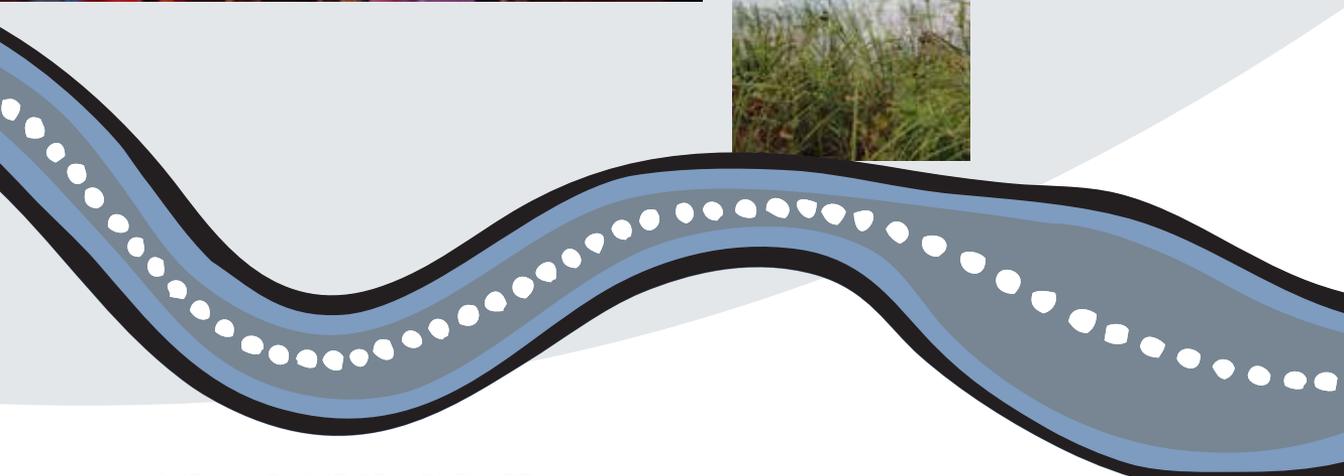
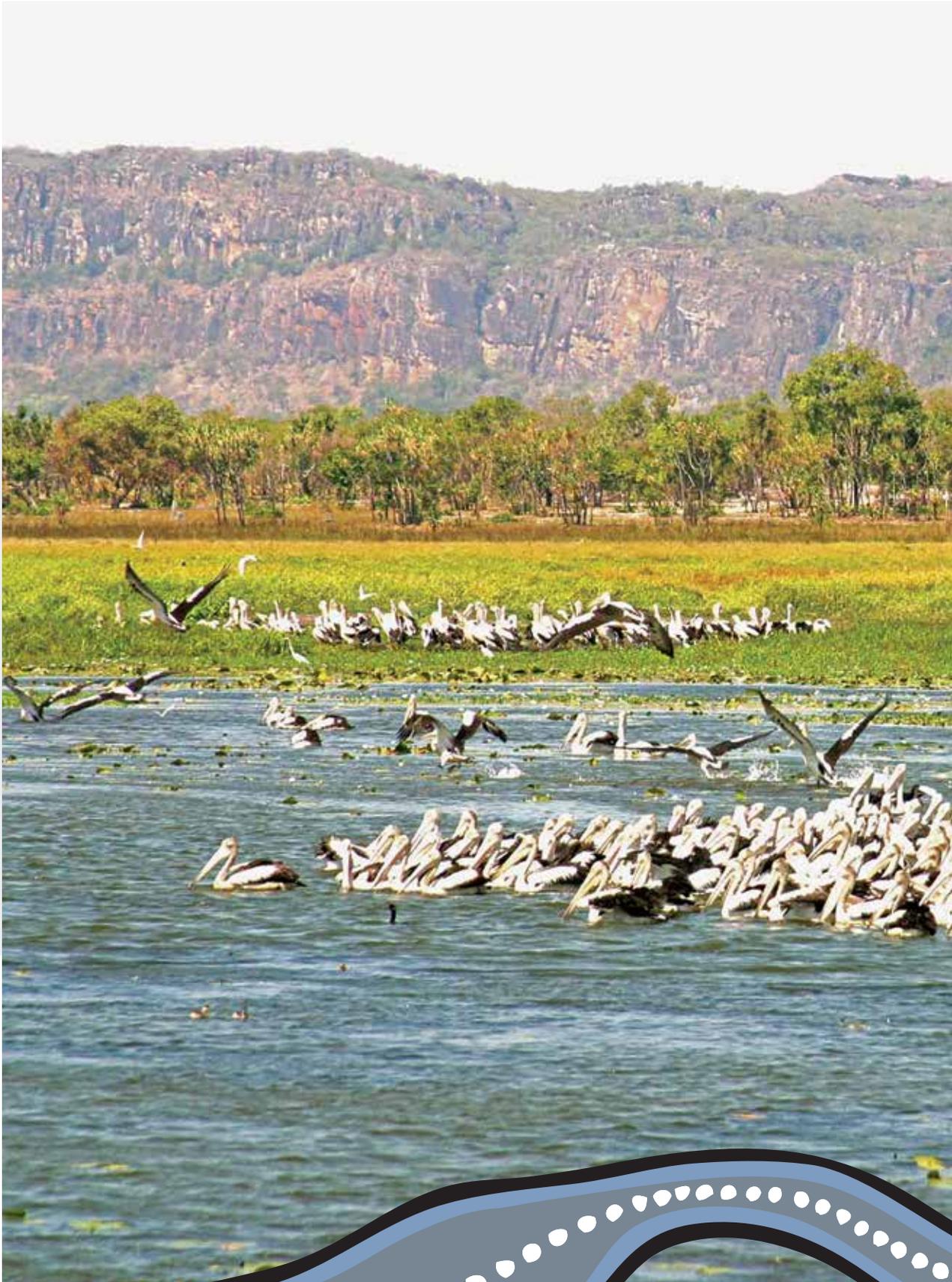




NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015



OUR LAND, OUR SEA, OUR LIFE





NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2014/2015

OUR VISION

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

OUR VALUES

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

WE AIM TO

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

*Cover, top right: Men prepare for a wedding ceremony near Borroloola, October 2014.
From left: Jacob Riley, Jack Green (groom) and Eric Rory. Cover, middle left and right: Women dance
at the opening of the Barunga Sports and Cultural Festival, June 2015. Opposite: Wildlife at Gunbalanya.*



CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS REPORT	9
THE YEAR: AT A GLANCE	12
Financial performance summary	17
Commonwealth compliance summary	18
FROM OUR CHAIRMAN	19
FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	21
PART I: ABOUT US – OUR LAND, OUR SEA, OUR LIFE	24
HISTORY	25
OUR ROLE	26
WHO WE SERVE	27
Traditional Owners	28
Regions	28
REGIONAL OFFICE NETWORK	30
OUR COUNCIL	34
FULL COUNCIL	36
Full Council membership, 2013–2016	36
Full Council meetings, 2014/2015	37
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL	40
Members	40
Meetings	42
Regional Councils	43
OUR PEOPLE	45
Administration	45
Structure	46
Branch overview	47
PART II: OUR APPROACH – SHAPING OUR FUTURE	50
STRATEGIC THINKING	51
Corporate Plan 2015–2019	52
Strategic Plan 2015–2019	53

PART III: THE YEAR IN REVIEW	54
ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND INTERESTS	55
Land claims	55
Sea country	58
Native title report	60
Update on continuing claims	62
Compensation applications	68
CARING FOR COUNTRY	70
Working together	71
Parks and reserves: joint management	79
CULTURE & HERITAGE	86
Protecting sacred sites, places and objects	87
Funeral and ceremonial fund	88
Advice on traditional ownership	89
Land Interest References (LIR)	90
GIS system support	91
COMMUNITY WELLBEING	92
Capacity building: employment, education and training	93
Anthropology – regional profiles	95
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	102
Land use agreements	103
Indigenous Pastoral Program	106
Commercial development	110
Minerals & Energy	111
Regional Development	125
PUBLIC ADVOCACY SERVICES	126
Public awareness and education	127
Information and education resources	128
Media management	128
GOOD CORPORATE STANDARDS	130
Distribution of royalties	131
Administering Aboriginal Land Trusts	132
Mediation and dispute resolution	132
Land and water access permits	134
Corporate governance approach	135
Committees	141



PART IV: THE YEAR AHEAD – KEY INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS	144
DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTUS	145
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	146
KENBI LAND CLAIM	146
NLC TO HOST NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE CONFERENCE	146
NATIVE TITLE MATTERS	147
CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION	147
PART V: 2014/2015 FINANCIAL REPORT	148
NLC ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT	149
NLC NATIVE TITLE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FINANCIAL STATEMENT	193
COMMONWEALTH COMPLIANCE INDEX	218
<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> and Commonwealth Annual Reporting Orders	218
<i>Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976</i>	219
Glossary of terms	220
TABLES	
TABLE 1: NLC’s financial performance – five-year overview	18
TABLE 2: Full Council membership, 2013–2016	36
TABLE 3: Full Council meeting dates and attendance record during 2014/2015	37
TABLE 4: Executive Council meeting dates and attendance record during 2014/2015	43
TABLE 5: Regional Council meeting dates and venues during 2014/2015	44
TABLE 6: NLC staff profiles, 2014/2015	48
TABLE 7: Native title applications statistics, 2014/2015	61
TABLE 8: Funeral and ceremony assistance per region	88
TABLE 9: LIR requests by activity for 2014/2015	90
TABLE 10: Distribution of Aboriginal living areas across NLC anthropology regions	95
TABLE 11: Aboriginal owned land and native title interests	95
TABLE 12: Minerals & Energy Branch consultations and other operational activities during 2014/2015	117
TABLE 13: Breakdown of royalty distribution payments, 2014/2015	131

TABLE 14:	Consultant expenditure, 2014/2015	136
TABLE 15:	Consultants and contractors – summary, 2011–2015	138
TABLE 16:	Northern Land Council ICT key projects 2014/2015	140
TABLE 17:	Audit Committee attendance	141

FIGURES

FIGURE 1:	NLC office locations	29
FIGURE 2:	NLC’s organisational structure	46
FIGURE 3:	Five-year trend – full-time employment statistics	48
FIGURE 4:	NLC’s Pastoral Consent Determination process	63
FIGURE 5:	Status of work on the Federal Court ordered Pastoral Consent Determination Schedule for the NLC region, June 2015	64
FIGURE 6:	Aboriginal land and sea management groups	73
FIGURE 7:	Joint management reserves	80
FIGURE 8:	Number of LIR requests, 2008–2015	91
FIGURE 9:	NLC anthropology regions – estimated Indigenous populations	96
FIGURE 10:	Minerals exploration in the NLC region	113
FIGURE 11:	Petroleum exploration in the NLC region	115
FIGURE 12:	Map showing the known onshore hydrocarbon resource potential of the NLC region	122



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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Northern Land Council Annual Report 2014/2015 provides a comprehensive account of the Council's performance from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 in accordance with its responsibilities and obligations under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (referred to as the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*) and the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993*.

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

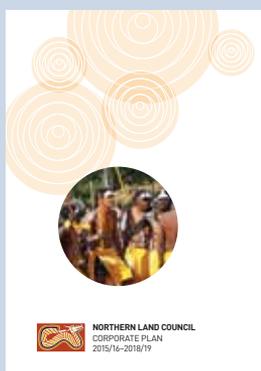
The Annual Report 2014/2015 is divided into five parts:

1. *About us: our land, our sea our life*, our history, our clients and our organisational structure
2. *Our approach: shaping our future*, which outlines our strategic approach and aspirations in terms of our goals, objectives and performance measurements
3. *The year in review: 2014/2015*, which presents the major issues and achievements for the reporting year across seven key performance areas that align with our seven goals.
4. *The year ahead: key initiatives and projects*, which identifies our current and future priorities
5. *2014/2015 financial reports*, which presents details on income and expenses for both the NLC as a Commonwealth entity and as a native title representative body.

During the reporting year, 2014/2015, the NLC continued an ambitious program of activities aligned to key strategic directions: enhanced social, political and economic participation and equity for Aboriginal people in the NLC's jurisdiction through the promotion, protection and advancement of their land, water rights and human rights.

The Annual Report highlights achievements and identifies future directions, and attempts to foresee challenges to minimise risks in achieving outcomes throughout the year.

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



The NLC's Corporate Plan has been revised, and

covers the financial years 2015/2016 to 2018/2019, as required under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The Plan sets out the NLC's role and purpose, and how it will achieve results for traditional Aboriginal owners and affected Aboriginal people within our region. The Corporate Plan can be viewed and downloaded at www.nlc.org.au



An updated version of the Strategic Plan is in preparation. The new plan will build on our achievements, confirm our vision for the future, emphasise our guiding values, and set our strategic goals and objectives. It also reflects the outcomes and outputs framework agreed with the Minister for Indigenous Affairs.



CONTACT US

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NGUKURR Balamurra Street, Ngukurr NT 0852
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12 October 2015

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

Dear Minister,

In accordance with the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, the *Native Title Act 1993* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, I am pleased to submit the 2014/2015 Annual Report for the Northern Land Council.

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 *Commonwealth Authorities (Annual Reporting) Orders 2011*.

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 Australian Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

Samuel Bush-Blanas
CHAIRMAN



THE YEAR: AT A GLANCE

2014/2015 HIGHLIGHTS

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

NLC Chief Executive Officer, Joe Morrison advocated at various forums for Aboriginal interests to be recognised and heard in the ongoing debate about northern development.

Mr Morrison was invited to address the National Press Club in Canberra in February and his speech was broadcast live on ABC Television. Mr Morrison concluded: "With goodwill on both sides, (Indigenous) people can be placed squarely in the frame of northern development. They can be empowered to advance Indigenous health and educational outcomes, and they can plan for the use of the lands and waters that our ancestors have occupied for millennia."

Mr Morrison further developed that theme at the Developing Northern Australia Conference in Townsville in July, after the release of the Commonwealth Government's White Paper on Developing Northern Australia. He said, "Aboriginal people ourselves require a real and meaningful input into the planning process, rather than just being presented with a *fait accompli* where the only outcomes are extinguishment of our Native Title and a sense of alienation."

MORE STREAMLINED APPROVALS PROCESS

The NLC's Full Council meeting in June 2015 voted to delegate some of its powers to the NLC's Executive Council, providing the means for agreements to be considered and approved more promptly.

The decision means that approval of matters like section 19 land use agreements, that were formerly the preserve of only the Full Council, will be expedited: the Executive meets six times a year outside of the bi-annual Full Council meetings, so there will now be at least eight opportunities a year to consider such agreements.

NLC delegations under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* had not been updated for 20 years, and the volume of land use agreements has been growing substantially in recent years.

The decision highlights the willingness of Traditional Owners to foster and promote development on their lands and the NLC's ability to respond efficiently to development applications.

Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, who attended the June meeting, welcomed the decision.

IMPROVED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

In response to concerns by the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee, the NLC's Executive Council, Leadership Group and staff, with assistance from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, have implemented major improvements to the organisation's governance, financial, administrative and other systems. A new audit committee has been appointed; BDO Financial Services have been hired to prepare annual accounts; new staff, including a Chief Financial Officer, have been appointed.

This has already achieved tighter financial management and budgetary control, resulting in significant improvements in our financial position.

Reviews across all facets of NLC's operations across all branches will continue to identify further efficiencies improvements that will inform future budget preparations.



One of NLC's essential roles is to give Traditional Owners a voice and to ensure their property rights are both protected and enabled...

Above: Waiting for the dance troupe, Barunga Festival, June 2015.



HISTORIC PROGRESS ON LONG-STANDING CLAIMS

The 2014/2015 reporting year saw major progress on three long-standing claims under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*: Borroloola; Wickham River; and Kenbi.

Borroloola

In May, the Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, handed back titles to outstanding areas of land from the Warnarrwarnarr-Barranyi (Borroloola No. 2 claim) to Yanyuwa Traditional Owners. These Deeds related to a land claim that was first submitted by the NLC in 1979.

The li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Ranger Unit has already built an operations base at Jawuma, an educational centre for visitors and school parties, as well as a booking centre for campers at Lhuka (Batten Point) and outer islands.

Wickham River

The Commonwealth Government has agreed to schedule as Aboriginal land the 149 km² block occupied by the Yarralin community on the Wickham River and a 355 km² block to the north, currently owned by the Northern Territory Land Corporation. As well, a 31 km² block to the south, which comprises the Wickham River land claim (lodged by the NLC in 1983) will also be scheduled – a total of 535 km².

The Wickham River claim was first considered by the Interim Aboriginal Land Commissioner (the late Hon. Justice Dick Ward) in 1975.

The Yarralin community has been told the land will be handed back in 2016. Meanwhile, the Commonwealth wants to consult with Traditional Owners about securing a 99-year township lease over Yarralin.

KENBI

As a step to advance settlement of the long-standing Kenbi claim, Parliament accepted a recommendation from its Public Works Committee and approved the spending of more than \$31.5 million to clean up contaminated sites on Cox Peninsula.

The Commonwealth used various sites on Cox Peninsula for maritime, communications and defence purposes that have left a wide area of contaminated land. Asbestos, pesticides, heavy metals and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) have been detected above safe levels.

The NLC delivered a submission in April 2015 to an inquiry by the Public Works Committee. The submission supported the remediation scheme and urged the Commonwealth to settle the Kenbi claim as soon as possible.

MCARTHUR RIVER MINE: LONG-TERM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

During 2014/2015, the NLC continued to monitor the Northern Territory Government's management of the unfolding environmental crisis at the McArthur River zinc-lead mine near Borroloola.

In 2006, the Government approved a diversion of the McArthur River to allow the mine's owner, Xtrata (now Glencore) to convert the mine to an open pit. Enabling legislation established a supervising regime under an Independent Monitor.

In October 2014, the Independent Monitor catalogued serious and persistent environmental problems that the operating company, MRM, had failed to remedy. The Independent Monitor also identified a high risk that MRM's security bond would be inadequate, with serious implications for the public purse.

Traditional Owners have long expressed to the NLC their concerns about the mine's poor operating record.

**...On their behalf,
we promote economic
development, we
seek to create jobs,
we seek to improve
people's lives.**

BORROLOOLA

At the handing back ceremony, Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion said:

It is always great to be back among the li-Anthawirriyarra. You, like me, are happiest by the sea or on a river. And you are most at home here on Yanyuwa country and on the islands.

This is your country. You are Yanyuwa Ngimarringi (land owner of father's country) and Jungkayi (custodian of mother's country). Here on country your future hopes are imbued with a strong sense of all that is good of the past.

These lands and all the things in and on them were created during Yijan, which some people call the dreaming...

Today, I do have a piece of paper that grants land, but I am deeply conscious that I am giving you back what is already yours.

Today I grant to you the islets on the east coast of Vanderlin as well as Lhuka and Jawuma.

Today we celebrate narnu-yuwa (Yanyuwa law) and white law both working together to return this land to its rightful owners.

Today you are rightly strong and proud.

As I do the honours today, I want to applaud you for the struggle and journey that you have undertaken to have your land and culture recognised.

Yours was the first land claim formally submitted under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act back in 1977. And you endured many setbacks to that claim and waited a long time for its resolution.



KEY NEW APPOINTMENTS

Leanne Liddle, Senior Policy Adviser



Leanne is an Arrernte woman born and raised in Alice Springs and has cultural ties across the central desert region, including the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands in the far north west of South Australia. Leanne worked with Traditional Owners in this region to manage the award-winning 'Kuka Kanyini' project, which loosely translated means 'looking after the land'. This project ensured the best environmental outcomes on a landscape scale as a result of learnings that incorporated both western science and traditional land management skills.

Leanne has qualifications in Environmental Science, Law and Management, but she believes her most important knowledge has come from her grandmother and great-grandmother who taught her about traditional land management skills, particularly with the use of fire.

Leanne has served other senior public service roles, including as the manager of Food Security for Aboriginal communities in South Australia, and the manager of the APY and West Coast regions of South Australia. She was also the first Aboriginal policewoman in South Australia where she worked for 11 years as a Senior Constable at remote police stations and in Adelaide. Leanne has also worked internationally – for the United Nations with stints in Geneva and New York and with UNESCO in Paris – and continues as director for Bush Heritage Australia. She has published many international scientific papers on the critical importance of integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge into land management.

Michael O'Donnell, Principal Legal Officer



Formerly a barrister at John Toohey Chambers in Darwin, Michael grew up in Sydney and studied at the University of New South Wales. He has a BA in history and politics, and a Masters degree in Law.

Michael came to Darwin in 1998 from Western Australia, where he had been Principal Legal Officer with the Kimberley Land Council. Michael has significant expertise in native title law, policy and practice and Indigenous legal issues in general. He has been counsel in a number of native title claims and related negotiations. He has provided advice to NAILSMA Ltd and was the KLC's legal

adviser in the negotiation of the *Native Title Act* in 1993 and amendments to the Act in 1998 on behalf of the National Indigenous Working Group. He has a detailed knowledge of the *Native Title Act* and its history.

Michael is a former chair of the Alcohol and Drugs Tribunal of the Northern Territory and current chair of the Community Justice Centre Consultative Council (Northern Territory). Michael was a legal consultant to the Review Board of the Northern Territory Emergency Response in 2008, and has written papers and given lectures and public seminars on a variety of Indigenous legal issues.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

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

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

Financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Finance Minister's Orders and Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period. The full audited statements are reproduced at the end of this report at page 149.

A short summary of the NLC's overall financial performance for 2014/2015 is shown below.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

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

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

CHALLENGES

The NLC faces ongoing challenges, including:

- Uncertainty of grant funding arrangements for ranger salaries and ongoing operational funding following the adoption of new policy directions by government
- Competing demands for limited financial resources
- Compliance with new Commonwealth Authority financial accounting and accountability procedures
- Turnaround time of the cost recovery process
- A depleted and aging motor vehicle fleet.

2014/2015 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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

The NLC is currently reviewing its financial policies and procedures which will lead to more efficient and effective work outputs and improved fiscal management and accountability.



TABLE 1: NLC'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

	2010/2011 \$000	2011/2012 \$000	2012/2013 \$000	2013/2014 \$000	2014/2015* \$000
Revenue	42,628	37,021	35,419	36,869	41,232
Expenses	34,719	40,904	48,780	43,660	34,402
Operating Surplus/(Deficit) (before Capital Investment)	7,909	(3,883)	(13,361)	(6,791)	6,830
Assets	31,116	27,955	15,629	11,294	15,566
Liabilities	5,546	6,236	7,492	8,019	5,461
Asset Revaluation Reserve	265	265	44	1,973	1,973
Cash Held	12,965	19,247	4,577	2,545	6,588
Net increase/decrease in cash held	8,965	6,462	(13,361)	(2,032)	4,043

* Note 2014/2015 figures are draft and may be subject to change

COMMONWEALTH COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

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

FEES

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

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

There were no significant events pursuant to section 16(a) of the Annual Reporting Orders to report this financial year.

KEY CHANGES

There were no key changes to the state of affairs or principal activities of the NLC pursuant to section 16(c) of the Annual Reporting Orders to report this financial year.

AMENDMENTS TO ENABLING LEGISLATION

There were no amendments to the enabling legislation pursuant to section 16(d) of the Annual Reporting Orders to report this financial year.

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY

There were no judicial decisions, no ministerial directions and general policies or decisions of administrative tribunals pursuant to s17(a) Annual Reporting Orders this financial year.

A detailed account of the NLC's financial statements are presented in Part V of this Annual Report.

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN
MR SAMUEL BUSH-BLANASI



The NLC over the past year continued to advocate for the property rights of the 36,000 Aboriginal people in its region, especially in the context of economic development in northern Australia. I wrote in last year's annual report that too much of the debate about economic development had focused on land tenure. I said that the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the *Native Title Act 1993* were held by many commentators to be an impediment to development. This past year has brought more of that sort of commentary.

First was Mr Andrew Forrest's report to the Commonwealth, *Creating Parity – The Forrest Review*, released on 1 August last year. The report began life as a review of Indigenous training and employment programs. Its brief expanded to deal at some length with the matter of land tenure; it also sought to diminish the powers of the Northern Territory Land Councils.

The final report recommended that governments "create the ability for traditional owners to convert their land to freehold or hold the underlying title with a 99-year lease owned by the home or business owner, so that it can be mortgaged or traded through the open market and so that Traditional Owners can build their houses on allotments on their own land".

...continue to advocate for the 36,000 Aboriginal people in our region.

Forrest wanted the Commonwealth to use its funding leverage and, specifically, its powers to devolve decision making to more regional structures "to ensure land councils are responsive to the wishes of Traditional Owners who have requested to freehold or lease their land to enable business investment and/or home ownership".

Then, out of the blue, came a communique from the COAG meeting on 10 October 2014. It announced an 'urgent' investigation into Indigenous land administration and land use "to enable traditional owners to readily attract private sector investment and finance to develop their own land with new industries and businesses to provide jobs and economic advancement for Indigenous people."

I saw both the Forrest report and the COAG announcement as presaging an attack on the property rights of Aboriginal people, and the functions of the NLC.

The Full Council, whilst respecting its statutory functions, continued during the past year to oppose 99-year township leases on Aboriginal land within the NLC region being held by a Commonwealth officer, the Executive Director of Township Leasing (EDTL); and we continued to oppose regulations which would effect the devolution of NLC powers to regional, unaccountable corporations.

I am pleased to report that the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, has listened to our objections and has indicated that he's prepared to be flexible on both fronts. His willingness to negotiate signals a welcome step towards a more constructive relationship.

It was also heartening to hear the Minister praise the NLC Full Council at its meeting at Barunga in June for their decision to delegate some approval powers to the Executive Council. That decision will speed up the processes for approving land use and mining agreements under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*.



The Chairman of the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee, Senator the Hon. Cory Bernardi, congratulated NLC officers for their evidence to the committee in Canberra on 29 May, which I attended with the CEO and senior NLC staff.

Our re-appearance before Senator Bernardi's committee followed criticisms at a hearing in February which flowed from a report by the Australian National Audit Office about the NLC's financial management and reporting procedures. At the May hearing we were able to demonstrate that much had already been achieved to get the NLC house in order.

After our appearance before the Senate Committee in February, the Executive Council gathered with the staff Leadership Group for a three-day retreat in March at Mary River, to set a course for improving the NLC's governance and internal administration systems. Much work continues within the organisation to achieve this.

It was my pleasure in June this year to speak at the opening of the annual Barunga sports and cultural festival. It was the festival's 30th anniversary, and I recalled that it was at the Barunga Festival in 1988 that the then Prime Minister, the Hon Bob Hawke, had promised a treaty with Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Much has already been done to get the NLC house in order.

I was also pleased to be invited by the Human Rights Commission to attend, with the Deputy Chair John Daly and CEO Joe Morrison, a roundtable at Broome in June to discuss Indigenous property rights. The Attorney General, Senator the Hon. George Brandis, also attended with Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda and Human Rights Commissioner Tim Wilson.

The discussions over two days were positive, although I shared the disappointment of other participants in what the native title system has delivered over the past twenty years, and in the way rights have been whittled away through successive amendments to the *Native Title Act*.

Also at the Broome roundtable, we held a positive discussion about the recognition of Indigenous peoples in the Australian Constitution. Members have taken a close interest in the subject of constitutional recognition at NLC Full Council meetings, and the NLC stands prepared to facilitate discussion in the wider Aboriginal community in our region.

Finally, I want to thank my deputy, John Daly and the seven other members of the NLC Executive Council for their hard work over the past year. We all look forward to next year, 2016, which will be the 40th anniversary of the passing of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*. It will also be the 50th anniversary of the walk-off from Wave Hill station by the Gurindji people.

Samuel Bush-Blanasi
CHAIRMAN

FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
JOE MORRISON



The NLC's workload and outputs continue to grow. At the two meetings of the NLC's Full Council held during the past reporting year, 84 Land Use Agreements and 13 Mining Agreements were approved. That represents clear evidence of the willingness of Aboriginal Traditional Owners in our region to accept development on their lands. It's also a tribute to the hard work of NLC staff who conduct consultations and ensure free, prior and informed consent for mining ventures, development projects and property leases on Aboriginal-owned land.

The NLC is now well-placed to expedite the approval of land use agreements, after the Full Council meeting in Barunga in June decided to delegate some of its approval powers to the Executive Council. Executive meets six times a year outside of the bi-annual Full Council meetings, so there will now be at least eight opportunities a year to consider and approve agreements.

The Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, was in attendance when the Full Council made its historic decision to delegate its powers, and he congratulated the members immediately.

The development of northern Australia has been the focus of much of my thinking and advocacy in many different forums over the past reporting year.

The NLC cautiously welcomed the Commonwealth Government's White Paper on Developing Northern Australia when it was released in June. We were relieved that the paper did not attack the basic integrity of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. In a speech to the National Press Club in February, I described the Act as "a beautiful thing – a beacon that marks the high point of recognising dispossession, of customary ownership and enduring practice of an ancient culture rooted in the land and waters of the Northern Territory."

Workload and output continues to grow.

But we had reservations about the White Paper's proposal to simplify native title processes. I said that any simplification must not be a guise for diminishing communal decision-making and the rights of native title holders. My fundamental reservation about the White Paper is the absence of a place for Aboriginal people at the planning table. The White Paper does not address the need for robust, evidence-based planning that will deliver good outcomes, especially for Indigenous people in the north.

Throughout the past year I have campaigned publicly for a rigorous planning regime that recognises and embraces property rights and interests of Indigenous people as the major land owners and population group away from the major urban centres in the north.

I have also sought to advance the preparation of a development prospectus that clearly identifies opportunities for new activities on Aboriginal-owned land in the NLC region, because Aboriginal people want to be part of an economic development agenda.

But we want that development to be ethical and aligned with our environmental and cultural values.

With the participation of Aboriginal people themselves, an NLC-facilitated prospectus would identify where and how they would like their lands to be developed, how they want their communities to grow, how they want to create real and lasting employment that embraces both culture and economic aspirations.



This is a project with great potential to build resilient communities by creating sustainable prosperity. I have promoted its value to various Commonwealth Government ministers and their officials, and I am optimistic about their support. On that note, I am pleased that the NLC is investigating the establishment of a Community Development Unit across the NLC operations.

With senior officers, I had to appear before the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee on 27 February, where we were questioned closely about the NLC's reporting record. The committee was concerned about references to the NLC in the Australian National Audit Office's report on the financial statements of Australian Government entities, tabled in Parliament on 18 December 2014. The ANAO found weaknesses and delays in financial reporting by the NLC.

Aboriginal people want to be part of an economic development agenda.

I later wrote to all staff that the appearance was a 'serious wake-up call'.

The work that we have ahead of us constitutes a complex change management initiative where it is not simply about changing systems and procedures – as large a task as that already is – but also about changing the way we work and aligning our day-to-day corporate culture to our vision and mission. This task is not one that can be completed in a few months, but one which we must implement intently over the coming year.

In the months since, with assistance from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, we have worked tirelessly to implement significant improvements to our governance, financial, administrative and other systems. The Leadership Group has met several times to deal with those matters; a new audit committee has been appointed; BDO Financial Services have been hired to prepare the annual accounts; new staff, including a Chief Financial Officer, will be appointed by the end of the 2015 calendar year.

Within this short period, we have focused on much tighter financial management and budgetary control and I am proud to report that we have made significant improvements in our financial position. There are continuing reviews of all facets of operations across all NLC branches. Efficiencies and needs are being identified, and that information will be fed into future budget preparations.

Like other Commonwealth entities, the NLC has had to grapple with the introduction of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, which came into effect on 1 July 2014, replacing the *Financial Management and Accountability Act* and the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act*. For the NLC, the new Act has meant meeting more compliance benchmarks within the constraints of a diminished budget and fewer resources.

These administrative matters are also important in order to finalise the long outstanding Enterprise Agreement that was idling prior to my commencement. I am committed to resolving the Agreement, so that hard working NLC staff can get on with important work for our constituents and communities.

I am pleased to be able to report progress on three fronts during the year towards the historic settlement of long-standing claims under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*.

1. BORROLOOLA

With the NLC chairman, other executive members and staff, I attended a land hand-back at Borroloola on 6 May, where the Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, handed over Title Deeds to the Yanyuwa people on behalf of the Australian Government. The Deeds related to land outstanding from the Borroloola No. 2 claim, which was submitted by the NLC in 1979.

2. WICKHAM RIVER

The next day I flew with the Minister to Yarralin where he undertook to process quickly the Wickham River land claim, which was first considered by the Interim Aboriginal Land Commissioner (the late Hon. Justice Dick Ward) in 1975. The Minister has introduced legislation to schedule around 535 km² of land as Aboriginal land. Talks will continue about the Commonwealth's wish to secure a 99-year Township lease over the community of Yarralin.

3. KENBI

Another welcome development during the year was the decision by the Commonwealth Parliament to approve the expenditure of \$31.5 million to remediate contaminated sites on Cox Peninsula, in order to advance the settlement of the Kenbi land claim. An NLC submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public

Works described the Kenbi claim as the "most complex and hard-fought for" in the history of the Northern Territory *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*.

Historic progress on three long-standing claims...

The NLC has another busy year ahead, and discussions continue with the Federal Government to receive sufficient

budget allocations to enable our organisation to fulfill its statutory responsibilities under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* and *Native Title Act*.

I congratulate the hard working staff of the NLC and the elected members of the Council led by Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanas.



Joe Morrison
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



PART I: ABOUT US – OUR LAND, OUR SEA, OUR LIFE

HISTORY

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

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

The NLC remains an important body through which Aboriginal people of the Top End can make their voices heard.

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

an historic national referendum in 1967, where 91% of the people of Australia voted to give the Australian Parliament the power to make laws with respect to Aboriginal people.

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

* Mr Wunungmurra passed away 7 August 2015.

Opposite: Muckaty Station landscape.



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

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

OUR ROLE

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

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

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

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

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

NLC’S RESPONSIBILITIES

The role and purpose of the NLC is driven by its enabling legislation – the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and the *Native Title Act 1993* – and the views of our stakeholders, both of which are reflected in our Vision, Guiding Values, Goals and Objectives (outlined in Part II of this Annual Report).

A full explanation of our legislative obligations and how these are being addressed is provided in the NLC’s *Corporate Plan 2015/2016–2018/2019*.

See NLC’s website: www.nlc.org.au

The NLC ...advancing
Aboriginal interests and
rights through strong
leadership and good
governance.



WHO WE SERVE

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

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

- Consult with and act with the informed consent of Traditional Owners in accordance with the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*.
- Communicate clearly with Aboriginal people taking into account the linguistic diversity of the region.
- Respect Aboriginal law and tradition.
- Be responsive to Aboriginal 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.

Above, left: NLC Executive Council and Leadership Group meet at Mary River, March 2015. Above, right: Timothy Nadjowh receives OAM from Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, at Gunbalanya, May 2015.



TRADITIONAL OWNERS

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

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

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

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

...Aboriginal people, wherever they live, in the big smoke or in distant outstations, want to engage, they want to be part of modern society.

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

REGIONS

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

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

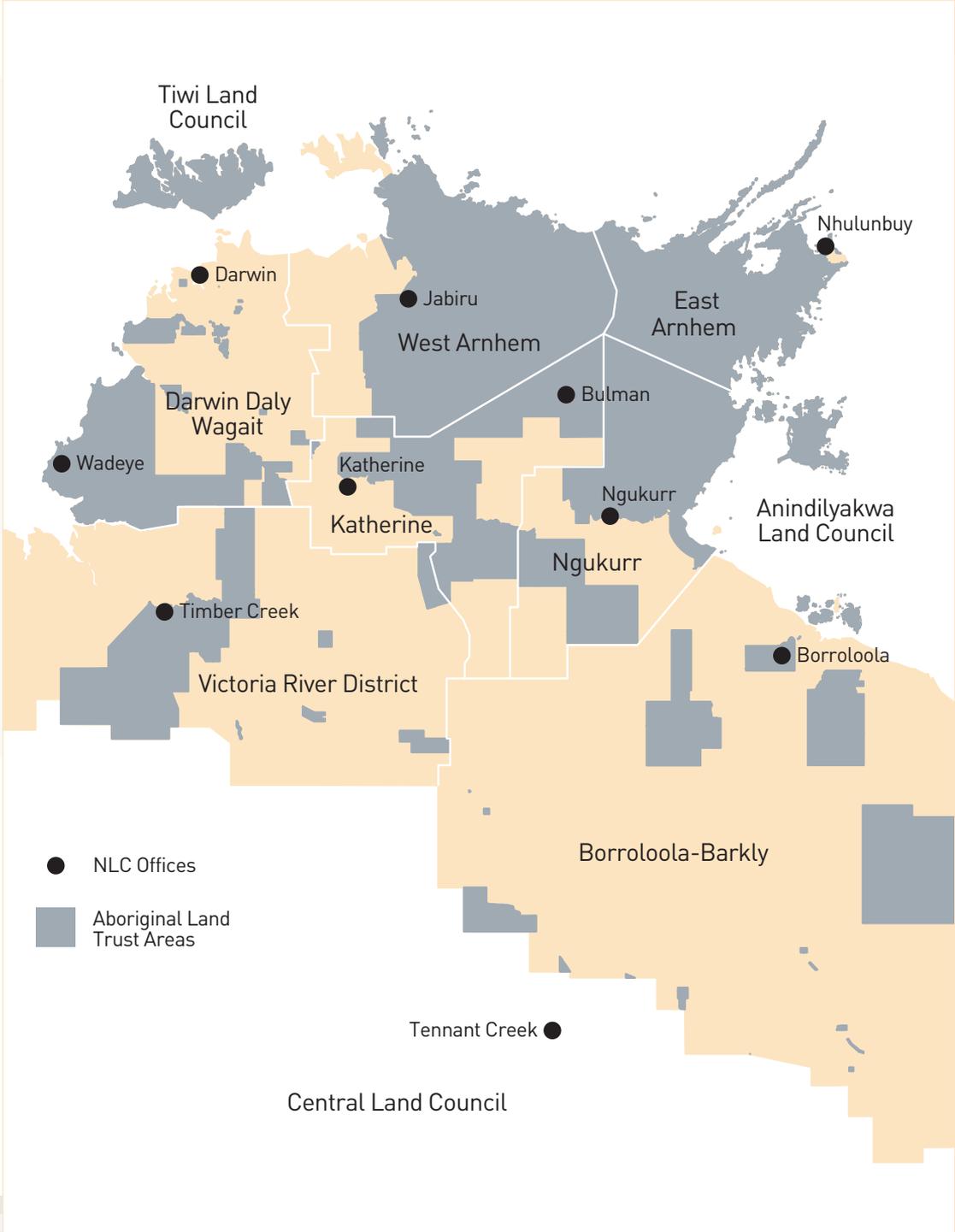


Customary law continues to be practised in many communities within the region.

