



Aboriginal Areas  
Protection Authority  
*protecting sacred sites across the territory*

# AAPA ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

NOTICE: Due to the passing of Kunmanara Hoosan, some images and references within the AAPA Annual Report 2021-22 have been temporarily removed out of respect to Kunmanara, his extended family and his friends.

**AAPA Board Members (left to right) in front of Welcome to the Wetlands sign:**

Cover Image: Custodian Ryan Baruwei and Ranger Joseph Markham at lower pools of Gunlom falls

## Acknowledgement of country

The Authority acknowledges the First Nations people throughout the Northern Territory.

We have a continuing, powerful connection to this land and its waters. We thank all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with whom we work, and who help the Authority to protect our sacred sites for all Australians. The Authority pays its respects to the many custodians of country, and to our leaders past, present and emerging.

## Disclaimer

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has taken due care in ensuring information contained in this annual report was true and correct at the time of publication, however changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on its accuracy. The Authority disclaim all liability associated with the use of this information by others in contexts not approved by the Authority.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island readers and viewers should be aware that this material may contain images or names of deceased persons.

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## Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority

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The Hon Chansey Paech MLA  
Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage  
GPO Box 3146  
DARWIN NT 0801

25 November 2022

Dear Minister,

I have the pleasure to submit to you, in accordance with section 14(1) of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989, the annual report of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

The report refers to the thirty-third year of operation of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

Yours sincerely



Bobby Nunggumajbarr  
Chairperson

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The Hon Chansey Paech MLA  
Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage  
GPO Box 3146  
DARWIN NT 0801

25 November 2022

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (the Authority) for the financial year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

Pursuant to the Financial Management Act 1995 and Information Act 2002, and Treasurer's Directions, I advise that to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- a. proper records of all transactions affecting the Authority are kept and the employees under my control observe the provisions of the Financial Management Act 1995, the Financial Management Regulations and Treasurer's Directions;
- b. procedures within the Authority afford proper internal control and a current description of such procedures is recorded in the accounting and property manual, which has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Management Act 1995;
- c. no indication of fraud, malpractice, major breach of legislation or delegation, major error in or omission from the accounts and records exists;
- d. the internal audit capacity available to the Authority is adequate and the results of internal audits have been reported to me;
- e. the financial statements included in the annual report have been prepared from proper accounts and records and are in accordance with Treasurer's Directions; and
- f. the Authority is working in compliance with the Information Act 2002.

Yours sincerely



Dr Benedict Scamبارy  
Chief Executive Officer

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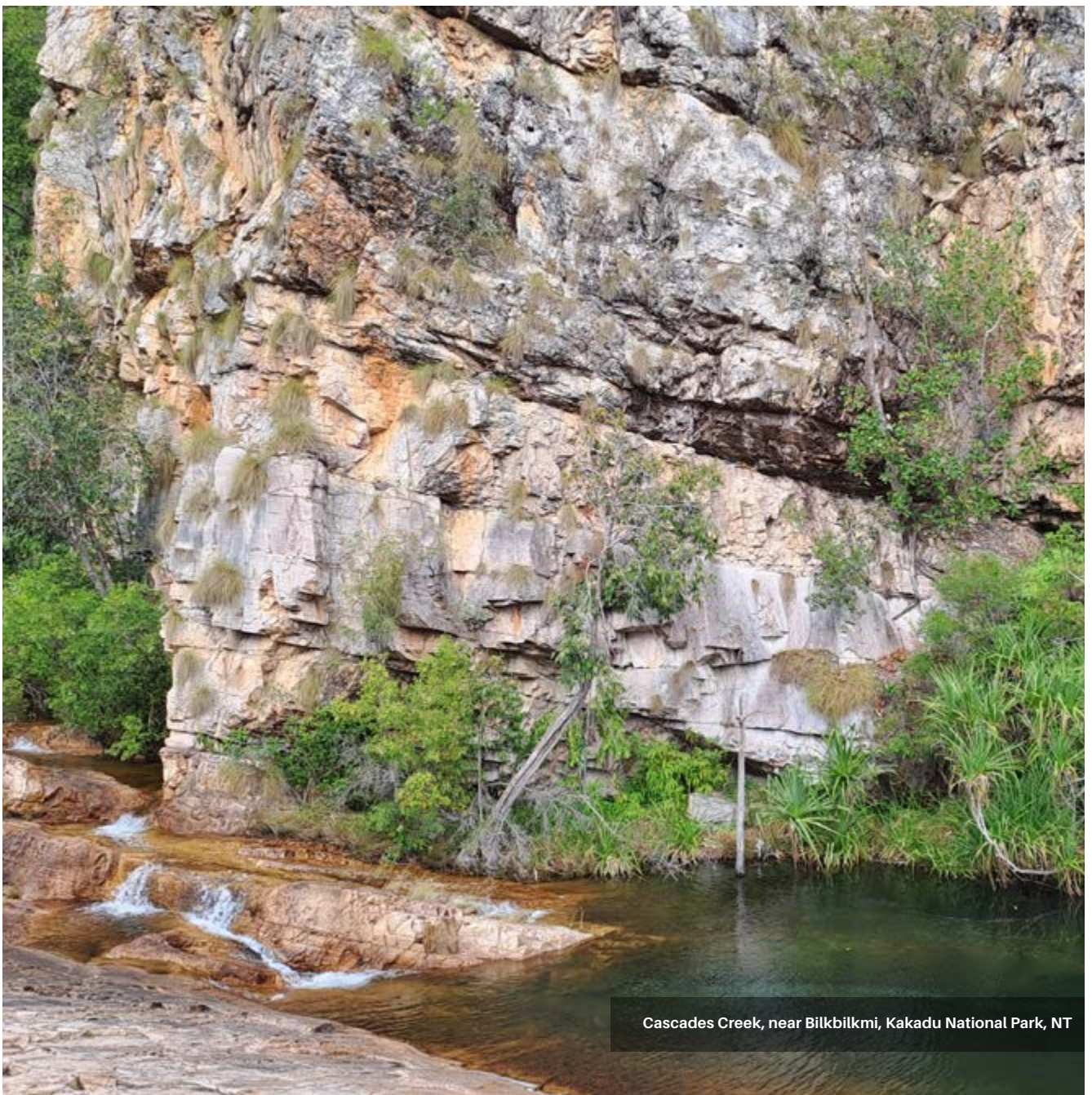
# INTRODUCTION

## ROLE AND FUNCTION

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (the Authority) is a statutory authority that was established under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* (Sacred Sites Act). It is responsible for overseeing the protection of sacred sites in the Northern Territory.

The Authority's functions are set out in section 10 of the Sacred Sites Act. The Northern Territory Government and the broader community recognises protecting Aboriginal sacred sites as an important element in preserving the NT's cultural heritage for the benefit of all Territorians.

The Authority ensures the protection of sacred sites whilst providing developers with certainty and confidence when carrying out works.



Cascades Creek, near Bilkbilkmi, Kakadu National Park, NT





Mr Bobby Nunggumajbarr  
Chairperson

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

**This has been a year dominated by law: COVID laws to keep community safe; broken traditional law at Gunlom that has seen the Authority go the Supreme Court to fight for our sacred sites; Commonwealth law, as the Federal Government grapples with how to protect sacred sites after the destruction at Juukan Gorge; and in the NT this year, the Minister upheld our finding that McArthur River Mine had not properly consulted with traditional custodians about plans to expand.**

Gunlom is a sacred site for Jawoyn people in Kakadu National Park. It is within Bula country which Munanga (white people) call 'sickness country'. It is a dangerous place, but Jawoyn people want to share this place with visitors safely and ensure sacred sites are respected and protected. But the Director of National Parks built a walkway in the wrong place here and broke our traditional law. As a result, the Authority began a prosecution in September 2020 and it is still ongoing.

It is very disappointing for custodians and the Authority that this matter was not resolved quickly, and remedial work immediately undertaken at Gunlom. While the Director of National Parks has admitted wrongdoing, they have argued they can not be held to account under Territory law. This is a serious constitutional challenge which has far reaching implications for the protection of sacred sites across the NT. **We need to know that Munanga law is strong and can protect our sites on any land in the Northern Territory. Our law for our sacred places is powerful, and we need Munanga law to be strong too.**

The constitutional issues were considered by the Full Court of the Supreme Court in March, and we are waiting on the Court's decision.

Meanwhile the Authority is committed to making federal legislation stronger to protect our heritage and has joined the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance who are working in partnership with the Australian Government to improve First Nations cultural heritage protections.

The Senate's final report into the destruction of Juukan Gorge called for a significant overhaul of national cultural heritage legislation, including veto powers for Traditional Owners to refuse consent to projects impacting cultural heritage. Our evidence and submissions to the Juukan Gorge Inquiry

showed how the NT Sacred Sites Act has successfully protected our sacred places for the benefit of all Australians. The NT model provides certainty and clarity for custodians and developers, and offers many lessons for the Commonwealth. We welcome the Federal Government's commitment to strengthen national laws, and will also work with the NT Government to review our own Act in the context of this changing legislation.

This year did see the resolution of one long-standing issue, when the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage supported our ruling that McArthur River Mine (MRM) did not have custodian agreement to expand their waste rock dump. The waste dump is currently within 35 metres of a significant Barramundi Dreaming site, Damangani, and under the proposed expansion the waste dump would have a footprint around twice the size of Uluru. This has widespread implications for many sacred sites in the vicinity, including a number of soaks and waterholes on the minesite. MRM are now working with the Northern Land Council to develop an Indigenous Land Use Agreement over the mine expansion. The Authority is continuing to monitor the sacred sites and ensure their ongoing protection.

The Authority's ability to get on country with custodians was greatly hampered in the first half of 2022 when first the NT Government and then the Federal Government implemented bio-security zones, restricting remote travel as part of the COVID measures to protect our Aboriginal communities. This was a very stressful time for our staff and remote communities, and I extend my thanks to everyone who went above and beyond to continue our important work during these challenges, and who did their utmost to keep our remote communities safe.

And finally, I wish to thank those Aboriginal board members who left us last year – Elaine Watts, Jack Green, Lynette Granites and Phillip Mamarika. They gave the Authority years of dedicated service. Lynette in particular had been with the AAPA board since 2005, making her our longest serving member, and she leaves with our gratitude. I am also pleased to welcome our new government board members, Amy Dennison and Nigel Browne, who replace Leah Clifford and Andrew Cowan. I welcome our new members [REDACTED] Aputula; Lorraine Jones from Timber Creek; Christopher Neade from Elliott; and Jennifer Yantarrnga from Umbakumba.







**Ms Valerie Martin**  
Deputy Chairperson

## DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

**It was another busy year for the Authority, and another year in which unfortunately the business of balancing site protection with the needs of industry, pushed aside the important work of sacred site registration.**

Despite COVID restrictions on travel, the Authority staff and consultants spent 429 days in the field, on country, this year, but fieldwork to support site registration was only done when it could be combined with Authority Certificate consultation. **It continues to be of great concern to me and the Board that there is a backlog of registration requests. Whilst all sites are protected, regardless of registration, there can be no doubt that having a site comprehensively documented offers the strongest protection.** I'm pleased, however, that the Authority has been able to collaborate with Indigenous ranger groups such as Mimal, Wagiman, Guwardagun, Djelk, li-Anthawirriyarra, and Yirralka to progress sacred site protection through surveys, signage and compliance activities. This work will inform forthcoming registrations, and strengthen relationships with Indigenous rangers across the NT. It remains a focus of the Board to find ways to increase the number of registered sacred sites.

Whilst water management and its impact on sacred sites remains a challenge for the Authority, to date the Authority's work, including audits of Authority Certificate restrictions related to onshore gas projects and the Beetaloo Basin, has been proceeding well. It is very welcome that Environment Management Plans can not be approved without the existence of an Authority Certificate, and I thank the Authority staff for their rigorous work meeting this new complex demand and in particular I thank the compliance team on responding to custodian concerns.

As is customary, the Authority continued to show its support for small business, not-for-profit and community activities this year by providing full or partial waivers of our fees for eight projects. This included a cost waiver for the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress to develop the Todd Street Health Hub; and for Larrakia Development Corporation in relation to their proposed cultural centre.

The Authority continues to be a highly trusted agency, and the Board and I give our thanks to the staff for their dedication to ensuring custodians are fully informed about projects prior to development, and for their tireless work protecting our sacred sites for all Australians.







