



**NATIONAL
NATIVE TITLE
COUNCIL**



Annual Report
2024-2025

NNTC.COM.AU

Yaegl Country
Tom Widdup, NNTC

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country across Australia and pay our respects to all Elders, past and present.

We pay respects to the Elders and Ancestors who guide and watch over us.

We celebrate the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' connection to land, water and Culture.

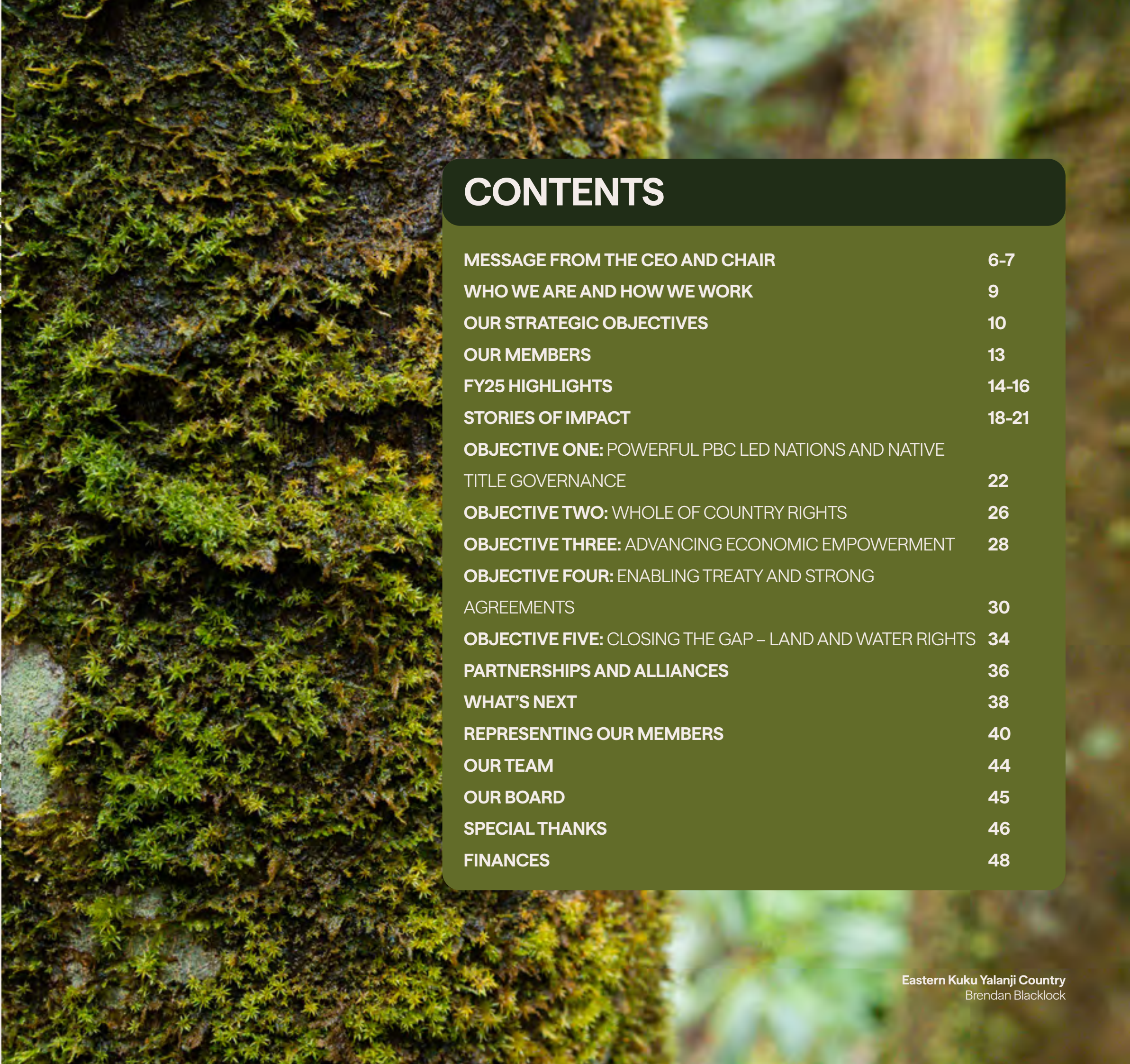
We give thanks to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who generously offer their time to enact land, water and Cultural rights. We acknowledge them, their families and communities for their ongoing custodianship. Sovereignty of this land and waters has never been ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.

Cultural Message

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that the NNTC's publications may contain images or names of deceased people.

Cover Page
Top: Eastern Maar Country
Brendan Blacklock

Bottom: Yawuru Country
Paul Bell



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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO AND CHAIR

The National Native Title Council’s core purpose is to represent and advocate for Traditional Owner rights. Twenty years ago, Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRBs) came together to build a national advocacy presence. Today, the NNTC represents the rights and interests of more than 120 NTRBs and Traditional Owner organisations.

Over two decades we have built the influence necessary to drive reform agendas at the state and federal level. Our work developing stronger cultural heritage protections, driving macro-economic reform, negotiating the clean energy transition, is testament to the central role Traditional Owners’ play in informing government decision-making.

Native title holders and Traditional Owner Representative Organisations are recognised as central to shaping and advancing national policy agendas. The NNTC has worked with members to create federal law reform opportunities that deliver tangible benefits in our communities.

Our policy priorities are guided by members. This report highlights several key achievements. In 2024-25 we:

- **Launched the Mabo Centre**, a partnership between the NNTC and the University of Melbourne that brings significant new research and academic capacity to the native title sector.
- **Advanced federal First Nations Cultural Heritage reform** through our work with the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance.
- **Developed a new economic empowerment agenda** by contributing to the First Nations Economic Empowerment Alliance and the Coalition of the Peaks.
- **Worked with the PBC Steering Group** to progress planning for a staged approach to increase funding for the native title sector.

This year we are mid-delivery against the NNTC 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. Our program of trainings, PBC forums and events, policy and research, advocacy and native title sector coordination continued to expand this year to meet our members’ needs.

