications for a catastrophic hit or outcome on our communities was looking like a reality, the Executive Council made an immediate decision to stop issuing all non-essential permits. The NLC worked tirelessly to ensure that instead of a framework that could potentially isolate or be a retrograde step for our people, the Land Councils supported the implementation from the Commonwealth of the Biosecurity Act. This legislation was able to apply and be applicable across the enforcement that the Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act 1976 and the Aboriginal Land Act (NT) regarding the suspending of permits and regions in the NT in discrete and important health biosecurity zones. When the internal travel restrictions commenced the NLC (and the other three land councils) worked closely with the NT government and the Police to make sure that the health protections provided for under the Commonwealth Health Minister's Biosecurity Determination were effective. This included assessing applications for exemptions. The work was extensive and I acknowledge the small team of staff in the NLC who worked tirelessly with me to make sure we kept our communities safe.

NLC staff worked from home, many from their offices out bush - to help more than 800 Aboriginal remote residents travel to and from their communities and outstations during the lockdown to sort out urgent family or medical business.

Those NLC staff also issued more than 3,000 emergency worker ALA permits to make sure that doctors, nurses, health workers, police officers, Council workers and other essential service providers could keep our remote communities safe from COVID-19.

At that time it fell to the Land Councils to ensure that our internal documentation met both the Aboriginal Land Act and Biosecurity screening requirements. It was the Land Councils who were vetting and facilitating essential travel and protecting communities from COVID-19 infection.

The NLC's Regional Development teams based in Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Timber Creek, Borroloola, Jabiru and Ngukurr and at our main office in Darwin have processed more than 3,000 Remote Emergency Worker permits for essential workers to travel out bush and between Biosecurity Act declaration areas to provide community safety, medical and essential services work to keep our communities and outstations operating.

It has truly been a team effort to equip NLC staff to work under these unprecedented circumstances and effectively mobilise communications and support networks throughout our regions. Our response demonstrated how necessary land council leadership is in the NT landscape.

Travel restrictions had a significant impact on NLC operations with the cancellation of 140 scheduled consultations. Consultations will be rescheduled and every effort made to make up for lost time.

Despite the challenges of COVID this has been a year of consolidation and growth for the NLC. Regionalisation remains a major priority for members.

The appointment of a Regionalisation project manager tasked with building the bush will be welcomed by many as the NLC looks to expand its footprint in remote communities in order to deliver better services for our members. The NLC has shown this year it is serious about what takes place on Aboriginal Land. 2021 will now allow us to do more with Traditional Owners on developing an economy on the Aboriginal estate. We must do this as our communities are saying that we cannot just measure our success by the number or volume of Indigenous Land Use Agreements that are signed by external proponents but how many of those Agreements are actually assisting our people to become economically independent.

We have built our capacity centrally to look at how our governance and compliance obligations to Traditional Aboriginal Owners is implemented and reported on. The new corporate Governance, Compliance and Risk Unit to ensure good governance practices are adhered to internally and effective transparent systems are embedded across the organisation.

We have recruited key general manager positions to better align our operational branches. Our new leadership team, will work with me to better deliver on priorities set by our membership – the full council.

The Full Council Meeting in December 2019 at Jabiru was significant as it welcomed the first meeting following elections. I look forward to working with all members to deliver more opportunities in our communities and to advocate at the highest levels of government on your behalf.

I would like to thank our Chairman, Executive and all council members for their hard work and support. I also thank all our staff for their dedication and commitment throughout this challenging year but we look forward to 2021 with renewed hope.



Marion Scrymgour
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

PART 1

*About
Us*



Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

*Jasmin Huddleston - Wagiman Ranger
- Photo by Kathrine Carver*

HISTORY

The Northern Land Council (NLC) is an independent statutory authority of the Commonwealth, established pursuant to the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (ALRA)*, a fundamental piece of land rights and social reform.

Under the Act, the NLC is responsible for assisting Aboriginal peoples in the Top End of the Northern Territory (NT) to acquire and manage their traditional lands, waters and seas.

Since the Act was passed, more than half the land in the NT has become Aboriginal land. This is in addition to approximately 85% of the coastline. A large proportion of the remaining land and seas are subject to ALRA and Native Title land claims.

THE JOURNEY

1963-1971: Yolngu people protest against bauxite mining

- **1963:** the Commonwealth Government approved 300 square kilometres of the Northern Territory's East Arnhem Land, home to the Yolngu people, for the exploration and mining of bauxite without consultation with the rightful owners of the land
- **August 1963:** the East Arnhem Land's Yolngu people opposed the decision and sent two Yirrkala Bark Petitions to the Commonwealth Parliament in an attempt to persuade the government to reconsider plans to allow the North Australian Bauxite and Alumina Company (Nabalco) to exploit their homeland for bauxite reserves

- The government initiated a parliamentary inquiry, but the Yolngu people failed to gain justice, resulting in the mining exploration to progress across the Gove Peninsula, including the building of a massive bauxite refinery
- **1968:** Yolngu people took the matter, referred to *The Gove Land Rights Case (Milirrpum & others v. Nabalco Pty Ltd and the Commonwealth of Australia)* to the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, claiming that their lands had been unlawfully invaded
- **April 1971:** Justice Richard Blackburn acknowledged the Yolngu people had been living at Yirrkala for tens of thousands of years, but as communal native title was not part of common law and even had it existed, any pre-existing rights to land would have been extinguished by the assertion of sovereignty by the British Crown.

1972-1976: *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and Department of Aboriginal Affairs established

- In gaining government in 1972, Prime Minister Whitlam appointed Justice Edward Woodward to conduct a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the appropriate way to recognise Aboriginal land rights in the Northern Territory
- The findings of the Royal Commission led to the drafting of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the establishment of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

*Jasmin Huddleston is a Wagiman Ranger. She is just 22 years old, and has been a ranger for 3 years. Jasmin loves photography and IT. She also loves eating freshwater turtle. Looking very pleased with her fat turtle. We know when the turtles are getting fat because *Cochospermum fraseri* (native kapok) is in flower. These flowers are delicious in salad and the younger tender roots of the trees may also be eaten - so I'm told.*



Kakadu rain run off - Photo by Kathrine Carver

1973: Northern Land Council (NLC) established

- 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
- As the representative body for the purposes of the *Native Title Act 1993*, the NLC went on to represent Aboriginal people across the Top End of the Northern Territory, including Tiwi Islands and on Groote Eylandt.

More than 40 years on, the NLC remains a fundamental body through which Aboriginal people of the Top End can have their voices heard on a range of issues impacting on their lands, seas and communities. The ALRA continues to be a strong foundation on which to build social, cultural, economic and spiritual growth for Traditional Owners.

The NLC logo is derived from a painting by a deceased Kunwinjku artist, Curly Bardkadubbu, who was born in 1924 of the Kamarrang subsection of the Naborn clan of the Marrkolidjban estate on the Liverpool River. He passed away in 1987.

Bardkadubbu rose to prominence as a painter in the late 1970s. He was tutored by Yirawala in the early 1970s when they shared outstations at Table Hill and Marrkolidjban, which both men had helped to establish. Later he moved to Namokardabu, also in the Liverpool River region.

The use of the painting as the NLC logo and a small change in the design to make production easier were approved by the artist and a copyright fee paid. The painting is a western Kunwinjku depiction of the Rainbow Serpent, which is widespread in Aboriginal beliefs.



Jabul Huddleston - Wagiman TO and Josie Ritchie - Wagiman Ranger - Photo by Kathrine Carver

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, 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. The NLC implement free prior and informed consent, and 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 and language are diverse and rich, and their lands and waters are resource rich. The NLC is a major contributor to Aboriginal affairs and the Northern Territory economy.

NLC'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The role and purpose of the NLC is driven by its enabling legislation – the ALRA and the NTA – and the views of our stakeholders. A full explanation of our legislative obligations and how these are being addressed is provided in the NLC's Corporate Plan 2019-20 to 2023-24.

Visit the NLC's website at www.nlc.org.au

WHOM WE SERVE

The diversity of skills and experience of our staff helps to build strong relationships and effective partnerships. 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.



Wagiman kids love turtle - Photo by Kathrine Carver

TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Since the enactment of the ALRA and the NTA, approximately 50 per cent of land in the Northern Territory has become legally Aboriginal-owned, including 85 per cent 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 per cent live in regional and remote areas – in nearly 200 communities, ranging in size from small family outstations to communities with populations of about 3000.

The majority of Aboriginal people in the NLC region speak an Aboriginal language as their first language. Many are multilingual, 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. 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 take part in planning and development activities while at the same time protecting their cultural integrity.

NLC COUNCIL

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 responsible Commonwealth Minister approves the method of choosing members of the NLC, including the community and/or outstation area represented. The Minister has approved the 52 community areas in the NLC region that members can be nominated to represent.

There are 78 elected members and five co-opted women representing the NLC's seven regions, equating to 83 NLC Full Council Members.

The five co-opted women are appointed by the Chair on advice from the Executive and Regional Council Members for the purpose of improving female representation. At the first meeting of a new Full Council, the Chair will allocate these positions. Co-opted members have the same roles and functions of elected Council Members.

The last Full Council election was held in December 2019. The NLC would like to acknowledge and thank all previous members for their contribution during their term and welcome our new members.

List of Council Members by region and attendance tables for regional council meetings during the reporting period please refer to Appendices 1 (Council Meeting Attendance).

The Full Council shapes the policy and the strategic direction of the NLC. The Full Council, which meets twice a year, has delegated most of its powers to approve exploration and petroleum licence applications, and section 19 land use agreements under the ALRA to the Executive and Regional Councils.

The Chairman, Mr Samuel Bush-Blanas, and Deputy Chairman, Mr Calvin Deveraux, were elected at the first meeting of the current Full Council at Jabiru, in December 2019.

Along with one member nominated from each of the NLC's seven regions, the Chairman and Deputy comprise the NLC's nine-member Executive Council.

The Chairman is an executive director and an employee of the NLC.

The Deputy is a non-executive director who becomes an executive director in 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 Executive Council meets at least six times a year and is responsible for managing business between Full Council meetings.

Full, Executive and Regional Council meetings receive operational and financial reports from NLC branch managers on the progress of activities and projects.

Induction and governance training sessions are provided to all new and returning Council Members. Capacity building also occurs during council meetings when government officials, politicians and various experts are invited to make special presentations.

NLC REGIONS

The NLC is divided into seven regions: Darwin/Daly/Wagait, West Arnhem, East Arnhem, Katherine, Victoria River District, Ngukurr and Borroloola/Barkly, each represented by a regional council. One member from each region is elected to sit on the NLC's Executive Council.

The NLC has 10 offices beyond Darwin – Katherine, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy, Timber Creek, Tennant Creek, Ngukurr, Borroloola, Wadeye, Maningrida and Galiwin'ku.

NLC REGIONS AND REGIONAL OFFICES

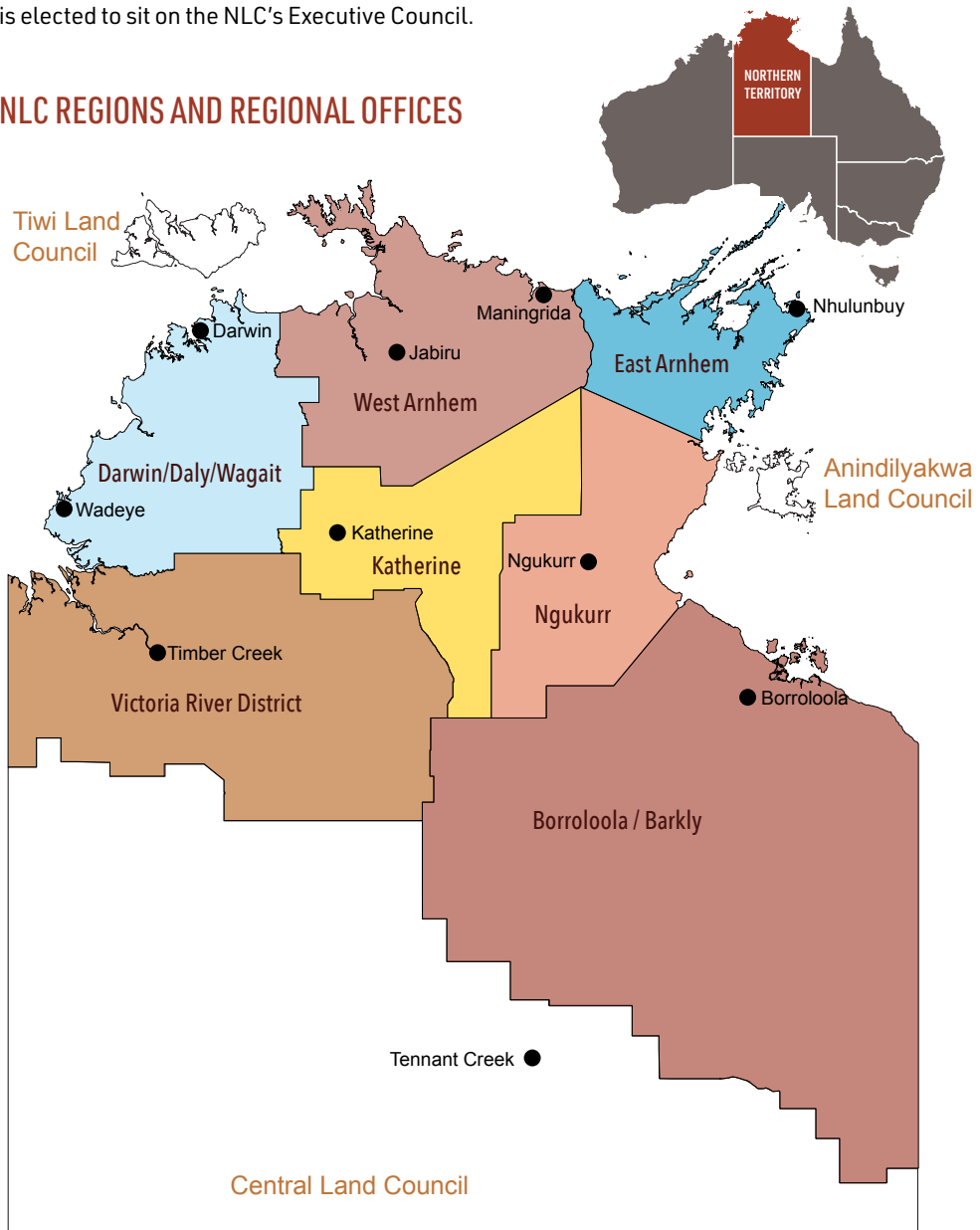


Figure 6

NLC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS



CHAIRMAN

Samuel Bush-Blanasi

Samuel Bush-Blanasi is a Mayili man and his mother is from Blue Mud Bay. He is a 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 was mentored by Raymond Fordimail in Wugularr, learning the skills required to become a successful administrator. Mr Blanasi is an artist who has a long history of community service and a wealth of social experience. This is Mr Blanasi's seventh term at the NLC with a third term as Chairman.



DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Calvin Deveraux

Calvin Deveraux is a Rak Mak Mak Marranungu man from the Finnis River area and lives on Twin Hill Station.

He was first elected to the Northern Land Council in 2005, serving consecutive terms to 2010. He returned in 2019 as the representative for the Darwin South West (Litchfield) ward. Calvin was elected as the Deputy Chair at the Full Council Meeting at Jabiru in December 2019.

DARWIN/DALY/WAGAIT REGION

**Bill Danks**

**Executive Council
Member Dec
2019-current**

Bill Danks is a Larrakia man and lives in Darwin. He was first elected to the Northern Land Council in 1998, serving consecutive terms to 2013. In 2019, he returned to the NLC as a representative of the Darwin ward. Bill is a passionate advocate for Larrakia people and has been involved, with his family, in the Kenbi land claim, Australia's longest-running Aboriginal land claim. Bill returned to the NLC to be a voice for Larrakia people and all Aboriginal people in the Darwin, Daly and Wagait Region.

**Elizabeth Sullivan**

**Executive Council
Member Nov
2016-Dec 2019**

Elizabeth Sullivan is a Wagaman woman who lives in Pine Creek and has been a Council member since 2012. She has also worked for the NLC as a casual Ranger. In her position as an Executive Councillor, she wanted to help members in her region develop economically. "I'm not superhuman, but I will do the best I can to support their decisions and interests for the best possible outcome."

BORROLOOLA/BARKLY REGION

**Christopher Neade**

**Executive Council
Member Dec
2019-current**

Christopher Neade is a Waanyi man from the Barkly Tablelands and lives in Elliot. He was elected to the Council in 2016. This is his second term as an NLC Council Member representing the Elliot ward and his first term as an executive member. Chris studied in Mt Isa before starting work on cattle stations throughout the Barkly region. He joined the NLC to ensure that the concerns of his communities are taken seriously. Chris is an advocate for development opportunities in the Barkly and to ensure Aboriginal people are treated with fairness and respect.

**Richard Dixon**

**Executive Council
Member Nov
2016-Dec 2019**

Richard Dixon is a Garawa man from Robinson River and is the senior Traditional Owner for the community area lease. He is a member and former director of the Gulf Savannah NT Aboriginal Corporation, whose principal function is to provide community development program services to the Gulf region. He is also a member and former Chairman of the Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation, which delivers a range of essential services to Robinson River residents, including through its community store. His vision is to help his people and the government to work together.

EAST ARNHEM REGION



**Djawa
Yunupingu**
Executive Council
Member Dec
2019-current

Djawa Yunupingu is a Gumatj man and is a respected community elder in the East Arnhem region. Djawa also sits on the Gumatj Board as well as the Yothu Yindi Foundation Board. He was one of the founding members of the Dhimurru Land Corporation, which is responsible for looking after the land environment of North East Arnhem Land. He delivered a moving speech at the 2018 Garma festival. Since 2008, Djawa has led the work of Marngarr Resource Centre, which is a local resource agency that provides training, employment and work. Djawa joined the NLC in February 2019 and will continue to raise the issues of his people and the East Arnhem region.



**Bobby
Wungunmurra**
Executive Council
Member Nov
2016-Feb 2019

Bobby Wungunmurra, a Dhalwangu man, lives at Gapuwiak, where he works as an employment consultant and is a liaison officer at Miwatj Employment Participation. He was elected to the Executive Council in November 2016. His appointment ceased in February 2019. Bobby has served on the Executive previously. He was also an NLC member in the late 1980s. "I want to look after the people better and help to improve relations so that we get better government services." His vision is for Aboriginal people to run their own businesses.

KATHERINE REGION



Helen Lee
Executive Council
Member Dec
2019-current

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 and Burridj Aboriginal Group Training, and is the Deputy Mayor of the Roper Gulf Regional Council. Helen is keen to promote women's issues and wants to help Aboriginal people develop economic enterprises on Homelands.

NGUKURR REGION



Grace Daniels

**Executive Council
Member Dec
2019-current**

Grace Daniels is a member of the Mara clan and is a respected community elder in the Ngukurr region. She was first elected to the council in 2002 and is a representative for Ngukurr outstations. Grace is committed to seeing real change on the ground. She is an advocate for improving infrastructure in remote communities through investment in roads, bridges, outstations and housing.



Peter Lansen

**Executive Council
Member Nov
2016-Dec 2019**

Peter Lansen, who is of Alawa and Mara heritage, is a long-standing member of the NLC; this is his third non-consecutive term as a member of the Executive Council. He works as a labourer at Minyerri.

Last year, he returned as a director of the Alawa Aboriginal Corporation and is a former director of Sunrise Health. "I want to perform well for my people. I'm still young, and I want to pave the way for tomorrow's children. I want to be that voice for tomorrow."

VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT



Brian Pedwell

**Executive Council
Member Dec
2019-current**

Brian Pedwell is Ngarinman from his grandfather's side and Gurindji from his grandmother's side. He grew up on the Victoria River Downs Station and in Yarralin, moving around the region to Kalkarindji. Brian completed his studies at Kormilda College. He has a diverse background, having worked in essential services and as an Aboriginal health practitioner for more than 15 years. Brian was an executive member of the Katherine West Health Board and is the Mayor of the Victoria Daly Regional Council. As a member of the NLC, he hopes to build on the legacy of leaders before him and continue to fight for the interests of Aboriginal people in his region.



Raymond Hector

**Executive Council
Member Nov
2016-Dec 2019**

Raymond Hector was born in Darwin in 1970 and was schooled at Kormilda College. He was a health worker for many years at home in Pigeon Hole.

As a member of the Executive Council, Raymond, who is from the Billarna people, says his position 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 to care for and control their land.

WEST ARNHEM REGION



Matthew Ryan

**Executive Council
Member
Dec 2019-current**

Matthew Ryan is of Rembarrga, Ngalkban, Kune and Gurindji descent and lives at Maningrida. He was elected to the NLC in 2004 and is a representative for the Maningrida ward. Matthew completed his primary and secondary schooling at the Maningrida School and then served his community for many years as an Aboriginal Community Police Officer in the Northern Territory Police Force. Matthew is a respected community leader and is the Mayor of West Arnhem Regional Council.

Matthew's vision for the NLC is to create new and genuine economic opportunities for all Aboriginal people in remote communities.



John Christophersen

**Deputy Chairman
Nov 2016-
Dec 2019**

John Christophersen, a member of the Murran Group, Cobourg Peninsula, was born in Darwin. He has family ties into Kakadu, is a former NLC staff member, and is 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. John's term as Deputy Chair ceased in December 2019.

Mr R Lami Lami (Deceased)

**Executive Council Member
July 2019 – Dec 2019**

Mr R Lami Lami is a Mayurrulibj man from the East Wellington Range on the mainland, south of South Goulburn Island. This is his first term as an NLC member. Schooled at Kormilda College, he did an apprenticeship as a diesel mechanic and worked for Perkins Shipping. In the 1980s, he worked on the Pancontinental Jabiluka project before undertaking a 12-month community development course and used those skills at ERA's Community Development Unit at Jabiru. Later he was manager of the Red Lily Health Board. He has also been a member of ATSIC, and chaired its Jabiru Regional Council. As an NLC member, he wants to help countrymen gain a better knowledge of the NLC. "They rely on the NLC a lot, but many don't understand enough about what the NLC does."

NLC FULL COUNCIL MEMBERS

BORROLOOLA / BARKLY REGION (13 MEMBERS)

NAME	ROLE	WARD	SERVICE DURING 2019-20
Brian Limerick	Full Council Member	Alexandria	July 2019–current
David Harvey	Full Council Member	Borrooloola	Dec 2019–current
Shaun Evans	Full Council Member	Borrooloola	Dec 2019–current
Keith Rory	Full Council Member	Borrooloola – Outstations	July 2019–current
Jack Green	Full Council Member	Brunette Downs	Dec 2019–current
Chris Neade	Executive Council Member Full Executive Council	Elliott	July 2019–current July 2019–Dec 2019
Jason Bill	Full Council Member	Muckaty	July 2019–current
Jeffrey Dixon	Full Council Member	Murranji	Dec 2019–current
Maxine Wallace	Full Council Member	Nicholson River	July 2019–current
Joy Priest	Full Council Member	North Barkly	July 2019–current
Richard Dixon	Full Council Member Executive Council Member	Robinson River	Dec 2019–current July 2019–Dec 2019
Gordon Noonan	Full Council Member	Rockhampton Downs	July 2019– current
John Finlay	Full Council Member	Wombaya	July 2019–current
Jason Mulholland	Full Council Member	Borrooloola	July 2019–Dec 2019
Jody Evans	Full Council Member	Borrooloola	July 2019–Dec 2019
Kumanjayi (Deceased)	Full Council Member	Murranji	July 2019–Dec 2019
Timothy Lansen	Full Council Member	Nicholson	July 2016–Dec 2019

DARWIN / DALY / WAGAIT REGION (15 MEMBERS)

NAME	ROLE	WARD	SERVICE DURING 2019-20
Joy Cardona	Full Council Member	Daly River	Dec 2019–current
Matthew Shields	Full Council Member	Daly River North (Woolianna)	July 2019–current
Norman Miller	Full Council Member	Daly River South (Upper Daly)	Dec 2019–current
John Sullivan	Full Council Member	Daly River West (Woodycupildiya)	July 2019–current
Bill Danks	Executive Council Member	Darwin	Dec 2019–current
Christine Jenner	Full Council Member	Darwin	Dec 2019–current
Graham Kenyon	Full Council Member	Darwin East (Humpty Doo)	July 2019–current
Margaret Daiyi	Full Council Member	Darwin South (Adelaide River)	Dec 2019–current
Calvin Deveraux	Deputy Chairman	Darwin South West (Litchfield)	Dec 2019–current
	Full Council Member		July 2019–Dec 2019
Rex Edmunds	Full Council Member	Darwin West (Belyuen)	Mar 2019–current
Roger Wodidj	Full Council Member	Palumpa	Dec 2019–current
John Wilson	Full Council Member	Peppimenarti	July 2019–current
Aaron Banderson	Full Council Member	Pine Creek	Dec 2019–current
Tobias Nganbe	Full Council Member	Wadeye	Dec 2019–current
Mark Tunmuck-Smith	Full Council Member	Wadeye (North)	Dec 2019–current
Aaron Hector	Full Council Member	Daly River	July 2019–Dec 2019
Audrey Tilmouth	Full Council Member	Darwin	July 2019–Dec 2019
James Sing	Full Council Member	Darwin West	July 2019–Dec 2019
Elizabeth Sullivan	Executive Council Member	Pine Creek	July 2019–Dec 2019

EAST ARNHEM REGION (16 MEMBERS)

NAME	ROLE	WARD	SERVICE DURING 2019-20
Bandarr (Michael) Wirrpanda	Full Council Member	Blue Mud Bay – Outstations	Dec 2019–current
Makugun (Brendan) Marika	Full Council Member	Blue Mud bay – Outstations	Dec 2019–current
Jason Guyula	Full Council Member	Galiwinku	July 2019–current
Johnny Burrawanga	Full Council Member	Galiwinku – Outstations	July 2019–current
Kenny Guyula	Full Council Member	Galiwinku – Outstations	July 2019–current
Peter Yawunydjurr	Full Council Member	Galiwinku	Dec 2019–current
Bobby Wunungmurra	Full Council Member Executive Council Member	Gapuwiyak	July 2019–current Position ceased Feb 2019
Jason R Butjala	Full Council Member	Gapuwiyak	Dec 2019–current
George Milaypuma	Full Council Member	Milingimbi	July 2019–current
Michael Ali	Full Council Member	Milingimbi	July 2019–current
D.R.R. (Deceased)	Full Council Member	Ramingining	July 2019–current
David Warraya	Full Council Member	Ramingining	July 2019–current
Djawa Yunupingu	Executive Council Member	Ski Beach	Dec 2019–current
	Full Council Member		July 2019–Dec 2019
Djawa Murrmurra Burarrwanga	Full Council Member	Yirrkala	Dec 2019–current
Witiyana Marika	Full Council Member	Yirrkala	July 2019–current
Yananymul Mununggurr	Full Council Member	Yirrkala	July 2019–current
J.L (Deceased)	Full Council Member	Blue Mud Bay	July 2019–Dec 2019
Jonathan Nunggumajbarr	Full Council Member	Blue Mud Bay	July 2019–Dec 2019
Wesley Bandi Bandi	Full Council Member	Gapuwiyak	July 2019–Dec 2019

KATHERINE REGION (7 MEMBERS)

NAME	ROLE	WARD	SERVICE DURING 2019-20
Helen Lee	Executive Council Member	Barunga	July 2019-current
Samantha Lindsay	Full Council Member	Bulman	July 2019-current
Dwayne Rosas	Full Council Member	Katherine	Dec 2019-current
Lisa Mumbin	Full Council Member	Katherine	July 2019-current
Ossie Daylight	Full Council Member	Mataranka/ Djimbra (Jilkmिंगgan)	Dec 2019-current
John Dalywater	Full Council Member	Weemol	July 2019-current
Samuel Bush-Blanasi	NLC Chairman	Wugularr	July 2019-current
Linda Fletcher	Full Council Member	Katherine	July 2019-Dec 2019
Jocelyn James	Full Council Member	Mataranka / Djimbra	July 2019-Dec 2019

NGUKURR REGION (9 MEMBERS)

NAME	ROLE	WARD	SERVICE DURING 2019-20
Sheila Hall Joshua	Full Council Member	Minyerri	Dec 2019-current
Grace Daniels	Executive Council Member Full Council Member	Ngukurr - Outstations	Dec 2019-current July 2019-Dec 2019
Gregory Daniels	Full Council Member	Ngukurr - Outstations	July 2019-current
Walter Rogers	Full Council Member	Ngukurr - Outstations	July 2019-current
Ernest Numamurdirdi	Full Council Member	Numbulwar - Outstations	Dec 2019-current
Hubert (Rami) Nunggumajbarr	Full Council Member	Numbulwar - Outstations	Dec 2019-current
Virginia Nundhirribala	Full Council Member	Numbulwar - Outstations	July 2019-current
Peter Lansen	Full Council Member Executive Council Member	Nutwood/Cox River	Dec 2019-current July 2019-Dec 2019
Clifford Duncan	Full Council Member	Urapunga	July 2019-current
Keith Farrell	Full Council Member	Minyerri	July 2019-Dec 2019
Faye Mangurra	Full Council Member	Numbulwar	July 2019-Dec 2019
Timothy Wurramara	Full Council Member	Numbulwar	July 2019-Dec 2019

VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT (6 MEMBERS)

NAME	ROLE	WARD	SERVICE DURING 2019-20
Kenivan Anthony	Full Council Member	Amanbidji	July 2019–current
Shadrack Retchford	Full Council Member	Bulla	July 2019–current
Raymond Hector	Full Council Member Executive Council Member	Pigeon Hole	Dec 2019–current July 2019–Dec 2019
Lorraine Jones	Full Council Member	Timber Creek	Dec 2019–current
Brian Pedwell	Executive Council Member Full Council Member	Yarralin	Dec 2019–current July 2019–Dec 2019
Charlie Newry	Full Council Member	Yingawunari	July 2019–current
Jocelyn Victor	Co-opted	Pigeon Hole	July 2019–Dec 2019
Doris Roberts	Co-opted	Timber Creek	July 2019–Dec 2019
Elaine Watts	Co-opted	Timber Creek	July 2019–Dec 2019
George Campbell	Full Council Member	Yarralin	July 2019–Dec 2019



Parkinsonia seedlings - Photo by Kathrine Carver

WEST ARNHEM REGION (12 MEMBERS)

NAME	ROLE	WARD	SERVICE DURING 2019-20
June Fejo	Full Council Member	Cobourg	Dec 2019–current
Otto Dann	Full Council Member	Gunbalanya	July 2019–current
Timothy Nabegeyo	Full Council Member	Gunbalanya - Outstations	Dec 2019–current
Wayne Wauchope	Full Council Member	Gunbalanya - Outstations	July 2019–current
John Christophersen	Full Council Member Deputy Chairman	Kakadu	Dec 2019–current July 2019–Dec 2019
Valda Bokmarray	Full Council Member	Maningrida	July 2019–current
Wayne Kala-Kala	Full Council Member	Maningrida	Dec 2019–current
Julius Kernan	Full Council Member	Maningrida - Outstations	July 2019–current
Matthew Ryan	Executive Council Member Full Council Member	Maningrida - Outstations	Dec 2019–current July 2019–Dec 2019
Matthew Nagarlbin	Full Council Member	Minjilang	July 2019–current
Bunug Galaminda	Full Council Member	Warruwi - Outstations	July 2019–current
Jenny Inmulugulu	Full Council Member	Warruwi - Outstations	July 2019–current
R Lami Lami (Deceased)	Executive Council Member	Cobourg	July 2019–Dec 2019
Noni Eather	Co-opted	Maningrida	July 2019–Dec 2019
June Fejo	Co-opted	Minjilang	July 2019–Dec 2019

CO-OPTED WOMEN

NAMES	REGION	MEMBERSHIP STATUS
Jocelyn Victor	Victoria River District	Nov 2016–Dec 2019
Doris Roberts	Victoria River District	Nov 2016–Dec 2019
Elaine Watts	Victoria River District	Nov 2016–Dec 2019
June Fejo	West Arnhem	Nov 2016–Dec 2019
Noni Eather	West Arnhem	Nov 2016–Dec 2019

Note: The co-opted women for 2019-22 have not been confirmed until the round of Regional Council meetings are held.

ADMINISTRATION

The Executive Council appoints the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who has day-to-day responsibility for operations of the NLC. The CEO works closely with the Chairman and the Executive Council, and is responsible for the leadership and management of the organisation, with the delegation to manage staff, implementing Full Council decisions, driving the NLC's strategic direction, setting priorities and enforcing sound corporate governance.

During the reporting period, seven branches supported the CEO, which are as follows:

- Executive (previously Secretariat): provides support to the CEO, Chairman and to the NLC's elected arms; manages policy, communications, complaints and sea country matters
- Legal: provides sound legal advice to the administrative and elected arms
- Anthropology: identifies and consults with Traditional Owners to secure and protect rights in land
- Regional Development: oversees the NLC's network of regional offices beyond Darwin and provides logistics support for consultations required under ALRA and the NTA
- 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; also, the branch will soon assume management of the Commonwealth-funded Learning on Country program
- Minerals and Energy: provides advice to enable Aboriginal people to understand and consider proposals to explore for and mine minerals or petroleum products on their land
- Financial Services Administration: delivers financial, information technology, human resource and administrative support, including fleet and property asset management to all branches.

Before the end of the reporting period, the branches were aligned into four divisions with new general manager positions introduced. However, as part of a major change to the organisational structure, the four divisions now support the CEO to enable a better and effective way of operating and understanding the rights and responsibilities of the various decision-makers within the organisation.

As of 30 June 2020, the NLC structure consists of four divisions:

- Land and Law

The Land and Law division comprises Legal Services, Anthropology and the Minerals and Energy branches. The division identifies and consults with Traditional Owners to secure and protect their rights and interests in land and sea. The team provides legal advice to the NLC and Traditional Owners, conducts land rights and Native Title claims, negotiates agreements and pursues litigation where appropriate. It also provides advice and oversight of the NLC's obligations regarding mineral and petroleum exploration, production and associated activities as they relate to the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act* and the *Native Title Act*.

- Financial Services

The Financial Services division provides financial and information communications technology (ICT) management across the NLC. It is also responsible for assets, fleet, infrastructure and facility management.

- Community and Regional Services

The Community and Regional Services division is made up of the Regional Development, Caring for Country and the Community Planning and Development branches. The Regional Development branch is responsible for

managing the NLC's network of regional offices beyond Darwin and performs a number of services in our remote communities. It coordinates funding allocations for ceremonies and funerals, processes permit applications and facilitates the section 19 proposal and assessment approval process across the region. The Caring for Country branch hosts and provides administrative support to land and sea Ranger groups, provides policy support and advice on land and sea management issues, and supports joint management of national parks. The Community Planning and Development branch supports Aboriginal land-owning groups to use payments from land use agreements to drive their own development and secure lasting benefits from their land, waters and seas.

- People Services

The People Services division supports the NLC's diverse and growing workforce. It is responsible for the entire suite of human resources, including recruitment, industrial relations, payroll, learning and development and work health safety. The division is also responsible for information management, which includes archiving, records management and library services.

NLC ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

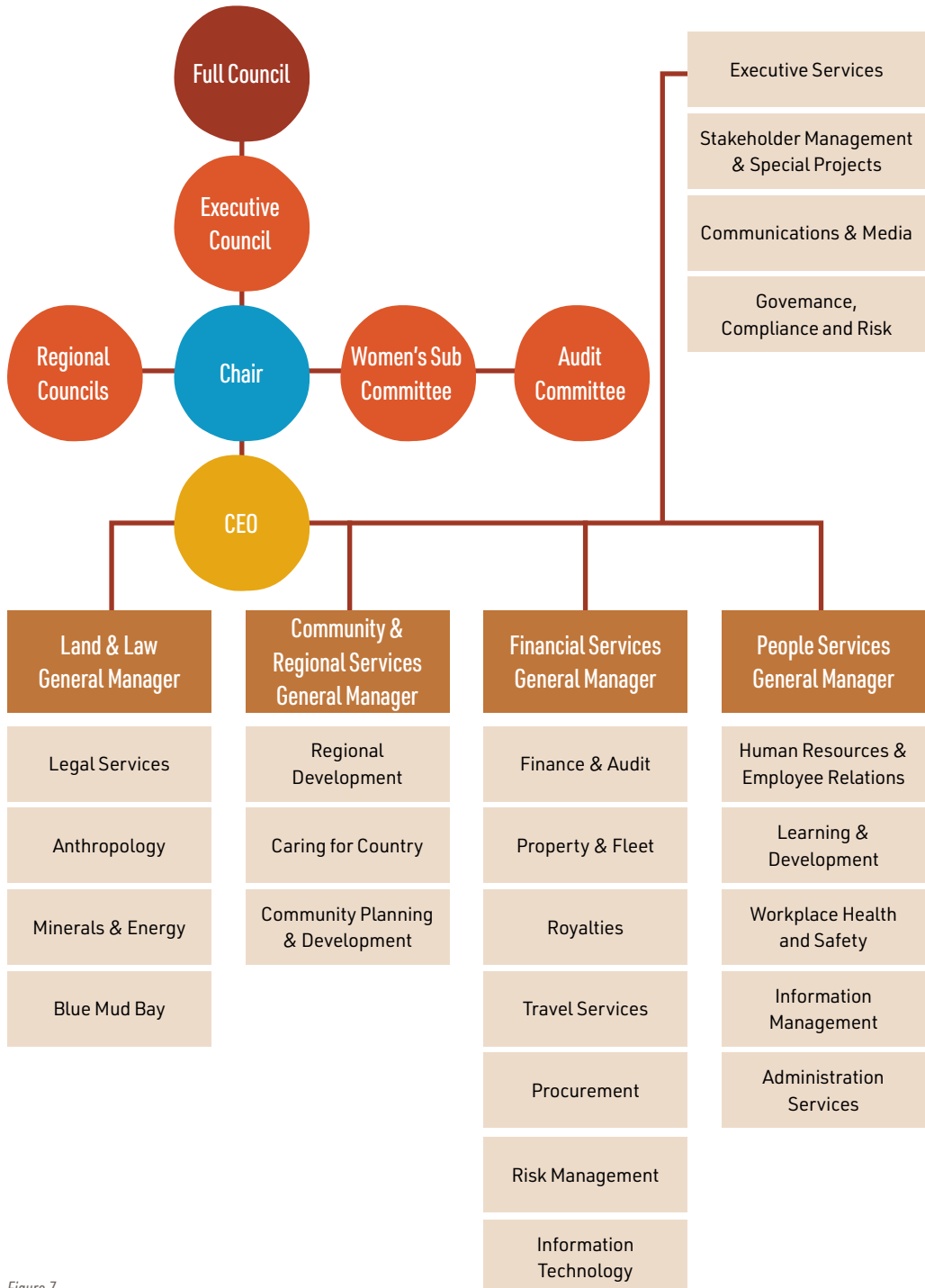
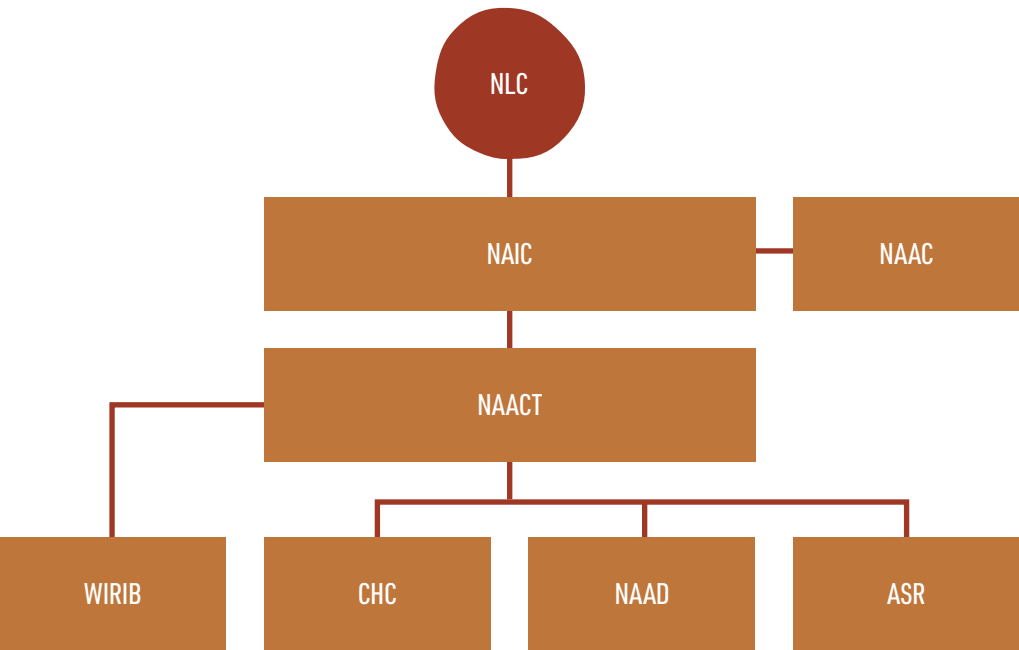


Figure 7

NLC SUBSIDIARIES



- NLC – Northern Land Council
 - NAIC – Northern Aboriginal Investment Corporation Pty Ltd
 - NAACT – Northern Australian Aboriginal Charitable Trust
 - NAAC – Northern Australian Aboriginal Corporation
 - NAAD – Northern Australian Aboriginal Development Corporation Pty Ltd
 - ASR – Aboriginal Solar Rollout Pty Ltd
 - AIG – Aboriginal Investment Group
 - CHC - Create Housing & Construction Pty Ltd
 - WIRIB – Wirib Tourism Park Pty Ltd
- Controlling entity
- AIG

MANAGEMENT



GENERAL MANAGER LAND AND LAW

Peter Kilduff

Peter Kilduff joined the NLC in November 2019 after an extensive career as a barrister specialising in criminal defence and Native Title.



GENERAL MANAGER PEOPLE SERVICES

Jason Chin

Jason Chin joined the NLC in June 2020 after working as the HR and Operations Manager at the Menzies School of Health Research. He has also worked at Kormilda College and Paspaley Pearling Company.



GENERAL MANAGER COMMUNITY & REGIONAL SERVICES

Sharon Hillen

Sharon Hillen joined the NLC in June 2020 following a decade in community and council service delivery in local government. Sharon has a long history in land use management, and project and contract management in remote and regional service delivery throughout the Northern Territory.



GENERAL MANAGER FINANCIAL SERVICES

Irfan Bhat

Irfan Bhat, who has had extensive experience in senior financial roles during his career, has been with the NLC since 2013 working in various positions within finance. He was appointed Chief Financial Officer/GM Financial Services in June 2019.

PART 2

*The Year
in Review*



Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

*Bush apple flower
- Photo by Kathrine Carver*



Daly River - Guwardagun - Photo by Kathrine Carver



Cedric & Josie remove Bellyache bush, Claravale Crossing - Photo by Kathrine Carver

INTRODUCTION

This section provides a detailed look at the extensive range of activities undertaken by NLC branches during the reporting period.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the NLC's priority was to protect the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people, especially remote residents. This affected some of our usual operational activities. All permits to enter Aboriginal land except for non-essential travel were suspended. The NLC, along with the other NT Land Councils, and the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory has worked closely with the Commonwealth

and NT governments in developing proper responses to the coronavirus pandemic.

NLC staff have worked tirelessly in response to COVID-19, in particular on issuing and reviewing permit applications, communicating in language to help keep communities informed, and helping return aboriginal people back their country and homelands.



*Early dry season burning - Wagiman Country
- Photo by Kathrine Carver*

Legal Branch

Lawyers and legal support staff work for the Legal Branch. The primary functions of NLC lawyers include:

1. Advice in relation to the functions and powers of a Land Council and Aboriginal Land Trusts under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cth) (*Land Rights Act*).
2. Advice about its obligations under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth), *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (Cth) and other laws of the Commonwealth or Northern Territory.
3. Advising and representing the NLC in current or threatened litigation, including proceedings before the NT Supreme Court, the Federal Court of Australia and the High Court.
4. Working with the Policy and Stakeholder Engagement staff in providing advice on proposed law reform and other policy matters affecting NLC constituents.
5. Assisting to negotiate agreements with individuals, corporations and governments who wish to enter and use Aboriginal land pursuant to sections 11A or 19 of the *Land Rights Act*.
6. Working with the Minerals and Energy Branch in assisting the NLC to negotiate agreements under Part IV of the *Land Rights Act*.
7. Assisting the NLC to monitor and enforce compliance with agreements made under the *Land Rights Act*.
8. Coordinating the NLC's response to trespass and other illegal activity on Aboriginal land.
9. Providing legal advice and representation to Aboriginal people and groups in relation to land claims before the Aboriginal Land Commissioner under the *Land Rights Act*.
10. Providing legal advice and representation to Aboriginal people and groups in relation to applications in the Federal Court for determinations of Native Title or compensation under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth).
11. Notifying, advising and negotiating agreements on behalf of Native Title Holders in relation to future acts under the *Native Title Act*.
12. Providing advice and assistance to the Top End (Default PBC/CLA) Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (Top End Default PBC) pursuant to a comprehensive services agreement.
13. Assisting the NLC to perform its other functions as a representative body under part 11 of the *Native Title Act*, including certification, dispute resolution and agreement making.
14. Where requested, providing the other branches and units of the NLC with legal advice and assistance in relation to aspects of their various different functions and programs.



Wagiman Country - Photo by Kathrine Carver

As with many other areas, the work of the NLC's Legal Branch has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The NLC took measures together with the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments to protect the Territory's vulnerable Aboriginal population. Many meetings in the first six months of 2020 were cancelled and non-essential contact with clients ceased. Court proceedings have continued but have been conducted by either telephone or videoconference.

BRANCH STRUCTURE

The Legal Branch is made up the following personnel:

- Principal Legal Officer
(General Manager Land and Law)
- Branch Manager
- Two legal practice managers, one each for the Land Rights Practice and Native Title Practice
- 18 lawyers
- Senior contracts administrator
- Five legal support staff.

The Legal Branch is structured to correspond to the seven regions that make up the Top End, the area for which the NLC is responsible under the *Land Rights Act*. The structure of the Legal Branch also reflects the different areas of law in which NLC lawyers are required to practise.

Each of the lawyers are, therefore, assigned to one or more of the following:

- land use agreements and other regional development matters arising under the *Land Rights Act*
- unresolved land claims under the *Land Rights Act*
- Native Title claims under the *Native Title Act*
- minerals and energy advice and negotiations
- community planning and development
- Top End PBC and the Native Title Holders for whom the PBC is agent
- national parks
- other matters.

While each lawyer is assigned to a particular practice or region, all NLC lawyers are capable of working flexibly across the different areas in which the NLC operates, including on litigation, major projects, policy and governance.



Ferragusson - Photo by Kathrine Carver



Wagiman Ranges and Jabul Huddleston - prior to early dry season burning - Photo by Kathrine Carver.

REGIONAL LAND RIGHTS PRACTICE

A significant part of a regional lawyer's work involves working with the NLC's Regional Development team to negotiate leases and licences of Aboriginal land to individuals, companies or government agencies. These agreements are colloquially referred to as "section 19 agreements".

Under section 19 of the *Land Rights Act*, the NLC may direct an Aboriginal Land Trust to grant an interest in land to a third party. This interest in land may be in the form of either a "lease" for a term of years or a "licence" giving the proponent permission to use Aboriginal land for a particular purpose, or a combination of both. Section 19 agreements are presented to the Executive Council for approval, but all the applicable statutory criteria must first be met. The criteria include that:

- the Traditional Owners of the land concerned understand the nature and purpose of the grant and as a group consent to it
- any Aboriginal community or group affected has been consulted and has had an adequate opportunity to express its view
- the NLC is satisfied that the terms and conditions of any grant of an estate or interest are reasonable.

LAND CLAIMS

Land claims lawyers work with claimants to prove their traditional rights and interests over the land under claim. If the Aboriginal Land Commissioner recommends to the Minister that the land be granted as Aboriginal land, land claims lawyers work with claimants and non-Aboriginal persons who have an existing interest in the claim area to persuade the Minister to grant the land.