**Dr Benedict Scambary**  
Chief Executive Officer

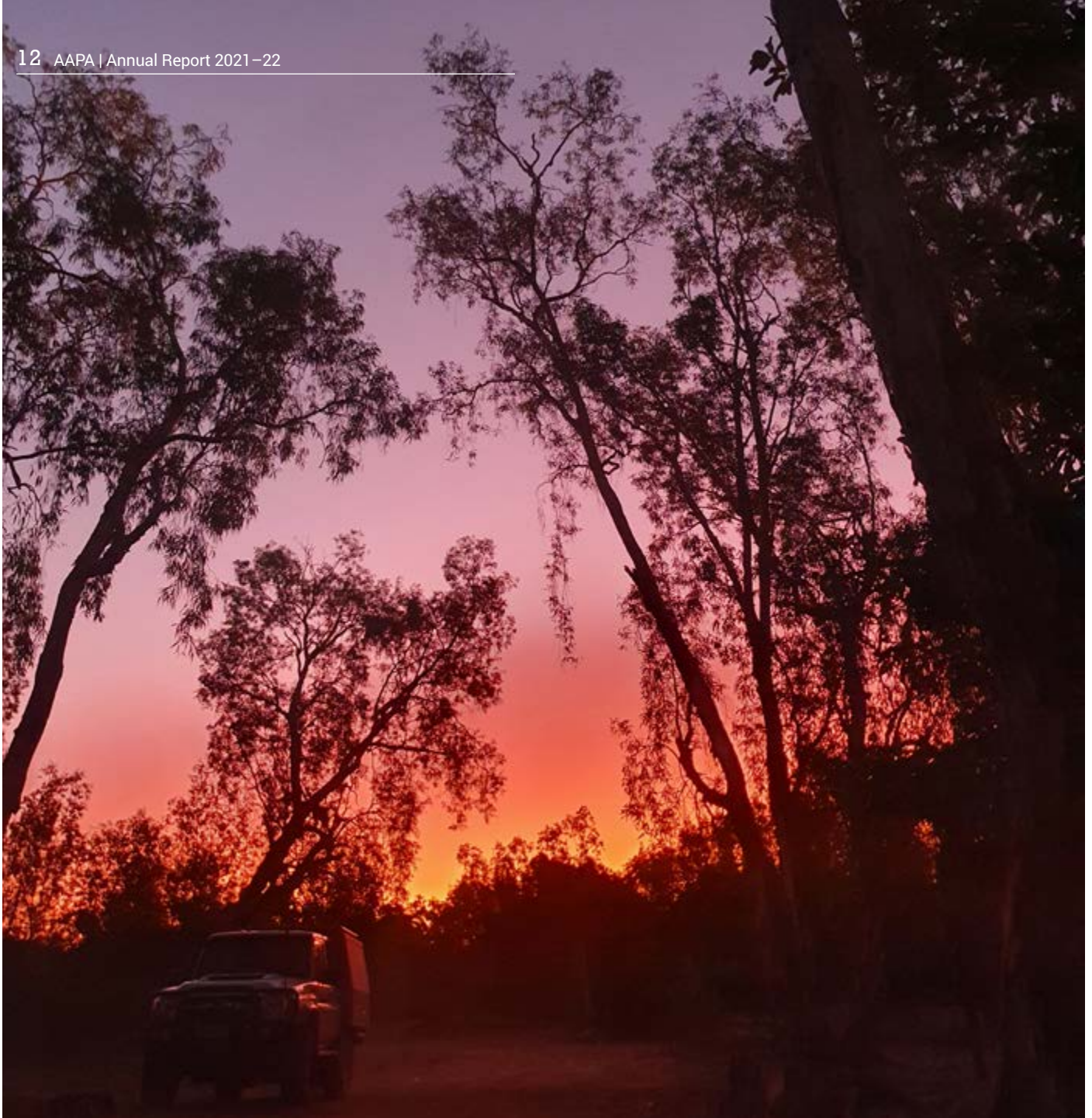
# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

**The past year has been one of challenges for the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority - challenges which we have risen to, but some of which reflect emerging trends that will demand a long-term sophisticated response from the Authority. Foremost amongst these is water, and evolving land use in the Territory.**

The Authority is responsible for overseeing the protection of Aboriginal sacred sites on land and sea. These can be rocks, hills, and plains, but also include trees, soaks and billabongs, all of which can be dependent on groundwater. More than 5,000 sacred sites in the NT are water places, which represents more than a third of the sacred sites in the NT. In the context of rapidly changing land use, pastoral land clearing, increased water licenses, and of course on-shore gas and other mining activities, there is an urgent need for the Authority to develop additional expertise, but also for complex projects to provide the relevant information. **It is critical we can ensure custodians understand the potential impacts of development, to better guide the requirements of Authority Certificates.**

The Authority is also hampered by the ongoing inadequacy of our business operating systems. The tempo of demand on the Authority continues to be high, with 166 Authority Certificate applications this year. The significant issues with our sacred sites and research database (ARMS) and AAPA Online are affecting service delivery and the effectiveness of the organisation. The systems are no longer fit-for-purpose and are unstable, putting not only our work protecting sites at high risk, but undermining our ability to provide timely support to development in the NT. A new database for the Authority was a recommendation from the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission Progress Report, and we will continue to seek funding for this vital project in 2022-23.

This year has also seen the Authority take a case to the Supreme Court, in an effort to resolve constitutional issues raised by the Director of National Parks. Very sadly, senior custodian and Jawoyn traditional owner, Mr Markham, passed away this year before he could see justice for his people's sacred site. We look forward to having this matter resolved soon, and I thank the Board for their strong guidance during this prosecution.



Sunset at Borroloola area, NT

# OUR ORGANISATION

“WE TAKE SENIOR CUSTODIANS OUT TO INSPECT SACRED SITES AND INSPECT AREAS WHERE WORKS COULD BE, SO THEY KNOW WHAT IS PLANNED AND CAN ADVISE US HOW TO PROTECT THE SITES.”

- PHIL ADGEMIS, ANTHROPOLOGIST AND RESEARCH OFFICER

## OUR HISTORY

While its form has changed over time, the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has existed for 44 years. Our history is entwined with the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Aboriginal Land Rights Act) the legislation that gives the Northern Territory the power to pass laws for the protection of sacred sites. That Act provided a foundation for the Sacred Sites Act.

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has existed for

# 44 years

**Throughout the 1980s** there were numerous proposals to amend the *Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1978 (NT)*.

**Since 1989, the Sacred Sites Act has established a framework for sacred site protection based on voluntary engagement.**

The Act's predecessor, the *Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1978 (NT)*, was one of the first pieces of legislation the Northern Territory Government passed after self-government was granted in 1978. The new law was significant in its recognition of Aboriginal culture by empowering Aboriginal people to protect their sites of cultural significance and allowing their sites to be recorded, registered and protected in the context of development.

Under the new law, it became an offence to enter, remain on, carry out works on, or desecrate sacred sites anywhere in the Northern Territory. Other parts of today's legal protection were also established at that point, including a board largely made up of Aboriginal custodians who are nominated by land councils, and a clear framework for the protection of sacred sites.

The early years brought some controversy between the Authority, the government and developers. The general public had little understanding of sacred sites and their meaning and importance to Aboriginal people. However, under the strong leadership of senior Aboriginal chairmen, including Mr Raphael Apuatimi OAM and Mr Wenten Rubuntja AM, the Authority worked hard to bridge this gap by engaging with government and developers to negotiate workable solutions.

Throughout the 1980s, there were numerous proposals to amend the *Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1978 (NT)*. In 1988, due to concerns around the Act, the NT Government introduced the *Aboriginal Areas Protection Bill (NT)* in an attempt to strike a more effective balance between protecting sacred sites and supporting development in the NT.

The government continued negotiations with the Authority and land councils over amendments to the sacred sites legislation, which led to the current Sacred Sites Act and the establishment of the current Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

Since 1989, the Sacred Sites Act has established a framework for sacred site protection based on voluntary engagement. Under the Act, the Authority is recognised as the expert body for identifying and consulting with Aboriginal custodians and for issuing Authority Certificates. All Authority Certificates reflect custodian wishes and set out clear conditions under which

proposed work near sacred sites may be carried out. They provide a defence against prosecution under the Sacred Sites Act, if the conditions are followed. While Authority Certificates are not mandatory, they give developers, businesses and individuals certainty about how to protect sacred sites, and ensure Aboriginal custodians have given free, prior and informed consent to development.

In recognition of the importance of sacred sites and their protection, the Northern Territory Government obtains Authority Certificates for many of its public works. Key agencies such as the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics use Certificates to guide their many projects because they provide clear instructions about what can and cannot be done in and around sacred sites. Through the Authority Certificate process, the Authority has facilitated thousands of government projects across the Northern Territory.

Following the acceptance of all 135 recommendations of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory, the *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016* (Petroleum Regulations) were amended so that Authority Certificates must be obtained as part of all environment management plans (EMPs) for hydraulic fracturing projects. Additionally, the Authority must be given a copy of any hydraulic fracturing applications and the opportunity to consult with custodians and provide comments to the relevant decision maker. These changes have placed the Authority into the regulatory regime and approvals process for all onshore petroleum activities in the NT. The benefit for proponents and stakeholders alike is that the streamlined process reduces the risk of delays and duplication of work and ensures sacred sites are adequately considered for all hydraulic fracturing projects.

**MARINDJA ROAD**

**ROAD OPEN**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

FROM 0.00 km TO 18.3 km

WEIGHT LIMIT \_\_\_\_\_

No. OF AXLES \_\_\_\_\_

FROM 18.3 km TO 67.0 km

WEIGHT LIMIT \_\_\_\_\_

No. OF AXLES \_\_\_\_\_

ROAD INFORMATION 1800 246 199

## KEY SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE AUTHORITY

The Authority manages the protection of Aboriginal sacred sites through:

- sacred site avoidance surveys and issuing Authority Certificates for any proposed development
- providing the public with information about existing sacred sites through abstracts of Authority records and access to the register we maintain
- registering Aboriginal sacred sites.

### AUTHORITY CERTIFICATES

Anyone proposing to use or work on land in the Northern Territory may apply to the Authority for an Authority Certificate to cover their proposed activities.

We issue these Certificates based on consultations with custodians, and the Certificates include clear conditions on what can and cannot be done in and around sacred sites.

An Authority Certificate provides a defence against prosecution in relation to the works or uses covered by the Authority Certificate, if the applicant complies with any conditions imposed to protect sacred sites.

While Authority Certificates are voluntary, they are an effective risk management tool for developers because they indicate where sacred sites are and how to work in and around them. This helps prevent desecration of the site, which can lead to prosecution, reputational damage, project delays and extra cost.

### REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Members of the public can seek advice on sacred sites by requesting access to the register of sacred sites. We provide abstracts of records on where sacred sites are known to exist, so they are not inadvertently damaged.

These abstracts give information on the sacred sites that are likely to be at risk if works are carried out without seeking more detailed information. We might advise that works should not be carried out near these sacred sites without an Authority Certificate and that any development proposals must take into account the sacred site's existence.

### THE REGISTRATION OF ABORIGINAL SACRED SITES

Custodians of Aboriginal sacred sites may apply to have their sites registered under Part III, Division 2 of the Sacred Sites Act.

The Authority then conducts anthropological research, including consulting with Aboriginal custodians and reviewing the register for any historical information that may be available on the proposed sacred site to determine the site's location, boundaries and significance in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. Landowners are given an opportunity to comment on the proposed registration before it's presented to the Board.

In accordance with the Sacred Sites Act, the Board of the Authority must approve the registration of sacred sites.

## OUR STAKEHOLDERS

**Sacred sites are important to the cultural life and heritage of the Northern Territory. Their preservation is important to all Australians.**

**The Authority serves a diverse range of stakeholders:**

- Aboriginal custodians and traditional owners
- Northern Territory and Australian Government agencies
- Industry including the oil, gas, mining, pastoral and agricultural industries.
- the Defence Force
- land councils
- local governments and shires
- communication network companies
- tourism operators
- environment managers (including Aboriginal rangers)
- home owners
- real estate agents and conveyancers
- private and non-government organisations who use land across the NT.

The Authority strives to meet the needs of all stakeholders in protecting sacred sites.



Custodian Mangatjay Yunupingu being interviewed by Dr. Sophie Creighton on Yirrkala main beach





# Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority

*protecting sacred sites across the territory*

## STRATEGIC PLAN

### CUSTODIAN VALUES

- Traditional Law
- Knowledge

### AUTHORITY GUIDING VALUES

- Two Laws
- Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act
- Independence
- Integrity

### CLIENT VALUES

- Legal Certainty
- Advice

### Strategies to Protect Sacred Sites in the NT

Promote the Value of Sacred Sites in the Northern Territory by:

1. Ensure Compliance with the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*
2. Adopt a Risk Management Approach to Corporate Governance
3. Advance Technology and Information Management
4. Advance High Quality Research and Land Information
5. Staff Committed to the Values of a High Performing Organisation
6. Streamlined Financial Management Systems

### MISSION STATEMENT:

To protect Sacred Sites in the Northern Territory



# ORGANISATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Authority registered **19 SACRED SITES** during Authority board meetings.

**73%** of **AUTHORITY CERTIFICATES** were issued within six months.

The Authority completed **896 REQUESTS** for information from our records.

AAPA staff and consultants spent **429 DAYS** in the field.

The Authority issued **92 AUTHORITY CERTIFICATES** for projects across the Northern Territory, including for tourism, infrastructure and mining.

The Authority issued Authority Certificates for **key projects** including the upgrade of the Shady Camp campground; infrastructure upgrades at Kakadu National Park; works at the Jervois Base Metal Project; and the Defence Wartime Remnants Cleanup Program across the Top End.

The Authority provided **eight full** or partial waivers to support a range of projects across the NT. These supported Aboriginal organisations with community initiatives, as well as tourism, infrastructure and environmental management projects. These waivers supported economic development in the NT, and amounted to **\$107,803**.



Custodian John Stuart-Newchurch presenting at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Summit (AIATSIS) 2022

# GOVERNANCE

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority board comprises 12 members. Ten members are custodians nominated by Northern Territory Land Councils: five men and five women. The other two members are nominated by the Northern Territory Minister for Heritage.

The Administrator of the Northern Territory appoints members by notice in the Northern Territory Government Gazette. The Administrator also appoints the Chair and Deputy Chair, based on nominations from the Authority.



Custodian John Stuart-Newchurch attending Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Summit (AIATSIS) 2022

## AUTHORITY BOARD MEETINGS

Under the Sacred Sites Act, the Authority meets at least four times each calendar year.

In 2021-22 the Board met on:

<b>129th board meeting</b>	29 September 2021	Darwin/Alice Springs
<b>130th board meeting</b>	30 September 2021	Darwin/Alice Springs
<b>131st board meeting</b>	1 December 2021	Virtual*
<b>132nd board meeting</b>	9 -10 March 2022	Darwin/Alice Springs
<b>133rd board meeting</b>	8 - 9 June 2022	Darwin/Alice Springs

\*Board meetings were held via videolink between the Darwin and Alice Springs offices, due to COVID precautions. The virtual meeting saw Board Members dial-in from their communities.

## APPOINTMENTS

In this reporting period, the board experienced a number of changes to its membership.

In 2021, terms of membership expired for Elaine Watts, Jack Green, Lynette Granites and Phillip Mamarika, and after years of service they retired from the board.

The following members were reappointed to the board for another three-year term: Bobby Nunggumajbarr, Jenny Inmulugulu, Barbara Shaw, Neville Petrick and Walter Kerinauia Junior. Valerie Martin’s term continued through this period.

On 13 July 2021, Amy Dennison and Nigel Browne were appointed as the Government appointees to the board

The board also welcomed the following new members: [REDACTED], Lorraine Jones, Christopher Neade, and Jennifer Yantarrnga.



AAPA Board Members Christopher Neade and Chairperson Bobby Nunggumajbarr

# ABORIGINAL AREAS PROTECTION AUTHORITY BOARD



## Mr Bobby Nunggumajbarr – Chairperson

Region: Roper Basin  
First appointed: 29 September 2015  
Date re-appointed: 2 November 2021

Mr Bobby Nunggumajbarr is a senior Nunggubuyu man from Numbulwar in south-eastern Arnhem Land. He has had a long and distinguished career in public administration and has held various positions on the Yugul Mangi Community Government Council in Ngukurr and the Roper Gulf Shire. Until recently, he was the Senior Project Officer in charge of the Northern Land Council's Ngukurr office, a role he held for more than 15 years. Mr Nunggumajbarr is widely respected for his knowledge and authority in Ngukurr and is highly regarded as a community facilitator.