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

*Above: Traditional Owners display their land title deeds at a handback ceremony near Borroloola, May 2015.
From left: Leister Timothy, Selena Timothy, Marlene Timothy and Warren Timothy.*

FIGURE 1: NLC OFFICE LOCATIONS





REGIONAL OFFICE NETWORK

According to ABS statistics (2011), nearly seventy percent (70%) of all Aboriginal people in the NLC region live outside of the greater Darwin area, so NLC regional offices are often the first point of contact for a vast majority of rural and remote Aboriginal people accessing NLC services. Regional staff work across 10 sites including:

- 29 regional based positions located in Katherine, Bulman, Timber Creek, Ngukurr, Borroloola, Jabiru, Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek and Wadeye
- a defence liaison position funded by the Department of Defence and based at Timber Creek to assist with the implementation and monitoring of the Bradshaw ILUA
- a Telstra liaison position funded by Telstra to assist with accelerating Aboriginal land access and management of Telstra infrastructure leases
- a pastoral engagement position funded by the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) to assist in the implementation of the Indigenous Pastoral Program (IPP) Strategic and Operational Plan
- 11 positions based in Darwin to directly support all regional offices, coordinate regional programs and provide services to the Darwin Daly Wagait region.

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

- helping coordinate consultations
- progressing expressions of interest for land use agreements and licences
- monitoring compliance with agreements
- processing permits and funeral applications
- supporting the Full Council and Regional Councils.

Just over sixty five percent (65%) of all staff employed in the regions are Aboriginal, with a large percentage recruited locally, therefore having close ties to the region they are working in. The regional network also employs up to 20 local Aboriginal people on a casual basis to assist with projects on a needs basis.



Right: Lazarus Murray, Senior Project Officer, Bulman.

REGIONAL STAFF PROFILES

TED LOWE – Senior Project Officer, Katherine



Background – I'm a proud Indigenous man, married and father of two. Born in Darwin, I have lived in Katherine pretty much all my life, schooling and all. I left school after the 9th grade to start work as a labourer in the construction game; done 13 years at the Katherine Abattoirs, eight years at Tindal Airport, then in 1987, I started work with the NLC and have been there for the last 28 years.

In 1998, I sought to develop my skills and successfully completed a Degree in Aboriginal Community Development at Curtin University. Since then, I've worked in the Indigenous Pastoral Program for a decade, and over the last two years have worked as a Senior Project Officer and Regional Coordinator.

Indigenous connections – My father Bob Lowe was a Larrakia man; mother Nida was from the Stolen Generation. My maternal connections are throughout the Barkly and Borroloola Region. I have family connections throughout the breadth of the Northern Territory and have grown up with the Dagoman, Jawoyn and Wardaman peoples.

Interest – I have a keen interest in music, being a self-taught guitarist and drummer, and played in a number of bands since the late 1960s; however, now I have pulled up a bit on that as the body isn't what it was and the hair around my muscles has turned grey. My hobbies lately are a little less strenuous; I like photographing people, events and I dabble in painting landscapes.

What's it like working in NLC? – The work is interesting, challenging and there is never a dull moment. After 20 plus years doing fieldwork, it has been good to see NLC continuing to apply significant effort with consulting countrymen in the bush. When you work on a project and Traditional Owners get a good outcome, it gives me a great sense of achievement knowing that we have accomplished something. Through work I continue to have opportunities to meet new people and I have also established everlasting friendships with countrymen from all over the place.

Observations – NLC's workload over the years continues to increase. The Katherine Regional Office presence is also now starting to develop. Over the last 18 months we have increased our staff numbers, resources and equipment base, which is critical to undertake the work coming our way and support other smaller offices. At the moment, Katherine has established a pool of good staff and we are ready to take on projects in the region when they arise.



BOBBY NUNGGUMAJBARR – Senior Project Officer, Ngukurr



Background – Born at Roper River, my family and I travelled to Numbulwar by dugout canoe when I was a child back in the Mission days. I did all my schooling at Numbulwar and on completion worked in many different jobs in the community. I moved to Groote Eylandt for a few years starting work with GEMCO, and then took up an administrative position with Angurugu Community Council where I was later appointed as Town Clerk.

I started work at the NLC in Ngukurr around 1983. My position is Senior Project Officer. I have been doing NLC work for over 30 years and I am still here today enjoying my job and being a family man.

Indigenous connections – I am from the Nungumajbarr clan; in culture way I have connections with many other clan groups in the Ngukurr, Numbulwar and Groote Eylandt regions.

Interests – I have a real sense of commitment to providing my people with economic, community and social benefits. I am an active community member participating as an official with the Ngukurr Bulldogs Football Club, Chairperson of the Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation, member of the Local Reference Group, Housing Reference Group, Ngukurr Store, Ngukurr School and the Local Authority Council.

What's it like working at the NLC? – I live and breathe NLC; it's been my life for over 30 years. The family home at Ngukurr is an NLC house and is less than a stone throw away from the NLC Office; there is no escape for me. I serve my community and countrymen all day and night. I do a lot of travelling in my region. I meet new people; I try to lead discussions with Traditional Owners and other stakeholders. The job can be frustrating at times as our people often want more than I can deliver but at the same time the job is very rewarding when we get real good outcomes. I feel good working for my people and being able to set things up for our children and grandchildren.

Observations – NLC work over the years hasn't got any easier. We have had big projects with mining in the Ngukurr region start and then fall over not too long after. This has been difficult for our area and people. There is also more work for NLC now than there has been before. I am regularly required to consult Traditional Owners over leasing, mining, Native Title, planning and royalties, and my NLC Toyota and I are on the go all the time. NLC moving forward will really need to work on how we improve the way we do our business in the bush – things seem to be changing steadily and we have to be able to meet the needs of our people and community.

TAHNEE MAWSON – Project Officer, Borrooloola



Background – I was born in Darwin in the mid 80s with Katherine becoming home where most of my schooling years were spent. A single mother to one child brought me back to Borrooloola to be closer to family. After doing a few months of work with Mabunji Aboriginal Corporation and McArthur River Mine, I started with the NLC in 2008. Seven years have now passed and I still find my job to be challenging and exciting, as it was the day I commenced.

Indigenous connections – I am a Garawa and Yanuwa woman from my mother's side and Larrakia from my father's side. Most of my adult life I spent living in Borrooloola and have strong cultural connection to Gurdanji and Mara tribes through close family ties.

Interest – I enjoy fishing, hunting and spending as much time as I can with family. I spend most of my spare time helping to organise community events such as our annual Rodeo, NAIDOC celebrations and football and softball carnivals. But most importantly, I cherish every moment I get to spend time with my son who schools in Queensland, which is a strain but rewarding at the same time knowing that providing him with the stepping stone to his future through education will be accomplished.

What's it like working in NLC? – Working with the NLC has proven difficult at times juggling family and work commitments, but I have enjoyed every obstacle thrown my way working as a project officer in the region for the past years because not only is work challenging, but also rewarding. Helping our mob in the bush and seeing outcomes brings great pride. The travel that is required with my position has brought me long life friendships and connections through different projects, which include native title workshops over Australia and Woman's Law and Culture camps. Our recent handback of North Island and Blackrock has proven that hard work, commitment and dedication of past and present staff produces good results, team work and working together creating positive outcomes.

Observations – Over the years I have seen staff come and go, all making significant contributions to the region and it has been a pleasure to be a part of it. Out in the region, you really need to make connections with the people and the staff you work with. They are your family for as long as you will be here. The connections made with people and the outcomes from major projects over the years have been rewarding and I look forward to our future challenges that will arise while continuing to help our mob in the bush.



OUR COUNCIL

The responsible Commonwealth Minister, Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, approves the method of choosing members of the NLC, including the community and/or outstation area represented. Section 29 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* provides that an Aboriginal person who is a Traditional Owner or a resident living within the NLC region may nominate for membership of the NLC Full Council.

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

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the NLC were elected at a Full Council meeting in Darwin in November 2013. Along with members nominated from each of the seven regions, the Chairman and Deputy comprise the NLC's nine member Executive Council. The Chair is an executive director and an employee of the NLC. The Deputy is a non-executive director who becomes an executive director during the Chairman's absence. Individual members have an important role in keeping the Full Council informed of the opinions and priorities of their Aboriginal constituents.

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

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



Above, clockwise from top left: Executive Council member David Djalangi (East Arnhem region) addresses Full Council meeting at South Alligator, December 2014; Full Council members confer with NLC anthropologist Carol Christophersen (right) at South Alligator, December 2014; NLC Full Council meets at South Alligator, December 2014.



FULL COUNCIL

TABLE 2: FULL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP, 2013–2016

DARWIN, DALY, WAGAIT	WARD	BORROLOOLA BARKLY	WARD
Bill Risk (<i>Executive</i>)	Darwin	Leonard Norman (<i>Executive</i>)	Borroloola
Bill Danks	Darwin	Keith Rory*	Borroloola
David Kenyon	Darwin East	Jack Green	Borroloola
James Sing*	Darwin West	Timothy Lansen	Nicholson River
Les Waters	Darwin South	Richard Dixon	Robinson River
Margaret Daiyi	Darwin South West	David Harvey	North Barkly
Donna Sullivan	Daly River	Shannon Dixon	Murrانji
Matthew Shields	Daly River North	Brian Limerick	Alexandria
John Sullivan	Daly River West	David Cutta	Brunette Downs
John Daly (<i>Deputy Chair</i>)	Daly River South	Elaine Sandy	Elliott
Elizabeth Sullivan	Pine Creek	Gordon Noonan	Rockhampton Downs
John Wilson	Peppimenarti	John Finlay	Wombaya
Wally Minjin	Palumpa	Jason Bill	Muckaty
Leslie Smiler	Port Keats	Hazel Shadforth	Women's Co-opted
Cyril Ninnal	Port Keats North	Vacant	Women's Co-opted

WEST ARNHEM	WARD	NGUKURR	WARD
John Christophersen (<i>Executive</i>)	Coburg	Virginia Nundhirribala (<i>Executive</i>)	Numbulwar
Bunug Galaminda	Warruwi	Timothy Wurramara	Numbulwar
Jenny Inmulugulu	Warruwi	Faye Mangurra	Numbulwar
Jonathan Nadji	Kakadu	Peter Lansen	Nutwood/Cox River
Dean Yibarbuk	Gunbalanya	Keith Farrell	Hodgson Downs
Wayne Wauchope*	Gunbalanya	Grace Daniels*	Urapunga
Otto Dann	Gunbalanya	Walter Rogers	Ngukurr
Matthew Ryan	Maningrida	Gregory Daniels	Ngukurr
Deceased Member	Maningrida	Gordon Nawundulpi	Ngukurr
Helen Williams	Maningrida		
Julius Kernan	Maningrida		
Matthew Ngarlbin	Minjilang		

VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT	WARD	KATHERINE	WARD
Raymond Hector (<i>Executive</i>)	Pigeon Hole	Samuel Bush-Blanas (<i>Chair</i>)	Beswick
George King	Yingawunarri	Helen Lee (<i>Executive</i>)	Barunga
George Campbell	Yarralin	Bill Harney	Katherine
Shadrack Retchford	Amanbidji	Lisa Mumbin*	Katherine
Jack Little	Bulla	Desmond Roberts	Weemol
Larry Johns	Timber Creek	Lloyd Murray	Bulman
Elaine Watts*	Women's Co-opted	Clive Roberts	Mataranka/Djimbra
Vacant	Women's Co-opted		

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

There's a lot of knowledge and wisdom on that Full Council, and our bi-annual meetings, which run for the best part of a week, are productive, lively and full of debate.

* ABA Members

AIG Members are the Executive Members

TABLE 3: FULL COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND ATTENDANCE RECORD DURING 2014/2015

MEETING	DATES	LOCATION
109th	8 to 12 December 2014	South Alligator, via Jabiru
110th	15 to 19 June 2015	Barunga, via Katherine

DARWIN DALY WAGAIT	109TH PROXY	110TH PROXY
John Daly (<i>Deputy Chair</i>)		Absent 18.06–19.06
Bill Risk (<i>Executive</i>)		Absent 19.06
Bill Danks		Absent
David Kenyon		Graham Kenyon
Les Waters	Graham Kenyon	Absent
Margaret Daiyi		
Donna Sullivan		Absent
Matthew Shields	Absent	Absent
John Sullivan		
Elizabeth Sullivan		
John Wilson		
Wally Minjin	Harold Wilson	
Leslie Smiler		
Cyril Ninnal		
James Sing		



BORROLOOLA/ BARKLY	109TH PROXY	110TH PROXY
Leonard Norman (<i>Executive</i>)	Timothy Lansen	Absent
Garrick George		Absent
Jack Green		Jason Green
David Harvey		Absent
Hazel Shadforth		Absent
Richard Dixon		
Keith Rory		
Brian Limerick		
Shannon Dixon		Absent
David Cutta		
Elaine Sandy	Absent	
Gordon Noonan	Absent	
John Finlay	Claudette Albert	
Jason Bill		

WEST ARNHEM	109TH PROXY	110TH PROXY
John Christophersen (<i>Executive</i>)	Jimmy Marinowa	Absent
Bunug Galaminda		
Jenny Inmulugulu		
Jonathon Nadji		
Dean Yibarbuk		
Wayne Wauchope		
Otto Dann	Absent	Deceased
Matthew Ryan		
Maningrida Member		
Julius (Clint) Kernan		
Helen Williams		
Matthew Ngarlbin (Cooper)	Absent	Absent

NGUKURR	109TH PROXY	110TH PROXY
Virginia Nundhirribala (<i>Executive</i>)	Daphne Daniels	Jim Wilfred
Timothy Wurramara		
Faye Mangurra		
Peter Lansen		
Keith Farrell		
Grace Daniels		
Walter Rogers		
Gregory Daniels		
Gordon Nawundulpi		
	Dwayne Rogers	
	Absent	

VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT	109TH PROXY	110TH PROXY
Raymond Hector <i>(Executive)</i>		Peter Chubb
George Campbell		Absent
George King	Absent	
Jack Little	Absent	
Larry Johns	Absent	
Shadrack Retchford		
Elaine Watts		

KATHERINE	109TH PROXY	110TH PROXY
Samuel Bush-Blanasi <i>(Chair)</i>		
Helen Lee <i>(Executive)</i>		
Bill Harney		
Clive Roberts		
Desmond Lindsay	Absent	Melissa Rogers
Lisa Mumbin		
Lloyd Murray	Absent	Christopher Gordon

EAST ARNHEM	109TH PROXY	110TH PROXY
David Djalangi <i>(Executive)</i>		
Yananyumul Mununggurr		Absent
Dhuwarrwarr Marika		
Banambi Wunungmurra	Absent	Absent
Jabani Lalara		
Jonathon Nunggumajbarr		Absent
Don Wininba	Absent	
Jason Guyula		
Kenny Djekurra Guyula		
David Marpiyawuy	Absent	Noel Manggurra
Richard Dadarr Barakal	Billy Buyman	Absent
David Rumba Rumba		
David Warraya		
Wesley Bandi Bandi		
Bobby Wunungmurra		Absent
Djawa Yunupingu		Absent
Caroline Dhamarrandji	Absent	



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

MEMBERS

KATHERINE REGION



Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Chairman

Samuel Bush-Blanasi is a Mayili man and resident of the Wugularr (Beswick) community in the Katherine region. He was educated in his own community before completing his studies at Kormilda College in Darwin. Mr Blanasi thanks his father (the late Mr David Blanasi) for his education, and says his father instilled in him strong cultural and traditional values. Mr Blanasi is a prolific artist who brings a wealth of administrative and social experience to the NLC. This is Mr Blanasi's fifth term at the NLC. He is the immediate past Deputy Chairman, and was previously

an NLC member during the 1990s. Mr Blanasi is also a board member of the Aboriginal Investment Group, and has a long record of service on boards of several other Aboriginal bodies.

DARWIN DALY WAGAIT REGION



John Daly, Deputy Chairman

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

You've got to be passionate for these things otherwise there's no point in being in organisations such as ours. You have got to have it to live it."

BORROLOOLA BARKLY REGION



Leonard Norman, Executive Member

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

He holds strong views on the need to educate young people about the vision of the NLC and the work it does for Traditional Owners across the Top End of the Northern Territory.

DARWIN DALY WAGAIT REGION



Bill Risk, Executive Member

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

EAST ARNHEM REGION



David Djalangi, Executive Member

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

WEST ARNHEM REGION



John Christophersen, Executive Member

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 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.



KATHERINE REGION



Helen Lee, Executive Member

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

NGUKURR



Virginia Nundhirribala, Executive Member

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

make it strong so that culture can live. The NLC is a part of that, and it is helping us with our culture and the land and to look after it properly. That's very important to me."

VICTORIA RIVER DISTRICT



Raymond Hector, Executive Member

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

MEETINGS

Seven Executive Council meetings were held during the reporting period.

TABLE 4: EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND ATTENDANCE RECORD DURING 2014/2015

MEETING	DATE	LOCATION	ATTENDEES	APOLOGIES
166th	30–31 July 2014	DDW Regional Office Palmerston	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector Helen Lee, John Christophersen, John Daly, Virginia Nundhirribala, Leonard Norman	David Djalangi, John Daly, John Christophersen (day 2)
167th	25–26 September 2014	Rydges Darwin Airport Resort Darwin	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector Helen Lee, John Christophersen, John Daly, Virginia Nundhirribala, David Djalangi	Leonard Norman
168th	26 November 2014	NLC Office 60 Smith Street Darwin	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector Helen Lee, John Christophersen, John Daly, Virginia Nundhirribala, David Djalangi, Leonard Norman	
169th	7 December 2014	Aurora Resort Sth Alligator	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector Helen Lee, John Christophersen, John Daly, Virginia Nundhirribala, David Djalangi, Leonard Norman	
170th	10 January 2015	NLC Office 60 Smith Street Darwin	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector Helen Lee, John Christophersen, John Daly	David Djalangi, Virginia Nundhirribala, Leonard Norman
171st	21–22 March 2015	Mary River	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector Helen Lee, John Christophersen, Virginia Nundhirribala, David Djalangi, Leonard Norman	John Daly
172nd	15 June 2015	NLC Office Katherine	Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Bill Risk, Raymond Hector Helen Lee, John Christophersen, Virginia Nundhirribala, David Djalangi	John Daly Leonard Norman



REGIONAL COUNCILS

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

TABLE 5: REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND VENUES DURING 2014/2015

REGION	DATE	LOCATION
Darwin Daly Wagait	9–10 October 2014	Daly River
	6–7 May 2015	Lake Bennett Resort
East Arnhem	1–2 October 2014	Marthakal Lodge, Galiwinku
	22–23 April 2015	PM & C Office, Nhulunbuy
Katherine	10–11 September 2014	NLC Office, Katherine
	5–6 March 2015	NLC Office, Katherine
Borroloola Barkly	13–14 August 2014	Borroloola
	23–24 March 2015	Borroloola
West Arnhem	4–5 September 2014	NLC Office, Jabiru
	17–18 March 2015	NLC Office, Jabiru
Ngukurr	27–28 August 2014	Ngukurr
	13–16 April 2015	NLC Office, Katherine
Victoria River District	18–19 September 2014	Kununurra
	28–29 April 2015	Shire Council Office, Timber Creek

OUR PEOPLE

ADMINISTRATION

The NLC's Full Council, the supreme governing body, comprises 83 members – 78 are elected every three years from across the NLC's seven regions, and five women are co-opted; the Chairman and Deputy Chairman are also elected.

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

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

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

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

Seven branches support the CEO:

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

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



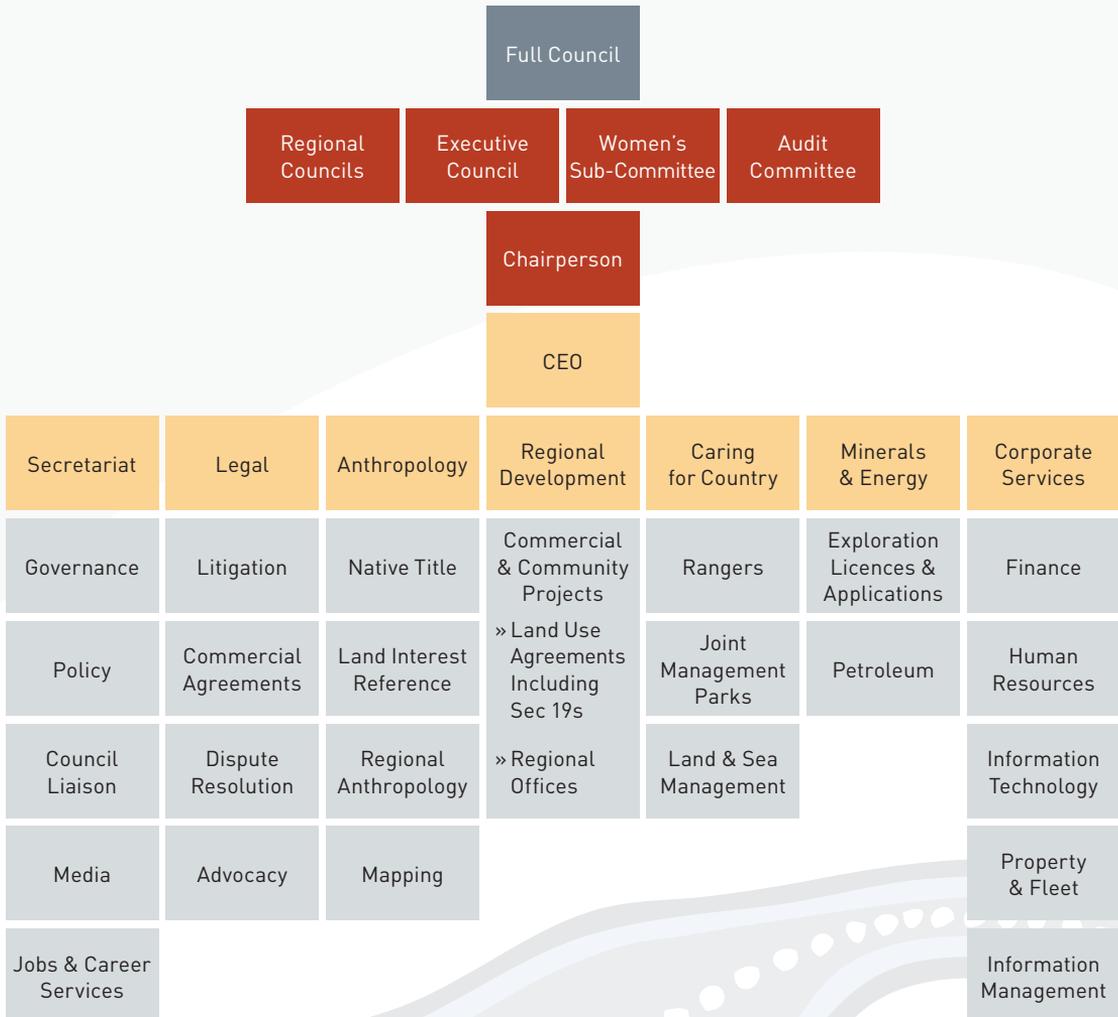
STRUCTURE

The diagram below illustrates the NLC’s structure.

Some of the NLC’s key stakeholders include:

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

FIGURE 2: NLC’S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



BRANCH OVERVIEW

ANTHROPOLOGY

Carol Christophersen, Acting Branch Manager

Robert Graham left the Anthropology Branch in early 2015 to work with the South Australian Native Title Services and Carol Christophersen has managed the branch since his departure.

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

Cultural heritage, site clearances and geographic information services are essential elements to facilitate effective consultations. The Land Interest Reference Register informs staff as to whom they need to consult. The Full Council takes advice from this branch as to whether decisions made were well informed and made in accordance with traditional decision making processes.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Steven Lawrence, Acting General Manager Corporate Compliance

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

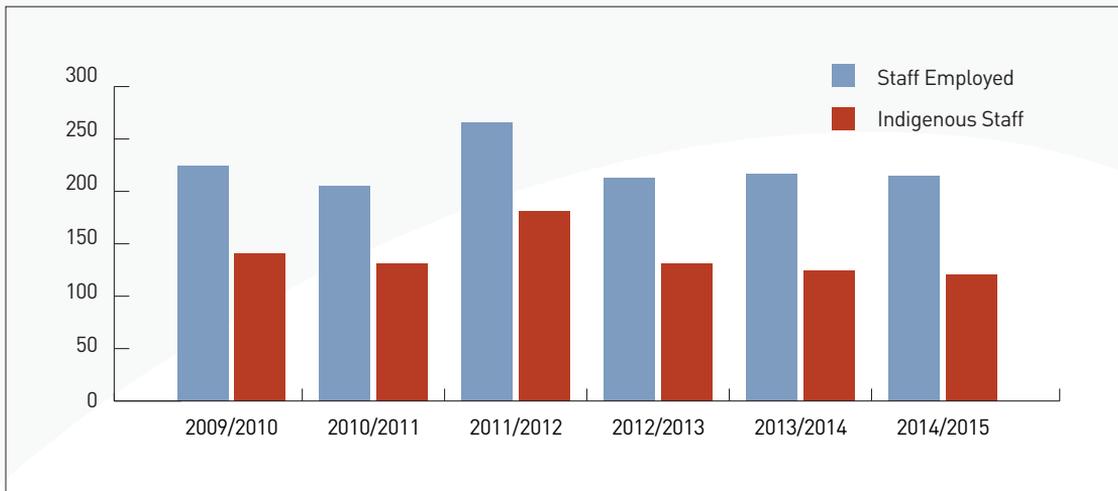


Information on the NLC's staff profile is presented in the table and figure below, detailing staff numbers within each branch and the five-year employment trend.

TABLE 6: NLC STAFF PROFILE, 2014/2015

	POSITIONS	ATSI	% ATSI
Secretariat	13	9	69
Corporate Services	39	19	49
Minerals & Energy	9	2	22
Regional Development	40	24	60
Caring for Country	22	4	18
Working on Country	46	46	100
Indigenous Land Corporation	8	8	100
Anthropology	25	5	20
Legal	13	4	31
TOTAL	215	121	56.2

FIGURE 3: FIVE-YEAR TREND – FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS



MINERALS & ENERGY

Rhonda Sarmardin, Manager

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

CARING FOR COUNTRY

Justine Yanner, Manager

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

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jonathan McLeod, Manager

Jonathan joined the NLC in September 2011 and manages the regional office network, Indigenous pastoral program and the section 19 land use agreement section.

LEGAL

Michael O'Donnell, Principal Legal Officer

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

SECRETARIAT

Leanne Liddle, Senior Policy Advisor

The Secretariat branch works closely with the CEO and Chairman. The Secretariat provides administrative support and co-ordinates all council meetings, liaises with council members, networks with external media and leads the organisation in research, governance and policy development. The jobs and career services unit is part of the Secretariat branch. The branch also processes applications for permits and funeral grants.



PART II: OUR APPROACH – SHAPING OUR FUTURE

STRATEGIC THINKING

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

Our planning framework incorporates:

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

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

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



Opposite: NLC Full Council meeting, Barunga, June 2015. Above: Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion (left) receives a gift at land hand-back ceremony near Borroloola, May 2015.



CORPORATE PLAN 2015–2019

The Corporate Plan 2015–2019 presents the NLC’s goals and objectives for the next four years, based on the organisation’s legislative responsibilities (under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act and Native Title Act*), and our identified Vision and Values (see page 3).

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.

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

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

The plan is the vehicle to achieve our corporate mission: to have an experienced and capable organisation that effectively serves Aboriginal peoples’ interests in the Northern Territory’s land, waters and seas – one that is fully focused and committed to achieve our strategic objectives over the next four years.

The NLC’s focus during this four year period is targeted improvements – improved governance support to the Council, supporting the Council in policy development, increased community engagement and the delivery of accessible and efficient services to Aboriginal people of the Territory by the NLC.

Successful delivery of our Corporate Plan will be a positive and meaningful steps to realise our vision for the NLC.

**The NLC is committed
fully to delivering
successfully on our
strategic directions.**

*Opposite, left: Dancers at land hand-back ceremony near Borroloola, May 2015.
Opposite, right: Men’s camp, Full Council meeting, Barunga, June 2015;*

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015–2019

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

The objectives of this four-year Strategic Plan are:

- To serve as a document that sets out medium-term, high-level, strategic directions for the Executive and Full Council Members, Regional Councils and the Chief Executive Officer of the NLC.
- To establish a platform for the Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with the Leadership Group and staff, to set, monitor and review annual priorities and actions outlined in the Corporate Plan alongside detailed business plans for each operational area commencing 2015.
- To provide a communication tool to inform stakeholders, governments and the general public on the strategic direction of the NLC over the next four years and recognition of achievements.

The NLC is fully committed to delivering successfully on our strategic objectives that will see Aboriginal people benefit economically, socially and culturally from the secure possession of our land, waters and seas in the top end of the Northern Territory.

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





PART III: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND INTERESTS

GOAL: Advocate, protect and acquire Aboriginal property rights and interest in our traditional lands, waters and seas through land claims and native title processes.

LAND CLAIMS

A key NLC objective is to assist Aboriginal people who have a traditional claim to land within the NLC's region to pursue their claims.

A central purpose of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* is to enable the granting of land in the Territory for the benefit of Traditional Owners. Under the Act, Aboriginal people may make a claim to unalienated Crown land outside of gazetted town areas, or land in which all estates and interests are owned by, or on behalf of Aboriginal people, such as Aboriginal-owned pastoral leases.

The office of the Aboriginal Land Commissioner was established to consider claims to land by Aboriginal groups. Within the NLC, land claims are the primary responsibility of the legal and anthropology branches.

Many land claims have been successfully settled by the NLC in past years and only a small number remain, most of them over small areas including the beds and banks of several rivers.

NLC combines its native title functions with its other statutory functions to increase administrative efficiency and flexibility.

Opposite: NAIDOC Week march, Darwin, July 2014.



KENBI CLAIM

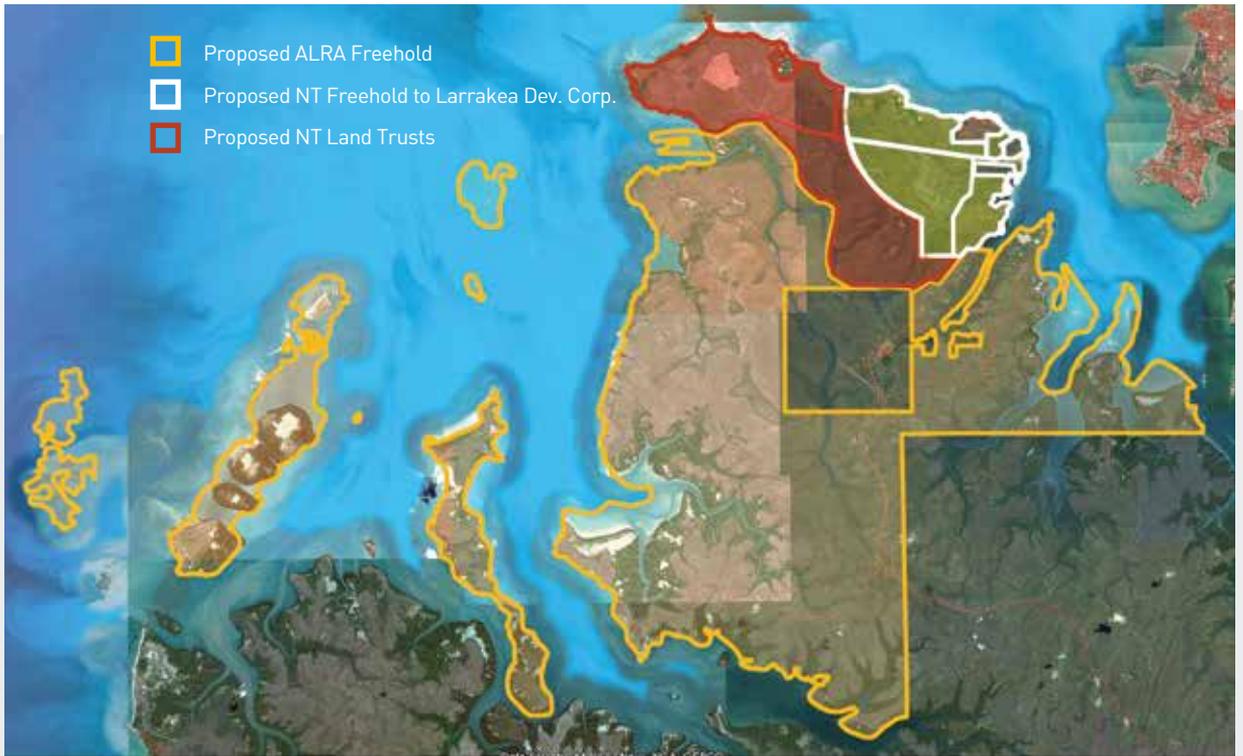
The Kenbi Land Claim involves land and islands around Cox Peninsula near Darwin. Lodged in the 1970s Kenbi is one of the longest proceedings in Territory history. In December 2000, Justice Gray, then the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, published his report and recommendations that were in favour of the claimants. Ongoing discussions facilitated by the NLC, including the requirement for remediation works, have resulted in significant progress towards settlement. It is anticipated that the majority of the Cox Peninsula and the surrounding islands will finally become Aboriginal land in 2016.

VERNON ISLANDS CLAIM

The Vernon Islands, Wickham River, and Kakadu land claims have all been the subject of extensive research and documentation by the NLC. The Vernon Islands land claim, involving three islands to the north east of Darwin in the Clarence Strait, was subject to on-country hearing and extensive legal submission and negotiations. Final settlement is expected soon and the country involved should become Aboriginal land.

The NLC's Anthropology Branch has embarked on a research program to prepare formal anthropological documentation – anthropological reports, genealogical material, site and dreaming maps – to some ten claims. These are largely to the south and west of Darwin including in the Legune, Gregory, Victoria and Fitzmaurice rivers region of the Victoria River District.





Opposite, left: NLC advisory sign. Opposite, right: Executive Council member Helen Lee (Katherine region) and Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi flank the display of the Yirrkala bark petition at Parliament House, Canberra. Above: Map of Kenbi land claim settlements.



SEA COUNTRY

In 2008, the rights of Aboriginal people were reaffirmed by the High Court through its decision on the Blue Mud Bay Case (*Gumana vs The Northern Territory*). This landmark case confirmed the right of Aboriginal people to manage access to intertidal waters over Aboriginal land relevant to their interests under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*. This accounts for 84% of the Northern Territory's coastline – a culturally, environmentally and economically rich landscape that provides the potential to support community development, resilience and prosperity in Aboriginal remote communities.

Since the decision, the Northern Territory Government has pursued long-term, ongoing access to intertidal waters based on fishing industry interests. While negotiations with Traditional Owners have been conducted, short-term interim commercial and recreational fishing licences and permits have enabled continuing fishing access. An interim licence under s19 of ALRA gives a right to take fish from Aboriginal tidal waters. A permit under s5 of the *Aboriginal Land Act* gives a right of entry to Aboriginal tidal waters.

The interim licence and permit scheme has been extended four times since the initial agreement. The current extension, supported by the NLC Full Council at its 109th meeting in December 2014, expires 31 December 2015.

Currently, the interim regime applies to all intertidal waters over Aboriginal land, except where Traditional Owners have rejected the Northern Territory Government's offer for long term settlement.

So far, two areas, both within the Darwin Daly Wagait region, have rejected offers of settlement and now require licences and permits from the NLC. One area is the Upper Finnis River, relevant to the Delissaville Wagait Larrakia Aboriginal Land Trust; the second is from Cape Scott to Dooley Point, relevant to the Daly River Port Keats Aboriginal Land Trust.

To date, six areas of Northern Territory intertidal waters have settled agreements and licences that provide continued commercial and recreational fishing access to intertidal waters over Aboriginal land:

1. Arnhem ALT for Mini Mini and Murgendela Rivers area south of Coburg Peninsula (1 July 2013 to 2016).
2. Malak Malak ALT for Daly River area (1 July 2012 to 2032).
3. Narwimbi, Wurralbi & Wurralbi No.2 ALTs for Sir Edward Pellew Islands Group and lower McArthur River area (1 July 2012 to 2032).
4. Daly River Port Keats ALT for Anson Bay area from the mouth of the Daly River to Cape Scott (1 January 2013 to 2033).
5. Arnhem ALT for Nhulunbuy area (1 January 2014 to 2034).
6. Daly River Port Keats ALT for Moyle River area (1 July 2014 to 2034).

Since November 2014, the NLC has been working with the NT Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries on managing the compliance of settlements and licences for each area. To date, Traditional Owners of all areas, except for Nhulunbuy, have met to discuss the detail and terms of their respective Settlements. Consultations for Nhulunbuy area are planned for August.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: Consultation with Traditional Owners about their Moyle River intertidal fishing access settlement held 13 May 2015; NT Indigenous ranger groups undertaking Compliance Training; Malak Malak Ranger Theresa Lemon recording prawn traps.