There are 38 unresolved land claims in the NLC region. Of these, 16 are claims that have been recommended by the Commissioner for grant and 22 claims that are still being pursued by NLC staff on behalf of claimants.

In 2019-20, the land claims lawyers focused their efforts on:

- Preparing final submissions for each of the Woolner/Mary River and Fitzmaurice land claim hearings
- Preparing for hearings about traditional ownership over the areas subject to the Peron Islands (Anson Bay) and Cobourg land claims
- Negotiating the resolution of the remaining claims by agreement with claimants and the Northern Territory.

NATIVE TITLE

Native Title lawyers prepare Native Title claims and progress Native Title determination or compensation applications under the *Native Title Act*. There have been 72 positive determinations of Native Title in the NLC region recognising Native Title and two determinations that Native Title does not exist.

There are 33 active Native Title claims in the NLC's region that are before the Federal Court:

- 29 of these claims are facilitated by the NLC's Legal Branch providing legal advice and representation to the claimants
- three of these claims are brought by private lawyers
- one claim is a non-claimant application by the Northern Territory Government for clearance to develop an area of about 300 square metres near Darwin.

The Native Title program in the 2019-20 financial year included the following:

- Responding to future Act notices and developing the Top End PBC's workflows, including by upgrading its capacity to perform PBC functions on behalf of Native Title Holders
- Appealing the Federal Court's decision in the case of *Quall v NLC* to the High Court to challenge the finding that the NLC cannot delegate performance of its certification functions to its CEO
- Seeking Federal Court relief in regard to the NT Government's proposal to grant a further minerals lease to the McArthur River Mine without first giving Native Title Holders the relevant procedural rights under the *Native Title Act*

- Progressing 16 pastoral lease Native Title claims that are before the Federal Court
- Advancing research and authorisation of new Native Title and compensation claims
- Representing the Katherine Families claimants in their Native Title claim over the Township of Katherine, including by pursuing mediation with the overlapping Jawoyn claimants
- Preparing and filing new Native Title claims in response to future Act notices about proposed minerals leases, so that Native Title Holders are in a position to negotiate mining agreements
- Assisting Yolngu leaders from the Blue Mud Bay region to design and register the Djalkiripuyngu Aboriginal Corporation, a new body capable of being nominated by the Native Title Holders of Blue Mud Bay to be their prescribed body corporate.

TOP END PRESCRIBED BODY CORPORATE

The Top End PBC is the agent prescribed body corporate (PBC) for all of the positive determinations of Native Title in the NLC's region, if Native Title Holders consent. Members of the NLC Executive Council from time to time are the members and directors of the Top End PBC. There is a services agreement between the Top End PBC and the NLC under which NLC staff assist the directors to exercise the PBC's functions, including responding to future Act notices received over areas where Native Title has been determined.

MINERALS AND ENERGY

NLC lawyers provide the Land Council with advice about applications for minerals and petroleum tenements over Aboriginal land and also advise and represent Native Title Holders in negotiating the terms of agreements regarding future acts on lands and waters subject to Native Title claims or determinations (e.g. agreements under section 31 of the *Native Title Act* regarding the grant of mining or petroleum interests).

Lawyers work closely with members of the Minerals and Energy Branch on the implementation and monitoring of agreements and provide advice on mineral and petroleum, environmental and water regulation, including in respect of mine rehabilitation and mine closure matters.

LITIGATION

In 2019-20, NLC lawyers have been involved in court proceedings on behalf of either the NLC, Native Title Holders or Aboriginal Land Trusts. Litigation matters consume considerable human and financial resources. They include:

- *NLC v Quall (D21/2019)* – High Court appeal

In 2019, the NLC sought leave from the High Court to appeal the Full Federal Court's decision in the case of *Quall v NLC*. In that case, Mr Quall and Mr Fejo successfully argued that

the NLC did not have the power to delegate its certification function to the CEO, and so the application to register the Kenbi (Cox Peninsula) ILUA had not been validly certified.

Leave to appeal to the High Court was granted. The NLC funded Mr Quall and Mr Fejo to access legal services and participate. The High Court heard the matter in August 2020. The NLC argued that the Full Council can lawfully delegate its functions under the *Native Title Act* to its officers and that the Federal Court was wrong to find otherwise. The High Court may hand down its judgment on this appeal before the end of the 2020 calendar year.

- *Friday v Minister for Primary Industry and Resources* (NTD 40/2019 and NTCAT 2019-0278-CT)

On behalf of Native Title Holders and the Top End PBC, NLC lawyers are challenging the NTG's proposal to grant Minerals Lease (ML) 29881 to Mt Isa Mines Pty Ltd (the McArthur River Mine operating company) for the purpose of dredge spoil from the Bing Bong Port.

Proceedings have been launched in the Federal Court and the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal. NLC lawyers argue that the NTG did not provide Native Title Holders with applicable procedural rights under the *Native Title Act* before seeking to grant the interest. NLC lawyers will also say that the NTG did not provide Native Title Holders with procedural fairness in approaching its decision-making task.

NLC PROJECTS

In 2019-20, the Legal Branch provided advice to various branches and units across the NLC in respect of a variety of internal projects, including permit reform and the Land Use Management and Royalties (LUMAR) system.

Lawyers have worked closely with the Permit Reform team to review and reform the NLC's systems for processing permits and monitoring compliance. This reform includes the development of an online platform for processing permit applications and various policies for administering the permit system. Lawyers have provided the team with advice on the legal requirements for access to Aboriginal land and developing an agreement with traditional Aboriginal owners to facilitate the issuing of permits.

Lawyers have also worked closely with the NLC's LUMAR team to assist with the design of a single contract management system within the NLC. In particular, lawyers have worked to ensure key statutory processes are captured and that adequate compliance checks are incorporated. Once implemented, the LUMAR system will significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of processing land use agreement applications, contract management and compliance.

POLICY FRAMEWORK AND LAW REFORM

The branch has been responsible for, or involved in, the preparation of a range of submissions and meetings in relation to the following:

- Amendment of the *Land Rights Act*, including the introduction of cost recovery regulations
- Amendment of the *Petroleum Legislation Miscellaneous Amendments Bill 2019* (NT)
- Amendment of *Environment Protection Regulations 2019* (NT)
- The proposed *Water Further Amendment Act 2019* (NT) and related regulations
- Reform of the NT EPA's Guidance Note on Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation
- The Productivity Commission's Report on Resources Sector Regulation
- The Independent Review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth).





Bulgul Paradise
- Photo by Kathrine Carver

Anthropology Branch



BRANCH REVIEW AND RESTRUCTURE

Recently introduced structural reforms have addressed unacceptable management-to-staff ratios.

Two senior anthropologist positions have been created and they report directly to the branch manager and share mentorship of regional anthropologists. These staff have taken on complex anthropological projects as well as a number of HR, dispute conciliation, middle management and business planning tasks.

The NLC recruited four regional anthropologists to cover the West Arnhem, Darwin Daly Wagait, Ngukurr and Borroloola Barkly regions.

PAYMENT AGREEMENT (ROYALTIES) POLICY AND PROCESSES

In November 2018, the Full Council endorsed a Payment Agreement Policy. The policy, which provides an overarching structure for incremental reforms introduced over several years, has resulted in a refined and more efficient disbursement system.

Some of the reforms include the implementation of three to five-year standing instructions for recurrent payments; an increased hotline capacity; the introduction of future purpose payment release forms; and the appointment of a full-time disbursement processing officer.

Discussions are underway with NLC senior management for further reforms, including the possible implementation of a unit dedicated to royalty disbursement.

DISPUTE CONCILIATION

Some traction has been gained on certain dispute conciliation matters, but new matters and disputes will continue to challenge the Anthropology Branch. First-hand input and advice from Council Members and senior Aboriginal constituents has been sought and is vital to manage complex disputes appropriately.

PRESENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

The branch is faced with an exponential growth in business on Aboriginal country but with no commensurate increase in capacity.

The branch has undertaken substantial research to clarify anthropological and legal questions in anticipation of the upsurge in activities on country. An example is the extensive research done on parts of the Beetaloo Basin for the Origin oil and gas project.

Other projects reported on previously are continuing with the branch working to enhance cooperative links across the organisation, especially in respect to the Community Planning and Development unit, where future options for investment may be offered to constituents. Negotiations and discussions around Blue Mud Bay and other high-level matters are also continuing with data upload and digitisation projects nearing completion after years of effort.

LAND INTEREST REFERENCES

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 below provides a breakdown of activities completed.

A total of 304 requests were lodged, with 252 significant releases completed during the reporting period. Outstanding information releases will be processed in the new financial year.

ALL REQUESTS		COMPLETED	
FLAG TEXT	NUMBER OF REQUESTS	FLAG TEXT	NUMBER OF REQUESTS
Economic development (S19: tourism, crocodile egg harvesting, pastoral leases, roads and gravel, infrastructure)	173	Economic development (S19: tourism, crocodile egg harvesting, pastoral leases, roads and gravel, infrastructure)	150
Economic development (mining)	59	Economic development (mining)	49
Caring for Country (IPA, parks and reserves, fire abatement, water management, Rangers, resources management)	30	Caring for Country (IPA, parks and reserves, fire abatement, water management, Rangers, resources management)	20
Land claims	16	Land claims	15
Native Title claims (land and sea)	9	Native Title claims (land and sea)	7
Other (FCM, cultural, research, media, defence, permits)	9	Other (FCM, cultural, research, media, defence, permits)	6
Community development	7	Community development	5
Roads and gravel	1		
TOTAL	304	TOTAL	252

There are 37,179 individual documents held in the LIR.

In addition, approximately 2382 new documents were added to the LIR, each requiring geographic and ethnographic indexing (see figure 8 below).

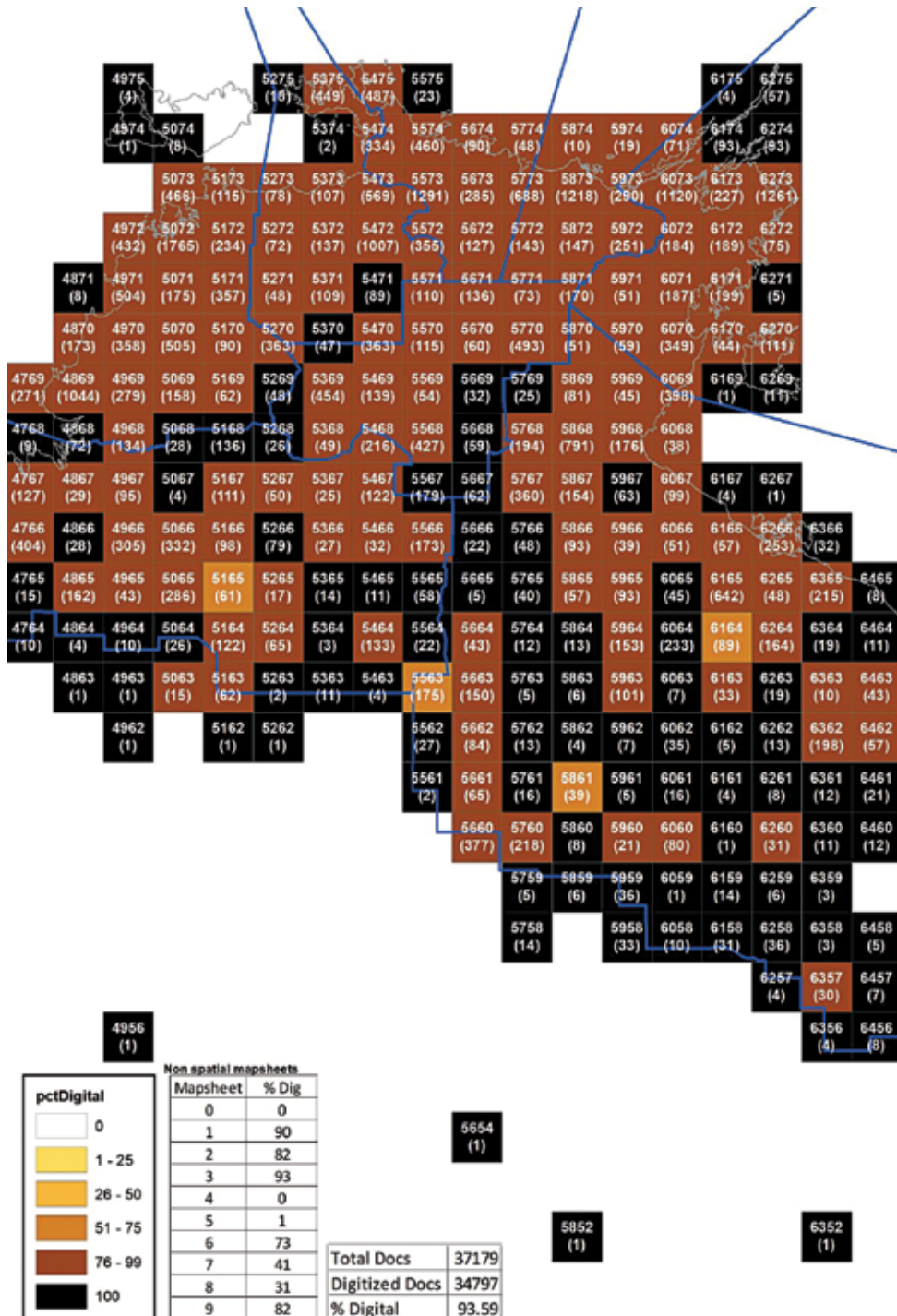


Figure 8

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The NLC’s Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team is made up of four staff and known better as the mapping team. The team is responsible for cartographic production, mapping data compilation and analysis, and a variety of other graphic and databased outputs. The team maintains strong operational

procedures and data management practices to process the high volume of requests from all operational units of the NLC.

Due to COVID-19, mapping requests have not been as high this year. The following tables provide the number of requests this reporting period.

Mapping request by branch for the reporting period

BRANCH	REQUEST TALLY
Anthropology	156
Community Planning and Development (CP&D)	25
Geographic Information Systems (GIS)	13
Caring for Country (Land and Sea)	26
Legal	100
Mining	55
Other	108
Regional Development	172
Executive	12

Mapping requests by month

JOB YEAR	JOB MONTH	NUMBER OF JOBS
2019	July	55
2019	August	41
2019	September	82
2019	October	57
2019	November	91
2019	December	28
2020	January	34
2020	February	68
2020	March	83
2020	April	15
2020	May	31
2020	June	99

The GIS team are also in the process of rolling out a new modernised web mapping architecture for wider distribution of project mapping data on web browsers within the NLC network. This architecture also pushes GIS data management tools out into web browser clients, and also facilitates future mobile apps, which can be used for field data connection on devices such as mobile phones and tablets.

REGIONAL PROFILES

There are seven identified regions within the NLC's jurisdiction. Within the Anthropology Branch these are further broken down to reflect respective workloads in particular areas. This section provides an overview of the work being undertaken in the seven anthropology regions. These summaries give an indication of the diverse and complex environments in which Traditional Owners, Native Title Holders and many NLC staff live and work.

NORTH EAST ARNHAM LAND REGION

The North East Arnhem Land anthropology region includes most of the East Arnhem region and the northern most parts of the Ngukurr region. Traditional Owners for the region are the Yolngu people in the north east and Nunggubuyu people in the south east toward Numbulwar. The region includes areas of cultural significance, such as Blue Mud Bay, Gove Peninsula, Elcho Island in the Wessel Island group and the Mitchell Ranges.

The major communities of Gapuwiyak, Galiwin'ku, Gunyangara, Yirrkala and Numbulwar are within the North East Arnhem anthropology region as well as more than 60 Homelands.

The region attracts a broad range of economic and development interests – from mineral and petroleum exploration, extractive minerals, tourism, Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) and Aboriginal Ranger groups, wildlife harvest (buffalo safari and crocodile egg harvest), business, research and government sectors.

CENTRAL ARNHAM LAND

The Central Arnhem Land anthropology region intersects the East and West Arnhem Land regions, and a small portion of the Katherine and Ngukurr regions. It is supported by the Katherine, East Arnhem and West Arnhem regional offices.

The region encompasses the major communities of Ramingining and Milingimbi and numerous outstations throughout the Arafura Wetlands and along the Blyth and Cadell Rivers.

There are more than 100 Traditional Owner clan groups in the region, with the easternmost groups speaking Yolngu Matha and the westernmost groups comprising a large variety of Aboriginal languages, such as Burarra, Na-Kara and Rembarrnga. The presence of so many diverse clan groups in a relatively small region makes Central Arnhem a particularly ethnographically dense region.

Land use agreement activity in the region has increased steadily compared with previous years. The livestock and fishing tourism industries have been particularly active, with buffalo hunting, buffalo safari, crocodile egg collection and sports fishing enterprises providing economic opportunities for landowners.



Kakadu rain runoff - Photo by Kathrine Carver

WEST ARNHEM

The West Arnhem anthropology region covers the western part of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust. The major communities are Maningrida, Minjilang, Gunbalanya and Waruwi, plus many outstations.

There are more than 100 Traditional Owner groups within the region speaking a variety of Aboriginal languages. Generally, the groups are patrilineal, which means that clan affiliation and inheritance of country is passed down through the father and father's father. However, affiliations to country are complex and besides landowning clans with primary rights, there can be many other groups and individuals with interests in a particular country through kinship, company relationships or ceremonial connections.

Mining exploration activities form an important part of the anthropological work taking place in West Arnhem. There are a number of granted Exploration Licences (ELs) within the region. Every year the NLC facilitates consultations with Traditional Owners and affected people

where the companies' work programs are presented and explained so informed consent can be given along with royalty instructions.

During the reporting period, consultations were conducted with Traditional Owners regarding leases over infrastructure lots in the major communities, resulting in new land use agreements with government agencies, private entities and Aboriginal corporations.

The NLC often consults on commercial development and tourism on Aboriginal land, including artistic ventures that may showcase the area. For instance, an action thriller feature film, *High Ground*, was filmed in the region. With the consent from several groups of Traditional Owners, it features amazing landscapes and stunning features of West Arnhem Land.

Planning for the responsible and culturally appropriate management of the intertidal zone continues. It focuses on the development of agreements that will support Traditional Owners in controlling access to their intertidal country.

KAKADU, COBOURG AND MARY RIVER REGION

The NLC's Kakadu and Cobourg anthropology region is between the Darwin hinterland and West Arnhem Land. It encompasses Mary River National Park in the west, Kakadu National Park, Garig Gunak Barlu National Park on the Cobourg Peninsula and Marine Park in the north.

The region now includes the Gunbalanya community and some parts of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust adjacent to the parks.

The national parks all operate under joint management agreements between Traditional Owners and the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission or the Commonwealth's Parks Australia. A primary focus of the NLC is to support the effective participation of Traditional Owners in joint management arrangements. This involves consultations over membership, management plans, natural and cultural resource use, and monitoring informed decision-making processes to ensure board members can confidently report on Traditional Owners' views.

The NLC also promotes employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal people; the protection of traditional law and customs; the protection of sacred sites; and help in managing disputes.

There are a number of land claims in progress within the region, including the Cobourg Peninsula land claim (No. 6), the Kakadu Repeat land claims covering areas in Kakadu not yet granted as Aboriginal Land, and the Woolner/Mary River Beds and Banks land claim (No. 192). The anthropological research for each of these claims has been completed.

The closure of the Ranger uranium mine and monitoring Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) and the Commonwealth Government to ensure they fulfil obligations to rehabilitate the mine is a major, long-term project. The NLC's role is to advocate for Mirrar people's interests, and promote opportunities for them to gain environmental, economic and social benefits from the mine closure.

This work will involve collaboration between the NLC and the Mirrar people, the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, ERA, the Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments, and other external stakeholders, such as the Kakadu National Park Board of Management and Director of Parks.

Work on the culturally appropriate management of the intertidal zone is continuing. New agreements allowing Traditional Owners to control access are being negotiated with the NT Government.

In Gunbalanya, the NLC has continued to hold consultations with Mandjurlngunj Mengerrdji for new land use agreements.

NGUKURR, BORROLOOLA-BARKLY REGION

The Borroloola Barkly region covers a geographically expansive area encompassing 26 Aboriginal land trusts and many pastoral leases. The major towns are Borroloola and Elliott. Major communities include Ngukurr, Minyerri and Robinson River. The region also features a large section of coastline, and the Roper and McArthur Rivers and Limmen Bight.

During this reporting period, multiple agreements pertaining to s19 mining, pastoral and township development matters have been facilitated between Traditional Owners and proponents.

A focus of the NLC will continue to be addressing the chronic shortage of housing for Aboriginal people in Elliott. The NLC is working with Traditional Owners and Native Title Holders to identify their housing needs, including exploring the option of establishing an Aboriginal corporation to manage housing, local enterprises and community services, such as youth engagement programs.

In the past year, the NLC have conducted land use agreement consultations with Traditional Owners and affected people of the Ngukurr, Urapunga and Robinson River communities and at the Borroloola township.

VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT REGION

The Victoria River District is centred on the catchment of the Victoria River in the southwestern portion of the NLC area. Land tenure of this region includes land trusts, pastoral leases and Aboriginal land use agreements subject to Native Title.

The communities of Timber Creek, Bulla, Amanbidji, Yarralin, Lingara, Pigeon Hole, and Menggen, as well as surrounding outstations, Homelands and areas of outstanding cultural and historical significance, such as the Judbarra/ Gregory National Park, lie within the region.

The history of pastoralism in the region is relevant to understanding local groups today and the remarkable maintenance of cultural values within changing conditions.

KATHERINE REGION

The Katherine anthropology region encompasses the larger townships of Katherine and Mataranka and the major Aboriginal communities of Barunga, Beswick, Jilkminggan, Manyallaluk, Bulman and Weemol.

The region extends south-east and northeast from Katherine and includes the Mangarrayi, Beswick, Manyallaluk and Jawoyn Aboriginal Land Trusts and the south-west area of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust. Pastoral leases include Conways, Flying Fox, Goondooloo, Mainoru, Moroak and Mountain Valley.

In the past year, the Anthropology Branch has contributed to the progression of a number of land use matters in the Katherine region. Significant consultations and agreements have taken place for grazing and buffalo mustering in the Elsey, Beswick and Roper River regions, as well as consultations for the Barunga Festival.

Agreements have been made with Traditional Owners over cemeteries in communities across the Roper Gulf Regional Council area. Traditional Owners have agreed to community housing and store developments and variations in Manyallaluk, Beswick and Barunga. The branch has also processed royalty disbursements, associated with related agreements, in a timely manner.



Kenbi Country - Photo by Kathrine Carver

DARWIN-DALY-WAGAIT (WADEYE) REGION

The Darwin Daly Wagait region includes the following Aboriginal land trusts: Kenbi, Daly River Port Keats, Malak Malak, Upper Daly, Wagiman No. 1 and No. 2, Finnis River, Delissaville/Wagait/Larrakia, and Gurudju.

The Darwin-Daly region has a diverse range of leasing interests in three major communities: Wadeye, Palumpa and Peppimenarti. The consultation process for a high-voltage powerline from Wadeye to Peppimenarti concluded during the reporting period.

Tourism ventures, including heli-fishing, are operating within the region with consent from Traditional Owners. The NLC completed consultations and site visits to progress several new heli-fishing areas on the Daly River Port Keats Land Trust. Consultations are continuing for crocodile egg harvesting agreements over the same land trust.

Regional anthropology has been working closely with the NLC's Community Planning and Development Unit (CPD) on a number of projects in the region. The Darwin-Daly regional anthropologist has been involved in planning, consultation and dispute conciliation to support CPD projects.

Developments on Aboriginal land also provide Traditional Owners with the opportunity to request and take part in sacred site surveys, which enable them to identify culturally and environmentally sensitive areas that require protection or exclusion from land use agreements.

The surveys are an important opportunity for transferring cultural knowledge to younger generations and for visiting otherwise inaccessible country. The regional anthropologist has facilitated several site surveys with knowledgeable Traditional Owners to map sacred sites and update the NLC's records.



Benung Billabong
- Photo by Kathrine Carver

Minerals and Energy Branch



OVERVIEW

The NLC has statutory functions and duties in relation to minerals and energy exploration, production and associated activities as prescribed by the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA) and the *Native Title Act 1993* (NTA). These laws enable the property rights and other interests of Aboriginal people to be recognised through their enduring cultural connection to country and provide a regulatory framework for Traditional Owners to make an agreement with exploration and mining companies if they choose.

The Minerals and Energy Branch is responsible for managing the NLC's obligations as they relate to minerals and energy exploration, production and associated activities.

The principal objectives of the branch are compliance, accountability and transparency of the NLC's functions as they relate to the minerals and energy sectors. Our staff provide accurate and up-to-date environmental, technical and other information and support to Aboriginal people at all stages in the life of a resource project, from submission of an exploration proposal to production, through to closure and rehabilitation.

2019-20 ACHIEVEMENTS

AGREEMENTS FINALISED

Two agreements for minerals exploration on Aboriginal Land were completed during the reporting period.

NLC-Alligator Energy Exploration Agreement

In December 2019, the Full Council approved an exploration agreement with Alligator Energy Ltd for eight minerals exploration licences over the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust in the West Arnhem Region. The combined exploration licences cover approximately 480km². The NLC-Alligator Energy agreement has a unique feature of the choice of a 25% equity option in the project for Traditional Owners should an economic uranium resource be found. Such an equity option provides Traditional Owners with direct input to any potential future mining operations.

NLC-Eclipse Metals Exploration Agreement

In December 2019, the Executive Council approved a minerals exploration agreement with Eclipse Metals for Exploration Licence EL27584 covering an area of 96km². EL27584 is located over the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust in the West Arnhem Region. Exploration during the 1980s and 2000s identified a small uranium and gold anomaly.

CULTURAL MONITOR PROGRAM

The Minerals and Energy Branch continues to implement and refine its Cultural Monitor Program, which supports Aboriginal people in protecting sacred sites and caring for country by enabling their participation in fieldwork activities conducted by minerals and energy companies and other proponents. This program assists Aboriginal people to manage culture and country as well as to be an ambassador for their community and people.

The primary objectives of the Cultural Monitor Program are to:

1. Strengthen the involvement of Aboriginal people with activities being undertaken on their traditional lands
2. Ensure the protection of sacred sites and other areas of high cultural and environmental value during on-country works
3. Assist with the management of environmental and cultural aspects of Minerals and Energy projects, including during the collection of baseline data and other field-based surveys.

A key component of the program is for cultural monitors to deliver cultural awareness training (also known as cultural inductions) to the proponent. This training promotes awareness of aspects of local Aboriginal culture(s) within the locality of proposed fieldwork. The cultural monitor program supports Traditional Owners and other relevant Aboriginal people to spend time on country and provides a valuable opportunity to apply, retain and transmit traditional cultural knowledge.

The Minerals and Energy Branch have employed 67 people via the Cultural Monitor Program during 2019-20. The Cultural Monitor Program has expanded beyond commercial exploration and development activities to include projects undertaken via the CSIRO's NT Regional Research Advisory Committee (NTRRAC) – the NLC Cultural Monitor program is now included as standard procedure for NTRRAC-approved field activities in the NLC region. The Minerals and Energy Branch represents the NLC on this committee.

FORMER REDBANK MINE SITE

The former Redbank Copper Mine, on the Wollogorang Pastoral Lease in the southern Gulf Region of the NT, is a notorious legacy mine site. Metals emanating from the site impact more than 40 kilometres of waterways downstream. Native Title Holders have been tireless over many years in drawing attention to the impacts and seeking remediation. Despite a promise from Northern Territory Government in 2014 to remediate the site as a priority, and the establishment of the Legacy Mine Unit within the Department of Primary Industry and Resources, pollution continues.

During 2019-20, the NLC re-energised the former Redbank Mine Working Group with a meeting in Borroloola and have continued to engage with Native Title Holders and the Legacy Mine Unit. The NLC will continue to support the calls of Native Title Holders for action to address the sources of pollution and for the long-term remediation of the site.

RANGER URANIUM MINE CLOSURE AND REHABILITATION

The successful closure and rehabilitation of the Ranger uranium mine is of extreme importance to the Traditional Owners, the Mirarr, the NLC and the Australian community generally.

The mine must be closed and rehabilitated to a standard that prevents impacts on the surrounding World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park and downstream internationally recognised wetlands.

The last full year of production for the Ranger uranium mine was 2019-20. Under the terms of the mine's authorisation, production must cease by 8 January 2021, followed by a five-year period for rehabilitation. The NLC welcomed the \$476 million in capital raised by ERA through a renounceable entitlement offer to contribute to the cost of closure and rehabilitation.

As the deadline for cessation of production looms, the planning and implementation of closure intensifies. During 2019-20, the NLC welcomed an update of the Mine Closure Plan, which outlined plans for closure in greater detail, but note there is still much work to be done. On the ground there was substantial progress in rehabilitation works, most notably in the backfill of Pit 1 and the transfer of tailings to Pit 3.

The NLC continues to input to closure planning and oversight of the mine through involvement in committees and forums. This includes membership of the mine site Technical Committee and associated scientific working groups. The NLC is also involved in regular inspections of the mine by attendance at routine periodic inspections and taking part in the annual audit.

The NLC works closely with the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation to represent the interests and views of the Mirarr. There is still much work to be done to ensure that planning and implementation of closure is at world-best standard. There is an opportunity for the closure of the Ranger uranium mine to set a closure standard for the industry to follow.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT – INTERNAL PROCESSES

In 2019-20, the Minerals and Energy Branch:

- Commenced development of new management systems, including improvements to existing business processes for the management of applications and granted titles and information management
- Conducted an internal audit of security obligations included in all NLC's minerals and energy agreements
- Further enhanced and refined the priority determination system for all NLC minerals and energy projects; process of managing applications received under Native Title; and review process for ALRA applications
- Proactively managed all aged debtors, including charging interest for outstanding monies
- Reviewed and updated internal branch induction and training for new staff.

The Minerals and Energy Branch is committed to ensuring that its staff are appropriately trained and supported to undertake consultations with Traditional Owners in relation to minerals and energy projects. The branch has identified essential competency requirements for relevant staff in relation to inter-cultural communication, and industry, environmental and financial management and auditing practices and standards.

In consideration of the requirement for decisions to be made in accordance with the principle of free prior and informed consent, it is essential that NLC consultation services be provided by appropriately qualified staff. Given the intent of both the onshore gas and minerals sectors to continue to expand their footprint in the NLC region, it is essential that minerals and energy training for relevant NLC staff be convened as a priority during the coming year.



NLC Cultural Monitors discuss white ochre encountered during pipeline construction



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

At the end of the 2019-20 reporting period, 632 minerals and energy titles were active within the NLC region. Of these 48% (297 titles) were administered under ALRA, of which:

- 14% (43 titles) were granted tenements with negotiated agreements in place
- 16% (50 titles) were in moratorium following a decision to refuse consent to grant
- 3% (8 titles) were tenements where agreement negotiations were finalised
- 7% (20 titles) were applications where negotiations had commenced towards reaching an agreement
- 27% (83 titles) represented a backlog of applications pending an initial meeting with traditional owners
- 33% (101 titles) represented a backlog of applications pending compliance assessment.

52% (327 titles) were administered under the NTA, of which

- 20% (65 titles) were granted tenements with negotiated agreements in place
- 1% (4 titles) were tenements where agreement negotiations were finalised
- 10% (31 titles) were applications deemed to attract the right to negotiate where negotiations had commenced towards reaching an agreement
- 69% (227 titles) were tenements processed under the expedited procedure – deemed not to attract the right to negotiate – and of these 23% (77 titles) were in the application phase and 46% (150 titles) were granted under the expedited procedure.

TYPE	TITLES	PROJECTS	ASSOCIATED CONSULTATIONS & OTHER ACTIVITIES
ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT 1976 (ALRA)			
Applications ¹	212	104	20
Applications in moratorium ²	50	50	N/A
Granted	43	22	20
Liaison and other ³	N/A	5	102
Sub Total	305	181	141
NATIVE TITLE ACT 1993 (NTA)			
Applications ⁴	35	25	1
Granted	65	28	36
Expedited applications	77	N/A	N/A
Expedited granted	150	N/A	N/A
Liaison and other ⁵	N/A	1	1
Sub Total	327	55	38
OTHER			
Liaison and other ⁶	N/A	27	68
Combined Total	632	263	247

[1] Applications received by the NLC, includes backlog of applications pending assessment.

[2] Titles in moratorium, as per section 48, *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.

[3] Projects not associated with titles issued under the *Mineral Titles Act*, *Petroleum Act*, *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967*, and *Geothermal Energy Act 2009*.

[4] Non-expedited titles under application within the NLC region.

[5] Projects not associated with titles issued under the *Mineral Titles Act*, *Petroleum Act*, *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967*, and *Geothermal Energy Act 2009*.

[6] Projects not associated with titles issued under the *Mineral Titles Act*, *Petroleum Act*, *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967*, and *Geothermal Energy Act 2009*.

REPRESENTATION

During 2019-20, the Minerals and Energy Branch represented the NLC at various scientific, technical and other forums. A number of Aboriginal people (or their representative bodies) also took part in some of the following committees, forums and related activities:

ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT 1976

Authority under the *Atomic Energy Act*:

1. Alligator Rivers Region Advisory Committee (ARRAC)
2. Alligator Rivers Region Technical Committee (ARRTC)
3. Ranger Mine Site Technical Committee (MTC)
4. Ranger Uranium Mine Ecosystem Restoration Closure Criteria Working Group
5. Ranger Uranium Mine Relationship Committee
6. Ranger Uranium Mine Water and Sediment Closure Criteria Working Group.

Granted titles:

7. Jabiluka and Nabarlek Mine Site Technical Committee (MTC)
8. Woodcutters Mine Closure Liaison Committee.

NATIVE TITLE ACT 1993

Granted titles:

1. Bootu Creek (OM) Manganese Mine Liaison Committee
2. Esmeralda Mine Liaison Committee

OTHER

Staff of the Minerals and Energy Branch represented the NLC at the following forums:

[7] Projects not associated with titles issued under the *Mineral Titles Act*, *Petroleum Act*, *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967*, or *Geothermal Energy Act 2009*

- Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (APPA) – NLC coordination meetings
- Aboriginal Information Program Working Group, comprising representatives of the NLC, CLC, NT Government and industry – refer to recommendation 11.6 of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the NT)
- Amadeus (Gas Pipeline) Consumer Reference Group
- Cost Recovery Working Group, comprising representatives of the Commonwealth Government and all NT Land Councils
- Department of Primary Industry and Resources (NT Government) – NLC coordination meetings
- Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee public hearing into the Environment Protection Bill 2019
- Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee public hearing into the into the Water Further Amendment Bill 2019
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (Cth.) review
- Former Redbank Mine Working Group, comprising representatives of the NLC, Native Title Holders and NT Government
- Legislation Scrutiny Committee public hearing into the Petroleum Legislation Miscellaneous Amendments Bill 2019



NLC Cultural Monitors with Minerals & Energy Branch Staff in the field

- Northern Territory Regional Research Advisory Committee (NT RRAC) – a multi-stakeholder committee established under the CSIRO's Gas Industry Social and Environmental Research Alliance (GISERA), comprising representatives of community groups, including the NLC and Central Land Council, onshore gas industry, CSIRO and government
- NT Biannual Strategic Forum Group, comprising representatives of the Commonwealth Government, NT Government and all NT Land Councils
- Onshore Shale Gas Community and Business Reference Group – a multi-stakeholder advisory body comprising representatives of government, non-government organisations and the private sector (refer to recommendation 16.4 of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the NT)
- Part IV ALRA Working Group, comprising representatives of the Commonwealth Government, NT Government and all NT Land Councils
- Rum Jungle (rehabilitation) Governance Board, comprising representatives of the NLC, Commonwealth Government and NT Government
- Strategic Water Reserves Working Group, comprising representatives of the NLC, CLC and NT Government.

The Minerals and Energy Branch has been responsible for or involved in a range of meetings, submissions, reports and presentations at public hearings in relation to:

- 2019 (Commonwealth) Senate Estimates briefing
- Aboriginal Information Program (refer to recommendation 11.6 of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory)
- Code of Practice: onshore petroleum activities in the Northern Territory
- Commonwealth Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia's Inquiry into Opportunities and Challenges of the Engagement of Traditional Owners in the Economic Development of Northern Australia
- Commonwealth Senate Select Committee on the effectiveness of the Australian Government's Northern Australia agenda
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR – Northern Territory Government): Trading Licensed Water Entitlements Policy
- Draft Bootu Creek Mine Closure Plan
- Draft Environment Impact Assessment Guidance the NT EPA's Environmental factors and objectives
- Draft Environment Protection Regulations 2019

- Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance for Proponents Referring a Proposed Action to the NT EPA
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Rehabilitation of the Former Rum Jungle Mine Site
- Draft Framework for the Strategic Regional Environmental Baseline Assessment (SREBA)
- Draft NT Environment Protection Agency (EPA) Guidance for Proponents Referring a Significant Variation to the NT EPA
- Draft NT EPA draft Guidance Note Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation – Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance for Proponents
- Draft NT EPA General Guidance for Proponents Preparing an Environmental Impact Statement
- Draft NT EPA Guidance for Proponents Preparing a Supplementary Environmental Report
- Draft NT EPA Guidance Making a Public Submission During the Impact Assessment Process
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act Review (Commonwealth Government);
- Limmen Bight Marine Park draft Plan of Management
- Northern Territory (Government) Climate Change Response – Towards 2050
- Northern Territory (Government) draft Social Impact Policy
- Northern Territory (Government) Offsets Policy
- Petroleum Legislation Miscellaneous Amendments Bill 2019
- Rehabilitation of the Former Redbank Mine
- Strategic Water Reserves
- Water Further Amendment Bill 2019.



Rehabilitation of Ranger Uranium Mine - Photo Chris Brady



Minerals & Energy Branch Work Program Meeting



NLC Cultural Monitors inspect rehabilitated work area



MINES IN THE NLC REGION

During the year, the NLC managed consultations and other activities associated with the following mines:

Operational mines

1. Alcan Gove mine in north-east Arnhem Land
2. Bootu Creek manganese mine near Tennant Creek
3. Gove refinery in north-east Arnhem Land
4. Gulkula bauxite mine in north-east Arnhem Land
5. Jabiluka (in care and maintenance) near Jabiru
6. Mount Porter mine (in care and maintenance) near Pine Creek
7. (proposed) Esmeralda mine near Pine Creek
8. (proposed) Kazi mine near Pine Creek
9. Roper Bar iron ore mine (in care and maintenance) near Ngukurr
10. Ranger uranium mine near Jabiru
11. Roper Valley iron ore project near Minyerri
12. SIL80 ilmenite mine near Minyerri.

Mine closure and rehabilitation

1. Former Nabarlek uranium mine in the West Arnhem region
2. Former Redbank copper mine south-east of Borroloola near Queensland border
3. Former Rum Jungle uranium mine near Batchelor
4. Frances Creek mine near Pine Creek (in care and maintenance)
5. Newmont copper mine (formerly Woodcutters) near Batchelor.

MINERAL TITLES IN THE NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL AREA

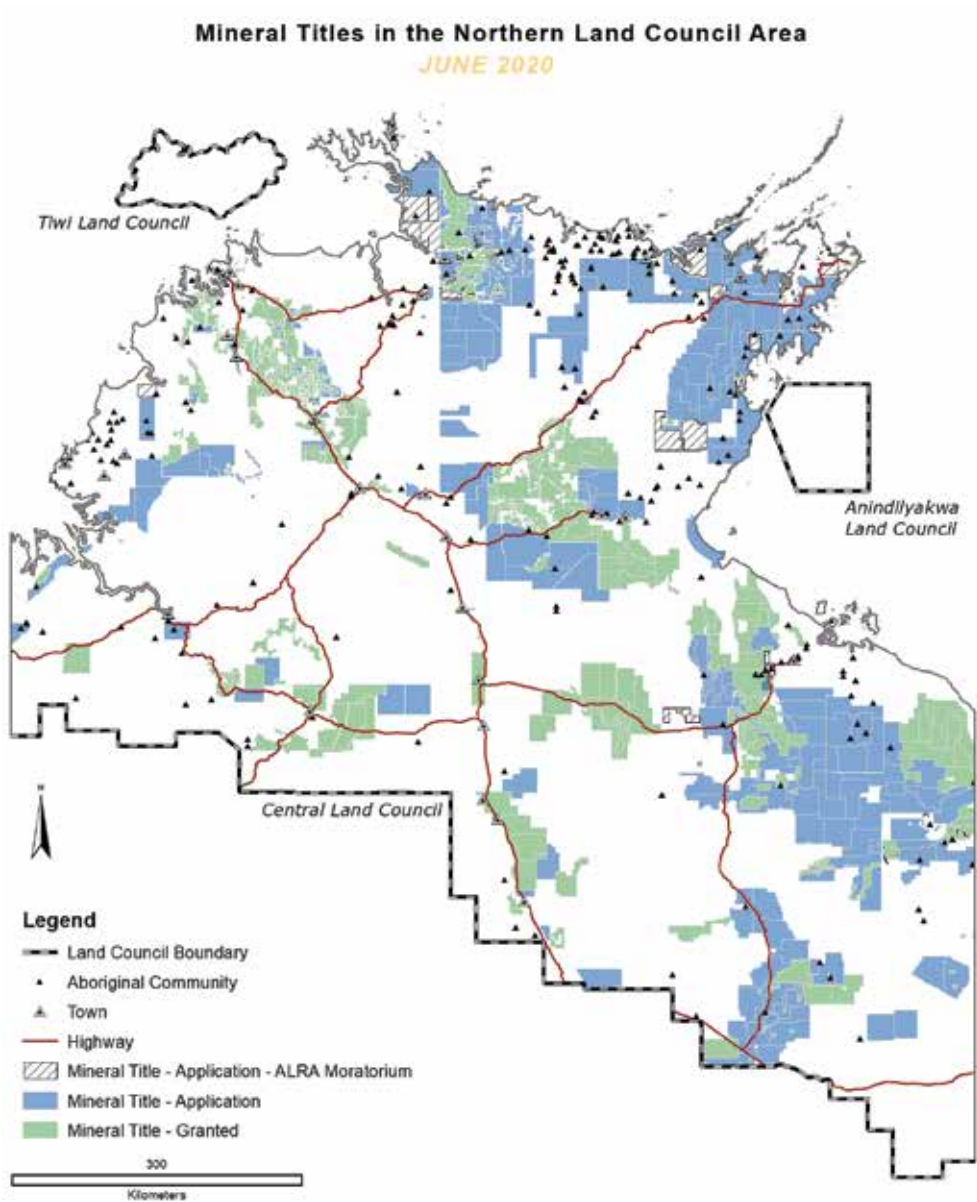


Figure 9

ONSHORE PETROLEUM TITLES IN THE NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL AREA

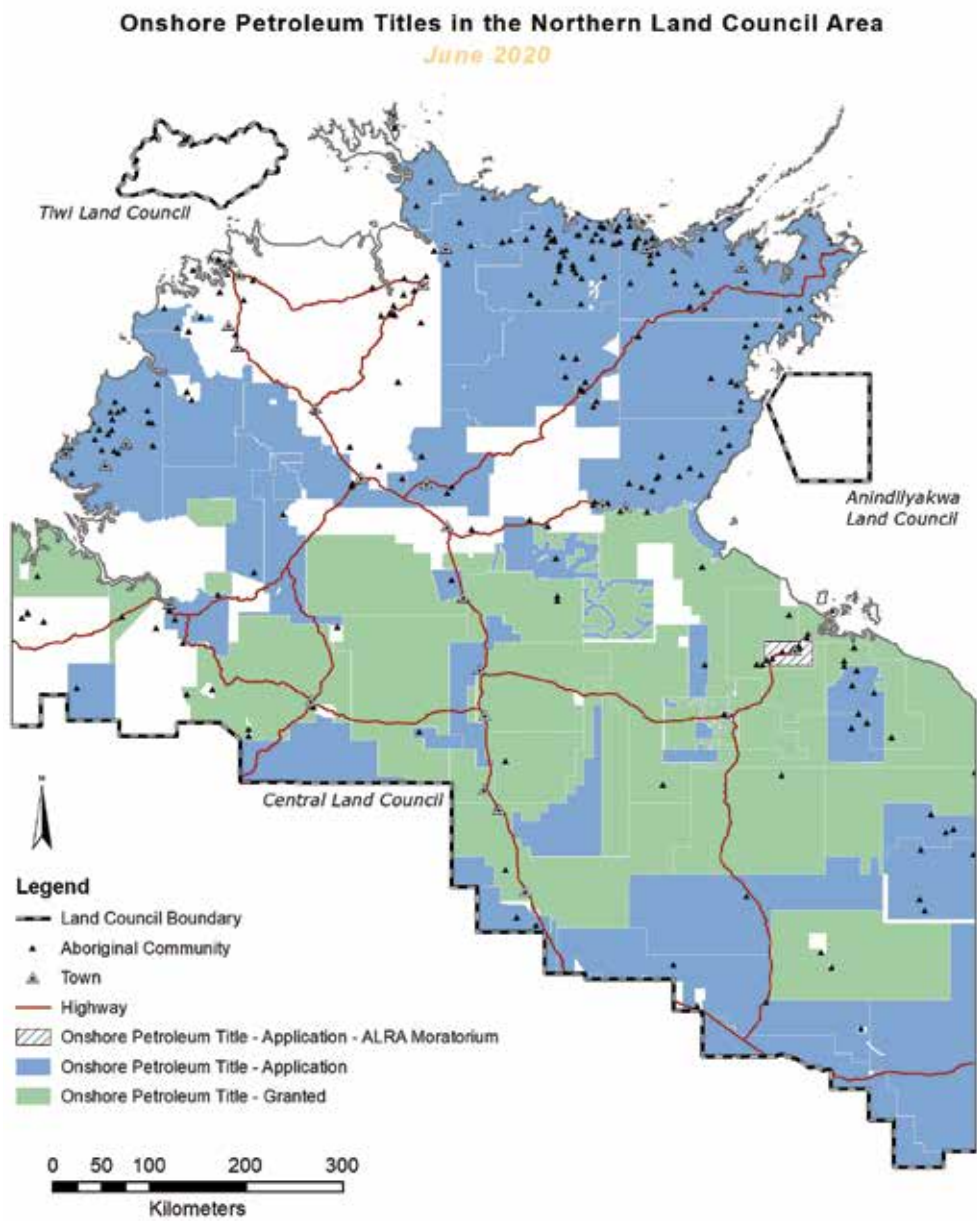


Figure 10



Rehabilitation of Ranger Uranium Mine - Photo Chris Brady



Mid-tide Mangroves
- Photo by Kathrine Carver

Sea Country Branch



BACKGROUND

Sea country is important to a large demographic of Aboriginal people living in remote coastal communities and Homelands in the NT.

For more than 20 years, the NLC has been working with Traditional Owners to improve their rights and interest in looking after their sea country.

This included the High Court of Australia determination in 2008 that the *Northern Territory Fisheries Act 1988* does not apply within the boundaries of Aboriginal land granted under the *Land Rights Act (1976)* NT. This also includes the tidal waters over their land from the high to low tide marks (the intertidal zone). The case, *Northern Territory Government v the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land*

Trust, is commonly referred to as the Blue Mud Bay case.

The Blue Mud Bay decision is significant given that about 85% (6050 kilometres, including islands) of the entire NT coastline is owned by Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups.

Yet regardless of this significant right, a holistic and practical resolution to this matter has still not been reached.

TOWARDS RESOLUTION

In 2018, the NLC submitted a proposal to NT Government to resolve issues stemming from the Blue Mud Bay decision. Negotiations between the NLC, NT Government and key user groups – NT Seafood Council, Amateur Fishermen's Association NT and NT Guided Fishing Industry Association – followed. This led to the parties signing a heads of agreement at the NLC Full Council meeting at Nitmiluk in June 2019. The agreement provided a roadmap to resolve Blue Mud Bay.

In approving the NLC to sign the heads of agreement, the Full Council extended an open access waiver to Aboriginal intertidal waters until 31 December 2020. This means that recreational and commercial fishers may enter these waters without an NLC permit or section 19 land use agreement until that date. However,

if this waiver is not further extended or other arrangements put in place as of 1 January 2021 people entering Aboriginal intertidal waters will require permission from the Traditional Owners.