## Ms Barbara Shaw

Region: Alice Springs Hinterland  
First appointed: 27 March 2019  
Re-Appointed: 1 June 2021

Ms Barbara Shaw is from the Alice Springs Hinterland region and is the current Deputy Chair of the Central Land Council (CLC). She is the CLC delegate for Tangentyere Council, where she coordinates the family safety group, targeting domestic violence in town camps. She is a well-known advocate for education, women's issues and housing. Ms Shaw is also heavily involved in a range of community organisations and initiatives that support these areas, including acting as the co-chair of Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory, being a member of the Aboriginal Benefit Account, and being a former engagement officer under the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.



## Ms Valerie Martin – Deputy Chairperson

Region: Yuendumu Hinterland  
First appointed: 2 August 2016  
Date re-appointed: 8 January 2020

Ms Valerie Martin is a senior Warlpiri woman from Yuendumu. Ms Martin is a member of the board of the Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation and a previous member of the Central Land Council and the Aboriginal Benefit Account Advisory Committee. Ms Martin has served as Deputy Chairperson since 2016.



## Mr Neville Petrick

Region: Plenty River Basin  
First appointed: 27 March 2019  
Re-Appointment: 1 June 2021

Mr Neville Petrick is from McDonald Downs in the Northern Territory and is the Executive Council representative on the Central Land Council for the Eastern Plenty region. In that role, Mr Petrick represents his region at the Land Council meetings and informs the community about the discussions and outcomes of these meetings.



## Ms Jenny Inmulugulu

Region: Arnhem Land West  
First appointed: 26 April 2006  
Date re-appointed: 2 November 2021

Ms Jenny Inmulugulu is a traditional owner of Warruwi community on South Goulburn Island. She has been a member of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority since 2006 and served as Deputy Chairperson from 2008 to 2012. Ms Inmulugulu is a member of the Northern Land Council. As a senior woman for her clan, she is a strong advocate for her community, with a focus on youth engagement and business enterprises.



## Mr Walter Kerinauia Junior

Region: Tiwi Islands  
First appointed: 31 August 2015  
Date re-appointed: 24 August 2021

Mr Walter Kerinauia Junior is from the Mantiyupwi clan group and is one of the senior 'culture men' on the Tiwi Islands. He is a past member of the Tiwi Islands Regional Council/Tiwi Islands Land Council and past Director of Mantiyupwi Pty Ltd. Mr Kerinauia Junior has been the long-time Trustee of the Mantiyupwi land-owning group, which takes in southern parts of both Bathurst and Melville islands.



**Mr Christopher Neade**

**Region:** Barkly Central  
**Date appointed:** 2 November 2021

Mr Christopher Neade is a Waanyi man from the Barkly Tablelands and lives in Elliot. He was elected to the Northern Land Council in 2016. Mr Neade studied in Mt Isa before starting work on cattle stations throughout the Barkly region. Chris is an advocate for development opportunities in the Barkly and to ensure Aboriginal people are treated with fairness and respect.



**Ms Lorraine Jones**

**Region:** Victoria River Basin  
**Date appointed:** 24 August 2021

Ms Lorraine Jones is from Timber Creek and represents the Victoria River District on the Northern Land Council (NLC) Full Council. She also represents the NLC on the Aboriginal Benefit Account Advisory Committee.



**Ms Jennifer Yantarrnga**

**Region:** Arnhem Land East  
**Date appointed:** 24 August 2021

Ms Jennifer Yantarrnga is a respected elder of the Yantarrnga Clan of Umbakumba, Groote Eylandt. Ms Yantarrnga is involved in general community liaison and is a strong conduit between the Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC) Land and Sea Rangers and the ALC Head Office. She collaborates in joint initiatives with stakeholders in relation to the ALC Anthropology Unit, and Anindilyakwa intellectual property and cultural knowledge protection.



**Ms Amy Dennison**

**Government Appointment**  
**Date appointed:** 13 July 2021

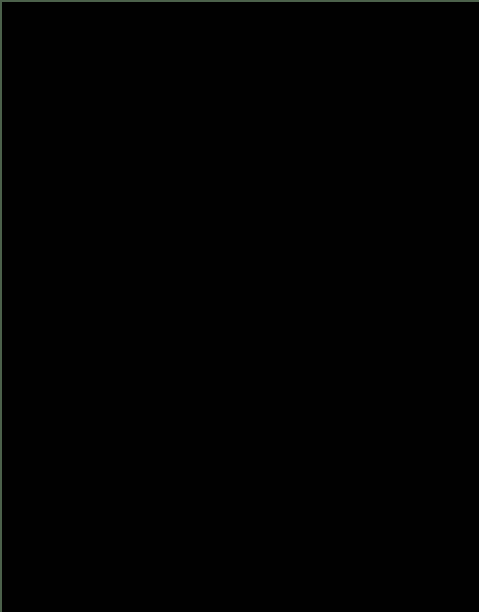
Ms Amy Dennison is the Executive Director of the Environment Regulation Division in the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security. She was the Acting Chief Executive of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority for around 10 months during 2019-2020. Ms Dennison completed a Masters of Public Administration as a Fulbright Scholar from the Harvard Kennedy School in 2019 and is currently working on a Master of Liberal Arts (Sustainability) from the Harvard Extension School.



**Mr Nigel Browne**

**Government Appointment**  
**Date appointed:** 13 July 2021

Mr Nigel Browne is a descendent of the Larrakia and Wulna peoples. He is the Chief Executive Officer of the Larrakia Development Corporation, and is a Director with The Healing Foundation, and Chair of the Australia Day Council (NT). He is also a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.







# AUTHORITY OPERATIONS

## PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNANCE

The Authority's governance framework aims to ensure the Authority carries out its functions effectively, efficiently and in line with its responsibilities under the Sacred Sites Act.

This includes:

- effective human resource management practices;
- quality control for data and outputs;
- developing risk management strategies; and
- strategic planning

## HOW THE AUTHORITY IS GOVERNED

The primary policy and decision-making body is the Authority (the board), established under section 5 of the Sacred Sites Act. The Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the Administrator, and is charged with carrying out the decisions of the Authority.

All other Authority staff are employed directly by the Authority, under section 17 of the Sacred Sites Act.

Section 19 provides for the Authority to delegate certain powers or functions. The CEO holds some of these delegations and is responsible for the Authority's overall operation. The CEO also exercises responsibilities under the Financial Management Act.

## HOW THE AUTHORITY IS MANAGED

The CEO maintains overall responsibility for the Authority's day-to-day operations.

To ensure the smooth functioning of the office, the CEO chairs weekly Executive Management Group meetings and fortnightly staff meetings. Each operational group also meets regularly to ensure the effective flow of information.

The Authority's operational groups are Research and Land Information, Corporate Services, and Policy and Governance.



# ORGANISATIONAL CHART

**AUTHORITY BOARD**

**MINISTER**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**Research and Land Information**

**Corporate Services**

**Policy and Governance**

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Authority Certificate research  
Anthropological research  
Requests for information  
Site registrations  
Mapping  
Public register  
Stakeholder management  
Library

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Human resources  
Procurement and contracts  
Property and vehicle management  
Finance, budget and accounting  
Records management  
Information Technology

**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Organisational performance  
Strategic planning  
Policy development  
Legal and compliance  
Ministerial liaison  
Secretariat to the Board,  
Audit Committee and  
Executive Management Group



AAPA Board Members left to right:  
Ms Lynette Granites (former member), Ms Jenny Inmulugulu, Ms Valerie Martin and Ms Jennifer Yartangga

# LEGISLATION AND POLICY

## COMMONWEALTH AND NORTHERN TERRITORY LAWS

The establishment of the Sacred Sites Act by the Northern Territory Government was enabled by section 73 of the Land Rights Act, which gives the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly power to enact laws:

*'73(1)(a) laws providing for the protection of, and the prevention of the desecration of, sacred sites in the Northern Territory, including sacred sites on Aboriginal land, and, in particular, laws regulating or authorizing the entry of persons on those sites, but so that any such laws shall provide for the right of Aboriginals to have access to those sites in accordance with Aboriginal tradition and shall take into account the wishes of Aboriginals relating to the extent to which those sites should be protected.'*

The protection of sacred sites in the NT is further aided by section 69 of the Land Rights Act, which broadly prohibits a person entering or remaining on any land in the Northern Territory that is a sacred site, unless a law of the Northern Territory specifies otherwise.

## ABORIGINAL SACRED SITE PROTECTION IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Aboriginal sacred sites are recognised and protected as an integral part of Northern Territory and Australian cultural heritage under both the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and the Sacred Sites Act.

Both Acts define a sacred site as:

*'...a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition...'*

## LANDOWNERS AND DEVELOPERS

The Authority strives to achieve practical outcomes in its operations by balancing the interests of sacred site custodians, landowners and developers, whilst always protecting sacred sites.

As the use and development of land evolves, alongside onshore gas and other mining activities, there is an increasing need for the Authority to develop sophisticated responses to ensure the ongoing protection of sites.

Landowners and developers have certain rights under the Sacred Sites Act:

- Section 28 provides the opportunity for landowners to make representations on the prospective registration of a sacred site.
- Section 44 explicitly deals with landowners' rights to use land comprised in a sacred site consistent with the protection of sacred sites. Authority Certificates provide a legal instrument to accommodate such land use.
- Under section 48A, if the application of the Sacred Sites Act in a particular case would result in an acquisition of property other than on just terms, then the person affected is entitled to such compensation as a court may decide.

As well as protecting sacred sites in the context of land ownership and development, the Sacred Sites Act provides for Aboriginal people to have access to their sacred sites 'in accordance with Aboriginal tradition'.

In accordance with the Sacred Sites Act, all sacred sites are protected regardless of underlying land title, registration status or whether they are known to the Authority.

The specific sections of the Sacred Sites Act relevant to the protection of sacred sites are sections 33 (unauthorised entry), 34 (unauthorised works or uses) and 35 (desecration), which set out the various offences in relation to sacred sites.

## RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER NORTHERN TERRITORY HERITAGE LEGISLATION

Section 128 (2)(b) of the Heritage Act 2011 states that the Authority must have a representative on the Heritage Advisory Council. Robert Pocock, Director, Strategic Aboriginal Policy Unit, Department of the Chief Minister & Cabinet serves as the Authority's representative.

## EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

The Authority's Executive Management Group (EMG) comprises of senior managers from the organisation's operational areas and is chaired by the CEO.

The purpose of the EMG is to provide the CEO with advice and support about a range of strategic and operational matters. The group's key functions include monitoring the organisation's performance, setting the Authority's strategic direction and priorities, implementing the strategic plan and addressing critical issues facing the organisation.

During the 2021-2022 financial year, the EMG members were:

- Dr Benedict Scambary, Chief Executive Officer
- Dr Sophie Creighton, Director, Research and Land Information
- Mr Robert Pocock, Acting Director, Policy and Governance (until October 2021).
- Mr Cameron McInerney, Director, Policy and Governance (from October 2021).

## AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

In accordance with section 13(2) of the Financial Management Act, the CEO must ensure appropriate internal control procedures are in place. As such, the Authority's Audit and Risk Committee exists to provide advice to the CEO on matters associated with risk management, internal controls, reviews and audits within the Authority, including:

- endorse and monitor the Risk Management Plan for the Authority
- review and maintain the Authority's risk register
- monitor external audit program outcomes and the implementation of recommendations
- monitor the development of internal review programs and audits
- review progress and findings of process reviews and monitor the implementation of findings
- consider the adequacy of the internal control environment, including the effectiveness of internal controls on key risks, such as fraud, information and communications technology, governance and systems to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements
- consider financial reports of the Authority, particularly the narrative summaries and statements included in the annual report, with respect to risk management and internal controls
- within the context of the committee's primary purpose, undertake other functions and activities as determined from time to time by the CEO.

The members of the Audit and Risk Committee were the Executive Management Group, Business Manager and Alice Springs Anthropology Research Manager.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) CHANGE ADVISORY BOARD

The role of this board is to oversee the Authority's information management and information and communications technology practices to ensure our priorities are met. The board's responsibilities include:

- review of business cases and project plans for ICT initiatives and investment decisions and submissions to EMG for review and approval
- delivery of ICT initiatives and performance reviews of project delivery
- software upgrades, system changes and managing the impact on Authority users
- report and discuss NTG ICT initiatives and possible impacts on the Authority and its operations.

The members of the ICT Change Advisory Board were the CEO, Director Research & Land Information, Research Manager, Registrar, Assistant Registrar and Systems & Information Manager.



McArthur River, near Borrooloola, NT



View of Rio Tinto Bauxite conveyor belt at Gove, NT

# PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

One of the Authority's functions is to facilitate discussions between custodians of sacred sites and proponents to ensure the protection of sacred sites. As such, the Authority is involved in the planning stages of most major projects in the Northern Territory.

“OUR AIM IS TO BALANCE THE INTERESTS OF CUSTODIANS, LANDOWNERS AND DEVELOPERS WHILST ALWAYS ENSURING THE PROTECTION OF SACRED SITES.”



View of dry season burn-off southeast of Borroloola, NT

## NOTABLE AUTHORITY CERTIFICATES

### TOURISM AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE PROJECTS

The Authority supported government and private sector tourism projects by issuing Authority Certificates that protected multiple sacred sites while allowing for works to improve visitor experiences. These included:

- Gunyangara (Gove Port) Tourism Precinct
- Tourism works at Pungalina- Seven Emu Wildlife Sanctuary
- Expansion and upgrade of the Shady Camp campground and day use area

The Authority worked with Parks Australia to ensure Authority Certificates were issued for works to be undertaken in Kakadu National Park, including upgrades to:

- East Alligator Region projects and maintenance
- Cahills Crossing Viewing Area
- Jim Jim Ranger Station
- Mary River Ranger Station
- Bowali Area upgrades and maintenance

### DEFENCE

The Authority issued four Certificates to the Department of Defence’s Wartime Remnants Clean-up Program, including at Adelaide River and Nightcliff Beach.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

The Authority supported the infrastructure and investment priorities of the Northern Territory and Federal Governments by issuing Certificates for:

- Roadworks across the Northern Territory, including the Central Arnhem Road, the Tanami Road and the Carpentaria Highway
- Katherine flood mitigation
- Ground stations to support satellite navigation
- Geological and geophysical research station in Alice Springs.