In the context of the federal political cycle, 2024-25 was a period of collaboration and consolidation. While the lead of to the May 2025 federal election brought a quieter period for our engagement with the Federal Government, we continued to actively engage with the states and territories. Traditional Owners found solidarity and common ground in developing a clear reform agenda.

At the NNTC our focus was on supporting members to advance a bold, rights-based vision for change.

We welcomed 24 new Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) members throughout FY25, meaning more Traditional Owners have access to the support and representation they need to enact their native title rights.

To sustain our growth, we invested in building organisational capacity, expanding our staff team by 25 percent and strengthening our internal systems and operations.

We worked flexibly with our members while they supported their communities through a series of extreme weather events across the continent. Tropical cyclones and heavy wet season rains in the Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales had a significant impact on our work with members in regional and remote areas.

None of our work would be possible without the dedication of our members, and the work they do on the ground in their communities every day. To the directors who serve on our Board, thank you for your wisdom and contributing countless hours of expertise this year.

As we enter our 20th year of operation, we build on two decades of hard-won progress. Across the nation, Native Title holders and Representative Organisations are leading the way - setting priorities, shaping policy, and defining their future native title rights.

Our strategic agenda has never been more focussed, and the urgency of our work has never been greater. We are grateful to all the members and supporters who join with us in working toward a future where all First Nations communities determine our own futures.



Jamie Lowe
CEO



Kado Muir
Chair



WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE WORK

We are the peak body representing and advocating for Traditional Owners and the native title sector across the country.

Our mission is to champion members' rights and interests through advocacy, leadership, and skill-building. By delivering the tools and knowledge our members need to navigate the native title system, we ensure their voices are heard by governments and industry. Our work is guided by rights-based standards such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

We support coordination and collective decision-making across the native title sector.

We convene regular opportunities for Traditional Owner organisations to meet, develop shared positions, and make decisions.

We develop policy proposals, participate in law reform development and design legislative proposals to deliver systems change. Working with federal and state governments, industry peak bodies and key stakeholders, we have a clear agenda to deliver policy reform that will benefit native title holders and Traditional Owner organisations.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Powerful PBC-led Nations and Native Title Governance

We strengthen the capacity and influence of PBCs to enact and enjoy their native title rights. We lead advocacy work to ensure PBCs are funded to deliver their regulatory and statutory obligations. We coordinate many PBC Regional Forums, PBC Steering Group Meetings, PBC Director trainings and capacity building events each year and work to ensure PBCs have resources to be self-determining.

Whole of Country Rights

We support stronger native title and whole of country rights by advocating for and working directly on legislative, policy and practice reform through a range of mechanisms. We act as the Secretariat for the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance to lead the reform process for First Nations Cultural Heritage laws federally. We are piloting the Dhawura Ngilan Business Investor Best Practice Guides, which promote best practice engagement between Traditional Owners and industry.

Advancing Economic Empowerment

We support native title holders to unlock economic opportunities by addressing barriers to accessing capital and providing resources that support wealth creation. We work toward structural reform that enables economic growth for members. We are developing and implementing a national native title compensation strategy to ensure native title holders receive the compensation they are entitled to under native title laws.

Closing the Gap – land and water rights

We are a member of the Coalition of Peaks, working collaboratively to implement the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The NNTC participates in working groups, meetings and forums and leads coordination on implementing the Inland Water Targets in the Closing the Gap Agreement.

Enabling Treaty and strong agreements

We support Traditional Owners to negotiate strong agreements that recognise their rights and advance their interests. We provide members with practical agreement frameworks, expert advice, and strategic guidance to ensure they can enter negotiations from a position of strength.



Image Credit
Caleb Sweeting

OUR MEMBERS

Everything we do at the NNTC is informed by our members. Through Council and Board meetings, forums, workshops and regular dialogue, members guide our priorities and highlight the issues that matter most. Daily engagement with members sits at the heart of how we work.

In 2024–25, our membership grew by 24 new PBCs and TORIs, bringing us to over 120 organisations – and we are still growing. Our members include PBCs, Traditional Owner Corporations (TOCs/TORIs), and Native Title Representative Bodies and Service Providers (NTRBs/SPs).

We have a dedicated PBC Steering Committee, made up of participants from member PBCs across the country. This committee plays a vital role in engaging directly with government to advise on reforms affecting PBCs ensuring that changes are shaped by the people they impact most.

The NNTC membership delivers a national voice on policy and reform, and provides connections to a network of Traditional Owner organisations across Australia. Members also have opportunities to participate in training, forums, and events, as well as access to tailored support that reflects their specific needs.

THE NNTC MEMBER'S WORK

Our members carry significant responsibilities under the *Native Title Act 1993* and many other laws. They manage native title rights, negotiate agreements, protect cultural heritage, and provide governance and legal services to their communities. However, the NNTC members' work goes far beyond their statutory compliance obligations. Members create opportunities through jobs, training, and enterprise. They strengthen identity by keeping culture strong, safeguarding heritage, and maintaining connection to Country.

NNTC members also play a national role in ensuring Traditional Owner voices shape laws, policies, and reforms. This leadership supports sustainable land management, stronger relationships between First Nations and non-First Nations communities, and a fairer, more inclusive future for all Australians.

“The NNTC’s advocacy ensures native title holders’ voices are heard, advancing self-determination and strengthening governance across Australia.” – Lawford Benning, Chair, MGCorp

FY25 HIGHLIGHTS

250+ engagements and events across the native title sector.

80+ PBCs, TOCs, NTRB/SPs organisational engagements with the NNTC.

45 Traditional Owner organisational leaders trained.

55 PBCs attended PBC Regional Forums in:

- Karlkurla (Kalgoorlie) co-hosted with Native Title Services Goldfields
- Nauo (Coffin Bay) co-hosted with South Australian Native Title Services in South Australia
- Inteye-arrkwe on Eastern Arrernte country, approximately 80 kilometres from Mparntwe (Alice Springs) with Central Land Council

*Unfortunately, a Regional Forum scheduled for North Queensland had to be postponed due to weather.