Progress implementing the heads of agreement after its signing at Nitmiluk was slow, and by the end of 2019 little headway had been made. In response, the NLC developed an implementation agreement document, which is based on the heads of agreement, but articulates details about how to practically implement the concepts discussed. It was submitted to NT Government in May 2020 and negotiations between both organisations are in progress.

SEA COUNTRY UNIT

The Sea Country team grew and evolved in 2020 and has recruited staff with a vast amount of fisheries management knowledge and extensive connections across the NLC region.

The team is moving forward with the sea rights program, including an extensive process of meeting, consultation with Traditional Owners, and working with and under the direction of NLC regional staff as part of efforts to resolve Blue Mud Bay.

COASTAL AREA INTERTIDAL ACCESS AGREEMENTS

Since 2011, six coastal area intertidal access agreements have been negotiated by the NT Government with Traditional Owner groups. These agreements provide permit-free access for recreational and commercial fishers to certain sections of the Aboriginal coastline. These agreements focus on areas that have a high level of fishing activity.

Agreements within the NLC region include:

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

A sixth agreement for the Mini Mini and Murganella River systems, south of Cobourg Peninsula, expired on 30 June 2018.



Regional Development Branch



OVERVIEW

The Regional Development Branch is comprised of the regional office network and support operations. According to 2016 ABS Census statistics, approximately 75% of the Indigenous population – or 38,500 people – in the NLC region live in regional and remote locations, so NLC regional offices are the first point of contact for a vast majority of Aboriginal people accessing NLC services. The branch had just over 40 positions throughout 2019-20 with staff working across 11 sites:

- 29 regional-based positions – in Katherine, Timber Creek, Ngukurr, Borroloola, Tennant Creek, Jabiru, Maningrida, Wadeye, Nhulunbuy and Galiwin'ku
- A defence liaison position funded by the Department of Defence based at Timber Creek to assist with the implementation and monitoring of the Bradshaw ILUA
- 12 positions based in Darwin to support all regional offices, coordinate regional programs and provide services to the Darwin Daly Wagait region
- ABA Homelands Project positions were funded for part of the year by the Commonwealth to assist with engaging prioritised Homeland communities and complete ABA Homeland Project proposals.

Key functions include:

- Assisting the coordination of all community consultations
- Coordinating section 19 (s19) *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA) land use expressions of interest
- Compliance activities for s19 ALRA land use agreements
- Processing permits, funeral and ceremony applications
- Supporting the Full Council, Executive and Regional Councils.

This financial year saw the establishment of offices in Wadeye, Maningrida and Galiwin'ku as part of the priorities of the Council's Regionalisation Strategy. Murin Association in Wadeye, until a purpose-built office can be constructed. This has ultimately enabled its staff to actively reach the communities across its greater regional locations.

The Regional Development team continues to work collaboratively with various employment services providers and local organisations to fill roles locally, including a new roles such as the Project Officer position in Wadeye.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the Northern Territory was reported in Darwin in early March 2020. On 14 March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 threat, the NLC’s Executive Council determined to protect its constituents and announced that all existing non-essential permits would be suspended and no new non-essential travel permit would be granted. The suspension of all permits generated hundreds of inquiries a day about land access.

By 26 March 2020, the Commonwealth Government imposed travel restrictions for remote areas.

Cancellation of meetings

To protect the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people – and to adhere to the travel restrictions and social distancing measures – the NLC altered its business practices, including cancellation of about 145 meetings scheduled between mid-March and June 2020.

Managing access requests

The Regional Development Team suspended all activity for three months. Time was used to assist in answering thousands of inquiries regarding land access, processing remote essential worker applications, COVID-19 Travel Declarations, permit applications, assisting Aboriginal people to return home, and working with government agencies and other stakeholders.

The NT Government’s Department of Chief Minister (DCM) established the Approved Remote Essential Worker (AREW) program to manage permissions for people undertaking essential activities in designated areas, as defined in the Biosecurity Determination. The AREW program required people undertaking essential activities to apply to DCM for an AREW identification card, provide details of the essential activity, application to the relevant Land Council if working on Aboriginal land trusts, and photo identification.

The AREW team assessed individual applications, liaised with the relevant land council and produced interim digital cards, which were emailed to applicants. A hard copy lanyard and vehicle stickers were later sent by post. Key staff at DCM worked closely with NLC and had regular meetings – up to three per week for six weeks – to process priority applications.

The NLC managed hundreds of inquiries and numerous applications each day. It became clear that some of the people applying for access permits had been travelling to Aboriginal communities across the Top End for a long time without getting an Aboriginal land access permit from the NLC.

The biosecurity area restrictions in the Northern Territory were lifted on 5 June 2020. The regional biosecurity checkpoints were removed and there is no longer a requirement to quarantine for 14 days before entering a remote community. People are now moving freely between their communities, Homelands, and regional towns.

For the foreseeable future, the NLC will not be issuing individual recreational permits to enter Aboriginal land. Tour operators with permits issued pursuant to s19 ALRA agreements that were suspended after 14 March 2020 can now apply for permits.

COVID-19 Travel Declarations, permits & Return to Community access requests

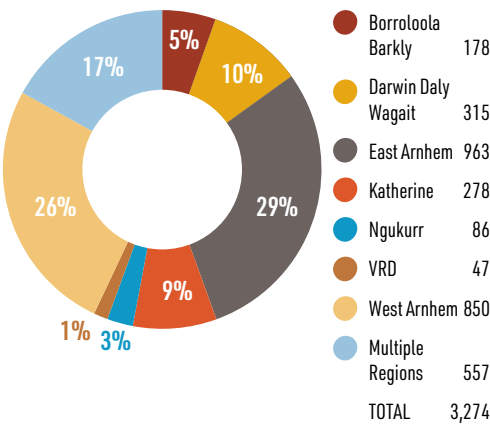


Figure 11

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The Regional Development Branch have performed exceedingly well over the past 12 months considering the interruptions caused by COVID. Achievements include:

- Successfully managing the logistics for 209 community consultations for s19 land use, Native Title, royalty distribution, community development, minerals and energy, ABA Homelands Project and COVID-19 Homeland Assistance consultations. These consultations involved 3884 Traditional Owners and affected Aboriginal people attending NLC meetings at 96 different locations
- Consulting more than 362 clan estate groups, some counted a number of times with meeting an estate group multiple times
- NLC's Delegated Authorities approving 132 new s19 land use agreements and the team leading the way in the assessment of all s19 ALRA land use expressions of interest
- Processing a high percentage of the 14,614 land access permits
- Facilitating the administration of 194 funeral and ceremony applications
- Re-establishing an office at Wadeye
- Managing to complete the last of the ABA Homelands Project consultations, completing eight community proposals and funding package to NIAA
- Managing the COVID-19 Homeland Assistance Project and assisting more than 50 communities with completing their own applications, and having 63 proposals approved to assist 1780 Aboriginal residents to remain on country at 116 Homeland communities.

Number of Aboriginal people consulted by region

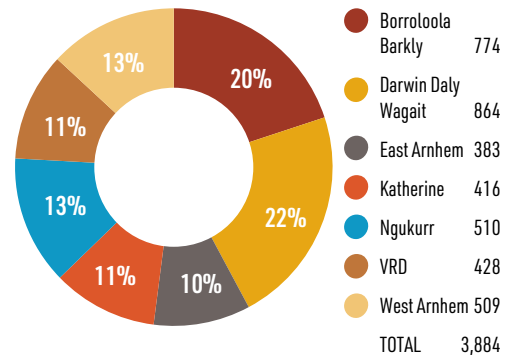


Figure 12

Coordinated logistics & assisted with the following types of meetings

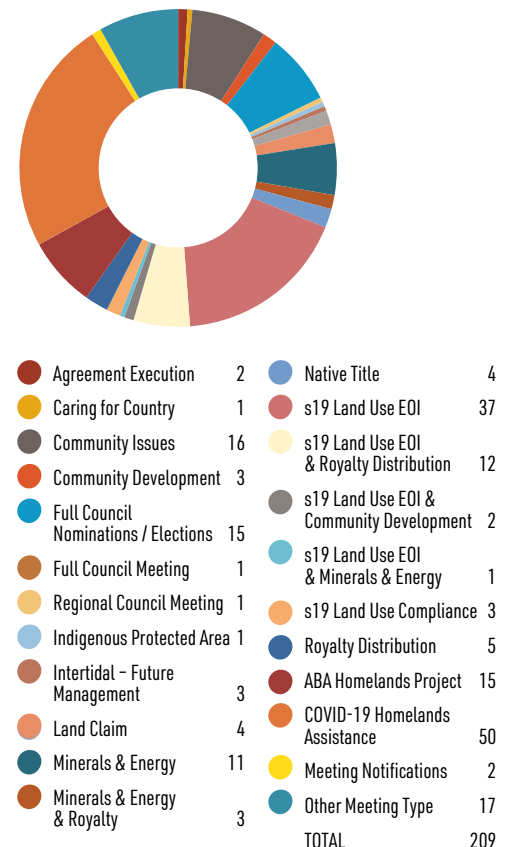


Figure 13

STRENGTHENING MEETING AND LOGISTICS CAPACITY

Regional Meeting System

Our team, working with the Project Management Unit, planned and invested in the development of a new Regional Meeting System (RMS) to assist manage meetings across the organisation. The objective of the new data management system is to increase the visibility and transparency of scheduled meetings and planning. The overall intent is to deliver greater efficiencies with the planning of hundreds of meetings each year, assist to manage information with consultation planning and delivery, capture effort, and enhance reporting capabilities. The new system was implemented in February 2020.

Key features we are looking to achieve in the new system include:

- Whole of organisation meeting scheduling and planning tool
- Accessible, simple and user friendly
- Present all meetings on the regional meeting calendar, and an ability to drill down on projects, resources, budgets, bookings, constituents and logistics plans
- Immediate and accurate querying and reporting
- Store and capture anthropological request and received dates, meeting notices, meeting notification registers, and meeting attendance lists.

The Regional Meeting System proved to be handy in mid-March 2020 when NLC wanted to cancel all planned meetings for three and a half months because of the COVID-19 threat. This was done on one system accessed by the NLC intranet for all staff to see.

REGIONALISATION

The NLC's Regionalisation Strategy, Building the Bush, was approved by the Full Council in early December 2019. The plan aims to strategically place its resources and strengthen its services to those located in high-need locations. The Regionalisation Plan was first initiated in the NLC's 2016-20 Strategic Plan.

To support the strategy, NLC engaged KPMG to assist with the finalisation of our Regionalisation Strategy Business Case, which articulates the rationale for investing in the service delivery infrastructure necessary to facilitate a restructure of the NLC's operations. It provides a fully-costed business case and implementation plan for the proposal, including details of the infrastructure requirements for each of the NLC's regional offices and the associated management and operating model. The benefits of implementing the proposal when compared with the NLC's existing operations in the regions are detailed and the significant gains to be made in productivity and community engagement as the NLC moves to a new era of service delivery to Aboriginal people in the bush are highlighted.

Our team has completed preliminary concept design plans with a cost estimate for purpose-built facilities – regional service hubs in Katherine and Nhulunbuy; community offices at Wadeye, Maningrida, Galiwin'ku and Elliott; staff accommodation for remote and regional staff across multiple sites; and a new office in Darwin.

Our aim is to be able to provide a comprehensive plan to NLC's funding agencies to support our proposal to build stronger regions by the latter half of 2020.

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 business practices in a changing work environment. Important regional office service hubs, such as Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Jabiru, are being reviewed with a long-term plan to address infrastructure, human resource and service delivery needs.

In a bid to accelerate the regionalisation effort, the NLC has appointed a Project Manager, who is dedicated to overseeing implementation of the Regionalisation Strategy.

FUNERAL AND CEREMONIAL FUND

Funeral and Ceremonial Fund

NLC administers funeral and ceremonial assistance funds from the Aboriginals Benefit Account. The Full Council recognises the increasing costs of charters, freight and coffins. The funeral and ceremonial policy enables Traditional Owners to apply for assistance to conduct funerals and ceremonies on country.

In 2019-20, the NLC provided financial assistance for more than 175 Aboriginal funerals and 19 ceremonies at a cost in excess of \$370,000. All financial transactions are directed to service providers. No cash payments are made.

Statistical data for funeral and ceremonial assistance for 2019-20 are provided below.

FUNERALS				
REGION	APPLICATIONS	APPROVED	DECLINED	PENDING
Borroloola Barkly	19	17	2	0
Darwin Daly Wagait	38	38	0	0
East Arnhem	39	36	3	0
Katherine	24	24	0	0
Ngukurr	7	7	0	0
Victoria River District	5	5	0	0
West Arnhem	50	48	1	0
Total	181	175	6	0

CEREMONY				
REGION	APPLICATIONS	APPROVED	DECLINED	PENDING
Borroloola Barkly	2	2	0	0
Darwin Daly Wagait	0	0	0	0
East Arnhem	6	5	0	1
Katherine	0	0	0	0
Ngukurr	2	2	0	0
Victoria River District	4	4	0	0
West Arnhem	6	6	0	0
Total	20	19	0	1

NLC aims to process funeral and ceremony applications within five business days and provide an answer to the applicant about potential support as early as possible. Our team processed 61% of applications within two working days and 73% of all applications were finalised within five work days.

Delays were due to applicants failing to provide all required information in a timely manner to make an assessment; administrative delays; disputes; and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Application processing timeframes

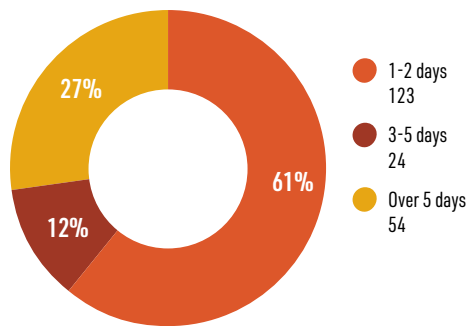


Figure 14

The program support guidelines and applications with funeral and ceremony funding is available on the NLC’s internet site. Additionally, the NLC circulates relevant information to key service providers.

Financial support will not be granted to applicants who do not meet the funeral and ceremony funding guidelines or where there is a duplication of applications or events.

LAND AND WATER ACCESS PERMITS

A key NLC objective is to ensure that 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 took effect in 2008 and removed the need for some 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 remove and prosecute people who are in breach of permit access requirements or conditions. 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 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, but the NLC advocates that these provisions need to be removed. This statutory defence to a 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, 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, fishing, camping 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 – for example, in the event of COVID-19 contact tracing, missing person or notification of road closures.

Statistical data for permits issued by type and region for 2019-20 are provided in the following in figure 15 and figure 16.

Number of permits issued by permit type

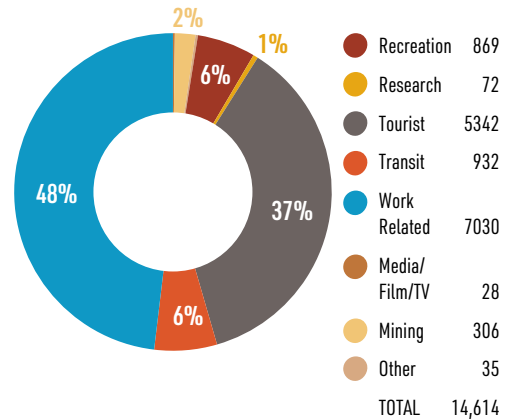


Figure 15

Number of permits issued by region

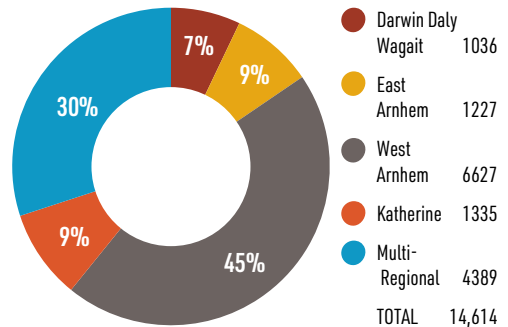


Figure 16

ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

LAND USE AGREEMENTS

Aboriginal land, water and sea in the Northern Territory is rich in biodiversity and other natural resources, providing potential to deliver economic opportunities and good outcomes for our constituents. A major function of the NLC is to express the wishes of Traditional Owners. In terms of economic development, this is carried out through s19 ALRA land use agreements or Part IV mining agreements. NLC carries out consultations and negotiations on behalf of Traditional Owners with third parties who seek commercial activities on Aboriginal land.

NLC follows the principle of free, prior and informed consent, and under ALRA must ensure that any land use proposal is reasonable, that the appropriate Traditional Owners understand the proposal and consents in accordance with traditional decision-making processes, and that affected Aboriginal people are given an opportunity to express their views about the impacts of a particular land use application. Once consent is reached by the traditional Aboriginal owners, NLC Council Members consider the land use proposal and, on approval, direct the appropriate Aboriginal land trust to enter into a licence or lease agreement with the proponent.

Prior to taking land use proposals to the Traditional Owners and affected Aboriginal community groups for consideration, multi-disciplinary teams within the NLC, comprising project coordinators, solicitors, anthropologist, regional support staff and needs-basis external experts, undertake a rigorous assessment. Business and economic development in remote parts of the NT can be impeded by a number of factors. Some proposals may

provide insufficient detail about the proposed operational area. 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. 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). However, this window of opportunity puts pressure on 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 strategically focused on aiding development of enterprises on Aboriginal land. The benefits for Aboriginal owners, community members and stakeholders of securing s19 ALRA land use agreements, facilitated by NLC in accordance with the requirements of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, 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 the 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.

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 the Aboriginal Land Trust. It is the policy of Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments that assets on Aboriginal land be underpinned by secure tenure arrangements. Government policy on appropriate tenure arrangements has paved the way for 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, housing, and commercial operations.

It is estimated that there are more than 4000 lots or parcels of land across the 27 discrete medium to large Aboriginal communities on Aboriginal land in the NLC region. These lots alone present a significantly large lease management portfolio. The three largest Aboriginal communities – Galiwin'ku, Maningrida and Wadeye – each have more than 400 lots.

The NLC's s19 ARLA land use agreement portfolio continues to expand. At the end of the 2019-20 year, the NLC had 858 land use agreements spread across 3968 parcels of land. This equates to an 18% increase on the previous year.



Ferrgusson - Photo by Kathrine Carver

TABLE: BY INDUSTRY, THE NUMBER OF LAND USE AGREEMENTS AND PARCELS OF LAND UNDER A S19 ALRA LAND USE AGREEMENT

INDUSTRY DESCRIPTION	CONTRACTS	LAND PARCELS
Access track	3	5
Accommodation	21	29
Agriculture	4	5
Airfields	1	2
Airport terminal	5	6
Arts centre	2	2
Arts, music, entertainment	4	6
Boat ramps and landings	13	14
Buffalo mustering	2	4
Creche	8	8
Crocodile farming	2	2
Emergency infrastructures	15	21
Feral animal harvesting	1	1
Fisheries	7	7
Government employee housing	61	313
Guided fishing/fishing charters	2	2
Health	27	43
Indigenous essential services	72	189
Indigenous housing	31	2,091
Industrial	25	82
Land Mmnagement	18	23
Lighthouses	9	10
Maintenance – cemetery/grave site	20	24
Maintenance – parks and ovals	6	8
Mobile Services – food	2	2
Multi-purpose venue	13	43
Offices	60	158
Pastoral – grazing	44	49
Pastoral – mustering	9	9
Pipelines	6	6

INDUSTRY DESCRIPTION	CONTRACTS	LAND PARCELS
Powerlines	1	1
Recreation	24	24
Religious	1	1
Research station	1	1
Residential	144	324
Retail	32	39
Roads	3	3
Safari hunting	8	9
Sand and gravel extraction	34	188
School	13	34
Storage space	2	2
Telecommunications	36	50
Tourism	24	35
Training centre	10	14
Utilities	4	5
Water extraction	1	1
Weather station	10	10
Wildlife harvesting	17	63
Total	858	3968

Land use agreement by regions that are current or holding over

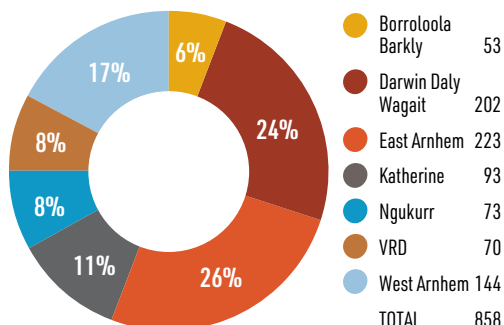


Figure 17

Parcels of land under a land use agreement by region that are current or holding over

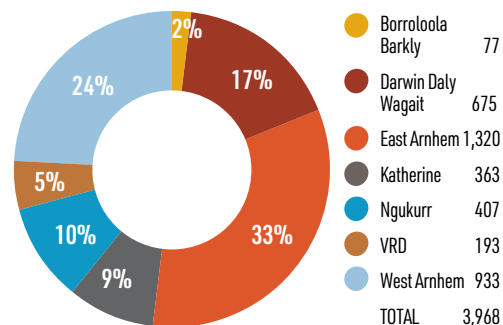


Figure 18

ACHIEVEMENTS

- From 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, the Executive Council, Full Council and Chief Executive Officer approved 132 s19 ARLA land use agreements, enabling economic, cultural and social benefits for the Aboriginal people in the respective regions

NLC Delegated Authority approving S19 land use agreements

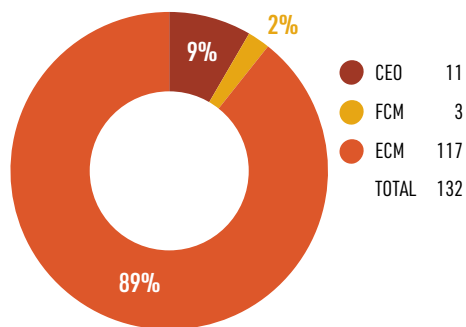


Figure 19

- 54 meetings were held with Traditional Owners and affected groups to discuss s19 ARLA land use expressions of interest; some groups met multiple times
- 1265 Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people from affected and interest groups were consulted across 24 different locations throughout the NLC region
- Registered consultations with 91 clan estate groups; some clans were counted a number of times because of more than one meeting
- At the end of the reporting period, there were 102 land use proposals approved by Traditional Owners and NLC's delegated authorities, and were pending execution by proponents and Aboriginal land trust members.

Our achievements are down in terms of the number of s19 land use consultations, as we had to cancel 42 planned community consultations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Over the past few years, the NLC's continuous improvement agenda reforms were initiated through a Land Use Management and Royalties Review (LUMAR). A dedicated project management team has overseen the review, planning, design and now implementation stage of a new land management database system with an integrated financial package called Customer Reference Management (CRM). CRM went live on 1 July 2019 and was to be implemented over a 12-month period by the Regional Development Branch and the LUMAR project management team. Unfortunately, the first 12 months of this project has not been a smooth transition as we have encountered numerous issues and project function delays.

It is anticipated that over the next 12 months outstanding CRM system and implementation issues will be resolved and that there will be a significant amount of reviewing information on the system to ensure the NLC is up to date with overall project administration of all activities. The outcome of this is that CRM will assist NLC to manage whole-of-life activities associated with negotiated land use agreements, capturing and collating critical information to assist the organisation in planning, predicting future workload demands, managing resources effectively, and significantly enhancing the quality and quantity of information presented to Traditional Owners about activities occurring on their land, and enhancing reporting requirements.

AGREEMENT COMPLIANCE

Land use agreements have a compliance requirement, which needs to be monitored and resources applied to ensure that the interests of Traditional Owners are met and managed in accordance with the agreement. Agreements, including tourism, crocodile egg collecting, safari hunting, mustering, gravel pits and pet meat, are analytically measured to see that annual fees and royalties are calculated and proponents invoiced correctly. This ensures funds are received and distributed to Traditional Owners accordingly.

NLC's s19 land use agreement portfolio has increased significantly over the years. As a result, the demand for lease compliance work continues to grow with regular lease reviews.

A high percentage of NLC personnel are dedicated to agreement negotiation and the managing of compliance requirements. It is hoped that with improvements and effective implementation of the CRM, the compliance activities will become easier to manage across the NLC.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Over the course of the 2019-20 year, NLC received 150 new s19 land use expressions of interest proposals, which covered 222 parcels of land. This is a 20% decline from the previous year (2018-19 – 281 land parcels), a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ANNUAL COMPARISON OF S19 LAND USE EOIS BY LAND PARCEL	
YEAR	NUMBER OF S19 EOIS
2017-18	263
2018-19	281
2019-20	222
Total	766

Nearly half of all expressions of interest applications received 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, office accommodation and government infrastructure.

Land use expressions of interest received by land parcel and region

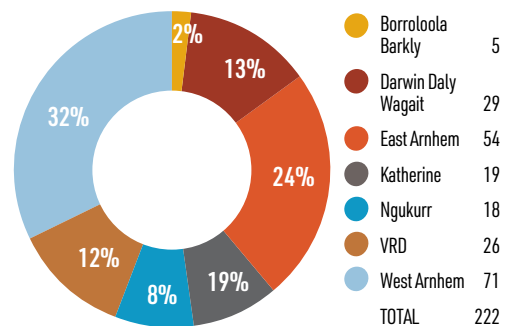


Figure 20

CHALLENGES

The increasing number of s19 ARLA land use agreements and expressions of interests since August 2012 have required significant resources to progress and manage a rapidly growing land use management portfolio. NLC's continuous improvement strategy has invested in streamlining lease management business processes and procedures, strengthening multi-disciplinary teamwork, enhancing the logistics and meeting capabilities of regional offices and designing new lease management systems. Lease management efficiencies will significantly enhance NLC's ability to work closely with Traditional Owners to harness economic and community development opportunities.

MANAGING PROPONENT EXPECTATIONS

To progress an expression of interest up to the agreement stage takes resources and time. Consideration must be given to the large number of existing applications, competing priorities and the steps that NLC follow, from registering the interest to having an agreement executed.

The s19 land use assessment process can take up to six months to get a proposal to an agreement when there are minimal delays throughout the process. Proponents need to factor these timeframes into their planning

to avoid disappointment. NLC has updated information on the internet to assist proponents with frequently asked questions; the feedback has been a helpful tool for the proponents.

PROGRESSING S19 LAND USE EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

As of 30 June 2020, the NLC is working on progressing s19 land use expressions of interest (EOI) for 501 proposals, which cover 732 parcels of land. These activities are at various stages of progression.



Wagiman Rangers - Photo by Kathrine Carver

TABLE: S19 LAND USE EOI STATUS, STATUS DESCRIPTION AND TOTAL NUMBER OF PROPOSALS

STATUS	STATUS DESCRIPTION	NO. OF PROPOSALS
Received	s19 land use EOI has been received and registered in CRM. Proposals registered within 48 hours and provided an acknowledgment email.	4
Considered	s19 land use EOI being considered. The application is checked for completeness, a due diligence assessment is completed on the proponent, the proposal is assessed, the proposed location of the activity is clearly identified and the GIS Unit are engaged to produce a geographically referenced map for the location. Based on the GIS map, anthropological advice is sought to identify the landowners and affected groups to be consulted. The proposal has to be considered to be fair and reasonable to progress. Key terms are negotiated with proponent, cost estimates are completed for a community consultation and a cost recovery agreement is negotiated with the proponent.	271
Consult	S19 land use EOI is ready for community consultation – key terms are agreed, a meeting is scheduled with the relevant Traditional Owners and affected groups. The NLC organises the planning and logistics for the meeting, and meeting notifications with Traditional Owners and affected groups are sent at least two weeks before the meeting. Once the meeting is complete there might be three types of outcomes: successful, unsuccessful or no decision. Further information and consultations may be required.	53
Pending Approval	After completing community consultations and the s19 land use EOI proposal is consented to by Traditional Owners and there is no more consultation follow-ups required, NLC staff will complete a consultation report, which includes the anthropologist being satisfied that there was sufficient number of senior Traditional Owners to make this decision and it was made in accordance to the group's decision-making process. The legal officer then prepares a briefing paper and a draft land use agreement for NLC's Delegated Authorities consideration.	71
Pending Execution	After NLC's Delegated Authority (Full Council, Executive Council or CEO) has given approval, the agreement has to be executed by the NLC, the relevant Aboriginal land trust and the proponent. When this is completed an agreement will be in place.	102

TABLE: BY REGION THE NUMBER OF S19 LAND USE EOI PROPOSALS BY STATUS

REGION	RECEIVED	CONSIDER	CONSULT	PENDING APPROVAL	PENDING EXECUTION	TOTAL
Borrooloola Barkly	1	10	3	5	7	26
Darwin Daly Wagait	1	48	12	10	15	86
East Arnhem	0	81	9	5	25	120
Katherine	0	21	3	8	10	42
Ngukurr	0	22	18	10	9	59
Victoria River District	1	16	4	9	6	36
West Arnhem	1	73	4	24	30	132
Total	4	271	53	71	102	501

Significantly impacted by COVID-19, the NLC has experienced a backlog of proposals across the financial year. This was in addition to:

- Proponent’s failure to provide relevant information in a timely manner
- Difficulties finalising negotiations with proponents
- Traditional Owner groups unable to make decisions
- Funding limitations to hold meetings and resourcing issues
- Delays in obtaining signatures of Land Trust members to complete agreements
- Obtaining ministerial consent for agreements
- Funerals and sorry business.

The increasing demand on NLC to progress these activities continues to place a significant strain on resources.

COST OF CONSULTING TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Progressing s19 ARLA land use applications with Traditional Owners has significant cost implications. The user-pays system, as per the Australian Government’s cost-recovery guidelines, has been critical towards improving NLC’s business efficiency, productivity and responsiveness. It is crucial to continue to implement user-pays systems to ensure s19 land use agreements are progressed more cost effectively.

Consulting Traditional Owners in different locations has varying levels of costs. Last year alone, more than \$270,000 was spent on associated travel and meetings. Cost recovery efforts were 40% of this total. It should be noted that outlay for meetings is down considerably compared with the previous year. It is anticipated that next year NLC will be required to schedule a significantly higher number of s19 land use consultations to fill the backlog of cancelled engagement caused by COVID-19.

ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION

In reviewing Aboriginal participation in land use agreements on Aboriginal land, the NLC has adopted the ABS definition of an Aboriginal business – a legal entity that is majority owned by Aboriginal people and is engaging in productive activity and/or other forms of economic activity in the market sector. Such entities accumulate assets on their own account and/or hold assets on behalf of others and may incur liabilities. Included are economic entities, such as incorporated businesses, where majority ownership of the entity may be shared between Aboriginal directors, partners and/or shareholders.

Aboriginal business and corporations feature strongly in the leasing of major assets on Aboriginal land trusts with the vast majority of community stores leased by an Aboriginal business entity. Overall, such corporations have an interest in nearly 22% of all land use agreements and cover a range of industries, including shops, a township lease, rocket launching site, pastoral station, tourism and fishing. There were 222 expressions of interest over land parcels received during the year, with nearly 45% (98) from an Aboriginal proponent.

The following provides an indication of Aboriginal participation with leasing on Aboriginal land trusts.

Indigenous proponents with a land use agreement current or holding over by region

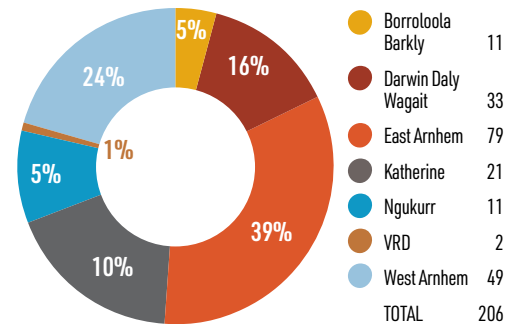


Figure 21

Status of indigenous s19 land use proposals

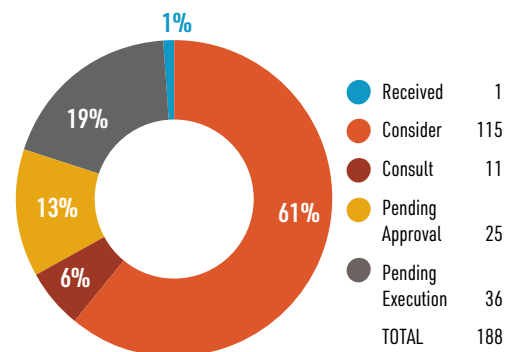


Figure 22

PASTORAL

INDUSTRY UPDATE

The NT cattle population has remained stable over the past few years at about 2.1 million head, equating to approximately 9% of the estimated Australian herds. More than half of all NT cattle are in the NLC regional area, with approximately 80,000 head on Aboriginal land, behind fences under a land use agreement, and thousands more roaming free across Aboriginal land trusts.

During the reporting period, a number of areas across northern Australia received good rainfall. As a result, pastoralists have been buying livestock for fattening and replenishing breeding herd numbers. The live cattle export markets have continued to export reasonable numbers of cattle to South-East Asia, resulting in a competitive market place for livestock and benefits for cattle producers. The live export of buffalo continued throughout the year, supported by mustering agreements in the NLC area.

COVID-19 impacts on the northern pastoral Industry and live export trade continues to change. The impact on processed beef and live exports is dependent on how market participants manage the effects of the pandemic and the ability of consumers and retailers to consume reliable supplies of beef considering health and movement restrictions.

At this stage, outlook reports from the northern beef industry for the remainder of 2020 are reasonably optimistic.

PASTORAL UNIT WORKLOAD

The Pastoral Unit workload is continually increasing, particularly with additional mustering areas being approved over the past 12 months. There are two dedicated pastoral coordinator positions based in Darwin and Katherine. They are required to manage pastoral issues, assess expressions of interest, undertake agreement consultations and meet compliance requirements.

The pastoral coordinators work with a multi-disciplinary team to progress and lead pastoral and mustering expression of interest consultations with Traditional Owners on Aboriginal land. The team includes legal, anthropology, and regional office staff and other land use project coordinators.

The following pastoral and mustering licences and expressions of interest are registered:

- 40 pastoral licences covering approximately 28,043 square kilometres
- Three pastoral licences pending approval covering approximately 1616 square kilometres
- Nine mustering licences for cattle and buffalo covering 32,946 square kilometres
- Five mustering licences pending approval
- Four mustering licence expressions of interest
- 11 pastoral licence expressions of interest.

Statistical analysis of pastoral activity

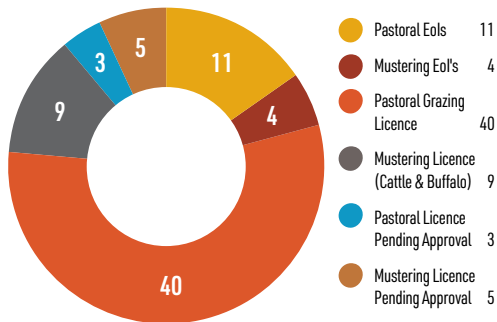


Figure 23

The Pastoral Unit has this year successfully carried out 23 monitoring and compliance inspections, and progressed 15 expressions of interest presented to Traditional Owners.

An additional 57 pastoral and mustering licences were dispensed across approximately 64,470 square kilometres of Aboriginal Land Trust.

Compliance and monitoring of licence areas is a priority for the NLC as it provides benefits to 70% of Traditional Owners, including infrastructure offsets for vital equipment, such as bores, watering points, fencing and cattle yards. Land management and animal welfare issues must be addressed and proponents kept up to date with their payment schedules.

A significant portion of the pastoral coordinators' workload is following up queries with, or on behalf of, Traditional Owners and licence agreement holders. Another activity that can be resource intensive is working with proponents developing expressions of interest for pastoral land or mustering, and coordinating pastoral business with the various work units.

In addition to managing pastoral and mustering activities, pastoral coordinators assist other project coordinators, who are often working closely alongside other pastoral activities, including pet meat and safari hunting agreements.



Robin John from Mataranka tending to buffalo weaners for live export at Bishop Bore Station on Beswick Aboriginal Land Trust

PASTORAL INTERESTS

NLC pastoral coordinators fielded a large number of inquiries from pastoralists about potential grazing arrangements on Aboriginal Land Trusts.

Animal welfare compliance remains a high priority for mustering and pastoral activities. Contactors and pastoral licence holders are required to adhere to best-practice methodology and legally required standards in all aspects of the supply chain as expected by exporters, processors and government regulators.

Demand from livestock exporters is expected to remain stable, taking into account seasonal conditions and the requirements of the destination countries due to COVID-19 and other local conditions.

BUFFALO

The live export of buffalo over the past two calendar years has remained stable with 8673 head exported from Darwin Port in 2018 and 9364 in 2019.

Market demand continues to be mainly from Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and, to a lesser extent, Brunei. The outlook for the remainder of 2020 seems to be consistent with previous years.

UNAUTHORISED MUSTERING

Mustering on Land Trusts without a licence agreement or legal authority is an issue for the NLC to manage. The non-authorised mustering is illegal and results in the loss of income for Traditional Owners as they are not receiving valid payment for livestock removed from their country. Illegal activities may also cause sacred site desecration. Stock theft is a concern for the wider industry and the NLC is working with authorities to minimise its impact. The NLC has advocated for the reintroduction of stock inspectors.

NLC receive regular complaints about the unauthorised removal of feral cattle and buffalo from Land Trusts. Steps have been taken to improve responsiveness and reduce its impact. NLC manage a large geographical area and it is difficult to provide the level of monitoring required with limited resources. Cattle duffing operations, unauthorised pet meat harvesting and non-Traditional Owner weekend hunters are all problems on Land Trusts.

PASTORAL RANGELAND MONITORING

NLC has reviewed rangeland conditions over the past few years to gauge the sustainability and impact on grazing areas. Rangeland monitoring on pastoral areas consists of setting up monitoring sites in suitable areas about 2.5 to 3.5 kilometres from stock watering points. Some of the Land Trusts that used to operate as pastoral leases have historical data that can

be used for comparisons, but some have not previously had monitoring points so new points have been established. The site coordinates are recorded along with data on the composition of native grasses, tree density, land condition, erosion, weeds and percentage of bare ground. Photographs are used to record changes in rangeland appearance over many years, even decades.

Information gathered from rangeland monitoring points is used to establish whether grazing density is at long-term sustainable levels or if it can be increased or needs to be reduced. Fire histories and seasonal variability are also taken into consideration. The Department of Primary Industry and Resources (DPIR) Aboriginal Pastoral Program (IPP) provides high-level technical expertise to the NLC in evaluating pastoral rangeland and establishing monitoring points on Land Trusts. In addition to rangeland monitoring support, IPP and other DPIR staff have supported the NLC with estimated carrying capacity assessments on several areas, which are valuable in assisting NLC staff in negotiating expressions of interest for presentation to Traditional Owners.

Data recording is critical to evaluating rangelands and developing management strategies to ensure the land remains in healthy, and retains high levels of native plant species and biodiversity, which can ensure long-term sustainability for pastoral activities and other land uses.

COVID-19 IMPACT

NLC staff have not been able to travel to pastoral licence or mustering areas for several months due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. This has created a backlog of work to be completed as soon as possible, including pastoral licence compliance inspections, inspections of mustering agreement areas and following up on outstanding agreement compliance issues.

It is envisaged that much of the catch-up work can be tackled before the onset of the 2020-21 wet season.

Some pastoral areas received exemptions for regional travel to enable the continuation of livestock sales and transport, animal welfare obligations and movement of staff between properties. Properties have strict COVID-19 management plans to ensure cattle production continues to support the food supply chain as close to normal as is possible.



Wagiman Rangers - Josie Ritchie - early dry season burning - Photo by Kathrine Carver

DEFENCE LIAISON BRADSHAW FIELD TRAINING AREA

BRADSHAW PARTNERING ABORIGINAL LAND USE AGREEMENT

The Department of Defence's Bradshaw Field Training Area (BFTA), formerly known as Bradshaw Station, is near Timber Creek in the Victoria River District (VRD). The facility, bought by the Australian Government in 1996, is one of the Defence Force's (ADF) largest military training areas. It covers approximately 870,000 hectares, bound to the north by the Fitzmaurice River, to the west by the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf, to the south by the Victoria River and to the east by pastoral properties.

The Department of Defence negotiated with NLC and Traditional Owners the Bradshaw Partnering Aboriginal Land Use Agreement (ILUA) in July 2003. It has provided NLC with funding to support a dedicated position to assist Traditional Owners with the implementation and monitoring of the agreement.

NLC's Bradshaw liaison officer, who is based at Timber Creek, is responsible for consulting with Traditional Owners and ADF personnel in the implementation and monitoring of the Bradshaw Partnering ILUA. Over the past decade, emphasis has been placed on developing the capacity of Traditional Owners to take part effectively in cultural maintenance, including an annual cultural camp, business activities, training and employment, and promoting Aboriginal employment opportunities.

The site of the July 2019 cultural camp at a permanent camping ground at the Old Bradshaw homestead precinct was chosen by Traditional Owners. This important cultural event provided Traditional Owners with the

opportunity to return to country, visit sites of significance and to pass on knowledge to the younger generation. The Department of Defence places high importance on the event and provides guidance on the safe and successful running of the camp.

The success of the ILUA Partnership at BFTA is demonstrated by the relationship between Traditional Owners and ADF staff.

The Traditional Owners' business sponsors the cultural camp each year as a contribution to their extended families. The contribution entails labour, equipment, fuel, purchase of all the stores required on camp, and the construction and dismantling of the camp infrastructure.

BRADSHAW & TIMBER CREEK CONTRACTING & RESOURCE CO PTY LTD

Bradshaw & Timber Creek Contracting & Resource Company was established in June 2008 by senior Traditional Owners with a zero financial and asset base. There was no money, no equipment, and little or no expertise in business. What they did have was a vision and strong desire to provide local employment opportunities for Aboriginal people on their own country.

The business is Aboriginal managed and operated and headed up by a board of six Aboriginal Directors, who are all Traditional Owners in the Bradshaw and VRD area. The company received strong support in establishing the business from the NLC's Bradshaw liaison officer. The support has continued, helping the company to be where it is today – a position of strength with a strong asset base, including an industrial work shed



Dry Billabong & Parkinsonia aculeata - Photo by Kathrine Carver

and yard, a workers' village, and a large range of plant and machinery for municipal and infrastructure projects.

The company has demonstrated that it has a competitive and reliable workforce. It employs up to 12 full-time permanent local Aboriginal men, plus an additional eight to 10 who are engaged on a full-time casual basis during peak contracting periods. The ADF, through BFTA range control officers, has provided the company's employees with mentoring, encouragement, guidance and support. ADF's commitment to the ILUA and local Aboriginal participation has been critical to the company's development and success.

There has been a general broadening of the complexity of works for the company at BFTA. Activities now include roadworks, firebreaks, weed management, solid waste and porta-loo management, military tent facilities erection and dismantling, target construction, water infrastructure installation and maintenance, water and environmental monitoring, and general support for all military training exercises. Joint ventures have also been entered into with other civil works companies to undertake larger road projects, and some of the company's employees have been engaged by larger contractors for projects in the broader region.

The company has secured further contracts based on increased capacity and this, in

turn, provides more Aboriginal employment opportunities. It has established a good reputation for being reliable and cost effective, which has led to more contracting opportunities. The company holds the NT Government weed management contract for the Western Victoria River Region and roadside slashing on the Victoria and Buchanan highways.

The Bradshaw Partnering ILUA and the support provided by the NLC and Department of Defence have been critical to the company's success. The company not only provides work at the BFTA but has also been given opportunities to work at ADF facilities in Tindal and Delamere, plus a six-week stint in Rockhampton with contractors servicing sites for the Talisman Sabre 19 exercise involving 25,000 military personnel from six countries. These partnerships have provided real employment and business opportunities for local Aboriginal people and have had a positive impact on Aboriginal families in Timber Creek.

The ADF have indicated that there will be significant major investments in upgrading the facilities at the BFTA over the next few years, which will have a major impact on the development of Timber Creek and surrounding communities by providing increased employment and business opportunities. NLC will need to plan and improve its resources in the region to assist Aboriginal people maximise economic opportunities.

ABA HOMELANDS PROJECT

The Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) Homelands Project has been allocated \$40 million as a one-off infrastructure investment in selected Homelands in the Northern Territory. This project is community-driven with an emphasis on consulting with Homelands residents to learn what forms of investment they see as most beneficial. The project consults with other sources of assistance to Homelands, such as the NT Government's Municipal and Essential Services (MES) program, so that the investment is not duplicated.

Project funds will be allocated across the four Aboriginal Land Council regions in the NT. Budget breakdown as follows:

- Northern Land Council – \$15.75 million
- Central Land Council – \$15.75 million
- Tiwi Land Council – \$2 million
- Anindilyakwa Land Council – \$2 million.

DESCRIPTION	BUDGET \$
Power	\$15,731,279
Water	\$5,070,265
Sewerage	\$2,998,624
Access Roads	\$6,973,972
Communications	\$736,000
Infrastructure & Amenities	\$5,938,272
Total	\$37,448,412

An amount of \$4.5 million will be kept as a contingency for the engagement of technical specialists. Any remaining funds will be reinvested in the project.

HOMELAND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS

NLC consulted Aboriginal Homeland service provider boards, which are comprised of all Aboriginal members or a significantly high majority. So, in effect, Aboriginal boards provide essential and municipal services to Homelands with the highest need, benefit and capacity. At the end of June 2020, NLC had consulted all of the Homeland service providers, who provided a list of priority communities and projects.

HOMELAND COMMUNITIES

The information from Homeland service providers guided the community consultations, with some providers taking the time to submit well thought-out, fully-costed, detailed funding priorities.

The first phase of Homeland community consultations with community residents and Traditional Owners ran from September until late December 2018. The NLC completed 84 consultations. The second phase commenced in early March 2019 and continued until the end of January 2020, with 21 consultations completed.

ABA HOMELANDS PROJECT FUNDING PROPOSALS

Over the past two years, the NLC has put together four rounds of recommended funding packages for the ABA Advisory Committee. In a bid to share the funds among communities, the highest priority activities for the highest priority communities have been recommended for funding based on overall need and benefit. A significantly high percentage of the proposals were for essential service activities that address environmental health issues, reduce diesel consumption and create significant savings from operating budgets over the next 10-15 years.

2018-19 PROJECT APPROVALS

REGION	ROUND 1			ROUND 2		
	NO. SUBMITTED FEB 2019	NO. APPROVED MAY 2019	EST. VALUE APPROVED PROJECTS	NO. SUBMITTED FEB 2019	NO. APPROVED MAY 2019	EST. VALUE APPROVED PROJECTS
Borroloola Barkly	2	2	\$761,000	14	14	\$1,547,150
Darwin Daly Wagait	5	5	\$1,988,757	1	1	\$19,000
East Arnhem	14	14	\$3,941,615	1	1	\$58,000
Katherine	0	0	\$0	1	1	\$419,000
Ngukurr	0	0	\$0	3	3	\$754,000
Victoria River District	1	1	\$156,000	0	0	\$0
West Arnhem	11	11	\$3,838,000	2	2	\$165,000
Total	33	33	\$10,685,372	22	22	\$2,962,150

- **Round 1** – 33 Homeland projects approved, benefitting 260 homes and about 1670 residents, and upgrading critical infrastructure to more than 40% of Aboriginal people living on Homelands in the NLC region. The approved activities from the first round of funding approvals are estimated to be worth \$11.2 million, which includes a \$450,000 contribution from the NT Government for three large renewable energy projects in East Arnhem. All the approved projects moved into the negotiation and delivery stage with NIAA and a service provider. The negotiations took place in 2019-20
- **Round 2** – 22 Homeland projects approved, benefitting 74 homes and about 261 residents. The projects, estimated to be worth \$2.9 million, are mainly for essential service upgrades to water and renewable energy power infrastructure. They all moved into the negotiation and delivery stage with NIAA and a service provider. The negotiations took place in 2019-20

2019-20 PROJECT APPROVALS

REGION	ROUND 1			ROUND 2		
	NO. SUBMITTED AUG 2019	NO. APPROVED NOV 2019	EST. VALUE APPROVED PROJECTS	NO. SUBMITTED FEB 2019	NO. APPROVED	EST. VALUE APPROVED PROJECTS
Borroloola Barkly	3	3	\$398,000	0	0	\$0
Darwin Daly Wagait	0	0	\$0	0	0	\$0
East Arnhem	0	0	\$0	0	0	\$0
Katherine	2	2	\$158,000	0	0	\$0
Ngukurr	1	1	\$222,234	1	0	\$0
Victoria River District	0	0	\$0	6	0	\$0
West Arnhem	0	0	\$0	1	0	\$0
Total	6	6	\$778,234	8	0	\$0

- **Round 3** – six Homeland projects approved, benefitting 37 homes and about 160 residents. The approved projects, estimated to be worth \$778,234, were for mainly essential services and communication infrastructure upgrades. They moved into the negotiation and delivery stage with NIAA and a service provider. The negotiations commenced in 2020
- **Round 4** – eight Homeland projects were submitted in March 2020, but due to COVID-19, the ABAAC have not been able to meet so the proposals have not been considered. It is likely that a meeting will be convened in the latter half of 2020. The approximate value of the projects is \$1.3 million and, if approved, they will benefit 35 homes and about 122 residents.