### MINING, OIL AND GAS

The Authority issued 19 Authority Certificates to ensure the protection of sacred sites for mining oil and gas projects across the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory’s Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016 advises on Authority Certificate for petroleum activities. Six Certificates were issued in accordance with the Petroleum Regulations. Details of these Certificates are available in the Performance Report Chapter.

## COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

### PRESENTATIONS TO STAKEHOLDERS

In 2021-22, Dr Benedict Scamبارy (Chief Executive Officer), Dr Sophie Creighton (Director of Research and Land Information), Dr Mandy Trueman (Assessments and Regulations Officer), and Dr Janelle White (Research Manager) delivered presentations to various industry stakeholders:

- Australian National University in Canberra
- Environment and Logistics Forum during NT Resources week
- Alice Springs Town Council
- Darwin City Council
- Power and Water Corporation
- Equatorial Launch Australia
- Senate References Committee - Beetaloo Basin

The information sessions covered:

- Introduction to the Authority and sacred sites - NT Sacred Sites Act leads the way in Australia for protection of sacred sites
- Overview of the Authority processes - Request for Information and Authority Certificate.
- Sacred Site protection after the destruction of Juukan Gorge - setting new expectations
- Sacred site protection, legal and regulatory mechanisms and practice.



Xin Li, AAPA Senior Land Information Officer, undertaking drone fieldwork at Shoal Bay Peninsula, NT



## WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

### ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND ENTERPRISES

The Authority works with and supports a wide range of Aboriginal organisations and projects.

This year, the Authority issued a Certificate to the Larrakia Development Corporation for the proposed Larrakia cultural centre at the Darwin Waterfront. Certificates were also issued to the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress for the Todd Street Health Hub, the Ngarrariyal Aboriginal Corporation for the Gunyangara (Gove Port) Tourism Precinct Development, Menge Aboriginal Corporation for Finke tourism development and others.

The Authority continued to work with the Lhere Mparntwe Management Strategy.

### LHERE MPARNTWE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Authority's Alice Springs Research Manager, Dr Janelle White, and Senior Mparntwe custodian, Mr John Stuart-Newchurch, continued their involvement in the Lhere Mparntwe Management Strategy Group (LMMSG).

Dr White and Mr Stuart-Newchurch provide critical input into long-term management activities directly related to sacred site protection including fire hazard reduction, weed management, erosion mitigation and emergency response communication protocols.

In May 2022, Dr White and Mr Stuart-Newchurch presented at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Conference. The conference was an opportunity to discuss the long-term goals of the LMMSG, which are to:

- Protect and enhance the natural and cultural values of the rivers;
- Encourage locals and visitors to use the rivers in culturally and ecologically appropriate ways; and
- Provide a forum for the Local and Territory governments, Traditional Owners, sacred site custodians, business and broader community members to work collaboratively to care for the Todd and Charles rivers.

### STRATEGIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE ASSESSMENT (SREBA)

The Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing of Onshore Unconventional Reservoirs in the NT (the Inquiry) recommended that the NT Government undertake pre-development baseline assessment of six areas of study, including water quality and environmental health, in order to provide a reference point for ongoing monitoring. These are:

- aquatic biodiversity;
- flora and fauna;
- water quality;
- methane gas emissions;
- public health; and
- social and cultural

Five of the SREBAs are co-ordinated by the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (DEPWS). The Authority issued nine Certificates to DEPWS for water resource investigation.

The Authority also provided expert advice on the design and scope of the social and cultural SREBA study.

### BEETALOO BASIN INQUIRY

The development of the Beetaloo Basin, and the alignment of Environment Management Plans with the requirement for Authority Certificates, has seen increased demand on consultation and compliance work for the Authority.

On 22 March 2022, Dr Benedict Scamarcy (CEO), Mr Cameron McInerney (Director of Policy and Government), and Dr Mandy Trueman (Assessment and Regulations Officer) appeared before the Senate Environment and Communications Reference Committee's inquiry into oil and gas exploration and production in the Beetaloo Basin. The Authority provided the Senate Committee with an overview of the role and function of the Authority. The discussion centred on the Authority processes, and in particular the requirement to obtain an Authority Certificate prior to the approval of an Environment Management Plan.

# TOs back landmark decision



(A)MANDA PARKINSON

BORROLOOLA leader Jack Green looked down as he remembered the day they dug the river up.

"When they dug up that place, they dug the snake up – that's how they diverted our river," he said.

"Our old people used to say don't let anyone damage this site... this is our songline."

McArthur River Mine, near Borroloola, is the world's largest zinc and lead mine, but in a landmark decision, Glencore's application to expand the site has been rejected.

On Tuesday night, Arts Culture and Heritage Minister Chansey Paech upheld the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority's (AAPA) recommendation to reject the mine's calls to pile waste rock on mounds up to 140m high.

The decision was the first of its kind and blocked of the

NT Aboriginal NT Sacred Site Act 1989.

AAPA chief executive Benedict Scamبارy quoted the Chief Minister's words when he first spoke about Covid in the Territory.

"The Chief Minister said we are trying to protect the oldest continuous living culture on the planet – we have tens of thousands of years of history, law, custom and song to keep alive," Dr Scamبارy said.

"This announcement reflects the importance of that mission," he said.

For Traditional Owners Josie Davey and her brother Casey Davey, the mine has already decimated a number of sacred sites.

The mine currently extends to a space about the same size as Uluru.

The recent request would see it expand to within 35m of a specifically significant site

Traditional Owners Casey and Josie Davey with Jack Green after the mine decision. Picture: (A)manda Parkinson

named Damangani (Barramundi Dreaming).

"When they disturb those sites, they make our people sick," Ms Davey said.

"They don't understand what these places mean to our people... that is why they need to talk to us.

"We have children now that we want to grow up knowing our country and our songlines – they (Glencore) should be talking to all of us."

Glencore claimed that it spoke to six Traditional Owners, but AAPA said there were 180 people who have rights and interests in the site

and needed to be consulted.

"We were trying to help Glencore get to a conclusion but they intervened with an application under the Sacred Sites Act to challenge our decisions," said Dr Scamبارy.

There are a number of sacred sites on the mine lease. Also within the new waste facility footprint is an archaeological site that is protected by the Heritage Act.

Glencore however had obtained the six signatures under an agreement that included each family receiving a car and monthly food deliveries.

"Those people were promised cars and each month a big pallet of food would get delivered to them," Mr Green told NT News.

"Yeah, I do think it is (coercion)."

The application to expand the site was made in 2017 and since then Mr Green said the mine has been expanded regardless of its permissions.

"It had just been doing what it liked but maybe this will make them stop now."

Paech's decision now leaves Glencore's operations in a predicament as the waste rock dumping can become

volatile when exposed to air and water.

In 2013 and 2016 the waste rock caught on fire and released sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere.

In response, the EPA ordered MRM to resolve the issues around the waste dump. The expanded waste facility forms part of the mine's new management plan.

Dr Scamبارy said this decision proves mines can't just pay lip-service to Traditional Owners.

The decision upholds AAPA's expertise and processes, and puts mines on notice.

NT NEWS, Thursday February 17 2022

## MEDIA

Recent years has seen growing attention from the public and the media in the work of the Authority.

Aside from reporting prosecutions, there has been increased media interest in the protection of sacred sites, and the granting of Authority Certificates.

In 2021-22 the Authority distributed five media releases.

The Authority also provided additional media comment on issues such as the expansion of McArthur River Mine, the Singleton Station water license; proposed development for Little Mindil; the closure of Gunlom Falls; the Federal Government's Juukan Gorge Inquiry; the proposed National Aboriginal Art Gallery; mining exploration on Tanumbirini Station and more.

### NEWS

## Commonwealth argues it can't be prosecuted for alleged Kakadu sacred site damage, as NT Supreme Court hearing begins

By Nicholas Hynes

Posted Mon 21 Mar 2022 at 6:23pm, updated Mon 21 Mar 2022 at 9:25pm



Gunlom Falls is one of Kakadu's most popular attractions for tourists. (ABC News: Chelsea Heaney)

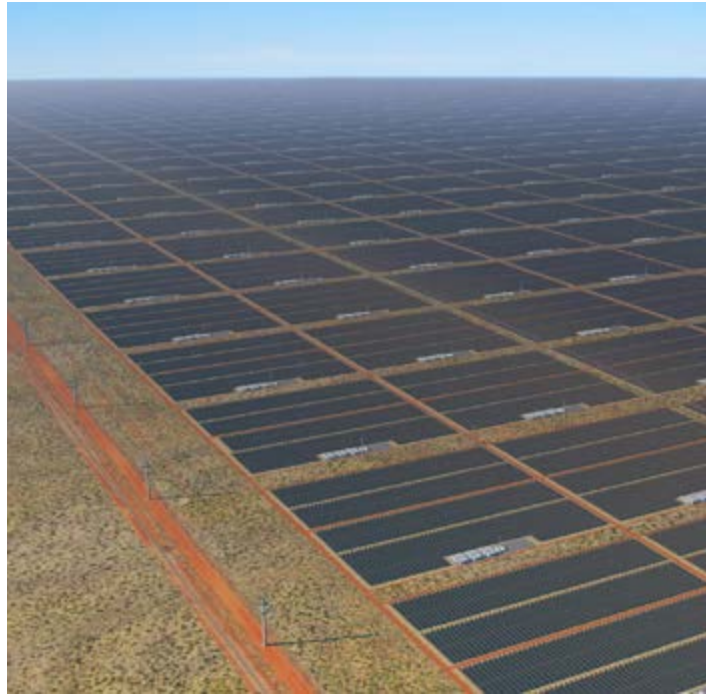
Posted Mon 21 Mar 2022 at 6:23pm, updated Mon 21 Mar 2022 at 9:25pm

## SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS

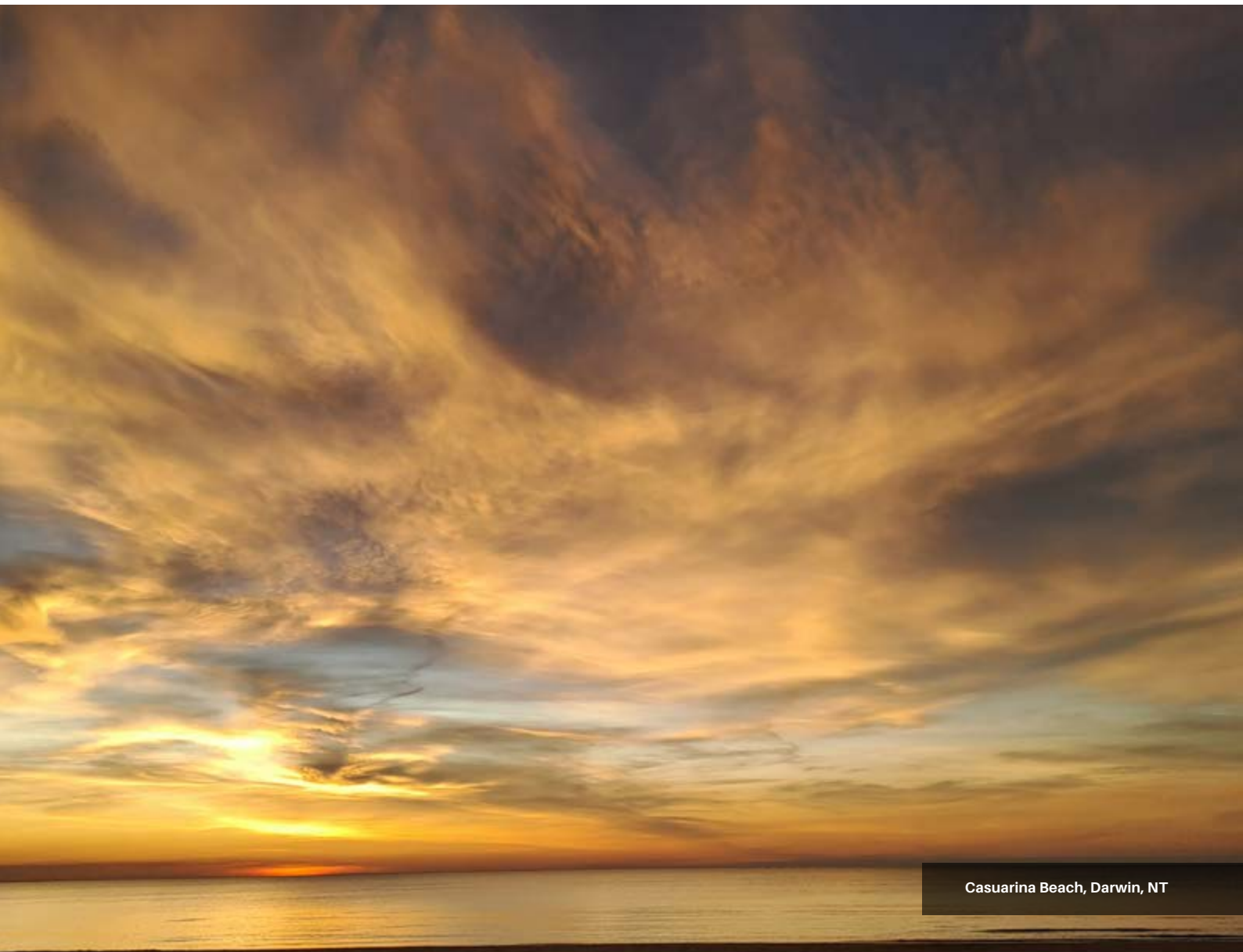
### SUN CABLE AUSTRALIA – ASIA POWERLINK

The Authority and the Northern Land Council (NLC) have entered a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in relation to the Sun Cable project, to ensure a co-ordinated and efficient approach to the protection of sacred sites. This collaboration will:

- survey areas that will be affected by the project, and map and potentially register their sacred sites;
- streamline consultations with Sun Cable so the Authority can issue Certificates under s 22(1)(b) of the Sacred Sites Act; and
- take other measures to identify and protect sacred sites and cultural heritage within the vicinity of the project.