6 PBC Steering Group meetings hosted. Four on Country in collaboration with:

- Jamukurnu-Yapalikurnu Aboriginal Corporation in Boorloo (Perth)
- Yaegl Aboriginal Corporation in Yamba
- Central Land Council and Lhere Artepe in Mparntwe (Alice Springs)
- Yawuru in Rubibi (Broome)

40+ engagements with elected government representatives.

170 media stories featuring the NNTC including opinion pieces by our CEO and Chair.

9 business leaders piloting implementation of the Dhawura Ngilan Business and Investor Principles. This group includes BHP, Lendlease, HESTA, QIC, two commercial banks and a government financing agency.

40 PBC Directors participated in the four-day face-to-face PBC Director Training Program.

7,500 followers on LinkedIn and growing.

FY25 HIGHLIGHTS

Member engagement

In FY25, we focused on making our work more accessible to members, particularly those living in regional and remote parts of Australia. We shifted our PBC Director Training to more community locations and held the majority of our PBC Steering Group meetings on Country. Through our various forums, meetings and services, such as training, we were able to engage with over 80 PBCs, TOCs and NTRB/SPs.

New NNTC Brand and Website

In FY25 we worked closely with the digital agency Ngakkan Nyaagu (NGNY) to develop a new NNTC website that is clear, more accessible and can be developed as a central hub for PBC resources as well as a coordination point for the native title sector.

We refreshed our brand and logo to better represent our growing member base. Our new design represents our national focus and delivers consistent features that can be easily applied across a range of products.

Whadjuk Country
Jasmine Yarran, NNTC

STORIES OF IMPACT

Launch of the Mabo Centre - dedicated research capacity for native title and Traditional Owner rights

When the NNTC undertook an intensive strategic planning process in 2022-23, a critical gap became clear. Our members told us that the native title sector needed dedicated research capacity to inform policy development and support Traditional Owners to fully realise their land and sea rights.

The NNTC developed a proposal for a First Nations research and training centre that would identify best practice and deliver training to support community aspirations.

In March 2025, that vision became reality. The Mabo Centre was launched as a partnership between the NNTC and the University of Melbourne, bringing together the NNTC's strong relationships with native title rights holders with the University's research expertise. The Mabo Centre works closely with Traditional Owners and communities to ensure land and water rights are fully realised by providing First Nations-led leadership and opportunities to share knowledge and expertise.

The Mabo Centre is guided by a Board of First Nations leaders and experts, including Co-Chair Professor Marcia Langton, Associate Provost of the University of Melbourne.

PBC Steering Group and native title funding

The PBC Steering Group was established in response to Recommendation 7 of the Juukan Gorge Inquiry Report. The PBC Steering Group is an advisory body of PBCs from within the NNTC's membership that provides valuable guidance on issues of national and regional significance. The members are appointed by the NNTC and include PBCs from around the country, varying in size, activity and history.

The PBC Steering Group provides advice to the NNTC and to the Government on policy matters relating to native title holders and PBCs, including funding and resources, governance, cultural heritage, water and economic development. In FY25 the PBC Steering Group met six times, and also met with several federal Ministers.

The PBC Steering Group worked with the Australia Government to progress work on a new funding regime for the native title sector with an initial ask of \$60-90 million per annum funding package for PBC support and operations. As work on the funding reform progresses, a new funding package is likely to be announced in FY26.

The PBC Steering Group presented on the potential new funding package to the NNTC Council and at the 2024 and 2025 AIATSIS Summits.



“Through their leadership, we’ve been able to build strong networks, exchange ideas, and work collectively to advance the interests of native title holders.” – Marcia McCullough, First Nations Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda People Aboriginal Corporation



“As a regional native title organisation, we value our collaborative relationship with the National Native Title Council. Working together, we’re able to strengthen the native title system, influence national policy, and support our members with a unified and strategic approach across the sector.”

- Leon Yeatman, CEO, North Queensland Land Council.

STORIES OF IMPACT

Alternative Framework - native title compensation

Every native title holder has a legal right to seek compensation for the loss or impairment of their native title rights. In practice, however, many Traditional Owner groups face significant barriers in accessing compensation. After consultations with native title holders, practitioners and stakeholders, the NNTC partnered with Redgum Legal to develop the interim report on the Alternative Compensation Framework. The Framework is broken into two parts: Part I: Learnings; and Part II: Recommendations. The Recommendations include a scheme for settling the compensation liability owed to native title holders that will be the subject of consultations with native title holders, NTRB/SPs, the private sector and government.

Stage 3 consultations and the final report will be completed in the second half of 2025.

In June 2025, the NNTC presented at the AIATSIS Summit in Darwin on the alternative compensation framework and the current barriers that need to be addressed in order to increase access to compensation under the *Native Title Act 1993*. The presentation was very well attended with all available seats filled and patrons standing in the aisles and at the back of the room.

Economic Policy Partnership

In May 2024, the Murru waaruu Outcomes Report was released, calling for a renewed focus on the economic aspirations of Indigenous peoples and a process of genuine co-design between the Australian Government and First Nations organisations on a comprehensive economic policy framework for the nation. This year, the First Nations Economic Empowerment Alliance was convened by the First Nations Portfolio at the Australian National University, Chaired by Peter Yu, with the NNTC as one of the founding members.

In FY25, the NNTC worked with the Alliance in a Treasury led First Nations Economic Empowerment Working Group to co-design critical economic matters on Indigenous economic empowerment for consideration by the Australian Government captured in the Phase 1: Outcomes Report.

Working alongside the Coalition of the Peaks Economic Partnership, chaired by the NNTC CEO Jamie Lowe, this work will inform negotiation of the first Economic Policy Partnership with the Australian Government.

OBJECTIVE ONE: POWERFUL PBC LED NATIONS AND NATIVE TITLE GOVERNANCE

The NNTC convenes regular opportunities for PBCs to meet, develop shared positions, and make decisions. We coordinate PBC Regional Forums, Steering Group Meetings, PBC Director trainings and capacity building events. We run Working Groups, act as the Secretariat for the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance and Sea Country Alliance and facilitate members to attend policy development meetings. We support coordination and collective decision-making across the native title sector.