THE PROJECT HAS THREE KEY STAGES:

1. **Consultation:** Land Councils identify and consult with selected Homelands in their respective regions. Land Councils submit proposals for assessment on behalf of the Homelands residents
2. **Assessment:** Each proposal is checked by the NIAA to ensure benefit, need and capacity criteria are addressed. Proposals are presented to the ABA Advisory Committee (ABAAC) and their recommendation is considered by the Minister for Indigenous Affairs in making their decision on each proposal
3. **Delivery:** Local Aboriginal providers are approached by the NIAA to submit an application to deliver approved infrastructure activities. NIAA formally assesses applications and, if successful, NIAA enters into a funding agreement with providers.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The NLC initially consulted Aboriginal Homeland service provider boards to discuss priority communities in their area of operation. The service providers have a strong relationship with Homeland communities in their service footprint and are the local experts in understanding community need. There are 20 service providers providing essential and municipal services to Homeland communities in the NLC region.

The NLC engaged other community stakeholders on a needs basis to assist in identifying Homeland community infrastructure priorities and need. Residents inquiring about the ABA Homelands project separately were provided with information about the program and referred back to their Homeland service provider to discuss their priorities.

Managing expectations – it is estimated that with the amount of funds available, the extremely high need and the cost of doing business in the bush, it is likely that up to 70 Homelands in the NLC region will benefit from the ABA Homelands project.

The Aboriginal Homeland service provider boards consulted gave the NLC a prioritised list of Homelands to consult with on potential projects.

Once a list of Homelands to consult was established, NIAA were advised and provided an information package to help NLC with the consultations. Information included previous and planned government investment in each Homeland, to avoid duplication of support.

The NLC consulted the residents of prioritised Homeland communities. Potential projects identified by service providers guided the conversation, but community residents identified their funding priorities and NLC prepared detailed funding proposals on the behalf of the community, not the service provider.

WHAT THE PROJECT CAN FUND

- New and upgraded essential services infrastructure to provide safe and reliable power, water and sewerage services
- Upgrades and repairs to infrastructure that supports access to a Homeland, including roads, bridges, cross-overs, airstrips and barge landing, but do not or are not eligible to receive funding from other sources
- New or upgraded radio/telephony infrastructure, including mobile phone coverage
- New and upgraded infrastructure to improve the amenity of a Homeland, such as ablution blocks, meeting facilities, and new dump and fencing
- Vehicles and machinery for municipal activities and owned by an Aboriginal organisation.

STATISTICAL OUTLOOK

The NLC region has more than 200 occupied Homeland communities with varying levels of need with, according to NT Government statistics obtained from the Homeland service providers, nearly 4000 residents.

The level of need for essential and municipal service infrastructure is significantly high and rough estimates calculate costs into the high tens of millions of dollars, so prioritising investments in this project will be critical as not everything can be funded.

Number of regular occupied Homeland communities across the NLC's 7 regions - 204

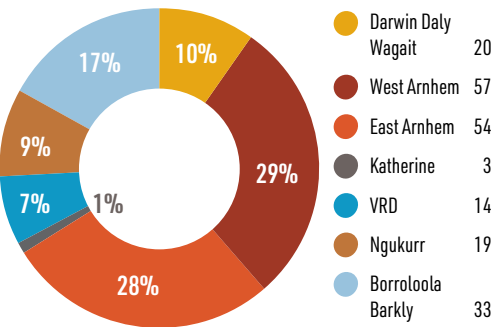


Figure 24

Regional Breakdown - Number of Homeland residents (total - 3,964)

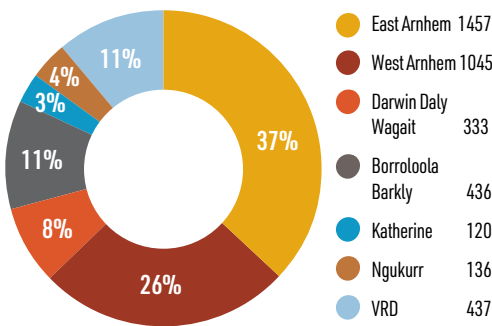


Figure 25

ALL REGIONS TO BENEFIT

It is also essential that all seven NLC regions benefit from the ABA Homelands project and funds are distributed throughout each region for the benefit of Aboriginal people living on their Homeland community.

To have a fair and equal distribution of ABA Homelands project funds (\$15.75 million) across the regions, the NLC agreed that ABA funds are to be distributed using the NLC's recommended regional distribution model.

NLC Regional Distribution Model is based on the following:

1. Overall percentage of Homeland community population by region
2. Overall percentage of Homeland communities by region
3. Average percentage of 1 and 2 by region applied against the overall funds allocation
4. Applying a cap or ceiling on regional funding because East and West Arnhem would take a significantly large percentage of all funds. There would be minimal funding for other regions so a cap of \$4 million, just over a quarter of the entire allocation, was applied
5. Equalisation – balance of funds with a cap applied would allow other NLC regions with high needs to receive a top up and maximise benefits across a larger area.

NLC REGIONS	RECOMMENDED BUDGET
East Arnhem	\$4,000,000
West Arnhem	\$4,000,000
Darwin Daly Wagait	\$2,011,250
Borroloola Barkly	\$2,700,000
Katherine	\$600,000
Ngukurr	\$1,100,000
Victoria River District	\$1,338,750
Total	\$15,750,000

The quarantining of funds for each region allows all NLC regions to benefit from this project.

CONSULTATIONS

Regional Councils

NLC's seven Regional Councils were consulted and they were consistent in identifying key funding priorities for their regions. The key funding priorities are listed in priority order in the table below:

PRIORITY	FUNDING PRIORITIES
1	The Homeland community must be permanently occupied by Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal residents must be living there for most of the year and it must be their principal place of residence.
2	Essential service upgrades, including power, water and sewerage infrastructure.
3	Upgrades to access, including roads, bridges, cross-overs, airstrips, and barge landings.
4	New or upgraded radio/telephony infrastructure, including mobile phone coverage.
5	New and upgraded community infrastructure to improve the amenity of the Homeland, such as ablution blocks, meeting facilities, new dumps and fencing.
6	Prioritise investments that will have the largest impact and meet the highest need – large Homeland community with a number of residents.

PRIORITY	FUNDING PRIORITIES
7	Investment into community infrastructure that fits within the project guidelines that may assist with economic opportunities.
8	Vehicles and machinery for municipal activities that are owned by an Aboriginal organisation.

Significant high levels of unmet need

The ABA Homelands project has clearly identified that among our Homeland communities there is significant high levels of unmet need. The 100-plus consultations represents approximately half of all the Homeland communities where Aboriginal people live in our regions.

There is only \$15.75 million available for the NLC region, but the essential service needs alone with communities consulted is about \$23.8 million. Common issues raised during community consultations include overcrowding; lack of basic repairs and maintenance; poor services; and a limited number of houses build on Homelands over the past decade.

Aboriginal participation

The NLC made effective use of 20 regional office staff, which resulted in a 65% Aboriginal participation rate. The NLC also engaged with two independent Aboriginal Ranger programs to assist in gaining the active engagement of Homeland communities.

COVID-19 HOMELAND ASSISTANCE PROJECT

The Minister for Indigenous Australians announced at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions in the Northern Territory that the Aboriginals Benefit Account would deliver \$10 million across the four Land Councils to allow each Land Council to address immediate infrastructure needs and travel expenses associated with Aboriginal people returning to Homeland communities.

The NLC was allocated \$4 million to assist with meeting the needs of Aboriginal people remaining on or returning to their Homeland community.

There are Homelands where people have not been living regularly, but Aboriginal people have now returned to these communities with the intention of being able to isolate themselves.

The NLC aims to provide immediate support to Homeland communities and residents who have been affected by restrictions imposed to reduce the spread of COVID-19. NLC envisaged that this pandemic response would affect our Homeland communities for a minimum of six months.

WHAT CAN BE FUNDED

The COVID-19 Homeland Assistance Project is one-off and has no additional funds to support maintenance of equipment and supplies.

Eligible items

Minor equipment purchases – small generators, chainsaws, trailers, small tools and equipment, cooking equipment, refrigeration units or chest/large household freezer units, beds and other items that would provide a level of comfort and amenity for Homeland residents.

Water – minor repairs to upgrade water infrastructure, water pumping equipment, and transportable water tanks for delivering potable water to a Homeland community.

Power – minor repairs to upgrade power supply infrastructure, such as the replacement of generators. This may also include power cards for Homeland community houses fitted with power meters.

Sewerage – minor repairs to upgrade sewerage infrastructure, including the installation of long drop toilets, repairs and maintenance to community ablutions and pumping of septic systems.

Communications – upgrades to infrastructure that would improve mobile phone, internet and radio communications.

Fuel supplies – for the purpose of power generation or minor equipment operations.

Food – vouchers for food with local community stores and the cost of food delivery to Homeland communities, but not including cigarettes, lollies, tobacco, alcohol, clothing or gift cards.

Travel expenses – for Aboriginal people returning to their Homeland communities.

Tents and shelters – for short to medium-term occupancy.

Accommodation emergency repairs and maintenance – Homeland communities and houses that do not fall under the NT Government's Municipal and Essential Services (MES) or Housing Maintenance Services programs will be eligible for emergency assistance to make safe accommodation for Aboriginal residents. This includes emergency repairs to wet areas, water and electrical services, fans, lights and the roof. Projects that fall under the NTG-funded services can be carefully considered based on external funding capacity to meet the need and urgency, and benefit of the repairs.

INVITATION TO APPLY AND THE APPLICATION PROCESS

NLC sent out an information package about the COVID-19 Homeland Assistance Project to 25 Homeland community service providers and Aboriginal organisations in May 2020. NLC staff in the regions advised Homeland residents, community organisations and service providers about the project. Accessing the project funds is via a simplified application process and NLC asked that applicants complete a proposal that met the project guidelines and submitted it by 30 May 2020.

There were two types of applications that NLC would consider – from a community organisation and a Homeland community. A Homeland community application completed by senior Homeland residents would take

priority over a community organisation application for that same Homeland community.

The project has generated significant interest and there has been a large volume of emails, phone calls, meetings and follow-up consultations. As of 30 June 2020, NLC had completed 50 Homeland community consultations to assist Aboriginal residents with providing information about the project and completing applications.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

All applications were assessed by Regional Development staff against the criteria set out in the COVID-19 Homeland Assistance Project Information Guide. These assessments included funding recommendation that were put to the NLC CEO and Chairperson for consideration and approval.

SUMMARY OF RECEIVED APPLICATIONS BY REGION

REGION	COMMUNITY APPLICATIONS	ORGANISATION APPLICATIONS	TOTAL APPLICATIONS	VALUE OF REQUESTED PROJECTS (GST EXCLUSIVE)	NO. HOMELANDS	NO. ABORIGINAL RESIDENTS	NO. HOUSES/ DWELLINGS
Borrooloola Barkly	12	1	13	\$962,597.89	31	413	86
Darwin Daly Wagait	21	1	22	\$619,768.14	36	356	83
East Arnhem	8	3	11	\$1,435,794.08	48	1,406	242
Katherine	5	0	5	\$67,791.47	5	150	29
Ngukurr	7	1	8	\$230,305.58	15	151	43
Victoria River District	6	0	6	\$75,618.91	6	186	36
West Arnhem	19	3	22	\$1,269,386.30	77	981	227
TOTAL	78	9	87	\$4,661,262.37	218	3,643	746

SUMMARY OF APPROVED APPLICATIONS BY REGION

REGION	COMMUNITY APPLICATIONS	ORGANISATION APPLICATIONS	TOTAL APPLICATIONS	VALUE OF APPROVED PROJECTS (GST EXCLUSIVE)	NO. HOMELANDS	NO. ABORIGINAL RESIDENTS	NO. HOUSES/ DWELLINGS
Borrooloola Barkly	5	1	6	\$306,488.69	24	291	62
Darwin Daly Wagait	19	0	19	\$304,266.05	19	192	46
East Arnhem	2	0	2	\$32,284.68	2	133	13
Katherine	5	0	5	\$66,855.36	5	150	29
Ngukurr	7	0	7	\$75,993.34	7	73	25
Victoria River District	4	0	4	\$54,506.31	4	150	16
West Arnhem	18	2	20	\$821,254.67	55	791	186
TOTAL	60	3	63	\$1,661,649.10	116	1,780	377

CHALLENGES

Challenges and delays experienced by the NLC included:

- **Grant administration** – NLC was required to carry out the grant administration of the projects and programs, an activity usually carried out by an external provider. As a result, additional time, training and resources were required to develop and administrate the process, in addition to assessing a large number of applications and filling outstanding gaps of required information from the applicants
- **Project services agreement** – an exercise requiring time to negotiate with community organisations, the providers of services to the multiple Homeland communities
- **Resources** – well over 50 community visits, plus follow-up calls and monitoring, to ensure clients, community providers and suppliers met the criteria. This amounted to well over 15 follow-up calls per visit, in addition to the administration of confirmation emails and the application of surveillance measures
- **End of financial year** – system and administrative delays impacted by the under-supply of human capital.

MOVING FORWARD

It is envisaged that all outstanding applications will be received, assessed and confirmed by the end of September. With a large percentage of this activity being spot purchasing of minor equipment and transporting food to the small cluster of Homelands, it is anticipated that a large percentage of the benefits from this project will be achieved in the second half of the 2020 calendar year.



*Wagiman Ranger - Rosie Ritchie -
Photo by Kathrine Carver*



*Arthur Muggleton on Wagiman's Parkinsonia seedling
hand weeding - Photo by Kathrine Carver*

Caring for Country Branch



INTRODUCTION

Traditional Owners in the NLC region have responsibility for 210,000 square kilometres of land and 2072 square kilometres of coastline, which contain some of the most intact, biologically diverse and culturally rich savannah and marine environments in the world.

The NLC's Caring for Country Branch helps Traditional Owners to maintain their cultural obligations to care for their land and sea country and report on the effectiveness of their efforts. We do this by using a two-way land and sea management philosophy, which combines the best of traditional knowledge and contemporary science.

The land and sea country, which the NLC supports Traditional Owners to manage, is some of the most intact and biologically diverse in Australia. It includes places such as Kakadu National Park, the Ganalanga Mindibirrira, Wardaman and South East Arnhem Land Aboriginal Protected Areas (IPAs), which are all globally significant in their own right.

Through the Aboriginal Rangers and Aboriginal Protected Area programs, National Parks Joint Management partnerships, land and sea management-based enterprise and research partnerships, the Caring for Country team employed 86 permanent Aboriginal staff, and an additional 150 casual staff were engaged in 2019-20. 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.

OUR APPROACH – WORKING TOGETHER

The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples recognise that Aboriginal people are intrinsically entwined with water and land.

It is a key objective of the NLC to assist Traditional Owners to manage land and sea country in a sustainable manner, guided by

the values and aspirations of custodians of Aboriginal law and culture. These principles underpin the operations of the Branch, which actively supports Traditional Owners to establish grass-roots land and sea management initiatives across the network of remote Homelands, outstations and community centres.

ACHIEVEMENTS

During the reporting period, the Caring for Country Branch:

- Grew the Learning on Country investment to support 15 sites
- Grew the Traditional Owner portfolio of carbon projects and complimentary fee for service work
- Secured significant project capital from the Northern Territory Government's Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program
- Worked with the NT Government and other key program partners to commence the Aboriginal Ranger's compliance pilot project

- Completed significant Ranger base upgrades at Ngukurr and Woodycupildiya
- Hosted the former Department of Agriculture and Water Resources-funded Northern Australian Ranger forum in August 2019
- Secured a substantial training investment from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

Importantly, the Branch continued to provide additional jobs and career progression opportunities for Aboriginal people across the NLC region.

ABORIGINAL RANGERS

Ranger programs are the practical expression of many of the Caring for Country aspirations of Traditional Owners. The Branch now directly supports 11 individual Ranger groups, plus one other via subcontract, and three IPAs. Through the NIAA Aboriginal Ranger Grants and the Aboriginal Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) Real Jobs programs, the NLC was funded to support the direct employment of up to 70 full-time equivalent (FTE) Aboriginal Rangers, 12 coordinators, cultural advisers, two Aboriginal administration trainees and program support staff. While full and part-time workers constitute the majority of our workforce, a significant number of Traditional Owners (more than 150) were engaged as casual staff to support the Ranger groups during peak workloads or to provide cultural advice. Supplemented by savanna burning carbon abatement projects and other fee-for-service sources, the network of casual Rangers is an important means for people to work on their country, often through contributing to peak dry season fire management, culture camps and training opportunities. For all participants, but young people and women in particular, casual work provides the opportunity to experience Ranger work. It also provides the NLC and others with a pool of experienced and engaged land managers from which to draw full-time workers.

Ranger groups continue to lead in fee-for-service activities and cost-recovery programs, supported through government agencies such as the Department of Primary Industry and Resources (NT Fisheries) and biosecurity surveillance activities for the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE).

NLC Ranger groups and IPA managers have continued to deliver on their commitments and lead the country, particularly in the areas of research, management and related innovation. At present Ranger groups and IPA managers are involved in a vast array of land and sea management programs, including fire management/early dry season burning, weed management, land and sea biodiversity surveys, marine debris collections, fisheries compliance patrols, sacred site management and knowledge transfer through the involvement with school groups.

Despite a lack of increase in Commonwealth funding, we continue to seek growth. A concrete example of this is in our partnership with Seafarms and Native Title Holders under the Legume Aboriginal Land Use Agreement. This initiative underpins the planning and on-country work necessary for the development of a new Ranger group and represents an important new private partnership model.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE NLC-HOSTED RANGER GROUPS INCLUDE:

Kenbi

- Funded by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, the 2019 Kenbi Ranger Forum brought Aboriginal Ranger groups together from across the tropical north. The event, hosted by the Kenbi Traditional Owners on the Cox Peninsula, proved highly successful with around 400 participants. In addition to the invaluable networking and information sharing, productive workshops were run by our program partners to help land and sea Rangers learn new land and sea management skills and manage biosecurity threats
- Indian Island Field Station – through support from the NT Government Aboriginal Ranger Grants program, a field station has been constructed on Indian Island within the Kenbi Aboriginal Land Trust. This base will act as an important facility for monitoring biodiversity and conducting sea patrols that form part of the Kenbi Ranger work plan
- Grassy weeds fee-for-service work – the Kenbi Rangers were sub-contracted by Akron Group to undertake roadside weed spraying in the Darwin Daly region.

Malak Malak

- Through support from the NT Government Department of Primary Industries (NT Fisheries), the Malak Malak Traditional Owners were funded to develop their 10-year Malak Malak Healthy Country Plan. This plan will be used as an important tool to continue to guide the work of the Malak Malak Rangers, as well as inform the various program partners about the threats to the values of the Malak Malak ALT and support needed to address them
- Sheila White was appointed as the Assistant Coordinator with the Malak Malak Ranger Group
- The Malak Malak Rangers continue to achieve significant outcomes with their control of gamba grass and mimosa, which are listed as Weeds of National Significance.

Wudicuppildyerr

- Phase 2 of Port Keats/Daly Region Savanna Fire/Carbon Abatement Project: the operational phase of this project has now commenced resulting in more organised and resourced fire management
- Mimosa management: the Wudicuppildyerr Rangers continue to treat mimosa pigra infestations in the Docherty/Moyle floodplains.

Wagiman

- In 2019, the Wagiman Traditional Owners formed a Ranger advisory group to help guide and communicate Ranger activities on the Wagiman and Upper Daly Aboriginal Land Trusts
- Phase 1 of the Wagiman Savanna Fire Management/carbon Abatement Project has been signed off. This will see consultations, a feasibility study and the establishment of a business plan for future carbon related activities
- A junior Ranger program continues to evolve in a collaboration involving the Wagiman Rangers, EON Foundation and the Pine Creek Primary School.

Garawa and Waanyi Garawa

The Garawa and Waanyi Garawa Ranger groups manage more than 16,000km² of Waanyi and Garawa country. The Rangers continue to implement extensive fire management and weed management programs. Aerial and ground burning work has been carried out to optimise biodiversity and defend against wildfire. The Rangers have taken part in scientific carbon-measuring and analysis with a view of capacity building and positioning Ranger groups and other Traditional Owners in the carbon marketplace. The Ranger group has also commenced cultural documentation work in relation to traditional knowledge in their work area.

Some highlights from 2019-20 for the Waanyi Garawa and Garawa Rangers include:

- Successful biodiversity survey and culture camp hosted by the Garawa Rangers at lower Quaker Creek on the Garawa ALT in July 2019, in partnership with Bush Heritage Australia. Since 2012, Bush Heritage Australia has been working with Garawa and Waanyi Traditional

Owners for the management and health of their country. In 2016, Bush Heritage began assisting with wildlife survey and culture camps as a means of supporting Traditional Owners and their Rangers to better understand what is happening with the plants and animals on their land, and as an opportunity for families to camp together on country and share knowledge about the land and its plants and animals. The first three of these camps were held on the Ganalanga-Mindibirrira Aboriginal Protected Area (Nicholson River). The Garawa Rangers from Robinson River helped with the camps and had asked for similar camps on the Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust (Robinson River). In response to these requests, Bush Heritage worked with Garawa Rangers and the Northern Land Council to support Garawa Traditional Owners and their families to undertake a wildlife survey and culture camp in 2019

- The Garawa Ranger Group also began the process of Healthy Country Planning 2019, completing the first workshop of this process with Traditional Owners, with further workshops to be planned. This process also assisted in establishing the Garawa Rangers Advisory Committee, where Traditional Owners nominated representatives from the four clan groups of the Land Trust as committee members and proxies. The Garawa Rangers plan to meet with this committee twice a year to provide updates and information, and gain valuable advice and direction from the Traditional Owners towards Ranger activities
- The Garawa Rangers and Traditional Owners have now entered into phase II of their Savannah Fire Management project in partnership with NAILSMA and the Aboriginal Land and Sea Corporation.

The Timber Creek Rangers

The Timber Creek Rangers are an ILSC Real Jobs Program-funded Ranger group working out of a small town in the large Victoria River District. Based at the northern end of Judbarra/Gregory National Park and surrounded by beautiful plateaus, gullies and rivers, the Timber Creek Rangers engage with numerous land management contracts, helping to protect their lands from the ravages of fire and feral animals.

Two highlights from 2019-20 for the Timber Creek Rangers include:

- A successful annual sawfish survey conducted in August 2019. In partnership with CSIRO, the Timber Creek Rangers captured the endangered large tooth sawfish (*Pristis pristis*), one of the most endangered species in the world. CSIRO scientists joined the Rangers for the 14-day survey on the Victoria River. This partnership has produced valuable data on the populations and health of the species, as well as provided the Rangers with the training to conduct their own surveys and monitoring along the river
- Timber Creek Rangers also attended two of the three on-country camps in 2019 for the phase I Savannah Fire Management Project of the Judbarra/Gregory National Park. One camp was in Barnangaya/East Gregory and the other at Bullita. The camps were in partnership with the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation, Parks and Wildlife, the NLC Caring for Country Branch, the Wardaman IPA Rangers and the Timber Creek Rangers. The Timber Creek Rangers assisted with logistics for the meetings, including transport, site clean-up and collecting fire wood. They also participated in the workshops and presented to the wider group. The camps were a great opportunity to work more closely with partners and build relationships. The

Timber Creek Rangers are eager to continue their involvement in this project and work more closely with Parks and Wildlife and neighbouring Ranger groups. Since the camps in 2019, the Rangers attended fire unit training with the Wardaman and Wagiman Rangers at the Charles Darwin University's Katherine campus in March 2020, learning essential safety and burning skills and techniques to prepare them for the next stage of the project.

Garngi

- Successful completion of the fisheries contract, building the group's capacity through the development of eight permanent staff, five casuals and Traditional Owners, who all worked together to complete this work
- Eslyn Wauchope, Acting Coordinator of Garngi Rangers, travelled to New Zealand to meet the Maori women of the Te Rarawa Iwi. This was a chance to share knowledge about how Aboriginal women are involved in land management, conservation and cultural revitalisation
- The Rangers have been working hard to limit the spread of mimosa across the island's floodplain.

Mardbalk

- The Rangers have been working with children from the school as part of the junior Rangers program. This has happened every fortnight and lots of time has been spent out in the field in bilingual learning and Aboriginal knowledge transfer
- Roy Winungju completed his coxswain's licence, which now enables the group to get back out on their waters to conduct patrols and look after some of their more remote country, including sea country

- The Rangers successfully completed NT Fisheries contracted patrols and all the possible DAWE scheduled biodiversity activities prior to COVID-19 impacts and closure of community borders.

Yugul Mangi

- The LoC program has started and the Rangers have been working with children from the school every fortnight. They have also taken the children camping to help with some of their field work, including two different biodiversity surveys
- The Rangers, in collaboration with cultural advisers and a film producer, hired a helicopter and travelled to a remote part of the IPA to conduct a rock art survey. The Rangers discovered three caves that were not previously known and documented their findings
- Two female Rangers travelled to Darwin for the Women's Leadership Training Course. The focus was on building capacity in activities associated with higher duties, and developing confidence to move into leadership roles.

Numbulwar Numburindi

- Three Rangers and two casual Rangers completed their coxswain's training
- In collaboration with the Yugul Mangi Rangers, the Numburindi Rangers camped at Wanmari for a week and treated a significant outbreak of mimosa on the Phelp River. This was done using newly acquired ATVs with the help of a helicopter. Weeds Branch helped with this work
- Also in collaboration with the Yugul Mangi Rangers, the early fire season burning program was completed, despite the difficult COVID-19 community isolation requirements
- Rangers completed all Fisheries NT and Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) contract requirements possible, although some activities were deferred due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Wagiman Traditional Owners with Wagiman Rangers - Photo by Kathrine Carver



INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA

Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) is a globally recognised, Aboriginal-developed way for people to care for country in the long term and participate in the National Reserve System. As at 30 June 2020, nationally there are 76 Aboriginal Protected Areas, which make up more than 47% of Australia's National Reserve System. IPAs combine traditional and contemporary knowledge into a framework to leverage partnerships with conservation and commercial organisations to assist in providing employment, education and training opportunities for Aboriginal people.

In collaboration with the Traditional Owners, the NLC manages three Aboriginal Protected Areas (IPAs) – the Wardaman IPA (declared in 2014), the Ganalanga Mindibirrira IPA (declared in 2016) and the South-East Arnhem Land IPA (declared in 2017).

WARDAMAN IPA

Wardaman country lies within the Victoria River and Upper Daly catchments, west of Katherine. The Wardaman IPA covers approximately 224,718 hectares of country rich in cultural heritage. More than 200 recorded rock art sites with around 6000 individual paintings and 41,000 engravings have been recorded. The Lightning Brothers at Yiwarrlarlayi on Delamere Station is the best known Wardaman rock art site. Six art site complexes are considered of national significance and have been registered with the Australian Heritage Commission. The natural landscape, including hills, waterholes, billabongs, springs, water courses, rock outcrops, mineral outcrops, soil, sand, trees and other vegetation, are also culturally significant sites.

The Wardaman IPA has a management emphasis on cultural values. In partnership with the NTG, via its innovative Ranger Grant program, the NLC supports Traditional Owners in maintaining these sites. This includes slashing long grass to create fire breaks, as well as fence repairs and other active conservation measures.

During 2019-20, management highlights included:

- In partnership with the NTG, the Wardaman Rangers continued training in water monitoring. For example, on a monthly basis during the dry season, the Rangers have been testing their springs, which naturally occur on the IPA. This work is producing regular data on the water quality of the IPA and is an important tool for the monitoring of healthy country
- The commencement of phase 1 of the Savannah Fire Management Project. With the support of Bushfires NT, the Rangers and Traditional Owners began to implement an early season fire program, integrating with training and planning already built upon with neighbouring groups. These included Wagiman and Timber Creek Rangers and Judbarra-Gregory National Park
- The Wardaman Women's Country Camp was held at the Giwining (Flora River) Nature Park in August 2019. Women, youths and children spent their time fishing, bushwalking, and exploring the Flora River and Djarrung Spring, telling stories, conducting language lessons, painting and dancing. This was the second annual Wardaman women's camp. It enabled women, youth and children to take part in Ranger activities and get people back out on country

- Commencement of an external mid-review of the IPA's 2014-24 Plan of Management, including the planning for workshops with Traditional Owners scheduled for 2020-21.

GANALANGA MINDIBIRRINA IPA

The Ganalanga Mindibirrinda Aboriginal Protected Area, covering 11,000 square kilometres in the South Western Gulf of the Borroloola Barkly Region, is the Homeland of the Waanyi and Garawa people. It encompasses most of the Nicolson Basin and is divided by the locally renowned China Wall. The IPA is relatively untouched and has been declared a category six, Managed Resource Protected Area, by the International Union of Conservation of Nature. Its management is guided by the Indigenous Protected Area Plan of Management 2015-20.

The IPA has outstations to the north and south of China Wall, some of which are lived in and others that are visited throughout the year. The Plan of Management includes living on country, teaching the next generation culture and language through leaning and ceremonies, and developing ideas for sustainable employment within their IPA Homelands. Getting back out on country allows for stronger connection to the land and the opportunity to develop ideas that may lead to opportunities to earn incomes.

Burning to ensure a healthy country is important on the IPA and reduces the chance of late wildfire harming fragile ecosystems. Late fires are a significant threat to the outstations, neighbouring pastoral leases and livestock. The aim for Ganalanga Mindibirrinda is to conduct yearly prescribed burns that are controlled and monitored.

Over the past year limited fire fuel load reduction work has been undertaken to reduce the intensity and minimise the threat of late wildfire to country and neighbouring land and

cattle stations. It is anticipated that after the next committee meeting annual work plans for regular fire management and support of carbon farming initiatives will develop.

There are several common feral animal species on the IPA, including horses, cattle, pigs, donkeys and cane toads. Cattle and feral animal surveys have been undertaken and during 2019-20 further funding has been awarded to enable comparative surveys to take place. It is anticipated that the evidence gained will generate a large animal management plan.

The Waanyi Garawa Ranger Group employed an assistant coordinator in 2020, with the position being primarily focused on women and youth engagement. The IPA continues to support and encourage female Rangers to work on the IPA and we are committed to further developing employment opportunities and variety. Women Rangers participate in all the duties required of any Ranger, including sacred site care and management, public awareness, animal surveys, trapping, weed spraying and removal.

Governance workshops and training for the IPA's Advisory Committee was a focus for the members and proxies in 2019. Capacity and leadership building and mentoring younger generations will continue to be a pivotal focus.

SOUTH EAST ARNHAM LAND IPA

At nearly 20,000 square kilometres, the South East Arnhem Land IPA spans most of south-east Arnhem Land, along the far western Gulf of Carpentaria from Blue Mud Bay to the mouth of the Roper River; where tidal flats meet vast coastal plains backed by rugged sandstone uplands. The vegetation is predominately open eucalypt woodlands with paperbark and monsoon rainforests along waterways or in moister pockets. In the north, tall eucalypt woodlands occur on the deepest soils, while

a mosaic of native grasslands, vine thickets, samphire and mangroves characterise the coastal lowlands.

The IPA is managed by an advisory committee of senior elders from the Ngukurr and Numbulwar communities. The South-East Arnhem Land IPA consists of the traditional estates of over 20 clans, who speak of themselves as Yugul. Their country comprises a patchwork of homelands with 20 established outstations, each belonging to a particular family group or clan. All Homelands are associated with significant cultural sites and all are enormously important, as they reflect the pattern of traditional land use and ownership. Homelands are places where ceremonies occur, bush tucker is collected or hunted and where history, stories and traditional ways are passed on to the children.

Sea country is particularly important. As the basis for livelihoods, it plays a key part of culture with Dreamtime ancestors creating marine sites and features just as they did on the land.

The South-East Arnhem Land IPA is jointly managed by the Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi Rangers based in Ngukurr and Numbulwar respectively. The Rangers work on behalf of Traditional Owners of the Ritharrngu, Rembarrnga, Ngandi, Ngalakgan, Warndarrang, Yugul and Nunggubuyu peoples.

Management highlights in 2019-20 include:

- An IPA Advisory Committee meeting and informal meetings with Traditional Owners throughout the year. The committee is uniquely representative of regional clans, language groups and the townships of Ngukurr and Numbulwar. Initially established to make decisions in relation to IPA management, the role of the SEAL IPA advisory committee has quickly expanded. Members continued their program of

governance training and are now managing annual budgets in excess of \$2 million and an ever-widening array of issues. The SEAL IPA Advisory Committee has also made decisions on funding a community planning and development project using carbon funds

- SEAL IPA Advisory Committee began the planning process to extend their sea country footprint. Traditional Owners are concerned with trespassing and having rights over their land and waters, and the health of their sea country. Concerns include over-fishing, over-hunting, unwanted visitors, protecting song lines and cultural sites, pollution, sea-bed mining, ghost nets and climate change. Caring for sacred sites, saltwater culture, dugong and turtles, fish and shellfish, privacy, clean water and livelihoods are of fundamental importance to the Traditional Owners. The planning process will continue in 2020-21
- Both Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi Rangers undertake regular river and sea patrols as part of their work with NT Fisheries for monitoring fishing compliance, recording suspicious activity and educating visitors about fishing regulations. Fisheries officers visit Numbulwar and Ngukurr twice a year to do compliance training with the Rangers. The Rangers also retrieve ghost nets and marine debris from the water and beaches. Ghost nets are commercial fishing nets that have been lost, abandoned or discarded at sea
- The Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi Rangers continue to undertake intensive fire management across the SEAL IPA. Since 2016, fire management has improved in SEAL IPA by reducing the total area that is burnt each year, shifting the seasonality of burning from late dry

season to early dry season, increasing the patchiness of fires, increasing the area that is considered long unburnt and reducing the greenhouse gases released from burning. The Yugul Mangi Rangers and Traditional Owners developed the Yugul Mangi Faiya En Sisen Kelenda (Yugul Mangi Fire and Seasons Calendar) in collaboration with the University of New England, which uses biocultural indicators to guide fire management. Forty biocultural indicators were identified and included in the calendar, alongside important bush tucker resources, weather conditions and savanna burning recommendations. The Rangers presented at the Ecological Society of Australia conference in Hobart in November 2019 and the North Australia Savanna Fire Forum in Darwin in February 2020

- The Yugul Mangi Rangers undertook a rock art survey at Burrungu. They recorded three new rock art sites, which were cleared of vegetation and surveyed. A short film about the rock art surveys was produced by the NTG following on from previous rock art surveys undertaken under the Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program
- The Rangers continue to undertake extensive weed management, including managing a *Mimosa pigra* infestation on the Phelp River, with assistance from the NT Weeds Branch.



Wagiman Rangers early dry burning - Photo by Kathrine Carver

LEARNING ON COUNTRY PROGRAM

POLICY CONTEXT

Commonwealth

The Learning on Country Program (LoC Program) is a significant community driven initiative that commenced in 2012-13 with four East Arnhem Land communities. With a teaching and learning partnership between community schools and local Ranger groups underway, the program successfully works across 15 remote communities spread throughout the Top End. The partnership is supported by strong governance arrangements, which ensure the activities are informed by and meet the dual pedagogical expectations of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators.

Since its inception, this approach has seen the LoC Program align itself with key Australian Government policies such as Healthy Country, Healthy People, which has enabled the education schedules and the overarching agreement held between the Commonwealth and Territory governments to address key areas of Aboriginal disadvantage under the Commonwealth's Closing the Gap framework.

The LoC Program methodology is consistent with and delivers on the Closing the Gap Refresh. This recognises that shared decision-making with Aboriginal people, from the design to evaluation of programs, is working towards reducing the social gradient in health between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

The program is also strongly aligned with the Northern Territory's key Aboriginal Affairs strategy, Everyone Together, which recognises "building, supporting and investing in strong Aboriginal governance is necessary to ensuring local people drive local solutions".

Northern Land Council

The NLC views the LoC Program as a flagship program in the implementation of the CFC's Workforce Development strategy by providing clear professional development pathways and better succession planning for NLC (and independent) Aboriginal Ranger groups. The strategy includes subsidiary strategies for engaging women and young people. Expanding the Ranger programs and growing the recruitment and retention of women and young people are key outcomes of the NLC's Strategic Plan 2016-20.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

Integrating culture and curricula, the LoC Program provides a hands-on approach in the educational, training and employment pathway, using a combination of each community's natural and cultural resource management and education resources. Incorporating the LoC Program into the school culture provides a successful community driven education option with local benefits and significant policy outcomes.

The LoC Program harnesses extant community capacity to extend and formalise existing activities that already incorporate Aboriginal and western knowledge systems. This arrangement provides students with an opportunity to literally learn on country under a combination of knowledgeable senior Traditional Owners, community Rangers, VET trainers and teachers. They will achieve educational qualifications from the two knowledge systems using both the bush and the school, linked by cultural and curriculum teachers to ensure learning requisites from the two knowledge systems are appropriately applied.

The objectives of the LoC Program, as articulated in the funding agreement, are:

- Increase in inter-generational transmission of Aboriginal knowledge and customary practice
- Development of strong partnerships between Ranger groups, schools and local community to deliver a culturally responsive secondary school curriculum
- Increased school attendance
- Improved student learning.

Governance

The LoC Program operates through a partnership arrangement between the community school and the local Ranger group, and is supported by a Local Learning on Country Committee (LLOCC) and an in situ LOC coordinator. An LoC Steering Committee provides cultural and strategic guidance to the program. Biannual LoC forums, which include site presentations, a steering committee meeting and practitioner workshops, occur alternately in Nhulunbuy and Darwin, and are attended by up to 70 participants.

Outcomes

The LoC Program continues to grow across the communities. Since initial inception in 2012-13, the program has grown from four to nine communities, including Maningrida, Galiwin'ku, Yirrkala and Laynhapuy Homelands Ramingining, Milingimbi, Gapuwiyak, Umbakumba and Angurugu.

The nine community sites highlight the success achieved in Aboriginal student participation. Employment outcomes show that 70% of students enrolled in middle and senior school took part in LOC activities; Aboriginal employment totals 63% of the overall program employment (91 women and 96 men); and Aboriginal staff worked 9336 hours in the preparation and delivery of LoC Program activities.

At the beginning of the 2020 school year, all six of the new communities, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Borrooloola, Gunbalanya, Beswick and Barunga, were online and delivering activities. With the addition of these communities, it was expected the program would grow to support about 1000 students.



Weed patrol by Wagiman Rangers - Photo by Kathrine Carver

Program site reporting (January to June 2020) on the key performance indicators for 14 LoC sites highlights the success achieved in Aboriginal student participation and employment outcomes – more than 1200 remote Aboriginal students took part in LoC activities; about 300 Aboriginal staff worked 11,796 hours in the preparation and delivery of LoC Program activities; and 130 remote Aboriginal students enrolled into VETiS based training.

Importantly, the LoC Program's pathway to employment supports internships/traineeships with Ranger groups in some locations. Future funding focuses on expanding this arrangement to all sites, where possible, and building an Aboriginal LoC assistant coordinator and coordinator cohort. Additionally, the NLC is working towards being an employer of choice and intends to expand its own workforce development approach to include trainee opportunities in its Darwin and regional offices.

CASE STUDY – LEARNING ON COUNTRY

Learning on Country Program transition into full-time Ranger work: the graduates

Bawinanga Djelk Internship program, growing the next generation of Rangers through LoC

The Learning on Country Program is unique in that it defines a pathway to employment in Aboriginal land and sea management, thereby growing the next generation of Rangers and traditional custodians to work and care for their country.

Maningrida, where the Bawinanga Djelk Ranger internship program supports LoC students' transition into full-time Ranger work, provides an excellent example.

Cedric Ankin celebrated his year 12 graduation at Maningrida – he is now employed as an intern with the Bawinanga Djelk Rangers.

Grestina Wilson, the daughter of long-time senior Ranger Greg Wilson, is in her senior year at Maningrida School where she is undertaking the internship program with the Women Rangers. Her passion has always been caring for country.

A supported and well-resourced environment encouraged Cedric and Grestina to commence the program in middle school. In that time, both completed Certificate One Conservation and Land Management (CLM) and with good use of a mentoring program, led to the commencement of Certificate Two CLM and internships with Bawinanga Djelk.

Other students include Jonah Ryan, who over the previous two years completed the Certificate Two, plus senior first aid, and obtained a driver's licence.

The LoC Program is administrated across 15 remote Aboriginal community schools, allowing nearly 1000 people to partner and participate with local Ranger groups.

The primary aims of the program are to increase student attendance, retention and participation rates; learnings on culturally relevant and experiential content; literacy and numeracy levels while strongly encouraging critical thinking skills; and strengthen the positive pathway to employment and community leadership.



Wagiman Rangers - Maurice Ray & Josie Ritchie - early dry season burning - Photo by Kathrine Carver

ABORIGINAL RANGER COMPLIANCE PROJECT

The newly established Aboriginal Ranger Compliance Support Project aims to ensure that Aboriginal Ranger groups across the NLC regions are appropriately trained, resourced and supported to undertake targeted compliance activities on their traditional land and sea estates, safely and effectively.

The project is purposely designed to provide compliance support to 12 Ranger groups, their operational areas, relevant Aboriginal Protected Areas and the surrounding Aboriginal Land Trusts.

The support project activities are set to:

- Establish Aboriginal Ranger Compliance Support team
- Set up a compliance support desk
- Undertake the development of the NLC Compliance Policy and Procedures Manual
- Provide Aboriginal Ranger compliance training and support

- Instigate individual Operational Area Compliance Plans for NLC Ranger groups
- Develop an incident/case management database contextualised for Ranger group needs.

A suitable platform for discussion and review of the project outcomes and related matters has been developed in the form of the Aboriginal Ranger Compliance Working Group, which consists of partnering agencies such as NT Fisheries, NT Water Police Section, Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, Parks and Wildlife, NIAA, Land Councils and independent Ranger groups.

The development of the project was financially secured in November 2019 by NIAA and the Commonwealth Government. It comes as a follow-on from a comprehensive review of the NLC's Ranger project.

SAVANNA BURNING CARBON ABATEMENT

A number of NLC Ranger groups, Indigenous Protected Area managers and Traditional Owners are involved in registered carbon abatement projects, using the early dry season savanna fire methodology. In 2019-20, a number of new participants trialed these approaches as part of Aboriginal Land and Sea Corporation Savanna Fire Management (SFM) Program. While much of this work was preparatory, we expect some groups to begin registering new projects in 2021-22.

SOUTH EAST ARNHEM LAND FIRE ABATEMENT PROJECT

There is an s19 agreement with the ALFA (NT) to undertake carbon farming across the South East Arnhem Land Aboriginal Protected Area. It is made up of the South East Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (SEALFA) and the South East Arnhem Land Fire Abatement Stage 2 (SEALFA2) projects, which use strategic fire management through the savanna burning methodology to reduce the fire-generated emissions of methane and nitrous oxide. The projects use strategic early dry season burning to reduce the total area that is burnt each year and to shift the seasonality of burning from late dry season to early dry season. Fire is a major focus of the Yugul Mangi and Numbulwar Numburindi Rangers' work. Funding from carbon credits earned through this project has gone to buying new vehicles and equipment for two Ranger groups and running culture camps, a community identified priority.

GARAWA ABORIGINAL LAND TRUST FIRE ABATEMENT PROJECT

The Garawa Savanna Fire project, located near Robinson River and managed by the Garawa Rangers in partnership with NAILSMA, entered its first full year of production. Despite some unexpected late season fires, the project passed its first project audit in June 2020 and continues to improve. This project and several others in the region are funded under the ILSC Savanna Fire Management (SFM) Program, which provides funding for coordination, training, start-up and early operational costs for new projects on Aboriginal Lands in the NT's Top End.



Wagiman Ranger - Maurice Ray - Photo by Kathrine Carver



Wagiman Rangers - drip torch early dry season burning - Photo by Kathrine Carver

JUDBARRA-GREGORY NATIONAL PARK PROJECT

The Savanna Fire Management Project for Judbarra-Gregory National Park completed its phase 1 consultations in 2019.

Consultations were held in Barnangaya/East Gregory, Bullita and Paperbark Yard over the school holidays, which allowed and encouraged participation from youth, elders and Traditional Owners. Follow-up consultations with Traditional Owners were also held to allow those who were unable to attend to be heard.

The stakeholders are looking forward in spending time looking after country through fire management, and caring for the rich cultural and biological resources of the park. The project rollout is expected in 2021.

Other projects in the NLC region funded for development under this program in 2020-21 include a larger Western Top End project involving Traditional Owners from the Wardaman IPA and the Wagiman Aboriginal Land Trust.

NATIONAL PARK JOINT MANAGEMENT

The NLC has a statutory responsibility to protect and advocate for the interests of Traditional Owners of land, water and sea within its jurisdiction. This includes estates leased by the Commonwealth and Territory governments and included in the national reserve estate for conservation of natural and cultural values and tourism purposes. Nearly half 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.

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.

KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

The NLC continued to have a strong focus on representing the interests of the Traditional Owners of the land in the use and management of Kakadu National Park in 2019-20. The NLC supported Traditional Owner involvement in park management decision-making processes through the Kakadu Board of Management and in ensuring effective consultation with Traditional Owners as required in the lease agreements held by the Australian Government through the Director of National Parks.

Throughout 2019-20, the NLC worked closely with Parks Australia to review the consultation guidelines and make necessary amendments to ensure that Traditional Owners will continue to be consulted and involved in all aspects of the use and management of land in Kakadu.

Carbon projects in Kakadu:

- In July 2019, the Director of National Parks and the Jawoyn Traditional Owners entered into the first carbon abatement agreement for the southern region of Kakadu National Park, known as the Wurrk Carbon Project
- The Traditional Owners in the southern region of Kakadu established a steering committee to oversee the implementation of the Wurrk Carbon Project. The committee held their first meeting in February 2020 to start making decisions on fire management activities aimed at reducing carbon emissions.

The NLC will continue to work with park management and Traditional Owners to establish carbon projects in other areas of Kakadu National Park.



Kakadu runoff - Photo by Kathrine Carver

KAKADU NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE PROGRAM

The National Environmental Science Program (NESP) Aboriginal Research Coordinator (ARC) has become a major role in facilitating partnerships between researchers and Traditional Owners. In 2019-20, the NESP program had a particular focus on Aboriginal land management and working with Traditional Owners on the development of healthy country indicators. Sites across Kakadu were selected to undertake research on land management approaches that incorporated Aboriginal and management practices.

The Kakadu steering committee held two meetings and identified and supported the partnership between NESP, Traditional Owners and Microsoft in recording and collecting data on specific projects. This information is, therefore, accessible to other scientists and researchers working in partnership with Traditional Owners in future land management activities.



Dwayne Alangale - Wagiman Ranger - early dry season burning - Photo by Kathrine Carver

Nardab site – weed and fire control East Alligator district

The NESP Healthy Indicators projects have seen the reforming of the wetlands, the return of wildlife to the floodplain and the control of para grass (*Urochloa mutica*), which is a significant weed. The sharing of Aboriginal knowledge and scientific monitoring methods have also led to improved local fauna and flora.