Key outcomes to date, relevant to terms under respective settlements, include:

- Delivery of fishing Code of Conduct for Daly River (<http://www.fishing.nt.gov.au/agreement-daly-river.html>) and McArthur River and Sir Edward Pellew Islands (<http://www.fishing.nt.gov.au/agreement-mcarthur.html>).
- Sea Ranger training and certification in fisheries surveillance and compliance, research sampling techniques, biosecurity monitoring, safety at sea and vessel operation in all areas except for Anson Bay and Mini Min Murganella areas where no ranger groups exist.
- Establishment of an Aboriginal Consultative Committee, as provided under the Mini Mini Murganella Settlement, with its first meeting planned in October.
- Establishment of the Wurrahiliba Management Committee, as provided under the Sir Edward Pellew Islands Group and McArthur River Settlement, with its first meeting planned in August.
- Establishment of the Daly River Bank Erosion Study Committee, as provided under the Daly River Settlement, with its first meeting planned in September.

Over the next 12 months, NLC will work to deliver terms under existing settlements and work with Traditional Owners in other areas to consider settlement offers from the Northern Territory Government for ongoing access to intertidal waters.





NATIVE TITLE REPORT

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

THE NATIVE TITLE ACT

Since its formation in the mid-1970s, the NLC has worked to promote Aboriginal land rights through the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. With the introduction of the *Native Title Act 1993*, the NLC has sought recognition for Aboriginal people for their rights in land and water across a wider area including pastoral leases and townships.

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

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

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

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



NATIVE TITLE: QUICK FACTS

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

NATIVE TITLE DETERMINATION APPLICATIONS

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

TABLE 7: NATIVE TITLE APPLICATIONS STATISTICS, 2014/2015

Active claimant applications	As at 1 July 2014	165
	As at 30 June 2015	163
New claimant applications	Filed 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015	2
New compensation applications	Filed 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015	0
Non-claimant applications	Filed 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015	3
Determinations of native title	1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015	0



UPDATE ON CONTINUING CLAIMS

PASTORAL CONSENT DETERMINATIONS

The Federal Court's Pastoral Consent Determination Schedule is an ambitious approach to address the backlog of native title claims. This schedule requires in excess of 110 pastoral lease areas within the NLC to be progressed to consent determination via a 'short form' process and represents a significant portion of the NLC's native title work.

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

In 2010, the parties agreed to resolve all future pastoral claims on the basis of a short form approach applied to providing:

1. Anthropological evidence in support of the native title claim group's connection to the relevant pastoral lease; and
2. Evidence of the construction or establishment of public works and pastoral improvements on that lease.

In addition, it was agreed that fresh native title claims be lodged over each individual pastoral lease, and that all earlier claims over the same lease be removed.

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



Above: Anthropologist checking Dreaming map with claimants, Ngukurr 2015.

FIGURE 4: NLC'S PASTORAL CONSENT DETERMINATION PROCESS

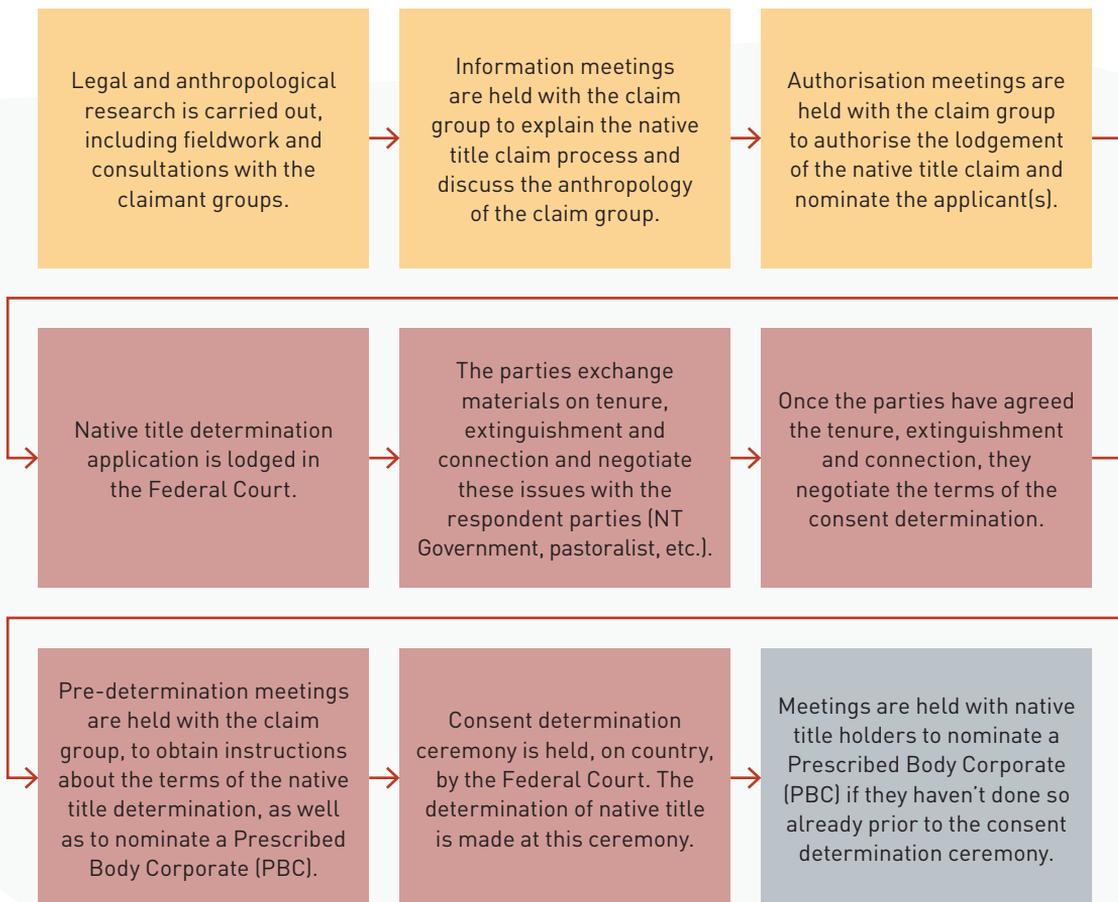
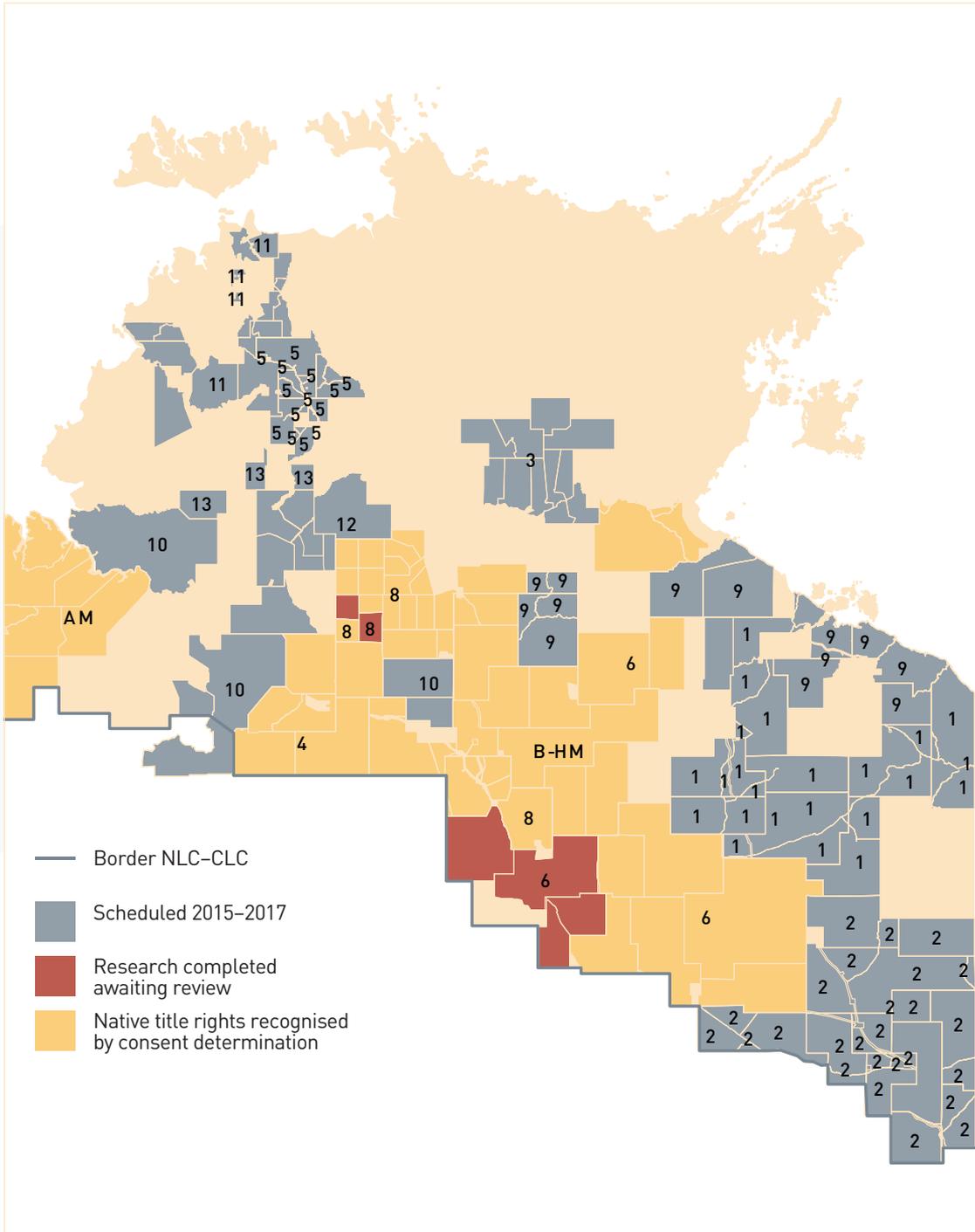




FIGURE 5: STATUS OF WORK ON THE FEDERAL COURT ORDERED PASTORAL CONSENT DETERMINATION SCHEDULE FOR THE NLC REGION, JUNE 2015



During the reporting period, no native title claims were determined. However, a large proportion of anthropological and legal work has been focused on progressing claims over 18 pastoral leases in Group 1 (Mallapunyah/Cresswell Matters – Billengarra, Mallapunyah Springs, Walhallow, Cresswell Downs, Benmarra, McArthur River, Kiana, Calvert Hills and Wologorang pastoral leases) and Group 9 (Mallapunyah/Cresswell-Gulf Country – Hodgson Downs, Nutwood Downs, Nathan River, Lorella, Pungalina, Seven Emu, Greenbank, Manangoora and Spring Creek pastoral leases), including 10 on-country meetings. The majority of these claims are likely to be determined in the 2015/2016 financial year.

Research and fieldwork continued for eight of the twelve pastoral leases in Group 2 (Dalmore Downs – Mittiebah, Mount Drummond, Alexandria, Dalmore Downs, West Ranken, East Ranken, Adder, Rocklands, Soudan, Avon Downs, Burrumurra and Austral Downs pastoral leases) and the three remaining leases in Group 6 (Banka Banka – Banka Banka, Helen Springs and Powell Creek).

In February 2015, the NLC was notified of a proposed petroleum exploration permit over the Buchanan Downs and Hidden Valley leases as well as a number of neighbouring pastoral leases under s29 of the *Native Title Act*. In response, the NLC’s anthropological, legal and field staff worked tirelessly to research, prepare and facilitate the authorisation of new claims over both leases to ensure Traditional Owners secured the right to negotiate.

The NLC will continue to progress pastoral claims in accordance with the Federal Court ordered Pastoral Consent Determination Schedule. While the Schedule significantly accelerates the rate at which claims are resolved, it requires the NLC to commit significant resources to progress these claims. In other words, the short form work process is far more intensive, requiring the same amount of work but in a shorter timeframe.

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

FIGURE 5 LEGEND

NAME	LABEL
Auvergne Matters	AM
Beetaloo-Hayfield Matters	B-HM
Mallapunyah/Cresswell Matters (Group 1)	1
Dalmore Downs Matters (Group 2)	2
Chattahoochie Matters (Group 3)	3
Montejinni Matters (Group 4)	4
Mary River Matters (Group 5)	5
Banka Banka Matters (Group 6)	6
Dry River Matters – Sturt Plateau Matters (Group 8)	8
Mallapunyah/Cresswell – Gulf Country Pastoral Leases (Group 9)	9
Humbert VRD Matters (Group 10)	10
Mary River Matters – Litchfield Daly Matters (Group 11)	11
Dry River Matters – Katherine West Matters (Group 12)	12
Dry River Matters – Daly Waters Region Matters (Group 13)	13



TOWNSHIP CONSENT DETERMINATIONS

The NLC is required to work on township native title claims as part of the Federal Court initiative to settle native title applications via consent determination.

During 2014/2015, the NLC continued meetings with claimants to finalise the Katherine and Borroloola townships native title claims.

NATIVE TITLE CLAIMS LITIGATION

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

Judgment on the Jabiru claim is yet to be determined. Following the 2013 trial, two of the three portions of land surrounding the town of Jabiru, which were subject to the Jabiru native title determination application, were granted as Aboriginal land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* to the Kakadu Aboriginal Land Trust. These two portions were leased back to the Director of National Parks as part of the settlement arrangements for the Jabiru native title claim. Discussions on native title determination on the remaining portion of land continue.

NATIVE TITLE SEA CLAIMS

The NLC understands that many Aboriginal people in the region consider 'country' to include the seas, islands, reefs, sand banks and associated sea beds. The ability to pursue sea rights, however, was not possible until the *Native Title Act* was introduced in 1993.

One of the first sea claims made on behalf of Aboriginal people by the NLC was *Yarmirr vs The Northern Territory* (decision in 2001), involving sea country in the Arafura Sea near Croker Island. The court found that the applicants held non-exclusive native title in the area. The Wellesley Island Native Title application by Lardil people in Queensland, not far from the Territory border, produced a similar outcome.

Over the past year, the NLC has continued working with colleagues from the Anindilyakwa Land Council to progress anthropological research and lodge an application for the recognition of native title rights in sea country in the Numbulwar-Groote Eylandt region.

NOMINATION OF A PRESCRIBED BODY CORPORATE

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

The NLC has developed a corporation called the Top End Default PBC, which can be used by native title holders as a PBC. Members of the Top End Default PBC are the members from time to time of the NLC Executive Council. If native title holders choose, the Top End Default PBC will perform the PBC role – which is primarily executing agreements based on the instructions and directions of native title holders. The Top End Default PBC does not receive money or royalties from those agreements.

The Top End Default PBC is merely an option for native title holders. There is no obligation on native title holders to 'opt in' to the Top End Default PBC. Furthermore, if they choose to nominate the Top End Default PBC to manage their native title rights and interests, they can later decide to 'opt out' and develop their own PBC when ready to do so.

The rationale behind the Top End Default PBC is to assist those native title groups, especially those located in remote and very remote areas where there is likely to have been little or no substantial development agreements in the past that would have provided the native title holders with the capacity – financial and otherwise – to handle the administrative requirements of running a corporation. The NLC has found that in

...the NLC acknowledges the strength, support and patience of Traditional Owners... as we work to settle native title across the NLC region.

such cases, a PBC can rapidly lapse into non-compliance with reporting requirements under the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006* (CATSI Act) (Cwlth). Aboriginal associations or corporations whose only role is to hold title in remote regions and do not generate income or employ staff understandably find it difficult to maintain documentation (relating to membership and office bearers for example) and to comply with annual reporting requirements. Non-compliance can lead to prosecution and deregistration of the corporation. The NLC created the Top End Default PBC as an optional interim measure to avoid these difficulties and reduce the risks.

UPDATE ON PRESCRIBED BODY CORPORATE NOMINATION WORK

In this reporting period, the NLC put significant time and resources into consulting widely with native title holders and claimants on nominating a registered prescribed body corporate (or PBC) to hold their native title rights and interests.

A total of 19 native title groups were consulted. The native title holders listed below decided to nominate the Top End Default PBC as the PBC for their native title determinations for the matters listed, as provided for under s 57(2)(a)(i) of the *Native Title Act*:

- July 2014 – Meeting at Newcastle Waters for Beetaloo, Hayfield, Amungee Mungee, Shenandoah, Ucharonidge, Kalala, and Mungabroom pastoral leases and town of Daly Waters
- August 2014 – Meeting in Kununurra for the Rosewood pastoral lease
- November 2014 – Meeting in Elliott for the Town of Elliott
- March 2015 (and April 2014) – Meeting in Elliott for Tandiyidgee, Newcastle Waters and Murraraji pastoral leases
- April 2015: Meeting in Elliott for Sunday Creek pastoral lease. Meeting in Tennant Creek for Alroy Downs pastoral lease
- April 2015 (and April 2014) – Meeting at Tennant Creek for Anthony Lagoon, Brunchilly and Rockhampton Downs pastoral leases
- May 2015 – Meeting in Mataranka for the Town of Mataranka.



COMPENSATION APPLICATIONS

In 2011, a compensation application for the loss and impairment of native title was lodged over the Town of Timber Creek. On 19 March 2014, Justice John Mansfield of the Federal Court delivered a preliminary judgement in the case on the issue of apportioning liability for compensation between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory.

The key issue of ascertaining the value of the loss and impairment of native title will proceed to trial in February 2016. This native title compensation application will be the second case of its kind to proceed to trial. The first was unsuccessful. The importance of the legal issues means that whatever judgement is made by the Federal Court, it is likely to be appealed (ultimately to the High Court).

FUTURE ACT NOTICES

During the reporting period, the NLC was notified of 67 future acts relating to mineral and petroleum exploration or production. The notification of future acts development proposals potentially affects the rights and interests of native title holders within its region.

During 2014/2015, thirty-seven notifications of future acts were withdrawn by the Department of Mines and Energy.

AGREEMENT MAKING

The NLC facilitates the negotiation of agreements to ensure that native title holders are, in most cases, provided with a package that offers economic opportunities. Under such agreements, the NLC is generally responsible for distributing benefits. Many agreements require NLC support to enable the native title parties to take advantage of employment, training and business opportunities that may occur when a project proceeds. The work of the NLC in this capacity continues for the life of the agreement to secure the agreed benefits for native title holders and ensure compliance with the terms and conditions.



Native title meetings are a huge logistical exercise... participants often have to travel from far away and take time away from work and family to attend.

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

DON COUZENS – Project Officer, Katherine



I have been working at the NLC since 2007. I first started as a Permit Officer and then a year later went on to become an Administration Officer until 2010.

Since 2010, I have been working as a Project Officer out of the Katherine Regional Office. In the past three years, a lot of my work has had to do with Native Title and in particular with helping to organise Native Title meetings that are usually attended by anything from 20 to 80 native title holders.

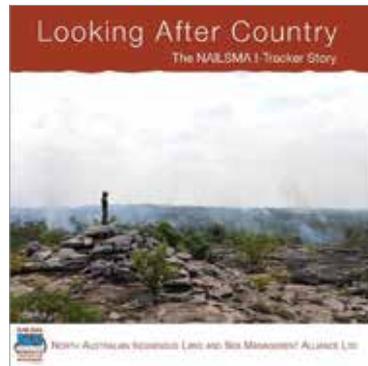
Once we know a native title meeting is to take place and we have received from anthropology the list of who should be invited to

attend, we have a staff meeting to organise the casual workers and full time staff. We need staff, including myself, to travel everywhere people might live, as far as Mt Isa and Doomadgee in Queensland, Kununurra and Halls Creek in Western Australia or down to Tennant Creek and distribute meeting notices a few weeks in advance. Just before the meetings we also send out drivers and organise fuel vouchers and charter planes to pick-up those who need assistance to get to where the meeting is taking place and return them safely home after the meetings.

My role is to ensure that all casual and full-time staff are dispatched to various locations and to provide them with a pick-up list. I also organise accommodation for all people attending the meeting as well as ensuring that meals will be provided as well as catering for the meetings. I also ensure that all timesheet and travel forms have been completed correctly and forward all paperwork to the main office for processing. Before the meetings start, I assist staff in setting up the meeting space, and take notes during the meeting which then goes on file.

Native title meetings are a huge logistical exercise and it is a real team effort to ensure that they run as smoothly as possible for the participants who often have to travel from far away and take time away from work and family to attend.

Opposite: Community meeting at Yarralin, VRD, May 2015, to discuss land claim and township leasing matters. Above: NLC Project Officer Don Couzens taking notes at Native Title meeting in Minyerri 2015.



The NLC employs more than 100 Aboriginal rangers to care for some of the most biologically intact landscapes on the planet.

CARING FOR COUNTRY

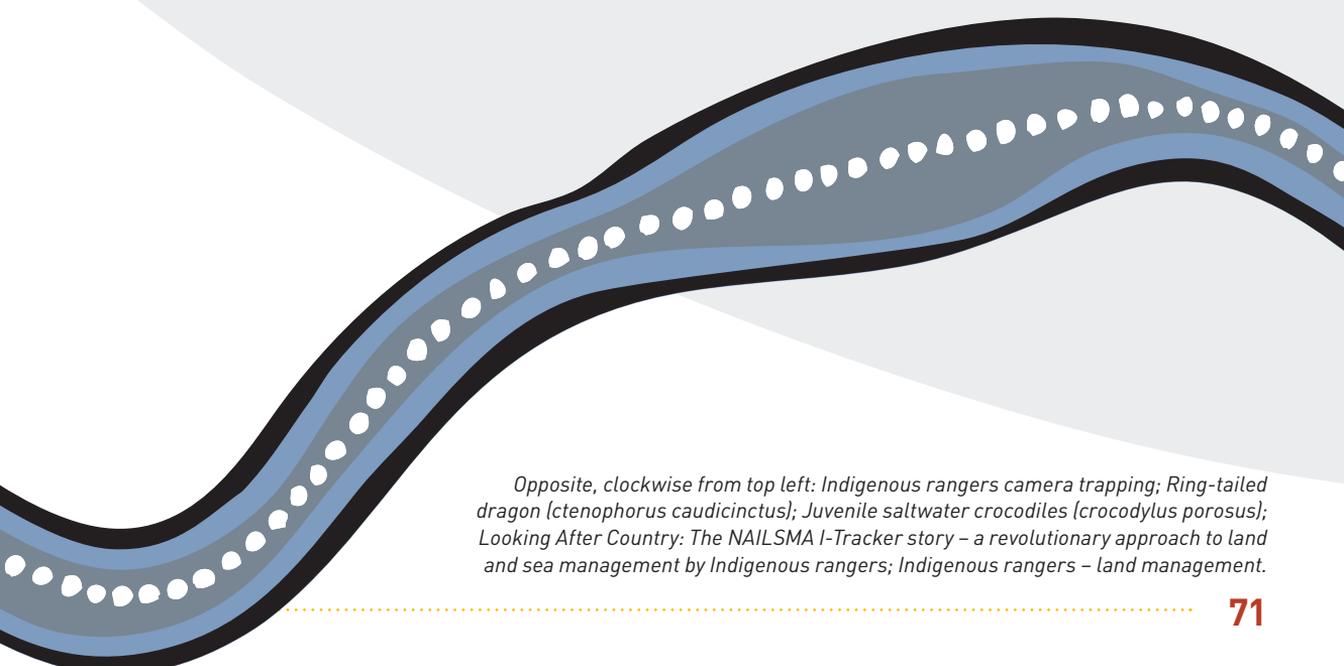
GOAL: Advocate, protect and acquire Aboriginal property rights and interest in our traditional lands, waters and seas through land claims and native title processes.

WORKING TOGETHER

A key NLC objective is to assist Traditional Owners to manage land, sea and natural resources in a sustainable manner.

The NLC actively supports the work of Aboriginal people in maintaining cultural responsibilities and obligations to care for each other and land, waters and seas within the Indigenous estate. NLC ranger teams are guided by the values and aspirations of the custodians of Indigenous law and culture. The NLC has developed various local, regional and Territory partnerships to assist this process.

The NLC Caring for Country team provides environmental and support services across 210,000 km² of Northern Territory land and 2,702 km² of water. This requires extensive planning, implementation, and reporting work. Northern Territory lands and waters are some of the most intact and biologically diverse land and seascapes in Australia. A range of cultural, historic and environmental values are described by the Traditional Owners during planning sessions, and rangers work to protect and enhance these values. This work involves a range of protective and pro-active measures to mitigate and manage threats posed by invasive plant and animal species and by a range of land use pressures. NLC rangers apply traditional and modern management practices to assist Traditional Owners in their ongoing efforts to protect biodiversity and conserve cultural heritage.



*Opposite, clockwise from top left: Indigenous rangers camera trapping; Ring-tailed dragon (*ctenophorus caudicinctus*); Juvenile saltwater crocodiles (*crocodylus porosus*); Looking After Country: The NAILSMA I-Tracker story – a revolutionary approach to land and sea management by Indigenous rangers; Indigenous rangers – land management.*



The *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognise that Indigenous people are intrinsically entwined with water and land. These principles underpin the Caring for Country program, which actively supports Traditional Owners to establish grass-roots land and sea management initiatives across the network of remote homelands, and in community centres.

The Caring for Country program respects cultural law and traditional knowledge, skills and practices, and encourages interaction with western science research, theory, and practices in an effort to maintain biodiversity and the sustainable use of wildlife. Land and sea managers also provide important environmental services for partner organisations. The NLC has actively developed relationships that enable Traditional Owners to engage in cost recovery contracts as a step towards their economic wellbeing.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

The NLC has provided leadership and support in the area of fire management for remote communities. In partnership with other ranger groups, and with the Central Land Council, the Carpenteria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, and a number of NGOs and government agencies, the NLC is engaged in extensive carbon abatement work.

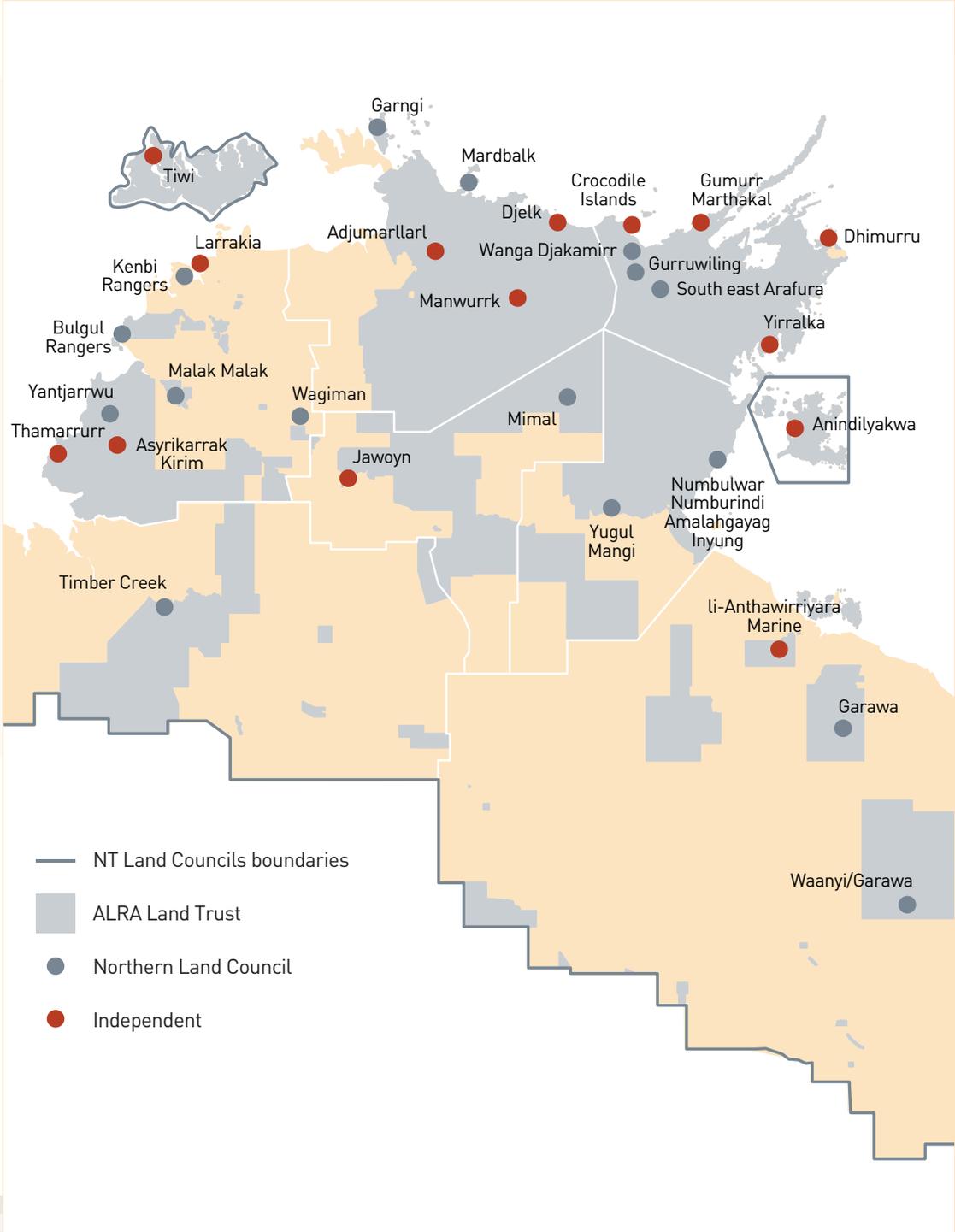
Through the collective efforts of rangers and partner agencies, and with the growing support of Northern Territory pastoralists, a significant reduction in wildfire activity has been achieved. Additionally, planned early burning regimes are creating optimal conditions for plant biodiversity, supporting a greater number of species and age classes within plant communities.

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



Above: Gumurr Marthakal undertaking prescribed burning on Elcho Island.

FIGURE 6: ABORIGINAL LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT GROUPS





INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

The NLC provides leadership and facilitates the humane management of invasive vertebrates such as buffalo and pigs. Work is ongoing in the Finnis Catchment and at the Arafura Swamp in partnership with Territory Natural Resource Management. Infestations of invasive animals have been mapped with a view to carrying out culls where significant environmental damage is occurring.

INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS

The NLC has helped establish Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs). This work requires extensive consultation and research work in collaboration with consultants, scientists, government agencies and field NGOs.

Bush Heritage Australia, the Australian National University, and the Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation have been influential and hardworking partners of the NLC in the progression of the IPA program.



The role of rangers is vital to the future of the north, because everyone needs healthy country to ensure that our natural and cultural values underpin the thriving tourism, fishing and recreational industries.



ACHIEVEMENTS

The NLC currently supports 17 Indigenous ranger groups through funding from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) and the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC).

Through the Working on Country program, the NLC was funded to support the direct employment of up to 63 FTE Indigenous rangers, four senior cultural advisers and an Indigenous Administration trainee. In 2014/2015, an additional 72 Traditional Owners were engaged as casual staff to support the ranger groups during peak workloads or to provide cultural advice.

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

Unfortunately, the NLC continues to experience delays in recommencing the Yantjarrwu and Numbulwar ranger programs due to the unavailability of funding for suitable housing for the Ranger Coordinator staff, which is necessary for the effective management and supervision of work activities.

The rangers utilise both traditional and modern management practices to provide a variety of important environmental services considered to be in the national and international interest. Key activities include the protection of threatened species and their habitats, fire management, control of significant feral animals and invasive weeds, passing on of cultural knowledge to the next generation (through activities with local schools and on-country camps), management of saltwater intrusion in freshwater billabongs, protection of important cultural sites, biosecurity surveillance, marine debris clean-ups and monitoring for fisheries and permits compliance.

The NLC has developed a suite of local, regional, Territory and national partnerships that support the development and delivery of the various ranger group activities. Key program partners (in addition to DPMC and the ILC) include the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, which provides fee for service agreements for biosecurity surveillance activities, the Northern Territory Government Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, which provides fee for service agreements for sea country patrols, fisheries compliance monitoring and training (with the assistance of the NT Water Police), and the Department of Land and Resource Management agencies. This includes the Weeds Management Branch, which provides technical advice on weed control and funding for aerial surveys of Weeds of National Significance (WONS), and research scientists who provided advice regarding threatened species management and biodiversity surveys.



The NLC is also helping to establish three Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) in the Waanyi Garawa Land Trust, South-East Arnhem Land and in Marthakal country in North East Arnhem Land with funding from the Department of the Environment (administered by DPMC). The IPA work requires extensive consultation and research in collaboration with consultants, scientists, government agencies and NGOs. Important NLC partners for this consultation work include Tamarind Planning Consultants, the Australian National University Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), Bush Heritage Australia and the Yugul Mangi Development Aboriginal Corporation. Bush Heritage Australia has also assisted with starting work on developing a Healthy Country Plan for the Arafura Swamp.

Territory Natural Resource Management (TNRM) continued to be an important program partner in 2014/2015 through development of the Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan in consultation with ranger groups. In 2014/2015, the Wagiman Rangers received support to develop strategic fire plans for the Wagiman Land Trust and aerial and on-ground burning. This project was undertaken in partnership with the ILC; Fish River Station Managers helped protect key sites and mitigate against wildfire excursion from the Land Trust. The Arafura ranger groups received support to control water buffalo populations in the southern area of the Arafura Swamp and training in pig trapping. TNRM also assisted the Bulgul rangers with ongoing surveys and management of mimosa and feral pigs as part of the Finnis/Reynolds catchment project through support from the Department of the Environment (see Case Study 2).

DATA COLLECTION, MAPPING AND REPORTING

The Caring for Country Branch provides ongoing ICT (Information and Communications Technology) training and support to all 17 NLC ranger groups in asset and equipment acquisition, coordination of routine repairs and maintenance, and providing required on-site and remote support including:

- Documentation of ranger group ICT needs and budget preparation
- Providing training in the use of ICT equipment, including GIS/Mapping Software and other data management tools (e.g. I Tracker) in partnership with NAILSMA
- Production of DVDs and other educational materials regarding ranger projects
- Providing general day-to-day ICT support and troubleshooting
- Assisting with the collection and management of data and other information through the development of the NLC Toolbox and preparation of reports.

The NLC receives funding from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet for a dedicated ICT Officer position. The ICT Officer visits each of the 17 ranger groups once a year (minimum) and is in contact with the rangers on a daily basis to provide ongoing support.

The reporting year 2014/ 2015 has seen the development and implementation of an IT Data Collection, Mapping and Reporting Curriculum Program to guide NLC rangers on the use of required software through the production of 25 video tutorials (e.g. for hand-held GPS use and mapping software).

CASE STUDY ONE: KENBI RANGERS



The Kenbi Rangers, who operate on the Cox Peninsula west of Darwin, continue to deliver great outcomes with the expansion of their ranger group activities including the development of innovative fee for service and enterprise opportunities and partnerships. The group has a very competent team who undertake core activities including fire management, feral animal control, visitor monitoring, beach patrols and cultural site management.

Through the development of fee for service agreements, the rangers have been actively involved in the Inpex nearshore marine monitoring program. This included ensuring compliance with environmental regulations during the initial phase of this industrial project, and

assisting with monitoring the abundance and distribution of key marine species (such as Bottlenose and Snubfin dolphins) and the wellbeing of fish populations throughout the dredging phase.

The capacity of the ranger group to undertake sea country activities has also expanded with the arrival of their new vessel (5.2 metre "MV Kenbi"). Income from their various fee for service agreements will allow rangers to access numerous island and remote mainland sites throughout the Bynoe and Darwin harbours. The ranger group has gained valuable knowledge and skills in scientific surveys, and is well equipped to further utilise these skills in the management of icon species into the future in partnership with the Northern Territory Department of Land Resource Management and other program stakeholders.

The rangers continue to work with a number of government departments and contractors involved with the remediation of the Radio Australia site at Charles Point, having secured contracts for site maintenance and revegetation at the site.

The group has also been busy with the establishment and development of a market garden and nursery on site in the Belyuen community. This program has had extensive support from the Department of Finance during the establishment phase. There are approximately 3000m² of market garden area, and produce from the garden is provided to residents of the aged care facility in Belyuen and other community residents.

In addition, Ironbark Aboriginal Foundation has contributed resources for the training of rangers and other community residents in Certificate II Horticulture units. This is taking place at the market garden and will run through into 2016, complementing the other ranger activities and training programs.



The Kenbi rangers are looking forward to consolidating their activities and are working towards the production of an overarching land and sea management plan and its implementation over the next three years.

Above, top: Kenbi Rangers marine mammal monitoring. (Photo by: GHD Photo).



CASE STUDY TWO: BULGUL RANGERS

The Bulgul Rangers manage 36,000 hectares of land and sea country across the Delissavale/Wagait/Larrakia Aboriginal Land Trust and undertake a range of activities including the management of Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) with a focus on Olive Hymenachne and Mimosa Pigra, feral animals (such as pigs), coastal patrols, biosecurity surveillance and protection of cultural sites.

With assistance from Territory Natural Resource Management (NRM), the rangers conducted surveys of the presence and density of priority WoNS in 2014/2015 as part of a long term program into weed distribution and management. Results indicate that their extensive Mimosa aerial spraying program over the past three years has greatly reduced the extent of Mimosa infestation by up to 5000 hectares.

The targeted surveys and eradication of feral pigs have been undertaken with the assistance of Territory NRM and ABS Scrofa as part of a collaborative project involving multi-sector interests (i.e. Traditional Owners, pastoral managers and government agencies) across the Finnis Reynolds-catchment region. Two culls of feral pigs were undertaken in 2014/2015, removing approximately 70% of the population (~1000 animals). However, analysis of the rate of removal suggests that ongoing funding for management of the feral pig population will be required to prevent further outbreak of this problem.

These activities undertaken by the Bulgul Rangers staff are of critical importance in minimising the loss of extensive wetland and other key habitats across the Land Trust, thus enabling the protection of the significant ongoing cultural and unique and intact biodiversity values of this area.