PBC Director Trainings

In FY25, the NNTC ran two PBC Director Trainings — one in Busselton, WA (August 2024) and another in Alice Springs, NT (October 2024). Each four-day program brought together PBC Directors from across the regions for practical, interactive sessions focused on governance, leadership, legal responsibilities, and how to exercise rights under native title. Delivered by expert trainers, the training series strengthened confidence, knowledge, and collaboration among Directors while supporting consistent, high-quality governance across the native title sector.

Two further trainings planned for Yamba, New South Wales and Kalgoorlie, Western Australia were postponed due to weather events and unforeseen circumstances. Those events will be delivered in the next financial year.

Busselton Directors Training

19–22 August 2024, Undalup (Busselton)

The Busselton training brought together 21 participants from Karri Karrak, Whadjuk, and Gnaala Karla Booja Aboriginal Corporations. Participants described the sessions as empowering, practical, and respectful, with local delivery helping to make the experience more accessible and culturally grounded.

Many noted that the focus on directors' duties and decision-making helped them better understand their roles and strengthened their ability to represent their communities effectively. Participants also valued the opportunity to connect with others in the region, share ideas, and reflect on ways to lead with confidence and accountability.

Alice Springs Directors Training

22–25 October 2024, Mparntwe (Alice Springs)

Delivered in partnership with the Central Land Council, the Alice Springs training brought together 19 Directors from Patta, Huckitta Gurindji, and Kwaty Aboriginal Corporations. Participants found the program engaging, relevant, and personally uplifting, describing it as “informative”, “empowering”, and “an amazing experience.”

They particularly valued the focus on leadership and communication, gaining a clearer understanding of governance and the legal frameworks guiding native title. Networking and shared learning were seen as major benefits, with participants expressing enthusiasm for future on-Country training and continued opportunities to build skills and confidence as Directors and community leaders.

PBC Regional Forums

The NNTC facilitated PBC Regional Forums since 2017, delivering approximately six forums per year (except during COVID). The forums are run in collaboration with the NTRB/SP for the region and bring together PBCs to provide relevant information that can help increase their capacity to leverage off the available networks and government programs, ultimately leading to PBCs progressing towards self-sufficiency and economic independence.

Ultimately, the forums provide PBCs with an opportunity to network with other PBCs in their region, hear success stories from others and learn how to overcome challenges that each organisation faces in their day-to-day operations. Government agencies attend the forums to provide up to date information about the support available to PBCs and in turn learn about the major issues and concerns faced by PBCs across the country.

New project: PBC App Project

Following the success of PBCMob developed by the Central Land Council, the NNTC secured funding to develop two more apps to cover the region of North Queensland Land Council and another region yet to be determined. The app will provide immediate access to information about native title holders' determinations and rights. The app addresses the challenges faced by many native title holders, including limited English and digital literacy, navigating complex systems, and unreliable internet access. It provides plain-language, offline, and device-friendly information, making it easier for people in remote areas to understand and access what they need.

The app will support PBCs and native title holders to build their knowledge of rights and responsibilities of native title in their region. The apps will be region-specific, developed through co-design with PBCs and NTRB/SPs. This ensures they meet local needs while providing accurate and transparent information to native title holders. The apps will be visually engaging, with culturally appropriate design and content and offline functionality, ensuring accessibility in remote areas.

Image Credit
Paul Bell

“The National Native Title Council provides essential leadership at the national level, ensuring the native title sector has a strong, coordinated voice in policy development. Their advocacy and strategic engagement have helped shape reforms that reflect the realities and priorities of native title holders on the ground.”

- Alan Miller, Director, Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation

OBJECTIVE TWO: WHOLE OF COUNTRY RIGHTS



Through our advocacy work, we strengthen the legal, policy and funding environments that PBCs and Traditional Owner bodies operate in.

Reforming Cultural Heritage Protection laws

The NNTC auspices the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance. The Alliance was formed in 2020, and it has spent the past 5 years developing a clear roadmap to update and strengthen federal Cultural Heritage laws.

Federal First Nations Cultural Heritage laws were enacted 41 years ago as a 'last resort' mechanism, ultimately delivering inadequate federal protections. The Alliance's proposed reforms to the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* deliver a modern national framework to better protect First Nations Cultural Heritage. In 2024, the Alliance and the Australian Government undertook targeted consultations on key elements of the reforms. National consultations have involved nearly 60 organisations including peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, industry bodies, state and territory governments and other Australian Government agencies.

Dhawura Ngilan Business and Investor Initiative

The First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance continues to advance the Dhawura Ngilan (Remembering Country) Business and Investor Initiative, a First Nations led framework guiding how businesses and investors can respect cultural heritage and uphold the right to free, prior and informed consent.

Following the launch of the Dhawura Ngilan Principles and Implementation Guide in March 2024, the Initiative continues to gain momentum, with growing engagement from major industry leaders, including BHP, Lendlease, HESTA, QIC and a number of commercial banks and investors who are piloting implementation of the guides. In the year ahead, the Alliance will continue to work with industry leaders to embed the Dhawura Ngilan Principles more broadly across the business and investment sectors.

Reforming the Native Title Act's Future Acts Regime

The NNTC has continued to drive advocacy to reform the future acts regime in the *Native Title Act 1993*. Following the release of A Way Forward by the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia, the NNTC conducted a national snapshot to identify the practical challenges faced by PBCs and NTRB/SPs. This snapshot was shared with government and the NNTC advocated for the Australian Government to reform the future acts regime. In June 2024, the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) was tasked by the Government to review the regime.

The NNTC arranged for ALRC representatives to attend several PBC Regional Forums and the NNTC Council Meeting in Alice Springs, giving our members a voice in shaping its recommendations. The ALRC consulted nationwide and released an Issues Paper to which the NNTC submitted a response. In June 2025, the NNTC partnered with the Mabo Centre to host a Future Acts Symposium which brought together more than 40 people from across the native title sector to inform a joint submission to the ALRC's Discussion Paper.