Anlarr (Nourlangie Camp) – monitoring Healthy Indicators in the Jim Jim district

Kakadu Rangers have developed a good working relationship with NESP and Traditional Owners in assisting with the fire management and monitoring of the sites. To ensure that the country stayed healthy, Parks Australia also committed to weed spraying and clearing of the area.

The area is responding well and the maintenance of weeds has resulted in a healthier population of native yams.

Koolpin Gorge

The youth and older Traditional Owners assisted NESP in setting up a number of surveillance cameras and sound monitors around Koolpin Gorge to monitor wildlife. The youth were provided training in drone operation and other monitoring devices. One of the key projects was to evaluate the benefits to country of early dry season burning.



PPE preps for Parkinsonia spraying - Photo by Kathrine Carver

NT PARKS JOINT MANAGEMENT

Caring for Country supports joint management in eight NT parks: Garig Gunak Barlu National Park, Mary River National Park, Adelaide River Conservation Reserve, Tjuwaliyn Nature Reserve, Umbrawarra Nature Reserve, Giwining National Park, Judbarra National Park and Barranyi National Park.

The Caring for Country Branch continued to support Joint Management Committee meetings between staff from the Parks and Wildlife Commission and Traditional Owners. Key highlights include:

- Nomination of a new Garig Gunak Barlu board member for the Madjunbalmi clan group and an out-of-session board meeting being held in April 2020. Land claim negotiations are being facilitated by NLC Legal Branch
- Consultation with Legal and Anthropology branches to develop a strategy to renew membership regarding joint management for the Mary River Committee

- The Adelaide River Committee met in December 2019. A scheduled meeting in April was deferred due to COVID-19 restrictions and sorry business but is being rescheduled for 2020-21
- The branch supported a two-day Judburra Committee meeting in October 2019. The scheduled meeting for March was deferred due to COVID-19 restrictions. Collaborations to finalise the visitor centre and cultural induction package is continuing
- The Giwining Committee met in August 2019 in Katherine with support from Caring for Country staff, with the March meeting was also deferred.

Caring for Country and NLC Legal Branch staff are working with Parks and Wildlife Commission NT and Traditional Owners to negotiate future management arrangements for Tjuwaliyn, Umbrawarra and Barranyi, including proposals for sole management by Traditional Owners. Negotiations that were delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions will continue in next year's work plan.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY – DATA COLLECTION, MAPPING AND REPORTING

The Caring for Country Branch provides on-site and remote ICT training and support to all NLC Ranger groups including:

- Documentation of Ranger group ICT needs and budget preparation
- Providing training in the use of ICT equipment, including MS Teams, GIS/ Mapping Software and other data management tools, such as Garmin Base Camp, Garmin Virb Edit, GeoSetter and Google Earth
- Production of videos and other educational materials about Ranger projects
- Providing general day-to-day ICT support and troubleshooting
- Assisting with the collection and management of data and preparation of reports, including KMZ Google Earth reports.

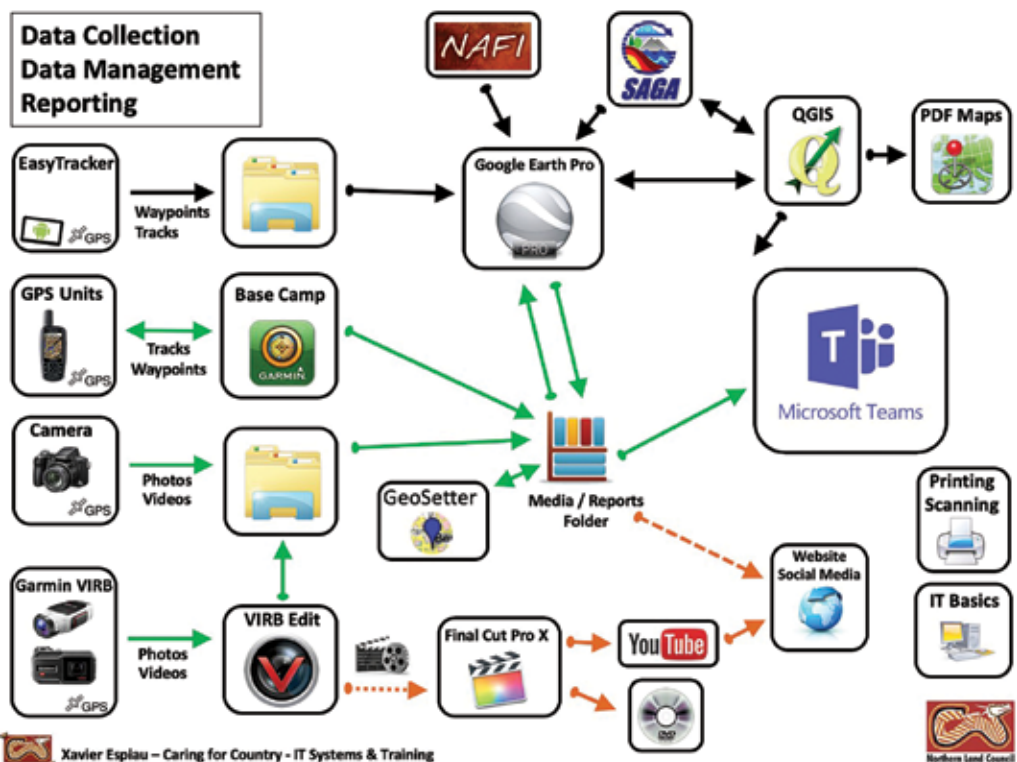
The NLC receives funding from NIAA for two dedicated information, communication and technology (ICT) officer positions. The first part of 2019-20 was dedicated to the migration of all Ranger bases onto the NLC network. Until then, each computer was connected in a standalone mode to the internet and had to be maintained independently. New technology in internet router, coupled by the NLC network upgrade, has enabled the migration to occur and by mid-December 2019 all computers were connected to the NLC network.

The second part of 2019-20 (January 2020), before the arrival of COVID-19 in the Territory and the lockdown, continued to focus on the support and training of Rangers in data collection, file management and reporting.

Re-enforcing the first wave of training and support organised the year before around the IT Data Collection, Mapping and Reporting Curriculum was a priority.

The curriculum gives the Rangers a better understanding of all processes involved in data collection and data management. Digital literacy has also been incorporated in the training program to address the skills gap for Rangers not familiar with IT hardware and software. The IT Data Collection, Mapping and Reporting Curriculum gives Rangers a pathway to learn the skills required to provide accurate and comprehensible reports to the Caring for Country Branch, Traditional Owners and to their community.

The arrival of COVID-19 in Australia in March changed our priorities towards remote support and training, and the deployment of video conferencing capabilities was required while the remote communities were on lockdown. The previous installation of MS Teams the previous year made the video conferencing deployment straight forward as it is fully integrated within MS Teams. Webcam, microphones and speakers were sent to all Ranger bases and video conferencing meetings became the norm. Daily video conferencing was easy and provided a critical communication channel during this difficult time. Remote training of Rangers became standard using video conferencing software and Desktop remote control programs, such as TeamViewer.

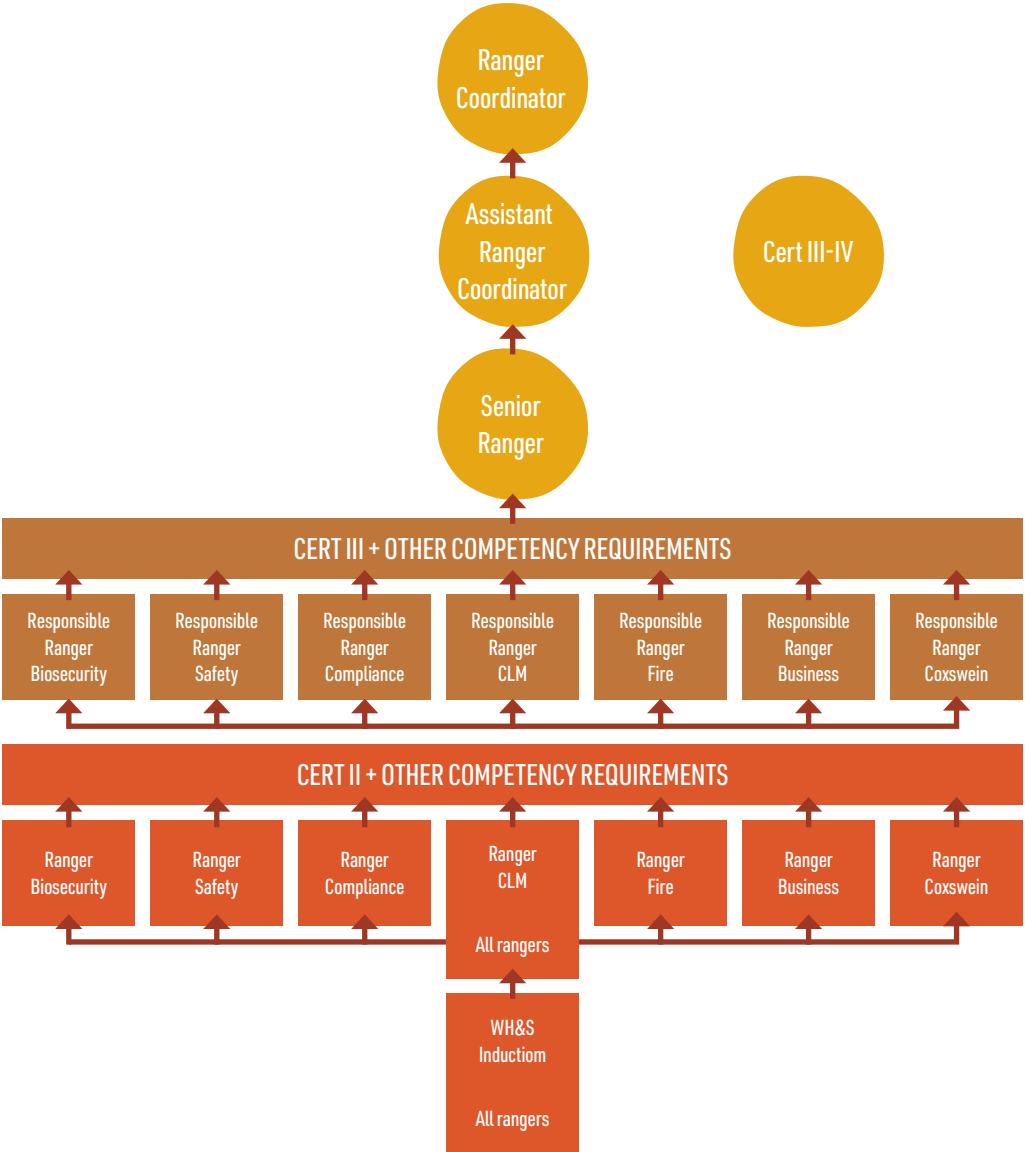


TRAINING

NLC training and workforce development: a new Ranger Workforce Development strategy

The revised Ranger career structure is a result of wide consultations with Caring for Country support staff, Ranger coordinators and the NLC People Services team. The proposed structure maintains the Conservation and Land Management (CLM) pathway towards a Certificate 2, 3 and 4 qualification. The new

structure incorporates compulsory work health and safety (WH&S) and CLM training for entry-level Rangers and provides multiple optional pathways for diversification (responsible Ranger roles). The proposed structure is outlined below.



Key to the structure is that it achieves an alignment with:

- **Aboriginal Ranger workforce expectations:** the CLM pathway has been maintained in the structure as it enables Rangers to undertake training in critical conservation and land management skills. All Rangers are expected to successfully complete a certificate two qualification in CLM before progressing into other positions
- **Industry and partner requirements:** new optional training pathways have been incorporated, such as compliance, biosecurity and business administration. The suggested pathways are not limited in number and new pathways may be added if there is a demand
- **Ranger aspirations:** not all Rangers want to progress into leadership positions. The new optional pathways will help expose Rangers to diverse career options in other industry sectors, such as local government, fire and emergency services, and fisheries compliance
- **NLC business requirements:** by making WH&S training compulsory as employees start in the Ranger workforce, good practices will be embedded at the foundational level. The creation of a career path in safety will also aid the NLC to more effectively streamline good WH&S practices in Ranger operations. The creation of a pathway in business will also enable NLC support staff to eventually delegate administration and other business tasks to the Ranger group level, thus minimising reliance on support staff and building resilience and independence of Ranger groups.

The CFC Training & Workforce Development team is aiming for the new career structure to be rolled out in 2021. The initial focus will be on ensuring that all Rangers will meet the requirements of the WH&S induction envisioned in the new workforce structure:

All steps in the career progression of Rangers will be benchmarked. Training delivery will also move towards a block delivery approach in February and October each year. This will free up Ranger teams to focus on core land and sea management activities during the busy months of the year and leverage greater efficiencies in training delivery. The Ranger Workforce Development Strategy will be designed to provide a consistent Caring for Country Branch approach to workforce development and progression, while recognising the need for individual teams to tailor strategies and actions for different local circumstances and needs.



Guwardagun kids - Photo by Kathrine Carver

WOMEN'S AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

The past year saw a strong recruitment effort across the Caring for Country Branch. As a result, 40% of permanent NLC Ranger positions are held by women, and all NLC Ranger groups now employ women Rangers. Furthermore, more than 90% of Ranger of groups saw comparable levels of participation from women and men in training opportunities. This progress is on track towards half of the 2021 targets set out in the Women's Employment Strategy (WES), detailed in the table below.

The WES targets that require more attention are the employment of Aboriginal women in leadership roles, women Rangers access to vehicles and female representation in the governance of Ranger programs. The Caring for Country Branch will improve outcomes towards these targets by increasing the number of Aboriginal leadership positions across Ranger groups through our Career Pathways Program, updating fleet, and building local governance bodies to oversee Ranger work.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

NLC Ranger groups work for people with a diversity of cultures and histories, and operate under widely different circumstances. Yet all Ranger groups identify teaching the upcoming generations of custodians how they are connected to country and each other as a core aspiration. Rangers are already working hard towards this, whether it be in helping youth, children and families spend time on country, supporting their languages and cultures being taught in school, or by employing young people as Rangers. NLC Rangers have raised the following key priorities for the Caring for Country Branch to support to their youth engagement:

TARGETS FOR 2021	WES ONSET 2018	JUNE 2019
50% of Rangers employed by the NLC are women	26% of permanent positions 22% of FTE	40% of permanent positions 38% of FTE
Women Rangers are represented in every NLC Ranger group	10 of 15 groups employ women	13 of 13 groups employ women
All NLC Ranger groups employ Indigenous women in one or more leadership roles (e.g. coordinators, assistant coordinators, or senior Rangers)	4 of 15 groups	4 of 13 groups
All women Rangers have access to the full range of training opportunities	5 of 15 groups	12 of 13 groups
All groups have a dedicated women's vehicle	3 of 15 groups	3 of 13 groups
All groups have an advisory group with 50% female representation	4 of 15 groups	1 of 13 groups

- **Uphold customary governance of youth engagement on country**

NLC Ranger groups work on behalf of the Traditional Owners of the country they care for and recommend that plans and decisions about youth engagement on country be made with its custodians.

- **Recognise and support Rangers' existing youth engagement efforts**

Rather than imposing new tasks on programs, NLC Rangers request that resources and time are allocated towards Traditional Owners-driven youth engagement work they are already undertaking. Youth engagement, therefore, needs to be recognised as a legitimate part of Ranger work, so it can be budgeted for and prioritised in planning.

- **Hold Rangers youth engagement partners accountable to clear terms of reference**

Collaborations with schools and other youth programs have fallen through in the past when participating staff members leave the community or when there are irreconcilable differences in expectations. Asking schools and other organisations to take responsibility for partnerships and commit to them long-term could make these valuable collaborations more sustainable.

- **Ensure children participating in Ranger activities are safe**

NLC Rangers recommend that children participating in Ranger activities are supervised by a responsible adult, such as parent, guardian, teacher, or sport and recreation supervisor, at all times and are transported in a vehicle with adequate safety restraints.

- **Provide mentorship to young Rangers**

When a Ranger faces hardship, it can affect the whole Ranger group. NLC senior Rangers and coordinators report deep concern for their younger colleagues and difficulty assisting them with serious personal issues on top of their already heavy workload. Senior Rangers and coordinators have requested professional assistance in mentoring young Rangers.

In response to these priorities identified by NLC Rangers, the Caring for Country Branch has developed the youth engagement targets detailed in the table below. The branch can achieve these targets through the roles and responsibilities proposed in the Youth Engagement Strategy.

TARGETS FOR 2021	JUNE 2019	2020
All Ranger groups employ custodians to evaluate and prioritise youth engagement activities during work planning	4 of 13 Ranger groups employed custodians to evaluate and prioritise youth engagement activities in the 2018-19 work plans	9 of 13 Ranger groups employ custodians to evaluate and prioritise youth engagement activities during work planning
All Ranger groups have a comprehensive list of youth engagement activities included in their 2020-21 work plans	4 of 13 Ranger groups have a comprehensive list of youth engagement activities included in their 2018-19 work plans	10 of 13 Ranger groups have a comprehensive list of youth engagement activities included in their 2019-20 work plans
All youth engagement partnerships with the NTG or other organisations have formal terms of reference	2 of 10 of partnerships between Ranger groups and NTG or other organisations have formal terms of reference	5 of 10 of partnerships between Ranger groups and NTG or other organisations have formal terms of reference
All Rangers and their coordinators have a valid Ochre Card number on file with NLC	14 of 87 Rangers and their coordinators have a valid Ochre Card number on file with the NLC	65 of 87 Rangers and their coordinators have a valid Ochre Card number on file with the NLC
All Ranger groups are serviced by a professional social worker	No NLC Ranger groups are serviced by a professional social worker	All Ranger groups are serviced by a professional social worker



Elijah checks out the camera trap
Photo by Kathrine Carver



Minjin family at the newly-built outstation at Papangala

Community Planning and Development Branch



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The NLC's Community Planning and Development (CP&D) Program works alongside Aboriginal groups in building their governance and planning capacity to effectively control their own interests and build healthy and resilient communities for future generations.

Over the past year, the CP&D Program has continued to support Traditional Owner groups, in eight locations across the NLC region, self-determine their development using income from their land ownership.

Since starting the program in 2016, groups have set aside nearly \$8 million of their income to development projects. So far, 33 CP&D projects have been planned and are at different stages of delivery. Projects have a strong focus on maintaining culture and language, supporting youth and constructing community infrastructure on Homelands.

To ensure that our work is on track and achieving the aspirations of Traditional Owners, the CP&D Program continually monitors and evaluates its practice to improve the quality of our service delivery when working with groups.

The CP&D Program is a key objective of the NLC, which is to ensure Traditional Owners benefit economically, socially and culturally from secure possession of their lands, seas and intellectual property.

**'I feel happy and strong for
this [project], for the TOs,
this community, and for our
grandchildren'**

Clancy Guthitjpuuy,
Gapuwiyak Traditional Owner.

BACKGROUND

Aboriginal groups have not always had the resources or have been able to effectively use those resources to create positive long-term community outcomes. In recognising this strategic issue, the NLC in 2016 initiated the CP&D Program to support social, economic and community development across its jurisdiction.

In 2019, the CP&D Program achieved its third year of development and is now recognised as a key integrated business unit of the organisation.

The program uses a community development practice, when working with Aboriginal groups, to build their governance and planning capabilities; enable them to define their aspirations, and identify the right projects to fund to meet their local values and needs. In this way Aboriginal people have stronger governance and planning capabilities, feel empowered to create a better future and deliver effective and sustainable projects that secure lasting social, cultural and economic benefits.

PRINCIPLES

The CP&D Program is based on the principles of:

- **Self-determination** – Aboriginal people have the right of self-determination, including to freely pursue their social, cultural and economic development, and to build resilient and independent outstations, communities and regions
- **Participation** – local participation in planning and decision-making through all stages of a project is required for effective Aboriginal development

- **Strengths-based** – Aboriginal people and groups have existing strengths, including culturally appropriate leadership and governance capabilities that provide the footing
- **Equity** – all members of the group benefit from outcomes, especially the most disadvantaged
- **Flexibility** – Aboriginal people need to be supported to design and trial their own solutions. This enables them to learn from the outcomes and make changes as situations develop
- **Long-term engagement** – a NLC commitment and adequate resourcing is required to build relationships among local people and organisations that will develop capacity and achieve outcomes.



'The tree is a symbol. Community knowledge comes from the roots of the tree. CP&D must listen and learn from those roots and follow Traditional Owners' direction. Be digestive rather than directive' – Joy Cardona, Malak Malak Traditional Owner

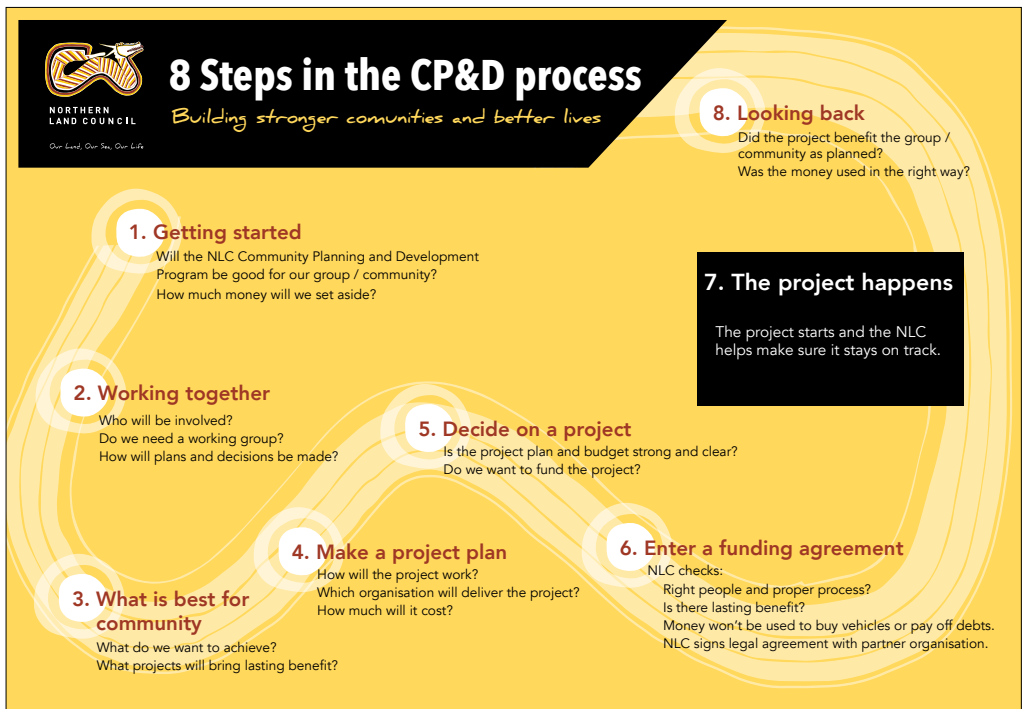
OBJECTIVES

The CP&D Framework 2016-20 guides the development work of the organisation through its CP&D Program. It sets out the four key objectives:

1. **Strengthen** Aboriginal capacity, control and group cohesion through their management of resources that belong to them
2. **Generate** social, cultural and economic outcomes that Aboriginal people want, value and benefit from
3. **Document** through monitoring and evaluating the CP&D work to strengthen the program and to check that it is delivering outcomes valued by Aboriginal people
4. **Share** learnings with government and non-government agencies so they better understand the value and support Aboriginal-led planning and development.

APPROACH

Community development works best when groups of people take action together, based on their ideas of what is important and their knowledge of how to manage local issues in their community. The CP&D Program uses an eight-step process that brings people together to do good planning, make informed decisions about those plans, make them happen through projects, and then review if their projects achieved their values and aspirations and what lessons have been learnt along the way.



OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The CP&D Program is a discrete branch within the NLC's Community and Regional Services Division, which is shared with the Caring for Country and Regional Development branches.

The work of the CP&D Program is delivered through a multidisciplinary team. The CP&D Branch is made up of eight staff, who work closely across the agency to progress delivery of community development within the NLC region.

The branch is structured around its project delivery in the NLC regions. All but one employee is based in NLC's Darwin head

office. A manager provides oversight and strategic direction of the program. Staff provide administration, legal, monitoring and evaluation support to the program. A senior project officer leads a team of two project officers working directly with groups in three of the NLC regions. A specialised senior governance, planning and development officer, who is based in Kununurra, works exclusively with Native Title Holder groups relevant to the delivery of their Aboriginal land use agreement (ILUA) for a project called Project Sea Dragon.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

Over this financial year, the CP&D Branch has continued to work with Aboriginal groups in eight locations across four of the seven NLC regions.

The eight CP&D Program project locations



Figure 26

Traditional Owners have so far set aside \$7,953,277 from their land use agreements income for community development initiatives.

Income is derived from a range of agreements, such as shop and town leases, intertidal fishing access agreements, Native Title ILUA, extraction agreements and funds generated through carbon abatement programs.

The most significant amount of funds set aside for community development are in Wadeye, Legune and Galiwin'ku.

Money set aside for community development in each location shown as a percentage of total income

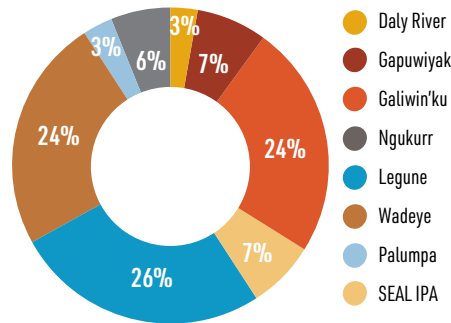


Figure 27

PROJECT DELIVERY

Although COVID-19 impacted the ability of CP&D staff to engage face-to-face with Aboriginal groups and facilitate in-depth planning during 2020, groups working with the CP&D Program have continued to invest a significant proportion of their income to community development projects over the past year.

Of the total \$7,953,277 allocated for community development, Traditional Owners have planned and approved 33 projects totalling more than \$3.1 million. Traditional Owners continue to consistently commit to their group's development with now nearly 40% of the overall funds achieving projects.

Of the funds committed to projects, approximately 75% is equally spread across projects targeting three broad objectives – development of infrastructure on country, language and culture, and sport and recreation. This illustrates the strong value Aboriginal people

are placing on supporting young people, the continuation of culture and connection to country.

Projects to support these aspirations include culture camps for young people, which are led by relevant Aboriginal cultural leaders. These are facilitated on country to support intergenerational learning, language-learning tools and associated professional development.

Of the 33 projects approved by Traditional Owners, 12 are now complete. Where Traditional Owners value the outcomes achieved through these projects, they build on their own early project work. For example, one group has undertaken additional community infrastructure projects to add value to initial projects. Another group has provided approval for the continued funding of these projects to extend the positive impacts these projects have.

Percentage of total income allocated to project objectives

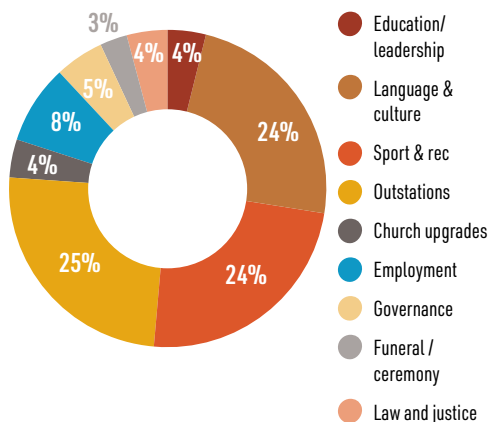


Figure 28

"If we are helping community to develop, we need to see outcomes and changes for our people... Reason why [we do this work] is for our young people."

Galiwin'ku Traditional Owner



DarraDjarrany Traditional Owners on country at Marralum outstation

REGIONAL PROFILES

VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT

The CP&D Program is working with three Native Title Holder groups in developing projects and managing benefits from Project Sea Dragon (PSD). PSD is an ambitious 95-year prawn farming project to be developed at Legune in the far north-west of the region, enabled through an ILUA. CP&D staff support Native Title Holders' engagement in the ILUA Committee, ensuring that they remain fully informed of project status.

While PSD is still in its early stages and pending finance, the ILUA was registered in December 2019 and community benefit projects are proceeding. In 2019, Native Title

Holders completed a substantial upgrade of Marralum outstation, including improved water supply, solar power, sanitation and house improvements.

The Marralum upgrade project has proven to be of great value, as it provided Native Title Holders with a place of retreat during enforced restrictions associated to COVID-19. Although this region is significantly impacted by COVID-19, hard border' restrictions between Western Australia and the Northern Territory, the CP&D Program is continuing to support Native Title Holders in planning other community projects, including an education fund and a bush camp project.

"We are not waiting for government to do things for us - we're getting on with developing our communities ourselves. We have used money from our agreement with Seafarms to build and improve our housing at Marralum so we can live out there when jobs start at the prawn farm or with the NLC's proposed Ranger program."

Marcus Simon, Legune Native Title Holder, NLC media release 9 December 2019



Malak Malak Traditional Owners network with the CLC WETT Committee members at the 2019 Puliima Indigenous Languages and Technology Conference

"We needed to capture the language while the Aunties are still alive, to keep the language and Malak Malak clan strong, and to pass it on to our children"

Malak Malak Traditional
Owner Joy Cardona

DARWIN DALY WAGAIT

The CP&D Program is working with Traditional Owners in three locations in the Darwin Daly Wagait region.

Daly River

The Malak Malak Traditional Owners have allocated a portion of their income from Fishing Value payments for community benefit. Malak Malak support strong governance through regular whole-of-group meetings and a well-established working group focused on project planning.

Traditional Owners have funded six projects. Some are complete and some are still under way. All the projects have a strong focus on preserving language and culture.

Projects completed this financial year include interpretation signage and brochures about Malak Malak country in the Daly River region; a language-learning online mobile phone application; and attendance at the international Puliima Aboriginal Languages and Technology Conference in August 2019, which was held during the international year of Aboriginal Languages.

The group has a continued focus on language and culture with two new projects being planned for the next year.



Malak Malak Traditional Owners attending the 2019 Puliima Indigenous Languages and Technology Conference

Modern technology is key to keeping ancient Malak Malak language alive

The Malak Malak Traditional Owners were the first group to begin working with the CP&D Program in 2016. Over the past four years, they have set aside significant funds from their Fishing Value payments towards projects for community benefit. Their focus has always been on preserving and revitalising language and culture, and hence all their projects follow this thread.

A key achievement for the group in the past 12 months was the completion and launch of the Malak Malak Language Learning app. The aim of this project was to capture and preserve the Malak Malak language in a modern-day format that would be relevant and accessible for generations to come.

With only a few fluent Malak Malak language speakers remaining, the group felt a sense of urgency in developing the app.

They partnered with the Language Conservancy and worked with linguist Dr Dorothea Hoffman to deliver the project.

The Malak Malak Language Learning app contains over 300 Malak Malak words and phrases, and contextual illustrations. It has



Mary Minjin testing the water tank at her newly built outstation at Papangala

22 learning modules and provides translations, both spoken and written, with games to test your knowledge.

The Malak Malak Language Learning app is available on Google Play and App Store.

"This is the first time I've seen our language on websites. I feel really happy, I can listen to it over and over" – Malak Malak Traditional Owner, Matthew Shields; NLC Media Release 30 June 2020

Palumpa

The Minjin Family of the Rak Papangala Traditional Owner group set aside funds from their gravel extraction agreement to work with the CP&D Program. Their focus was to establish an outstation on their traditional lands just east of Palumpa.

"Before we used to spend [our money] on other things that don't last... it's a good thing to have Land Council help" – Rak Papangala Traditional Owner, Wally Minjin

The outstation project was completed in late 2019. In 2020, the group funded a repairs and maintenance project to keep their new house in good order, and to ensure their family can continue to live on their outstation for many years to come.



Minjin family during construction of their outstation at Papangala

Rak Papangala self-fund infrastructure to support cultural wellbeing and regional harmony through living on country

In late 2019, the Minjin Family realised their dream – to live back out on country.

The Minjin Family of the Rak Papangala group first began using the CP&D Program in mid-2018, with a clear goal of establishing an outstation on their traditional land to keep their connection to country and culture strong.

“We want to move to our own country” – Rak Papangala Traditional Owner Wally Minjin

Using income from gravel extraction leases, the group commenced carefully planning the outstation, including an access road, water, power and housing.

Partnering with West Daly Regional Council and Tangentyere Constructions, the outstation was completed in late 2019 and their dream became a reality. The West Daly Regional Council is now funded by Traditional Owners to do their outstation repairs and maintenance work to keep their new residence in good condition.

Today, they are living on country and the new building is providing a place for all the family to come together.

“All my family will stay out here. It will be a good place for many years to come.” – Rak Papangala Traditional Owner Anzac Minjin

Wadeye

The Yak Diminin Traditional Owners for Wadeye Township have made a significant investment from their leasing income to do community development. Their focus is on supporting skill development and employment opportunities, as well as ensuring young people have a solid grounding in culture and education.

Traditional Owners have funded two projects. Their first community development project involves visiting sacred sites and sharing knowledge among their family and younger generations to build a strong cultural foundation.



Local workers doing upgrades to the cemetery at Wadeye.

"We went up to Mimal where that Dreaming pandanus. We went up there and up to where Milky Way Dreaming start, and we went up to another place to see the Honeybee Mother Bee. I haven't been to this place for long time. When my father was alive was a long, long time, maybe I was 15 years old"

Yak Diminin Traditional Owner Geraldine Kolumboort

Their other project included completion, in late 2019, of the first stage of a cemetery work, which is to improve the local cemetery and create better and larger amenities, while also increasing local employment opportunities.

The group plans to continue cemetery improvements to increase local employment opportunities and ensure ancestors are remembered and respected.

EAST ARNHEM

In the East Arnhem region, the CP&D Program is working with Traditional Owner groups in two locations.

Gapuwiyak

In Gapuwiyak, the Marrkula family are working with the CP&D Program, using their income from town lease agreements to focus on creating business and supporting local jobs and employment. In 2019, a first key step toward this aspiration was completed when they established their own corporation the Milintji Development Trust.

To build on this work, the group started to develop a long-term vision for the future of Milintji as the next step toward creating sustainable business opportunities. They also approved the design and printing of their own logo. The group have a clear focus on their governance and to learn, grow and build the capacity of their new Milintji Development Trust.

Gapuwiyak Traditional Owners are working to create their own business opportunities for future generations

The Gapuwiyak Traditional Owners commenced their community development journey in 2017. They have a clear vision for their work – learning and training opportunities, jobs and business.

They funded the establishment of the Milintji Development Trust in late 2018. Milintji has a strong connection to the origin story of Gapuwiyak and the group recognises the importance of laying a strong foundation, which they can grow and benefit socially and economically from the secure use and ownership of their lands.



The Marrkula clan hear an update from Sally Clifford from Matrix about their Governance Support project at their outstation in Burrum.

Part of laying a strong foundation is the funding of the Governance Support project, which is aimed at helping them learn and understand their corporation. The project is delivered through Matrix on Board Consulting, who are supporting the group to build their governance capacity, hold board meetings, develop a strategic plan, discuss and scope business ideas, and grow their vision.

"Milintji is for the next generation. We put our heart, our mind, our vision, our dream for Milintji ... to make Gapuwiyak manymak ['good'], strong for young people and for the future."
– Gapuwiyak Traditional Owne, Margaret Marrkula

Traditional Owners also fund wages for the Painting Crew, who deliver a house painting service in Gapuwiyak. The Painting Crew is an extension of ALPA's CDP program, and aims to develop painting skills while acknowledging the hard work of those involved through paid employment.



Kids at raypirri camp on Murrunga Island



Project partner EARC supporting a Traditional Owner-funded youth diversion program in Galiwin'ku.

Galiwin'ku

In Galiwin'ku, Traditional Owners from numerous clans have been working together through the CP&D Program to apply community benefit funds from their Top and Bottom Shop leases. The group have a strong focus on young people and have funded seven multi-year projects.

Concerned about legal issues, Traditional Owners have developed a strong partnership with the North Australia Aboriginal Justice Agency to support Yolngu going through the justice system, and improve knowledge of the western law system and how it interacts with Yolgnu law.

"We learn both laws and to teach both laws. It is a way for Yolngu law and Australian law knowing each other and learning from each other" – Galiwin'ku Traditional Owner involved in the project

Traditional Owners are also partnering with Yalu Marnggithinyaraw Aboriginal Corporation, to run raypirri (respect and discipline) camps

with children, and the Milingimbi Outstations Progress Association, which provides logistical support for raypirri camps run by Traditional Owners on Murrunga Island.

"We are lifting up the rightful Dreaming. Reminding the kids of the real Mä arra Dreaming, leave it where it is. On the island teaching how to hunt and cut it and eat it. The kids come back very healthy" – Traditional Owner Jonathon Roy regarding raypirri camps on Murrunga Island

To encourage school attendance, Traditional Owners are also co-funding adventure school playground equipment with the local school, Shepherdson College.

In late 2019, the group decided to again partner with the East Arnhem Regional Council and extend another year of funding to support youth diversion, recreation and sport services, which recognises the value and outcomes attached to their community development projects.



Newly-built toilet block at the Ngukurr church.

NGUKURR

In the Ngukurr region, the CP&D Program is working with Traditional Owners in two locations.

Ngukurr Township

The Milwarapara-Yutpundji Traditional Owners, whose income is derived from rent from a range of s19 leases, are very "town-proud" and are focused on the development of community infrastructure in the Ngukurr Township.

They have completed construction of a toilet block at their local church, and in late 2019 allocated significant funding to upgrade the football oval with the installation of a perimeter fence, seating and shade structures.

"We did the planning and it's happening. The toilet project is good, we're happy with the project" – Milwarapara-Yutpundji Traditional Owner

The CP&D Program is supporting the group to plan and undertake an upgrade of the amenities at the local airstrip to create a more welcoming environment to their visitors.



Fishing and meeting shelter at Numbulwar

South East Arnhem Land Indigenous Protected Area (SEAL IPA)

Traditional Owner groups spread over an area encompassing six distinct languages derive income from their fire abatement work carried out by the Ngukurr and Numbulwar Ranger groups within the South East Arnhem Land Indigenous Protected Area (SEAL IPA). Their focus is on enhancing cultural knowledge and developing the skills and capacity of their countrymen.

To realise these aspirations, Traditional Owners have run a successful culture camp in conjunction with the NLC Caring for Country Branch and have developed a project to train young people in governance, communication, running planning meetings, and project planning.

"We wanted to pass our traditional knowledge to young ones there, we don't want them to lose that cultural connection with the land" – Traditional Owner and Yugul Mangi assistant Ranger coordinator Winston Thompson

In 2019, the approved a project to undertake regular on-country visits for their elders to enhance their wellbeing and facilitate the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge.

The group is now planning the development of a cultural awareness program for visitors, linked to the permit system, to promote harmony and understanding.



Mary and Wendy Simon review monitoring and evaluation materials

LOOKING BACK

Looking back helps the NLC keep on track and keep heading towards goals set by Traditional Owners. Looking back is also a way to monitor progress and celebrate achievements.

The NLC is trialling new approaches to monitoring as part of the CP&D Monitoring and Evaluation System (MES) project. These trials will help Traditional Owners and the CP&D Program work out the best way to measure the success and value of community development projects.

The main purpose of the MES project is to provide accountability to Aboriginal people. Accountability includes evaluation of CP&D Program processes, outputs and outcomes. Aboriginal people will judge the worth of projects and the benefits they get through community development.

At Legune, Native Title Holders have been working with researchers from La Trobe University to discuss how to monitor wellbeing within their clan. The group has already done

extensive planning and created a “strong lives and futures” framework for community development that strongly aligns to their understanding of wellbeing. They are now getting ready to fill in the Mayi Kuwayu survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing. Though COVID-19 restrictions have delayed the start of the survey, Native Title Holders are looking forward to taking stock of health and wellbeing across their clan. Information collected will help Native Title Holders make strong decisions about their future community development aspirations.

Traditional Owners in Galiwin'ku and Gapuwiyak are working with Ground-Up researchers from the Charles Darwin University's Northern Institute to create a process for monitoring and evaluating their community development projects. Nyomba Gandaŋu, a community-based researcher in Galiwin'ku, describes monitoring as a practice that Yolŋu are always engaged in as part of their everyday collective life.



Gabriella Mollinjin reading project materials at Wadeye

As part of the MES project, Nyomba enrolled in a Diploma of Aboriginal Research and presented her research at the Central Australian Community of Practice Forum in Alice Springs on 1-3 October 2019 and at the Sydney ChangeFest on 19-23 November 2019.

Emmanuel Yunupingu, a young member of the Traditional Owner group at Gapuwiyak, is now an accredited Aboriginal Community-Based Researcher at Charles Darwin University. Emmanuel received on-the-job research training in ethics processes, such as plain language statements and consent forms, and has successfully facilitated interviews in English and Yolŋu Matha.

Because of his status as a young and highly bicultural member of the Gapuwiyak Traditional Owner family group, Emmanuel has flourished in the role of a community-based researcher working on the monitoring project. He has been keen to undertake the research so as to help his family participate in the monitoring process.

"I'm looking at monitoring is the way that 'How we monitor our environment, in ceremony, in workplaces, in family and also in the community'. That's how I understand for monitoring, like in three ways like safety, learning and education, and wellbeing"

Galiwin'ku Traditional Owner and community-based researcher Nyomba Gandaŋu

"I got this research job because I need to help my family, Gupapuyŋu clan, Liya-lanmirri. Working with them, it is really important to stay focused and on track, letting them know what the research is all about" – Gapuwiyak Traditional Owner Emmanuel Yunupingu

Year one of the MES project is now complete. The MES Working Group will continue to review the progress of the project and suggest changes or improvements for year two of its implementation. The MES project will continue until 2022.

LOOKING FORWARD

The growth of the CP&D Program since its inception has predominantly been through groups already using the program and that have continued to put more money aside and plan and deliver more projects. Though COVID-19 impacted progress of project delivery for most of the first half of 2020, the investment of land use income toward development projects presents a commitment by groups using the CP&D Program. A key challenge going forward is growing the reach across the NLC region and engaging with more groups in using the CP&D Program.

The primary goal of the CP&D Program over the next five years is to increase the number

of Aboriginal groups planning and delivering projects using their own resources and realising their future aspirations. To achieve this objective, NLC engaged Social Ventures Australia Consulting in April 2020 to develop a five-year strategic plan. The strategic planning process is considering capacity issues, gaps, challenges and opportunities within the program and across the NLC region.

The strategic plan will be delivered later in 2020. It will provide NLC with a comprehensive internal tool to measure progress on growing the reach and impact of the CP&D Program to 2025.

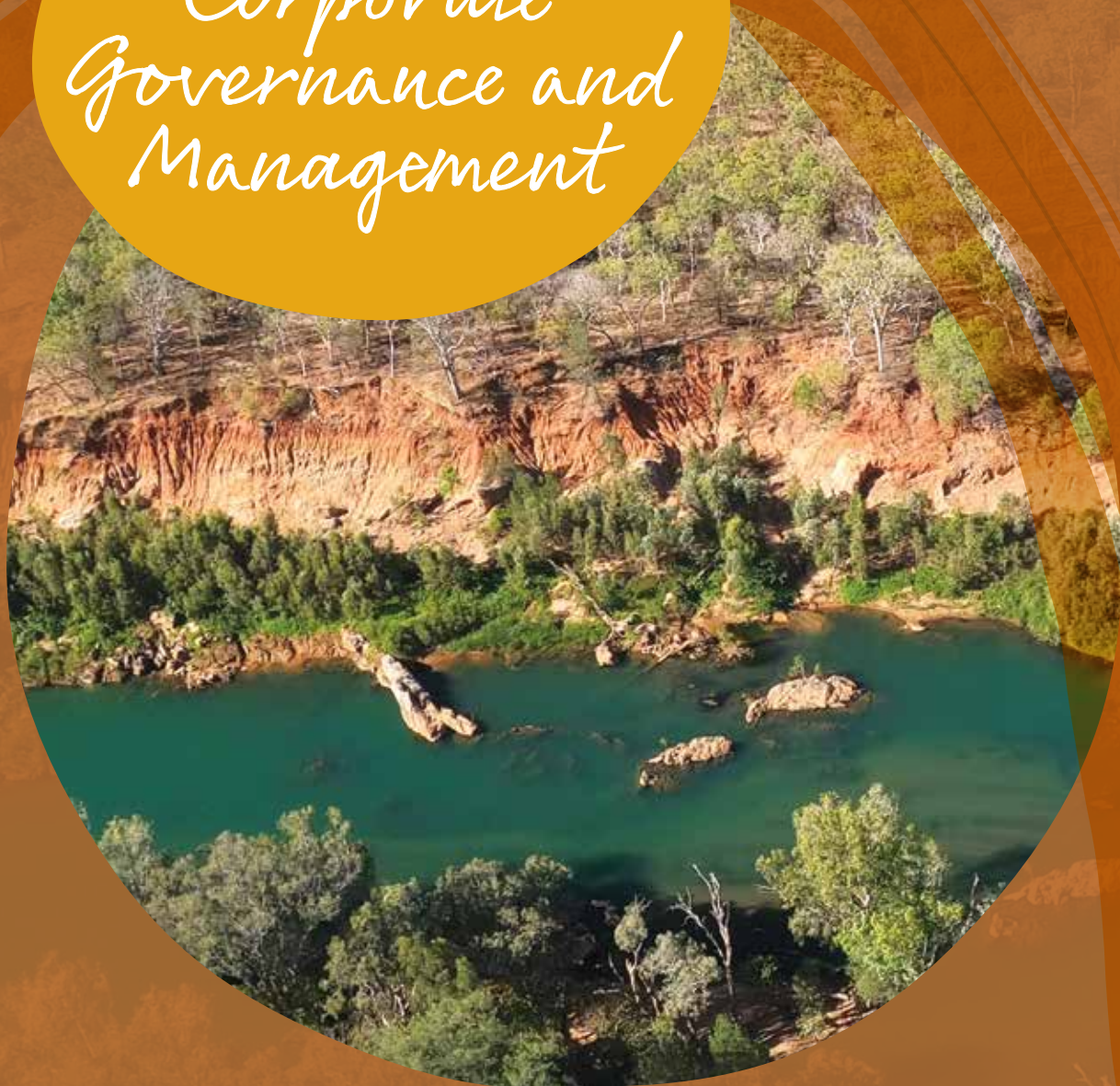


Walking to Papangala outstation after the Wet



PART 3

*Corporate
Governance and
Management*



Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life



4WD training at Lewin - Photo by Kathrine Carver

STRATEGIC THINKING

The enabling legislation of the NLC is the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. The responsible Minister for the 2019-20 reporting period is the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, the Minister for Indigenous Australians.

The Minister gave no directions to the NLC during the reporting year.

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

- Strategic Plan – a four-year overview of our vision, goals, values and objectives
- Corporate Plan – a four-year plan of our high-level initiatives to achieve our strategic goals and objectives

- Business Plans – annual plans that outline 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

CORPORATE PLAN 2019-20 TO 2023-24

The Corporate Plan 2019-23 presents the NLC's goals and objectives for the next four years, based on the organisation's legislative responsibilities (under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the *Native Title Act 1993*), and our identified Vision.

Our goals and objectives are translated into actions across the internal operational areas within the NLC, along with details on how these activities will be delivered and measured.

The seven priorities espoused in the Corporate Plan are:

1. Acquire, protect and manage traditional lands and waters within the NLC's region in accordance with the NLC's statutory functions
2. Facilitate Community Development so as to protect and develop Aboriginal use of land and seas and secure broad and lasting community benefits
3. Maintain and continue to strengthen Ranger groups on country to further protect and maintain Aboriginal land and seas
4. Facilitate arrangements to provide a more responsive and efficient Permit Management System to organise, manage and document licensed access to traditional lands and waters

5. Introduce improved processes to manage land use agreements and disbursement arrangements and lift internal capability by tracking activity through one consolidated system
6. Develop and maintain a comprehensive communications system to facilitate the provision of information to, and advocacy of, Traditional Owners' interests
7. Continuous improvement of the NLC's Policies and Procedures systems for more efficiency and best practice governance.