Sun Cable depictive photo of solar precinct





Rock outcrop at Adelaide River area, NT

# PERFORMANCE REPORT

## PROTECTION OF SACRED SITES

The Authority's overall performance in a financial year is quantified by the requests for information (of registers and other archives) and the number, size and complexity of Authority Certificate applications issued.

Timeliness is assessed by the average number of days between acceptance of costs for Authority Certificate applications or requests for information and the issuing of those requests.

Quality is reflected in the number of statutory appeals on Authority decisions under part III, division 3 of the Sacred Sites Act or section 9 of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 (Cth).

The Authority reports against agreed performance measures as part of its output performance. These performance measures provide an indication of the Authority's current workload and performance.

### OUTPUT GROUP:

Provide statutory services for the protection and registration of sacred sites and the avoidance of sacred sites in the economic development and use of land.

### OUTCOME:

Enhanced relations between Aboriginal custodians and the wider Territory community by increasing the level of certainty when identifying constraints, if any, on land and sea use proposals from the existence of sacred sites.

Key performance indicators	Actual 2017-18	Actual 2018-19	Actual 2019-20	Actual 2020-21	Target 2021-22	Actual 2021-22
Authority Certificates issued	107	107	80	111	100	92
Requests for information completed	789	511	625	971	800	896
Average time between receiving Authority Certificate application and completing service	93 days	109 days	106 days	130 days	120 days	135 days*
Average time between receiving request for information and completing service	1.5 days	2.2 days	2.91 days	2.53 days	3 days	1.9 days
Statutory appeals	0	1 appeal	1 appeal (ongoing from 2018-19)	1 appeal (ongoing from 2018-19)	<1%	0

\* Two projects excluded from calculation due to extensive delays beyond the Authority's control.

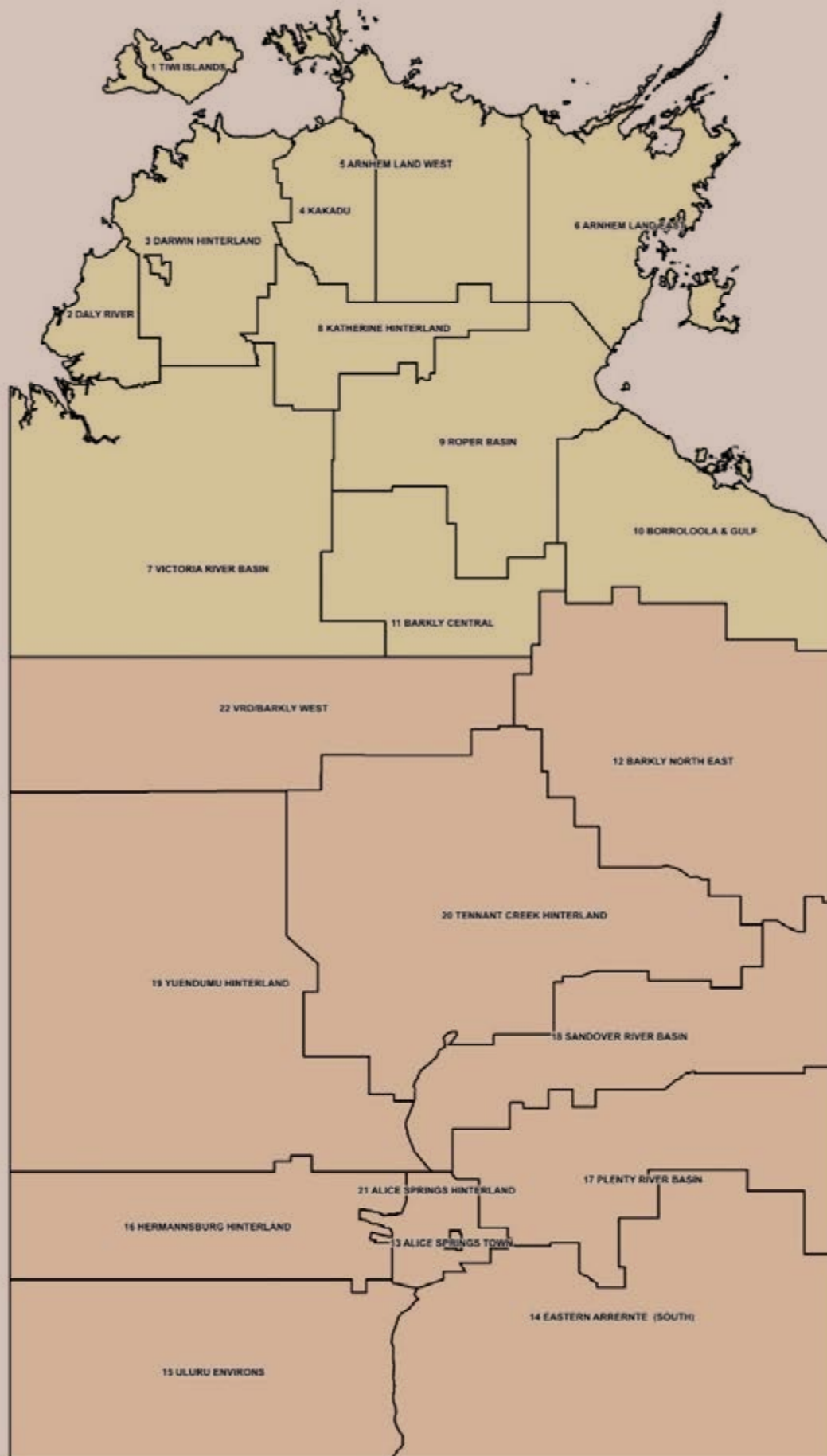


Figure 1: Map of the Authority's regions  
For administrative purposes, the Authority divides the Northern Territory into 22 regions.

# AUTHORITY CERTIFICATES

## Quantity

In 2021–22, the Authority received 166 Authority Certificate applications. A total of 92 Authority Certificates were issued for projects across the NT, and 37 applications were withdrawn.

## Issued Authority Certificates

The 92 Authority Certificates issued by the Authority in 2021 is a decrease from last year’s total of 111.

The decrease is partly due to the disruption of the Authority’s work as a result of biosecurity zones and restricted travel during COVID and also reflects the increasing complexity of proposed developments in the NT.

## Withdrawn Authority Certificates

The 37 applications withdrawn by applicants in 2021–22 is a decrease from the 59 applications withdrawn in 2020–21.

Of the 37 withdrawn applications this reporting period, eight were withdrawn by the NT Government. The other main user groups that withdrew their applications included exploration and mining sector, petroleum (onshore oil and gas) sector and the Australian Government.

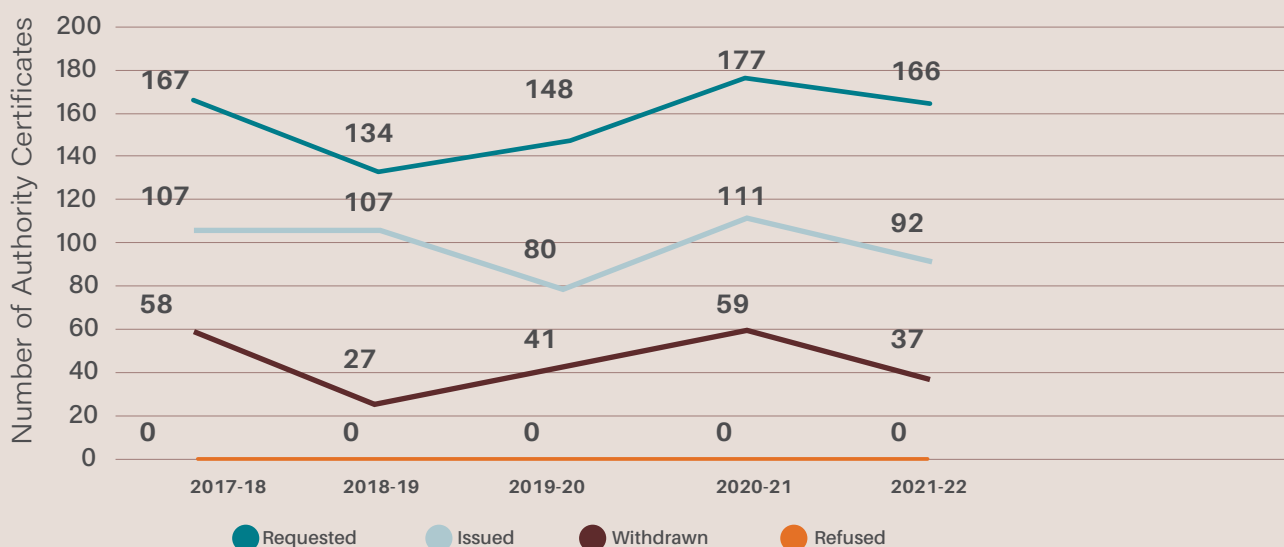
## Refused Authority Certificates

In this reporting period, the Authority did not refuse any Authority Certificate applications.



Xin Li, AAPA Senior Land Information Officer and Mr Conor Harrington, AAPA Anthropologist & Research Officer undertaking fieldwork at Shoal Bay Peninsula, NT

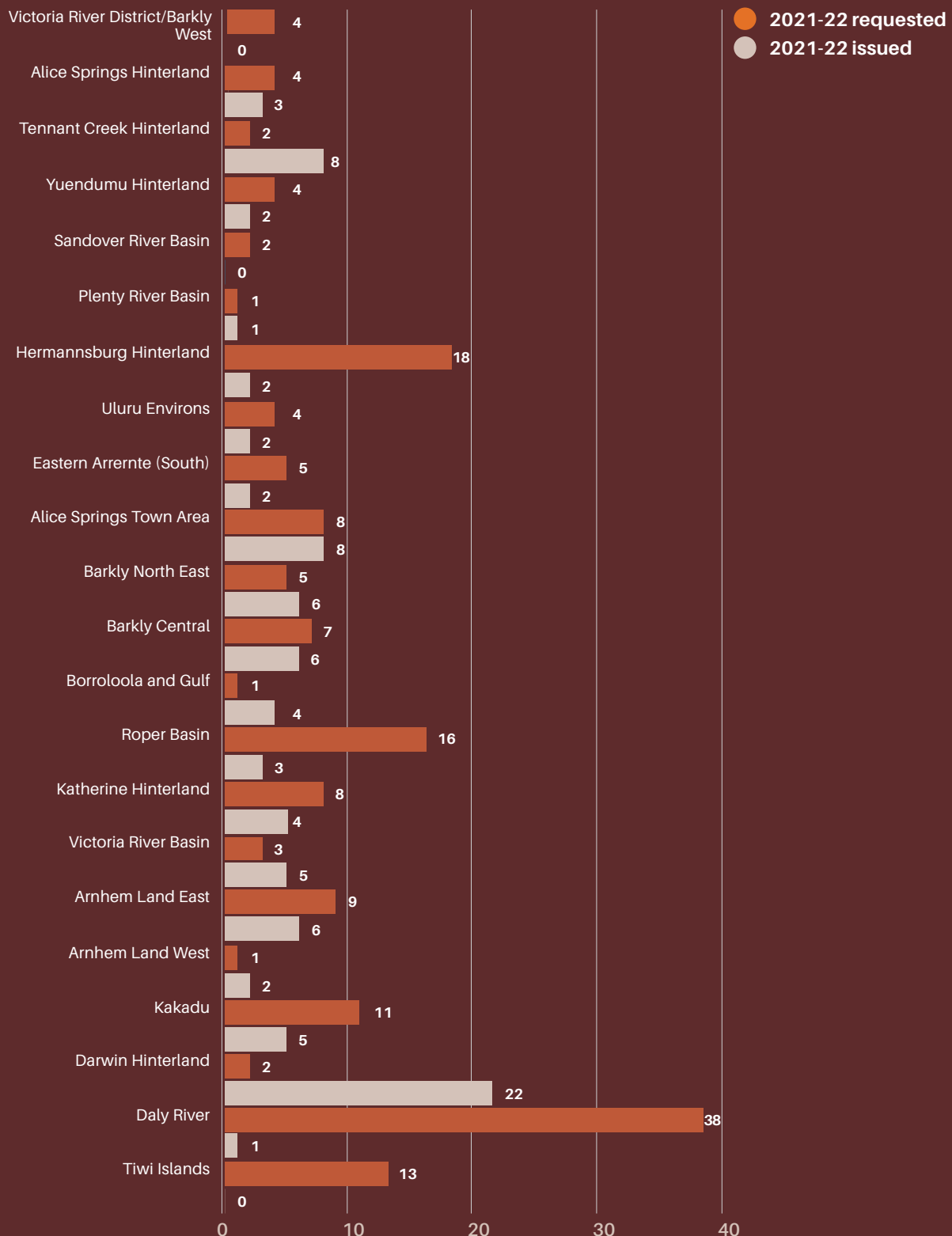
**Figure 2:** Authority Certificates requested, issued, withdrawn and refused between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2022



## REGIONAL PICTURE

In 2021-22, the highest demand for Authority Certificates was in the regions of the **Daly River (38)**, the **Hermannsburg Hinterland (18)** and the **Roper Basin (16)**.