The NNTC will continue to engage closely with the ALRC and our members to support the development of reforms to the *Native Title Act 1993*.

OBJECTIVE THREE: ADVANCING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

First Nations economic empowerment requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach between communities, Governments and industry. Our members tell us they need both: short term options for economic growth, including jobs and incomes; and more strategic wealth creation that provides an impact to communities over generations.



The advocacy and project work of the NNTC straddles the intersection of local and national, public and private sectors, and short- and longer-term options for economic opportunity, including:

1. Compensation claims and agreements
2. Strong native title agreements, including improvement to Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) and the future acts regime
3. A new native title operational funding program
4. Opportunities for access to capital and improved lending solutions.

Economic Policy reform

In 2024, the Prime Minister highlighted that the Government would take up the challenge of developing a comprehensive economic policy for Indigenous peoples. The Prime Minister noted the work of the First Nations Economic Empowerment Alliance, the NNTC and our members in making the announcement.

Working with the Commonwealth Government, the Coalition of Peaks and the First Nations Economic Empowerment Alliance, the NNTC was a key participant in the development and negotiations of the Economic Policy Partnership.

During FY25, the NNTC within the Alliance worked in a Treasury led First Nations Economic Empowerment Working Group to co-design critical economic matters on Indigenous economic empowerment for consideration by the Australian Government captured in the Phase 1: Outcomes Report.

The next stage of work will see the Partnership finalised, which will establish a mechanism for the Coalition of Peaks and the Alliance to collaborate on decisions about reforms to First Nations economic policy. It is built on the Closing the Gap Priority Reform 1 (Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making). Partners will meet 4–6 times a year.

The next stage of the Partnership will develop a First Nations Economic Framework, in collaboration with a wide range of First Nation stakeholders. The Framework will set out policy priorities and help drive coordinated action across the Commonwealth.

OBJECTIVE FOUR: ENABLING TREATY AND STRONG AGREEMENTS

The native title landscape is shifting from the determination phase, to agreement-making for implementation. As more PBCs move into the post-determination phase, the focus turns to enacting native title rights through agreements and economic opportunities. Every PBCs path to economic independence looks different. For some, it involves comprehensive settlements or compensation claims. For others, it is through negotiating strong ILUAs, securing equity stakes in major projects, forming joint ventures, or launching new enterprises that secure economic opportunity.

At the NNTC we provide PBCs with the tools, knowledge, and support to choose their own path. We develop economic and agreement-making frameworks that members can reference or adopt. We share practical knowledge across the sector, provide agreement-making guidance, document best practice approaches, and deliver targeted support to address capacity gaps as they emerge. This work ensures PBCs have the information and resources they need to make informed decisions about their economic futures.

Clean Energy and Co-ownership Videos

In FY24, our members often raised the issue of holding equity stakes in clean energy projects, wanting to know more about how it works and when it might be suitable. In response, the NNTC developed some materials: research papers on equity and clean energy agreements, explainer videos and a short training workshop on clean energy agreement-making and negotiations.

See the co-ownership videos [here on our new website](#). These illustrated animation videos are aimed at supporting PBCs to better understand clean energy projects, and the potential benefits and risks of co-ownership. The second video features the Yindjibarndi-ACEN agreement as a leading example of Traditional Owner-led decision making and equity for other groups to learn from.

Read the full article 'Resourcing the energy transition' [here on the Mabo Centre website](#).

Alternative Compensation Framework

Many Traditional Owner groups continue to face significant barriers in accessing compensation owed to them under native title law. Over FY25, the NNTC has worked closely with its members to address these barriers and promote fair and efficient pathways to settlement.

To support this work, the NNTC is developing a national framework to establish clear and consistent standards for compensating native title holders when their rights are affected by governments or third parties. This framework aims to provide greater certainty for both native title holders and project proponents, ensuring fair and transparent outcomes.

In FY25, the NNTC, in partnership with Redgum Legal and Consulting, continued consultations with NTRBs/SPs and PBCs, and presented on compensation issues at several regional forums and conferences.

Native Title Compensation Strategy

The NNTC is planning further forums to help address key challenges, including tenure analysis workshops and discussions focused on improving access to compensation.

The NNTC also continues to progress strategic litigation, including the development of test case priorities and remains actively engaged in improving court processes for the preservation of evidence for native title compensation through participation in the Preservation of Evidence Working Group convened by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

Education remains a key focus area, with new materials being developed to assist native title holders in understanding the legal and procedural considerations surrounding compensation.

Through these initiatives, the NNTC continues to strengthen access to native title compensation, supporting members to secure their legal entitlements and build stronger, more sustainable economic futures.

Commonwealth of Australia v Yunupingu [2025] HCA 6

In March 2025, the NNTC welcomed the High Court of Australia's decision in *Commonwealth of Australia v Yunupingu* [2025] HCA 6, a landmark case on compensation for native title holders in the Northern Territory. The NNTC congratulates the Yunupingu family and Gumatj Clan on this important outcome.

Following the judgment, the NNTC prepared and circulated a case note for members, outlining the background, key findings, and implications of the decision for native title holders across the country.

The NNTC will continue to keep members informed as several significant cases relating to native title compensation are set to be heard by the courts in the coming months.



OBJECTIVE FIVE: CLOSING THE GAP – LAND AND WATER RIGHTS



Image Credit
Caleb Sweeting

The NNTC co-chairs the Inland Waters Target Working Group alongside the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, to drive progress on the development of inland waters targets and related reforms.

At the July 2025 Joint Council meeting, members present agreed in principle to establish state and territory targets to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations' access to and ownership and management of inland waters by 2035. These targets will be agreed through jurisdictional partnership arrangements comprising governments, jurisdictional peaks and Traditional Owner organisations. The NNTC will work with Governments and members in the establishment of partnership arrangements and the development of targets and reforms over the next 12 months.