*Above, top: Bulgul Ranger collecting Mimosa seeds with Tom Price NT Govt. Weeds Branch.
Above, below: Regional planning for Mimosa control in the Finnis Reynolds catchment.*

PARKS AND RESERVES: JOINT MANAGEMENT

A key NLC objective is to support and deliver joint management outcomes.

The NLC has a statutory responsibility to protect and advocate for the interests of Traditional Owners of land and sea within its jurisdiction. This includes areas leased by the Northern Territory and Australian Governments and included in the National Reserve System for the conservation of natural and cultural values and tourism purposes.

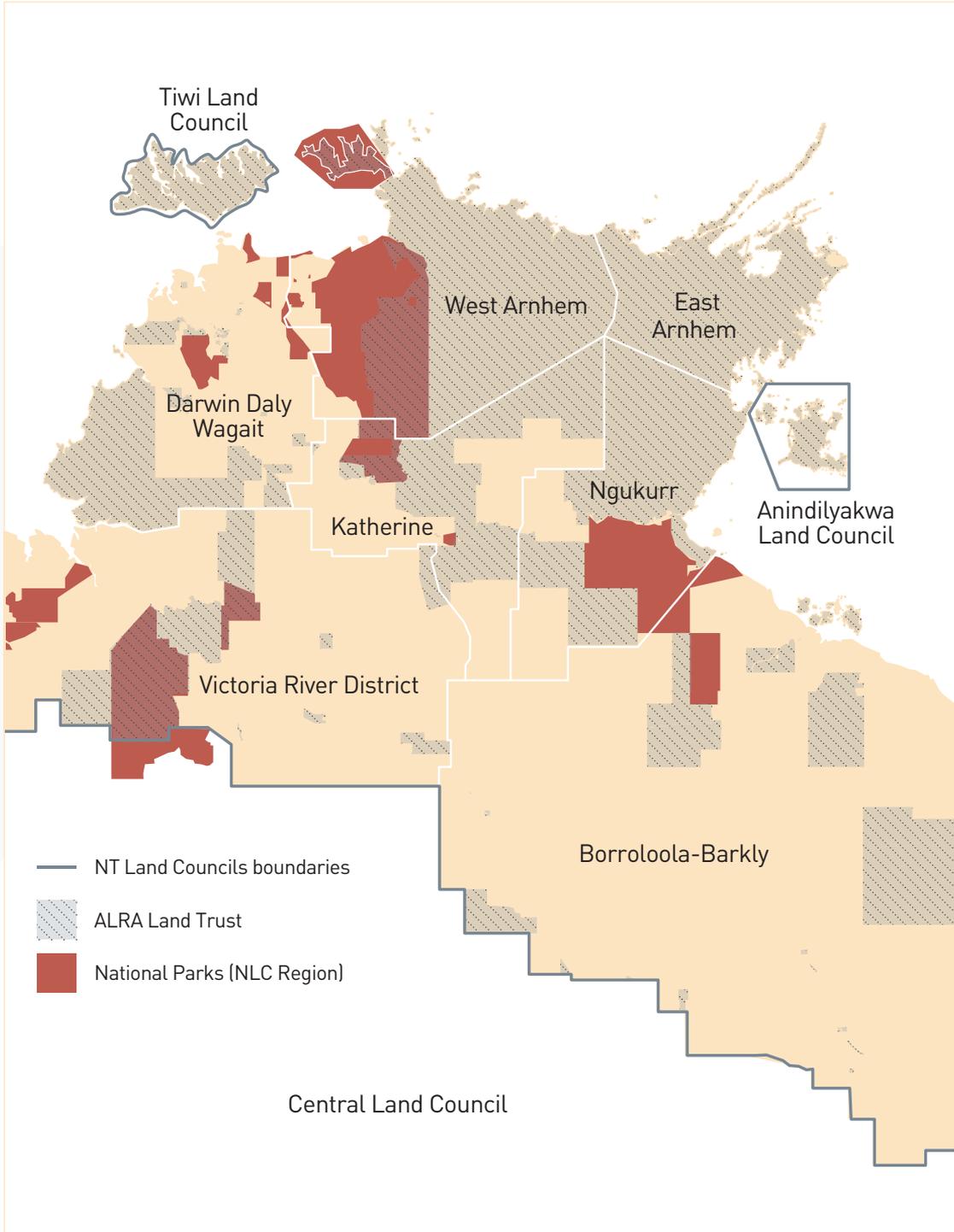
Approximately 44.6% of the Territory's national parks and conservation reserves in the NLC region are Aboriginal owned and jointly managed. The NLC works closely with Traditional Owners and the NT Parks and Wildlife Commission and Parks Australia to support and deliver joint management outcomes and build relationships and partnerships with government, communities and industry.

The NLC is focused on assisting Traditional Owners to:

- Engage effectively with Parks and Wildlife Commission NT and Parks Australia by providing third party technical advice and advocacy
- Make informed decisions relating to natural and cultural resource use and management
- Assess the social, cultural, environmental and economic implications of legislation and proposals affecting parks and reserves
- Protect and enhance traditional law and cultural practices
- Pursue employment and business development opportunities
- Manage and resolve disputes
- Carry out other statutory requirements of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* and *Native Title Act* in relation to joint management arrangements.



FIGURE 7: JOINT MANAGEMENT RESERVES



ACHIEVEMENTS

World Parks Congress Sydney 2014

The World Park Congress was held in Sydney on 12–19 November 2014. The conference focused on 'Inspiring Solutions' for parks, people and the planet.

A contingent of NLC rangers and joint management committee members attended forums related to their specific interests.



Kakadu National Park

The NLC has been involved in meetings associated with the Parks Australia 'Management Futures Project', which aims to review and improve management arrangements for the three Commonwealth jointly managed parks to ensure better outcomes for Traditional Owners.

The NLC has successfully negotiated to secure funding to reinstate a dedicated Joint Management Officer within Parks Australia. A key function of this position will be supporting the Management Futures Project.

NLC staff also assisted with coordinating the election of the membership for the next Board of Management, with appointments in place for five years from September 2015.

Information sessions with Traditional Owners and other stakeholder groups were conducted by the NLC about the potential development of a savanna burning carbon farming project. If successful, this project has the potential to deliver significant economic and cultural opportunities to Traditional Owners.

Above: Back row, from left: Jeffrey Lee, Lazarus Lami-Lami, Michael Smiler, Valarie Tambling, Ricky Cubillo, Rex Sing, Donald Shadforth, Phillip Goodman, Graham Kenyon. Middle row, from left: Matthew Birdum, Solomon O'Ryan, Tarizma Kenyon, Charlene Thompson, Cerise Young, Malarndirri McCarthy. Front row, from left: Mathias Baird, Solomon Cooper, Pam Wickham, Justine Yanner.



Judbarra/Gregory National Park

The Judbarra/Gregory National Park Joint Management Committee has met once during the reporting year in April 2015. The joint management partners have been working in a difficult financial environment, with limited employment opportunities being currently available to Traditional Owners. However, there have been some opportunities for engagement with external stakeholders. This included the Commonwealth Government Department of the Environment sponsoring a 'Bush Blitz' scientific discovery project and the development of a promotional international 4WD documentary 'Landrover Experience'. It is hoped that there will be further partnerships developed for Traditional Owner engagement in research, monitoring and tourism to build on these initiatives.

Giwining/Flora River Nature Reserve and Wardaman Indigenous Protected Area

The Giwining/Flora joint management partners met twice during the reporting period, in September 2014 and March 2015. Indigenous employment on the Reserve is limited compared to previous years due to reduced funding. However, the Joint Management Committee remains focused on working together with NT Parks and is satisfied with the current work programs on the reserve.

The other main ongoing focus for Giwining/Flora Traditional Owners is the Wardaman Indigenous Protected Area (IPA). Stage One of the IPA covering part of Menggen Aboriginal Land Trust, Yubulyawuyn Aboriginal Land Trust, Djarrung Community Living Area and Wurkleni Community Living Area was dedicated by the Australian Government in June 2014.

Operational activities have commenced on the IPA during 2014/2015 with the Wardaman Rangers employed casually on short-term contracts to complete fire, weed and cultural site protection work. The group has focused on securing full-time funding to start a Wardaman Ranger Program; however, this remains unfunded with previous applications unsuccessful.

The casual Wardaman Rangers have partnered with local pastoral stations, the NT Government Katherine Weeds Branch and the Parks and Wildlife Rangers to undertake small weed management projects to gain training and experience.

The Wardaman IPA Aboriginal Corporation met twice this year in July and December 2014 to discuss operational plans, budgets and the recruitment of a full-time IPA Coordinator in the Katherine NLC office. The Corporation continues to build capacity and maintains a strong partnership with the NLC.



Above, clockwise from top left: Judbarra/ Gregory National Park Joint Management Committee, April 2015; Wardaman Rangers and NLC Timber Creek Coordinator Paul Simonato, Matthew Birdum, Jason Raymond, Ted Croker and Michael Murrimal on the Bush Blitz Scientific Expedition; Uwynmil kids being shown how to make spear tips. From left: Shontae, Tekiah, Darryl Jnr, Leroy, Sharnee, Darryl Snr, Ethan and Tom Tambling the 3rd.



Adelaide River Conservation Reserves

The Adelaide River Reserves Plan of Management became operational in late February 2015. The Joint Management Committee met once this year and has focused on projects aimed at maintaining some open water in Fogg Dam for the diversity of birds and improving the visitor experience, crocodile management and safe use of the reserves. A Traditional Owner delegation was supported to attend the World Parks Congress in Sydney, a global event bringing people and protected areas into focus.

Mary River National Park

The Mary River Joint Management Plan was tabled on 16 June 2015, and is anticipated to come into effect on 17 September 2015. The Mary River joint management partners have met twice this year and continued to focus on business development. The Limilngan and Uwynmil Traditional Owners are developing tourism opportunities to add value to existing operations in and around the Park. Annual culture camps remain the highlight of the year for families, providing opportunities for intergenerational knowledge transfer and maintaining connections to country.

Two Traditional Owner delegates were supported to attend the World Parks Congress in Sydney.



Garig Gunak Barlu (Cobourg) National Park

The Cobourg Board had four meetings this year and hosted a strategic planning and governance workshop. The Board is supported by an NLC joint management officer and an NLC legal adviser through funding from the Aboriginals Benefit Account.

The Cobourg Board introduced a new motto that is endorsed at the beginning of every meeting:

Yinang Arrala-rrikun Ngarrurrung Yiwarrudj La Yingman

“Let’s not forget our culture and language”

The Board is focussed on providing opportunities for youth through learning and employment projects, work experience, volunteering and associated opportunities through tourism and recreation.

Three Traditional Owner members participated in the ‘Advancing Economic Development of Indigenous Land’ Conference held in Darwin in April this year.

Two Traditional Owner delegates were supported to attend the World Parks Congress in Sydney.

Tjuwaliyn (Hot Springs) Park

The newly formed Management Committee comprising Traditional Owners from all Wagiman family groups met in March 2015. The group agreed to grant a two year section 19 agreement to the Parks and Wildlife Commission NT to manage the Park while negotiations for a long term lease agreement continue. The NLC hopes to conclude these negotiations in late 2015.

Opposite, left: Kelly finds herself a good mat. Opposite, right: Garig Board members Mathias Baird and Solomon Cooper with NITV journalist Malarndirri McCarthy at the World Parks Congress 2014.



CULTURE & HERITAGE

GOAL: Protect Aboriginal sacred sites, places and objects of significant cultural heritage.

PROTECTING SACRED SITES, PLACES AND OBJECTS

A key NLC objective is to support Aboriginal law and culture values, and the maintenance and protection of sacred sites and heritage.

Granting land rights to Aboriginal people recognises the validity of Aboriginal traditional law and cultural values, and the justice of prior claims to ownership. Aboriginal law is an integral part of Aboriginal culture; it is as important to Aboriginal people as our traditional lands and heritage. According to Justice Blackburn, the Gove Land Rights case in 1971 revealed:

“...a subtle and elaborate system highly adapted to the country in which the people lead their lives, which provided a stable order of society and was remarkably free from the vagaries of personal whim or influence... a government of laws, and not of men.”

The authenticity of Aboriginal law derives from the social mores of Aboriginal communities, and does not rely on the reasoning of lawyers, parliament, or the courts. For Aboriginal people, traditional law is the governing force of our daily life.

Investing in the things that also matter to Indigenous people – living on country, language and culture – are just as important in northern development as gas plants in Darwin harbour, roads and ports.

Opposite: Traditional dance at Barunga Sports and Cultural Festival, June 2015.



Supporting Aboriginal law and associated cultural values is considered to be one of the most important roles of the NLC. The documentation of sacred sites, dreaming tracks and significant places, such as painted shelters and rock engraving sites, is one of the major works undertaken by the Anthropology branch each year and involves a coordinated approach by professional mapping and GIS staff.

FUNERAL AND CEREMONIAL FUND

The NLC administers a Funeral and Ceremonial Assistance project grant funded by the Aboriginals Benefit Account. The NLC Full Council recognises the increasing costs of charters, freight and coffin costs and the funeral and ceremonial policy enables Traditional Owners to apply for assistance to conduct funerals and ceremonies on country. This is an integral aspect of cultural and heritage protection in the NLC region.

Funeral and ceremonial assistance for 2014/2015 are provided below.

TABLE 8: FUNERAL AND CEREMONY ASSISTANCE PER REGION

REGION	BURIALS	CEREMONIES	TOTAL PER REGION
Borroloola Barkly	25		25
Darwin Daly Wagait	44	4	48
East Arnhem	30	10	40
Katherine	38		38
Ngukurr/Numbulwar	16		16
Tennant Creek	5	5	10
Victoria River District	11		11
West Arnhem	44	8	52
TOTAL	213	27	240

The total number of approved applications for 2014/2015 across all regions is 240, compared with 501 for the previous reporting year. The total number of burial applications decreased from 448 in 2013/2014 to 213; ceremony applications decreased from 53 in 2013/2014 to 27. Due to budget and policy changes, no assistance was provided for ceremonies relating to an actual burial.

OUTCOME

The Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments have agreed to spend \$5 million to upgrade 16 existing morgues in remote communities, and build four new ones. The Indigenous Affairs Minister, Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, announced the funding decision at the NLC Full council meeting at Barunga in June.

The decision brought to an end many years of lobbying by the NLC for governments to take responsibility for funding remote morgues. Until now, NT Government departments, shire councils and the Commonwealth could not agree about where responsibility lay.

Negotiations continue about which agency will run the morgues and pay for ongoing costs.

ADVICE ON TRADITIONAL OWNERSHIP

A key NLC objective is to provide thorough and professional advice regarding the appropriate people and groups associated with particular country, land or waters.

The identity of any traditional Aboriginal land owning group is contained within Aboriginal Law. The *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* makes an effort to capture this when it defines Traditional Owners as being 'a local descent group' of Aboriginal people who have common affiliations to a site(s) on or near the land that gives the particular group the 'primary spiritual responsibility' for the site(s) and associated land.

In addition, they are the group that, by Aboriginal tradition, are entitled to forage, over it. A definition can be found in section 3 (1) of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*.

The requirement to identify the appropriate people and groups for country is therefore fundamental to both traditional Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal law; hence, the NLC seeks at all times to be thorough and professional in its research to identify and document this information.

Advice prepared by the regional anthropologists to identify Traditional Owners and provided to other branches is used for a wide variety of purposes including land and native title claims, consultations with clients for mining, other projects and proposals and developments under section 19 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*.



LAND INTEREST REFERENCES (LIR)

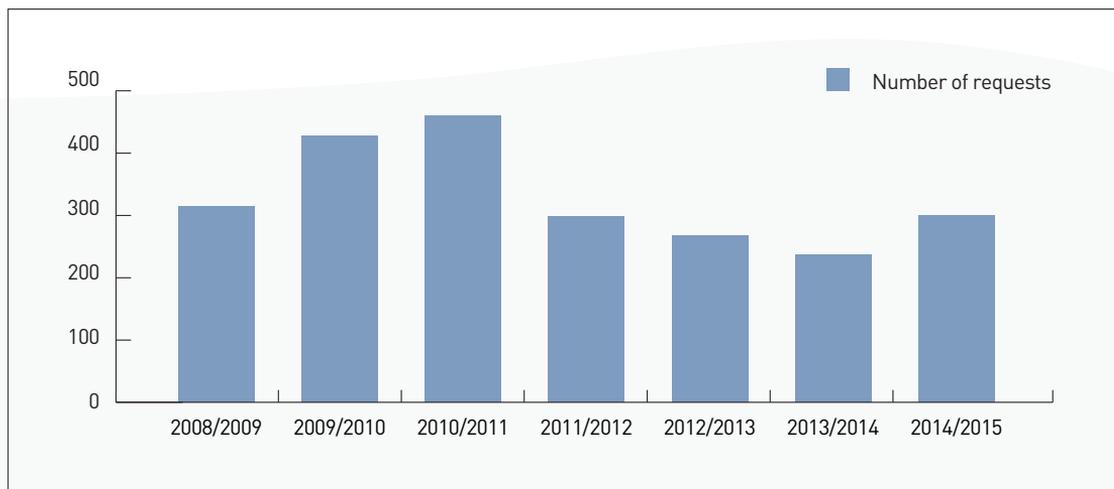
A key NLC objective is to manage and maintain a reliable LIR system.

LIRs are registered each year to assist with the assessment of development applications on Aboriginal and native title lands and waters. All requests are recorded and processed. The following table provides a breakdown of LIR requests relating to particular activities.

TABLE 9: LIR REQUESTS BY ACTIVITY FOR 2014/2015

Mining	69
Utilities – telecommunication	25
Tourism (not parks)	20
Land management – Crocodile egg harvesting	20
National Parks	18
Roads and gravel	17
Pastoral – grazing licence	17
Infrastructure	16
Native title – land	15
Communities – township Leasing	14
Pastoral land/resource management	12
Other	8
Leases (section 19)	7
Utilities – power and water	6
Sea Country	5
Communities – essential services	5
Native title – sea	4
National Parks – tourism	4
Land Claims	3
Economic development – retail	2
Cultural	2
Research	2
Caring for Country	1
Unflagged	1
Utilities – gas	1
Defence	1
Communities – stores	1
Indigenous Protection Areas (IPA)	1
Media	1
Land management – fire abatement	1
Land management – harvesting	1
TOTAL	300

FIGURE 8: NUMBER OF LIR REQUESTS, 2008–2015



LIR DATABASE

The Anthropology branch has designed and implemented enterprise database management systems to support growing demand on research outputs. Central to this is an electronic system for storing documents and maps, with a full text index on the documents stored within it.

Many documents were previously held as hard copies. An ongoing task over the last few years has been to transfer these to electronic files, involving scanning and text recognition of hardcopy documents and maps. Currently, more than 24,000 items are held in the LIR, of which over 19,000 now exist in electronic format.

OUTCOME

During the 2014/2015 reporting period, 1,041 new documents were submitted to the LIR, each requiring geographic and ethnographic indexing, a huge task for the branch.

GIS SYSTEM SUPPORT

A key NLC objective is to provide GIS support to NLC staff.

The NLC has a team that provides Geographic Information System (GIS) services. The GIS ESRI ArcGIS desktop software and server technology provides mapping technology to NLC staff via the NLC intranet. The NLC GIS outputs cartographic or mapping products.

The workload is managed using database technology with a web interface for making map requests and managing jobs. While the GIS section is part of the Anthropology branch, it provides a service to the whole organisation including native title claim mapping, compiling geographic data for section 19 agreements, gravel pit extraction areas, legal agreements and mining tenements.



COMMUNITY WELLBEING

GOAL: Support Aboriginal people to maintain sustainable communities, outstations and healthy lives.

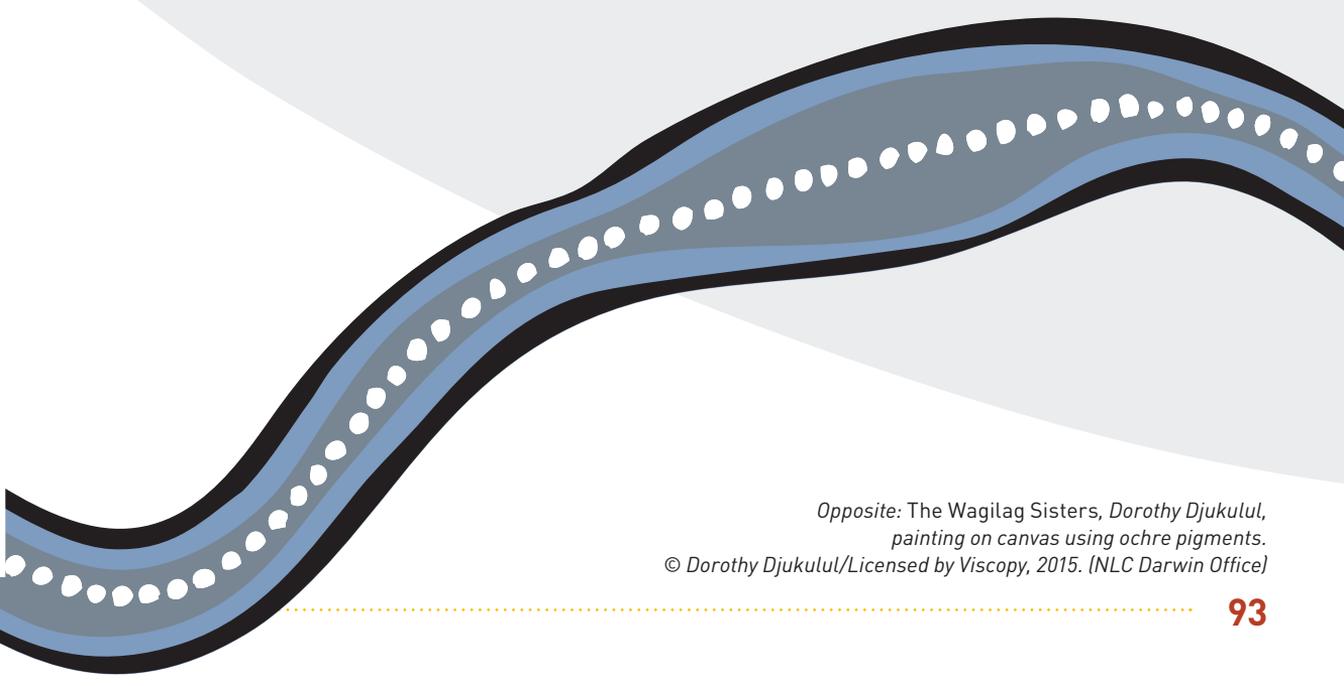
CAPACITY BUILDING: EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A key NLC objective is to develop employment and training plans in partnership with industry and government stakeholders, and facilitate the implementation of these plans.

The NLC supports Aboriginal people to use rights to land and seas to buy into the economic future of the Northern Territory, and for individuals to secure long term sustainable career pathways.

The NLC's Jobs and Careers Service Unit (JACS) was designed to maximise jobs and careers for Aboriginal people on major projects on Aboriginal land and where native title interests have been established. JACS first priority is to negotiate employment commitments from all major projects, focusing on key industry sectors and its employment model to achieve maximum results. The Unit aims to provide Aboriginal people with qualifications, skills and experiences that are recognised Australia wide through direct referral and on-the-job training and/or pre-employment training.

(We have a) vision for
healthy, happy and working
communities, something all
Australians can be proud of.



*Opposite: The Wagilag Sisters, Dorothy Djukulul,
painting on canvas using ochre pigments.*

© Dorothy Djukulul/Licensed by Viscopy, 2015. (NLC Darwin Office)



In summary, JACS endeavours to:

- a. help negotiate maximum job commitments from major projects subject to Indigenous Land Use Agreements
- b. ensure commitments made by employers are met, and
- c. provide on-going mentoring to employees and support to employers.

JACS has previously delivered employment and training outcomes through the 5Ps model – that is, provision of jobs via land use agreements, partnership formation, preparation of work, planning for training and mentoring workers and project management.

The JACS program has been heavily impacted by the downturn in the mining industry, and a review is expected to be completed by the end of 2015.



Above, left: Ranger Coxwain training at Mardbalk. Above, right: Kenbi Rangers with Greening Australia staff, Certificate 2 horticulture training.

ANTHROPOLOGY – REGIONAL PROFILES

The following figures illustrate the basic demographic characterisation of each NLC anthropology region in terms of geographic areas, population and land tenure.

TABLE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINAL LIVING AREAS ACROSS NLC ANTHROPOLOGY REGIONS

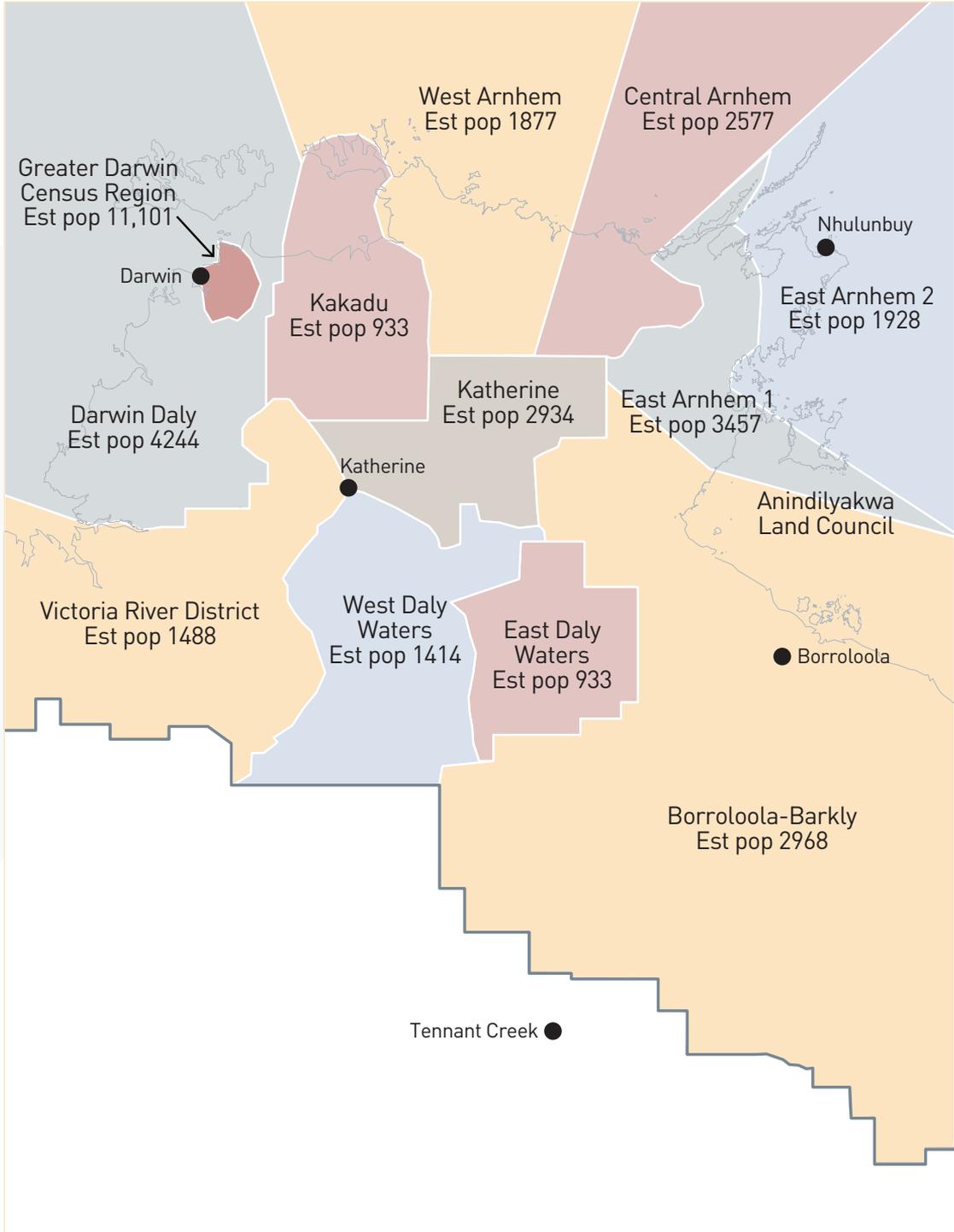
REGION	MAJOR	MINOR	TOWN CAMP	FAMILY OUTSTATION	TOTAL
Borroloola Barkly	2	3	6	68	79
Central Arnhem	2	3		50	55
Darwin Daly	8	2	7	47	64
East Arnhem 1	5	2		43	50
East Arnhem 2	2	6		39	47
East Daly Waters	1	1		1	3
Kakadu			1	20	21
Katherine	3	2	2	10	17
VRD	2	5	2	15	24
West Arnhem	4	1		47	52
West Daly Waters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

TABLE 11: ABORIGINAL OWNED LAND AND NATIVE TITLE INTERESTS

REGION	ALRA LAND TRUST (ALT)	NATIVE TITLE INTERESTS (NT)	OTHER
Borroloola Barkly	17.79%	75.77%	6.44%
Central Arnhem	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Darwin Daly	45.78%	23.79%	30.43%
East Arnhem 1	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
East Arnhem 2	100.00%	0.00%	0.74%
East Daly Waters	25.88%	73.37%	0.74%
Kakadu	29.22%	17.72%	53.06%
Katherine	68.08%	21.01%	10.91%
VRD	26.68%	54.04%	19.28%
West Arnhem	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
West Daly Waters	13.96%	76.51%	9.53%



FIGURE 9: NLC ANTHROPOLOGY REGIONS – ESTIMATED INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS



The following provides anthropological profiles for a selection of NLC regions.

DARWIN DALY WAGAIT PORT KEATS REGION

The land tenure of this anthropology region is largely Aboriginal Land Trusts administered under the *Aboriginal Rights (Northern Territory) Act*, in particular the:

- Daly River Port Keats
- Malak Malak
- Upper Daly
- Wagiman 1 & 2
- Finniss River
- Delissaville, Wagait Larrakia
- Gurundju Aboriginal Land Trusts.



NT has the capacity to become a vibrant Indigenous and multi-cultural community.

Left: CEO Joe Morrison addresses a rally outside Parliament House, Darwin to protest against Northern Territory Government water allocation policies, May 2015.



Pastoral and native title land interests make up approximately forty percent of the area. A wide range of activities other than government services is currently being undertaken in this region, including crocodile egg collecting on several of the Land Trusts; working towards the divestment of Fish River property to Traditional Owners; native title authorisation meetings for gold exploration in the Pine Creek region; working on joint management for Tjuwalyin Douglas Hot Springs, and a mustering agreement on Benung for Wagiman. Consultations over a diverse range of activities included: finalising arrangements for the new Peppimenarti Store and manager's house construction to begin this dry season; NTG Mineral Extraction Agreement setting a standard price for gravel and sand, and the realignment, lifting, widening and sealing of a section of the Port Keats Road between Chalanyi Creek and the Little Moyle River; ongoing Blue Mud Bay consultations over the intertidal areas that adjoin Aboriginal land; and a combined site survey with the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority on Cox Peninsula as part of the settlement of the Kenbi Land Claim.

NGUKURR & BORROLOOLA BARKLY REGION

The Ngukurr and Borroloola Barkly region contains three regional offices located in Ngukurr, Borroloola, and Tennant Creek. It makes up the eastern and southern extents of the NLC region and is roughly bounded in the west by the Stuart Highway.

The 2014/2015 financial year ended in disappointment for many Traditional Owners in the Ngukurr and Borroloola Barkly regions with several newly established mines going into administration. This has affected nearby communities not only emotionally, but also financially, as many community members had employment/contracts associated with the operation of these mines.

On a positive note for communities, agreements with Traditional Owners are near completion for the establishment of new health centres in Robinson River and Ngukurr, as well as a new solar set-up at Minyeri. Consultations for the upgrade of Roper and Wilton crossings on the Roper Highway are almost complete, whilst access to gravel pits for the upgrade of Numbulwar road are ongoing.

An agreement with Traditional Owners for buffalo mustering in south east Arnhem Land has been established as far north as Rose River, with consultations north of Rose River being completed later this year. An agreement with Traditional Owners concerning the mustering of feral cattle on Alawa ALT is being finalised, as well as a new grazing licence on Muckaty Aboriginal Land Trust.

Mineral and gas exploration is ongoing, with 2015 work program clearances undertaken with Traditional Owners.

WEST ARNHEM LAND REGION

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

A major part of consultation work in the region concerns mining exploration activity. In the 2014/2015 reporting year, regular yearly meetings were conducted for 15 tenements, at which Traditional Owners approved the company's work program for the coming dry season. At these meetings Traditional Owners also give instructions to the NLC on how they would like royalties from the previous year's work distributed.

Opposite: West Arnhem coastline.

There were also nine consultations regarding new exploration licence applications (ELAs). Some ELAs require the NLC to facilitate site surveys with Traditional Owners to identify and map significant sites within the tenements before a final meeting can be held. These cultural site surveys are an important part of anthropological work in the region as they enable Traditional Owners to identify areas to be protected and excluded from exploration licences and also enable cultural knowledge to be preserved and passed on to the younger generations.

Consultations regarding leases over lots in the communities have continued during 2014/2015, leading to many new section 19 land use agreements issued to governmental institutions, private entities and Aboriginal corporations.

In Gunbalanya and Maningrida, a meeting has been called to discuss the Solar Setup initiative proposed by the Indigenous Essential Services wing of Power and Water Corporation. The initiative aims to provide solar power as an alternative to relying on diesel generators. For the project to go ahead, clearance is required from Traditional Owners; talks for Warruwi are continuing.

Consultations continue with Traditional Owners of the Mini Mini and Murganella coastal region to settle fishing access, in light of the Blue Mud Bay decision by the High Court in 2008. Traditional Owners considered a range of options of how to apply compensation monies from the Northern Territory government, including the support of ranger patrols, equipment purchase and promotion of Indigenous business opportunities.





CENTRAL ARNHEM LAND REGION

The Central Arnhem Land anthropology region overlaps both the East Arnhem and West Arnhem NLC regions. Major communities within Central Arnhem Land are Milingimbi and Ramingining, with many outstations along the Blyth and Cadell Rivers and the Arafura Wetlands. The Katherine Regional Office, East Arnhem Regional Office and West Arnhem Regional Office provide support to the Central Arnhem region.

Our work in this region over the past year has been dominated by consultations for section 19 Land Use Agreement proposals, including a Traditional Owner-run safari hunting business, tourism ventures, and the installation of large-scale solar panels in both Milingimbi and Ramingining to reduce reliance on diesel fuel. Consultations are ongoing in relation to many applications for leases of lots within townships, or variations to current leases.

The West Arnhem Road's project saw conversations held in Ramingining seeking Traditional Owners' views on possible upgrades to the 'top track', including discussions of possible improvements to river crossings. Consultations for gravel extraction agreements along this road were also completed. On the Central Arnhem Road, the Goyder River Bridge and Donydji Bridge are now open.

In February 2015, Ramingining and Milingimbi and their outstations were hit hard by Cyclone Lam, closely followed by Cyclone Nathan. While fortunately there were no injuries and while, unlike Galiwinku, there was minimal damage to houses, many shade trees within the communities were lost, causing dramatic changes to country.



Above: Ramingining (BulaBula) before cyclone (left) and after (right).

NORTH EAST ARNHEM LAND REGION

The East Arnhem anthropology region takes up the majority of the East Arnhem NLC region, and the northernmost parts of the Ngukurr NLC region. Traditional Owners for East Arnhem are Yolngu people, with Nunggubuyu clans in the southern parts. The region includes areas of cultural significance including Blue Mud Bay, Gove Peninsula, Mitchell Ranges and Elcho Island. Oil and gas extraction through hydraulic fracturing continues to be one of the big issues in East Arnhem Land. Work on the approval process for a large tenement that covers much of the region is ongoing.

Consultations have highlighted a wide range of Traditional Owner opinions on 'fracking' including intense discussion about the need to protect water resources of great importance to Yolngu people. This has required a tremendous amount of work by NLC staff and consultants. In addition to specific projects, ongoing work is required on existing tenements, including work program meetings, where proposed works for the year are assessed and approved by Traditional Owners and royalties are distributed.

Emergency Response compensation payments for land in major communities have been ongoing and Traditional Owners are taking more time to consider options. An increasing number of lease agreements between Traditional Owners and proponents who wish to occupy lots in communities have been facilitated by the NLC including government, shires, health centres and businesses. In some cases, Traditional Owners have had to decide between multiple proponents who are requesting leases over the same lots.

KATHERINE REGION

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

Consultations so far this year have focused on section 19 proposals, sand and gravel pit extraction and to a lesser degree, on mining agreements. Pastoral leasing has dominated land interest in the Mangarrayi ALT, including upgrades to infrastructure (such as the Elsey meatworks) and altering or extending land interest areas for existing leases. In the Beswick ALT, discussions have focused on section 19 proposals, where the majority are individual government lot leases. This has been followed by commercial interests, the most prominent being buffalo mustering over four ALTs – Beswick, Jawoyn, South West Arnhem Land and Manyallaluk. It is anticipated that agreement will be finalised before the end of the dry season. Other consultations have addressed safari hunting and the renewal of two annual festival licences for the Beswick and Barunga communities. Traditional Owners have expressed concern about increasing attendances at festivals and the impact on the land. Last year NLC embarked on an environmental analysis to assess the level of impact to one specific site. Monitoring at this site is ongoing, and any degradation to the land will be recorded annually after each festival.

In Bulman, the new Gulin Gulin Community Store opened in August. The dongas, which were installed to provide temporary quarters for the construction workers remain at Bulman. The community now has the opportunity to take over management and maintenance of the existing premises, so they can be rented out as casual accommodation.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Facilitate economic opportunities that lead to viable and sustainable regional commercial activities and development in the regions.

LAND USE AGREEMENTS

A key NLC objective is to secure economic, social and cultural benefits for Traditional Owners from developments taking place on Aboriginal land.