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 – one that is focused and committed to achieving our strategic objectives over the next four years.

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

STRATEGIC PLAN

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-20

The NLC 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.

The Strategic Plan covers the period 2016-20 and is informed by legislative responsibilities, strategic directions, and views expressed by the Full Council membership and the NLC administration about our goals and strategies.

The purpose of the Strategic Plan to:

- serve as a document that sets out medium-term, high-level, strategic directions for the Full Council, Executive Council and Regional Councils and the Chief Executive Officer
- 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
- provide a communication tool to inform governments, stakeholders and the general public on the strategic direction of the NLC over the next four years and recognition of achievements.

The NLC is fully committed to the successful delivery of 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.

EXEMPTIONS GRANTED BY FINANCE MINISTER

No exemptions were granted by the Finance Minister in regard to reporting requirements in 2019-20.

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.

RELATED ENTITY TRANSACTIONS

The NLC has developed a system of delegated powers that enables decisions to be made on a range of transactions at the appropriate organisational level. The NLC's Full, Executive and Regional Councils are all required to comply with internal and externally-mandated decision-making processes for managing related party transactions and broader conflicts of interest for NLC members, particularly NLC Executive Council Members, to which delegations for a range of purposes have been made by the NLC Full Council.

The NLC's Conflict of Interest Policy (NLC 006) establishes an organisation-wide policy on the management of conflicts of interest and sets out the decision-making processes for NLC staff and Council Members. Further, the NLC's Code of Conduct (NLC 051) sets out comprehensive rules for the management of a range of responsibilities and obligations for staff and Council Members. Note 14 to the financial statements sets out the NLC's related party disclosures for 2019-20.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

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

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

During 2019-20 the ICT continue to focus on modernising the ICT environment and improving the existing system to support the Council workforce.

We've invested significantly in 2019 in a new, state of the art datacentre hardware, meaning that we can meet the increasing demand and enabling disaster recovery and business continuity.

As we expand our offices, the ICT has been extending the network services to every remote office and ranger sites, enabling the ranger stations to connect to the NLC network and accessing shared resources from a very remote location.

During COVID-19 pandemic ICT team ensured that NLC staff have all the supporting ICT systems and services enabling them delivery of a secure, flexible and customisable remote access that align with their expectations. NLC purchased and deployed 76 new laptops and 103 new Wi-Fi modems, configured and made them available for staff use.

FLEET AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

The NLC currently maintains a fleet of 141 vehicles currently (50% Pool & 50% Ranger) including a range of four wheel drives (4WD), sedans, trailers and buses to suit NT remote harsh conditions. The Ranger program requires specialised 4WD vehicles, trailers and ATV's (All-Terrain Vehicle) and also surveyed boats. The entire fleet is licensed and maintained to roadworthy and safe standards. The fleet is

funded from several sources including ABA, native title and grant funding. All 4WD fleet vehicles are accessory fitted out to operate in harsh NT environments. A comprehensive review of the motor vehicle fleet has been completed; the outcomes has secured funding for new vehicles to replace older end of operational usage vehicles. During the 2019-20 period, the whole NLC fleet vehicles have travelled approximately 2,261,572 kms throughout on supporting all regions.

The NLC also continuously manages and maintains, to required standards, various

properties consisting from Offices, Ranger Bases & Residential Properties throughout the NLC Regions on ongoing basis.

CONSULTANTS EXPENDITURE

During the reporting period, the NLC engaged consultants to do work in relation to the Council's functions and exercise of powers under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, and as required under s.37(8) and under *Native Title Act 1993*.

CONSULTANTS EXPENDITURE GREATER THAN \$25,000	TOTAL
Centrefarm/Topendfarm	609,000.00
Glacken, Sturt (A J Dever Pty Ltd)	266,266.23
Midena Lawyers	182,619.68
List G Barristers	159,561.78
Susan Jane O'Sullivan	156,551.66
MRAG Asia Pacific Pty Ltd	135,600.00
KPMG	116,522.03
Camatta Lempens Pty Ltd Lawyers	111,116.18
Maria Siskamanis - Lawyer	103,079.55
Ron Levy	100,259.61
NAILSMA Ltd	100,000.00
David S Trigger and Associates	93,450.00
Robert Blowes	89,000.00
Stephen Wright	88,305.00
Robwel Pty Ltd T/A Robert Welfare Barristers And Solicitors	83,912.23
Fogarty & Associates Pty Ltd	81,818.18
Cobey I Taggart	78,187.56
Charles Darwin University	69,579.36
Ganesha IT Consulting	62,962.51
Culture and Heritage	59,400.00

CONSULTANTS EXPENDITURE GREATER THAN \$25,000	TOTAL
La Trobe University	55,875.01
Jitendra Kumarage	55,200.00
Howells List Barristers Pty Ltd	50,911.81
Craig Elliott	50,400.00
Cardno (NT) Pty Ltd	47,532.75
Bowden McComack	45,713.51
Environmental and Cultural Services	45,100.00
Angus Frith	44,100.00
Dulfer-Hyams, Melanie Elwyn	43,850.00
GHD Pty Ltd	43,142.07
Chris Brown Consultancy	40,700.00
Anthropos Consulting	39,345.46
Social Ventures Australia	38,065.00
Gareth David James Lewis	34,754.04
Dodson Bauman & Associates Pty Ltd	33,050.00
A L Mcavoy	32,500.00
Chin Property Group Pty Ltd	32,177.27
Comhar Group Pty Limited	28,368.00
Nic Gambold	28,365.50
Mick Reynolds	28,326.66
GHD	27,219.49
Justin Edwards	25,875.00
Total	3,617,763.13

OUTCOME

Under the ALRA, income of \$54,192,000 was generated from Aboriginal land during 2019-20.

Distributions have been made as per instructions from Traditional Owners in accordance with traditional decision-making processes. Individual royalty payments were made to 6829 during the course of the financial year, totalling \$52,907,000.

DISTRIBUTION OF ROYALTIES

The NLC manages the receipt and disbursement of royalty monies to Aboriginal people.

The NLC maintains a royalty trust account that receives monies on behalf of individuals and associations of Aboriginal people and disperses them in accordance with section 35(2), (3) & (4) of the ALRA. The NLC makes distributions of rents, payments and royalties payable to Traditional Owners and royalty receiving associations.

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.

ADMINISTERING ABORIGINAL LAND TRUSTS

The NLC assists Aboriginal land trusts to act in accordance with the ALRA. Land trusts are statutory bodies corporate that hold title to Aboriginal land under the ALRA 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 terms. 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.

MEDIATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The NLC supports Traditional Owners and attempts to conciliate disputes. With its abundant natural resources, the Top End of the Northern Territory has always supported a large Traditional Owner population. Demand for coastal land and sea access, farming development, mineral and petroleum resources, 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, of the dispute. The NLC also has statutory responsibility for the identification of the traditional owners of Aboriginal land.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The principles of ecologically sustainable development are considered in the objectives of the 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. This includes the precautionary principle and monitoring and compliance of environmental impacts on natural and cultural resources of exploration and mining.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

The NLC's Communications and Media Unit is part of the Executive Branch. The team helped to represent the organisation at various events during the first half of the 2019-20 financial year, including the 2019 NAIDOC celebrations and the 30th anniversary of the official handback of Nitmiluk to Jawoyn people.

The global outbreak of COVID-19 had a major impact on the planned activities of the unit. Major events, including the Garma and Barunga 2020 festivals - where NLC usually has a public awareness and education display booth - were cancelled.

Early in 2020, the NLC's Communications and Media team reacted swiftly to the COVID-19 outbreak, developing and distributing a raft of vital information to boost health literacy in the NLC's region. The team produced and disseminated a suite of information, including COVID-19 health posters, 18 videos in Aboriginal languages, information sheets on access to Aboriginal communities in the NLC's region, as well as a proactive social media campaign.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

The NLC produces a range of information and educational resources, including *Land Rights News – Northern Edition*, which has been redesigned and has grown from a 24-page to a 32-page publication.

Land Rights News – Northern Edition, first published in 1973, is Australia's oldest Aboriginal newspaper. It's distributed free to Aboriginal communities and organisations in the NLC region, as well as being sent to 1000 print subscribers and 1000 digital subscribers throughout Australia.

NEWS MEDIA AND COPYRIGHT ASSISTANCE

The Communications and Media Unit facilitates and responds to requests from media organisations in Australia and internationally on a daily basis. The team liaises with media and provides news organisations with appropriate responses to a range of inquiries.

A large number of media releases are issued each year and the team coordinates media conferences when required. In addition, the unit maintains an internal media monitoring service and responds to frequent copyright permission requests from book publishers and documentary producers.

The team also oversees the issue of permits for filmmakers and journalists to enter Aboriginal land. Permission to film landscapes and interview Aboriginal community members is considered by Traditional Owners and, where these engagements are commercial in nature, a special agreement is negotiated.

ADVERTISING AND MARKET RESEARCH

The NLC advertised during normal recruitment campaigns and placed public notices relating to changes of NLC permit rules and requirements due to the threat of COVID-19. No market research, polling or direct mail activities were undertaken.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND ETHICS

In accordance with section 16 of the PGPA Act the NLC manages maintains an appropriate system of risk oversight and management This includes the NLC's risk management plan, risk framework, risk policy and risk register.

In May 2020 the NLC created the Governance, Compliance and Risk unit to strengthen and embed risk management practices, minimise

risks and their impacts on the organisations strategic objectives.

The Risk and Audit Committee plays an important oversight role in monitoring financial risk, compliance and financial performance in conjunction with the Leadership Group.

The Committee Charter sets out the role and purpose of the Risk and Audit Committee, which also acts as an advisory body on operational and financial management controls and reporting responsibilities, oversees internal and external audit functions, and provides independent and objective assurance that the NLC's systems, processes and risk management strategies are robust and comply with acceptable standards and government requirements.

During 2019-20, the Audit Committee was independently chaired by Aswin Kumar, and attended by two independent members and two Council Members.

The Chief Financial Officer 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 Members Handbook outline 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, council members receive an induction and copy of the Members' Handbook, as well as a clear understanding of appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

COMMITTEES

AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Northern Land Council established an Audit Committee (the Committee), in compliance with Section 45 of the PGPA Act and under *PGPA Rule* section 17 (1) the Accountable Authority of the NLC has determined the charter of the Audit Committee.

The Committee provides independent advice and assistance to the Council.

The Audit Committee Charter sets out the committee’s role, authority, responsibilities, composition and tenure, reporting, and administrative arrangements.

The Charter can be found on the NLC website at www.nlc.org.au.

NLC AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY 2019 TO 30 JUNE 2020

MEMBER NAME	QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE (INCLUDE FORMAL AND INFORMAL AS RELEVANT)	NUMBER OF MEETINGS ATTENDED / TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS	TOTAL ANNUAL REMUNERATION
Aswin Kumar (Chair)	CA, CIA, CISA	5 / 5	\$3,768
Bala Donepudi	CPA	5 / 5	\$2,480
Linda Fletcher (resigned 04 Dec 2019)	Council Member	0 / 3	\$0
Nigel James Browne	LLB, MAICD	3 / 5	\$1,488
Richard Dixon (appointed on 04 Dec 2019)	Council Member	2 / 2	\$921
Wayne Wauchope	Council Member	5 / 5	\$1,677

ABORIGINALS BENEFIT ACCOUNT (ABA) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) is legislated under Part VI of the ALRA and is a special account for the purposes of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (the PGPA Act).

The ABA receives and distributes monies generated from mining on Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory. Payments into the ABA are based on royalty equivalents which are determined by the estimated value of the statutory royalty payments. The ABA is public money.

The Minister for Indigenous Affairs allocates funds from the ABA to the four Northern Territory Land Councils (Northern Land Council, Central Land Council, Anindilyakwa Land Council and Tiwi Land Council) for operational purposes and to the Office of Township Leasing to cover the administration costs and upfront payments associated with township leases. The Minister also approves grants for the benefit of Aboriginal people living in the NT, taking into consideration the advice provided by the ABA Advisory Committee. Funds from the ABA are also distributed to Royalty Associations in areas affected by mining.

The following members who represents the NLC for the reporting period.

ABORIGINALS BENEFIT ACCOUNT (ABA) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEMBER NAME	REGION	MEMBERSHIP STATUS
Samuel Bush-Blanas	Katherine	Nov 2016 - Current
John Christophersen	West Arnhem	Dec 2019 - Current
David Harvey	Borroloola / Barkly	Dec 2019 - Current
Lorraine Jones	Victoria River District	Dec 2019 - Current
Graham Kenyon	Darwin / Daly / Wagait	Dec 2019 - Current
Peter Lansen	Ngukurr	Dec 2019 - Current
Lisa Mumbin	Katherine	Nov 2016 - Current
Yananymul Munungurr	East Arnhem	Nov 2016 - Current
Bunug Galaminda	West Arnhem	Nov 2016 - Dec 2019
Phillip Goodman	Darwin Daly Wagait	Nov 2016 - Dec 2019
Christopher Neade	Borroloola/Barkly	Nov 2016 - Dec 2019
Virginia Nundhirribala	Ngukurr	Nov 2016 - Dec 2019
Shadrack Retchford	Victoria River District	Nov 2016 - Dec 2019

WOMEN'S SUBCOMMITTEE

Note: The co-opted women positions for 2019-22 will be confirmed at regional council meetings deferred due to COVID-19.

MEMBER NAME	REGION	MEMBERSHIP STATUS
Margaret Daiyi	Darwin / Daly / Wagait	Current
Grace Daniels	Ngukurr	Current
June Fejo	West Arnhem	Current
Christine Jenner	Darwin / Daly / Wagait	Current
Lorraine Jones	Victoria River District	Current
Sheila Hall Joshua	Ngukurr	Current
Helen Lee	Katherine	Current
Samantha Lindsay	Katherine	Current
Lisa Mumbin	Katherine	Current
Virginia Nundhirribala	Ngukurr	Current
Joy Priest	Borrooloola / Barkly	Current
Maxine Wallace	Borrooloola / Barkly	Current
Vacant	Co-opted women	
Vacant	Co-opted women	
Vacant	Co-opted women	
Vacant	Co-opted women	
Vacant	Co-opted women	

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY (WHS) COMMITTEE

The WHS has ten members including the WHS Advisor and the WHS Officer who are seconded to the committee as part of their job requirements. The committee meets regularly and is active. The committee acts on behalf of all workers and deals with WHS issues of concern to workers, assists with the introduction of WHS policies and procedures and provides advice to both the CEO and branch managers on WHS issues raised by workers. The focus of the committee is to improve the safety standards of all workers and to ensure compliance with legislation and the regulator.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	POSITION	MEMBERSHIP STATUS
Ian Amy	WHS Advisor	Current
Kylie Burn	Regional Project Officer	Current
Tamara Cole	Legal Practice Manager – Native Title	Current
Perri Fletcher	Senior Administration Officer Regional Development - Southern	Current
Greg McDonald (Chair)	Manager - Mineral & Energy	Current
Hidayat Nurslanis	CFC Work Health & Safety Officer	Current
Andrew Thomas	Facilities Officer	Current
Adam Thompson	SPO, West Arnhem & Katherine Regions	Current
Jeffrey Yoelu	Regional Development Project Coordinator	Current
Don Couzens		Resigned
Kathryn Laferla		Resigned
Danielle Eveleigh		Resigned

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES (HSR'S)	POSITIONS	MEMBERSHIP STATUS
Steven Brown	Kenbi Ranger Coordinator	Current
Alexander Hanson	Research Assistant LIR	Current
Andrea Havlicova	Senior Contracts Administrator	Current
Adam Thompson	SPO, West Arnhem & Katherine Regions	Current
Don Couzens		Resigned during the year

REMUNERATION

The NLC remunerates employees either in accordance with the Northern Land Council Enterprise Agreement 2018 (the Agreement) or via negotiated common law contracts. Common law contracts are set in consultation with the Remuneration Committee to ensure fairness and parity.

Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)

In accordance with the Enterprise Agreement the JCC was formed in 2019. This is a forum to consult with nominated employee representatives on the implementation of the Enterprise Agreement and associated workplace policies and procedures.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	POSITIONS	MEMBERSHIP STATUS
Hamid Ali	Management Accountant	Current
Billy Anutara Angul	Manager ICT	Current
Craig Bonney	Regional Manager Nhulunbuy	Current
May Bury	Remote Housing Engagement Officer	Current
Jason Chin	General Manager People Services	Current
Tamara Cole	Legal Practice Manager – Native Title	Current
Melanie Espuis	People & Culture Manager, People Services	Current
Emma King	Senior Regional Anthropologist Nhulunbuy	Current
Leah McLennan	Media and Communications Officer	Current
Hidayat Nurslanis	CFC Work Health & Safety Officer	Current
Fiona Peek	CFC Branch Manager	Current
Dannielle Taylor	Human Services Administrator Officer	Current
Linda Couzens		Resigned during the reporting period
Danielle Eveleigh		Resigned during the reporting period

Remuneration Committee

The Committee is responsible for ensuring pay rates and allowances paid under the prevailing Enterprise Agreement are correct and meet pay rate minimums as set in the Australian Local Government Industry Award 2016. The committee is also responsible for assessing and making recommendations to the CEO on Common Law Contract remuneration packages which are fair and appropriately set as compared with the market and other relativities.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	POSITIONS	MEMBERSHIP STATUS
Jason Chin	General Manager People Services	Current
Irfan Bhat	General Manager Financial Services	Current
Melanie Espuis	People & Culture Manager, People Services	Current

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The NLC Human Resource (HR) team has continued to deliver a range of core HR services to the organisation. Of particular note, the team supported an initial restructure, which introduced a new tier of General Manager Leadership and some reorganisation of Branch reporting lines. This has enabled enhanced business decision making and a more efficient management and Branch structure.

In March 2020 the teams focus was required to immediately change to support the NLC, its staff and our broader community's response to COVID-19.

HUMAN RESOURCE CAPABILITY

The NLC continues to be a diverse organisation attracting a wide range of qualified personnel across multiple industries and disciplines including:

- Land and Law
- Financial Services
- Community and Regional Services
- People Services.

The NLC has grown within the 2019-20 year with the permanent workforce increasing by approximately 10% from 253 to 280 full time equivalent employees. Key growth areas include new positions in Governance, Risk and Compliance, Learning on Country, Learning and Development, Mining and additional logistical positions across Branches.

The NLC also employs many casual employees and Aboriginal consultants across our regions to assist staff to meet workload requirements. Casual employees continue to be engaged to meet critical demand during the dry season and to support flexible work commitments.

The NLC remains strongly committed to providing employment and opportunities for Aboriginal people through employment pathways and via traineeships and work experience programs. A review of the NLC recruitment process has commenced with a view to ensuring it aligns with best practice models and sets up Indigenous candidates for success in a culturally safe and appropriate manner.

Employee status (full-time or part-time) 2019-2020

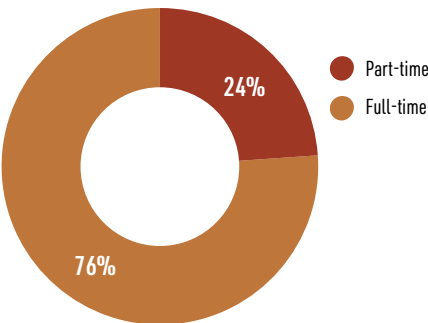


Figure 29

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

As part of the recent organisational restructure, the NLC has established a Learning and Development (L&D) unit within the People Services Branch. While only recently staffed it is envisioned that this unit will enhance and grow workforce capability through streamlined and focused learning solutions.

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION

Key employee analytics are as at 30 June 2020.

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION - BY CLASSIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION LEVEL	NO OF FT/PT EMPLOYEES
AS01	60
AS02	10
AS03	10
AS04	18
AS05	26
AS06	22
Legal Stream	16
Professional Officer	26
Senior Professional Officer	17
Senior Officer	53
Management (EL)	17
Leadership (SES)	5
Total	280

WORKFORCE COMPOSITION - BY LOCATION

LOCATION	NO OF FT/PT EMPLOYEES
Darwin	162
Belyuen	6
Borroloola	13
Bulgul	7
Croker Island	7
Daly River	7
Galiwin'ku	1
Goulburn Island	7
Jabiru	7
Katherine	13
Kununurra	1
Maningrida	1
Ngukurr	11
Nhulunbuy	5
Numbulwar	9
Pine Creek	8
Tennant Creek	2
Timber Creek	8
Wudicupildiyerr	5
TOTAL	280

TURNOVER AND RETENTION

The NLC’s total turnover was above the average national turnover rate at 20%. However, when involuntary turnover is removed, this falls below the national average and is a reflection of Northern Territory trends.

REASON FOR END OF EMPLOYMENT	NO OF EMPLOYEES	TURNOVER %
Retirement	0	0%
Death	0	0%
Redundancy	0	0%
Other	7	20%
End of Contract	12	22%
Resignation	32	58%
Total Turnover	55	20%

The NLC continues to have a significant group of long serving employees, with 14% having over 10 years of service.

TENURE (YEARS)	NO OF EMPLOYEES	% OF EMPLOYEES
Up to 3	142	51%
Over 3 up to 5	56	20%
Over 5 up to 10	42	15%
Over 10 up to 20 years	34	12%
Over 20 years	6	2%

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment

The NLC consistently maintains Indigenous employee representation of more than 50%. As at 30 June 2020, 52% of full-time and part-time identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

NLC employees ATSI 2019-20

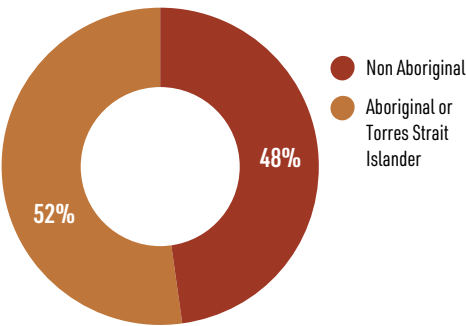


Figure 30

ATSI employees by classification 2019-20

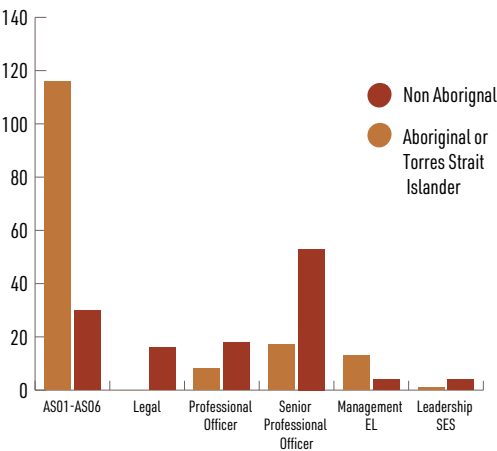


Figure 31

GENDER

The NLC has almost achieved gender balance across the organisation. There has been a notable increase in female representation at the middle and senior management levels.

NLC employees - gender diversity 2019-20

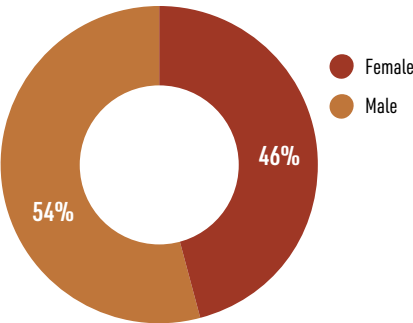


Figure 32

NLC employees gender diversity by classification 2020

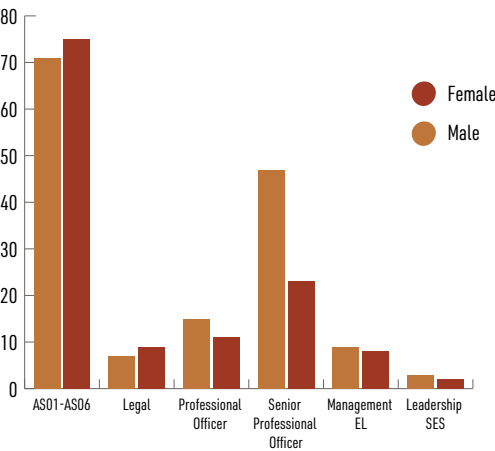


Figure 33

GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY

The NLC has a balanced distribution of generational representation. The NLC is actively working with a range of stakeholders to attract younger people to work at the NLC. The Caring for Country – Learning on Country (LOC) program in conjunction with the L&D team will continue to work towards developing programs and career pathways for Aboriginal youth.

NLC employees - age of workforce 2019-20

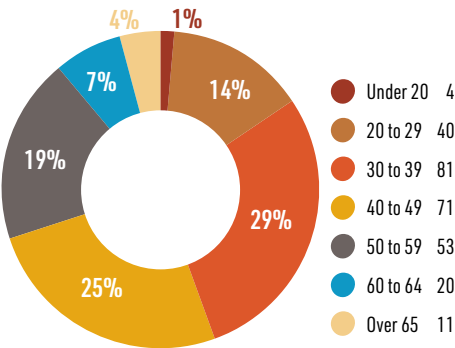


Figure 34

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

New initiatives

The NLC has established the Governance, Compliance and Risk team to enhance risk management and WHS compliance.

The NLC had a solid COVID-19 plan in place during the pandemic to protect NLC remote communities. This plan is still partly in place. Employees mainly worked from home for a period of some weeks at the height of the pandemic. NLC still has COVID-19 restrictions in place and continues to monitor the situation. No NLC workers tested positive for the virus.

Mental health is now an important focus for NLC and new programs are being set in place to better deal with the issue.

WHS activities

The WHS Committee continues to meet every three months and operates effectively;

All NLC facilities were inspected during the year to monitor compliance with WHS requirements;

Test & Tag of all electrical appliances is ongoing;

Development, review and updating of WHS policies, procedures and work practices continue;

WHS officers continue to attend industry seminars, conferences and training programs to increase skill base and to network with other agencies;

WHS officers maintain close links with regulators and other WHS organisations to ensure best practice. There were no breaches of legislation during the reporting period.

Outcomes

NLC continued to experience low injury rates and minimal work days lost because of injuries. There was one notifiable incident relating to injuries or near misses and no injuries requiring hospital admissions.

- Reported minor injuries that did not require time off work: nine (9)
- Reported injuries resulting in lost work days: three (3)
- Total days lost due to injury: nineteen (19).

There were three new workers' compensation applications during the year two were minor and one is ongoing and yet to be resolved. All were accepted by Comcare.

Worker welfare

NLC provides access to an employee assistance program for confidential counselling and mediation. This service is available to all workers who feel they need support. The service provided assistance to 65 workers with 164 counselling sessions. This represents a slight increase in clients seeking assistance but a large increase in the number of sessions required. The main presenting issues were for personal reasons. The rise in consultations was highest during the three months of the COVID-19 restrictions.

Notices under Part 10 of the Work Health Safety Act 2011

There were no investigations conducted or notices issued by the Regulator.

Notifiable incidents

There was one notifiable incident during the reporting period.

Trends

There were no identifiable trends reported. Vehicle incidents are the main source of workplace incident reports; however no serious injuries were reported.

Remuneration

The NLC remunerates management level staff under negotiated common law contracts and all other staff under the provisions of the NLC EA 2018. Management remuneration levels are set in consultation with the Remuneration Committee to ensure fairness and reasonable parity in relation to the enterprise agreement pay scale and management level (EL or SES equivalent).

INFORMATION ABOUT REMUNERATION FOR KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

Except for the CEO, whose remuneration is covered in the below noted information. The positions of the NLC Chairman and Executive Council Members are all remunerated in accordance with the Remuneration Tribunal – Full-Time Office Holder and Part Time Office Holders (determination)

- The Remuneration Tribunal – Full-Time Office Holder (determination) is applicable to the NLC Chairperson's position
- <https://www.remtribunal.gov.au/offices/full-time-offices>
- The Remuneration Tribunal – Part Time Office Holders (determination) is applicable to the NLC Executive Council positions and Council members – known as the elected arm of the NLC
- <https://www.remtribunal.gov.au/offices/part-time-offices>.

During the reporting period ended 30 June 2020, Northern Land Council had 16 executives who met the definition of key management personnel.

NAME	POSITION TITLE	SHORT-TERM BENEFITS			POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS	OTHER LONG-TERM BENEFITS		TERMINATION BENEFITS	TOTAL REMUNERATION
		BASE SALARY	BONUSES	OTHER BENEFITS AND ALLOWANCES		LONG SERVICE LEAVE	OTHER LONG-TERM BENEFITS		
Marion Scrymgour	Chief Executive Officer - NLC	350,240	-	29,093	38,428	7,385	-	-	425,146
Samuel Bush Blanas	Chairperson	232,338	-	13,664	18,767	-	-	-	264,769
Matthew Ryan	Executive Member	9,188	-	-	1,117	-	-	-	10,305
John Christophersen	Executive Member	16,525	-	-	2,066	-	-	-	18,591
Richard Dixon	Executive Member	10,230	-	-	1,208	-	-	-	11,438
Elizabeth Sullivan	Executive Member	8,855	-	-	1,075	-	-	-	9,930
Helen Lee	Executive Member	14,927	-	-	1,834	-	-	-	16,761
Peter Larsen	Executive Member	8,682	-	-	1,054	-	-	-	9,736
Raymond Hector	Executive Member	8,682	-	-	1,054	-	-	-	9,736
Ronald Lami Lami	Executive Member	4,301	-	-	538	-	-	-	4,839
Bill Danks	Executive Member	9,673	-	-	1,209	-	-	-	10,882
Djava Yunupingu	Executive Member	10,120	-	-	1,233	-	-	-	11,353
Brian Pedwell	Executive Member	9,753	-	-	1,200	-	-	-	10,953
Chris Nead	Executive Member	19,738	-	-	2,448	-	-	-	22,186
Grace Riley Daniels	Executive Member	7,805	-	-	976	-	-	-	8,781
Calvin Deveraux (Deputy Chair)	Executive Member	5,806	-	-	667	-	-	-	6,473
Totals		726,863	-	42,756	74,873	7,385	-	-	851,878

Footnotes:

1. Base Salary is total salary paid and includes AL paid plus AL movement
2. Other Benefits & Allowances includes MV Benefit & FBT Tax paid
3. Super is actual super paid
4. Any AL & LSL paid on Termination is not included as per PGPA Rule
5. The KMP's reported above are for the NLC only and will not match the KMP in the Financials due to consolidation of the financial statements with the subsidiaries.

INFORMATION ABOUT REMUNERATION FOR SENIOR EXECUTIVES

The majority of the Northern Land Council (NLC) workforce is engaged under the NLC Enterprise Agreement 2018 with the remaining staff engaged under negotiated common law contracts.

TOTAL REMUNERATION BANDS	SHORT-TERM BENEFITS				POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS	OTHER LONG-TERM BENEFITS		TERMINATION BENEFITS	TOTAL REMUNERATION
	NUMBER OF SENIOR EXECUTIVES	AVERAGE BASE SALARY	AVERAGE BONUSES	AVERAGE OTHER BENEFITS AND ALLOWANCES	AVERAGE SUPERANNUATION CONTRIBUTIONS	AVERAGE LONG SERVICE LEAVE	AVERAGE OTHER LONG-TERM BENEFITS	AVERAGE TERMINATION BENEFITS	AVERAGE TOTAL REMUNERATION
\$0 - \$220,000	12	113,216	0	10,366	15,017	3,318	0	0	141,916
\$220,001 - \$245,000	1	172,220	5,000	24,334	20,036	3,863	0	0	225,453
\$245,001 - \$270,000	1	123,450	0	5,957	24,146	4,642	0	100,000	258,195
\$270,001 - \$295,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$295,001 - \$320,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$320,001 - \$345,000	1	259,786	0	27,873	31,448	5,926	0	0	325,033
\$345,001 - \$370,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$370,001 - \$395,000	1	159,276	0	20,290	34,683	4,539	0	157,384	376,173
\$395,001 - \$420,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$420,001 - \$445,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$445,001 - \$470,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$470,001 - \$495,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$495,001 - ...	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

INFORMATION ABOUT REMUNERATION FOR OTHER HIGHLY PAID STAFF

The Northern Land Council has no Other Highly Paid Staff to report in accordance with the Public Governance Performance and Accountability (PGPA) Rule.



*Jabul, Wagiman TO, flying over
Guwardagun to Ejong Billabong -
- Photo by Kathrine Carver*

NLC Annual Performance Statement 2019 – 20



INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

We, Samuel Bush-Blansi and Marion Scrymgour, as the Accountable Authority of the Northern Land Council (NLC), present the 2019-20 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 PURPOSES, VISION AND GUIDING VALUES

The purpose of the NLC is to enable and assist Aboriginal people within the NLC region to acquire and manage land and seas and promote economic and community development.

The NLC's Vision is for a territory in which the rights and responsibilities of every Traditional Owner are recognised and in which Aboriginal people benefit economically, socially and culturally from the secure possession of their lands, seas and intellectual property. Our Guiding values are that we will:

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



ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

The NLC Corporate Plan 2019-20 to 2022-23 outlined priorities and measures of success for 2019-20. This section assesses the NLC performance in achieving it's objectives throughout the reporting period.

ACQUIRE, PROTECT AND MANAGE TRADITIONAL LANDS AND WATERS WITHIN THE NLC'S REGION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NLC'S STATUTORY FUNCTIONS.

Priority 1 (a)	Allocate financial and personnel resources to all NLC branches, especially the Legal, Anthropology, Minerals and Energy and Regional Development branches to ensure that expressions of interest to acquire and use traditional lands are prosecuted efficiently and in a timely manner.	Corporate Plan - pp. 19 - 20	
Priority 1 (b)	Prosecute Land Rights Act and Native Title claims.		
Priority 1 (c)	Identify and prioritise protracted issues and areas of dispute and facilitate effective mediation and conciliation measures in order of need.		
Priority 1 (d)	Through the management of available resources, consult with Traditional Owners and negotiate Land Use Agreements, permit access arrangements and other commercial agreements.		

- The NLC has grown during the 2019-20 year with the permanent workforce increasing by approximately 10% from 253 to 280 permanent employees
- As at 30 June 2020 52% of permanent (FT and PT positions) identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- The NLC regionalisation strategy will result in stronger regional offices that will provide Aboriginal members and business stakeholders with efficient and locally responsive regional services
- The implementation of the NLC regionalisation strategy is underway, with key appointments including the Regionalisation Project Manager and General Manager Community & Regional Services during the period. Key personnel have also been deployed into Regional Service Hubs.

The NLC prosecutes the Land Rights Act and Native Title claims in a number of ways outlined below:

- NLC lawyers represent Aboriginal people in relation to 38 unresolved land claims under the Land Rights Act and 29 claims under the Native Title Act
- Evidence provided to support continuation of Native claims
- Actively working with Traditional Owners to support rehabilitation of the former Rum Jungle Uranium Mine site to progress the Finnis River Land claim
- Assist the Top End Default PBC to exercise the PBC's functions including responding to future act notices received over 70 areas where native title has been determined
- Negotiate and manage agreements with individuals, corporations and governments for the access and use of Aboriginal traditional lands pursuant to the Land Rights Act and Native Title Act
- Perform functions as a representative body under Part 11 of the Native Title Act, including certification, dispute resolution, and agreement making
- Respond and investigate alleged illegal activity on Aboriginal land, for example, trespass, taking resources such as sand and gravel, tourism, mustering, land clearing, dumping, etc.

- The land claim, native title claim and agreement work of NLC lawyers frequently entails navigating and resolving disputes between individuals or groups. The NLC Legal, Anthropology and Regional Development branches work closely together to identify disputes and facilitate dispute resolution outcomes including through conciliation and mediation
- Further refinement of project management systems will more effectively identify and progress priority matters.

- During the reporting period 209 community consultations were held with traditional owners for a variety of purposes including for section 19 ALRA land use agreements, native title, royalty distribution, community development, minerals and energy, ABA Homelands Project and COVID-19 Homeland Assistance consultations
- 3,884 Traditional Owners and affected Aboriginal people attended NLC consultation meetings
- 132 new section 19 Land Use Agreements were approved by the NLC's Delegated Authorities during the reporting period
- The NLC cancelled 145 meetings that were scheduled for consultation between March and June due to COVID-19.

FACILITATE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SO AS TO PROTECT AND DEVELOP ABORIGINAL USE OF LAND AND SEAS AND SECURE BROAD AND LASTING COMMUNITY BENEFITS.

Priority 2 (a)	Continue to develop and grow the Community Planning and Development (CP & D) Unit to assist and facilitate Traditional Owners' to take control over the use of funds from land use agreements for broad and lasting community development.	Corporate Plan - pp. 20 - 21
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Priority 2 (b)	Deliver development of a robust monitoring and evaluation system that provides regular assessment of CP & D's value over the next three years (2019-22).		
Priority 2 (c)	Develop and implement a strategic plan for CP & D to set the direction and carefully grow the program over the next five years (2010 - 25).		
Priority 2 (d)	In partnership with other branches develop and promote an "economic prospectus" for the region, identifying the demand, capability and opportunities for Traditional Owners to participate in economic development on their lands.		

A number of Traditional Owner groups in 8 locations across 4 the NLC regions are engaged in community development activities.

- Despite COVID-19 impacting face to face meetings for the first half of 2020 the NLC has convened 16 full TO meetings and a further 11 working group meetings to support groups plan and deliver their community projects
- Groups have invested a further \$1.5M of their land use income into community projects bringing the total value invested by groups up to nearly \$8M
- 33 Aboriginal-led projects with total value of \$3.1M have been planned and are at different stages of delivery
- 12 projects are complete and some have been extended, building on previous projects
- The NLC's CP&D is nearly 4 years into its development
- CP&D is now identified as a business unit of the NLC in the Community and Regional Services Division
- CP&D's work is delivered by a team of 8 staff with multi-disciplinary skills.

- Continued to use existing practices for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of projects and CP&D's practices and processes
- Published second annual CP&D Monitoring Report in December 2019
- Evaluation suggests success in the Program objectives to support groups plan and self-determine their interests and delivery appropriate projects to support those values
- Successfully completed the first year of the three year research project that will develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system for the program. As part of that research, published 1st Year Ground-up report 2019 on work undertaken by Charles Darwin University supporting participatory practices through local researchers working with groups to self-monitor the value of their projects.

- Engaged independent consultant Social Ventures Australia in April 2020 to develop a five year strategic plan for CP&D
- Successfully completed two of the three stages to develop the plan, including desktop analysis and stakeholder engagement. Stage three, documenting the plan, will be completed and presented to the Council later in 2020.

- In 2017, a consultant to a desktop survey towards developing a social, cultural and economic prospectus for the Aboriginal estate across the NLC region
- Throughout the CP&D process Traditional Owners identify which projects will provide lasting benefit and achieve what is best for the community.

MAINTAIN AND CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN RANGER GROUPS ON COUNTRY TO FURTHER PROTECT AND MAINTAIN ABORIGINAL LAND AND SEAS.

Priority 3 (a)	Strengthen the capabilities of Ranger Groups through training and capacity building.	Corporate Plan – pp. 22 - 23
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Priority 3 (b)	Additional funding and program partnerships developed to facilitate improved capacity and operations of Ranger groups, management activities of IPAs and jointly managed parks.		
Priority 3 (c)	Indigenous land and sea management groups (Rangers) undertake a portfolio of activities and work on all major cultural, environmental and biodiversity issues in the NT, including fire management, feral animal and weed control, biodiversity monitoring and threatened species protection. They also work on border protection threats, including quarantine control and the illegal movement of people and goods, including foreign fishing.		
Priority 3 (d)	Consolidate and integrate expanded Learning on Country Program including development of a sustainable funding strategy.		

- Completed significant ranger base upgrades at Ngukurr and Wudicuppildyerr
 - Secured a substantial training investment from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)
 - Worked with the NT government and other key program partners to commence the Indigenous ranger's compliance pilot project
 - Implementation of the Women's Employment Strategy
 - All NLC ranger groups now employ women
 - 40% of all permanent NLC ranger positions are held by women
 - Significant achievements in youth engagement targets for ranger programs.
- Secured significant project capital and operational funding from the Northern Territory Government's Aboriginal Ranger Grants Program
 - Kenbi Traditional Owners and the CFC Branch hosted the former Department of Agriculture and Water Resources funded Northern Australian Ranger forum in August 2019
 - Highlights of activities in jointly managed parks:
 - In July 2019, the Director of National Parks and the Jawoyn Traditional Owners entered into the first carbon abatement agreement for the southern region of Kakadu National Park known as the Wurrk Carbon Project
 - The Traditional Owners in the southern region of Kakadu established a Steering committee to oversee the implementation of the Wurrk Project. The Wurrk Steering committee held their first meeting in February 2020 to start making decisions on fire management activities aimed at reducing carbon emissions
 - Supported Joint Management Committee meetings between Traditional Owners and staff from NT Parks and Wildlife Commission
 - Nomination of a new Garig Gunak Barlu board member for the Madjunbalmi clan group and an out of session board meeting was held in April 2020
 - The Adelaide River Committee met in December 2019
 - Supported a two day Judburra Committee meeting in October 2019
 - The Giwining Committee met in August 2019 in Katherine
 - Negotiations are underway for future management arrangements for Tjuwaliyn, Umbrawarra and Barranyi however have been delayed due to COVID-19.
- The activities of the 11 Ranger groups supported by the NLC throughout the period are extensive and varied. A full report from each ranger group is available in the Year in Review section of the Annual report
 - NLC ranger groups and IPA managers have continued to deliver on their commitments and lead the country, particularly in the areas of research, management and related innovation. At present ranger groups and IPA managers are involved in a vast array of land and sea management programs including fire management/early dry season burning, weed management, land and sea biodiversity surveys, marine debris collections, fisheries compliance patrols, sacred site management and knowledge transfer through involvement with school groups.
- Grew the Learning on Country investment to support 15 sites
 - Strengthen future sustainability of the program through:
 - the development of an evaluation framework
 - communication strategy
 - established a working group between LoC management and partner agencies
 - Submitted proposal to consolidate Learning on Country funding into a single annual budget over seven years.

FACILITATE ARRANGEMENTS TO PROVIDE A MORE RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT PERMIT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO ORGANISE, MANAGE AND DOCUMENT LICENSED ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL LANDS AND WATERS.

Priority 4 Summary	Create a Permit Reform Team to address the aspirations for permit reform from Traditional Owners and other stakeholders who recognise that current conditions and access arrangements constrain safety, tourism and investment, and the effective monitoring, control and deterrence of illegal and dangerous activity by visitors on Aboriginal land and waters.	Corporate Plan – pp. 24
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Priority 4 (a)	Facilitate Traditional Aboriginal Owner decisions about who visits their land and the circumstances under which access is permitted.		
Priority 4 (b)	Design, build and implement a modern Permit Management system.		
Priority 4 (c)	Grow confidence about Traditional Aboriginal Owner agency in managing visitors, leading to a more welcoming attitude to visitors and investment with the right controls.		

The Project Management Unit and Permit Reform team were established prior to this reporting period. During the permit team worked with providers and stakeholders to develop the Permit Administration System. The permit system was launched on 17 July 2020.

The new permit system has improved processes for Permit Officers and visitors:

- The self-service system means that Permit Officers spend less effort on data entry and more on due diligence
- NLC can track due diligence actions in considering applications
- More efficient triage for permit issues across the regional Permit Offices
- Central distribution of changes to policy and procedures to improve process consistency
- The application process is easier, so no excuse for visitors needing an NLC permit
- Companies can monitor staff permits ensuring that their employees have insurance coverage.

In addition it provides a means to manage visitors through Permit Agreements and improve reporting.

The impact of COVID-19 on the NLC was significant. Essential Worker Permits became mandatory and raised awareness of the need for workers to have permits prior to visiting communities. During the pandemic NLC cancelled all permits and is not issuing recreational permits in order to keep communities safe.

- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority locations have been identified for consultation about Permit Agreements • Planning is underway to establish Permit Agreements that support land claim processes and sea country reform. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New permit system was deployed on 17 July 2020 • Further releases will incorporate maps and other improvements. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NLC must continue to improve communications with Traditional Owners to raise awareness of permit processes, in particular better interactions with Permit Delegates and better tracking of their advice and contact details • The new permit system provides an opportunity to gather clear information about who is on country and who is coming – a one stop shop for enhanced visitor management across NLC region leading to greater understanding of visitor movements and the potential benefits, detriments and investment needs for tourism • Consultations with Traditional Owners to establish and implement permit agreements will empower Traditional Owner agency in determining conditions and local requirements to help manage visitors to specific areas. |

FACILITATE ARRANGEMENTS TO PROVIDE A MORE RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT PERMIT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO ORGANISE, MANAGE AND DOCUMENT LICENSED ACCESS TO TRADITIONAL LANDS AND WATERS.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Priority 4 (d) | Develop and promote Permit Reform to connect permit holders with Aboriginal Traditional Owners and help them be safe and informed, understand their obligations and responsibilities as visitors, and participate in mutually beneficial opportunities and experiences while on country. |
|----------------|--|

INTRODUCE IMPROVED PROCESSES TO MANAGE LAND USE AGREEMENTS AND DISBURSEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND LIFT INTERNAL CAPABILITY BY TRACKING ACTIVITY THROUGH ONE CONSOLIDATED SYSTEM.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Priority 5
Summary | <p>The aim of the LUMAR Project is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase efficiency by tracking land use management and disbursement arrangements through one consolidated system• Increase effectiveness by implementing productivity tools and consistent processes• Increase transparency so that information about NLC's activities in the management of Contracts is shared securely• Increase compliance with legislative requirements by building financial and operational controls into systems, eg ALRA s35. | Corporate Plan –
pp. 25 |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------------|

On-going strategies for permit compliance and enforcement:

- NLC collaboration on the provision of ranger tools and assistance to improve compliance opportunities
- Liaison with enforcement agencies to improve deterrence.

On-going strategies to communicate with constituents and councillors:

- Provision of summary reports and maps with the ability to prevent localised data on permit holders and companies
- Provision of permit updates at NLC Meetings
- Planned consultation about Permit Agreements.

On-going strategies with visitors to help them be safe and informed, understand their obligations and responsibilities as visitors, and participate in mutually beneficial opportunities and experiences while on country.

- The development of relevant terms and conditions for Permit Holders, including considerations for COVID-19
- Communicated with businesses working on Aboriginal land and waters to improve business relationships and compliance
- Developed a public awareness campaign about the need and value of a permit.

The LUMAR Project is a multi-release project with 4 of 10 releases now completed.

Project achievements throughout the reporting period:

- Consolidated and enhanced the Royalty Trust Accounting system in collaboration with the Royalty Unit
- Delivered a system to manage Proposals and Agreements for all s19 LUAs
- Completed critical data consolidation
- Lodged proponent information with ASIC to enhance due diligence processes.

Further coordination across the NLC is required in 2020-21 incorporate additional functions of the system.

INTRODUCE IMPROVED PROCESSES TO MANAGE LAND USE AGREEMENTS AND DISBURSEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND LIFT INTERNAL CAPABILITY BY TRACKING ACTIVITY THROUGH ONE CONSOLIDATED SYSTEM.

Priority 5 (a)	A more responsive and consistent approach to land use agreements. Trackable actions on contractual activities and variations and more effective oversight of proponent billing and commitments.		
Priority 5 (b)	More timely management of disbursement arrangements aligned with beneficiary preferences.		
Priority 5 (c)	Optimised schedule for consultation projects.		
Priority 5 (d)	The means to measure efficiency and effectiveness and drive improvements.		

In 2019-20, the NLC has:

- Deployed new modules to manage proposals and agreements
- Provided operational units with access to financial information on cost recovery and royalties
- Completed critical data consolidation, including matching data in operational and financial systems
- Validated agreement maps to help avoid land interest conflicts.

- Collected and validated information on standing advice to improve disbursement arrangements. This is a foundation for further enhancements during the planned implementation in 2020-21.

- The Regional Meeting System was implemented in February 2020
- The system enables effective planning of consultations with traditional owners and gives visibility for scheduled consultations to all NLC staff
- Further work planned for 2020-21 to integrate this system with spatial, financial and LUMAR systems.

The Royalty Management Future State document defines roles and responsibilities, policy framework, business processes and business definitions.