Figure 3: Regional trend of requested and issued Authority Certificates in 2021-22

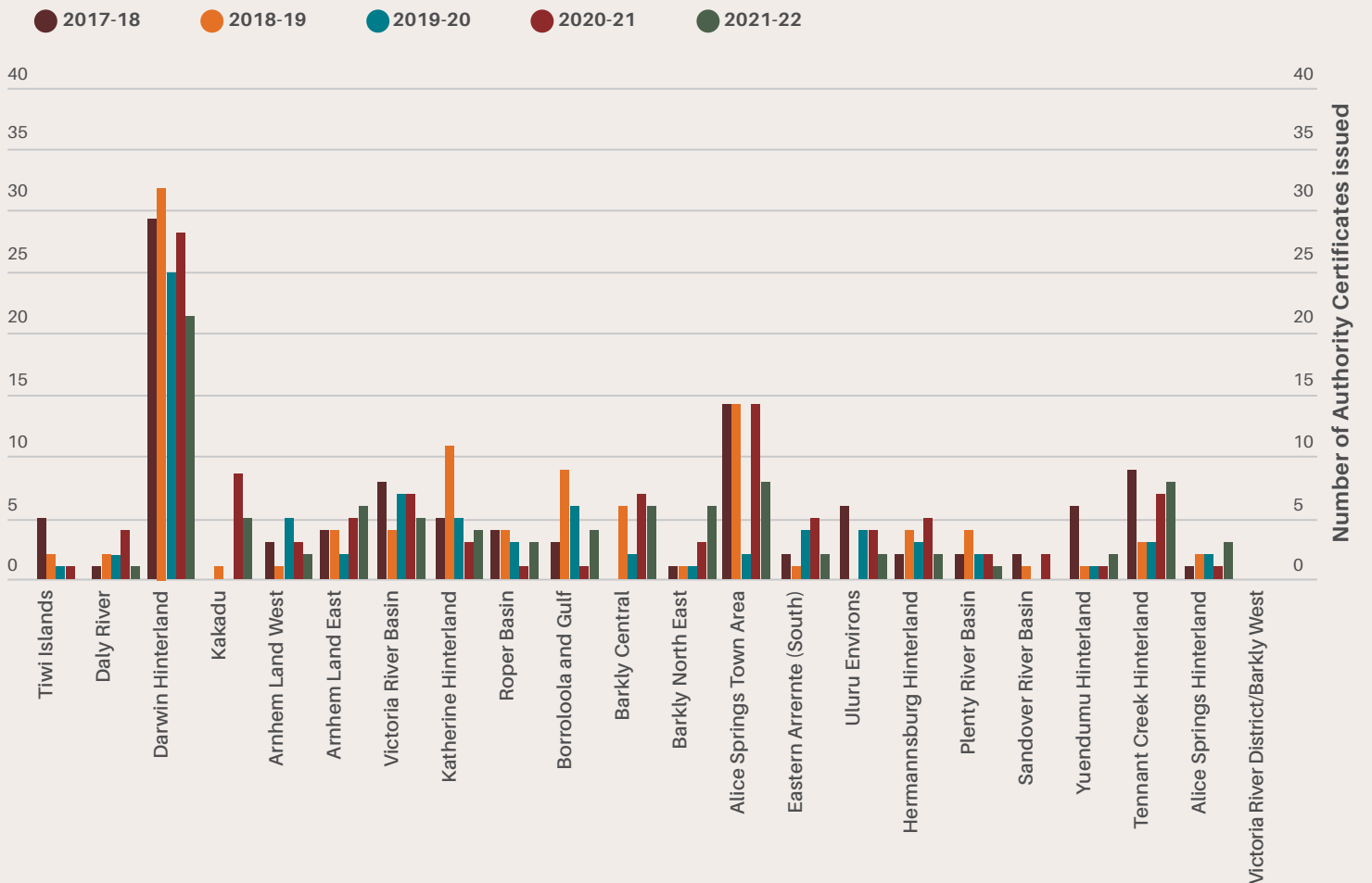






Paperbark swamp, Batchelor area, NT

Figure 4: Regional trend for issued Authority Certificates between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2022



## SERVICE USERS

The NT Government was issued the largest number of Authority Certificates in 2021-22 and represents 38% of all Certificates. The government’s public works include infrastructure and planning, tourism-related activities, roadworks and natural resource management in both urban and regional areas across the NT. The second largest demand came from the exploration / mining sector, with 17% or 15 Certificates issued.

## PROJECT TYPES

In 2021-22, infrastructure activity was the most common project type covered by Authority Certificates, with 23% (21) Certificates issued. These projects were mainly undertaken by the Commonwealth, Territory and local government.

Environment management, exploration/mining and roadworks were the next most common with 14% (13).

Six Certificates were issued for petroleum (onshore oil and gas) related activities, including hydraulic fracturing, for which an Authority Certificate is mandated under Regulation 9(1)(d) of the *Petroleum (Environment) Regulations 2016*. These Certificates were:

- Origin Energy B2 Pty Ltd - Origin Amungee extension area program
- Imperial Oil & Gas Pty Ltd - EP187 -2021 seismic, drilling, completion and production test program
- Peak Helium Pty Ltd - EP134 - Peak Helium - 2021 seismic program
- Minerals Australia Pty Ltd - 2019-2020 exploration program EP154
- Central Petroleum Limited - Zevon seismic testline program
- Blue Energy Pty Ltd - Blue Energy exploration program EP200.

All Certificates issued were subject to the approval of environment management plans (EMPs) in 2021-22. The Authority issued all these Certificates in sufficient time for Ministerial decisions on these EMPs within the statutory timeframe under the Petroleum Regulations.

Figure 5: Authority Certificate User Groups

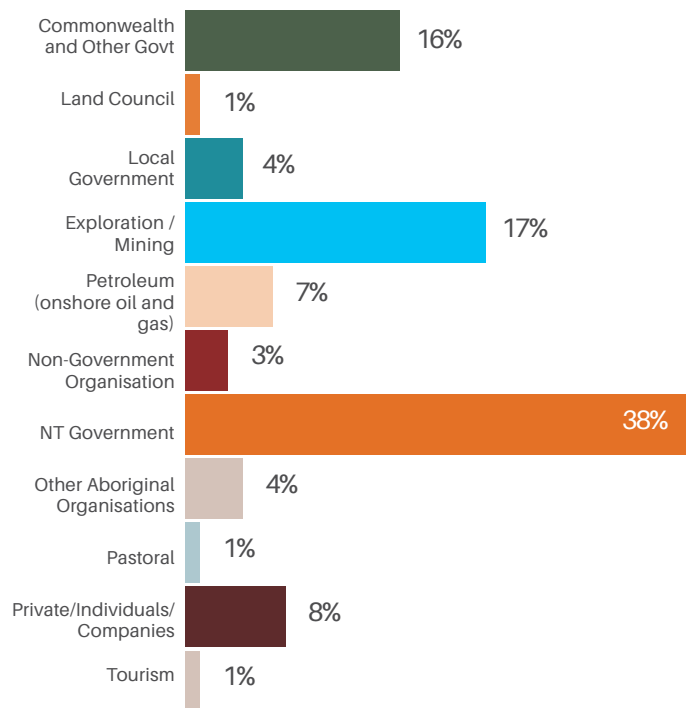
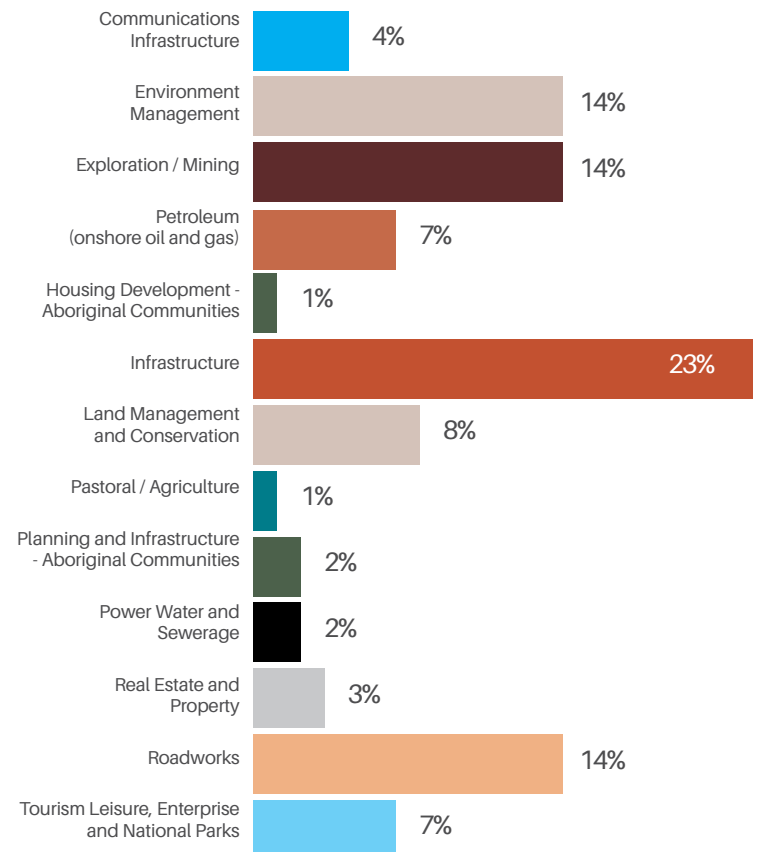


Figure 6: Issued Authority Certificate Project Types



## TIMELINESS

In 2021-22 timeframes for issuing Authority Certificates were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restricted community access, and health impacts on staff, consultants, and custodians. Other factors that affected timeframes include:

- the increased complexity of project proposals
- changes to traditional land tenure due to cultural transitions that result from the generational changes of custodians
- the increased mobility of Aboriginal custodians
- the remoteness of application areas
- access limitations due to the weather.

In 2021-22, the average time taken to complete an Authority Certificate application was 135 days.

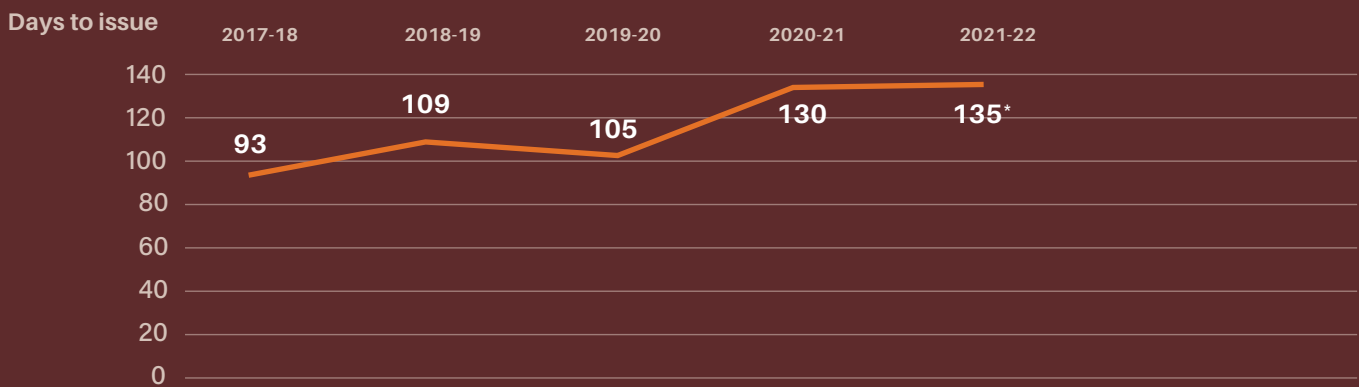
This is 15 days above the Authority’s KPI target of 120 days and is an increase from 130 days in 2020–21.

Further analysis shows that close to three quarters (67) of Authority Certificates were issued within six months.

The main factors that have affected timeliness are delays due to the pandemic, complex consultations, and late amendments to applications by clients.

Despite these difficulties, the Authority staff and consultants spent 429 days in the field during 2021-22.

**Figure 7:** Average days to issue Authority Certificates between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2022



\*Two projects excluded from calculation due to extensive delays beyond the Authority’s control

**Figure 8:** Timeframes to issue Authority Certificates by project types in 2021-22

	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-9 months	9-12 months	12+ months
Communications Infrastructure	1	3	0	0	0
Environment Management	9	3	1	0	0
Exploration / Mining	2	7	2	2	0
Petroleum (onshore oil and gas)	1	3	1	1	0
Housing Development - Aboriginal Communities	0	1	0	0	0
Infrastructure	7	11	3	0	0
Land Management and Conservation	4	2	1	0	0
Pastoral / Agriculture	0	0	0	1	0
Planning and Infrastructure - Aboriginal Communities	2	0	0	0	0
Power Water and Sewerage	2	0	0	0	0
Real Estate and Property	2	0	0	1	0
Roadworks	0	4	5	3	1
Tourism Leisure, Enterprise and National Parks	0	1	3	1	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>

# REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

## QUANTITY

In 2021–22, the Authority received and responded to 896 requests for information from the Register of Sacred Sites.

Most requests were for an abstract of the Authority’s records. Other requests were for digital data (3), inspections of the Authority Certificate Register (83), inspections of the Register of Sacred Sites (18) and other requests (11) (see Figure 9).

Historically, the Authority has issued an annual average of between 500 and 700 requests for information. However, since 2020, the Authority has seen a sharp rise in the demand for this service, with requests jumping to 971 in 2020–21 and 896 in this reporting period.

The increase in demand continues to be a positive sign that proponents value this service as a way of providing preliminary information about sacred sites on areas of land. However, the Authority is concerned that some proponents may be relying on requests for information (and in particular, abstracts of records) to plan their projects rather than obtaining Authority Certificates. The practice of relying on abstracts of records for works increases the risk of damage to sacred sites, as well as corporate reputational risk and possible prosecution, fines or jail time.

**Figure 9:** Types and numbers of requests for information between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2022.

	Quantity				
	2017 -18	2018 -19	2019 -20	2020 -21	2021 -22
Abstract of records	714	462	576	895	781
Digital data request	6	5	3	4	3
Inspection of Authority Certificate Register	34	18	26	54	83
Inspection of records	4	18	1	0	0
Inspection of sacred sites register	13	8	12	15	18
Other	18	0	7	3	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>971</b>	<b>896</b>

## REGIONAL PICTURE

Requests for information were the highest in the Darwin Hinterland region (246), followed by Alice Springs town area (120). For the third consecutive year, there was strong demand for requests for information in the Tennant Creek Hinterland (73) by the mining, oil and gas sector.

**Figure 10:** Requests for information by region

ALICE SPRINGS HINTERLAND	7	DARWIN HINTERLAND	246	TENNANT CREEK HINTERLAND	73
ALICE SPRINGS TOWN AREA	120	EASTERN ARRERENTE (SOUTH)	21	TIWI ISLANDS	10
ARNHEM LAND EAST	59	HERMANNSBURG HINTERLAND	21	ULURU ENVIRONS	8
ARNHEM LAND WEST (INCLUDING COBURG)	18	KAKADU	1	VICTORIA RIVER BASIN	45
BARKLY CENTRAL	20	KATHERINE HINTERLAND	52	VRD/BARKLY WEST	13
BARKLY NORTH EAST	34	PLENTY RIVER BASIN	29	YUENDUMU HINTERLAND	31
BORROLOOLA & GULF	34	ROPER BASIN	38		
DALY RIVER	5	SANDOVER RIVER BASIN	11	<b>Total</b>	<b>896</b>

## SERVICE USERS AND PROJECT TYPES

The three main groups requesting information are the private sector (412); mining, oil and gas (251); and the NT Government (118). Most private sector requests came from conveyancing work, particularly in the Darwin area.