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

The NLC must ensure that any land use proposal is reasonable, that the appropriate landowning group is provided opportunities to make informed decisions in accordance with its traditional decision making processes, and that affected Aboriginal people are also given opportunities to express their views about a particular land use agreement. Once informed consent is reached, NLC considers the land use proposal and may direct the appropriate Aboriginal Land Trust to enter into a licence or lease agreement with the proponent.

The NLC intends to prepare a development prospectus that clearly identifies opportunities for activity on Aboriginal-owned land in the NLC region.

Opposite: Pastoral Officers Mark Ford and Sam Tapp addressing Traditional Owners from Elsey Station area at Jilkminggan.



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

Business and economic development in remote parts of the Northern Territory can be impeded by a number of factors. Some proposals may provide insufficient detail about the proposed operational area. Land use proposals may cover more than one group's traditional lands, and therefore consultations and logistics to bring the decision makers together can be complex. Seasonal factors also dictate when and where community consultations can be held. Most consultations occur during the dry season (April to October); however, this limited window of opportunity puts pressure on both NLC staff and constituents in relation to planning and holding meetings as well as meeting legislative timeframes.

The NLC operates an electronic database called the Land Information Management System (LIMS) to record expressions of interest for land use agreements. Each expression of interest is registered in LIMS on receipt, and allows the NLC to monitor the progress of applications and provide accurate statistics for performance reports. LIMS is designed to monitor compliance information with negotiated land use agreements and assist planning.

We want development that becomes a lasting legacy for our children.

The NLC is strategically focused on aiding development of enterprises on Aboriginal land. The range of micro-enterprises, private businesses, government and

community development initiatives continues to increase. The benefits for Traditional Owners, community members and stakeholders of securing section 19 leases, 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.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since 1 July 2014, the Full Council has approved 84 section 19 land use agreements. A large percentage of these agreements were leases obtained for parcels of land in Aboriginal communities affected by the compulsory five-year leases introduced by the Australian Government through the Northern Territory Emergency Response. The income generated through these agreements is stimulating economies in Top End communities and will produce a range of economic, cultural and social benefits for Traditional Owners.

MAJOR AGREEMENTS

The Commonwealth's compulsory five-year leases over Aboriginal land expired in August 2012; all properties not underpinned by a lease arrangement revert back to the Aboriginal Land Trust. It is the policy of both the 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 section 19 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.

ROYALTY PAYMENTS

Royalty payments are derived from income from land use agreements and funds must be paid to or for the benefit of Traditional Owners.

CHALLENGES

The increasing number of section 19 land use agreements and expressions of interests over the last three years have required significant resources to progress and manage a rapidly growing land use management portfolio. The NLC, as part of a continuous improvement strategy, will need to invest in streamlining lease management business processes and procedures. This will involve development of whole-of-life lease application software with both integrated financial management and Geographic Information Systems. These efficiencies will assist the NLC to work closely with Traditional Owners to harness economic and community development opportunities.

Progressing section 19 land use applications to the consultation stage with Traditional Owners has significant cost implications. Implementing user-pay systems, in accordance with the Australian Government's cost recovery guidelines, will be critical to improving NLC business efficiency, productivity and responsiveness.

**We want development
that's aligned with our
environmental and
cultural values.**



INDIGENOUS PASTORAL PROGRAM

A key NLC objective is to actively support and encourage Indigenous pastoral activities across the Northern Territory.

Currently, 36 section 19 pastoral grazing licences are held on Aboriginal Land in the NLC region. Approximately 40,400 km² of Aboriginal Land Trust land are under pastoral production, with these properties carrying an estimated 116,000 head of cattle.

The NLC continues to be an agency partner in the Indigenous Pastoral Program (IPP) with the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC), Central Land Council (CLC), Northern Territory Government, Australian Government and the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association. These partner organisations, in particular the NLC and CLC, support and facilitate Indigenous pastoral activities across the Northern Territory. In total, it is estimated that the Indigenous pastoral sector in the Northern Territory has 200,000 head of cattle grazing on 60,000 km² of Aboriginal land.

The ILC's funding of a dedicated IPP position has resulted in further significant achievements for Aboriginal pastoralists in the NLC region. The NLC's IPP Coordinator works collaboratively with agency partners, contributing to the skills and expertise of the respective IPP organisations to support development of Indigenous land for pastoral development and production.

Significant IPP achievements during 2014/2015 include:

- three Natural Resource Audits completed for pastoral areas on Aboriginal Land Trusts
- modern yards completed at Amanbidji's Hurricane Yard (Nagurunguru Aboriginal Land Trust)
- new stock water facilities and rangeland land management assistance at Twin Hill Station
- successful Aboriginal Benefit Account grant proposals for Aboriginal organisations that will achieve \$815,000 of approved developments
- two section 19 pastoral agreements bringing over 900km² into pastoral production and approximately 6,000 additional head of cattle on Aboriginal land
- NLC administrative and pastoral assessment support for Palumpa Station
- infrastructure development program at Robinson River
- infrastructure development and equipment support at Seven Emu Station
- Business Management Advisory Program (BMAP) support for two properties.

The IPP has supported a Business Management Advisory Program (BMAP) on six Indigenous properties across the Northern Territory. Initially, BMAP focused on business analysis and management planning with property managers. It has evolved to include working with directors to increase the overall knowledge base of pastoral property management and business planning. In particular, BMAP participants have identified three key learning outcomes from participating in the program including the importance of maintaining accurate records, understanding the need for critical data analysis and utilising all information available to improve overall decision making.

Pastoral production on supported properties has also improved through IPP as a result of additional infrastructure, effective land management (fire, soils and weeds), understanding animal husbandry, herd management and animal welfare requirements. Where Natural Resource Audits have been carried out, the information informs land managers of environmental issues and the production capacity of the land used to generate income from sustainable cattle production.



Above: New cattle crush (left) and new cattle yards (right) constructed at Amanbidji.



CATTLE AND BUFFALO INDUSTRY GROWTH

Northern Australia is experiencing strong market growth through a rejuvenated industry with the following developments:

- Significant increase in the live cattle export trade, with steers fetching strong prices. In 2014, the Darwin Port broke its record for cattle exported in a calendar year with 493,958 cattle moved, smashing the previous record of 359,307 set in 2008.
- Opening of a \$90 million state-of-the-art meat processing facility on the outskirts of Darwin by Australian Agricultural Company Limited (AACo), a world-leading provider of beef and agricultural products. This infrastructure will significantly reduce transport and freight costs for local producers, minimising carcass weight loss during transportation, thus increasing opportunities to further develop cattle interests in Aboriginal Land Trust areas.
- Growth in the Asian buffalo industry with Australian buffalo bringing strong market rates from overseas buyers (particularly Vietnam), resulting in a significant spike in interest to muster wild buffalo on Aboriginal land. The Northern Territory Government has indicated that the current market could supply up to 10,000 buffalo per annum. The majority of wild buffalo currently reside on the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust, estimated to hold up to 120,000 animals.
- The signing of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) on 17 June 2015 will unlock significant opportunities for Australia. China is Australia's largest export market for goods and services, accounting for nearly a third of total exports, and is a growing source for foreign investment.

BUFFALO INDUSTRY TOUR, VIETNAM

An NLC team of Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Executive Member for West Arnhem John Christophersen and Regional Development Manager Jonathan McLeod accompanied the Northern Territory Government on a relationship building tour with the Vietnamese Government and the buffalo industry. The purpose of the visit was to promote the Northern Territory as a supplier of choice for live export, to investigate future live export demands with both buffalo and cattle, and to strengthen cooperative agency working relationships.

The visit included meetings with the the Vietnam Government's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Australian Embassy, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and a Vietnamese Importer. The NLC team also had the opportunity to see the unloading of a shipment of Northern Territory buffalo at the Haiphong port facilities and to tour stock holding yards and feed lots.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi, MLA Hon. Willem Westra van Holthe and Executive Member John Christophersen visiting a buffalo feed and holding yard in Haiphong; Scott Wauchope with Chairman Samuel Bush-Blanasi and Executive Member John Christophersen at the stock yards; Buffalo in the holding yard in Haiphong.

CHALLENGES

The value to Traditional Owners of the 36 pastoral grazing licences under section 19 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* is nearly \$2 million per annum, with up to 70% of all benefits being offset with infrastructure upgrades. Less than 10% of all section 19 grazing licences are Aboriginal operators. The role of the NLC Pastoral Officer is vitally important, especially for future Indigenous pastoral aspirations, to ensure that land use areas are appropriately maintained and infrastructure developed according to industry standards and any agreed terms of agreement are met.

Compliance with section 19 pastoral Land Use Agreements is resource intensive and the overall management of pastoral activities requires a unique skill set to effectively deal with the day-to-day challenges of working within the industry. At present, there are only two dedicated NLC Pastoral Officers to oversee the range of issues regarding monitoring and compliance that often require on-going brokering and dispute resolution.

The NLC pastoral team has started to see the benefits of the work on existing pastoral grazing licences through improved sustainable grazing and infrastructure management. However, without appropriate surveillance over the entire suite of 36 grazing licences, there is potential for Aboriginal assets and land to be degraded to the extent that future opportunities for Traditional Owners to develop pastoral activities on their land may be compromised.





COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A key NLC objective is to empower Aboriginal people to carry out commercial activities and build sustainable enterprises.

Economic development provides the foundation for genuine opportunities for Aboriginal people with attendant cultural and social benefits. Section 23(1) (ea) of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* empowers the NLC to assist Aboriginal people to carry out commercial activities, provided that the NLC itself does not profit from the activities. Currently, Aboriginal people in the NLC region suffer from high levels of disadvantage, a situation not likely to change without long term strategic investment. The NLC is a key agency in facilitating economic development on Aboriginal lands, with statutory responsibility for facilitating economic activity over an area that covers more than 210,000 square kilometres of the of the Northern Territory as well as 85% of the coastline. The NLC economic development program assists Traditional Owners to use their land assets to create investment, businesses and employment opportunities.

The NLC is a key agency for economic development on Aboriginal lands.

The NLC faces many challenges in building sustainable enterprises on Aboriginal land. Most former reserve land and land obtained under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* has low commercial productivity and services and essential

infrastructure are often poor in remote locations, except in areas where minerals have been found or where nature-based tourism activities occur. Despite these challenges, economic opportunities exist for Aboriginal people on Aboriginal land. As populations increase, small to mid-size food and retail operators increasingly see Aboriginal communities as attractive business opportunities. A range of industries from horticulture to agri-forestry and pastoral enterprises are in development and the environmental sector provides real opportunities for Aboriginal enterprises. Possible entry into the commercial fishing industry has also been raised by the Blue Mud Bay High Court decision.

However, overall, the long-term focus is on developing the capacity of Traditional Owners to:

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



MINERALS & ENERGY

A key NLC objective is to advocate on behalf of Traditional Owners and native title holders to ensure Aboriginal land owners make informed decisions about proposed minerals and energy projects.

The exploration and production of minerals, petroleum (oil and gas) and other forms of energy are essential to maintain our modern standard of living and are significant contributors to the financial and economic growth of the Northern Territory.

Minerals and energy sector resource-based proposals in the Northern Territory are administered and regulated by Northern Territory legislation – the *Minerals Titles Act*, the *Petroleum Act*, the *Geothermal Energy Act* and the *Mining Management Act*.

Resource-based exploration and development projects can pose risks to the natural environment and to Aboriginal culture, and these risks may have negative impacts on Aboriginal spirituality and connection to land (or places), and cultural and social activities. The responsibility to protect culturally and environmentally sensitive areas from such risks is significant not only to Aboriginal people and the NLC, but also to the broader community. The rights and interests of Traditional Owners and native title parties are protected by land tenure and are recognised by the Commonwealth as either freehold land granted under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, or through a continuous cultural connectivity to the land demonstrated in accordance with requirements under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

The NLC continues to receive many new applications to explore for mineral and energy resources over land governed by these two pieces of legislation. More than 90% of the NLC region is covered by applications to explore for minerals, petroleum and geothermal energy. The NLC is the statutory representative body with responsibility for advocating on behalf of Traditional Owners and native title parties to ensure that Aboriginal land owners make informed decisions about proposed minerals and energy projects and that, where possible, any likely impacts on Aboriginal culture and the natural environment are negated or at least minimised. This is achieved through consultation, negotiation of resource-based agreements and provision of advice in accordance with the principles of free, prior and informed consent.

More than 90% of the NLC region is covered by applications to explore for minerals, petroleum and geothermal energy.

Opposite: Peter Djigirr, Guruwilling Rangers, captures a rogue crocodile at the Blythe River.



The NLC meets its statutory obligations under both *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* and *Native Title Act* by conducting on-country consultations to provide advice, and through provision of other services such as:

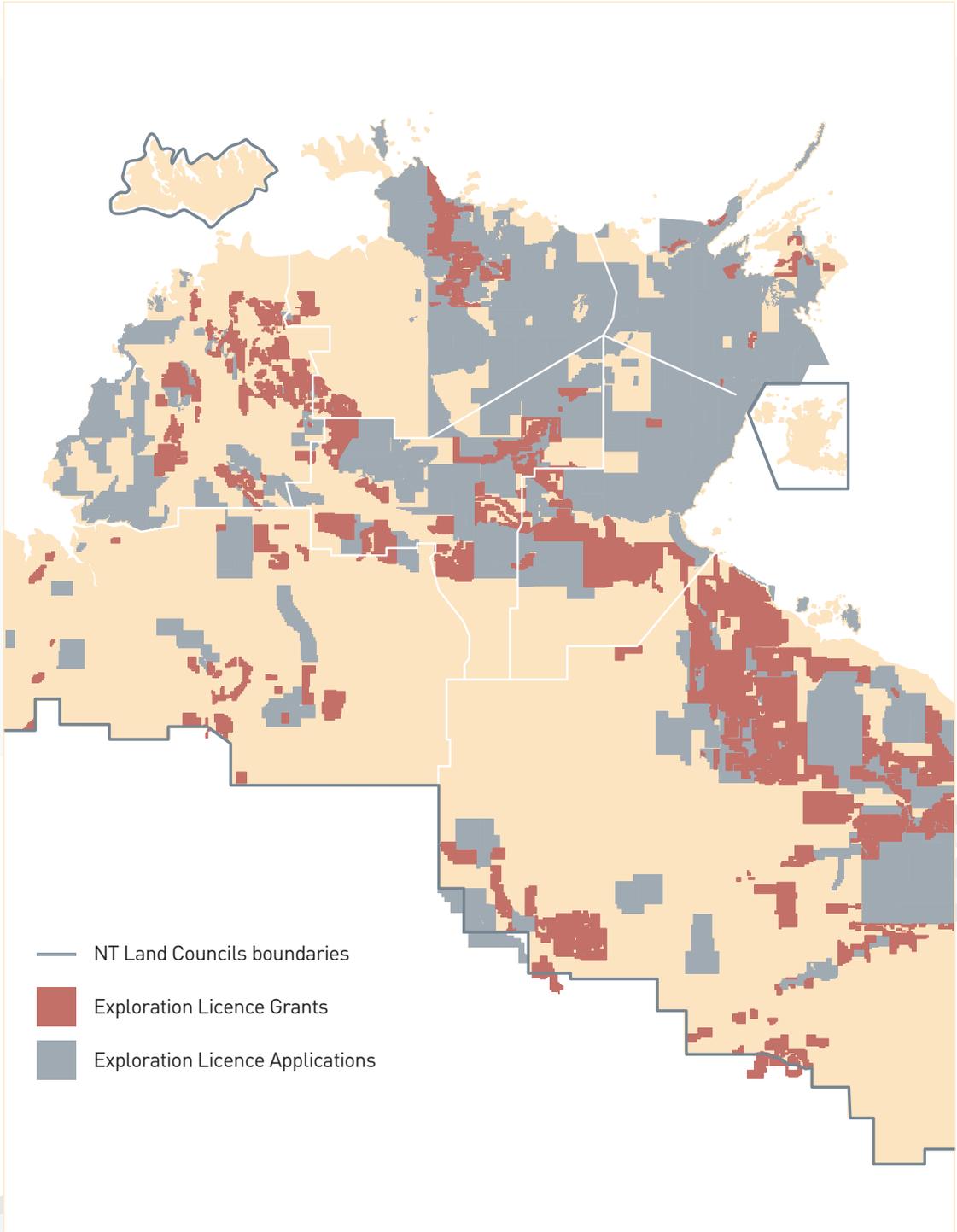
- responding to formal applications from the minerals and energy sectors in relation to exploration and development proposals over Aboriginal freehold land
- responding to notices of proposed 'future acts' pursuant to the *Native Title Act*
- consultation, negotiation and delivery of equitable agreements on behalf of Traditional Owners and native title parties
- assessment of the potential impacts of approved minerals and energy exploration and development proposals and other mineral and energy-related projects such as gas pipelines, processing plants, etc.
- assessment and distribution of financial benefits to Traditional Owners.

A key requirement for processing resource-based agreements is to ensure that the free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners or native title parties is obtained. This requires the NLC to maintain a high level of technical expertise, knowledge and skills across a number of fields, the key elements of which are:

- identification of the correct Traditional Owners, native title parties, estate groups and affected people for land located within an area of proposed development
- organisation of on-country consultations either on or near the proposed project area
- review, synthesis and effective communication of the technical information related to a proposed resource development project, its timeframes, commercial opportunities, and potential environmental and social risks, costs and benefits
- ensuring that all relevant information is presented in an unbiased and fair manner
- negotiation of agreements suited to a specific resource project(s) and its proponent(s), Traditional Owners, native title parties, estate groups, target minerals or hydrocarbon and other factors
- planning and management of the relationships between stakeholders which develop during the life of a project
- for tenement applications over Aboriginal Land Trust land, establishing whether the Traditional Owners have given free, prior and informed consent to exploration and production and have approved the land access to any granted tenement(s).

Many project proposals contain complex technical information. The NLC has a responsibility to ensure that such information is communicated appropriately to Traditional Owners and native title parties. This is an important role to ensure that Traditional Owners, native title parties and other affected Aboriginal people understand the nature and purpose of a proposed project; and to provide an opportunity for them to communicate any concerns that they may have back to the proponent, regulators and the NLC. Effective advocacy ensures that free, prior and informed consent is obtained during the decision-making process and that Traditional Owners and native title parties are properly represented. Advocacy and two-way communication is fundamental to understand the impacts that resource-based project proposals may have on Aboriginal culture and the environment.

FIGURE 10: MINERALS EXPLORATION IN THE NLC REGION





EXPLORATION LICENCES AND EXPLORATION PERMITS: PART IV *ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT 1976*

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

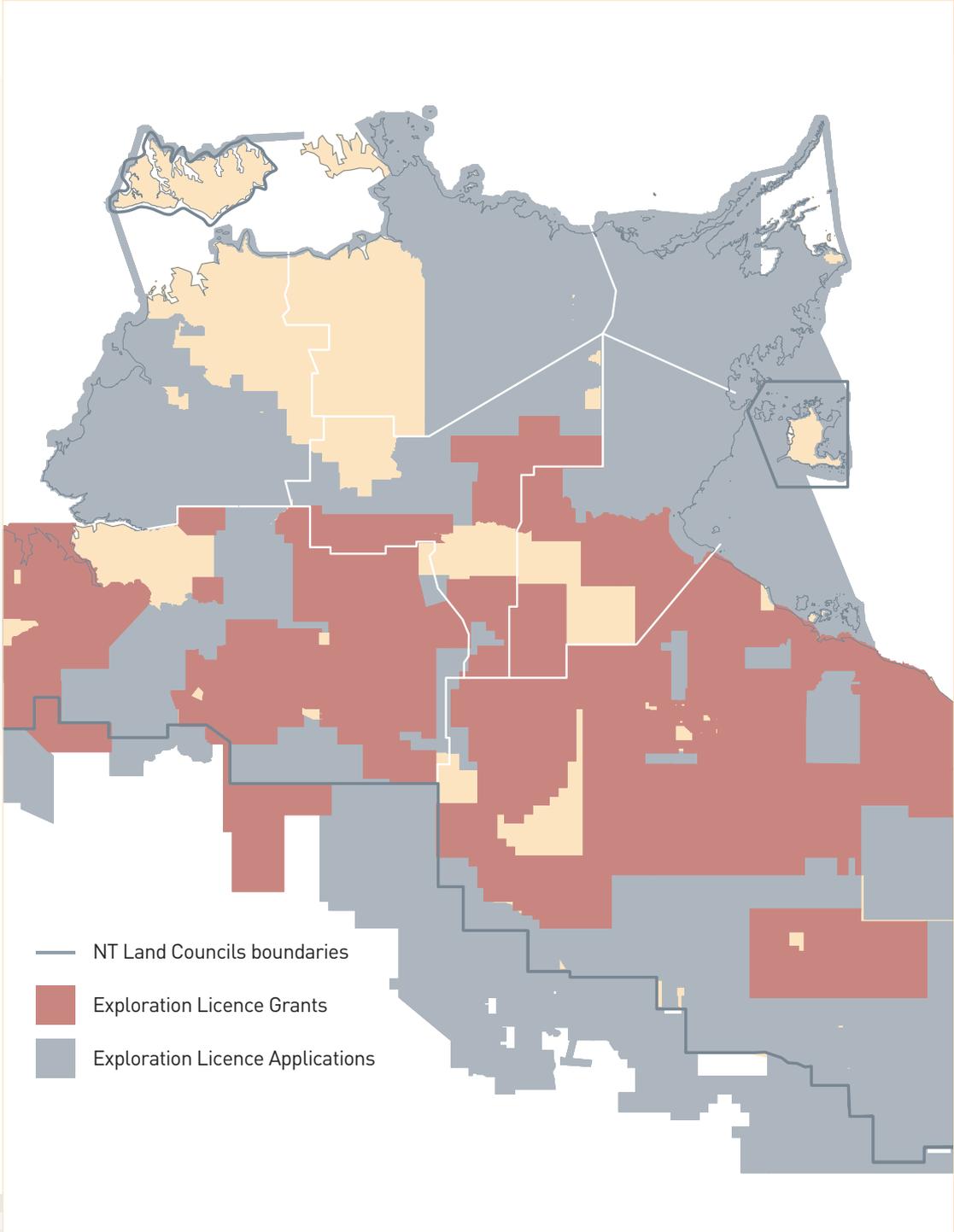
Each year, the NLC processes and manages a large number of applications for mineral-based Exploration Licences (ELs) and petroleum-based Exploration Permits (EPs). As a core responsibility under Part IV of the Act, the NLC facilitates the annual exploration activities for granted minerals Exploration Licences (ELs) or petroleum Exploration Permits (EPs) once the annual work program documents are submitted by the relevant mineral or petroleum company. To achieve these outcomes, the NLC uses a four-step consultation process:

1. Initial on-country consultations to establish if Traditional Owners wish to reject the application or if they wish to enter into negotiations towards an exploration agreement.
2. On-country surveys of sacred sites and clan boundaries, combined with defined areas that need to be protected under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1978*. This is usually done in conjunction with negotiations about the contents of a draft legal agreement applicable to the land that may be made available for exploration.
3. Final on-country consultations to allow Traditional Owners to consider and formally accept or refuse the application and its associated agreement.
4. If consented, delivery of a ministerially approved, executed agreement and formal notification necessary for the granting of the minerals Exploration Licence or petroleum Exploration Permit.

Once the agreement has been executed and the tenement granted by the Northern Territory Government, the proponent company is then obliged to present its proposed exploration activities to Traditional Owners at a specially convened work program meeting. These meetings are a contractual obligation and occur annually, although additional meetings are required if significant changes are made to an approved work program.

Advocacy and two-way communication is fundamental to understand the impacts that resource-based project proposals may have on Aboriginal culture and the environment.

FIGURE 11: PETROLEUM EXPLORATION IN THE NLC REGION





BACKLOG OF EXPLORATION APPLICATIONS AND THE NEGOTIATING PERIOD

At the end of the 2014/2015 reporting period, the NLC carried a backlog of 254 uncompleted exploration applications (including minerals and energy titles) over Aboriginal freehold land. Most of the outstanding applications were being warehoused and not actively pursued by the companies concerned. Reflecting global markets and the downward trend in petroleum and minerals commodity prices, fewer applications were received by the NLC than in previous years.

A total of 85 activities were conducted, including on-country consultations and audits for 48 separate minerals and energy resource development projects on Aboriginal freehold land. The statistics provided here do not reflect the complexity and vastness of some exploration proposals, especially some of the large petroleum tenements, or the human, financial and logistical resources required to conduct on-country consultations.

EXPLORATION LICENCES AND EXPLORATION PERMITS: NATIVE TITLE ACT 1993

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

**We want development,
but we want it to
be ethical.**

Petroleum exploration automatically attracts the procedural right to negotiate an exploration agreement under the

Native Title Act when a petroleum exploration permit is lodged. Many petroleum exploration applications and granted tenements pose significant logistical problems when it comes to conducting on-country consultations, as they generally cover vast tracts of land in remote regions, involving numerous Traditional Owners and clan estates. A tenement area (or boundary) of a petroleum exploration permit application can exist simultaneously within mining tenures administered by Northern Territory legislation – the *Minerals Titles Act*, the *Petroleum Act*, and the *Geothermal Energy Act* (including Exploration Licences, Mineral Leases or other mineral-related titles).

In 2014/2015 the NLC conducted a total of 87 activities, including on-country consultations and audits, related to 32 separate minerals and petroleum exploration and mining projects (including closure and legacy mine-related projects) located on land where native title rights exist.

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

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

TABLE 12: MINERALS & ENERGY BRANCH CONSULTATIONS AND OTHER OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES DURING 2014/2015

CONSULTATION TYPE	NO. OF PROJECTS	NO. OF CONSULTATIONS
Tenements processed under <i>Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act</i>	20	44
Applications for Minerals and Energy Exploration Titles	22	33
Granted Minerals and Energy Exploration Titles	5	8
Liaison Committee Meetings		
Tenements processed under the <i>Native Title Act</i>	5	5
Applications for Minerals and Energy Exploration Titles	17	44
Granted Minerals and Energy Exploration Titles	4	13
Liaison Committee Meetings		
TOTAL – ALL MINERALS AND ENERGY CONSULTATIONS	73	147
OTHER OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES (NOT CONSULTATIONS)	NO. OF ACTIVITIES	
Audits	25	
Stakeholder meetings	33	

NEGOTIATING MINERALS AND ENERGY AGREEMENTS

The NLC continues to identify and address Aboriginal disadvantage through positive financial and social outcomes that are facilitated by negotiation of fair and equitable resource exploration, development and related infrastructure agreements. In recent years, there has been a focus on securing longer lasting benefits in these agreements such as development of local infrastructure, and employment and business opportunities. Benefits that may flow from these negotiated agreements include, but are not limited to:

- Traditional Owner and native title party participation in the exploration planning and approvals process through sacred sites surveys, liaison committees and annual work program meetings
- minerals and petroleum companies working together with Aboriginal cultural monitors to ensure that sacred sites and other culturally sensitive areas are protected during the conduct of approved exploration activities
- local employment and provision of project/industry-specific training programs
- committing companies to high-level cultural and environmental considerations with, in serious cases, penalties for non-compliance
- provision for exploration compensation payments.



MANAGING MINERALS AND ENERGY AGREEMENTS

Negotiated minerals and energy agreements are binding legal documents and carry contractual obligations. By law, the NLC assumes responsibilities and commitments under such agreements to ensure that companies meet their contractual obligations to the relevant Traditional Owners or native title parties. During the 2014/2015 reporting period, a high proportion of the Mineral and Energy Branch's total on-country consultations were facilitated under existing agreements. These consultations mostly related to annual petroleum exploration work programs for granted petroleum Exploration Permits and mining or closure/legacy related matters under granted Mineral Leases.

During the 2014/2015 reporting period, agreement-based works undertaken by the NLC included on-going participation in cultural heritage management, exploration work program planning, and auditing activities on a number of granted minerals and petroleum tenements across the NLC region. The NLC also participated in on-going discussions with the Northern Territory Government, industry representative bodies and minerals and petroleum companies to optimise business development outcomes and training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people under existing agreements.

The onshore petroleum industry is expected to grow under the Northern Territory Government's initiative to release further petroleum acreage via a competitive bidding process. The NLC anticipates an increase in the volume and variety of work as more acreage is relinquished by existing explorers and released to the market, hence the requirement to address proposals for resource-based projects as demand arises.



Above, left: NLC and TO Rehabilitation Audit and Inspection on a well drilled in mid-2014, Manbulloo Station, March 2015. Oil and Gas Company Representatives, from left, Bill Harney, Neville Brown, Jessica Jones (NLC). Above, right: NLC staff and Traditional Owners inspecting a drill rig during a petroleum exploration audit.

MINING

The four major operational mines located in the NLC region are:

- Rio Tinto Alcan Gove, which mines bauxite near Nhulunbuy in north-east Arnhem Land
- ERA Ranger Uranium Mine, which mines and produces uranium oxide near Jabiru
- OM (Manganese) Limited Bootu Creek Mine, which mines and produces manganese near Tennant Creek
- Glencore Xstrata McArthur River Mine, which mines a complex silver-lead-zinc ore near Borroloola.

Additionally, the NLC represents Traditional Owners and native title parties affected by a number of smaller mines at various stages of operation. These include:

- Merlin Diamond Mine, which has produced diamonds near Borroloola (currently non-operational)
- Redbank Copper Mine, which is aiming to produce copper on Wollogorang Station near the Northern Territory/Queensland border (currently non-operational)
- Frances Creek, which produced iron ore near Pine Creek and moved into 'care and maintenance' phase during the reporting period (currently non-operational)
- numerous gold-producing mines operating in the Pine Creek region.

During the 2014/2015 reporting period, the NLC, Traditional Owners and native title parties participated in various initiatives related to the closure and rehabilitation of mines, including:

- promoting the interests of the Mirarr people in the development of future closure criteria for the Ranger Uranium Mine through ongoing technical meetings with Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) and various government representative bodies
- participating in the multi-stakeholder Redbank Working Group to address and remediate serious environmental issues associated with previous mining operations at the Redbank Copper Mine
- promoting the interests of the Finnis River Aboriginal Land Trust and the Kungarakany and Warai Traditional Owners throughout the closure of Newmont Asia Pacific's base metals mine (formerly known as the Woodcutters mine)
- promoting the interests of the Finnis River Aboriginal Land Trust and the Kungarakany and Warai Traditional Owners as part of the National Partnership Agreement between the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments in respect of the former Rum Jungle Uranium Mine near Batchelor.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION

Under both the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* and *Native Title Act*, the NLC has a responsibility to represent and support Aboriginal people with matters associated with environmental and land management. The NLC provides technical and environmental advice about proposed minerals and petroleum exploration and production activities that may impact on their land. The NLC's responsibilities include liaising among project developers, governmental agencies, Traditional Owners and native title parties. The NLC may initiate its own environmental research or investigations and engage specialist consultants as the need arises to ensure that best practice and precautionary principles are observed and applied.

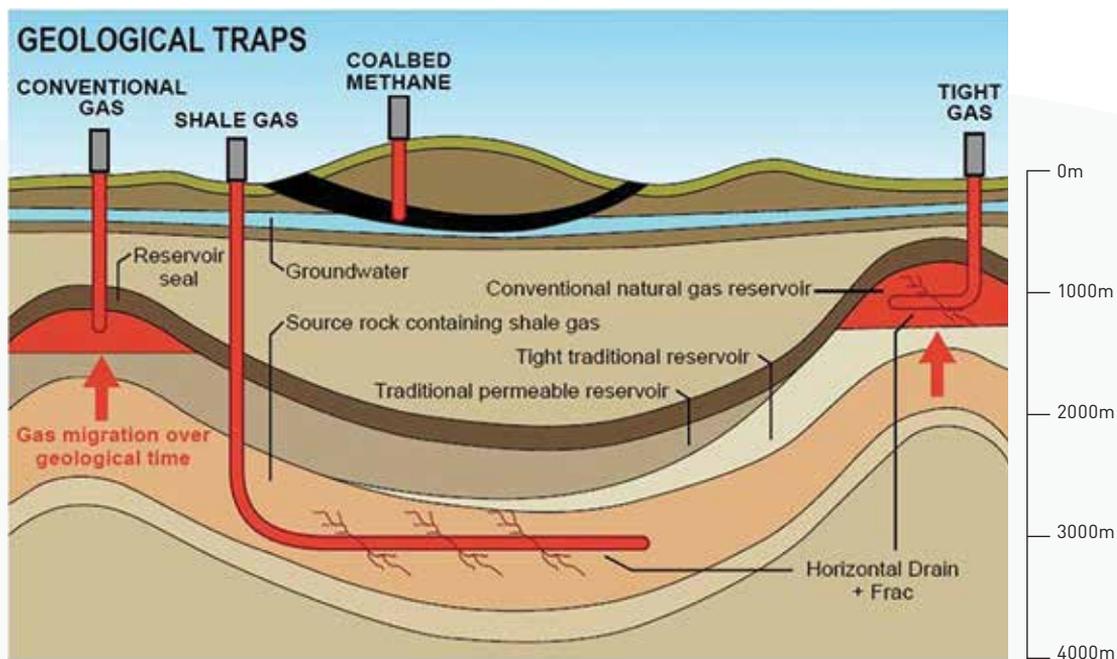


Over the course of this reporting period, the NLC represented the Traditional Owners and native title parties at various scientific and technical forums (listed below). It is worth noting that a number of Traditional Owners and native title parties (or their associations) also participated on these committees:

- Alligator Rivers Region Technical Committee (ARRTC)
- Alligator Rivers Region Advisory Committee (ARRAC)
- Ranger, Jabiluka and Nabarlek Minesite Technical Committees (MTCs)
- Ranger Uranium Mine – A Technical Working Group set up to implement findings of an Independent Surface Water Report (2012), which investigated specific aspects of surface water monitoring at the Ranger Uranium Mine
- Ranger Uranium Mine– Proposed 3 Deeps Underground Mine
- Ranger Uranium Mine – Ranger Taskforce Leach Tank Failure
- Rum Jungle Liaison Committee and Working Group Committee (including Aboriginal representatives of the Liaison Committee)
- Woodcutters Mine Closure Liaison Committee
- Bootu Creek Manganese Mine Liaison Committee
- Redbank Mine Working Group.

During the 2014/2015 reporting year, the NLC provided Traditional Owners and native title parties with environmental advice, representation or presented formal submissions in response to publicly available documents in relation to the following proposed major developments and inquiries:

- Northern Territory Public Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing – Addendum to the main submission to the Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing (submitted on 10th September 2014)
- legacy environmental issues and remediation works at the former Redbank Mine Site
- Ranger Uranium Mine
- former Rum Jungle Uranium mine
- former Woodcutters mine.



HYDRAULIC FRACTURING AND ONSHORE PETROLEUM EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION IN THE NLC REGION

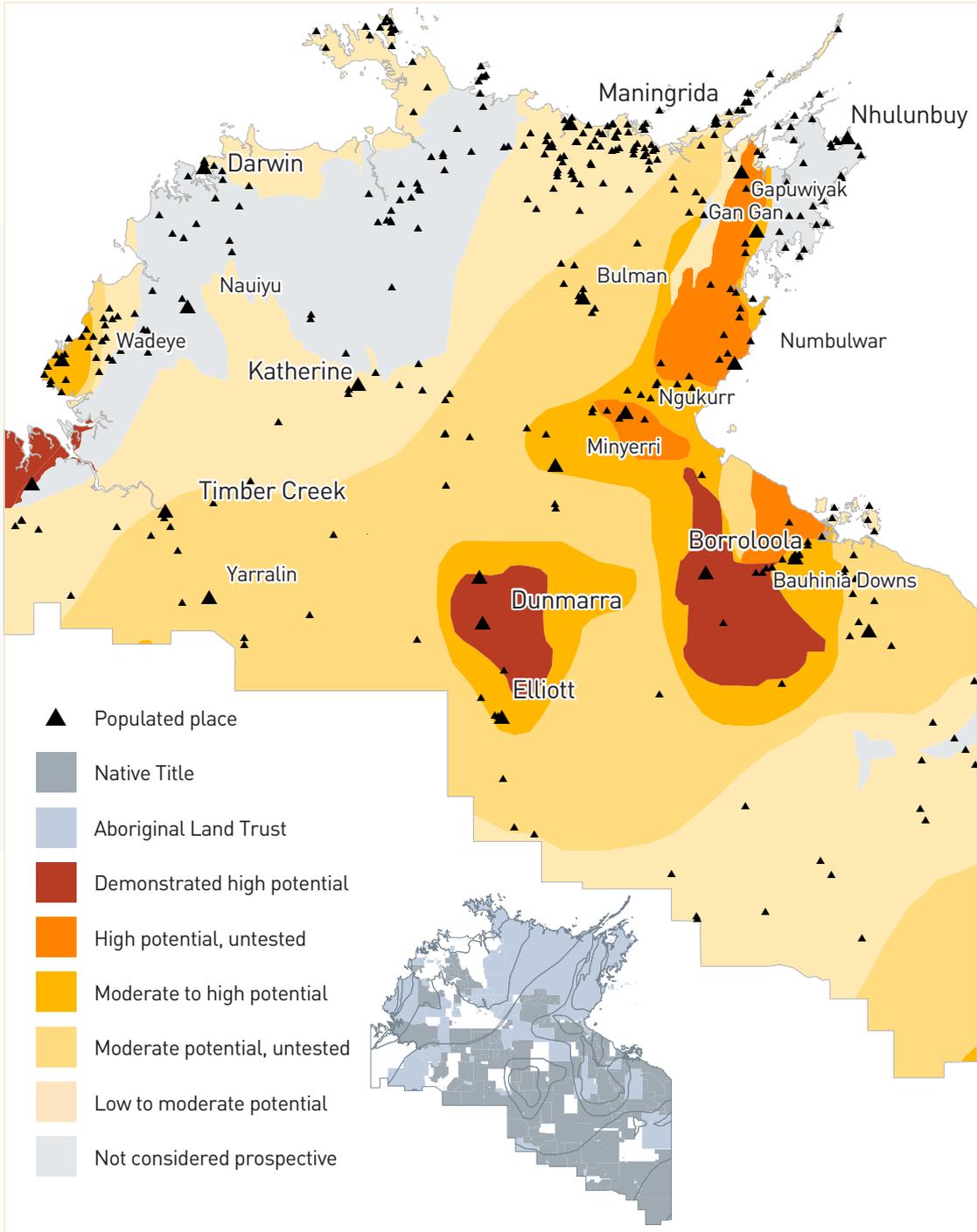
Hydraulic fracturing, or ‘fracking’, is the process of injecting liquid at high pressure into subterranean rocks to force open existing fissures and extract hydrocarbons (oil or gas). In the Northern Territory, the most common form of hydrocarbon resource is shale gas. Production of shale gas generally requires the application of horizontal drilling techniques combined with hydraulic fracturing. However, other drilling and resource extraction methods are also possible, depending on the nature of the geological structure being targeted (as shown in the figure above).