Reporting data will become more accurate and meaningful as more features become available within the contract management system.

In 2020-21, the NLC will continue the development of:

- Key performance indicators and dashboards
- Detailed procedures and business rules aligned with each Release of the software
- Critical reports.

Extensive change management is required over the next 2 years to ensure software and procedures are used consistently, including the ability to efficiently manage overdue and escalated tasks.

DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM TO FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO, AND ADVOCACY OF, TRADITIONAL OWNERS' INTERESTS.

Priority 6 (a)	Develop and implement a communications and public relations plan.	Corporate Plan – pp. 26	
Priority 6 (b)	Organise events, and prepare resources and publications, publish the Land Rights News quarterly; develop a program of media releases and press conferences around issues of the day.		
Priority 6 (c)	Maintain the alliance with Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APONT).		
Priority 6 (d)	Regularly liaise with Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and other institutions.		

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE NLC'S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SYSTEMS FOR MORE EFFICIENCY AND BEST PRACTICE GOVERNANCE.

Priority 7 (a)	Develop, implement, and continually improve policies and procedures that will strengthen the governance and management of the organisation, so that NLC operates in accordance with best practice principles and meets all statutory reporting obligations in order to provide its Aboriginal constituents with responsive, transparent governance and administration.	Corporate Plan – pp. 27	
Priority 7 (b)	Take account of and implement recommendations of ANAO Performance Audit: (a) develop and maintain an action plan to monitor the progress of reform initiatives and projects, and (b) develop a communications strategy to inform staff of changes.		

- NLC's Communications and Media Unit has developed a communications strategy that will undergo continuing development and refreshment in order to maximise information provision and advocacy for and on behalf of Traditional Owners.
- Organised media coverage of Indigenous Ranger Forum 2019 and NLC's presence at 2019 NAIDOC week; Garma 2019; International Women's Day and Reconciliation Week
- NLC social media channels played a critical role in providing health and protocol updates during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Produced and distributed 18 short films in NT Aboriginal languages providing essential health information for remote community and outstation constituents about Coronavirus/COVID-19
- The quarterly Land Rights News was published four times throughout the period
- 25 media releases during the reporting period
- Other major events were cancelled due to COVID-19.
- The Northern Land Council was integral in the formation of the Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory and regular officer meetings and CEO level meeting were held fortnightly. Multiple submissions were submitted. Around the time of the COVID-19 pandemic early in 2020, the Northern Land Council withdrew from the alliance.
- Formal liaison is maintained with AAPA and other institutions is maintained on an as needs basis and relationships between staff of the various institutions is continuous and ongoing.

The NLC has implemented significant structural change throughout the reporting period to strengthen corporate governance and improve our oversight of operations throughout our organisation.

The organisational structure has been adjusted with the establishment of new divisions that report to general managers. This alignment streamlines reporting requirements through to the CEO, increases accountability and ownership of NLC deliverables and creates clear ownership of policies and procedures.

In May 2020 the NLC established the new Governance, Compliance and Risk Unit located in the Executive branch. This team has commenced with a remit to develop and implement governance and compliance framework that will ensure organisation wide compliance with statutory obligations.

This team has conducted a review the policy register and is working with General Managers to update all policies procedure during 2020-21.

Updates to the Council Members handbook and code of conduct have been identified as a priority activity for the new Governance, Compliance and Risk team.

The NLC has responded to the ANAO performance audit in the previous reporting period.

The ANAO Governance review into the NLC scheduled for 2020 has been deferred due to COVID-19.



Wagiman Ranger burning ambition - Photo by Kathrine Carver

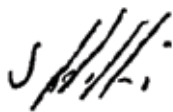
ANALYSIS

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on all aspects of NLC operations during the 2019-20 reporting year. Keeping our communities and Aboriginal people safe and healthy became the top priority for the executive, accountable authorities and all staff. The NLC responded strongly by restricting access to communities, revoking all permits and cancelling scheduled consultations. In close partnership with the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Government the NLC mobilised. Our response included facilitating emergency assistance to enable traditional owners to remain safely on their homelands, urgently manually processing permits for approved remote essential workers and supporting the implementation of biosecurity zones. The NLC was integral in disseminating essential health messaging throughout remote communities and providing support to help keep traditional owners safe.

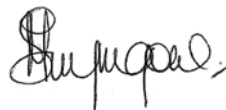
The pandemic has highlighted the important role Land Councils play as an advocate for Aboriginal people with government and as a relevant, dynamic institution that can deliver core business and also adapt to respond to an unprecedented crisis.

Despite the unprecedented disruptions to business as usual the NLC has performed strongly against the objectives set out in its Corporate Plan. Consultations and meetings with traditional owners were on track to surpass prior years, and more agreements were executed than in 2018-19. The NLC has also made significant progress on complex long standing legal matters as well as expanding the CP&D program to more Traditional Owner groups. Reform of the NLC's organisational structure have continued with the introduction of General Managers and the reorganisation of branches into divisions will provide opportunities to better coordinate service delivery while improving transparency and accountability. Similarly the creation of the Governance, Compliance and Risk Unit has put the focus on good governance practices and compliance within the organisation and in our contractual relationships with stakeholders and elected members. The NLC must continue to invest in business systems that empower frontline staff in delivery of our core services. Ranger groups and the Caring for Country Program has always played a major role in effective land management and their continued funding and operation as part of the NLC has been highlighted by this pandemic.

The NLC is continuing to respond to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic working with all levels of government and stakeholders to safeguard Traditional Owners. These challenges represent the new reality of our operating environment and regular operations must continue to adapt as the health, economic, environmental and legislative impacts of the pandemic evolve.



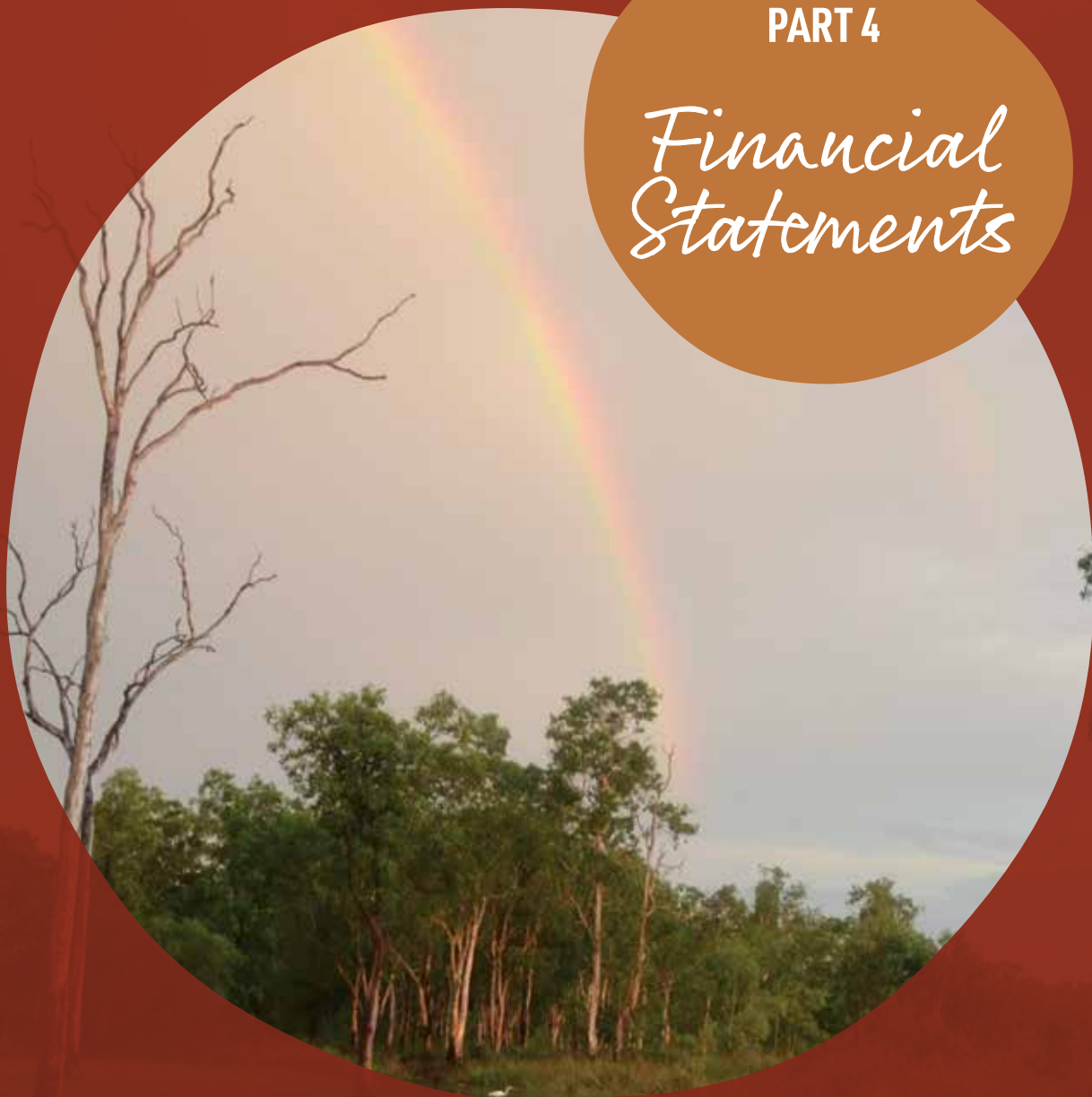
Samuel Bush-Blanasi
CHAIRMAN



Marion Scrymgeour
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

PART 4

*Financial
Statements*



Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Northern Land Council Annual Consolidated Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Minister for Indigenous Australians

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Northern Land Council and its subsidiaries (together the Consolidated Entity) for the year ended 30 June 2020:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*; and
- (b) present fairly the financial position of the Consolidated Entity as at 30 June 2020 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

The financial statements of the Consolidated Entity, which I have audited, comprise the following as at 30 June 2020 and for the year then ended:

- Statement by the Accountable Authority and Chief Financial Officer;
- Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Consolidated Statement of Financial Position;
- Consolidated Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Consolidated Cash Flow Statement; and
- Notes to the financial statements comprising a Summary of Significant Accounting Policies and other explanatory information.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Consolidated Entity in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements for financial statement audits conducted by the Auditor-General and his delegates. These include the relevant independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) to the extent that they are not in conflict with the *Auditor-General Act 1997*. I have also fulfilled my other responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Accountable Authority's responsibility for the financial statements

As the Accountable Authority of the Consolidated Entity, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer are responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the Act) for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the rules made under the Act. The Chairman and Chief Executive Officer are also responsible for such internal control as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer are responsible for assessing the ability of the Consolidated Entity to continue as a going concern, taking into account whether the Consolidated Entity's operations will cease as a result of an administrative restructure or for any other reason. The Chairman

and Chief Executive Officer are also responsible for disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the assessment indicates that it is not appropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial Statements

My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit 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 Consolidated Entity's internal control;
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Accountable Authority;
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Accountable Authority's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Consolidated Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Consolidated Entity to cease to continue as a going concern;
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation; and
- obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the Consolidated Entity to express an opinion on the financial report. I am responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the Consolidated Entity audit. I remain solely responsible for my audit opinion.

I communicate with the Accountable Authority regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Australian National Audit Office



Rita Bhana

Audit Principal

Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra

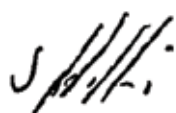
11 December 2020

STATEMENT BY THE ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

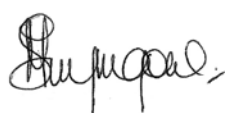
In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2020 comply with subsection 42(2) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Group 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.



Mr Samuel Bush-Blanasi
Chairman / Accountable Authority



Ms Marion Scrymgour
Chief Executive Officer / Accountable Authority



Mr Irfan Bhat
Chief Financial Officer

11 December 2020

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

for the year ended 30 June 2020

	NOTES	2020 \$'000	2019 RESTATED* \$'000
NET COST OF SERVICES			
Expenses			
Employee benefits	3A	32,446	28,425
Suppliers	3B	22,908	24,173
Depreciation and amortisation*	3C	3,459	2,536
Losses from sale of assets	3D	135	-
Finance costs	3E	143	125
Loss on revaluation of investment property	3F	189	-
Total expenses		59,280	55,259
Own-Source Income			
Own-Source Revenue			
Revenue from contracts with customers	4A	4,327	3,857
Rental income	4E	383	512
Interest	4B	319	560
Total own-source revenue		5,029	4,929
Gains			
Gains from sale of assets	4C	-	119
Reversal of write - downs and impairment	4D	28	537
Total gains		28	656
Total own-source income		5,057	5,585
Net cost of services		54,223	49,674
Revenue from government	4F	59,990	52,375
Surplus on continuing operations		5,767	2,701
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Items not subject to subsequent reclassification to net cost of services			
Changes in asset revaluation surplus		(805)	(1,825)
Total other comprehensive loss		(805)	(1,825)
Total comprehensive income		4,962	876

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

* The comparatives information has been restated as a result of correction of error in classification of leasehold improvements (see note 1.7).

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as at 30 June 2020

	NOTES	2020 \$'000	2019 RESTATED* \$'000
ASSETS			
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	6A	41,244	28,143
Trade and other receivables	6B	2,186	1,999
Total financial assets		43,430	30,142
Non-Financial Assets			
Land, buildings and leasehold improvements*^	7A	18,691	22,167
Property, plant and equipment^	7A	6,115	4,316
Other non-financial assets	7B	493	478
Investment property	7C	1,560	1,749
Total non-financial assets		26,859	28,710
Total assets		70,289	58,852
LIABILITIES			
Payables			
Suppliers	8A	3,714	2,569
Other payables	8B	563	651
Total payables		4,277	3,220
Interest bearing liabilities			
Borrowings	8C	2,280	2,717
Leases	8D	868	-
Total interest bearing liabilities		3,148	2,717
Unearned revenue			
Advanced payments	9	22,384	18,823
Total provisions		22,384	18,823
Provisions			
Employee provisions	10	5,413	3,987
Total provisions		5,413	3,987
Total liabilities		35,222	28,747
Net assets		35,067	30,105
EQUITY			
Asset revaluation reserves*		5,693	6,498
Retained surplus*		29,374	23,607
Total equity		35,067	30,105

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

* The comparatives information has been restated as a result of correction of error in classification of leasehold improvements (see note 1.7).

^ Right-of-use assets are included in land, buildings, leasehold improvements and property, plant and equipment.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN EQUITY

for the year ended 30 June 2020

	NOTE	RETAINED SURPLUS \$'000	ASSET REVALUATION RESERVE \$'000	TOTAL EQUITY \$'000
Balance at 1 July 2018		21,404	7,954	29,358
Prior year adjustment*	1.7	(498)	369	(129)
Balance at 1 July 2018 – As restated*		20,906	8,323	29,229
Other comprehensive loss		-	(1,825)	(1,825)
Surplus for the year*		2,701	-	2,701
Balance at 30 June 2019		23,607	6,498	30,105
Other comprehensive loss		-	(805)	(805)
Surplus for the year		5,767	-	5,767
Closing Balance as at 30 June 2020		29,374	5,693	35,067

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

- * The comparatives information has been restated as a result of correction of error in classification of leasehold improvements (see note 1.7).

CONSOLIDATED CASH FLOW STATEMENT

for the year ended 30 June 2020

	NOTES	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Receipts from government		56,256	54,984
Rendering of services		12,119	6,617
Interest		319	560
GST received		-	260
Total cash received		68,694	62,421
Cash used			
Employees		31,076	28,705
Suppliers		21,593	26,110
GST paid		506	-
Interest payments on lease liabilities and borrowings		119	125
Total cash used		53,294	54,940
Net cash from operating activities		15,400	7,481
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Proceeds from sales of property, plant and equipment		1,828	237
Total cash received		1,828	237
Cash used			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		3,365	4,519
Total cash used		3,365	4,519
Net cash used by investing activities		(1,537)	(4,282)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Cash used			
Repayment of borrowings		523	242
Principal repayment on leases		239	-
Total cash used		762	242
Net cash used by financing activities		(762)	(242)
Net increase in cash held		13,101	2,957
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		28,143	25,186
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	6A	41,244	28,143

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), the parent entity, is a representative body with statutory authority under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA). It also has responsibilities under the *Native Title Act 1993* (NT Act) and the *Pastoral Land Act 1992*. It is a not-for-profit entity. The objectives of the NLC 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 objects 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 NLC is a statutory authority formed within the provision of Section 21 of the ALRA. The NLC 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 NLC 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 sea
- 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 NLC 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 Australians.

The continued existence of the NLC in its present form with its present programs is dependent on Government policy and on continuing funding by Parliament for the NLC's administration and programs.

Events during the year that impacted the Group:

The spread of COVID-19 was declared a public health emergency by the World Health Organisation on 31 January 2020 and upgraded to a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. The rapid rise of the virus has seen an unprecedented global response by Governments, regulators and industry sectors. The Australian Government enacted its emergency plan on 29 February 2020 which has seen the closure of Australian borders from 20 March 2020, an increasing level of restrictions on corporate Australia's ability to operate, significant volatility and instability in financial markets and the release of a number of government stimulus packages to support individuals and businesses as the Australian and global economies face significant slowdowns and uncertainties. This has required the Group to assess whether and how they are affected, and the impact on their ongoing operations.

In April 2020 the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP approved a one-off payment of \$4 million under section 64(1) of the ALRA. The full amount was recognised as income on receipt during the year ended 30 June 2020. However, the unspent amount \$3,733,972 as at 30 June 2020 will be expended in the year 2020-21 with no corresponding income recognised in 2020-21. Refer Note 20 for further information.

The funding was utilised to provide immediate support to the residents of aboriginal communities who were affected by the restrictions imposed by the government to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The funding allowed NLC to provide immediate support to residents living in their homelands through the invitation of 'expression-of-interest' from various communities and aboriginal organisations. As at 30 June 2020 NLC approved COVID-19 support for \$2.5 million out of total expressions of interest for \$2.9 million.

During April and May 2020, the group office was closed for a few weeks and thereafter all the essential staff continued to work from the office premise, while non-essential staff continued to work from home. Operations of the Group continued during this period, however employees could not access remote locations to perform their duties. Therefore, it was expected that COVID-19 might have some impact in relation to the completion of some projects, however these are not significant to the Group. Management has determined that there is no material uncertainty that casts doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern.

As a result of COVID-19 North Australia Aboriginal Corporation received Job Keeper Payments of \$58,500 and Cash Flow Boost of \$62,500 from the Australian Taxation Office for the year ended on 30 June 2020.

1.2 Basis of preparation of the financial statements

The consolidated financial statements are general purpose financial statements and are required by section 42 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). The financial statements comprise the consolidated financial statements of the Group comprising:

- Northern Land Council (the Parent Entity)
- Northern Australian Aboriginal Charitable Trust (the Subsidiary)
- North Australia Aboriginal Corporation (the Subsidiary)
- Northern Aboriginal Investment Corporation Pty Ltd (the Subsidiary).

The following subsidiaries are not consolidated as part of the Group's financial statements as they are immaterial to the Group (refer to Note 1.4):

- Wirib Tourism Park Pty Ltd (the Subsidiary)
- Northern Australia Aboriginal Development Corporation Pty Ltd (the Subsidiary)
- Create Housing and Construction Pty Ltd (the Subsidiary)
- Aboriginal Solar Rollout Pty Ltd (the Subsidiary).

For the purposes of preparing the consolidated financial statements, the NLC and the entities controlled by the NLC (the Group) are not-for-profit entities.

The consolidated financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- a) *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015* (FRR); and

- b) Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations - Reduced Disclosure Requirements issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The financial year ended 30 June 2019 was the first year that the NLC's financial statements had been prepared as consolidated financial statements in compliance with AASB 10 *Consolidated Financial Statements*. See note 1.3 Basis of Consolidation and 1.4 Critical accounting judgements in applying the Group's accounting policies for more details.

The consolidated 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 policies on the results or the financial position of the Group.

The consolidated 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 along with income and expenses, are recognised in the statement of financial position and comprehensive income, when and only when it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the Group 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.

1.3 Basis of consolidation

The consolidated financial statements incorporate the financial statements of the NLC, and entities controlled by the NLC. Control is achieved when the NLC:

- has power over the investee;
- is exposed, or has rights, to variable returns from its involvement with the investee; and
- has the ability to use its power to affect its returns.

The NLC reassesses whether or not it controls an investee if facts and circumstances indicate that there are changes to one or more of the three elements of control listed above. When the NLC has less than a majority of the voting rights of an investee, it has power over the investee when the voting rights are sufficient to give it the practical ability to direct the relevant activities of the investee unilaterally. The NLC considers all relevant facts and circumstances in assessing whether or not the NLC's voting rights in an investee are sufficient to give it power, including:

- the size of the NLC's holding of voting rights relative to the size and dispersion of holdings of the other vote holders;
- potential voting rights held by the NLC, other vote holders or other parties;
- rights arising from other contractual arrangements; and
- any additional facts and circumstances that indicate that the NLC has, or does not have, the current ability to direct the relevant activities at the time that decisions need to be made, including voting patterns at previous shareholders' meetings of North Australia Aboriginal Corporation (NAAC) and Northern Aboriginal Investment

Corporation Pty Ltd (NAIC) as trustee for Northern Australian Aboriginal Charitable Trust (NAACT).

Consolidation of a subsidiary begins when the NLC obtains control over the subsidiary and ceases when the NLC loses control of the subsidiary. Specifically, income and expenses of a subsidiary acquired or disposed of during the year are included in the consolidated statement of comprehensive income from the date the NLC gains control until the date when the NLC ceases to control the subsidiary.

Profit or loss and each component of other comprehensive income are attributed to the owners of the NLC. Total comprehensive income of subsidiaries is attributed to the owners of the NLC.

When necessary, adjustments are made to the financial statements of subsidiaries to bring their accounting policies into line with the NLC's accounting policies.

All intragroup assets and liabilities, equity, income, expenses and cash flows relating to transactions between members of the Group are eliminated in full on consolidation.

Changes in the NLC's ownership interests in existing subsidiaries

Changes in the NLC's ownership interests in subsidiaries that do not result in the NLC losing control over the subsidiaries are accounted for as equity transactions. The carrying amounts of the NLC's interests and the non-controlling interests are adjusted to reflect the changes in their relative interests in the subsidiaries. Any difference between the amount by which the non-controlling interests are adjusted and the fair value of the consideration paid or received is recognised directly in equity and attributed to owners of the NLC.

When the NLC loses control of a subsidiary, a gain or loss is recognised in profit or loss and is calculated as the difference between (i) the aggregate of the fair value of the consideration received and the fair value of any retained interest and (ii) the previous carrying amount of the assets (including goodwill), and liabilities of the subsidiary. All amounts previously recognised in other comprehensive income in relation to that subsidiary are accounted for as if the NLC had directly disposed of the related assets or liabilities of the subsidiary (i.e. reclassified to profit or loss or transferred to another category of equity as specified/ permitted by applicable AASBs). The fair value of any investment retained in the former subsidiary at the date when control is lost is regarded as the fair value on initial recognition for subsequent accounting under AASB 9, when applicable, the cost on initial recognition of an investment in an associate or a joint venture.

Consolidation reflects 100% of the assets, liabilities, revenue, expenses and cash flows of the material subsidiaries controlled by the Group. Note 1.4 states other subsidiaries which are considered immaterial to the Group and hence not consolidated.

1.4 Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the Group's accounting policies, which are described in Note 1.5, the directors are required to make judgements (other than those involving estimations) that have a significant impact on the amounts recognised and to make estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

Critical judgements in applying the Groups' accounting policies

The following are the critical judgements, apart from those involving estimations (which are presented separately below), that the directors have made in the process of applying the Group's accounting policies and that have the most significant effect on the amounts recognised in financial statements.

Control over North Australia Aboriginal Corporation

Note 11 describes that NAAC is a subsidiary of the NLC and that NLC has control over NAAC in accordance with AASB 10 *Consolidated Financial Statements*. NAAC was incorporated in 1991 under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006*.

NAAC's Rule Book (2018) only allows Director appointments from members of the NLC's Executive Council. Whilst the NLC does not directly appoint the Directors of NAAC, it appoints its own Executive Council Members who then become qualified to become members and directors of NAAC. The substance of the arrangement is that NLC has the right to effectively fill the entire board of NAAC, which indicates 'power' over NAAC for the purposes of AASB 10 *Consolidated Financial Statements*.

The NLC has made the assessment that NLC has 'power' over NAAC (arising from its right to effectively fill the entire board of NAAC using its Executive Council members). This assessment also considers NLC's ability to use its power over NAAC to affect the extent to which broader social policy objectives are achieved ('returns').

Control over Northern Aboriginal Investment Corporation Pty Ltd

Note 11 describes that Northern Aboriginal Investment Corporation Pty Ltd (NAIC) is a subsidiary of the NLC, and NLC has 100% of the ownership interest and voting rights of the company. The company is the corporate trustee of the NAACT and acting as trustee is its sole function. The trustee company has no other assets or liabilities and has no operations other than in its capacity as trustee.

NLC held 75% ownership of NAIC and the company which held the remaining 25% shareholding was deregistered in 2002. The NAIC had cancelled the 25% shareholding and therefore NLC effectively holds 100% of the shares in NAIC. Given NLC's control of NAIC, it has been historic practice to appoint members of the NLC Executive Council to be Directors of NAIC, 8 out of 9 current NAIC Directors are from NLC's Executive Council. The Executive Council members are the Boards of NAIC only by virtue of their role in the Executive Council. Additionally, NAIC was established by the NLC in 1987.

NLC has made the assessment that NLC has 'power' over NAIC. This assessment also considers NLC's ability to use its power over NAIC to affect the extent to which broader social policy objectives are achieved ('returns').

Control over Northern Australian Aboriginal Charitable Trust

Note 11 describes that Northern Australian Aboriginal Charitable Trust (NAACT) is a subsidiary of the Group, by virtue of its trustee, NAIC, being controlled by NLC. Under the Deed of Settlement of Trust, NAIC has full powers to manage the activities of NAACT at its discretion. Accordingly, NAIC does have 'power' over the NAACT.

The NLC has made the assessment that NLC has 'power' over NAACT (arising from its control over the trustee). This assessment also considers NLC's ability to use its power over NAACT to affect the extent to which broader social policy objectives are achieved ('returns').

NAACT also holds shares in the following companies that have not been considered separately as subsidiaries as they are immaterial to the Group, and hence are not consolidated as part of the Group:

- Wirib Tourism Park Pty Ltd (90% shares and voting rights)
- Northern Australia Aboriginal Development Corporation Pty Ltd (100% shares and voting rights)
- Create Housing and Construction Pty Ltd (100% shares and voting rights)
- Aboriginal Solar Rollout Pty Ltd (100% shares and voting rights)

NAACT was first established as a charitable trust on 13 May 1988 with a vesting date of 13 May 2009, despite the fact that at law, a charitable trust need not have a vesting date. Subsequently, a new deed of settlement was entered into on 7 March 2018 to re-establish the trust. This action formalised that the trust property would continue to be used charitably for the Aboriginal people of Northern Australia (for whose benefit the original trust was established).

1.5 Significant accounting judgements and estimates

The Group has made the following judgements and estimates that has the most impact on the amounts recorded in the financial statements:

- Impairment loss allowance of \$119,372 has been recorded for doubtful debts in the current year.
- Lease term: whether the Group is reasonably certain to exercise extension options.

No other 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.

Refer to Note 7A Accounting Policy for the critical accounting judgements in relation to useful life for property plant and equipment for the Group.

1.6 New accounting standards

New Accounting Standards and Interpretations

New accounting standards adopted by the Group on 1 July 2019:

STANDARD / INTERPRETATION	NATURE OF CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY AND ADJUSTMENT TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AASB 15 <i>Revenue from Contracts with Customers</i> / AASB 2016-8 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Australian Implementation Guidance for Not-for-Profit Entities</i> and AASB 1058 <i>Income of Not-For-Profit Entities</i>	<p>AASB 15, AASB 2016-8 and AASB 1058 became effective 1 July 2019.</p> <p>AASB 15 establishes a comprehensive framework for determining whether, how much and when revenue is recognised. It replaces existing revenue recognition guidance, including AASB 118 <i>Revenue</i>, AASB 111 <i>Construction Contracts</i> and Interpretation 13 <i>Customer Loyalty Programmes</i>. The core principle of AASB 15 is that an entity recognises revenue to depict the transfer of promised goods or services to customers in an amount that reflects the consideration to which the entity expects to be entitled in exchange for those goods or services.</p> <p>AASB 1058 is relevant in circumstances where AASB 15 does not apply. AASB 1058 replaces most of the not-for-profit (NFP) provisions of AASB 1004 <i>Contributions</i> and applies to transactions where the consideration to acquire an asset is significantly less than fair value principally to enable the entity to further its objectives, and where volunteer services are received. The details of the changes in accounting policies, transitional provisions and adjustments are disclosed below and in the relevant notes to the financial statements.</p>

STANDARD / INTERPRETATION	NATURE OF CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY AND ADJUSTMENT TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AASB 16 Leases	<p>AASB 16 became effective on 1 July 2019.</p> <p>This new standard has replaced AASB 117 <i>Leases</i>, Interpretation 4 <i>Determining whether an Arrangement contains a Lease</i>, Interpretation 115 <i>Operating Leases—Incentives</i> and Interpretation 127 <i>Evaluating the Substance of Transactions Involving the Legal Form of a Lease</i>.</p> <p>AASB 16 provides a single lessee accounting model, requiring the recognition of assets and liabilities for all leases, together with options to exclude leases where the lease term is 12 months or less, or where the underlying asset is of low value. AASB 16 substantially carries forward the lessor accounting in AASB 117, with the distinction between operating leases and finance leases being retained. The details of the changes in accounting policies, transitional provisions and adjustments are disclosed below and in the relevant notes to the financial statements.</p>

Application of AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers / AASB 1058 Income of Not-For-Profit Entities

The Group adopted AASB 15 and AASB 1058 using the modified retrospective approach, under which the cumulative effect of initial application is recognised in retained earnings at 1 July 2019. Accordingly, the comparative information presented for 2018-19 is not restated, that is, it is presented as previously reported under the various applicable AASBs and related interpretations.

Under the new income recognition model the Group shall first determine whether an enforceable agreement exists and whether the promises to transfer goods or services to the customer are 'sufficiently specific'. If an enforceable agreement exists and the promises are 'sufficiently specific' (to a transaction or part of a transaction), the Group applies the general AASB 15 principles to determine the appropriate revenue recognition. If these criteria are not met, the Group shall consider whether AASB 1058 applies.

In relation to AASB 15, the Group elected to apply the new standard to all new and uncompleted contracts from the date of initial application. The Group is required to aggregate the effect of all of the contract modifications that occur before date of application.

In terms of AASB 1058, the Group is required to recognise volunteer services at fair value if those services would have been purchased if not provided voluntarily, and the fair value of those services can be measured reliably.

There was no impact on transition to AASB 15 and AASB 1058 on 1 July 2019.

Set out below are the amounts by which each financial statement line item is affected as at and for the year ended 30 June 2020 as a result of the adoption of AASB 15 and AASB 1058. The first column shows amounts prepared under AASB 15 and AASB 1058 and the second column shows what the amounts would have been had AASB 15 and AASB 1058 not been adopted:

	AASB 15 / AASB 1058	PREVIOUS AAS	INCREASE/ (DECREASE)
Revenue			
Revenue and other income	65,047	65,047	-
Expenses			
Expenditure	(59,741)	(59,741)	-
Net contribution by services	5,306	5,306	-
Assets			
Receivables	2,186	2,186	-
Liabilities			
Unearned revenue	(22,384)	(22,384)	-
Retained earnings	(14,892)	(14,892)	-

Application of AASB 16 Leases

The Group adopted AASB 16 using the modified retrospective approach, under which the cumulative effect of initial application is recognised in retained earnings at 1 July 2019. Accordingly, the comparative information presented for 2018-19 is not restated, that is, it is presented as previously reported under AASB 117 and related interpretations.

The Group elected to apply the practical expedient to not reassess whether a contract is, or contains a lease at the date of initial application. Contracts entered into before the transition date that were not identified as leases under AASB 117 were not reassessed. The definition of a lease under AASB 16 was applied only to contracts entered into or changed on or after 1 July 2019.

AASB 16 provides for certain optional practical expedients, including those related to the initial adoption of the standard. The Entity applied the following practical expedients when applying AASB 16 to leases previously classified as operating leases under AASB 117:

- apply a single discount rate to a portfolio of leases with reasonably similar characteristics;
- exclude initial direct costs from the measurement of right-of-use assets at the date of initial application for leases where the right-of-use asset was determined as if AASB 16 had been applied since the commencement date;

- reliance on previous assessments on whether leases are onerous as opposed to preparing an impairment review under AASB 136 Impairment of assets as at the date of initial application; and
- applied the exemption not to recognise right-of-use assets and liabilities for leases with less than 12 months of lease term remaining as of the date of initial application or low value assets.

Leases at significantly below market terms and conditions, the Group has applied AASB 2018 8 *Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards Right-of Use Assets of Not for Profit Entities* which is effective for an annual period that begins on or after 1 January 2019.

For NFP entities with leases that have significantly below market terms and conditions principally to enable the entity to further its objectives (commonly known as concessionary leases or peppercorn leases), AASB 1058 and AASB 16 requires NFP entities to measure right of use assets at initial recognition at fair value (based on AASB 13), the lease liability per AASB 16 and the difference to be accounted as income upfront.

AASB 2018 8 provides a temporary option for NFP lessees to elect to measure a class (or classes) of right of use assets arising under 'concessionary leases' at initial recognition, at either fair value or cost. If an entity chooses the cost option, additional disclosures are required for each material 'concessionary / peppercorn lease' on the nature and terms and the entity's dependence on such leases.

For the concessionary leases, the Group has decided to make use of the temporary option under AASB 2018 8 to measure the right of use assets at cost on initial recognition.

As a lessee, the Group previously classified leases as operating or finance leases based on its assessment of whether the lease transferred substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership. Under AASB 16, the Group recognises right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for most leases. However, the Group has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for some leases of low value assets based on the value of the underlying asset when new or for short-term leases with a lease term of 12 months or less.

On adoption of AASB 16, the Group recognised right-of-use assets and lease liabilities in relation to leases of buildings and property, plant and equipment, which had previously been classified as operating leases.

The lease liabilities were measured at the present value of the remaining lease payments, discounted using the Group's incremental borrowing rate as at 1 July 2019. The Group's incremental borrowing rate is the rate at which a similar borrowing could be obtained from an independent creditor under comparable terms and conditions. The weighted-average rate applied was 6.77%.

The right-of-use assets were measured as follows:

- Buildings: measured at an amount equal to the lease liability, adjusted by the amount of any prepaid or accrued lease payments
- Property, plant and equipment: the carrying value that would have resulted from AASB 16 being applied from the commencement date of the leases, subject to the practical expedients noted above.

Impact on transition

On transition to AASB 16, the Group recognised additional right-of-use assets and additional lease liabilities, recognising the difference in retained earnings. The impact on transition is summarised below:

	1 JULY 2019 \$'000
Right-of-use assets – buildings	881
Right-of-use assets – property, plant and equipment	226
Lease liabilities	1,107

The following table reconciles the minimum lease commitments disclosed in the Group's 30 June 2019 annual financial statements to the amount of lease liabilities recognised on 1 July 2019:

	1 JULY 2019 \$'000
Minimum operating lease commitments as at 30 June 2019	1,385
Less: GST in minimum operating lease commitments as at 30 June 2019	123
Less: short-term leases not recognised under AASB 16	99
Less: low value leases not recognised under AASB 16	29
Undiscounted lease payments	1,134
Less: effect of discounting using the incremental borrowing rate at the date of initial application	27
Lease liabilities recognised at 1 July 2019	1,107

1.7 Restatement of prior year comparatives

As part of NLC's commitment to improve the financial year end process and achieve accurate financial reporting, NLC management have performed a review of rights and obligations of land, buildings and leasehold improvements during the financial year ended 30 June 2020. As a result of this review, NLC management have identified four buildings that were in error classified as buildings instead of leasehold improvements. These assets had been classified as buildings since 2013. During the 2014 and 2017 revaluation review process, management continued to classify these assets as buildings until 30 June 2019. The difference in useful life is between 40 years (at 2.5% per annum) compared to lease terms of 10-15 years (approximately 7-10% per annum). Management assessed the error from the beginning of the lease terms and posted correcting journal entries to appropriately reflect the depreciation expenses from previous years.

The net impact on each line items affected due to the correction of error as at 1 July 2018 were:

- Opening retained surplus decreased by \$498,914
- Reclassification of buildings to leasehold improvements with net book value of \$752,607
- Asset revaluation reserve increased by \$369,144.

The NLC has restated the amounts for the 2018-19 financial year in the Statement of Comprehensive Income, Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Changes in Equity. The table below details the changes in the financial statements as a result of the restatement due to correction of the error.

	2018-19 \$'000	2018-19 ADJUSTMENTS \$'000	RESTATED 2018-19 COMPARATIVES \$'000
Statement of Comprehensive Income			
Depreciation and amortisation	2,398	138	2,536
Surplus on continuing operations	2,839	(138)	2,701
Statement of Financial Position			
Buildings	14,307	(917)	13,390
Leasehold improvements	3,382	650	4,032
Statement of Changes in Equity			
Asset revaluation reserve	6,129	369	6,498
Retained surplus	24,243	(636)	23,607

Note 2. Event after the Reporting Period

There are no subsequent events that had the potential to significantly affect the ongoing structure and financial activities of the Group.

Note 3. Expenses

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 3A: Employee Benefits		
Wages and salaries	27,996	24,550
Superannuation		
Defined contribution plans	3,190	2,798
Leave and other entitlements	1,260	1,077
Total employee benefits	32,446	28,425

Accounting policies for employee related expenses is contained in Note 10.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 3B: Suppliers		
Goods and services supplied or rendered		
Consultants	4,365	4,761
Stationery	582	588
Travel	2,501	3,685
Vehicle expenses	1,256	1,664
Office accommodation	936	1,232
IT/Communications	3,000	2,924
Meeting costs	1,019	1,248
Financial and legal services	1,998	1,329
Payment to grant partners	3,843	3,560
Training costs	269	312
Funeral and ceremonial costs	369	390
Equipment hire and minor purchases	965	622
Other	1,350	1,086
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	22,453	23,401
Other suppliers		
Operating lease rentals minimum lease payments*	288	575
Workers compensation expenses	167	197
Total other suppliers	455	772
Total suppliers	22,908	24,173

* The Group has applied AASB 16 using the modified retrospective approach and therefore the comparative information has not been restated and continues to be reported under AASB 117.

The Group has short-term lease commitments of \$87,341 as at 30 June 2020.

The above lease disclosures should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes 3E, 4E, 7 and 8D.

Accounting Policy

Short term leases and leases of low value assets

The Group has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of assets that a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (less than \$10,000). The entity recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

	2020 \$'000	2019 RESTATED* \$'000
Note 3C: Depreciation and Amortisation		
Property, plant and equipment	1,458	1,371
Buildings and leasehold improvements*	2,001	1,165
Total depreciation and amortisation	3,459	2,536

* The comparatives information has been restated as a result of correction of error in classification of leasehold improvements (see note 1.7).

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 3D: Losses from Sale of Assets		
Proceeds from sale	(1,828)	-
Carrying value of assets disposed	1,963	-
Total losses from sale of assets	135	-

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 3E: Finance Costs		
Interest on borrowings	64	122
Account fees and charges	24	3
Interest on lease liabilities	55	-
Total finance costs	143	125

The Group has applied AASB 16 using the modified retrospective approach and therefore the comparative information has not been restated and continues to be reported under AASB 117.

The above lease disclosure should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes 3B, 4E, 7 and 8D.

Accounting Policy

All borrowing costs are expensed as incurred.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 3F: Loss on Revaluation of Investment Property		
Loss on revaluation of investment property	189	-
Total loss on revaluation of investment property	189	-

Refer to note 7C for investment property revaluation.

Note 4. Own-Source Revenue and Gains

Own-source revenue

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 4A: Revenue from Contracts with Customers		
Rendering of services		
Government departments	1,733	300
External parties	2,594	3,557
Total revenue from contracts with customers	4,327	3,857
Disaggregation of revenue from contracts with customers		
Type of customers:		
Australian Government entities	1,725	1,792
State and Territory Governments	10	-
Non-government entities	2,592	2,065
	4,327	3,857

The principal activities associated with Revenue from contracts with customers relate to fees for service and fees for administrative support. The associated revenue is recognised over time as the services are delivered/performed.

The Group applies the practical expedient provided in AASB15.121 by not disclosing information for a performance obligation if the duration of the contract is less than 1 year.

Accounting Policy

When a contract is within scope of AASB 15 (which is an enforceable contract, with sufficiently specific performance obligations) the Group determines when these obligations have been satisfied.

When revenue is classified in accordance with AASB 1058, this revenue is recognised immediately in the profit or loss.

The following is a description of principle activities from which the Group generates its revenue:

Revenue from rendering of services: The Group receives grant funding to fulfil specific performance obligations per the underlying contract. For these specific contracts, revenue is either recognised over time as the costs are incurred for these contracts or at a point in time in accordance with the underlying contract.

The transaction price is the total amount of consideration to which the Group expects to be entitled in exchange for transferring promised goods or services to a customer. The consideration promised in a contract with a customer may include fixed amounts, variable amounts, or both.

Where revenue is recognised in accordance with AASB 1058, this revenue is recognised immediately in profit or loss.

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.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 4B: Interest		
Deposits	319	560
Total interest	319	560

Accounting Policy

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method as set out in AASB 9 Financial Instruments.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 4C: Gains from Sale of Assets		
Proceeds from sale of assets	-	237
Carrying value of assets disposed	-	(118)
Total gains from sale of assets	-	119

Accounting Policy

Gains from disposal of assets are recognised when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 4D: Reversals of Write-Downs and Impairment		
Reversal of impairment losses - property, plant and equipment	54	599
Less: Loss allowances for trade receivables	(26)	(62)
Total reversals of write-downs and impairments	28	537

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 4E: Rental Income		
Operating lease		
Investment properties*	324	398
Other	59	114
Total rental income	383	512

*The Group has applied AASB 16 using the modified retrospective approach and therefore the comparative information has not been restated and continues to be reported under AASB 117.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 4F: Revenue from Government		
Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet (PM&C) and National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)*		
Native Title Program	5,534	5,840
Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) s64 (1)	36,655	31,264
Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) s64 (4)	35	-
Others	-	216
Total Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet and NIAA	42,224	37,320
Special Purpose Grants		
Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet	12,966	11,283
Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation	2,043	1,257
Department of Defence	175	173
Department of Primary Industries & Resources (NTG)	696	-
Department of Environment & Natural Resources (NTG)	551	1,390
Department of Agriculture & Water Resources (NTG)	730	693
Parks & Wildlife Commission (NTG)	180	249
Northern Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance	73	-
Charles Darwin University	120	-
Director of National Parks	122	-
Bush Heritage Australia	28	-
Other	82	10
Total special purpose grants	17,766	15,055
Total revenue from Government	59,990	52,375

* In 2018-19, these grants were provided by the PM&C. The Indigenous Affairs Group within PM&C became an Executive Agency within the PM&C portfolio on 1 July 2019, named as the NIAA.

Accounting Policy

Funding received in accordance with ABA s.64(1) is recognised immediately in accordance with AASB 1058. Special purpose grants with sufficient specific performance obligations are recognised in accordance with AASB 15. Contracts with no specific performance obligations are recognised in accordance with AASB 1058.

Note 5. Income Tax Expenses

NLC has been approved as a Public Benevolent Institution. The services of the Council are provided on a 'not-for-profit' basis. Therefore, NLC is not subject to the Australian Government's Competitive Neutrality policy.

Accounting Policy

Taxation

NLC 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 the amount of the GST except:

- a) where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office; and
- b) for receivables and payables which are recognised inclusive of GST.

The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included as part of receivables or payables.

Cash flows are included in the statement of cash flows on a gross basis. The GST component of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is classified as operating cash flows.

Northern Land Council

NLC does not provide services on a for-profit basis. Therefore, NLC is not required to make Australian Income Tax Equivalent payments to the Government.

Subsidiaries

NAAC is exempt from tax under the provisions of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* subdivision 50-B. This situation will continue so long as the funds of the Corporation are being applied for the purpose for which it was established.

NAACT is exempt from tax under the provisions of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* Subdivision 50-B. This situation will continue so long as the funds of the trust are being applied for the purpose for which it was established.

NAIC was incorporated in Australia in 1987 and is the corporate trustee for the NAACT. The trustee company has no other assets or liabilities and has no operations other than in its capacity as trustee. Therefore, this entity is not subject to income tax.

Other subsidiaries that have not been consolidated as part of the Group are not exempt from taxation under the provision of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

Note 6. Financial Assets

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 6A: Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Cash on hand or on deposit	41,244	28,143
Total cash and cash equivalents	41,244	28,143

Accounting Policy

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents include:

- cash on hand
- 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.

The closing balance of cash does not include amounts held in trust. Refer Note 22 "Royalty Assets Held in Trust" for further information.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 6B: Trade and Other Receivables		
Goods and services receivables		
Goods and services receivables	1,239	1,864
Total goods and services receivables	1,239	1,864
Grant receivables		
External parties	484	55
Government entities	582	225
Total grant receivables	1,066	280
Total trade and other receivables (gross)	2,305	2,144
Less impairment loss allowance		
Grants receivable	-	(40)
Goods and services	(119)	(105)
Total impairment loss allowance	(119)	(145)
Total trade and other receivables (net)	2,186	1,999

Credit terms for goods and services were within 30 days (2019: 30 days).

Accounting Policy

Financial assets

Trade receivables and other receivables that are held for the purpose of collecting the contractual cash flows where the cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest, that are not provided at below market interest rates, are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method adjusted for any loss allowance.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 6C: Lease Commitment Receivables		
Lease commitment receivables relate to the investment of properties owned by the Group with lease terms of between 1 to 5 years. The future minimum lease payments are as follows:		
No later than one year	218	372
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	32
Total lease commitment receivables	218	404

The lease commitments represent the non-cancellable portion of current leases of the Group's properties, and amounts are inclusive of GST. There were no contingent rents recognised as income in the period.

Note 7. Non-Financial Assets

Note 7A: Reconciliation of the Opening and Closing Balances of Land, Buildings, Leasehold Improvements and Property, Plant and Equipment

	LAND \$'000	BUILDINGS \$'000	LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS \$'000	PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Balance as at 1 July 2019					
Restated gross book value*	4,745	13,781	5,484	8,441	32,451
Restated accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment*	-	(391)	(1,452)	(4,125)	(5,968)
Total as at 1 July 2019*	4,745	13,390	4,032	4,316	26,483
Recognition of right of use assets of application of AASB16	-	881	-	226	1,107
Adjusted total as at 1 July 2019	4,745	14,271	4,032	4,542	27,590
Additions by purchase	96	524	256	2,489	3,365
Addition by right-of-use assets	-	65	-	21	86
Transfers	-	28	-	(36)	(8)
Revaluations recognised in other comprehensive income	(1,211)	83	(377)	700	(805)
Depreciation and amortisation	-	(228)	(1,572)	(1,314)	(3,114)
Depreciation on right-of-use assets	-	(221)	-	(124)	(345)
Disposals	(1,800)	-	-	(163)	(1,963)
Total as at 30 June 2020	1,830	14,522	2,339	6,115	24,806
Total as at 30 June 2020 represented by					
Gross book value	1,830	15,409	5,510	11,678	34,427
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	-	(887)	(3,171)	(5,563)	(9,621)
Total as at 30 June 2020	1,830	14,522	2,339	6,115	24,806
Carrying amount of right-of-use assets	-	725	-	123	848

* The comparatives information has been restated as a result of correction of error in classification of leasehold improvements (see note 1.7).

** 45 Mitchell Street, 5/29 Katherine Terrace and 28 Scheelite Crescent properties are rented to Northern Land Council from North Australia Aboriginal Corporation, within the consolidated Group. In the separate financial statements of the subsidiaries, these assets are classed as Investment Property and as a result, are classified to Buildings at the consolidated group level. All rental income and outgoings on-charged are eliminated on consolidation.