The NNTC has continued to work with and support other members of the Coalition of Peaks in implementing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap in its role as the Peaks' representative on economic development to the Joint Council, and subject matter lead for Outcome 15: land and waters. It has also participated in various Coalition of Peaks meetings, forums and working groups.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES

Much of the NNTC's work is achieved through partnerships and coalitions. The NNTC collaborates through formal and informal partnerships to strengthen Traditional Owner decision-making. Our partnerships enable us to work across multiple sectors and issues, achieving better outcomes for law reform, agreement-making and economic empowerment. We develop partnerships with industry, legal professionals, and civil society groups to strengthen our advocacy.

The NNTC is the secretariat for:

- First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance
- Sea Country Alliance
- PBC Steering Group

The NNTC is a partner with:

- Mabo Centre, University of Melbourne
- Australian National University First Nations Portfolio
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
- The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- First Nations Financial Management Board (Canada)
- First Nations Major Projects Coalition (Canada)

The NNTC is a member of:

- First Nations Economic Empowerment Alliance
- Coalition of the Peaks
- First Nations Clean Energy Network
- Net Zero Australia Advisory Group



Image Credit
Caleb Sweeting

WHAT'S NEXT

Our priorities over the next 12 months

Over the next 12 months the NNTC will capitalise on the window for reform arising from the returned federal government to advocate for and collaborate on stronger laws, politics and programs for native title holders and regional bodies. We will focus our efforts on five key areas of reform:

- Funding program reform for the native title sector: to see a stronger native title operational funding program and advocate for additional funding and financial options for the native title sector.
- Native title policy and legislative reform: with the review of the *Native Title Legislation Amendment Act 2021 (Cth)* and the expected Future Act Review report by the ALRC, the NNTC will work closely with the Australian Government on expected policy and legislative reform to the Native Title Act 1993 and future act regime.
- Cultural heritage legislative reform: with the commitment of the returning Government to continue with the reform of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 (Cth)* (ATSIHP Act) to ensure stronger cultural heritage protections for all Traditional Owners.
- Economic policy reform: through the finalisation of the Economic Policy Partnership, the NNTC will work with Government on the development of shorter- and longer-term economic policy reforms on matters such as access to capital, financial capacity and economic infrastructure.
- Water reform: the NNTC aims to steward in 6 new inland waters targets under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, as well as developing a broader water reform agenda with our membership.

Goldfields Region
Tom Widdup, NNTC

Advocating with industry and the private sector

Through our work on the Dhawura Ngilan Business and Investor Initiative, we will continue to engage companies across a range of sectors to improve practice according to the principles outlined in the UNDRIP.

With the upcoming development of the Traditional Owner Guarantor Fund, we will continue our work with lending and investment stakeholders to bring new financing opportunities to native title holders.

Member engagement and support

With increased internal capacity this coming year, the NNTC will focus on member engagement. This includes increasing the communication, information, services and products we can provide to our members.

We will continue to engage members to determine which products and services they need most.

REPRESENTING OUR MEMBERS

List of engagements, conferences and events attended

July 2024

- 4 July, Joint Council on Closing the Gap, Adelaide
- 10–11 July, PBC Steering Group (Jamukurnu-Yapalikunu Aboriginal Corporation), Perth
- 24 July, First Nations Portfolio and NNTC Workshop, Canberra
- 30 July, Coalition of the Peaks Communications Advocacy Strategy Workshop, Online

August 2024

- 2–4 August, Garma Festival, Gove, Northern Territory
- 5 August, Chevron and the Sea Country Alliance, Online
- 9 August, NAB First Nations Advisory Group – Introduction (Jamie Lowe and Ann Sherry AO), Online
- 14 August, Towards Sustainable Mining, Community of Interest Panel meeting, Perth
- 15 August, Annual Meeting | BHP Chair, BHP CEO and First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance, Melbourne
- 19–22 August, PBC Director Training, Busselton, Western Australia
- 21 August, Valedictory Speech by the Hon Linda Burney MP, Australian Labor Party, Member for Barton (NSW), Minister for Indigenous Australians, Canberra
- 22 August, First Nations Legal and Research Service Anniversary, Melbourne
- 23 August, Native Title Senior Officers Meeting, Canberra
- 28–30 August, PBC Steering Group meeting, Yamba, NSW

September 2024

- 2–3 September, Carpentaria Land Council 40th Anniversary (Gulf Connect 2024), Burketown, QLD
- 4–5 September, Yamatji on Country, Geraldton, WA
- 17–18 September, Native Title Services Goldfields PBC Regional Forum, Kalgoorlie, WA
- 24–26 September, Aboriginal Sea Country Conference, Darwin, NT
- 25 September, First Nations Australia-Canada MOU quarterly meeting, online

October 2024

- 3 October, CEO address Aboriginal Enterprises in Mining, Energy and Exploration Ltd Conference, Perth.
- 8 October, Global Nature Positive Summit, Sydney
- 9 October, BHP Traditional Owners Summit, Adelaide
- 17 October, NNTC Board Meeting, online
- 17 October, DNBII Webinar, “How businesses and investors can protect our unique Indigenous Heritage”, online
- 22–25 October, PBC Director Training, Alice Springs
- 28 October, NNTC Annual General Meeting, Alice Springs
- 28 October, FNHPA – General Alliance Meeting, Alice Springs
- 29 October, NNTC Council Meeting, Alice Springs
- 31 October, International Mining and Resources Conference, Sydney

November 2024

- 8 November, Victorian Treaty Forum, Geelong
- 11 November, WA's Pathway to a Net-Zero Economy Event, Perth
- 13 November, Native Title and Indigenous Cultural Heritage Law – Professional Development Seminar, Melbourne
- 15 November, First Nations Economic Empowerment Alliance Policy Roundtable, Canberra
- 18 November, Inland Waters Target Working Group Meeting, November, Melbourne
- 19 November, NNTC Board Meeting, Online
- 20 November, Cultural heritage meeting with Minerals Council of Australia, Melbourne
- 20 November, PBC Steering Group Meeting, Online
- 22 November, Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand (HCOANZ) Conference, Canberra
- 25 November, Commonwealth Closing the Gap Implementation JWG, Online