The Northern Territory Government is currently reviewing the regulatory framework governing the onshore petroleum industry in the Northern Territory. As an integral step to inform this review, on 26 February 2015 the Government released the findings of the Public Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory that commenced during the previous reporting year. This was followed by the publication of the ‘Onshore Oil and Gas Draft Guiding Principles’. Further initiatives under this regulatory review, including revised legislation and other supporting documents, are likely to be made available to the public over coming years. The NLC will continue to engage with this review and to provide advice where required to promote a safe, environmentally and socially responsible and profitable onshore petroleum industry.

Above: Cross-section showing typical geological structures that support hydrocarbon resources, also depicting the application of hydraulic fracturing combined with both horizontal and vertical drilling techniques.



FIGURE 12: MAP SHOWING THE KNOWN ONSHORE HYDROCARBON RESOURCE POTENTIAL OF THE NLC REGION



The Northern Territory is believed to contain a large number of areas where gas and/or oil may exist in deep-seated 'shale' deposits. This has attracted the interest of many national and international petroleum companies. Several locations have already shown the presence of both oil and gas. New pipelines will be needed once production begins.

The NLC has concerns about the potential environmental risks and impacts associated with onshore petroleum exploration and production. These concerns relate to hydraulic fracturing activities and also broader issues including:

- effective regulation of the onshore petroleum industry in the Northern Territory
- transport and storage of chemicals and produced hydrocarbons
- integrity and safety of petroleum wells to ensure the highest level of protection people and the environment, especially shared groundwater resources (aquifers)
- habitat fragmentation, invasive species (weeds and pests), loss of biodiversity and other potential impacts on the natural environment
- cumulative and other potential impacts.

The NLC continues to liaise with Traditional Owners, government, industry representative groups, non-governmental organisations and other key stakeholders to strengthen oversight and achieve effective regulation of the onshore petroleum industry in the Northern Territory. The NLC will continue to engage with the onshore petroleum regulatory review and to meet with Traditional Owners, government, industry representative bodies and other key stakeholders in this process. The NLC is committed to continue consulting with and representing its core constituents by promoting efforts to safely and effectively regulate the onshore petroleum industry in the Northern Territory.

The NLC is committed to continue consulting with and representing its core constituents by promoting efforts to safely and effectively regulate the onshore petroleum industry in the Northern Territory.



INDUSTRY CONFERENCES AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

The NLC continues to participate in conferences and forums associated with the minerals and energy sectors while addressing the development of resource-based proposals and infrastructure. The NLC aims to maintain a competitive edge by keeping up-to-date with the latest developments in the minerals and energy sectors and by investing in the professional development and training of staff. Participation at industry conferences and targeted training for staff are positive investments towards achieving the NLC's strategic plan and other stated objectives.

Staff attended the following industry forums and training seminars to establish networks with project developers, government representatives and other stakeholders:

- NLC Staff Oil and Gas Workshop with the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association (APPEA), the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and representatives from several petroleum companies
- Mining the Territory Conference
- Life of Mine 2014 Conference.

Participation at these forums ensures that the NLC continues to develop an understanding of the resources industries, particularly those activities that relate to mine closure and remediation and onshore oil and gas exploration and production.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Minerals & Energy Branch continued to confront various challenges and opportunities during the reporting period, including:

- Due to the branch being understaffed, resources had to be allocated among a number of competing projects in order to deliver effective consultations and to meet key objectives consistently throughout the year.
- Sharing resources for better efficiency by combining multiple tenements/proponents to conduct consultations, where it was deemed suitable.
- Disputes within or between landholding groups resulted in additional on-country consultations to progress some tenement applications to a final decision.
- Weather conditions made it impossible to conduct on-country consultations during part of the Wet Season.
- The Minerals & Energy Branch committed significant resources towards engaging with government, industry groups and other key stakeholders concerning the regulation of the onshore petroleum industry in the Northern Territory. The Branch also provided information and advice to council members, Traditional Owners and native title parties about this issue.
- On-going issues related to environmental legacy, pollution and mine closure and rehabilitation at various current and former mine sites across the NLC region required on-going management by the branch.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A key NLC objective is to represent the rights and interests of Aboriginal people in the Top End, whether they live in the bush or in major centres.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the last 12 months, the Regional Development Branch achieved the following:

- organised more than 100 section 19 land use and mining consultations that involved up to 3,000 Traditional Owners and affected Aboriginal groups
- supported on-country consultations for native title and royalties
- processed a high percentage of land access permits
- assisted the assessment of section 19 Land Use Expressions of Interest
- assisted the administration of funeral/burial applications
- supported the logistics and running of Regional Council and Full Council meetings.

CHALLENGES

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

Continuous investment in communication and information technology infrastructure and software upgrades is also critical to keeping our regional services up to date.

Important regional office service hubs like Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Jabiru will need to be carefully reviewed with a long term plan to address infrastructure, human resource and service delivery needs. NLC and Traditional Owners are keen to establish a permanent presence and office site in large Aboriginal communities like Wadeye, Maningrida and Galiwinku, which are also service hubs to outlying areas.



PUBLIC ADVOCACY SERVICES

GOAL: Advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people to raise broader community awareness of the role and vision of the NLC.

A key NLC objective is to provide accurate, up to date information on issues affecting Aboriginal people throughout the NLC's region.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

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

The NLC's Media Unit has represented the organisation at various festivals, including GARMA, Barunga and NAIDOC events.

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

The NLC gives Aboriginal people a voice and the tools – legal and anthropological expertise and negotiation skills – to make informed decisions about their land and their futures.

Opposite: Flag Raising at Yirrkala.



INFORMATION AND EDUCATION RESOURCES

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

Land Rights News was first published in 1977 and is Australia's longest-running Aboriginal newspaper. Four editions were produced during the reporting year – July and October 2014 and January and April 2015. Changes were made during late 2014 to achieve financial savings and to improve the look and presentation of the publication. *Land Rights News* is distributed free to Aboriginal communities across the NLC region.

MEDIA MANAGEMENT

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

The arrival of Mr Joe Morrison as CEO has heightened the NLC's public profile as Mr Morrison has made himself available for regular interviews across a wide range of news media outlets.

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

Northern development and Northern Territory Government water allocation policies were also extensively covered in media releases and interviews. The decision in June 2014 to settle the Federal Court Muckaty case attracted widespread interest from national and international news media which flowed into the current reporting year.

Permission to film and photograph landscapes and interview members of local communities is considered by Traditional Owners and where these engagements are commercial in nature, a special agreement is negotiated. In 2016, the media unit is planning for the 40th anniversary of the passage of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*.



LAND RIGHTS NEWS

NORTHERN EDITION

"Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life"

October 2014 / Edition 4

www.nlc.org.au



Art that gets to the

THE above artwork is the creation of Darwin artist Chips Mackinolty. Land Rights News publishes the work to highlight the issues raised by the contribution inside from Lingiari Murray Gardle. Mr Gardle was engaged by the NLC to be a translator during consultations with Traditional Owners at Gunbalanya, who are struggling to grapple with

the complexities of an offer by the Commonwealth to lease their township for 29 years. His assignment revealed serious deficiencies in the conduct of negotiations so far. Chips Mackinolty's work was exhibited at the Fremantle Art Centre Print Award. The following text accompanied the entry. "We speak our mother's tongue, at

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COAG Reviews Land Rights

INDIGENOUS Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion has pointedly identified the Northern Land Council as target of an "urgent" investigation by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) into Indigenous land administration and land use.

The investigation was announced in a communique at the end of the last COAG meeting in Canberra in October last year. "The Commonwealth, the Northern Territory and Queensland will urgently investigate Indigenous land administration and land use to enable traditional owners to readily

attract private sector investment and finance to develop their own land with new industries and businesses to provide jobs and economic advancement for Indigenous people." The results of the investigation will be reported to the first COAG meeting of this year (a date has not yet been set).

The investigation will mean a review of the NT Aboriginal Land Rights Act and the Native Title Act. "We've been tasked with having a review over the impediments to economic development in northern Australia," Mr Scullion told the ABC late last year. "As part of that we will look at all the legislation that has an issue."

Three weeks before the 2013 federal election, Mr Scullion issued a joint news media statement with Tina Maud'flane, the CLP candidate for Lingiari. "The coalition has no

and a seat at the Cabinet table. NLC deputy chairman John Daly brandished the Scullion/MacFarlane media release during a news conference at the NLC's last Full Council meeting at South Alligator.

"Prior to him getting in as the Minister, this here says he want's going to do any review of anything like that without the consent of Traditional

Land Rights

ABORIGINAL land rights in the Northern Territory and Native Title rights across Northern Australia are under attack on several fronts, all in the name of promoting economic development, home ownership and employment.

After a meeting in Canberra of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on 10 October, NT Chief Minister Adam Giles announced that his government, with the Commonwealth and Queensland, would urgently investigate Indigenous land administration and land use, "to enable Traditional Owners to attract private sector investment and finance for development".

"I firmly believe that the protracted and complicated processes for approving development projects on Aboriginal land are prohibiting Indigenous Territorians

from pulling themselves out of poverty through economic development," Mr Giles said.

"I am pleased that the Prime Minister has agreed to work with the Northern Territory on ways to remove those barriers to the development of Aboriginal land."

The announcement came in the wake of two official reports which attacked Aboriginal land tenure.

First, on 1 August, came the review of Indigenous training and employment programs, called "Creating Parity—the Forrest Review".

Then, on 4 September, Federal Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia tabled its final report, "Five North".

The Forrest review was led by the West Australian billionaire miner,

MRM: What a m



WHEN the huge zinc-lead deposit at what's now known as the McArthur River Mine was discovered 60 years ago, it was named HVC -- "Here's Your Chance".

Chance, in the sense of fortune or opportunity, has not come the way

of the four Aboriginal tribes in the Gulf country near Borroloola affected by the mine, since operations began in 1955.

They mounted yet another protest against environmental impacts of the mine in October last year, when

Youth detention in Aboriginal pris

LAND RIGHTS NEWS

NORTHERN EDITION

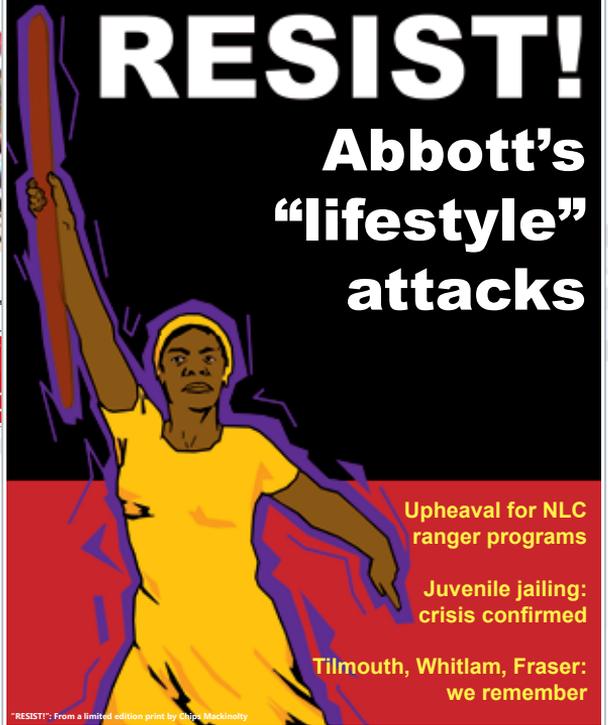
"Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life"

April 2015 - Edition 2

www.nlc.org.au

RESIST!

Abbott's "lifestyle" attacks



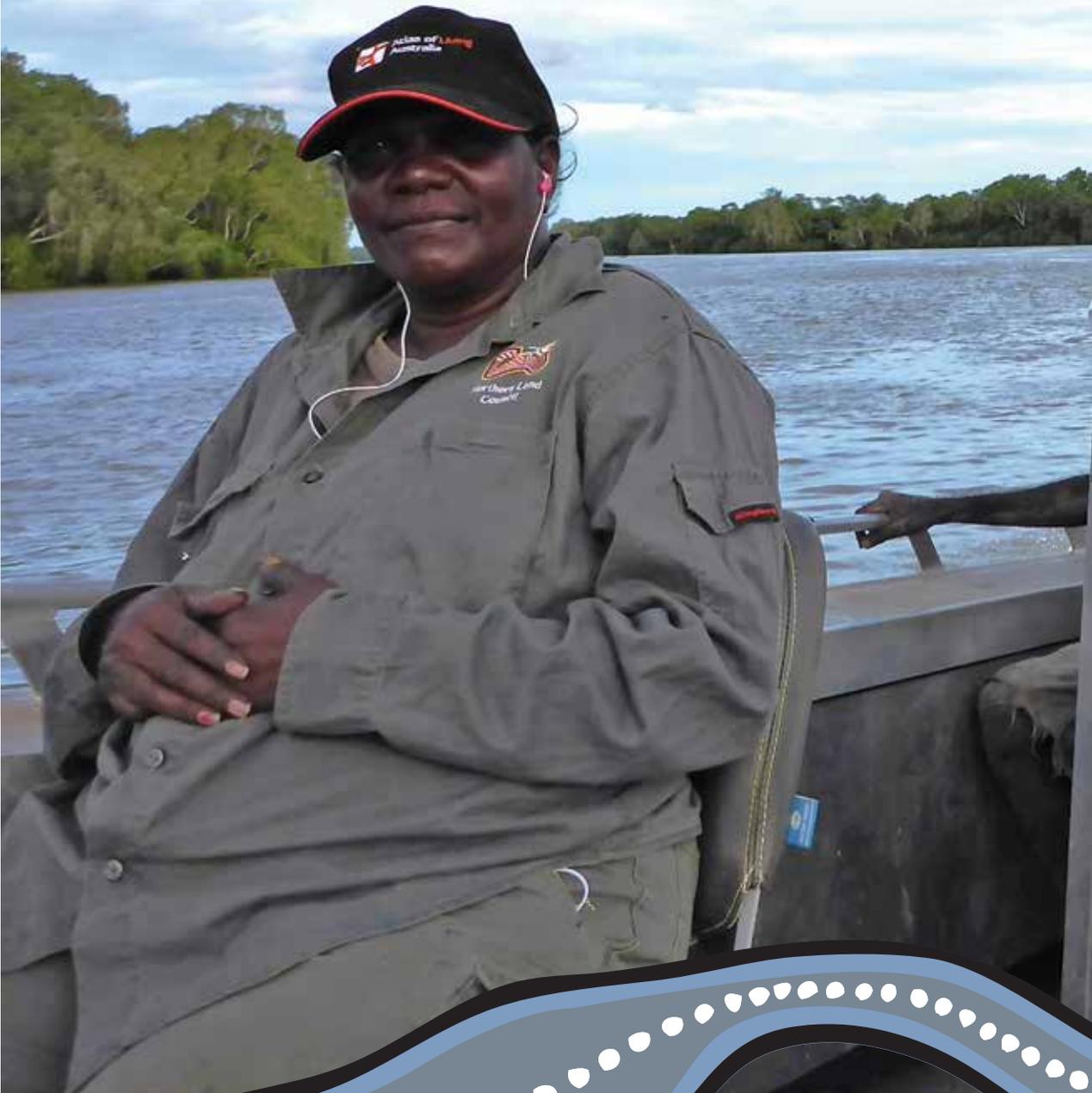
Upheaval for NLC ranger programs

Juvenile jailing: crisis confirmed

Tilmouth, Whitlam, Fraser: we remember

"RESIST!": From a limited edition print by Chips Mackinolty

Last financial year, we facilitated 109 new agreements and distributed \$62 million dollars that derived from the many agreements struck on Aboriginal lands.



GOOD CORPORATE STANDARDS

GOAL: Operate in accordance with best practice and reporting standards and obligations.

DISTRIBUTION OF ROYALTIES

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

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

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

OUTCOME

Under sections 15, 16 and 19 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*, income of \$15,499,000 was generated from Aboriginal land during 2014/2015.

Distributions have been made as per instructions from Traditional Owners in accordance with traditional decision making processes. A total of 8,674 royalty payments were made during the course of the financial year totalling \$14,227,000.

TABLE 13: BREAKDOWN OF ROYALTY DISTRIBUTION PAYMENTS, 2014/2015

PAYMENTS	
Section 35(2) Statutory Royalties	\$10,954
Section 35(3) exploration and mining	\$14,227
Section 35(4) negotiated monies; rental and lease monies	\$14,395
Native title	\$1,633
TOTAL	\$41,209

Opposite: Yugul Mangi River Patrol.



ADMINISTERING ABORIGINAL LAND TRUSTS

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

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

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

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

OUTCOME

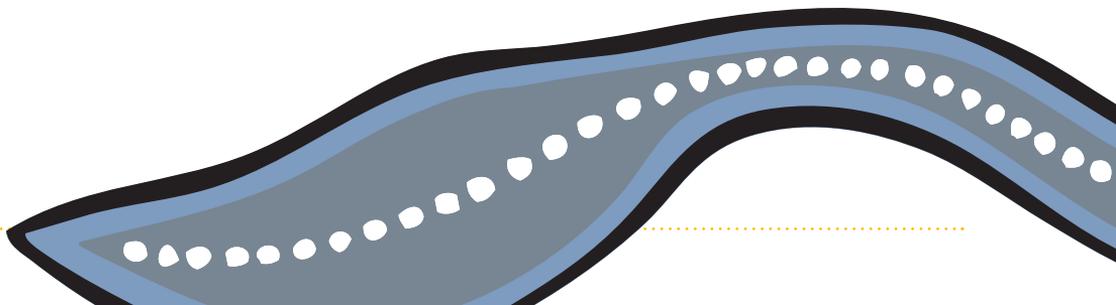
A total of 58 Aboriginal Land Trusts exist within the NLC's jurisdiction. The memberships for five trusts expired during the reporting period; the memberships of nine other trusts were renewed.

MEDIATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

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

With its abundant natural resources, the northern region of the Northern Territory has always supported a large Traditional Owner population. Demand for coastal land and sea access, farming development, the uranium and mineral resources, mining, large township development and water resource exploitation all confront the Traditional Owner population. The social, economic and cultural gap can cause tension within and between groups.

In addition, issues arise with regard to traditional ownership. There may be boundary disputes between groups, or intra-group disputes regarding membership, or both.

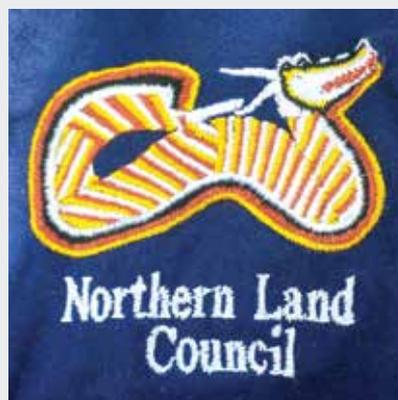


The NLC's functions include (under s25 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*), a duty to 'attempt the conciliation of disputes':

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

The NLC is also the arbiter for the identification of the Traditional Owners under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* and consequently, in some cases the need arises for investigations of disputes, mediation and for formal findings by the NLC.

A successful conciliation was conducted by the NLC in March 2015 with respect to the dispute concerning payments from the RTA Gove Traditional Owners Agreement. Legal action was commenced in the Federal Court in 2014. A conciliation process was initiated by the NLC using the services of Mr Geoff Eames and the Hon. Fred Chaney. This resulted in the settlement of most issues concerning the allocation of payments among three Traditional Owner clan groups and a way forward to address a clan boundary dispute.



Above, left: NLC staff at Native Title meeting in Minyerri 2015.



LAND AND WATER ACCESS PERMITS

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

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

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

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

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

ACHIEVEMENTS

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

OUTCOME

The NLC has invested a significant amount of work to gain approvals from relevant Traditional Owners or permit delegates across all regions. Work-related permits are dealt with as a priority and an increased number of government, contractors and other agencies wishing to access Aboriginal land are applying for permits.

More than 63% of permit applications are processed within a 10-day timeframe. Complex research and media applications may require legal and anthropological input, and take longer. A new permit information management system has been developed internally, progressively trialled and is scheduled to be operational by late 2015.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE APPROACH

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

The enabling legislation of the NLC is the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. The responsible Minister for the 2014/2015 reporting period is Senator the Hon. Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

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

EXEMPTIONS GRANTED BY FINANCE MINISTER

No exemptions were granted by the Finance Minister in regard to reporting requirements in 2014/2015.

INSURANCE PREMIUMS FOR OFFICERS

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

RISK MANAGEMENT AND ETHICS

NLC members are responsible for setting the policy and oversight of the risk management framework that integrates the process for managing risk into the organisations governance, strategic planning, management, reporting processes, policies, and organisational culture to comply with the Australian/New Zealand Risk Management Standard (AS/ANZ ISO 31000:2009).

More than 63% of permit applications are processed within a 10-day timeframe.

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

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



During 2014/2015, the Audit Committee was independently chaired by Mr Jon Webster, and attended by Ms Suzanne Archbold, John Christophersen (West Arnhem region Executive Council member) and Helen Lee (Katherine region Executive Council member).

The General Manager Corporate Compliance of the NLC attends Audit Committee meetings, but is not a member of the committee. Mr Matthew Kennon of Merit Partners also has a standing invitation to attend meetings on behalf of the Australian National Audit Office.

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

RELATED ENTITY TRANSACTIONS

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

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

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

CONSULTANT PROCEDURES, COMPETITIVE TENDERING AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The procurement policy is consistent with the Commonwealth procurement principles.

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

TABLE 14: CONSULTANT EXPENDITURE, 2014/2015

CONSULTANTS – LEGAL	
Appleby Consulting	\$ 16,657.04
Camatta Lempens Pty Ltd Lawyers	\$ 59,449.28
Eames Geoffrey Micheal	\$ 47,500.00
Endeavour Consulting Group	\$ 64,144.93
Foley's List Pty Ltd	\$ 1,945.45
Fred Chaney	\$ 33,000.00
Garde, Murray	\$ 2,075.00
Glacken, Sturt	\$ 272,147.65
Glenn Miller Property Consultants	\$ 39,617.92
Graeme Hill	\$ 57,636.36
Jamie Dalziel	\$ 26,682.51
Justin Edwards	\$ 4,930.91
Keely T.P.	\$ 21,636.37
Kim Barber	\$ 10,000.00
Megan Eliza Brayne	\$ 10,345.60
Sean Bowden	\$ 15,000.00
Sue Meaghan	\$ 9,580.00
Tallagandra Rural Consulting Pty Ltd	\$ 1,100.00
	\$ 693,449.02

CONSULTANTS – ABORIGINAL	
Lenore Dembski Paperbark Woman	\$ 541.23
Bradshaw & Timber Creek Contracting & Resource Co.	\$ 7,920.00
	\$ 8,461.23
CONSULTANTS – ANTHROPOLOGISTS	
Anthropos Consulting	\$ 64,005.74
Bennetts Anthropological Consultancies	\$ 88,989.77
Delphine D. Morris	\$ 28,078.26
Dr Mary Laughren	\$ 500.00
Dr Philip Clarke	\$ 20,631.38
Ellengowan Enterprises	\$ 15,318.00
Frank McKeown – McKeown Ygoa & Associates Pty Ltd	\$ 26,401.99
Gay English Consulting	\$ 89,518.18
Ian White	\$ 3,800.00
Jeffrey Stead Anthropological Consultant	\$ 12,518.18
Jitendra Kumarage	\$ 20,000.00
John Dymock	\$ 50,000.00
Mick Reynolds	\$ 66,589.18
Walter Zukowski	\$ 37,323.20
	\$ 523,673.88
CONSULTANTS – OTHER	
Abs Scrofa (Australi) Pty Ltd	\$ 9,090.91
Fire Stick And Associates Pty Ltd	\$ 16,955.43
Ganamarr Consultants Pty Ltd	\$ 9,000.00
Grant Sarra Consultancy Services	\$ 71,541.88
Hds Technical Management and Consulting Pty Ltd	\$ 32,750.00
Meltwater Australia Pty Ltd	\$ 15,300.00
Mike Longton	\$ 35,544.00
Nick Gambold	\$ 2,960.00
Opus International Consultants (Aus) Pty Ltd NT	\$ 169,366.23
Ots Management Pty Ltd	\$ 44,270.77
Savanna Solutions Pty Ltd	\$ 4,825.00
Savvy Community Devt Consult	\$ 7,500.00
	\$ 419,104.22
TOTAL	\$ 1,644,688.35



SUMMARY OF CONSULTANT EXPENDITURE

The following table and figure provides a summary of expenditure on consultants and contractors over the past four years.

TABLE 15: CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS – SUMMARY, 2011–2015

CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS	2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014		2014/2015	
	NO.	VALUE (\$000)	NO.	VALUE (\$000)	NO.	VALUE (\$000)	NO.	VALUE (\$000)
Aboriginal	–	–	3	8	3	15	2	8
Anthropology	27	877	28	729	22	864	14	524
Legal	17	692	15	809	11	769	18	693
Other	31	955	26	733	18	252	12	419
TOTAL	75	2,523	72	2,279	54	1,901	46	1,645

ADVERTISING AND MARKET RESEARCH

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

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

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

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

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

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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

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

Policy Statement: Preserving the Past – Protecting the Present – Planning for the Future

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

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

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

ACHIEVEMENTS

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

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Key IT projects during 2014/2015 included upgrading the Mail Server, from Exchange 2003 to 2012; critical servers were upgraded from either windows 2003 or windows 2008 to windows 2012; and a single point helpdesk was created through the deployment of Helpdesk software.



TABLE 16: NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL ICT KEY PROJECTS 2014/2015

PROJECT	PURPOSE
Installation of new servers for Regional Offices	Replacement of obsolete server hardware with new hardware. Domain controller server hardware for NLC Darwin, Palmerston, Jabiru, Katherine and Nhulunbuy Server
Upgrade Domain Controller Server from 2003 to Windows 2012	Upgrade domain controller Server's Operating system from version 2003 to Windows 2012 for following sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two domains controller for Darwin • Katherine • Nhulunbuy • Jabiru • Palmerston
DHCP Server	Setup new DHCP server to lease IP address to desktop computers
DNS Server	Setup new Domain Name Server. For computer/network devices name resolution across network
Active Directory migration	Migrate active directory database from Windows 2003 to Windows 2012 domain
Certificate Server	Setup new internal certificate server to increase security on the network
WSUS Server upgrade	Setup new Windows update server to schedule deployment of security and patches to all servers and desktop clients automatically when Microsoft releases their updates
VMWare upgrade	Upgrade V center & 3 ESX Hosts to 5.5 version
Printer Queue	Install 64 bit printer drivers and setup new queues on windows 2008 Server. Staff automatically mapped to their departmental printer though the setup from Group Policy
Microsoft Exchange Server upgrade	Upgrade email Server from 2003 to Exchange 2013 Server
Desktop OS upgrade	Upgrade all desktop/laptop from various versions of Microsoft Windows to Windows 7 OS
HR System (Attache) Server upgrade	Install Windows 2012 Server and migrate attache database to new Server. Update attache drive mapping for user in through Group Policy
Accpac Server upgrade	Upgrade Accpac to Sage 300 and perform database migration
Backup Software upgrade	Upgrade to Data Protector backup Software to version 8
Implement Online PO	Implement online PO – Stage 1 and provide user training
Development of new Permit database	Migrate Permit data to the new system. Testing and decommission old Permit Server
Deployment of Helpdesk System	Create a single point of helpdesk through the deployment of Helpdesk software

FLEET AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

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

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

COMMITTEES

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

AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

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

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

TABLE 17: AUDIT COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE

NAME	MEETINGS HELD	MEETINGS ATTENDED
Jon Webster <i>(independent Chair from 24/04/15)</i>	2	2
Suzanne Archbold <i>(independent Chair to 24/04/15)</i>	6	4
John Christopherson	6	5
Helen Lee	6	6



DELEGATIONS

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

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

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

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

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

A recent Comcare Safety Audit confirmed that the committee was operating effectively.

Work Health and Safety Committee members:

Steven Lawrence (Chair)
Greg McDonald
Kirsty Kassman
Jeffrey Yoelu
Brooke Watson – resigned June 2015
Cindy Hoban
Ian Amy
Hidayat Nurslanis

ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT COMMITTEE

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

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

As at April 2015, the Enterprise Agreement document was in its final draft, but due to advice from the Minister, the process was put on hold.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Internal governance

Audit Committee

Jon Webster (Non-Executive Member) – Chair commenced 24 April 2015
Suzanne Archbold (Non-Executive Member) – Interim Chair to 24 April 2015
John Christophersen (Executive Member) Nominated Nov 2013
Helen Lee (Executive Member) Nominated Nov 2013

Enterprise Agreement Committee July 2014 Management

Joe Morrison
Steven Lawrence
Cindy Hoban

CPSU and Staff

Tamara Cole
Garrett Smith (resigned)
Kirsty Howey
Rebecca Sirilas
Joy Cardona
Adam Thompson

External governance

Aboriginals Benefit Account Advisory Committee

Membership during the year was as follows:

East Arnhem	Djawa Yunupingu
Ngukurr	Grace Daniels
Darwin Daly Wagait	James Sing
Borroloola Barkly	Keith Rory
West Arnhem	Wayne Wauchope
Victoria River Downs	Elaine Watts
Katherine	Lisa Mumbin



PART IV: THE YEAR AHEAD – KEY INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTUS

The NLC is producing a prospectus to articulate how and where development opportunities can be realised on Aboriginal-owned land within its region. The prospectus will provide guidance for how Traditional Owners and communities wanting to develop Aboriginal owned lands and waters would like that to proceed.

This ambitious approach would consider economic, social and cultural development as equal objectives to drive a new paradigm for development in northern Australia. The prospectus would encourage partnerships with business, industry and ethical investors to ensure that free, prior and informed consent will enhance Aboriginal and indeed the nation's prosperity.

The NLC's proposal has been met with enthusiasm by the Commonwealth Indigenous Affairs Minister, the Northern Territory Chief Minister and NLC council members.



Land use planning, agreement-making and development of an Indigenous prospectus for investment in northern Indigenous lands to articulate the kinds of development Indigenous people want should be the primary focus.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Commonwealth Government has given financial support for the NLC to scope the establishment of a Community Development Unit. This approach could potentially invest royalty and other monies back into communities, to secure opportunities for Aboriginal people. It would maximise opportunities for Aboriginal engagement, ownership and control of their own resources, in order to generate social, cultural and economic benefits.

KENBI LAND CLAIM

The NLC will continue to press for an early settlement of the Kenbi land claim, lodged in 1979 and finally upheld by the Land Commissioner, the Hon. Justice Peter Gray in December 2000.

The Commonwealth Parliament has accepted the recommendation of its Public works Committee to approve the expenditure of more than \$31 million to remediate contaminated sites within the claim area.

The NLC is pleased that the committee noted the opportunities for Aboriginal participation and employment arising from the remediation works, and will press the Department of Finance, which has carriage of the project, to make a range of positions available to local Aboriginal people.

The NLC will also continue to urge the Department of Finance to enable the claim to be settled before the remediation works are completed. The NLC, in a submission to the Public Works Committee, said it wants the Commonwealth to transfer the land as soon as possible to the Kenbi Land Trust. The Trust would then be able to grant a lease back to the Commonwealth over those areas of land which need remediation.

NLC TO HOST NATIONAL NATIVE TITLE CONFERENCE

The NLC has accepted an invitation to co-convene, with the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Islander Studies (AIATSIS), the 2016 Native Title conference in Darwin. The 2015 conference was held in Pt Douglas, and attracted around 900 attendees.

The NLC and AIATSIS will consult Larrakia Traditional Owners about planning and logistics, and the development of the conference program. 2016 will mark the 40th anniversary of the passing of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*, and the 50th anniversary of the Wave Hill walk-off.

It's expected that the conference will be held in the first week of June.

... as we approach its 40th anniversary, it remains a beautiful thing – a beacon that marks the high point of recognising dispossession, of customary ownership and enduring practice of an ancient culture rooted in the land and waters of the Northern Territory.

NATIVE TITLE MATTERS

The NLC will continue consultations with Traditional Owners about two huge development proposals in the far-west of its region – Ord Stage 3A and Legune Station – both of which are controversial due to the extensive networks of sacred sites and dreaming tracks within the landscapes.

ORD STAGE 3A

Ord Stage 3A, if approved, will extend the Ord River irrigation scheme across the Western Australia border into the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory Government is seeking to extinguish native title over 4000 hectares on the Knox Plain, within the Spirit Hills pastoral lease. Within that area, 1800 hectares are earmarked for irrigation; the rest of the land, which includes sacred sites, is proposed as a buffer zone.

LEGUNE STATION

Further north, on Legune Station, Traditional Owners will be asked to consider a proposal by the Seafarms Group for a huge prawn aquaculture development called Project Sea Dragon.

Seafarms has done a pre-feasibility study for a feed mill, hatchery and breeding centres, processing plant, and growing ponds which would ultimately cover up to 10,000 hectares.



CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION

NLC Full Council members will continue to track progress towards a referendum on the recognition of Indigenous peoples in the Australian Constitution.

Full Council meetings have been briefed on the proposal, including a visit from 'Recognise'.

The NLC is well-placed to help the organisation of Indigenous peoples' conventions within its region to consider referendum options.

Above, top: Traditional Owners Gerard Meeyai (left) and Teddy Carlton at a sacred site in the proposed Ord 3A buffer zone, near the WA border. Above, below: NLC anthropologist Chris Brown (left) at native title discussions about Ord Stage 3A irrigation scheme with Traditional Owners (from left) Laurie Roberts, Teddy Carlton, Gerard Meeyai and Ronnie Carlton.



PART V: 2014/2015 FINANCIAL REPORT

NLC ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Minister for Indigenous Affairs

I have audited the accompanying annual financial statements of the Northern Land Council for the year ended 30 June 2015, which comprise:

- Statement by the Accountable Authorities and General Manager Corporate Compliance;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Cash Flow Statement;
- Schedule of Commitments; and
- Notes comprising a Summary of Significant Accounting Policies and other explanatory information.

Accountable Authority's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The Chair and the Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Land Council are responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the rules made under that Act. The Chair and the Chief Executive Officer are also responsible for such internal control as is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on my audit. I have conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. These auditing standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Accountable Authority of the entity, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

GPO Box 707 CANBERRA ACT 2601
19 National Circuit BARTON ACT
Phone (02) 6203 7300 Fax (02) 6203 7777

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have followed the independence requirements of the Australian National Audit Office, which incorporate the requirements of the Australian accounting profession.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Northern Land Council:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*; and
- (b) present fairly the financial position of the Northern Land Council as at 30 June 2015 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

Australian National Audit Office



Ron Wah
Audit Principal

Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra
7 October 2015

CONTENTS

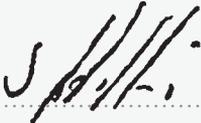
STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTORS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE COMPLIANCE	152
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	153
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	154
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY	155
CASH FLOW STATEMENT	156
SCHEDULE OF COMMITMENTS	157
NOTE 1: Summary of significant accounting policies	158
NOTE 2: Events after the reporting period	168
NOTE 3: Expenses	168
NOTE 4: Own Source Income	170
NOTE 5: Income tax expense (competitive neutrality)	171
NOTE 6: Fair value measurements	172
NOTE 7: Financial assets	174
NOTE 8: Non-financial assets	176
NOTE 9: Payables	179
NOTE 10: Provisions	180
NOTE 11: Cash flow reconciliation	180
NOTE 12: Contingent assets and liabilities	181
NOTE 13: Related party disclosures	181
NOTE 14: Senior management personnel remuneration	182
NOTE 15: Remuneration of auditors	182
NOTE 16: Financial instruments	183
NOTE 17: Royalty assets held in trust account	185
NOTE 18A: Aboriginal Benefit Account appropriations	188
NOTE 18B: ABA – Special purpose grant: funeral and ceremonial activities	189
NOTE 18C: ABA – Top End Land and Sea Management Program – S64 (4)	190

STATEMENT BY THE ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITIES
AND GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE COMPLIANCE

In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2015 comply with subsection 42(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Northern Land Council will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the directors.