Revaluations of non-financial assets

All land, building, leasehold improvement and property, plant and equipment of the Group were subject to revaluation as per Group accounting policy and were independently revalued by Herron Todd White on 30 June 2020. A consolidated revaluation decrement of \$804,787 was charged to asset revaluation reserve, reflected in the consolidated statement of changes in equity.

The property at 45 Mitchell Street was revalued by Herron Todd White, using market approach, at \$7,200,000 (2018 valuation: \$9,800,000). The lease for the building at 45 Mitchell Street Darwin NT was renegotiated and signed in September 2019 reducing the annual rental amount by 21.5%. In 2019, a director's valuation was performed using the net income approach similar to the one performed by the independent valuer resulting in an impairment of the value of the property by \$1,824,986.

On 30 June 2020 the property at 32 Dripstone Street, Darwin NT was also valued by Herron Todd White at \$4,800,000 (2018 valuation: \$5,000,000).

On 30 June 2020 the properties at Bradshaw Cres and Katherine Tce, Katherine and Scheelite Cres Tennant Creek NT, were also independently valued by Herron Todd White, using the market approach. This resulted in a combined valuation of \$2,830,000. In 2019 the directors used objective evidence from independent valuations performed in June 2016 and an internal capitalisation of net income approach which resulted in a combined valuation of \$2,052,000.

No indicators of impairment were found for land, buildings, leasehold improvements and property, plant and equipment at year end other than impairment of 45 Mitchell Street, Darwin NT property owned by NAAC. No land, buildings, leasehold improvements and property, plant and equipment are expected to be sold or disposed of within the next 12 months.

The contractual commitments for the purchase of the land, buildings, leasehold improvements and property, plant and equipment of the Group is \$189,833 in 2020 (2019: \$324,190), amounts are inclusive of GST.

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 Group's accounts immediately prior to the restructuring.

Asset Recognition Threshold

Purchases of land, buildings, leasehold improvements and 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	\$1
Buildings	\$2,000 - \$25,000
Leasehold improvements	\$2,000 - \$10,000
Furniture and equipment	\$2,000 - \$10,000
Information technology (hardware)	\$2,000 - \$10,000
Information technology (software)	\$2,000 - \$10,000
Motor vehicles	\$2,000 - \$10,000

Revaluations

Fair values for each class of asset are determined as shown below:

Asset Class Fair Value Measurement

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Fair Value Measurement</u>
Land	Market selling price
Buildings excluding leasehold improvements	Market selling price
Leasehold improvements	Depreciated replacement cost
Property, plant and equipment	Market selling price

Following initial recognition at cost, land, buildings, leasehold improvements and property plant and equipment (excluding ROU assets) 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. An independent valuer conducted the valuations and has provided a comprehensive review and valuation of all stated assets on 30 June 2020 for financial reporting purposes on NLC's assets. An independent valuation of the property at 45 Mitchell Street, Darwin NT and 32 Dripstone Street, Darwin NT properties were conducted by Herron Todd White in the financial year ended 30 June 2020 for NAAC.

Leased Right-of-use (ROU) Assets

Leased ROU assets are capitalised at the commencement date of the lease and comprise of the initial lease liability amount, initial direct costs incurred when entering into the lease less any lease incentives received. These assets are accounted for by Commonwealth lessees as separate asset classes to corresponding assets owned outright, but included in the same column as where the corresponding underlying assets would be presented if they were owned.

On initial adoption of AASB 16 the Group has adjusted the ROU assets at the date of initial application by the amount of any provision for onerous leases recognised immediately before the date of initial application. Following initial application, an impairment review is undertaken for any right-of-use lease asset that shows indicators of impairment and an impairment loss is recognised against any right-of-use lease asset that is impaired. Lease ROU assets continue to be measured at cost after initial recognition in the financial statements.

Depreciation

Depreciable buildings, leasehold improvements and property, plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to the Group 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:

	2020	2019
Buildings on freehold land	40 years	40 years
Leasehold improvements	Lease term	Lease term
Office furniture and equipment	3-5 years	3-5 years
Motor vehicles	5-8 years	5-8 years
Plant and equipment	2-10 years	2-10 years

The depreciation rates for ROU assets are based on the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the ROU asset or the end of the lease term.

Impairment

All assets were assessed for impairment at 30 June 2020. Where indications of impairment exist, the assets' recoverable amount is estimated, and an impairment adjustment is made 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 Group 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.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 7B: Other Non-Financial Assets		
Deposits	16	15
Other	109	28
Prepayments	368	435
Total other non-financial assets	493	478

Other non-financial assets to be recovered

All other non-financial assets are expected to be recovered in no more than 12 months

No indicators of impairment were found for other non-financial assets.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 7C: Investment property		
Beginning of the year	1,749	1,749
Increase / (decrease) in fair value during the year	(189)	-
Closing balance	1,560	1,749

Investment properties comprise residential properties leased to third parties outside the Group. These properties are owned by NAAC.

In 2020 an independent valuation of the properties at Bradshaw Cres, Katherine NT was performed by Herron Todd White, using the market approach. This resulted in a decrease in valuation of these properties, the revaluation decrease is recognised in the profit or loss.

Accounting Policy

Investment property, principally comprising land, buildings and fixed plant and equipment, is held for long-term rental yields and is not occupied by the Group.

Investment properties are measured initially at cost, including transaction costs. The carrying amount includes the cost of replacing part of an existing investment property at the time that cost is incurred if the recognition criteria are met, and excludes the costs of the day-to-day servicing of an investment property. Subsequent to initial recognition, investment properties are measured at fair value, which reflects market conditions at the reporting date. Gains or losses arising from changes in the fair values of investment properties are recognised in profit or loss in the year in which they arise. Investment properties are revalued every three years or earlier if required.

Investment properties are derecognised either when they have been disposed of or when the investment property is permanently withdrawn from use and no future economic benefit is expected from its disposal. Any gains or losses on the retirement of an investment property are recognised in profit or loss in the year of retirement or disposal.

Transfers are made to investment property when, and only when, there is a change in use, evidenced by ending of owner-occupation or commencement of an operating lease to another party. Transfers are made from investment property when, and only when, there is a change in use, evidenced by commencement of owner-occupation or commencement of development with a view to sale.

For a transfer from investment property to owner-occupied property or inventories, the deemed cost of the property for subsequent accounting is its fair value at the date of change in use. If the property occupied by the Group as an owner-occupied property becomes an investment property, the Group accounts for such property in accordance with the policy stated under Property, Plant and Equipment (note 7A) up to the date of change in use. When the Group completes the construction or development of a self-constructed investment property, any difference between the fair value of the property at that date and its previous carrying amount is recognised in profit or loss.

Note 8. Payables

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 8A: Suppliers		
Trade creditors and accruals	3,714	2,569
Total suppliers	3,714	2,569

Suppliers expected to be settled

All suppliers are expected to be settled in no more than 12 months.

Settlement was usually made within 30 days.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 8B: Other Payables		
Salaries and wages	403	257
Superannuation	1	251
GST payable to the Australian Taxation Office	24	55
Other	135	88
Total other payables	563	651

Other payables expected to be settled

All other payables are expected to be settled in no more than 12 months.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 8C: Borrowings		
Secured - at amortised cost		
Bank loans	2,280	2,717
Total borrowings	2,280	2,717

A new NAB Corporate Market Loan was negotiated during the financial year totalling \$2,342,000 effective from 29 January 2020.

The NAB Corporate Market Loan is secured by a registered mortgage broker over the property situated at 32 Dripstone Road, Darwin NT. Registered mortgage holdings under the previous loans (45 Mitchell Street, Darwin NT and 15, 17 and 19 Bradshaw Crescent, Katherine NT) have been released by the bank in the current financial year.

The length of the loan has been negotiated at 2 years which aligns the loan to the average lease terms on the security held. The loan will be re-negotiable upon expiry terms. The variable floating interest rate is set at the Bank Bill Swap Bid Rate (BBSY) plus the drawn margin of 1.75% per annum. The quarterly principal repayment of the renegotiated loan is \$62,500.

Accounting Policy

Financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as other financial liabilities.

Other financial liabilities

Other financial liabilities, including borrowings, are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs. Other financial liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with interest expense recognised on an effective yield basis.

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial liability and of allocating interest expense over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments through the expected life of the financial liability, or (where appropriate) a shorter period, to the net carrying amount on initial recognition.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

The Group derecognises financial liabilities when, and only when, the Group's obligations are discharged, cancelled or they expire. The difference between the carrying amount of the financial liability derecognised and the consideration paid and payable is recognised in profit or loss.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 8D: Leases		
Lease liability for buildings	621	-
Lease liability for plant and equipment	247	-
Total leases	868	-

The Entity has applied AASB 16 using the modified retrospective approach and therefore the comparative information has not been restated and continues to be reported under AASB 117.

Total cash outflow for leases for the year ended 30 June 2020 was \$239,000.

Accounting Policy

Refer to note 1.6 for accounting policy on leases.

Note 9. Unearned Revenue

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Advanced payments	22,384	18,823
Total unearned revenue	22,384	18,823
Australian Government Entities	19,770	16,252
State and Territory Governments	1,309	1,052
Non-government entities	1,305	1,519
Total unearned revenue	22,384	18,823

Unearned revenue expected to be settled

All unearned revenue is expected to be settled in no more than 12 months. Unearned revenue is made up of various special purpose grants and projects, which will be used as per grant agreements.

Note 10. Employee Provisions

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Leave	5,413	3,987
Total employee provisions	5,413	3,987

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 Group'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 employee benefits expected to be settled within twelve months of the end of reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

The Group used the shorthand method to calculate the long service leave liability.

Termination benefits

A liability for a termination benefit is recognised at the earlier of when the Group can no longer withdraw the offer of the termination benefit and when the Group recognises any related restructuring costs.

Defined contribution plans

Contributions to defined contribution superannuation plans are recognised as an expense when employees have rendered service entitling them to the contributions. NLC Group staff can choose their own super fund with most members being with Australian Super. The Group makes employer-contributions to the employees' defined benefit superannuation scheme, at rates determined by the enterprise agreement and *Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993*. The liability of superannuation recognised as at 30 June 2020 represents outstanding contributions for the last month of the year.

Note 11. Subsidiaries

Details of the Group's material subsidiaries at the end of the reporting period are as follows:

NAME OF SUBSIDIARY	PROPORTION OF OWNERSHIP AND VOTING POWER HELD BY THE NLC	
	2020	2019
North Australia Aboriginal Corporation (i)	100%	100%
Northern Aboriginal Investment Corporation Pty Ltd (ii)	100%	75%
Northern Australian Aboriginal Charitable Trust (iii)	100%	100%

- (i) NLC has the power to control NAAC by virtue of having the right to appoint Executive Council members to the Board of NAAC.
- (ii) NAIC was incorporated in Australia in 1987 and is the corporate trustee for NAACT. The trustee company has no other assets or liabilities and has no operations other than in its capacity as trustee. The NLC holds 75% of the 100 ordinary shares of \$1 each of NAIC. The company which holds the remaining 25% shareholding was deregistered in 2002. In 2020 these 25 shares were cancelled by Australian Security and Investment Commission (ASIC).
- (iii) Per (ii) above, NLC effectively fully controls and holds 100% of the voting rights of NAIC and therefore the ownership and voting power held by the Group in NAACT is 100%.

Refer to note 1.4 for the list of subsidiaries that are not consolidated as part of the Group's financial statements as they are immaterial to the Group.

Note 12. Parent Entity Information

The accounting policies of the parent entity, which have been applied in determining the financial information shown below, are the same as those applied in the consolidated financial statements except as set out below. Refer to Note 1 for a summary of the significant accounting policies relating to the group. As mentioned in Note 1.7, 2019 comparative figures have been restated under AASB 108 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors*.

Investments in subsidiaries

Investments in subsidiaries are accounted for at cost.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Financial Position		
Assets		
Financial assets	40,775	28,723
Non-financial assets****	12,945	10,566
Total assets	53,720	39,289
Liabilities		
Payables*	3,520	2,918
Lease liabilities**	2,292	-
Unearned revenue	22,336	18,671
Provisions***	5,743	3,933
Total liabilities	33,891	25,522
Net assets	19,829	13,767
Equity		
Equity****	19,829	13,767
Total Equity	19,829	13,767
Financial Performance		
Surplus for the year****	5,580	2,551
Total comprehensive income	5,580	2,551
Contingent assets and liabilities of the parent entity		
Contingent liabilities	135	30
Total contingent liabilities	135	30

Commitments for the acquisition of land, buildings, leasehold improvements and property, plant and equipment by the parent entity

The contractual commitments for the purchase of the land, buildings, leasehold improvements and property, plant and equipment of the parent entity is \$164,730 in 2020 (2019: \$288,000), amounts are inclusive of GST.

- * Payables include borrowings, other payables and suppliers.
- ** On adoption of AASB 16 NLC recognised right-of-use assets and lease liabilities in relation to leases of buildings and property, plant and equipment, which were previously classified as operating leases. On consolidation group eliminated leased properties owned by NAAC to the value of \$1,423,406.
- *** Included in provisions is a make-good provision of \$465,300 which relates to NLC's commercial office lease. The lease on this office will expire on 31 August 2021. The remaining provision relates to employee benefits.
- **** The comparatives information has been restated as a result of correction of error in classification of leasehold improvements (see note 1.7).

Note 13. Contingent Assets and Liabilities

	CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES OR COSTS	
	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Contingent Liabilities		
Balance from previous period	30	34
New contingent liabilities recognised	105	-
Obligations expired	-	(4)
Total contingent liabilities	135	30

Quantifiable contingencies

The above table contains \$135,000 of contingent liabilities disclosed in respect to claims for damages/costs (2019: \$30,000). The amount represents an estimate of the Group's liability based on precedent cases. The NLC is defending the claims.

The nature of decisions of the NLC 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 NLC.

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 Northern Land Council (NLC) is a statutory authority of the Commonwealth of Australia, under the Minister for Indigenous Australians (the Portfolio Minister). The NLC’s supreme body is the Full Council, made up of 83 members – 78 members plus 5 co-opted women positions, elected once every three years from across 7 NLC regions, with the next election schedule to be held in December 2022. Full Council elections were held on 3 December 2019.

The Portfolio Minister approves the method of choosing members of the NLC. Section 29 of the ALRA, states that an Aboriginal person who is a traditional owner or a resident living within the NLC region may nominate for membership of the NLC.

The Chair and the Deputy Chair are elected at the first meeting of the Full Council, along with one member nominated from each of the NLC’s 7 regions as Executive Council members. The Chair and the Deputy Chair comprise the NLC Group’s nine-member Executive Council. Being a member of the Group Executive Council is a pre-requisite to serve on the Boards of all of NLC’s subsidiaries.

The related parties to this Group are Key Management Personnel of the Group.

The NLC Group Council Executive Members, who held office during and for the year ended 30 June 2020:

NAME	NLC (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL)		NAIC, NAACT & NAAC	
	POSITION	TERM	POSITION	TERM
Samuel Bush-Blanasi	Chairperson	Full year	Director*	Full year
John Christophersen	Deputy Chairperson	Part year up to 02/12/2019	Director	Part year up to 27/02/2020
Richard Dixon	Executive Member	Part year up to 02/12/2019	Not applicable	
Raymond Hector	Executive Member	Part year up to 02/12/2019	Director	Part year up to 27/02/2020
Ronald Lami Lami	Executive Member	Part year up to 02/12/2019	Director	Part year up to 27/02/2020
Peter Lansen	Executive Member	Part year up to 02/12/2019	Director	Part year up to 27/02/2020
Elizabeth Sullivan	Executive Member	Part year up to 02/12/2019	Director	Part year up to 27/02/2020
Helen Lee	Executive Member	Full year	Director**	Full year
Calvin Deveraux	Executive Member	Part year from 02/12/2019	Not applicable	
Christopher Neade	Executive Member	Part year from 02/12/2019	Director	Part year from 27/02/2020

NAME	NLC (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL)		NAIC, NAACT & NAAC	
	POSITION	TERM	POSITION	TERM
Grace (Riley) Daniels	Executive Member	Part year from 02/12/2019	Director	Part year from 07/05/2020
Brian Pedwell	Executive Member	Part year from 02/12/2019	Director	Part year from 27/02/2020
Matthew Ryan	Executive Member	Part year from 02/12/2019	Director	Part year from 27/02/2020
William (Bill) Danks	Executive Member	Part year from 02/12/2019	Director	Part year from 27/02/2020
Djawa Yunupingu	Executive Member	Full year	Director	Part year from 27/02/2020

* NAAC Chairperson for part year up to 27/02/2020

** NAAC Chairperson for part year from 27/02/2020

The NLC Group Chief Executives, who held office over the 2019/20 financial year, were as follows:

NAME	NLC GROUP	TERM
Marion Scrymgour	NLC	Full Year
Steve Smith	NAAC, NAIC, NAACT	Full Year

Balances and transactions between the Group have been eliminated on consolidation and are not disclosed in this note. Transactions between the Group and its subsidiaries, which are not being consolidated are disclosed below.

Trading transactions

During the year, the Group entered into the following transactions with subsidiaries that are not consolidated as part of the Group. The following amounts were outstanding at the reporting date:

	AMOUNTS OWED BY RELATED PARTIES		AMOUNTS OWED TO RELATED PARTIES	
	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Related party				
Create Housing and Constructions Pty Ltd	-	358	-	-
Wirib Tourism Park Pty Ltd	2	-	-	6
Total	2	358	-	6

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Loans to related parties		
Loans to other related parties:		
Directors Loans	-	3
Total	-	3

The loan relates to recovery of expense payments to Directors of the subsidiaries. There were no other transactions with Directors, or any other entities controlled by common Directors.

In 2017, NLC and Central Land Council (CLC) had developed a joint economic development framework which includes, as a cornerstone, the establishment of the Aboriginal Land and Sea Economic Development Agency (ALSEDA). It is intended that ALSEDA provides funds to establish enterprises/businesses on Aboriginal land and coordinate the stakeholders required to ensure their success. Over the last three financial years the Northern Territory Government invested \$1.097 million in the establishment of ALSEDA.

In November 2018, an Agreement to the value of \$900,000 (excluding GST) was signed by Mr Joseph Morrison, as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the NLC, between NLC and Centrefarm Aboriginal Horticulture Ltd (Centrefarm). The Agreement was in relation to a Special Purpose Funding, provided by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), in respect of the ALSEDA Project. At the time the agreement was signed Mr Morrison was one of two Centrefarm Directors. Of the \$900,000 only \$50,000 was paid to Centrefarm while Mr Morrison was the CEO.

Centrefarm, established by the CLC in 2002, is a not-for-profit Aboriginal company limited by guarantee and has members, not shareholders. Those members are the Aboriginal Traditional Owners that it works for, to engender economic development on Aboriginal land, Aboriginal land-trust properties, other properties and areas owned or part-owned by Aboriginal interests.

In October 2019, the new CEO of NLC, Ms Marion Scrymgour, reviewed the agreement and signed a variation to the November 2018 Agreement to include the following:

- increase the contract value to \$1,059,000 (excluding GST) to match the funds received from the PM&C
- adjust the completion date for this project from 20 November 2020 to 31 March 2020; and
- the submission of a completion-report, along with an acquittal.

As at 29 November 2019, \$1,059,000 (excluding GST) has been paid in relation to this Agreement.

On 16 April 2020, Ms Scrymgour was appointed director of Centrefarm after the contract variation and all payments were made.

Note 15. Key Management Personnel Remuneration

Key management personnel (KMP) are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the Group, directly or indirectly, including any of the directors of the Group.

The NLC has determined the KMP to be the NLC Executive Council members and the CEOs of the Group.

The executive remuneration of the Group are set out below in aggregate for each of the categories specified in AASB 124 *Related Party Disclosure*:

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Short-term employee benefits:		
Salary	956	900
Other benefits and allowance	43	52
Total short-term employee benefits	999	952
Post-employment benefits:		
Superannuation	97	106
Total post-employment benefits:	97	106
Other long-term employee benefits:		
Long-service leave	21	8
Total other long-term employee benefits:	21	8
Termination payout:		
Superannuation	-	365
Total post-employment benefits:	-	365
Total executive remuneration expenses	1,117	1,431

The total number of key management personnel that are included in the above table are 17 (2019: 15).

Note 16. Remuneration of Auditors

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Remuneration of auditors for the reporting period are as follows:		
Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) - Statutory audit: NLC	110	169
Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) - Statutory audit: NAAC (2017-18 to 2019-20)	77	-
Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) - Statutory audit: NAACT (2012-13 to 2019-20)	124	-
HLB Mann Judd - Grants Audits	21	12
Merit Partners - NAAC	-	10
Merit Partners - NAACT	-	4
Total remuneration to auditors	332	195

The audit fees above report the costs associated with auditing each financial year.

No other services were provided by the ANAO, HLB Mann Judd, and Merit Partners.

Note 17. Financial Instruments

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 17A: Categories of Financial Instruments		
Financial assets at amortised cost		
Cash at bank	41,244	28,143
Trade and other receivables	2,186	1,999
Total financial assets at amortised cost	43,430	30,142
Total financial assets	43,430	30,142
Financial Liabilities		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Trade creditors	3,714	2,569
Other payables	563	88
Unearned revenue	22,384	-
Borrowings	2,280	2,717
Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	28,941	5,374
Total financial liabilities	28,941	5,374

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Note 17B: Net Gains or Losses on Financial Assets		
Financial assets at amortised cost		
Interest revenue	319	560
Net gains on financial assets at amortised cost	319	560

Fair Value Measurement

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 Group classifies its financial assets at amortised cost.

The classification depends on both the Group's business model for managing the financial assets and contractual cash flow characteristics at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised when the entity becomes a party to the contract and, as a consequence, has a legal right to receive or a legal obligation to pay cash and derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire or are transferred upon trade date.

Financial Assets at Amortised Cost

Financial assets included in this category need to meet two criteria:

1. the financial asset is held in order to collect the contractual cash flows; and
2. the cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest (SPPI) on the principal outstanding amount.

Amortised cost is determined using the effective interest method.

Effective Interest Method

Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis for financial assets that are recognised at amortised cost.

Impairment of Financial Assets

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period based on Expected Credit Losses, using the simplified approach which measures the loss allowance based on an amount equal to lifetime expected credit losses where risk has significantly increased, or an amount equal to 12-month expected credit losses if risk has not increased.

The simplified approach for trade, contract and lease receivables is used. This approach always measures the loss allowance as the amount equal to the lifetime expected credit losses. A write-off constitutes a derecognition event where the write-off directly reduces the gross carrying amount of the financial asset.

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as other financial liabilities. Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost

Financial liabilities, including borrowings, are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs. These liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with interest expense recognised on an effective interest basis.

Suppliers 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).

Note 18. Aggregate Assets and Liabilities

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Assets expected to be recovered in:		
No more than 12 months	43,923	30,579
More than 12 months	26,366	28,540
Total assets	70,289	59,119
Liabilities expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months	31,358	25,418
More than 12 months	3,864	3,329
Total liabilities	35,222	28,747

Note 19. ABA-Capital Works/Infrastructures

The Caring for Country Branch of the NLC manages various infrastructure construction and repairs and maintenance projects involving ranger groups from across the NLC regions, in order to address some of their long-term ranger program capacity needs and also ensure that NLC fulfils its Workplace Health and Safety obligations. The funding for this work was sourced from the ABA, NT Aboriginal Ranger Grants and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) Indigenous Ranger Grants programs.

	2019 \$'000	2020 \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Income			
Grant income*	-	-	1,258
Grant income	-	-	1,258
Expenditure			
Travel related expenses	4	9	13
Consultants	93	67	160
Meeting costs	2	1	3
Building/Capital works	617	318	935
Total expenditure	716	395	1,111
Surplus / (Deficit)	(716)	(395)	147

* Grant income to the value of \$1,823,000 relating to ABA Capital works was received in FY2017-18. In 2017-18 NLC carried forward \$1,258,127 unspent grant to 2018-19.

This note relates to NLC only.

Note 20. s64(1) Funding for COVID-19 Support

In April 2020 the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, approved a one-off payment of \$4 million under s64(1) of the ALRA to assist residents of Aboriginal communities impacted by restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Income:		
Grant income	4,000	-
Total income	4,000	-
Expenses:		
Vehicles and fuel	13	-
Meeting costs	42	-
Travel allowance	1	-
Accommodation	2	-
Community relations	11	-
Capital expense	48	-
Minor equipment	149	-
Total expenses	266	-
Surplus	3,734	-

The COVID-19 payment of \$4 million was recognised as income in accordance with AASB 1058 in the current financial year. As at 30 June 2020, funds to the value of \$3,733,972 remain unspent and will be expended in 2020-21.

This note relates to NLC only.

Note 21. Native Title

The NLC is a Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) under the Northern Territory Act. Since being recognised as an NTRB, the NLC has performed the functions of the NTRB in association with other NLC functions.

In the 2017-18 financial year, Native Title income and expenditure was audited and reported separately. As from the 2018-19 financial year, as per the new agreement, between the PM&C and NLC, a set of comprehensive financial statements is not required to acquit NLC's NTRB program funding, and the note disclosure in the NLC's financial statements was considered appropriate.

	2020 APPROVED BUDGET \$'000	2020 ACTUAL \$'000	2020 ACTUAL VS BUDGET \$'000	%
Income				
Income 2018/2019 brought forward	2,472	2,472	-	100%
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet funding - Operational	5,194	5,194	-	100%
Prescribed Bodies Corporate support funding	500	500	-	100%
Other income	-	2	2	0%
Interest income	38	39	1	103%
Total income	8,204	8,207	3	100%
Capital expenditure				
Vehicles	292	112	(180)	38%
Equipment	71	41	(30)	58%
Operational salaries				
Corporate staff (e.g. Accounting admin)	277	372	95	134%
Project staff (e.g. Legal, anthropologists, field)	3,233	2,729	(504)	84%
Services				
Accommodation	192	165	(27)	86%
Motor vehicles - corporate	162	64	(98)	40%
Repair and maintenance - equipment	10	-	(10)	0%
Repair and maintenance - buildings	10	-	(10)	0%
Bank charges	1	-	(1)	0%
Audit fees	14	-	(14)	0%
Consultants - attributable	1,933	1,364	(569)	71%

	2020 APPROVED BUDGET \$'000	2020 ACTUAL \$'000	2020 ACTUAL VS BUDGET \$'000	%
Communications, telephones, fax and information technology	134	154	20	115%
Insurance	83	75	(8)	90%
Energy and water	35	33	(2)	94%
Training and development				
Staff	20	31	11	155%
Meeting expenses				
Claimants	135	26	(109)	19%
Travel and allowances				
Claimants	79	37	(42)	47%
Staff travel - corporate	43	45	2	105%
Staff travel - attributable	299	64	(235)	21%
Supplies and consumables				
Office supplies and consumables - corporate	31	27	(4)	87%
Other operational				
Recruitment and relocation	12	35	23	292%
Equipment	-	3	3	0%
Advertising and publicity	10	-	(10)	0%
Computer services	95	41	(54)	43%
Transcripts and claim documents	2	9	7	450%
Other				
National Native Title Council contribution	31	27	(4)	87%
Prescribed Bodies Corporate support funding	1,000	82	(918)	8%
Total expenses	8,204	5,536	(2,668)	67%
Surplus	-	2,671	2,671	

This note relates to NLC only.

Note 22. Royalty Assets Held in Trust

Monetary Assets

The NLC maintains a Royalty Trust Account. The money in the Royalty Account mainly comes from government agencies, mining and exploration companies and various commercial operators under agreements made pursuant to the ALRA and NT Act. The NLC is required to distribute this money in accordance with the ALRA and NT Act. These monies are not available for other purposes and are not recognised in the financial statements of the NLC and the Group.

Non-monetary Assets

The NLC had no non-monetary assets held in trust in both the current and prior reporting periods.

Royalty Trust Account - Monetary Asset

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Cash held at the beginning of the reporting period	43,347	44,730
Receipts		
ABA section 64(3) royalty equivalents	17,360	17,869
Section 15, 16 & 19 rental and lease monies	20,795	30,216
Section 42, 43 and 44 mining exploration negotiated monies	16,038	14,086
Native Title	4,222	6,218
Contract administration	354	569
Other monies	459	728
Total receipts	59,228	69,686
Payments		
ABA section 35(2) royalty equivalents	(17,401)	(17,780)
Section 35(3) negotiated monies	(15,343)	(15,002)
Section 35(4) rental and lease monies	(20,163)	(27,687)
Native Title	(3,855)	(5,386)
Contract administration	(584)	(518)
Other monies	(2,598)	(1,980)
Total payments	(59,944)	(68,353)
GST paid to ATO	(2,860)	(2,717)
Total amount held at the end of the reporting period	39,771	43,347
Cash at bank	39,771	43,347

The reporting requirements of the ALRA are detailed in section 37(3) - (5) and refer to the application of monies received by the NLC under various sections of the ALRA, in particular under sub-section 64(3).

Receipts under section 64(3), as referred in section 35(2):

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Opening balance	90	-
Funds received	17,360	17,870
Funds distributed to the following associations:		
Gumatj Aboriginal Corporation	(10,370)	(10,642)
Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation	(3,191)	(3,274)
Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation	(2,393)	(2,456)
Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation	(1,447)	(1,408)
Closing balance	49	90

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 NLC 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 s64(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 has expired on 17 June 2020. A Full Council meeting was not held on schedule due to COVID-19. The Full Council will make a new determination in next council meeting in December 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 NLC 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 has expired on 17 June 2020. A Full Council meeting was not held on schedule due to COVID-19. The Full Council will make a new determination in next council meeting in December 2020.

This note relates to NLC only.

Note 23. Community Planning and Development Fund

The NLC's Community Planning and Development (CP&D) Program, endorsed by the NLC Full Council in November 2016 and commenced in the financial year 2017-18, supports groups of Aboriginal people to plan and implement projects that bring lasting community benefit (social, cultural, economic, environmental), using income that they receive from land use agreements. It is a voluntary, consent-based approach based on the principles of self-determination and participation, with Aboriginal people control and decision-making at every step. Approved CP&D Program designated funds are held on trust by the NLC for community benefit purposes, and then applied in accordance with the consultation and planning processes set out in the CP&D Program. Where there is a decision by Traditional Owners to set aside monies from payments in respect of Aboriginal land for community development projects, the NLC and its CP&D Program administer those funds in accordance with its obligations under the ALRA.

	2020 \$'000	2019 \$'000
Cash held at the beginning of the reporting period	3,745	2,044
Receipts		
Malak Malak	107	-
Wadeye	546	1,374
Rak Panngal	21	264
Gapuwiyak	87	71
Galiwinku	868	-
Ngurkurr	164	350
Seal IPA	-	450
VRD	180	-
Other	7	92
Total receipts	1,980	2,601
Payments		
Malak Malak	(61)	(15)
Wadeye	(18)	(12)
Rak Panngal	(262)	-
Gapuwiyak	(67)	(74)
Galiwinku	(529)	(271)
Ngurkurr	(176)	(61)
Seal IPA	(8)	(3)
VRD	(51)	(464)
Total payments	(1,172)	(900)
Total amount held at the end of the reporting period	4,553	3,745
Cash at bank	4,553	3,745

This note relates to NLC only.



Benung Billabong - Photo by Kathrine Carver

PART 5

Appendices



Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

COUNCIL MEETINGS ATTENDANCE

One meeting of the Full Council was held in 2019-20:

121st FCM Jabiru, 02-06 December 2019

BORROLOOLA / BARKLY	POSITION	WARD	121ST FCM 02 - 06 DEC 2019
Brian Limerick	Member	Alexandria	A
David Harvey	Member	Borrooloola	✓
Shaun Evans	Member	Borrooloola	✓
Keith Rory	Member	Borrooloola - Outstation	✓
Jack Green	Member	Brunette Downs	✓
Christopher Neade	Executive	Elliott	✓
Jason Bill	Member	Muckaty	✓
Jeffery Dixon	Member	Murrnaji	✓
Maxine Wallace	Member	Nicholson River	✓
Joy Priest	Member	North Barkly	✓
Richard Dixon	Member	Robinson River	✓
Gordon Noonan	Member	Rockhampton Downs	✓
John Finlay	Member	Wombaya	✓

DARWIN / DALY / WAGAIT	POSITION	WARD	121ST FCM 02 - 06 DEC 2019
Joy Cardona	Member	Daly River	✓
Matthew Shields	Member	Daly River North (Woolianna)	✓
Norman Miller	Member	Daly River South (Upper Daly)	✓
John Sullivan	Member	Daly River West (Woodycupildiya)	✓
Bill Danks	Executive	Darwin	✓
Christine Jenner	Member	Darwin	✓
Margaret Daiyi	Member	Darwin South (Adelaide River)	✓
Graham Kenyon	Member	Darwin East (Humpty Doo)	✓
Calvin Deveraux	Member	Darwin South West (Litchfield)	✓
Rex Edmunds	Member	Darwin West (Belyuen)	✓
Roger Wodidj	Member	Palumpa	✓
John Wilson	Member	Peppimenarti	✓
Aaron Banderson	Member	Pine Creek	✓
Tobias Nganbe	Member	Wadeye	✓
Mark Tunmuck-Smith	Member	Wadeye (North)	✓

EAST ARNHEM	POSITION	WARD	121ST FCM 02 - 06 DEC 2019
Bandarr (Michael) Wirrpanda	Member	Blue Mud Bay-Outstations	✓
Makungun (Brendan) Marika	Member	Blue Mud Bay-Outstations	✓
Peter Yawunydjurr	Member	Galiwinku	✓
Jason Guyula	Member	Galiwinku	✓
Kenny Guyula	Member	Galiwinku - Outstations	✓
Johnny Burrawanga	Member	Galiwinku - Outstations	✓
Bobby Wunungmurra	Member	Gapuwiyak	A
Jason Butjula	Member	Gapuwiyak	A
George Milaypuma	Member	Milingimbi	✓
Michael Ali	Member	Milingimbi	✓
David Warraya	Member	Ramingining	✓
David Rumba Rumba	Member	Ramingining	✓
Djawa Yunupingu	Executive	Ski Beach	✓
Djawa "Timmy" Murrmurrna	Member	Yirrkala	✓
Yananymul Mununggurr	Member	Yirrkala	✓
Witiyana Marika	Member	Yirrkala	✓

KATHERINE	POSITION	WARD	121ST FCM 02 - 06 DEC 2019
Helen Lee	Executive	Barunga	✓
Samantha Lindsay	Member	Bulman	A*
Lisa Mumbin	Member	Katherine	✓
Dwayne Rosas	Member	Katherine	✓
Ossie Daylight	Member	Mataranka/Djimbra (Jilkminggan)	✓
John Dalywater	Member	Weemol	✓
Samuel Bush-Blanasi	Chairman	Wugularr	✓

NGUKURR	POSITION	WARD	121ST FCM 02 - 06 DEC 2019
Sheila Hall Joshua	Member	Minyerri	✓
Walter Rogers	Member	Ngukurr & Outstations	✓
Grace Daniels	Executive	Ngukurr & Outstations	✓
Gregory Daniels	Member	Ngukurr & Outstations	✓
Hubert Nunggumajbarr	Member	Numbulwar & Outstations	✓
Virginia Nundhirribala	Member	Numbulwar & Outstations	✓
Ernest Numurdirdi	Member	Numbulwar & Outstations	✓
Peter Lansen	Member	Nutwood/Cox River	✓
Clifford Duncan	Member	Urapunga	✓

VICTORIA DISTRICT RIVER	POSITION	WARD	121ST FCM 02 - 06 DEC 2019
Shadrack Retchford	Member	Bulla	✓
Raymond Hector	Member	Pigeon Hole	✓
Charlie Newry	Member	Yingawunari	✓
Brian Pedwell	Executive	Yarralin	✓
Kenivan Anthony	Member	Amanbidji	✓
Lorraine Jones	Member	Timber Creek	✓

WEST ARNHEM	POSITION	WARD	121ST FCM 02 - 06 DEC 2019
June Fejo	Member	Cobourg	✓
Otto Dann	Member	Gunbalanya	✓
Timothy Nabegeyo	Member	Gunbalanya - Outstations	✓
Wayne Wauchope	Member	Gunbalanya - Outstations	✓
John Christophersen	Member	Kakadu	✓
Valda Bokmarray	Member	Maningrida	✓
Wayne Kala-Kala	Member	Maningrida	✓
Matthew Ryan	Executive	Maningrida - Outstations	✓
Julius Kernan	Member	Maningrida - Outstations	✓
Matthew Nagarlbin	Member	Minjilang	✓
Bunug Galaminda	Member	Warruwi - Outstations	✓
Jenny Inmulugulu	Member	Warruwi - Outstations	✓

Seven meetings of the Executive Council was held in 2019/20:

202nd ECM Darwin, 07-08 August 2019 203rd ECM Darwin, 21-22 August 2019
 204th ECM Darwin, 29 November 2019 205th ECM Darwin, 30 - 31 January 2020
 206th ECM Darwin, 12 - 14 March 2020 207th ECM Darwin, 5-6 & 8 May 2020
 208th ECM Darwin, 26-31 July 2020

NAME	REGION	202ND ECM 07-08 AUG 2019	203RD ECM 21-22 AUG 2019	204TH ECM 29 NOV 2019
Samuel Bush-Blanasi	Chairman	✓	✓	✓
John Christophersen	Deputy Chairman	✓	✓	✓
Helen Lee	Katherine	✓	✓	✓
Elizabeth Sullivan	DDW	✓	✓	✓
Ronald Lami Lami	West Arnhem	✓	A	✓
Richard "Dickie" Dixon	Borroloola/Barkly	✓	✓	✓
Djawa Yunupingu	East Arnhem	✓	A	✓
Raymond Hector	VRD	✓	✓	✓
Peter Lansen	Ngukurr	✓	✓	✓

NAMES	REGION	205TH ECM 30-31 JAN 2020	206TH ECM 12-14 MAR 2020	207TH ECM 5-6 & 8 MAY 2020	208TH ECM 26-31 JUL 2020
Samuel Bush-Blanasi	Chairman	✓	✓	✓	✓
Calvin Deveraux	Deputy Chairman	A	A	A	A
Helen Lee	Katherine	✓	✓	✓	A
Bill Danks	DDW	✓	✓	✓	✓
Matthew Ryan	West Arnhem	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chris Neade	Borroloola/Barkly	✓	✓	✓	✓
Djawa Yunupingu	East Arnhem	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brian Pedwell	VRD	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grace Daniels	Ngukurr	✓	✓	✓	✓

NOTE: * Where a member was not present a proxy attended.

- ✓ Member was in attendance
- A Member was an apology

COMPLIANCE INDEX

Compliance index of Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA RULE) requirements for corporate commonwealth entities.

ABOUT

REQUIREMENT UNDER 17BE OF THE PGPA RULE	PAGE(S) PGPA RULE 2014	PAGE(S) NLC
Approval of Annual Report by Accountable Authority	s.17BB	vii
Details of the legislation establishing the body	s.17BE (a)	12
A summary of the objects and functions of the entity as set out in legislation	s.17BE(b) (i)	12-15; 205
The purposes of the entity as included in the entity's corporate plan for the reporting period	s.17BE(b) (ii)	161; 187-200
The names of the persons holding the position of responsible Minister or responsible Ministers during the reporting period, and the titles of those responsible Ministers	s.17BE(c)	160
Directions given to the entity by the Minister under an Act or instrument during the reporting period	s.17BE(d)	160
Any government policy order that applied in relation to the entity during the reporting period under section 22 of the Act	s.17BE(e)	160
Particulars of non-compliance with: (a) a direction given to the entity by the Minister under an Act or instrument during the reporting period; or (b) a government policy order that applied in relation to the entity during the reporting period under section 22 of the Act	s.17BE(f)	NIL
Annual performance statements in accordance with paragraph 39(1)(b) of the Act and section 16F of the rule	s.17BE(g)	185 - 198
A statement of significant issues reported to the Minister under paragraph 19(1)(e) of the Act that relates to non-compliance with finance law and action taken to remedy non-compliance	s.17BE(h), 17BE(i)	02
Information on the accountable authority, or each member of the accountable authority, of the entity during the reporting period	s.17BE(j)	01; 7-10

REQUIREMENT UNDER 17BE OF THE PGPA RULE	PAGE(S) PGPA RULE 2014	PAGE(S) NLC
Outline of the organisational structure of the entity (including any subsidiaries of the entity)	s.17BE(k)	32
Statistics on the entity's employees on an ongoing and non-ongoing basis, including the following: (a) statistics on full-time employees; (b) statistics on part-time employees; (c) statistics on gender; (d) statistics on staff location	s.17BE(ka)	175-178
Outline of the location (whether or not in Australia) of major activities or facilities of the entity	s.17BE(l)	vi
Information relating to the main corporate governance practices used by the entity during the reporting period	s.17BE(m)	19-31; 163-174
For transactions with a related Commonwealth entity or related company where the value of the transaction, or if there is more than one transaction, the aggregate of those transactions, is more than \$10,000 (inclusive of GST): (a) the decision-making process undertaken by the accountable authority to approve the entity paying for a good or service from, or providing a grant to, the related Commonwealth entity or related company; and (b) the value of the transaction, or if there is more than one transaction, the number of transactions and the aggregate of value of the transactions	s.17BE(n), 17BE(o)	164-165
Any significant activities and changes that affected the operation or structure of the entity during the reporting period	s.17BE(p)	213
Particulars of judicial decisions or decisions of administrative tribunals that may have a significant effect on the operations of the entity	s.17BE(q)	42

REQUIREMENT UNDER 17BE OF THE PGPA RULE	PAGE(S) PGPA RULE 2014	PAGE(S) NLC
Particulars of any reports on the entity given by:	s.17BE(r)	NIL
(a) the Auditor-General (other than a report under section 43 of the Act); or		
(b) a Parliamentary Committee; or		
(c) the Commonwealth Ombudsman; or		
(d) the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner		
An explanation of information not obtained from a subsidiary of the entity and the effect of not having the information on the annual report	s.17BE(s)	242; 245-247
Details of any indemnity that applied during the reporting period to the accountable authority, any member of the accountable authority or officer of the entity against a liability (including premiums paid, or agreed to be paid, for insurance against the authority, member or officer's liability for legal costs)	s.17BE(t)	163
The following information about the audit committee for the entity:	s.17BE(taa)	169
(a) a direct electronic address of the charter determining the functions of the audit committee;		
(b) the name of each member of the audit committee;		
(c) the qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience of each member of the audit committee;		
(d) information about each member's attendance at meetings of the audit committee;		
(e) the remuneration of each member of the audit committee		
Information about executive remuneration	s.17BE(ta)	180-182
Operational and financial results	s.46 PGPA Act 2013	04-06; 205-259
Information about the remuneration of key management personnel, senior executives and other highly paid staff	subsection 17CA, CB and CC	181-182; 248

REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT 1976

REQUIREMENT	ALRA SECTION	PAGE(S) NLC
<p>FEES</p> <p>Specify the total fees received for services provided by the NLC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Under s 33A of ALRA for services provided under Part IV (Mining); andUnder s 33A for services prescribed by the regulations that it provides in performing any of its functions, whether in the reporting year of the previous year.Specify total fees received under s 33B (other fees charged to the Commonwealth).	<p>s 37(2), Part IV, s 33A and s 33B.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">No fee types prescribed under s 33A and no fees were requested under s 33B.	<p>226-228</p>
<p>SECTION 35 DETERMINATIONS</p> <p>Include details of payments by the NLC under s 35(2) or (3) and any determinations made by the Minister under s 35(6) made during the reporting year. Details of payments made by determination or otherwise under s 35(2), s 35(6), s 35(4), s 35(4b), s 35(11) and s 67(b) 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.</p>	<p>s 35</p>	<p>258</p>

REQUIREMENT	ALRA SECTION	PAGE(S) NLC
DETAILS OF AMOUNTS HELD IN TRUST	s 37(5)	257-258
<p>Include details of payments by the NLC under s 35(2) or (3) and any determination made by the Minister under s 35(6) made during the reporting year. Details of payments made by determination or otherwise under s 35(2), 35(4), 35(6), 35(4B), 35(11) and 67(B) 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.</p>		
COMMITTEES	s 37(7)	169-174
<p>If a committee has been appointed under s 29A to assist the NLC 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.</p>		
CONSULTANTS	s 37(8)	164-165
<p>Specify consultants engaged by the NLC during the year and the amount paid to each consultant.</p>		
OTHER REPORTING OBLIGATIONS		
Environmental matters	s 516A EPBC Act	36-158
Work, Health and Safety Act	Part 3 & 4 of Schedule 2	172; 179-180
FOI Act	Part 1 of Schedule 2 s 7	163

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

2019-20 Annual Report Glossary

ABA	Aboriginal Benefit Account
Aboriginal land	(a) land held by a land trust for an estate in fee simple; or (b) and the subject of a deed of grant held in escrow by a land council until a specific event or condition takes place
ADF	Australian Defence Force
AHNT	Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory
ALC	Aboriginal Land Commissioner, a statutory officer of the Commonwealth appointed to perform functions outlined in section 50 of the Land Rights Act
ALFA	Arnhem Land Fire Abatement
ALRA	Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976
ALT	Aboriginal Land Trust
APO NT	Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
AREW	Approved Remote Essential Worker
ASQA	Australia Skills Quality Authority
ASRAC	Arafura Swamp Rangers Aboriginal Corporation
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
BAU	Business as usual
CAEPR	Centre of Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

CATSI Act	Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006
CDP	Community Development Program
CFI	Carbon Farming Initiative
CITC	Compliance Incident Tracking System
CLA	Community Living Area
CLC	Central Land Council
CLM	Conservation and Land Management
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CP & D	Community Planning and Development
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAWE	Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment
DAWR	(Australian) Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
DENR	(NT) Department of Environment and natural Resources
DPMC	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
EL	Exploration Licence
ELA	Exploration Licence Application

EP	Exploration Permit
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FRR	Financial Reporting Rule 2015
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GM	General Manager
GIS	Geographic Information System
HSR's	Health and Safety Representatives
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
ILM	Indigenous Land Management
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
IPP	Indigenous Pastoral Program
IRCS	Indigenous Ranger Compliance Support
Land Council	An Aboriginal land council in the Northern Territory established by or under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976
Land Rights Act	The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976, also ALRA
Land Trust	An Aboriginal land trust established under the Land Rights Act to hold land on behalf of the traditional owners

LIMS	The NLC's Land Information Management System
LIR	The NLC's Land Interest Register
LLoCC	Local Learning on Country Committee
LoC	Learning on Country
LUA	Land Use Agreement
LUMAR	Land Use Management and Royalties
MES	Monitoring and Evaluation System
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRM	McArthur River Mine
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NAISMA	North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd
NLC	Northern Land Council
NNTC	National Native Title Council
NTA	Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)
NT EPA	Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTRB	Native Title Representative Body
PAS	Permit Administration System
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate, a corporation that holds or manages native title for a native title-holding group

PGPA	Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013
P & W	(NT) Parks and Wildlife Service
PLO	Principal Legal Officer
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSD	Project Sea Dragon
RO	Region Offices
RSH	Regional Service Hub
RPO	Royalty Processing Officer
RTN	Right To negotiate
Sacred Sites	Areas of spiritual significance to Aboriginal people, marking an association with, or a specific act of, a creation being. They may be parts of the natural landscape such as hills, rocks, trees, springs or offshore reefs and include burial grounds and places where ceremonies have been held.
SCWG	Sea Country Working Group
SEAL IPA	South East Arnhem Land Indigenous Protected Area
TNRM	Territory Natural Resource Management
Traditional Aboriginal owners (TAOs)	A local descent group of Aboriginal people who have common spiritual affiliations to a site on the land, being affiliations that place the group under a primary spiritual responsibility for that site and for the land, and are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to forage as of right over that land.
TWD	Training and Workforce Development

VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in School
WHS	Work Health and Safety
WoC	Working on Country
WoNS	Weeds of National Significance



Guwardagun - Daly River - Photo by Kathrine Carver

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Cover Image: Beautiful Kenbi Country