December 2024

- 4–5 December, SANTS Regional Forum, Coffin Bay, South Australia
- 6 December, First Nations Economic Working Group Meeting, Canberra
- 10–12 December, AHC125 Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, VIC
- 11 December, First Nations Australia-Canada MOU quarterly meeting
- 18 December, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Expert Panel Meeting, Online

January 2025

- 20 January, Members briefing on the Inland Waters Target, Online
- 29–30 January, NNTC Operational Planning, Perth

February 2025

- 5 February, NAB First Nations Advisory Group, Melbourne
- 17 February, Native Title Sector Executive Training Program, Online
- 18 February, PBC Steering Group Meeting, Online
- 19 February, General Alliance Meeting, Brisbane
- 20 February, NNTC Council Meeting, Brisbane
- 24 February, Inland Waters Target Working Group Meeting, Online
- 25 February, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Expert Panel Meeting, Online

March 2025

- 4 March, Mabo Centre First Nations Advisory Board Meeting, Perth
- 4 March, Mabo Centre Launch, Perth
- 12 March, Gumatj Compensation Case, Canberra
- 13 March, Towards Sustainable Mining Coalition of Interest Advisory Panel Meeting, Online
- 25 March, SVA–NNTC Final Future Proofing Workshop, Online
- 25 March, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Expert Panel Meeting, Sydney
- 26 March, Alliance Partnership Meeting, Canberra
- 27 March, Net Zero Australia Project Advisory Group Meeting, Melbourne
- 28 March, NNTC Board Meeting, Online
- 31 March, Australian Heritage Council AHC126, Parramatta

April 2025

- 2 April, NNTC / Powering Australia, Canberra
- 7–8 April, Native Title Strategic Issues Forum, Adelaide
- 10 April, Inland Waters Target Working Group Meeting, Online

List of engagements, conferences and events attended

May 2025

- 5–6 May, PBC Steering Group Meeting, Broome
- 14 May, Accredited Native Title Training Workshop, Canberra
- 15 May, NNTC Aboriginal Water Roundtable (WA), Online
- 20–21 May, Central Land Council Regional Forum (PBC Camp), Ross River
- 26 May, Aus-Canada First Nations Economic Policy Roundtable, Canberra
- 27 May, Aus-Canada Government House MOU Function, Canberra
- 28 May, Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA) Conference Australia 2025, Sydney

June 2025

- 2–6 June, AIATSIS Summit 2025, Darwin
- 11 June, Australian Heritage Council AHC127, Online
- 16 June, Net Zero Economy Authority First Nations Workshop, Canberra
- 20 June, Joint Council on Closing the Gap, Darwin
- 24 June, Inland Waters Target Working Group Meeting, Online
- 25 June, CFN Board Meeting and Workshop, Sydney
- 27 June, Mabo Centre Future Acts & the Native Title Regime, Melbourne

List of NNTC submissions and publications

12 December 2024

NNTC submission in response to the Consolidated Mining Standard Initiative Draft Standard, submitted to the Consolidated Mining Standard Initiative.

21 October 2024

NNTC submission, Review of the North Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF), submitted to the Chair of the Independent Expert Panel, NAIF Secretariat (federal).

27 September 2024

NNTC submission, Informing the Agenda Project, Australian Human Rights Commission.

13 September 2024

NNTC submission, Sustainable Ocean Plan: Navigating a course to 2040, Senate Inquiry into Offshore Wind Industry Consultation Process

26 July 2024

NNTC Submission, Future Made in Australia, Senate Economic Legislation Committee.



OUR TEAM

Staff employed by the NNTC during the 2024-25 Financial Year

- Anirudha Nagar**
Director of Clean Energy and Finance

Aurora Milroy
Director of Policy

Belinda Burbidge
Chief Operation Officer

Carolyn Betts
Senior Executive Officer

Chelsie Collard
Policy Officer

Chirantha Perera
Finance Officer

Clinton Benjamin
Director of Native Title
- Debby Lovett**
National Training Manager

Emily Robinson
Executive Officer/Graphic Designer

Jack Faine
Legal Advisor

Jaidah Lowe
Policy Officer

Jamie Lowe
Chief Executive Officer

Jasmine Yarran
Senior Governance Officer

Jessica Kendall
Director of Strategic Communications
- Rashin Eftekhari**
Executive Assistant to the CEO

Sarah Easson
Head of Media Relations

Scott Mackay
Senior Policy Officer

Tobias Beckmann
Senior Economic Officer

Tom Widdup
Engagement Strategy Advisor

Xena Jammass
Policy Officer



OUR BOARD

During the 2024-25 Financial Year

- 

Kado Muir
Wakamurru Aboriginal Corporation
Chair
- 

Francine McCarthy
Central Land Council
Deputy Chair
- 

Melvin Farmer
Mungarlu Ngurrarankatja
Rirraunkaja Aboriginal Corporation
Local Member
- 

Kaylene Malthouse
Dulabed and Malanbarra
Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation
Local Member
- 

Joshua Haynes
Yandruwandha
Yawarrarwanda
Traditional Land Owners Corporation
Local Member
- 