Signed: 

Samuel Bush-Blanasi
CHAIRMAN
ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY

Signed: 

Joe Morrison
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY

Signed: 

Steven Lawrence
ACTING GENERAL MANAGER
CORPORATE COMPLIANCE

05 October 2015

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	NOTES	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NET COST OF SERVICES			
EXPENSES			
Employee benefits	3A	18,233	20,851
Suppliers	3B	14,528	17,408
Depreciation	3C	893	680
Write-down and impairment of assets	3D	882	434
Loss on disposal of assets	3E	125	-
Other expenses	3F	440	4,287
Total expenses		35,101	43,660
OWN-SOURCE INCOME			
Own-source revenue			
Sale of goods and rendering of services	4A	5,137	4,393
Interest	4B	114	163
Total own-source revenue		5,251	4,556
Gains			
Gain from sale of assets	4C	-	310
Reversals of previous asset write-downs and impairments	4D	-	410
Total gains		-	720
Total own-source income		5,251	5,276
Net cost of services		29,850	38,384
Revenue from Government – DPMC	4E	8,073	4,999
Revenue from ABA S64 (1)	4F	18,768	17,569
Revenue from Government – Special Purpose Grant	4G	9,111	9,025
Total revenue from Government		35,952	31,593
Surplus/(deficit) before income tax on continuing operations			
Income tax expense		-	-
Surplus/(deficit) after income tax on continuing operations		6,102	(6,791)
Surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Australian Government		6,102	(6,791)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Items not subject to subsequent reclassification to net cost of services		-	-
Change in asset revaluation surplus		-	1,929
Total other comprehensive income		-	1,929
Total comprehensive income/(loss) attributable to the Australian Government		6,102	(4,862)

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30 JUNE 2015

	NOTES	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
ASSETS			
Financial assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	7A	6,588	2,545
Trade and other receivables	7B	675	1,547
Total financial assets		7,263	4,092
Non-financial assets			
Land and buildings	8A	4,269	3,417
Property, plant and equipment	8B	3,396	3,694
Other non-financial assets	8D	82	92
Total non-financial assets		7,747	7,203
Total assets		15,010	11,295
LIABILITIES			
Payables			
Suppliers	9A	1,868	2,997
Other payables	9B	733	1,161
Total payables		2,601	4,158
Provisions			
Employee provisions	10	3,033	3,862
Total provisions		3,033	3,862
Total liabilities		5,634	8,020
Net assets		9,376	3,275
EQUITY			
Asset revaluation reserves		1,973	1,973
Retained surplus		7,404	1,302
Total equity		9,377	3,275

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	RETAINED EARNINGS		ASSET REVALUATION		TOTAL EQUITY	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Opening balance	35,101	43,660	35,101	43,660	35,101	43,660
Balance carried forward from previous period	1,302	8,093	1,973	44	3,275	8,137
Adjusted opening balance	1,302	8,093	1,973	44	3,275	8,137
Comprehensive income						
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	1,929	-	1,929
Surplus (deficit) for the period	6,102	(6,791)	-	-	6,102	(6,791)
Total comprehensive income	6,102	(6,791)	-	1,929	6,102	(4,862)
Closing balance attributable to the Australian Government	7,404	1,302	1,973	1,973	9,377	3,275

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	NOTES	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Sales of goods and rendering of services		5,559	5,397
Receipts from Government		37,639	36,883
Interest		114	163
Total cash received		43,312	42,443
Cash used			
Employees		(19,185)	(20,384)
Suppliers		(17,547)	(19,031)
Distribution of old S64(1) funding		(440)	(4,287)
Net GST paid		(524)	508
Total cash used		(37,696)	(43,194)
Net cash from/(used by) operating activities	11	5,616	(751)
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Proceeds from sales of property, plant and equipment		247	377
Total cash received		247	377
Cash used			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(1,820)	(1,658)
Total cash used		(1,820)	(1,658)
Net cash from/(used by) investing activities		(1,573)	(1,281)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		4,043	(2,032)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		2,545	4,577
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	11	6,588	2,545

SCHEDULE OF COMMITMENTS

AS AT 30 JUNE 2015

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
BY TYPE		
Commitments receivable		
Net GST recoverable on commitments	(351)	(476)
Total commitments receivable	(351)	(476)
Other commitments		
Operating leases ¹	3,776	4,904
Operational commitments	97	337
Total other commitments	3,873	5,241
Net commitments by type	3,522	4,765
BY MATURITY		
Commitments receivable		
Operating lease income		
Within 1 year	(170)	(201)
Between 1 to 5 years	(157)	(242)
More than 5 years	(24)	(33)
Total operating lease income	(351)	(477)
Commitments payable		
Operating lease commitments		
Within 1 year	1,779	1,879
Between 1 to 5 years	1,731	2,664
More than 5 years	266	361
Total operating lease commitments	3,776	4,904
Operational commitments		
One year or less	97	337
Total operational commitments	97	337
Total commitments payable	3,873	5,241
Net commitments by maturity	3,522	4,765

Note: Commitments are GST inclusive where relevant.

The nature of operating leases relates to the leases for office accommodation and office equipment.

- Lease payments are subject to annual increases in accordance with upwards movements in the Consumer Price Index. The initial periods of office accommodation leases are still current and each may be renewed for up to ten years at the Northern Land Council's option, following a once-off adjustment of rentals to current market levels.

Operational Commitments are various goods & services ordered and not yet received.

The above schedule should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL

The Northern Land Council is an Australian Government controlled entity. It is a not-for-profit entity. The objectives of the Northern Land Council are to:

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

The Northern Land Council is a statutory authority formed within the provision of Section 21 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA). The Northern Land Council receives appropriations from the Aboriginal Benefit Account (ABA) pursuant to ministerially approved estimates prepared in accordance with Section 34 of the Act and made available under Section 64 of the Act.

The Northern Land Council is structured to meet the following outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Access to Aboriginal Land is managed effectively and efficiently.
- Outcome 2: Traditional owners are assisted to manage their land, sea and natural resources in a sustainable manner.
- Outcome 3: To assist Aboriginal people to obtain or acquire property rights over their traditional land and seas.
- Outcome 4: To secure economic, social and cultural benefits for traditional owners from developments taking place on Aboriginal land.
- Outcome 5: Develop employment and training plans in partnership with industry and government stakeholders, and facilitate the implementation of these plans.
- Outcome 6: Efficiently process exploration and mining license applications and provide accurate advice on potential environmental impacts and benefits.
- Outcome 7: Empower Aboriginal people to carry out commercial activities and build sustainable enterprises.
- Outcome 8: Advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people and express their views.
- Outcome 9: Raise public awareness of the NLC's work and the views of Aboriginal people.

- Outcome 10: Supporting Aboriginal people to maintain and protect their sacred sites and cultural heritage.
- Outcome 11: Help Aboriginal people achieve their development potential by facilitating access to leadership and governance programs, resources, infrastructure and government services.
- Outcome 12: Receive and distribute statutory and other payments for Aboriginal people.
- Outcome 13: Assist Land Trusts' to act appropriately and in accordance with the ALRA.
- Outcome 14: Support traditional owners to manage and resolve disputes.

The funding conditions of the Northern Land Council are laid down by the ALRA, and any special purpose grant guidelines. Accounting for monies received from the ABA is subject to conditions approved by the Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

The continued existence of the Northern Land Council in its present form with its present programs is dependent on Government policy and on continuing funding by Parliament for the Northern Land Council's administration and programs.

1.2 BASIS OF PREPARATION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements and are required by section 42 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- a) Financial Reporting Rule (FRR) for reporting periods ending on or after 1 July 2014; and
- b) Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and in accordance with the historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position.

The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified.

Unless an alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard or the FRR, assets and liabilities are recognised in the statement of financial position when and only when it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the NLC or a future sacrifice of economic benefits will be required and the amounts of the assets or liabilities can be reliably measured. However, assets and liabilities arising under executory contracts are not recognised unless required by an accounting standard. Liabilities and assets that are unrecognised are reported in the schedule of commitments or contingencies note.

Unless alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard, income and expenses are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income when, and only when, the flow, consumption or loss of economic benefits has occurred and can be reliably measured.

1.3 CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimates are revised and in any future periods affected.

In 2015 Northern Land Council reviewed the useful life of motor vehicles and changed its accounting estimate on the estimated useful life of motor vehicles from 3 years to range from 3 years to 10 years (refer to note 1.16). This change in accounting estimate is based on management’s historical experience and on other various factors.

As a result of the change, this affects the depreciation expense for the current period and for each future period during the asset’s remaining useful life as follows:

\$'000	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	LATER
(Decrease) increase in depreciation expense	(432)	(432)	(469)	337	290	706

1.4 SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND ESTIMATES

No accounting assumptions or estimates have been identified that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

1.5 NEW AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

ADOPTION OF NEW AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

No accounting standard has been adopted earlier than the application date as stated in the standard.

The following new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations were issued prior to the signing of the statement by the accountable authority, chief executive officer and general manager corporate compliance, were applicable to the current reporting period on the entity’s financial statements:

STANDARD/ INTERPRETATION	NATURE OF CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY AND ADJUSTMENT TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AASB 1031 Materiality (2013), AASB 2013-9 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Conceptual Framework, Materiality and Financial Instruments, AASB 2014-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards (Part C – Materiality)	Revised AASB 1031 is an interim standard that cross-references to other standards and the <i>Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements</i> that contain guidance on materiality. The standard does not impact the financial statements.
AASB 2012-3 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Offsetting Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities (AASB 132)	The standard addresses inconsistencies in current practice when applying the offsetting criteria in AASB 132 <i>Financial Instruments: Presentation</i> . The standard does not impact the financial statements.

AASB 2013-3 Amendments to AASB 136 – Recoverable Amount Disclosures for Non-Financial Assets	The amendments to AASB 136 <i>Impairment of Assets</i> address the disclosure of information about the recoverable amount of impaired assets if that amount is based on fair value less costs of disposal. The standard does not impact the financial statements.
AASB 2014-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards (Part A – Annual Improvements 2010–2012 and 2011–2013 Cycles)	Part A of the standard makes amendments to various Australian Accounting Standards (AASB 2, 3, 8, 9, 13, 116, 119, 124, 137, 138, 139, 140 & 1052 and Interpretation 129) arising from the issuance by IASB of <i>IFRSs Annual Improvements to IFRS 2010-2012 Cycle and Annual Improvements to IFRSs 2011-2013 Cycle</i> . The standard does not impact the financial statements.

All other new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to sign-off date and are applicable to the current reporting period did not have a material effect, and are not expected to have a future material impact on the Northern Land Council's financial statements.

FUTURE AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

The following new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations were issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board prior to the signing of the statement by the accountable authority, chief executive officer and general manager corporate compliance, on the entity's financial statements for future reporting period(s):

STANDARD/ INTERPRETATION	APPLICATION DATE	NATURE OF IMPENDING CHANGE/S IN ACCOUNTING POLICY AND LIKELY IMPACT ON INITIAL APPLICATION
AASB 9 <i>Financial Instruments (Dec 2014)</i> , AASB 2014-1 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards (Part E – Financial Instruments)</i> , AASB 2014-7 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9 (Dec 2014)</i>	1 Jan 2018	The final version of AASB 9 brings together the classification and measurement, impairment and hedge accounting phases of the IASB's project to replace AASB 139 <i>Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement</i> . This version adds a new expected loss impairment model and limited amendments to classification and measurement for financial assets. The standard does not impact the financial statements.
AASB 15 <i>Revenue from Contracts with Customers</i> , AASB 2014-5 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 15</i>	1 Jan 2017	AASB 15 outlines a single comprehensive model for entities to use in accounting for revenue arising from contracts with customers. It replaces several Standards and Interpretations, including AASB 111 <i>Construction Contracts</i> , AASB 118 <i>Revenue</i> , Interpretation 15 <i>Agreements for the Construction of Real Estate</i> , and Interpretation 18 <i>Transfers of Assets from Customers</i> . The standard does not impact the financial statements.
AASB 2014-4 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation (AASB 116 & 138)</i>	1 Jan 2016	Amends AASB 116 <i>Property, Plant and Equipment</i> and AASB 138 <i>Intangible Assets</i> to provide additional guidance on how the depreciation or amortisation of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets should be calculated. The standard does not impact the financial statements.

All other new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to the sign-off date and are applicable to future reporting period(s) are not expected to have a future material impact on the Northern Land Council's financial statements.

1.6 REVENUE

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when:

- a) the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred to the buyer;
- b) the Northern Land Council retains no managerial involvement or effective control over the goods;
- c) the revenue and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and
- d) it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the Northern Land Council.

Revenue from rendering of services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date. The revenue is recognised when:

- a) the amount of revenue, stage of completion and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and
- b) the probable economic benefits with the transaction will flow to the Northern Land Council.

The stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date is determined by reference to the proportion that costs incurred to date bear to the estimated total costs of the transaction.

Receivables for goods and services, which have 30 day terms, are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance account. Collectability of debts is reviewed as at the end of the reporting period. Allowances are made when collectability of the debt is no longer probable.

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method as set out in AASB 139 *Financial Instruments: recognition and Measurement*.

REVENUES FROM GOVERNMENT

Funding received or receivable from Government is recognised as Revenue from Government when the Northern Land Council gains control of the appropriation, except for certain amounts that are reciprocal in nature, in which case revenue is recognised only when it is earned.

Appropriations receivable are recognised at their nominal amounts.

1.7 GAINS

SALE OF ASSETS

Gains from disposal of assets are recognised when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

1.8 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. No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and the average sick leave taken in future years by employees of the Northern Land Council is estimated to be less than the annual entitlement for sick leave.

The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that applied at the time the leave is taken, including the Northern Land Council's employer superannuation contribution rates to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination.

The estimate of the present value of the long service leave liability takes into attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

1.9 LEASES

A distinction is made between finance leases and operating leases. Finance leases effectively transfer from the lessor to the lessee substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of leased assets. An operating lease is a lease that is not a finance lease. In operating leases, the lessor effectively retains substantially all such risks and benefits.

Where an asset is acquired by means of a finance lease, the asset is capitalised at either the fair value of the lease property or, if lower, the present value of minimum lease payments at the inception of the contract and a liability is recognised at the same time and for the same amount.

The discount rate used is the interest rate implicit in the lease. Leased assets are amortised over the period of the lease. Lease payments are allocated between the principal component and the interest expense.

Operating lease payments are expensed on a straight line basis which is representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets.

1.10 FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT

The Land Council deems any transfers between levels of the fair value hierarchy to have occurred at the end of the reporting period.

1.11 CASH

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents include:

- a) cash on hand
- b) demand deposits in bank accounts with an original maturity of 3 months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value.

1.12 FINANCIAL ASSETS

The Northern Land Council classifies its financial assets in the following categories:

- a) 'loans and receivables'.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the financial assets and is determined at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised and derecognised upon trade date.

EFFECTIVE INTEREST METHOD

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset and of allocating interest income over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset, or, where appropriate, a shorter period.

Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis except for financial assets that are recognised at fair value through profit or loss.

LOANS AND RECEIVABLES

Trade receivables, loans and other receivables that have fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market are classified as 'loans and receivables'. Loans and receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment. Interest is recognised by applying the effective interest rate.

IMPAIRMENT OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at each reporting period.

Financial assets held at amortised cost – if there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has been incurred for loans and receivables or held to maturity investments held at amortised cost, the amount of the loss is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. The carrying amount is reduced by way of an allowance account. The loss is recognised in the statement of comprehensive income.

Available for sale financial assets – if there is objective evidence that an impairment loss on an available for sale financial asset has been incurred, the amount of the difference between its cost, less principal repayments and amortisation, and its current fair value, less any impairment loss previously recognised in expenses, is transferred from equity to the statement of comprehensive income.

Financial assets held at cost – if there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has been incurred the amount of the impairment loss is the difference between the carrying amount of the asset and the present value of the estimated future cash flows discounted at the current market rate for similar assets.

1.13 FINANCIAL LIABILITIES

Financial liabilities are classified as other financial liabilities. Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon trade date.

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.

Supplier and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

1.14 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

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.

1.15 ACQUISITION OF ASSETS

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken. Financial assets are initially measured at their fair value plus transaction costs where appropriate.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised as assets and income at their fair value at the date of acquisition, unless acquired as a consequence of restructuring of administrative arrangements. In the latter case, assets are initially recognised as contributions by owners at the amounts at which they were recognised in the transfer of Northern Land Council's accounts immediately prior to the restructuring.

1.16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

ASSET RECOGNITION THRESHOLD

Purchases of property, plant and equipment are recognised initially at cost in the statement of financial position, except for purchases below the capitalisation threshold, which are expensed in the year of acquisition (other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total). The capitalisation thresholds values are:

Land	\$20,000
Buildings	\$20,000
Leasehold improvements	\$5,000
Furniture and equipment	\$5,000
Information technology (hardware)	\$5,000
Information technology (software)	\$5,000
Motor vehicles	\$10,000

REVALUATIONS

Fair values for each class of asset are determined as shown below:

ASSET CLASS	FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT
Land	Market selling price
Buildings excluding leasehold improvements	Market selling price
Leasehold improvements	Depreciated replacement cost
Other property plant and equipment	Market selling price

Following initial recognition at cost, property plant and equipment are carried at fair value less subsequent accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Valuations are conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure that the carrying amounts of assets do not differ materially from the assets' fair values as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depends upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

Revaluation adjustments are made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment is credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that it reverses a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised in the surplus/deficit. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets are recognised directly in the surplus/deficit except to the extent that they reverse a previous revaluation increment for that class.

Any accumulated depreciation as at the revaluation date is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the asset restated to the revalued amount.

DEPRECIATION

Depreciable property, plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to the Northern Land Council using, in all cases, the straight-line method of depreciation.

Depreciation rates (useful lives), residual values and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current and future reporting periods, as appropriate.

Depreciation rates applying to each class of depreciable asset are based on the following useful lives:

	2015	2014
Buildings on freehold land	10 to 40 years	10 to 40 years
Leasehold improvements	Lease term	Lease term
Office furniture and equipment	3 to 5 years	3 to 5 years
Motor vehicles	3 to 10 years	3 years
Plant and equipment	3 years	3 years

IMPAIRMENT

All assets were assessed for impairment at 30 June 2015. Where indications of impairment exist, the assets' recoverable amount is estimated and an impairment adjustment if the asset's recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount.

The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value less costs of disposal and its value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from the asset. Where the future economic benefit of an asset is not primarily dependent on the asset's ability to generate future cash flows, and the asset would be replaced if the Northern Land Council were deprived of the asset, its value in use is taken to be its depreciated replacement cost.

DERECOGNITION

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no further future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal.

1.17 TAXATION/COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY

The Northern Land Council is exempt from all forms of taxation except fringe benefits tax (FBT) and the goods and services tax (GST).

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST except:

- where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office; and
- for receivables and payables.

COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY

The Northern Land Council does not provide services on a for-profit basis. Therefore the Land Council is not required to make Australian Income Tax Equivalent payments to the Government.

NOTE 2: EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

There are no subsequent events that had the potential to significantly affect the ongoing structure and Financial Activities of the entity.

NOTE 3: EXPENSES

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 3A: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		
Wages and salaries	15,929	17,574
Superannuation:		
Defined contribution plans	1,921	2,119
Leave and other entitlements	383	1,158
Total employee benefits	18,233	20,851
NOTE 3B: SUPPLIERS		
Goods and services supplied or rendered		
Consultants	1,940	2,508
Stationery	291	367
Travel	2,283	4,198
Vehicle expenses	1,260	2,008
Office accommodation	856	940
IT/communications	902	1,379
Payment to grant partners	1,906	739
Other	2,706	2,980
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	12,144	15,119
Goods and services in connection with:		
Provision of goods – external parties	5,200	5,328
Rendering of services – external parties	6,863	9,725
Rendering of services – related parties	81	66
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	12,144	15,119
Other suppliers		
Operating lease rentals in connection with:		
External parties		
Minimum lease payments	1,863	1,851
Workers compensation expenses	521	438
Total other suppliers	2,384	2,289
Total suppliers	14,528	17,408

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 3C: DEPRECIATION		
Depreciation:		
Property, plant and equipment	446	477
Buildings and leasehold	447	203
Total depreciation	893	680
NOTE 3D: WRITE-DOWN AND IMPAIRMENT OF ASSETS		
Impairment on financial instruments	882	434
Total write-down and impairment of assets	882	434
NOTE 3E: LOSS ON DISPOSAL OF ASSETS		
Intangibles		
Proceeds from sale	247	-
Carrying value of assets disposed	372	-
Total loss from assets sales	125	-
NOTE 3F: OTHER EXPENSES		
Distribution of old S64(1) funding	440	4,287
Total other expenses	440	4,287

NOTE 4: OWN-SOURCE INCOME

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
OWN-SOURCE REVENUE		
NOTE 4A: SALE OF GOODS AND RENDERING OF SERVICES		
Rendering of services in connection with:		
Related entities	316	179
External parties	4,821	4,214
Total sale of goods and rendering of services	5,137	4,393
NOTE 4B: INTEREST		
Deposits	114	163
Total interest	114	163
GAINS		
NOTE 4C: GAINS FROM SALE OF ASSETS		
Infrastructure, plant and equipment		
Proceeds from sale	-	377
Carrying value of assets sold	-	(67)
Total gain from sale of assets	-	310
NOTE 4D: REVERSALS OF PREVIOUS ASSET WRITE-DOWNS AND IMPAIRMENTS		
Reversal of impairment losses	-	410
Total reversals of previous asset write-downs and impairments	-	410
REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT		
NOTE 4E: REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT – PMC		
Native Title Program	3,664	4,499
Revenue from ABA S64 (4)	4,069	-
Others	340	500
	8,073	4,999
NOTE 4F: ABA S64 (1)		
DPMC – Revenue from ABA S64 (1)	18,768	17,569
	18,768	17,569

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 4G: REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT – SPECIAL PURPOSE GRANTS		
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet	5,506	5,566
Indigenous Land Corporation	975	1,160
Department of Defence	157	168
Department of Environment	209	-
Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries	180	180
Department of Land Resource Management	1,915	1,425
Others	169	526
	9,111	9,025

NOTE 5: INCOME TAX EXPENSE (COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY)

The Northern Land Council has been approved as a Public Benevolent Institution. The services of the Council are provided on a 'not-for-profit' basis. Therefore the Northern Land Council is not subject to the Australian Government's Competitive Neutrality policy.

NOTE 6: FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

The following tables provide an analysis of assets and liabilities that are measured at fair value.

The different levels of the fair value hierarchy are defined below.

- Level 1: Quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the entity can access at measurement date.
- Level 2: Inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3: Unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

NOTE 6A: FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS, VALUATION TECHNIQUES AND INPUTS USED

	FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS AT THE END OF THE REPORTING PERIOD		
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	CATEGORY (LEVEL 1, 2 OR 3)
Non-financial assets (3)			
Land	299	200	Level 2
Buildings	2,009	2,060	Level 2
Leasehold improvements	1,961	1,157	Level 2
Property, plant and equipment	3,396	3,694	Level 2
Total non-financial assets	7,665	7,111	
Total fair value measurements of assets in the statement of financial position	7,665	7,111	

(1) No change in valuation technique occurred during the period.

(2) Significant unobservable inputs only. Not applicable for assets or liabilities in the Level 2 category.

(3) Fair value measurements – highest and best use differs from current use for non-financial assets (NFAs).

The highest and best use of all non-financial assets are the same as their current use.

**FOR LEVELS 2 AND 3
FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS**

VALUATION TECHNIQUE (1)	INPUTS USED	RANGE (WEIGHTED AVERAGE) (2)
Market comparables	Observable prices or recent market transactions	NA
Market comparables	Observable prices or recent market transactions	NA
Depreciated replacement cost	Observable prices or recent market transactions	NA
Market comparables	Observable prices or recent market transactions	NA

NOTE 7: FINANCIAL ASSETS

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 7A: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash on hand or on deposit	6,588	2,545
Total cash and cash equivalents	6,588	2,545
NOTE 7B: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES		
Goods and services receivables in connection with:		
External parties	1,550	1,641
Total goods and services receivable	1,550	1,641
Grant receivables		
External parties	40	-
Related parties	173	641
Total grant receivables	213	641
Total trade receivables	1,763	2,282
Other receivables		
GST receivable from the Australian Taxation Office	243	407
Total other receivables	243	407
Total trade and other receivables (gross)	2,006	2,689
Less impairment allowance		
Grants receivable	(213)	-
Goods and services	(1,043)	(1,142)
GST	(74)	-
Total impairment allowance	(1,330)	(1,142)
Total trade and other receivables (net)	676	1,547
Trade and other receivables (net) expected to be recovered:		
No more than 12 months	676	1,547
More than 12 months	-	-
Total trade and other receivables (net)	676	1,547

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Trade and other receivables (gross) aged as follows:		
Not overdue	409	980
Overdue by:		
0 to 30 days	550	234
31 to 60 days	244	9
61 to 90 days	106	168
More than 90 days	697	1,298
Total trade and other receivables (gross)	2,006	2,689
Impairment allowance aged as follows:		
Not overdue	(24)	-
Overdue by:		
0 to 30 days	(384)	-
31 to 60 days	(119)	-
61 to 90 days	(106)	-
More than 90 days	(697)	(1,142)
Total impairment allowance	(1,330)	(1,142)

NOTE 7B: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (CONT'D)**RECONCILIATION OF THE IMPAIRMENT ALLOWANCE
MOVEMENTS IN RELATION TO 2015**

2015 \$'000	GOODS AND SERVICES	GRANTS RECEIVABLES	GST	TOTAL
Opening balance	1,142	-	-	1,142
Amounts written off	(694)	-	-	(694)
Amounts recovered and reversed	-	-	-	-
Increase/(decrease) recognised in cost of services	595	213	74	882
Closing balance	1,043	213	74	1,330

MOVEMENTS IN RELATION TO 2014

2014 \$'000	GOODS AND SERVICES	GRANTS RECEIVABLES	GST	TOTAL
Opening balance	1,142	-	-	1,142
Amounts written off	(694)	-	-	(694)
Amounts recovered and reversed	-	-	-	-
Increase/(decrease) recognised in cost of services	595	213	74	882
Closing balance	1,043	213	74	1,330

NOTE 8: NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 8A: LAND AND BUILDINGS		
Land at fair value	299	200
Total land	299	200
Buildings on leasehold land:		
Fair value	2,060	2,060
Accumulated depreciation	(51)	-
Total buildings on leasehold land	2,009	2,060
Leasehold improvements:		
Fair value	2,344	1,157
Accumulated depreciation	(383)	-
Total leasehold improvements	1,961	1,157
Total land and buildings	4,269	3,417

REVALUATIONS OF NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS

All revaluations are conducted in accordance with the revaluation policy stated at Note 1. On 30 June 2014, an independent valuer conducted the revaluations.

No indicators of impairment were found for land and buildings and leasehold improvements.

No land, buildings or leasehold improvements are expected to be sold or disposed of within the next 12 months.

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 8B: PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Property, plant and equipment:		
Fair value	3,838	3,694
Accumulated depreciation	(442)	-
Total property, plant and equipment	3,396	3,694

REVALUATIONS OF NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS

All revaluations are conducted in accordance with the revaluation policy stated at Note 1. On 30 June 2014, an independent valuer conducted the revaluations.

No indicators of impairment were found for property, plant and equipment.

No property, plant and equipment is expected to be sold or disposed of within the next 12 months.

NOTE 8C: RECONCILIATION OF THE OPENING AND CLOSING BALANCES OF PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

RECONCILIATION OF THE OPENING AND CLOSING BALANCE OF PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT FOR 2015

\$'000	LAND	BUILDINGS	LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS	OTHER PP&E	TOTAL
As at 1 July 2014					
Gross book value	200	2,060	1,157	3,694	7,111
Accumulated depreciation and impairment	-	-	-	-	-
Total as at 1 July 2014	200	2,060	1,157	3,694	7,111
Additions by purchase	99	-	1,207	514	1,820
Revaluation and Impairments recognised in other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	-	(51)	(396)	(446)	(893)
Disposals – other	-	-	(7)	(366)	(373)
Total as at 30 June 2015	299	2,009	1,961	3,396	7,665
Total as at 30 June 2015 represented by:					
Gross book value	299	2,060	2,344	3,838	8,541
Accumulated depreciation	-	(51)	(383)	(442)	(876)
Total as at 30 June 2015	299	2,009	1,961	3,396	7,665

RECONCILIATION OF THE OPENING AND CLOSING BALANCE OF PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT FOR 2014

\$'000	LAND	BUILDINGS	LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS	OTHER PP&E	TOTAL
As at 1 July 2013					
Gross book value	182	1,944	2,084	1,062	5,272
Accumulated depreciation and impairment	-	(22)	(979)	-	(1,001)
Total as at 1 July 2013	182	1,922	1,105	1,062	4,271
Additions by purchase	-	-	40	1,618	1,658
Revaluation and Impairments recognised in other comprehensive income	18	203	150	1,558	1,929
Depreciation	-	(65)	(138)	(477)	(680)
Disposals – other	-	-	-	(67)	(67)
Total as at 30 June 2014	200	2,060	1,157	3,694	7,111
Total as at 30 June 2014 represented by:					
Gross book value	200	2,060	1,157	3,694	7,111
Accumulated depreciation	-	-	-	-	-
Total as at 30 June 2014	200	2,060	1,157	3,694	7,111

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 8D: OTHER NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Other	13	5
Prepayments	69	87
Total other non-financial assets	82	92
Other non financial assets to be recovered		
No more than 12 months	82	92
More than 12 months	-	-
	82	92

No indicators of impairment were found for other non-financial assets.

NOTE 9: PAYABLES

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 9A: SUPPLIERS		
Trade creditors and accruals	1,868	2,997
Total suppliers	1,868	2,997
Suppliers expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months	1,868	2,997
More than 12 months	-	-
Total suppliers	1,868	2,997
Suppliers in connection with:		
External parties	1,662	2,997
Related entities	206	-
Total suppliers	1,868	2,997

Settlement was usually made within 30 days.

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 9B: OTHER PAYABLES		
Salaries and wages	564	537
Superannuation	148	280
Other	21	344
Total other payables	733	1,161
Total other payables expected to be settled		
No more than 12 months	733	1,161
Total other payables	733	1,161

NOTE 10: PROVISIONS

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Leave	3,033	3,862
Total employee provisions	3,033	3,862
Employee provisions expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months	2,137	2,880
More than 12 months	896	982
Total employee provisions	3,033	3,862

NOTE 11: CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Reconciliation of cash and cash equivalents as per statement of financial position to cash flow statement		
Cash and cash equivalents as per:		
Cash flow statement	6,588	2,545
Statement of financial position	6,588	2,545
Discrepancy	-	-
Reconciliation of net cost of services to net cash from/(used by) operating activities:		
Net cost of services	(29,850)	(38,384)
Revenue from Government	35,952	31,593
Adjustments for non-cash items		
Depreciation/amortisation	893	680
(Gain)/loss on disposal of assets	126	(310)
Movements in assets and liabilities		
Assets		
(Increase)/decrease in net receivables	633	2,872
(Increase)/decrease in GST receivables	238	671
(Increase)/decrease in other assets	11	47
Liabilities		
Increase/(decrease) in other payables	(428)	(236)
Increase/(decrease) in employee provisions	(829)	596
Increase/(decrease) in supplier payables	(1,129)	169
Net cash from operating activities	5,617	(751)

NOTE 12: CONTINGENT ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES OR COSTS	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Contingent Liabilities		
Balance from previous period	160	208
New contingent liabilities recognised	90	160
Obligations expired	-	(208)
Total contingent liabilities	250	160

QUANTIFIABLE CONTINGENCIES

The above table contains \$250,000 of contingent liabilities disclosed in respect to claims for damages/ costs (2014: \$160,000). The amount represents an estimate of the Northern Land Council's liability based on precedent cases. The Council is defending the claims.

The nature of decisions of the Northern Land Council mean 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 Land Council.

NOTE 13: RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

The Council Executive Members who held office during the year ended 30 June 2015 were:

Samuel Bush-Blanasi	Chairperson
John Daly	Deputy Chairperson
Helen Lee	Executive
Bill Risk	Executive
John Christophersen	Executive
Raymond Hector	Executive
Leonard Norman	Executive
Virginia Nundhirribala	Executive
David Djalangi	Executive

Full Council elections were held in November 2013. The elections are held every three years to elect a new Full Council and Executive Council. The next call for nominations will be held in November 2016.

There were no loans made to directors or other transactions with Directors or Director – Related Entities during the year.

NOTE 14: SENIOR MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL REMUNERATION

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Short-term employee benefits:		
Salary	1,517,028	1,327,863
Performance bonus	-	-
Total short-term employee benefits	1,517,028	1,327,863
Post-employment benefits:		
Superannuation	205,310	187,536
Total post-employment benefits	205,310	187,536
Other long-term employee benefits:		
Annual leave	134,120	108,716
Long-service leave	6,878	9,091
Total other long-term employee benefits	140,998	117,807
Termination benefits		
Termination payout	-	29,547
Total termination benefits	-	29,547
Total senior executive remuneration expenses	1,863,336	1,662,753

The total number of senior management personnel that are included in the above table are 11 (2014: 10 senior management personnel).

NOTE 15: REMUNERATION OF AUDITORS

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Remuneration to auditors for the reporting period are as follows:		
Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) – statutory audit	84	63
Merit Partners – grant audits	12	12
	96	75

The audit fees above report the costs associated with auditing each financial year.

No other services were provided by the Australian National Audit Office.

NOTE 16: FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 16A: CATEGORIES OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS		
Financial assets		
Loans and receivables		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,588	2,545
Trade and other receivables	506	1,139
Total loan and receivables	7,094	3,684
Total financial assets	7,094	3,684
Financial liabilities		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Suppliers	1,868	2,997
Other payables	733	1,160
Total financial liabilities at amortised cost	2,601	4,157
Total financial liabilities	2,601	4,157
NOTE 16B: NET GAIN OR LOSSES ON FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Loans and receivables		
Interest revenue	114	163
Net gain/(losses) on loans and receivables	114	163

The net interest income from financial assets not at fair value through profit or loss is \$114,000 (2014: \$163,000).

NOTE 16C: FAIR VALUE OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The carrying amount of the financial assets and liabilities is a reasonable approximation of fair value due to their short-term nature.

NOTE 16D: CREDIT RISK

The Council is exposed to minimal credit risk as loans and receivables are cash and trade receivables. The maximum exposure to credit risk was the risk that arises from potential default of a debtor. This amount was equal to the total amount of trade receivables (2015: \$2,007,018 and 2014: \$2,688,558). The council has assessed the risk of the default on payment and had allocated \$1,330,428 in 2015 (2014: \$1,143,215) to an impairment allowance account.

The Council only trades with recognised, creditworthy third parties. Exposure to credit risk is monitored by management on an ongoing basis. The Council holds no collateral to mitigate against credit risk.

CREDIT QUALITY OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS NOT PAST DUE OR INDIVIDUALLY DETERMINED AS IMPAIRED

	NOT PAST DUE NOR IMPAIRED 2015 \$'000	NOT PAST DUE NOR IMPAIRED 2014 \$'000	PAST DUE OR IMPAIRED 2015 \$'000	PAST DUE OR IMPAIRED 2014 \$'000
Cash and cash equivalents	6,588	2,545	-	-
Receivables for good and services	216	573	1,621	1,709
Total	6,804	3,118	1,621	1,709

AGEING OF FINANCIAL ASSETS THAT WERE PAST DUE BUT NOT IMPAIRED FOR 2015

	0 TO 30 DAYS \$'000	31 TO 60 DAYS \$'000	61 TO 90 DAYS \$'000	90+ DAYS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Receivables for good and services	166	125	-	-	291
Total	166	125	-	-	291

AGEING OF FINANCIAL ASSETS THAT WERE PAST DUE BUT NOT IMPAIRED FOR 2014

	0 TO 30 DAYS \$'000	31 TO 60 DAYS \$'000	61 TO 90 DAYS \$'000	90+ DAYS \$'000	TOTAL \$'000
Receivables for good and services	234	9	168	155	566
Total	234	9	168	155	566

NOTE 16E: LIQUIDITY RISK

The Northern Land Council's financial liabilities were payables. The exposure to liquidity risk was based on the notion that the Northern Land Council will encounter difficulty in meeting its obligations associated with financial liabilities. This is highly unlikely due to grants and government funding available to the council and internal policies and procedures put in place to ensure there were appropriate resources to meet its financial obligations.

The Council had no derivative financial liabilities in either the current or prior year.

MATURITIES FOR NON-DERIVATIVE FINANCIAL LIABILITIES

	2015 WITHIN 1 YEAR \$'000	2014 WITHIN 1 YEAR \$'000
Trade creditors	1,868	2,997
Other payables	733	1,160

NOTE 16F: MARKET RISK

The Council held basic financial instruments that did not expose the Council to certain market risks, such as 'Currency risk' and 'Other price risk'.

INTEREST RATE RISK

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in interest rates. The Council is exposed to interest rate risk primarily from cash at bank and short term deposits. The Council manages its interest rate risk by maintaining floating rate cash.

	NOTES	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 16G: FINANCIAL ASSETS RECONCILIATION			
Total financial assets as per statement of financial position		7,263	4,092
Less: Non-financial instrument components			
Other Receivables	7B	169	407
Total non-financial instrument components		169	407
Total financial assets as per financial instruments note		7,094	3,685

NOTE 17: ROYALTY ASSETS HELD IN TRUST ACCOUNT**MONETARY ASSETS**

The Northern Land Council maintains a Royalty Trust Account. Monies received on behalf of Associations of Aboriginal people and individuals, in accordance with Section 35 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act* [ALR (NT) Act], are held in the royalty trust account, and are distributed in accordance with the requirements of the ALR (NT) Act. These monies are not available for other purposes of the Northern Land Council, and are not recognised in the financial statements.

NON-MONETARY ASSETS

The Council had no non-monetary assets held in trust in both the current and prior reporting periods.