**Figure 11:** Requests for information by user groups between 1 July 2017 and 30 June 2022

Requests for information completed					
	2017 -18	2018 -19	2019 -20	2020 -21	2021 -22
NT Government	142	59	80	134	118
Commonwealth and Other Govt	5	6	58	60	39
Local Government	3	4	10	17	2
Aboriginal organisations and Land Councils	67	60	29	42	51
Private/Individuals/Companies	409	258	252	356	412
Mining, oil and gas	157	110	178	305	251
Non Government Organisation	0	13	16	56	22
Site custodian	6	1	2	1	1



Custodian Eric Fejo at Shoal Bay Peninsula, NT

## TIMELINESS

While the Authority continues to experience higher-than-usual demand for requests for information in 2021–22, our timeframe to deliver this service improved from 2.53 days in 2020–21 to 1.90 days in 2021–22.

Average number of days to complete each type of request for information in 2021–22

Request type	Average of Elapsed Days
Abstract of Records	2.07
Digital Data Request	3.49
Inspection of Authority Certificate Register	0.86
Inspection of Sacred Sites Register	0.22
Other	0.44
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1.90</b>

## REGISTERED SACRED SITES

Registered sacred sites are religious and spiritually significant places that Aboriginal custodians have asked the Authority to protect, and the Authority has comprehensively documented and evaluated. The Authority's board makes the decision to enter sites into the register of sacred sites. The register makes information about the location, boundaries and custodians of a sacred site publicly available through a request for information process.

Registering a sacred site offers the highest level of protection under the Sacred Sites Act. Registration of a sacred site by the Authority provides prima facie evidence that a place is a sacred site. The Authority maintains records of all sacred sites which custodians have identified to the Authority.

Recorded sacred sites are sites that have been made known to the Authority from a variety of sources. In some cases, the Authority has not been able to fully assess the information about recorded sacred sites. These sacred sites may not have not been fully mapped, nor have they gone through the formal process of being registered by the board. These sacred sites are also protected by the Sacred Sites Act.

### QUANTITY

The Authority registered 19 sacred sites in 2021–22. Sacred sites can only be registered at Authority board meetings, and there are four meetings each calendar year.

The Authority recorded 130 new sacred sites through fieldwork in this reporting period.

In total, the Authority has 2183 registered sacred sites and 11,722 recorded sacred sites in its database, bringing the total number of documented sacred sites in the Northern Territory to 13,905 in 2021–22.

### TIMELINESS

There remains a backlog of registration requests for sacred sites.

Generally the research to support sacred site registration is carried out when fieldwork is already being undertaken nearby. The Authority has established priorities for addressing registration requests based on threats of desecration.



AAPA Board Member Valarie Martin at East Arm looking at sacred site



## STAFF PROFILE

**Jodie Peckham**  
Executive Assistant to Chief Executive Officer



**Sharon Laughton**  
Assistant Registrar

Jodie Peckham as Executive Assistant supports the work of the Authority Board and the Chief Executive Officer and is the first point of contact for the Authority. Sharon Laughton recently joined the Authority and is Assistant Registrar and, along with the Registrar, guides applicants seeking the services of the Authority and information on sacred sites.

"I came from the civil construction industry, and I liked the sound of working with AAPA because it is looking after country. Being Aboriginal myself, I enjoy working on Indigenous issues, and protecting country for everyone," said Sharon.

"People contact the Authority from the mining sector, construction, tourism, government departments as well, building roads. It is not a quick process. Every single application has to go through an assessment process to make sure we have the right information before consultation with the custodians can occur. Custodians need to know what is happening on their land, and whether there is the potential for damage to a sacred site. Developers, clients, don't always understand how in-depth, and how involved the the Authority work is."

Jodie agrees and says working at the Authority has given her a new understanding of the country.

"I always travelled remote areas and you don't really know about it. I've been in the Territory almost 20 years, and you just have no idea about the sacred sites. So to be a part of an organisation, and learn about the sites and protect them is pretty good.

"I like dealing with the Board," said Jodie. "They're from country and to see them together in a corporate way is interesting. They have shown me there needs to be more site registration. There are a lot of recorded sites and there isn't the time and staff to get out and actually register them. The custodians really want that. The old people are dying and nothing can be done, so before they die they want to have their sites registered. The sites are protected as recorded sites under the Act, but it's not a full registration which is what the custodians and old people really want. There are thousands of sites not registered."

# COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Compliance encompasses all aspects of the Authority’s work that contributes to conformity with the Sacred Sites Act. The Authority has a dedicated Compliance Unit that:

- **assist stakeholders in the public and private sector with the Authority Certificate process and support them to voluntarily comply with the conditions set out in any issued Authority Certificates;**
- **audit proponents to ensure conditions in Authority Certificates are being followed;**
- **respond to and investigate complaints about damage to sacred sites;**
- **prosecute offences against the Sacred Sites Act; and**
- **support custodian access to sacred sites.**

The Authority investigates sacred site damage concerns and enforces a number of offence provisions under the Sacred Sites Act. It is an offence to enter onto a sacred site, carry out work on a sacred site, desecrate a sacred site, or contravene the conditions of an Authority Certificate.

### In 2021-22, the Authority:

**Received** 17 alleged site damage reports

**Resolved** 11 cases

**Undertook** 5 audits

**Initiated** 2 prosecutions

At the end of the 2021-22 financial year, six cases were under investigation.

## FIELDTRIPS

In the 2021-22 financial year, the Compliance Unit undertook 10 fieldtrips across the NT to conduct Authority Certificate audits and investigate allegations of damage to sacred sites.



Site inspection on Wakaya Aboriginal Land Trust



## PROSECUTIONS

### Completed

In August 2021, a commercial fisherman was convicted and fined \$2,000 in the Darwin Local Court after being found guilty of working on a sacred site without an Authority Certificate. Between 28-29 October 2019, the commercial fisherman anchored his mothership inside the boundary of a sacred site at the mouth of the Koolatong River in Blue Mud Bay. There is an onus on a person on Aboriginal land or waters to ensure they do not enter or work on a sacred site without the approval of an Authority Certificate.

### Ongoing

The Authority has two active prosecutions.

#### *AAPA v Director of National Parks*

In September 2020, the Authority charged the Director of National Parks (DNP) with breaching section 34 of the Sacred Sites Act, for work on a sacred site.

Parks Australia realigned the walking track to the top pools of Gunlom Falls, which form part of the broader Gunlom sacred site within Kakadu National Park. The track realignment impacted features of the sacred site and had been constructed against the wishes of custodians and without an Authority Certificate.

In March 2021, the DNP advised the Darwin Local Court that constitutional issues arose in respect of the charge and would need to be dealt with in accordance with the *Judiciary Act 1903* (Cth). The Commonwealth Attorney General intervened in the proceeding asserting that the DNP has the benefit of Crown Immunity.

The constitutional issues raised by the Commonwealth Attorney General were considered by the Full Court of the Supreme Court on 21 and 22 March 2022. The Court has reserved its decision.

#### *AAPA v Hayes Enterprises (NT) Pty Ltd*

In April 2022, the Authority charged Hayes Enterprises (NT) Pty Ltd with unlawfully entering a sacred site and unlawfully working on a sacred site located on Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust. It is alleged that Hayes Enterprises used a front-end loader to widen existing tracks, knocking down 63 trees within a sacred site. This work was undertaken without an Authority Certificate.

## PROVIDING SACRED SITE ADVICE

In 2021-22, the Authority provided sacred site advice to NT Government agencies about development proposals and management plans, including:

- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
  - Development Assessment Services for proposals including development permits, subdivision and rezoning applications.
  - Crown Land Estates – for occupation licences over vacant Crown Land.
  - Northern Territory Planning Commission for proposed land use plans.
- Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet
- Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security
- Pastoral Land Board

## STATUTORY APPEALS

McArthur River Mine (MRM) submitted an application for ministerial review in 2018-19 in accordance with section 30 of the Sacred Sites Act.

MRM sought a ministerial review of decisions made by the Authority in relation to an application by MRM to vary an Authority Certificate obtained by MRM. The basis of the variation application was a purported agreement between MRM and custodians to increase the height of an Overburden Emplacement Facility and mine pit.

The Minister upheld the Authority's decision that the agreement did not satisfy the requirements of the Sacred Sites Act, and that MRM must undertake consultations with sacred site custodians before commencing the planned expansion. The decision means that MRM will need to reapply for a variation to their existing Authority Certificate before they can proceed with their overburden management project.





## STAFF PROFILE

### **Douglas Lovegrove** **Compliance and Investigations Manager**

Douglas Lovegrove is the Authority's Compliance and Investigations Manager, working in a team of three.

"I came to the Authority a year ago from the Aboriginal Justice Unit in the Department of Attorney-General and Justice. I worked with Leanne Liddle for three years on the Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA). During the AJA consultations people talked a lot about how they wanted customary lore and tradition preserved. Elders often voiced concerns that the lack of formal recognition in Australia's legal framework was contributing to the breakdown in respectful relationships in community. The feeling that was repeatedly expressed was that if the broader Australian public didn't acknowledge or respect customary lore and traditional values then how we could expect Indigenous youth to. Cultural and traditional values systems are fundamental to our sense of identity and they define our community. So when the opportunity came up to work at AAPA, where I could work closely with Aboriginal people who were maintaining their connection to traditional belief systems, it was something I just couldn't pass up. I am very dedicated to ensuring cultural values and knowledge is preserved for the next generation."

Douglas was also drawn to the Authority through the work and life of his grandpa, Creed Lovegrove, who was part of the first Authority board and served from 1979 to 2002, and who cared deeply about the protection of sacred sites and the freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

In his audit and investigation work, Douglas often travels with the compliance team across the Territory to review complaints.

"We've done quite a lot of travel in the last year. We've been out to the Keep River. We've been out to Barunga and recently, to Tennant Creek a few times. We've been dealing with a number of matters in Central Australia too; including issues at Epenarra station; Newcastle Waters; and Kulgera on the SA border. We're also undertaking a joint investigation with the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism."

As part of the development of the hydraulic fracturing industry in the Territory, the Authority has been funded to undertake a more comprehensive compliance program, which also takes the team out on country.

"We have developed an auditing schedule of existing fracking Authority Certificates, and through that process, we visited Tanumbirini Station to ensure Tamboran is compliant with the restricted work areas identified in their Certificate. We've also audited an Authority Certificate over Hayfield Station in the Barkly that was issued to Origin. It's very early days, but the review process has begun and is working well so far."



Manton Dam, NT

## OUR PEOPLE

“YOU LEARN A LOT ABOUT DIFFERENT WAYS OF SEEING THE WORLD, AND YOU GET TO SEE AMAZING PLACES WITH SENIOR CUSTODIANS WHO HAVE THOSE CONNECTIONS WITH THOSE PLACES.”

- PHIL ADGEMIS, ANTHROPOLOGIST AND RESEARCH OFFICER

## SNAPSHOT

Our **full-time** equivalent staff numbers were **29.77** in 2021-22 compared to **32.35** in 2020-21.

Our **headcount** of **staff** was **34** in 2021-22 compared to **35** in 2020-21.

**61.4%** of the workforce were female in 2021-22 compared to **65%** in 2020-21.

The **average age** of staff was **40** in 2021-22 slightly higher than the **38** in 2020-21.

**24.2%** of our staff were aged 50 and over in 2021-22 compared to **22.9%** in 2020-21.

**59%** of **our staff** were ongoing permanent employees in 2021-22 compared to **72%** in 2020-21.

The **Research and Land Information unit** is our largest unit, employing **59%** of our staff.

**15.2%** of our staff identified as Indigenous in 2021-22, compared to **20%** in 2020-21.

**18.2%** of our staff identified as being from a **culturally and linguistically diverse** background in 2021-22 compared to **14%** in 2020-21.

**0%** of **our staff** identified as having a disability in 2021-22, which is consistent with 2020-21.

**59%** of the **workforce** has worked for the Authority less than **five years**.

**38%** of the **workforce** had worked for the Authority for more than **five years**, and **3%** had worked for the Authority for more than **30 years**.

**53%** of our staff were **employed** in the professional (**47%**) or technical streams (**6%**).

**47%** of our staff had **flexible work** agreements in place and a further **15%** work part time.

**3%** of our staff were employed on a casual basis.

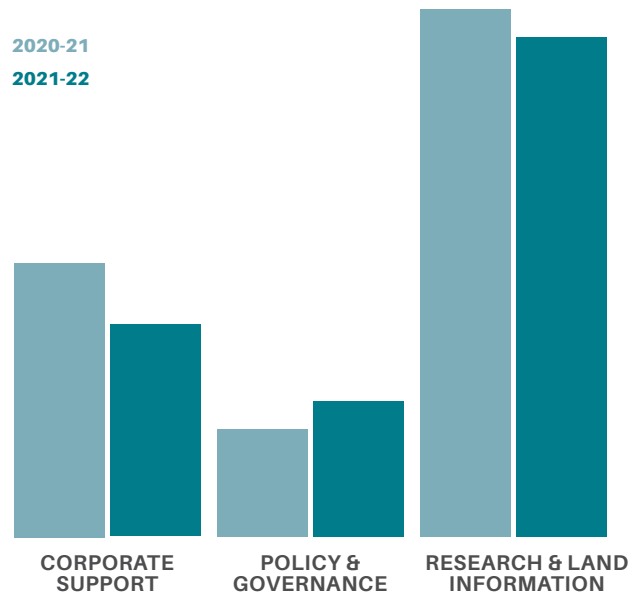
**\$32,183** was spent on **training and development** for our staff in 2021-22 compared to **\$25,894** in 2020-21.

**\$1,613** was spent on providing 3 individual **support services** and one COVID-related anxiety management workshop for all staff.

## WORKFORCE PROFILE

Despite efforts to grow the Authority in 2021-22, with a particular focus on expanding the number of anthropologists in the Research and Land Information Unit, the Authority’s workforce actually decreased by 2.58 full time equivalent (FTE) staff to 29.77. This decrease is due to staff transferring to other agencies, retiring and resigning to undertake further studies. The decrease demonstrates a transition within the Authority after several years of stable FTE numbers. In addition, a number of full-time permanent staff transitioned to part-time roles. The Authority continues to recruit to positions however this is a challenging time for recruiting people with the required skills and expertise in the predominantly professional stream positions.