Peter Windie
Yamatji Marlpa
Aboriginal Corporation
Regional Member
- 

Tim Wishart
Queensland South
Native Title Services
Regional Member
- 

Kenneth Stewart
First Nations Legal and
Research Services
Regional Member
- 

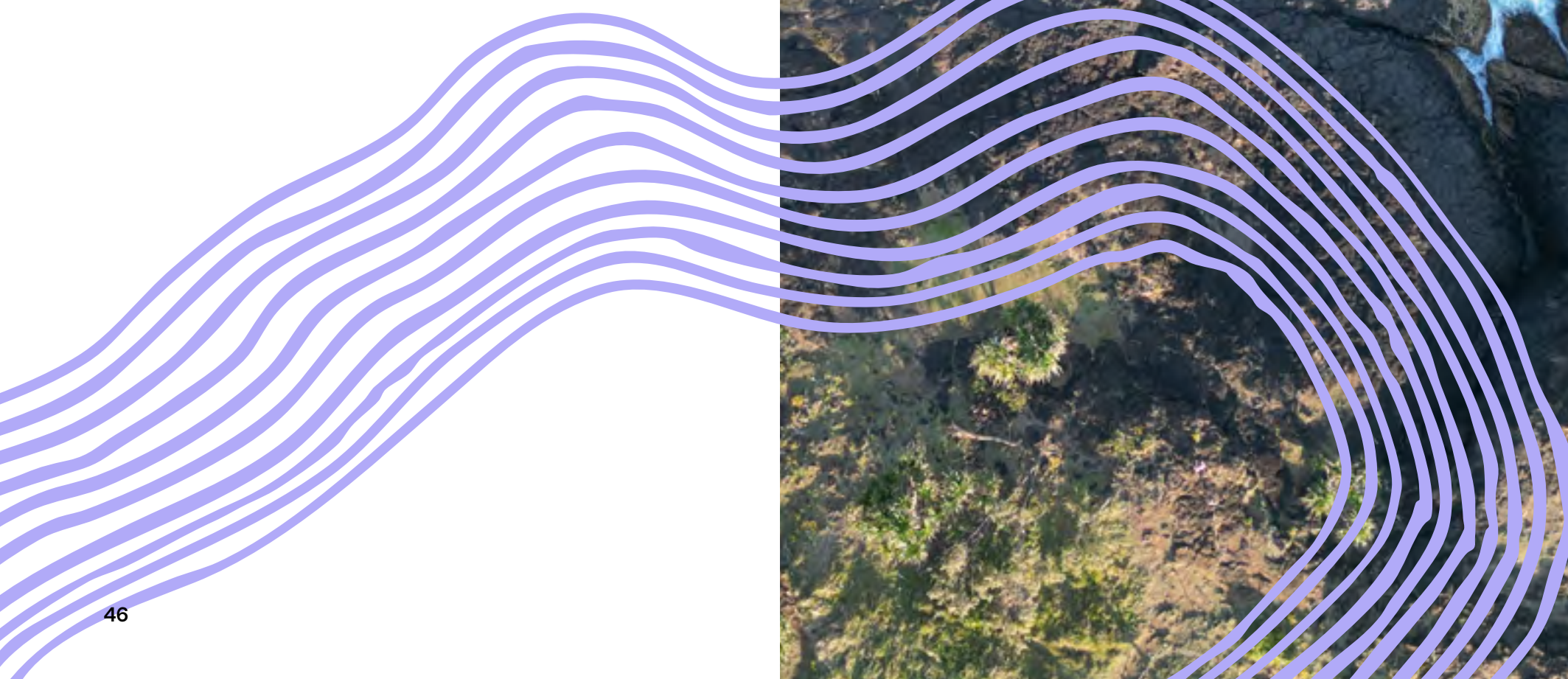
Ned Lui David
Gur A Baradharaw
Kod Torres Strait Sea
and Land Council
Torres Strait Islander
Corporation
Additional Director
- 

Patricia Laurie
Yaegl Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation
Additional Director

SPECIAL THANKS

To the many individuals and organisations who contributed their time, expertise and effort to make the NNTC's events and meetings a success, including those who travelled interstate. The NNTC couldn't do the work we do without the commitment and efforts of our members and supporters.

Bundjalung Country
Tom Widdup, NNTC



FINANCES

The following financial statements are an extract of our audited Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2025.

For our full audited statements visit:
www.nntc.com.au

Statement of Profit or Loss & Other Comprehensive Income

	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Income		
Grants received	6,154,669	5,303,173
Membership fees	225,000	225,000
Interest received	128,355	87,063
Other revenue	777,130	2,216,986
Total Income	7,285,154	7,832,223
Expenses		
Employee costs	3,109,903	2,268,710
Consultant fees	1,820,165	1,231,423
Travel Expenses	1,018,635	1,662,212
Web Expenses	62,407	20,476
Depreciation	55,013	17,808
Other Expenses	878,865	1,724,272
Total Expenses	6,944,988	6,924,901
Current year Surplus / (deficit)	340,166	907,321

Statement of Financial Position

Current Assets	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Cash & Cash Equivalents		
Cash at bank	4,534,861	4,379,234
	4,534,861	4,379,234
Trade & other Receivables		
Trade receivables	336,749	143,647
	336,749	143,647
Other current Assets		
Accrued Income	2,339	-
Prepayments	41,111	-
Salary Advances / Clearing Items	-	1,311
	43,450	1,311
Total Current Assets	4,915,060	4,524,192
Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment		
Computer Equipment	56,869	49,120
Furniture	15,850	-
Office Equipment	4,702	-
ROU Asset	304,582	-
	382,003	49,120
Total Non-Current Assets	382,003	49,120
Total Assets	5,297,063	4,573,312

Statement of Financial Position

Current Liabilities	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Accounts Payable & other Payables		
NAB CC	6,159	12,015
Accruals	77,605	84,919
Superannuation payable	2,611	978
Lease Liability	45,490	-
Unexpended Grant	2,713,121	2,656,170
Trade Creditors	101,533	193,602
Leave Entitlement	335,735	287,483
Total Current Liabilities	3,282,254	3,235,167
Non-Current Liabilities	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Provisions		
Lease Liability	264,112	-
Leave Entitlement	72,386	-
Total Non-Current Liabilities	336,498	-
Total Liabilities	3,618,752	3,235,167
Net Assets	1,678,311	1,338,145
Equity		
Retained Surplus / (accumulated Deficit)	1,678,311	1,338,145
Total Equity	1,678,311	1,338,145



National Native Title Council Ltd

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[National Native Title Council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-native-title-council)



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www.nntc.com.au

The NNTC 2024-25 Annual Report was designed internally by Emily Robinson, Gunai-Gunditjmara woman.