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
ROYALTY TRUST ACCOUNT – MONETARY ASSET		
Total amount held at the beginning of the reporting period	39,648	58,035
Add :		
RECEIPTS		
ABA Section 64 (3) royalty equivalents	10,954	7,666
Section 15, 16 & 19	15,499	14,205
Section 42, 43 and 44 mining exploration negotiated monies	16,552	22,386
Native title	2,231	1,453
Other monies	926	880
Total receipts	46,162	46,590
Less:		
PAYMENTS		
ABA Section 35 (2) royalty equivalents	(10,954)	(8,352)
Section 35 (3) rental and lease monies	(14,227)	(31,902)
Section 35 (4) negotiated monies	(14,395)	(20,936)
Native title	(1,633)	(1,155)
	(41,209)	(62,345)
GST Paid	(2,892)	(2,159)
Contract Administration	(354)	(473)
Total amount held at the end of the reporting period	41,356	39,648
Cash at bank	41,356	39,648

The reporting requirements of the ALR (NT) Act 1976 are detailed in section 37 (3)–(5), and refer to the application of monies received by the Northern Land Council under various sections of the Act, in particular under sub-section 64(3).

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Receipts under section 64(3), as referred in section 35(3):		
Opening balance	-	666
Funds received	10,954	7,666
Funds distributed to the following associations:		
Gumatj Aboriginal Corporation	(5,964)	(3,158)
Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation	(1,835)	(977)
Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation	(1,377)	(733)
Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation	(1,722)	(2,701)
Guyanggan Aboriginal Corp	(56)	(763)
Funds awaiting distribution	-	-
Closing balance	-	-

DETERMINATION PURSUANT TO SECTION 35(2) ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT**GOVE RIO ALCAN PROJECT ROYALTY EQUIVALENTS RECEIVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 64(3)**

The Northern Land Council determines pursuant to sub-section 35(2) that for the next 5 years (subject to any further determination within that period) amounts equal to all monies received under s.64(3) with respect to the Gove Alcan Project are to be apportioned and paid as follows:

- Gumatj Aboriginal Corporation 65%
- Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation 20%
- Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation 15%

Resolution Number: C110/4784

Note: This determination will expire on 17 June 2020.

DETERMINATION PURSUANT TO SECTION 35(2) ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT**RANGER PROJECT ROYALTY EQUIVALENTS RECEIVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 64(3)**

The Northern Land Council determines pursuant to sub-section 35(2) that for the next 5 years amounts equal to all monies received under s.64(3) with respect to the Ranger Project are to be paid to Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation.

Resolution Number: C110/4785

Note: This determination will expire on 17 June 2020.

	ABA APPROVED ESTIMATES 2014/2015 \$'000	ABA ACTUAL 2014/2015 \$'000	ABA VARIANCE 2014/2015 \$'000
NOTE 18A: ABORIGINAL BENEFIT ACCOUNT APPROPRIATIONS			
Surplus/(deficit) as at 30 June 2014		(3,736)	
Balance carried forward			
Income			
ABA S64(1)	18,768	18,768	100%
Total ABA income	18,768	18,768	100%
Other			
Recoveries	2,586	1,648	64%
Other activity generated income	76	130	171%
Interest	78	26	33%
Sale of equipment	150	185	123%
Total other	2,890	1,989	69%
Total Income	21,658	20,757	96%
Expenditure			
Salaries	12,195	11,899	98%
Operating	9,233	8,077	87%
Capital	230	67	29%
Total expenditure	21,658	20,043	93%
ABA surplus/(deficit) for the year		714	
Less: carry forward 2015/2016		690	
ABA surplus/(deficit) as at 30 June 2015		(3,712)	

	2011/2012 ACTUAL \$	2012/2013 ACTUAL \$	2013/2014 ACTUAL \$	2014/2015 ACTUAL \$	TOTAL ACTUAL \$
NOTE 18B: ABA SPECIAL PURPOSE GRANT: FUNERAL AND CEREMONIAL ACTIVITIES					
Income					
Aboriginals Benefit Account	500,000	500,000	500,000	340,379	1,840,379
Recoveries	-	2,980	-	-	2,980
Total Income	500,000	502,980	500,000	340,379	1,843,359
Expenditure					
Borroloola/Barkly region	40,933	64,429	26,295	43,285	174,942
Darwin/Daly region	131,425	212,689	110,203	82,068	536,385
Jabiru region	118,418	182,395	82,057	75,330	458,200
Katherine region	97,477	80,050	65,739	56,049	299,315
Ngukurr region	45,551	29,091	44,477	24,518	143,637
Nhulunbuy region	154,743	135,477	77,804	66,735	434,759
Tennant Creek	13,325	33,747	11,826	14,486	73,384
Timber Creek (VRD) region	28,932	33,962	14,545	15,441	92,880
Administration	1,833	3,653	(1,681)	1,400	5,205
Total expenditure	632,637	775,493	431,265	379,312	2,218,707
Commitments					
Surplus (deficit)	(132,637)	(272,513)	68,735	(38,933)	(375,348)

	2009/2010 ACTUAL \$	2010/2011 ACTUAL \$
NOTE 18C: ABA TOP END LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM – S64		
Income		
Grant income – operational	2,278,812	1,286,772
Grant income – infrastructure	-	-
Recoveries	-	6,600
Total Income	2,278,812	1,293,372
Expenditure		
Acacia Larrakia ranger group	45,425	49,571
Adjumarllarl ranger group	17,376	55,656
SE Arafura/Gurrwiling ranger group	50,877	141,455
Asyrikarrak Kirim ranger group	44,165	42,881
Warramunburr	984	57,709
Bulgul ranger group	70,282	50,259
Garawa & Waanyi ranger group	62,374	113,846
Garngi ranger group	58,638	43,463
Malak Malak ranger group	53,949	13,735
Mardbalk ranger group	150,050	31,916
Gumurr Marthakal ranger group	161,536	30,225
Mimal ranger group	34,944	59,590
Minyerri ranger group	-	-
Numbulwar ranger group	2,461	19,186
Timber Creek ranger group	25,885	56,723
Wagiman Guwardagun ranger group	89,875	50,748
Wanga Djakamirr ranger group	46,652	22,667
Warramunburr ranger group	51,292	20,897
Wudicupildiyerr ranger group	50,973	47,946
Yugal Mangi ranger group	113,062	98,994
Infrastructure budget	-	-
Kenbi (Belyuen)	-	-
Bagala	-	-
Gurruwiling	-	-
Administration/project management – NLC	20,809	172,546
Total expenditure	1,151,608	1,180,013
Commitments		
Grant funds available	1,127,204	113,359

2011/2012 ACTUAL \$	2012/2013 ACTUAL \$	2013/2014 ACTUAL \$	2014/2015 ACTUAL \$	TOTAL ACTUAL \$
-	-	-	2,156,466	5,722,050
-	870,000	-	1,912,874	2,782,874
37,270	-	16,927	[29,425]	31,372
37,270	870,000	16,927	4,039,915	8,536,296
21,153	-	-	-	116,149
39,851	-	-	57,268	170,150
16,306	-	101,481	54,467	364,585
72,282	-	-	-	159,328
706	-	-	-	59,400
43,200	-	116,701	97,005	377,448
65,109	-	111,458	133,864	486,651
34,032	-	59,493	76,080	271,706
15,618	-	37,617	43,815	164,735
17,443	-	118,761	83,352	401,522
-	-	-	-	191,761
63,569	-	78,132	130,443	366,678
-	-	-	-	-
23,137	-	10,886	13,936	69,606
34,438	-	39,724	-	156,769
25,264	-	83,277	70,570	319,734
50,246	-	33,916	43,228	196,710
1,118	-	-	-	73,308
29,905	-	12,969	-	141,793
66,357	-	119,707	102,411	500,531
422,018	275,954	73,107	1,475,944	2,247,022
18,168	-	105,225	235	123,628
124,803	-	25,970	26,993	177,766
-	-	17,866	55,255	73,121
491,146	-	-	-	684,501
1,675,870	275,954	1,146,289	2,464,867	7,894,602
(1,638,600)	594,046	(1,129,362)	1,575,048	641,694



 NLC NATIVE TITLE REPRESENTATIVE BODY FINANCIAL STATEMENT


INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT
To the Minister for Indigenous Affairs

I have audited the accompanying annual financial statements of the Northern Land Council – Native Title Representative Body for the year ended 30 June 2015, which comprise:

- Statement by the Accountable Authorities and General Manager Corporate Compliance;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Cash Flow Statement;
- Schedule of Commitments; and
- Notes comprising a Summary of Significant Accounting Policies and other explanatory information.

Accountable Authority's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

The Chair and the Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Land Council – Native Title Representative Body are responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the rules made under that Act. The Chair and the Chief Executive Officer are also responsible for such internal control as is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on my audit. I have conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. These auditing standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Accountable Authority of the entity, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

GPO Box 707 CANBERRA ACT 2601
 19 National Circuit BARTON ACT
 Phone (02) 6203 7300 Fax (02) 6203 7777

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have followed the independence requirements of the Australian National Audit Office, which incorporate the requirements of the Australian accounting profession.

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Northern Land Council – Native Title Representative Body:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*; and
- (b) present fairly the financial position of the Northern Land Council – Native Title Representative Body as at 30 June 2015 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

Australian National Audit Office



Ron Wah
Audit Principal

Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra
7 October 2015

CONTENTS

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTORS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	196
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	197
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	198
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY	199
CASH FLOW STATEMENT	200
SCHEDULE OF COMMITMENTS	201
NOTE 1: Summary of significant accounting policies	202
NOTE 2: Events after the reporting period	208
NOTE 3: Expenses	209
NOTE 4: Income	210
NOTE 5: Financial assets	211
NOTE 6: Payables	213
NOTE 7: Provisions	213
NOTE 8: Cash flow reconciliation	214
NOTE 9: Contingent assets and liabilities	214
NOTE 10: Directors and senior executive remuneration	214
NOTE 11: Remuneration of auditors	215
NOTE 12: Financial instruments	215
NOTE 13: DPM&C grant: Native Title Representative Services	216

STATEMENT BY THE ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITIES
AND GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE COMPLIANCE

The Northern Land Council (NLC) is a Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) as prescribed in the Native Title Act 1993 and a land council under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976. Since being recognised as an NTRB, the NLC has performed the functions of the NTRB in association with other NLC functions.

While separate books and records are not maintained by the NLC for the NTRB, the revenue and expenditure is recorded as separate cost centres within the NLC financial books and records for the current year and assets and liabilities have been able to be separately identified as detailed in note 1.

In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2015 comply with subsection 42(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Body will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This Statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the directors.

Signed: 
Samuel Bush-Blanasi
CHAIRMAN
ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY

Signed: 
Joe Morrison
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY

Signed: 
Steven Lawrence
ACTING GENERAL MANAGER
CORPORATE COMPLIANCE

05 October 2015

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	NOTES	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NET COST OF SERVICES			
EXPENSES			
Employee benefits	3A	2,593	3,243
Suppliers	3B	1,456	2,333
Write-down and impairment of assets	3C	284	167
Total expenses		4,333	5,743
OWN-SOURCE INCOME			
Own-source revenue			
Sale of goods and rendering of services	4A	1,434	1,125
Interest	4B	24	19
Total own-source revenue		1,458	1,144
Gains			
Reversals of previous asset write-downs and impairments	4D	-	393
Total gains		-	393
Total own-source income		1,458	1,537
Net cost of services		2,875	4,206
Revenue from Government	4C	3,664	4,499
Surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Australian Government		789	293
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Total other comprehensive income/(loss)		-	-
Total comprehensive income/(loss) attributable to the Australian Government		789	293

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2015

	NOTES	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
ASSETS			
Financial assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5A	2,311	1,312
Trade and other receivables	5B	160	256
Total financial assets		2,471	1,568
Total assets		2,471	1,568
LIABILITIES			
Payables			
Inter-entity payables	6A	663	570
Other payables	6B	269	155
Total payables		932	725
Provisions			
Employee provisions	7A	358	451
Total provisions		358	451
Total liabilities		1,290	1,176
Net assets		1,181	392
EQUITY			
Retained surplus/(accumulated deficit)		1,181	392
Total equity		1,181	392

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	RETAINED EARNINGS		TOTAL EQUITY	
	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Opening balance				
Balance carried forward from previous period	392	99	392	99
Comprehensive income				
Surplus (deficit) for the period	789	293	789	293
Total comprehensive income	789	293	789	293
Closing balance attributable to the Australian Government	1,181	392	1,181	392

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015

	NOTES	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Receipts from Government		4,030	4,949
Sales of goods and rendering of services		1,371	1,257
Interest		24	19
Total cash received		5,425	6,225
Cash used			
Employees		(2,697)	(3,154)
Suppliers		(1,362)	(2,331)
Net GST paid		(367)	(352)
Total cash used		(4,426)	(5,837)
Net cash from/(used by) operating activities		999	388
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		999	388
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		1,312	924
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	8	2,311	1,312

SCHEDULE OF COMMITMENTS

AS AT 30 JUNE 2015

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
BY TYPE		
Commitments receivable		
Net GST recoverable on commitments	(4)	-
Total commitments receivable	(4)	-
Commitments payable		
Other commitments		
Operational commitments	48	2
Total other commitments	48	2
Net commitments by type	44	2
BY MATURITY		
Commitments receivable		
Other commitments receivable		
Within 1 year	(4)	-
Total other commitments receivable	(4)	-
Commitments payable		
Other commitments		
Within 1 year	48	2
Total other commitments	48	2
Net commitments by maturity	44	2

Note: Commitments are GST inclusive where relevant.

The nature of operational commitments are various goods & services ordered and not yet received.

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 OVERVIEW

The Northern Land Council (NLC) is a Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) as prescribed in the *Native Title Amendment Act 1998* and a Land Council under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. Since being recognised as an NTRB, the NLC has performed the functions of the NTRB in association with other NLC functions. It is a not-for-profit entity.

The general functions of the NTRB are to:

- assist claimants in the preparation of anthropological and historical evidence in support of their claim applications;
- provide claimants with legal representation e.g. negotiations for an Indigenous Land Use Agreement; and
- act as mediators between the claimants and the Government.

The NTRB is dependent on the continued release of these funds for its continued existence and ability to carry out its normal activities. The funding conditions of the NTRB are laid down by the Native Title Act, and any special purpose grant guidelines. Accounting for monies received from the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet (PMC) is subject to conditions approved by the Land Rights Branch.

1.2 BASIS OF PREPARATION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements and are required by section 42 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and section 203DC (4) of the *Native Title Amendment Act 1998*.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- a) Financial Reporting Rule (FRR) for reporting periods ending on or after 1 July 2014; and
- b) Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The NLC has prepared the statement of comprehensive income, statement of financial position and cash flow statement applicable to the NTRB operation and function. All NTRB account balances have been identified from within the NLC financial information system and accurately extracted from the NLC accounts, representing the completeness and existence of all assets and liabilities of the NTRB. The NLC maintains an NTRB revenue and expenditure cost centre and the statement of comprehensive income is a complete and accurate record of NTRB revenue and expenditure.

The NTRB financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and in accordance with historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position.

The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified.

Unless an alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard or the FRR, assets and liabilities are recognised in the NTRB statement of financial position when and only when it is probable that

future economic benefits will flow to the entity or a future sacrifice of economic benefits will be required and the amounts of the assets or liabilities can be reliably measured. However, assets and liabilities arising under executor contracts are not recognised unless required by an accounting standard. Liabilities and assets that are unrecognised are reported in the schedule of commitments or contingencies note.

Unless alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard, income and expenses are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income when, and only when the flow, consumption or loss of economic benefits has occurred and can be reliably measured.

1.3 SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND ESTIMATES

No accounting assumptions or estimates have been identified that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

1.4 NEW ACCOUNTING STANDARDS

ADOPTION OF NEW AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

No accounting standard has been adopted earlier than the application date as stated in the standard.

The following new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations were issued prior to the signing of the statement by the accountable authority, chief executive officer and general manager corporate compliance, were applicable to the current reporting period on the entity's financial statements:

STANDARD/ INTERPRETATION	NATURE OF CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY AND ADJUSTMENT TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AASB 1031 Materiality (2013), AASB 2013-9 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Conceptual Framework, Materiality and Financial Instruments, AASB 2014-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards (Part C – Materiality)	Revised AASB 1031 is an interim standard that cross-references to other standards and the <i>Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements</i> that contain guidance on materiality. The standard does not impact the financial statements.
AASB 2012-3 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Offsetting Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities (AASB 132)	The standard addresses inconsistencies in current practice when applying the offsetting criteria in AASB 132 <i>Financial Instruments: Presentation</i> . The standard does not impact the financial statements.
AASB 2013-3 Amendments to AASB 136 – Recoverable Amount Disclosures for Non-Financial Assets	The amendments to AASB 136 <i>Impairment of Assets</i> address the disclosure of information about the recoverable amount of impaired assets if that amount is based on fair value less costs of disposal. The standard does not impact the financial statements.
AASB 2014-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards (Part A – Annual Improvements 2010–2012 and 2011–2013 Cycles)	Part A of the standard makes amendments to various Australian Accounting Standards (AASB 2, 3, 8, 9, 13, 116, 119, 124, 137, 138, 139, 140 & 1052 and Interpretation 129) arising from the issuance by IASB of <i>IFRSs Annual Improvements to IFRS 2010-2012 Cycle and Annual Improvements to IFRSs 2011-2013 Cycle</i> . The standard does not impact the financial statements.

All other new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to sign-off date and are applicable to the current reporting period did not have a material effect, and are not expected to have a future material impact on the Northern Land Council's financial statements.

FUTURE AUSTRALIAN ACCOUNTING STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

The following new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations were issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board prior to the signing of the statement by the accountable authority, chief executive officer and general manager corporate compliance, on the entity's financial statements for future reporting period(s):

STANDARD/ INTERPRETATION	APPLICATION DATE	NATURE OF IMPENDING CHANGE/S IN ACCOUNTING POLICY AND LIKELY IMPACT ON INITIAL APPLICATION
AASB 9 <i>Financial Instruments (Dec 2014)</i> , AASB 2014-1 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards (Part E – Financial Instruments)</i> , AASB 2014-7 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 9 (Dec 2014)</i>	1 Jan 2018	The final version of AASB 9 brings together the classification and measurement, impairment and hedge accounting phases of the IASB's project to replace AASB 139 <i>Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement</i> . This version adds a new expected loss impairment model and limited amendments to classification and measurement for financial assets. The standard does not impact the financial statements.
AASB 15 <i>Revenue from Contracts with Customers</i> , AASB 2014-5 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards arising from AASB 15</i>	1 Jan 2017	AASB 15 outlines a single comprehensive model for entities to use in accounting for revenue arising from contracts with customers. It replaces several Standards and Interpretations, including AASB 111 <i>Construction Contracts</i> , AASB 118 <i>Revenue</i> , Interpretation 15 <i>Agreements for the Construction of Real Estate</i> , and Interpretation 18 <i>Transfers of Assets from Customers</i> . The standard does not impact the financial statements.
AASB 2014-4 <i>Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Clarification of Acceptable Methods of Depreciation and Amortisation (AASB 116 & 138)</i>	1 Jan 2016	Amends AASB 116 <i>Property, Plant and Equipment</i> and AASB 138 <i>Intangible Assets</i> to provide additional guidance on how the depreciation or amortisation of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets should be calculated. The standard does not impact the financial statements.

All other new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to the sign-off date and are applicable to future reporting period(s) are not expected to have a future material impact on the NTRB's financial statements.

1.5 REVENUE

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when:

- a) the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred to the buyer;
- b) the Northern Land Council as an NTRB retains no managerial involvement or effective control over the goods;
- c) the revenue and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and
- d) it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the NTRB.

Revenue from rendering of services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date. The revenue is recognised when:

- a) the amount of revenue, stage of completion and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and
- b) the probable economic benefits with the transaction will flow to the entity.

The stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date is determined by reference to the proportion that costs incurred to date bear to the estimated total costs of the transaction.

Receivables for goods and services, which have 30 day terms, are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance account. Collectability of debts is reviewed as at the end of the reporting period. Allowances are made when collectability of the debt is no longer probable.

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method as set out in AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement.

REVENUES FROM GOVERNMENT

Funding received or receivable are recognised as Revenue from Government when the entity gains control of the appropriation, except for certain amounts that relate to activities that are reciprocal in nature, in which case revenue is recognised only when it is earned.

1.6 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Liabilities for 'short-term employee benefits' (as defined in AASB 119 Employee Benefits) and termination benefits expected within twelve months of the end 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 provisions for annual leave and long service leave. No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and the average sick leave taken in future years by employees of the NTRB is estimated to be less than the annual entitlement for sick leave.

The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that will be applied at the time the leave is taken, including the NTRB's employer superannuation contribution rates to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination.

The estimate of the present value of the long service leave liability takes into attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

1.7 LEASES

A distinction is made between finance leases and operating leases. Finance leases effectively transfer from the lessor to the lessee substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of leased assets. An operating lease is a lease that is not a finance lease. In operating leases, the lessor effectively retains substantially all such risks and benefits.

Operating lease payments are expensed on a straight-line basis which is representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets.

1.8 CASH

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents include:

- a) cash on hand; and
- b) demand deposits in bank accounts with an original maturity of 3 months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value.

NTRB cash is received into the NTRB bank account. All payments are made from the NLC operating account. On a regular basis the funds are transferred from the NTRB bank account to the NLC operating account for the value of payments on behalf of the NTRB.

1.9 FINANCIAL ASSETS

The NTRB classifies its financial assets in the following categories:

- a) 'loans and receivables'.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the financial assets and is determined at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised and derecognised upon trade date.

LOANS AND RECEIVABLES

Trade receivables, loans and other receivables that have fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market are classified as 'loans and receivables'. Loans and receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method less impairment. Interest is recognised by applying the effective interest rate.

IMPAIRMENT OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at each reporting period.

Financial assets held at amortised cost - if there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has been incurred for loans and receivables or held to maturity investments held at amortised cost, the amount of the loss is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. The carrying amount is reduced by way of an allowance account. The loss is recognised in the statement of comprehensive income.

1.10 FINANCIAL LIABILITIES

Financial liabilities are classified as either financial liabilities 'at fair value through profit or loss' or other financial liabilities. Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

OTHER FINANCIAL LIABILITIES

Other 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 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.

Supplier and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

1.11 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

Contingent liabilities and contingent assets are not recognised in the statement of financial position but are reported in the 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.

1.12 TAXATION/COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY

The NTRB is exempt from all forms of taxation except Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST except:

- where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office; and
- for receivables and payables.

COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY

The NTRB does not provide any services on a for-profit basis. Under Competitive Neutrality arrangements, the NTRB is not required to make Australian Income Tax Equivalent payments to the Government.

NOTE 2: EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

There are no events that have occurred after reporting date that have been brought to account in the 2014/2015 Financial Report.

NOTE 3: EXPENSES

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 3A: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		
Wages and salaries	2,134	2,748
Superannuation:	290	319
Leave and other entitlements	169	176
Total employee benefits	2,593	3,243
NOTE 3B: SUPPLIERS		
Goods and services supplied or rendered		
Consultants	605	661
Stationery	26	20
Travel	256	892
Vehicle	128	257
Training	11	31
IT/communications	121	89
Other	194	248
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	1,341	2,198
Goods and services in connection with:		
Provision of goods – external parties	274	499
Rendering of services – external parties	1,058	1,687
Rendering of services – external parties	9	12
Total goods and services	1,341	2,198
Other suppliers		
Operating lease rentals:		
Minimum lease payments	73	71
Workers compensation expenses	41	64
Total other supplier expenses	115	135
Total supplier expenses	1,456	2,333
NOTE 3D: WRITE-DOWN AND IMPAIRMENT OF ASSETS		
Impairment on financial instruments	284	167
Total write-down and impairment of assets	284	167

NOTE 4: INCOME

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
OWN-SOURCE REVENUE		
NOTE 4A: SALE OF GOODS AND RENDERING OF SERVICES		
Rendering of services external parties	1,434	1,125
Total sale of goods and rendering of services	1,434	1,125
NOTE 4B: INTEREST		
Deposits	24	19
Total interest	24	19
REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT		
NOTE 4C: REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT		
Revenue from Government:		
Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet grant	3,664	4,499
Total revenue from Government	3,664	4,499
NOTE 4D: REVERSAL OF PREVIOUS ASSET WRITE-DOWNS AND IMPAIRMENTS		
Reversal of impairment losses	-	393
Total reversals of previous asset writedowns and impairments	-	393

NOTE 5: FINANCIAL ASSETS

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 5A: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash on deposit	2,311	1,312
Total cash and cash equivalents	2,311	1,312
NOTE 5B: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES		
Goods and services receivables in connection with:		
External parties	617	429
Total goods and services receivable	617	429
Less impairment allowance		
Goods and services	(457)	(173)
Total impairment allowance	(457)	(173)
Total trade and other receivables (net)	160	256
Trade and other receivables (net) expected to be recovered:		
No more than 12 months	160	256
More than 12 months	-	-
Total trade and other receivables (net)	160	256
Trade and other receivables (gross) aged as follows:		
Not overdue	24	63
Overdue by:		
Less than 30 days	392	56
30 to 60 days	94	-
61 to 90 days	106	-
More than 90 days	1	310
Total trade and other receivables (gross)	617	429
Impairment allowance aged as follows:		
Not overdue	(24)	(7)
Overdue by:		
Less than 30 days	(233)	(57)
30 to 60 days	(94)	-
61 to 90 days	(106)	-
More than 90 days	-	(109)
Total impairment allowance	(457)	(173)

NOTE 5B: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES (CONT'D)

RECONCILIATION OF THE IMPAIRMENT ALLOWANCE
MOVEMENTS IN RELATION TO 2015

2015 \$'000	GOODS AND SERVICES	TOTAL
Opening balance	173	173
Amounts recovered and reversed	-	-
Impairment allowance	284	284
Closing balance	457	457

MOVEMENTS IN RELATION TO 2014

2014 \$'000	GOODS AND SERVICES	TOTAL
Opening balance	399	399
Amounts recovered and reversed	(393)	(393)
Impairment allowance	167	167
Closing balance	173	173

NOTE 6: PAYABLES

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 6A: INTER-ENTITY PAYABLES		
Payable to Northern Land Council	663	570
NOTE 6B: OTHER PAYABLES		
Trade payables	192	77
Salaries and wages	63	74
Accruals	14	4
Total other payables	269	155
Total payables	932	725
Total payables expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months	932	725
More than 12 months	-	-
Total payables	932	725
Total payables in connection with:		
External parties	677	570
Related entities	255	155
	932	725

Settlement was usually made within 30 days.

NOTE 7: PROVISIONS

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 7A: EMPLOYEE PROVISIONS		
Leave	358	451
Total employee provisions	358	451
Employee provisions expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months	266	317
More than 12 months	92	134
Total employee provisions	358	451

NOTE 8: CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Reconciliation of cash and cash equivalents as per statement of financial position to cash flow statement		
Cash and cash equivalents as per:		
Cash flow statement	2,311	1,312
Statement of financial position	2,311	1,312
Difference	-	-
Reconciliation of net cost of services to net cash from operating activities:		
Net cost of services	(2,875)	(4,206)
Revenue from Government	3,664	4,499
Movements in assets and liabilities		
(Increase)/decrease in net receivables	96	(168)
(Increase)/decrease in employee provisions	(93)	46
(Increase)/decrease in inter-entity payables	93	150
(Increase)/decrease in other payables	114	67
Net cash from (used by) operating activities	999	388

NOTE 9: CONTINGENT ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

QUANTIFIABLE CONTINGENCIES

The Northern Land Council as NTRB has undertaken an assessment of the reasonable potential liability arising out of litigation to which the NTRB is a party. As at 30 June 2015 the potential liability has been assessed as nil (no contingent liabilities in 2013/2014).

NOTE 10: SENIOR MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL REMUNERATION

There were no accountable authorities or executive remuneration payments made during the period with NTRB monies.

NOTE 11: REMUNERATION OF AUDITORS

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
Financial statement audit services provided to the Northern Land Council in regard to NTRB by the Australian National Audit Office:		
Fair value of the services provided		
Financial statement audit services	9	9
Total	9	9

No other services were provided by the auditor of the financial statements.

NOTE 12: FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

	2015 \$'000	2014 \$'000
NOTE 12A: CATEGORIES OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS		
Financial assets		
Loans and receivables		
Cash on deposit	2,311	1,312
Trade and other receivables	160	256
Total financial assets	2,471	1,568
Financial liabilities		
Amortised cost:		
Inter-entity payables	663	570
Other payables	269	155
Total carrying amount of financial liabilities	932	725
NOTE 12B: NET GAIN OR LOSSES ON FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Loans and receivables		
Interest revenue (see note 4B)	24	19
Net gain/(loss) on loans and receivables	24	19

NOTE 12C: FAIR VALUES OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The carrying amount of the financial instruments are reasonable approximation of fair value due to their short-term nature.

NOTE 12D: CREDIT RISK

The NTRB was exposed to minimal credit risk as loans and receivables were cash and trade receivables.

The carrying amount of financial assets recorded in the financial statements, net of any allowances for losses, represents the NTRB's maximum exposure to credit risk.

The NTRB only trades with recognised, creditworthy third parties. Exposure to credit risk is monitored by management on an ongoing basis.

The NTRB held no collateral to mitigate against credit risk.

NOTE 12E: LIQUIDITY RISK

The NTRB's financial liabilities were payables. The exposure to liquidity risk was based on the notion that the NTRB will encounter difficulty in meeting its obligations associated with financial liabilities. This was highly unlikely due to government funding and mechanisms available to the entity and internal policies and procedures put in place to ensure there were appropriate resources to meet its financial obligations.

NOTE 12F: MARKET RISK

The NTRB held basic financial instruments that did not expose the entity to certain market risks, such as currency risk and other price risks.

**NOTE 13: DEPARTMENT OF PRIME MINISTER & CABINET (PM&C) GRANT:
NATIVE TITLE REPRESENTATIVE SERVICES**

	2014/2015	2014/2015	2014/2015	2014/2015
	APPROVED BUDGET \$	ACTUAL \$	ACTUAL VS. BUDGET \$	ACTUAL VS. BUDGET%
INCOME				
Income 2014/2015 brought forward	-	741,958	741,958	0%
Prior year deficit brought forward	-	(367,474)	(367,474)	0%
PM&C funding – operational	3,723,000	2,981,042	(741,958)	80%
Other project income	984,472	1,433,991	(449,519)	146%
Interest income	60,000	24,359	35,641	41%
Supplementary bid 2014/2015 to be c/forward	683,000	683,000	-	100%
Total income	5,450,472	5,496,876	(781,352)	101%
EXPENDITURE				
Operational				
Salaries				
Corporate staff (eg. accounting admin.)	89,693	254,212	164,519	283%
Project staff (eg. legal, anthropologists, field)	2,645,923	2,475,006	(170,917)	94%

	2014/2015	2014/2015	2014/2015	2014/2015
	APPROVED BUDGET \$	ACTUAL \$	ACTUAL VS. BUDGET \$	ACTUAL VS. BUDGET%
Services				
Accommodation	72,930	72,930	-	100%
Motor vehicles – corporate	109,395	44,749	(64,646)	41%
Repair and maintenance – equipment	9,738	9,738	-	100%
Repair and maintenance – buildings	9,738	9,738	-	100%
Bank charges	12,604	-	(12,604)	0%
Audit fees	13,134	11,700	(1,434)	89%
Consultants – attributable	806,732	581,346	(225,386)	0%
Communications, telephones, fax and IT	92,161	121,887	29,726	132%
Insurance	9,396	9,396	-	100%
Training and development				
Governing committee	9,138	-	(9,138)	0%
Staff	88,236	65,806	(22,430)	75%
Meeting expenses				
Claimants	173,418	133,407	(40,011)	77%
Travel and allowances				
Claimants	100,285	34,147	(66,138)	34%
Staff travel – corporate	19,865	1,825	(18,040)	9%
Staff travel – attributable	341,710	185,151	(156,559)	54%
Supplies and consumables				
Office supplies and consumables – corporate	27,673	17,411	(10,263)	63%
Other operational				
Recruitment and relocation	17,503	32,476	14,973	186%
Security	4,543	4,543	-	100%
Equipment	30,003	-	(30,003)	0%
Policy and liaison	31,827	37,626	5,799	118%
Educational resources – land rights	31,827	25,379	(6,448)	80%
Other				
NNTC contribution	20,000	12,000	(8,000)	60%
Pastoral lease claims	600,000	-	(600,000)	
Contested litigation – Borroloola	83,000	-	(83,000)	
Total expenditure	5,450,472	4,140,474	(1,309,998)	76%
Surplus (deficit)	-	1,356,401	1,356,401	-
Carried forward 2015/2016	-	683,000	683,000	0%
Carried forward 2015/2016 projects	-	185,000	185,000	0%
Surplus (deficit) after commitments	-	488,401	488,401	-

COMMONWEALTH COMPLIANCE INDEX

PUBLIC GOVERNANCE, PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT 2013 AND COMMONWEALTH ANNUAL REPORTING ORDERS

REQUIREMENT	ANNUAL REPORTING ORDERS 2011 CLAUSE	PAGE NO.
Approval by Directors	Clause 6	11, 150
Details of exemptions granted by Finance Minister in regard to reporting requirements	Clause 7	135
Enabling legislation	Clause 10	135
Responsible Minister	Clause 11	135
Ministerial Directions	Clause 12	18
General Policy Orders	Clause 12	18
Work Health and Safety	Clause 12	142
Advertising and Market Research	Clause 12	138
Disability Reporting Mechanisms	Clause 12	NIL
Ecologically sustainable development and environmental performance	Clause 12	138
Information about Directors	Clause 13	40–42
Organisational Structure	Clause 14	46
Board Committees and their main responsibilities	Clause 14	141, 143
Main corporate governance practices (i.e. risk management, ethics, education and performance review for directors)	Clause 14	135
Related Entity Transaction	Clause 15	136
Operational and financial results	Clause 16 (b)	18, 149
Key changes to the authority's state of affairs or principal activities	Clause 16 (c)	18
Amendments to authority's enabling legislation	Clause 16 (d)	18
Significant judicial or administrative tribunal decisions	Clause 17 (a)	NIL
Reports made about the authority	Clause 17 (b)	NIL
Obtaining information from subsidiaries	Clause 18	NIL
Indemnities and insurance premiums	Clause 19	135

ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS (NORTHERN TERRITORY) ACT 1976

REQUIREMENT	REFERENCE	PAGE NO.
<p>FEEs Specify the total fees received for services provided by the land council: a) under Part IV (Mining); and b) under 33A for services prescribed by the regulations that it provides in performing any of its functions, whether in the reporting year or the previous year. Specify total fees received under s33B (other fees charged to the Commonwealth).</p>	s37(2)	18
<p>SECTION 35 DETERMINATIONS Include details of payments by the Council under Sec. 35 (2) or (3) and any determinations made by the Minister under Sec. 35 (6) made during the reporting year. Details of payments made by determination or otherwise under 35(2), 35(6), 35(4), 35(4B), 35(11), and 67B (6) must be provided and include, the recipient of the amount; the subsection under which the amount was paid; and the total of the amount paid.</p>	s37(3) s37(4)	???
<p>DETAILS OF AMOUNTS HELD IN TRUST In respect of amounts paid to the Council and held in trust at the end of the year; provide details of the amount paid to Council and the year it was paid, the amount held in trust, and the mining operation concerned.</p>	s37(5)	131
<p>DELEGATIONS If there is a delegation under s28, particulars of activities during the year related to any delegated functions or activities must be provided.</p>	s37(6)	142
<p>COMMITTEES If a committee has been appointed under s29A to assist the Council in relation to the performance of any of its functions or the exercise of any of its powers, detailed information of its activities must be included.</p>	s37(7)	141, 143
<p>CONSULTANTS Specify each consultant engaged by council during the year and the amount paid to each consultant. In order for comprehensive information to be reported details of the nature of work undertaken the total cost of the consultancy and the reasons why a consultant was required could be included in addition to the details required by this provision.</p>	s37(8)	136

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AGREEMENTS

Land Use Agreements are generally leases or licences for the use of or to carry out activities on Aboriginal land issued in accordance with section 19 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.

Indigenous Land Use Agreements are native title agreements about the management and use of lands and waters between native title claimants/ holders and other parties. Agreements reached through the native title negotiations process either before or after a native title determination is made.

Part IV Mining Agreements Exploration and mining agreements are entered into in accordance with the Part of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*.

ACRONYMS

ABA	Aboriginals Benefit Account
Aboriginal Land	Land held by a Land Trust for an estate in fee simple; or land the subject of a deed of grant held in escrow by a Land Council. <i>Aboriginal Land Trust established under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976</i> . Section 5 sets out the functions of Land Trusts. Section 7 deals with membership of Land Trusts
ALRA	<i>Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976</i>
APO NT	The Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory, which is an alliance between Northern Land Council (NLC), Central Land Council (CLC), North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA), Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the NT (AMSANT), Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS)
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
CFI	Carbon Farming Initiative
CLC	Central Land Council established under the <i>Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976</i>
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DPMC	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
GIS	Geographic Information System
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
IPP	Indigenous Pastoral Program

JACS	The NLC's Jobs and Careers Service Unit
Land Council	An Aboriginal Land Council established in accordance with the <i>Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976</i>
LIMS	The Northern Land Council's Land Information Management System
LIR	Land Interest Reference
Mining Act	<i>Mining Act Minerals Titles Act 2010</i>
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NLC	Northern Land Council established under the <i>Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976</i>
NRETAS	Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts
NTA	Commonwealth <i>Native Title Act 1993</i>
NTRB	Native Title Representative Body
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
SIR	Strategic Indigenous Reserve, an amount of water set aside in a water allocation plan for Indigenous people in a water allocation plan area to support future water trading and economic development
TNRM	Territory Natural Resource Management – an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works with landholders, industry and government to ensure sustainable management of our water, land, soils, plants and animals
Traditional Owners	Traditional Aboriginal Owners – a local descent group of Aboriginals who have common spiritual affiliations to a site on the land, being affiliations that place the group under a primary spiritual responsibility for that site and for the land; and are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to forage as or right over that land
WoC	Working on Country funding initiative of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
WoNS	Weeds of National Significance



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