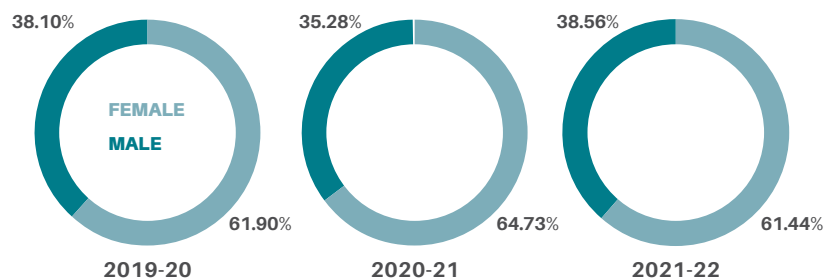
FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) BY FINANCIAL YEAR



## GENDER COMPARISON

There was a slight reduction in the number of female employees in 2021-22 to 61% compared to 65% in 2020-21. Over the last three years, men have made up 35% to 40% of staff, and this year saw a slight rise to 39% from 35% the previous year.

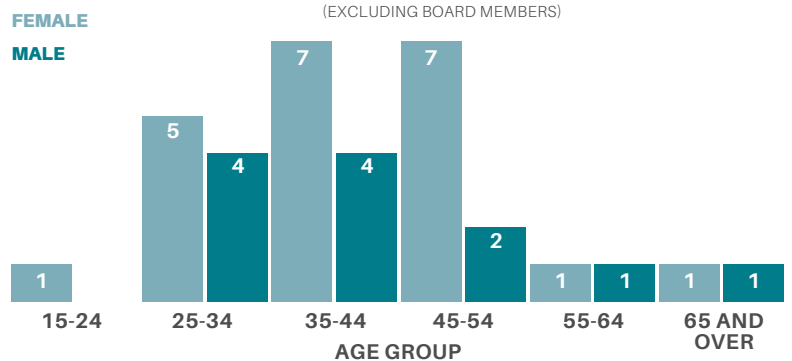
EMPLOYMENT BY GENDER BY FINANCIAL YEAR (EXCLUDING BOARD MEMBERS)



## EMPLOYEES BY AGE AND GENDER

At 30 June 2021, 59% of the workforce was aged between 25 and 44. In 2021-22, there was a slight increase of the number of staff over the age of 50 to 24.2% compared to 22.9% in 2020-21.

EMPLOYEES BY AGE AND GENDER (EXCLUDING BOARD MEMBERS)



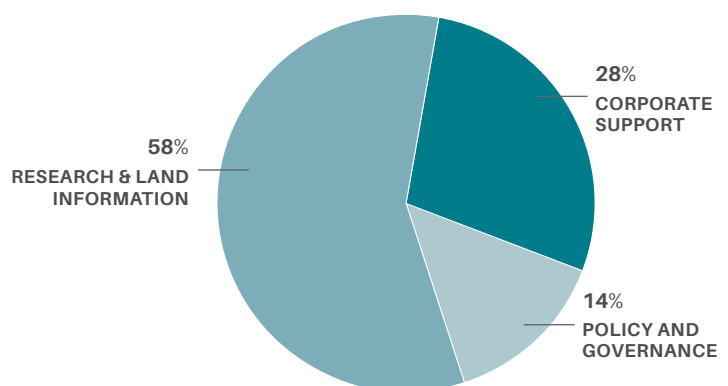
## EMPLOYEES BY UNIT

In 2021-22, the Research and Land Information unit, which undertakes the Authority’s anthropological and technical services, continued to be the largest unit, employing 58% of our staff. Of those, 44% were employed in the professional stream.

The Corporate Support unit was the second largest unit in 2021-22 with 28% of the workforce. The Corporate Support function includes the Office of the Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Services unit and the Information Systems unit.

Policy and Governance remains the smallest unit within the Authority with 14% of the workforce.

EMPLOYEES BY WORK UNIT



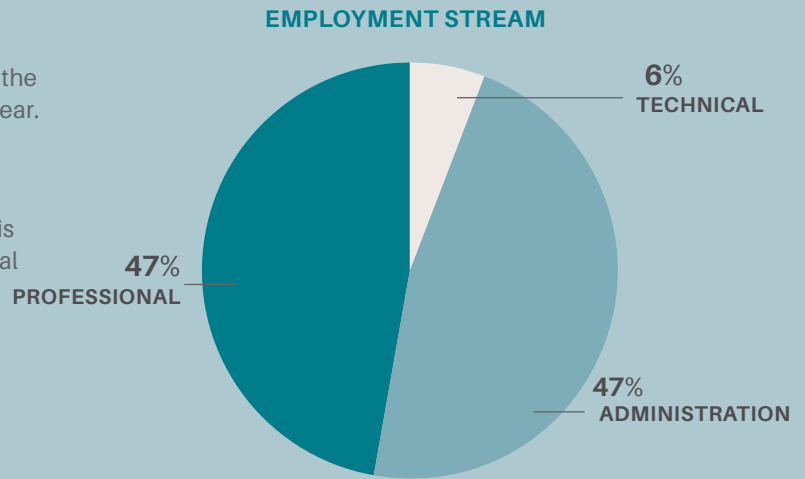
## EMPLOYEES BY STREAM

In 2021-22, the administrative stream employed 47% of the workforce, down two staff positions from the previous year.

The professional stream increased by 1 person to 47% in 2021-22. Of staff within the professional stream, 75% were anthropologists in research-based positions. This is a slight increase on last year which reflects the additional employee in an active anthropology role.

The technical stream increased to 6% from 3% due to the employment of an additional mapping officer and replacing a previous casual arrangement in 2020-21 to a full-time position for a two-year period.

Overall, the split between employment streams was fairly consistent with the previous year with only minor fluctuations that were mainly due to a casual employment arrangement transitioning to a full-time role.



## RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

In 2021–22, there were 13 new commencements and 13 separations, including seven resignations and six contracts ceasing. A number of the new commencements were temporary contracts, and due to accommodating employees with revised hours, the Authority was still reduced by 2.58 FTE. Of the 13 new commencements, four identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and were employed in the corporate support and technical units.

To backfill roles vacated by leave arrangements and as part of the push to expand the Research and Land Information Unit, the Authority advertised for roles 16 times in 2021-22 and only six were successful. Of the 10 unsuccessful recruitment rounds, seven were unable to identify a suitable applicant with the relevant skills, knowledge and experience required for the role(s). Recruitment to positions has been exceptionally difficult, especially to professional stream anthropological positions. In 2021-22 the Authority undertook six recruitment rounds specifically for anthropologists, with minimal success due to a lack of applicants with the relevant anthropological and fieldwork experience. Strategies were undertaken to engage staff with less field-based experience however this was not successful for the Authority with all three recruits resigning within six months after an extensive induction.

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Seperations	4	10	13
Commencements	12	10	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>26</b>

The Authority has been awarded additional funding over two years for a further seven positions commencing in 2022-23. These positions will support an increased tempo of work and assist in the review of the Sacred Sites Act.

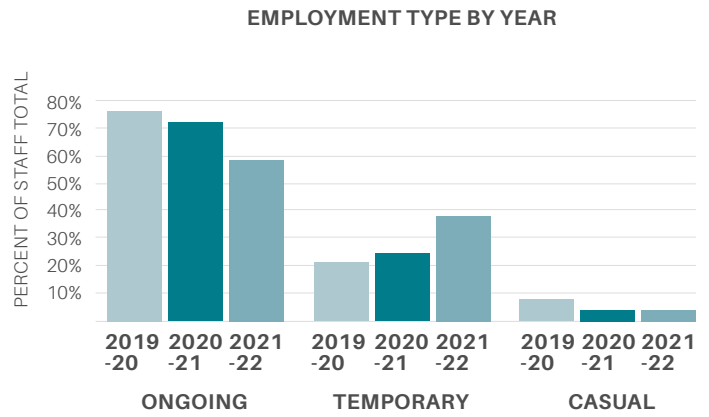


Tolmer Falls, Litchfield National Park, NT



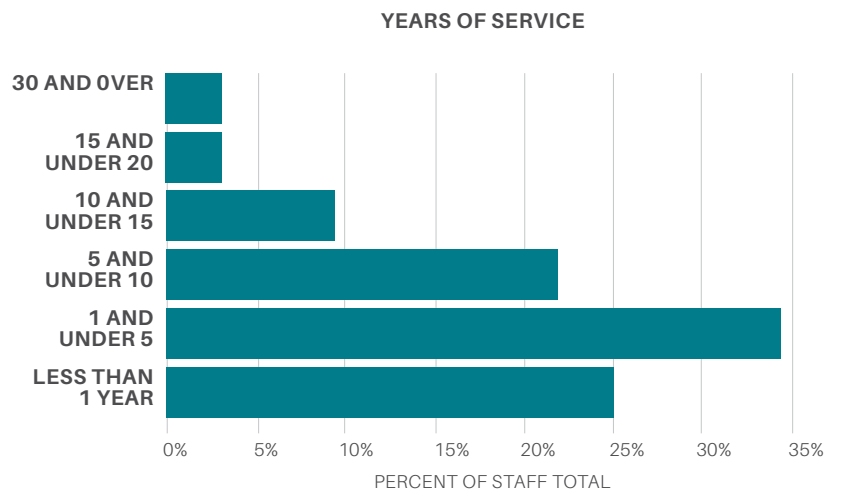
## EMPLOYMENT TYPES

In 2021-22, the ongoing employed workforce reduced by six to 59% with four ongoing employees resigning and two transferring to other agencies. Temporary positions increased by four to 30% of the workforce and is due to a number of positions directly related to funding programs with a life cycle of two years or the backfilling for parental and long-term leave arrangements. The Authority maintains its commitment to creating a stable workforce through opportunities for ongoing employment.



## RETENTION

In 2021-22, 59% of the workforce had been employed by the Authority for less than five years. This rate is consistent with previous years however the length of service from one year to five years has increased by 25%, a ten percent increase on the previous year. This year 16% of the workforce had been employed by the Authority for 10 years or more, a slight decrease from the previous year demonstrating an evolving workforce.

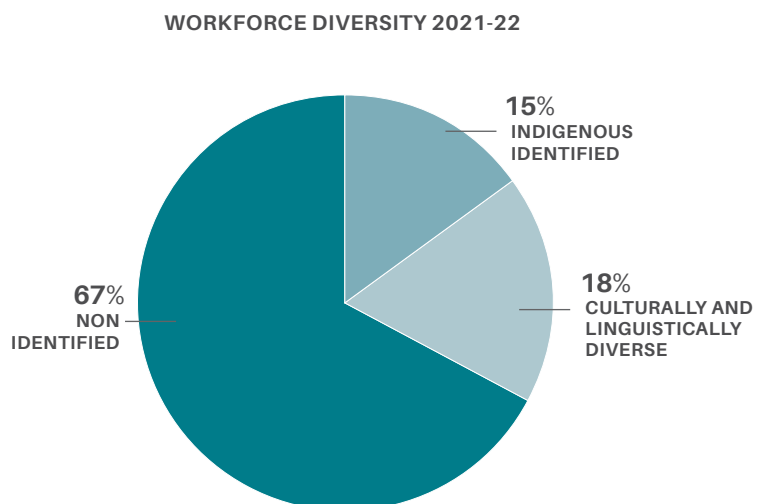


## DIVERSITY

The Authority is committed to the principles of inclusion, equity and diversity.

Overall, this year the percentage of staff identifying as Indigenous decreased from 20% to 15%. The percentage of staff identifying as being from a culturally and linguistically diverse background increased from 14% to 18%. The percentage of staff that identified as having a disability remained at 0% for the fourth year in a row.

In 2021-22 the Authority continued to mandate the special measures principles to increase Aboriginal employment. During each recruitment opportunity, we not only encourage Aboriginal applicants to apply for positions, but we also prioritise Aboriginal applicants as the preferred applicant for employment assessment. In 2021-22 there was a noticeable reduction in Aboriginal applicants for positions, which can be largely attributed to the focus on recruiting for anthropologist positions which traditionally receive no Aboriginal applicants. The Authority remains committed to increasing its Aboriginal employee numbers and has a target of 20%.



## WELLBEING AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

### WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The Authority has always maintained a commitment to flexible work arrangements for staff and recognises the benefits of providing a balanced working environment that supports family and other responsibilities. The benefits not only support our productivity but promote a supportive work environment.

In 2021-22, five staff were employed on a part-time basis due to family and lifestyle commitments. A further 16 staff, although working full time, had flexible workplace arrangements to vary their standard working hours. This means that 62% of our workforce are employed under flexible working arrangements, whether that be part-time employment or a variation of the standard working hours, a 6% increase from the previous year.

### EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Authority continued to promote the Employee Assistance Program in 2021-22 and encouraged staff and family members to access the free and confidential counselling service through the whole-of-government contract especially in light of the challenges being experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the additional stressors this placed on employees in their personal and working lives.

In 2021-22, staff and family members participated in 3 individual, confidential counselling sessions – a reduction from the 13 sessions accessed the year before but reflective of the changing environment. The Authority also ran an in-house workshop for all staff to assist in managing anxiety and stressful situations due to the evolving and in some cases daily changes in COVID-19 conditions and Chief Health Officer mandates.

### FLU VACCINATION PROGRAM

As in previous years, the Authority provided a flu vaccination program in the Darwin office, and the Alice Springs based staff accessed the whole-of-government flu vaccination program.

### CHRISTMAS CLOSEDOWN

In 2021-22, the Authority closed its doors over the Christmas period, enabling staff to have a break between Christmas and New Year. Staff accessed recreation leave during this period.

### COVID-19 RESPONSE

This year saw the continuation of the challenges experienced in 2021-22 with a global pandemic continuing to affect Australia, and the realisation that COVID-19 could no longer be kept out of the Northern Territory nor Aboriginal communities.

In January 2022, exclusion zones were declared by the Chief Health officer which prohibited non-essential workers from travelling to the majority of remote communities. Under the Directive a community must reach a vaccination rate of 85% for everyone aged over five years, before it was removed from the exclusion zone listing. This restriction saw all fieldwork postponed for over four months and limited access to numerous communities in the Top End, Barkly and Central Australian regions. In April 2022 travel resumed to remote communities with strict testing and health protocols implemented to ensure the safety of custodians, their families and communities as well as staff.

### WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Authority is committed to ensuring the safety of all our staff, whether they are travelling remotely or are in the office.

In 2021-22 remote travel and staff welfare was again recognised as the highest organisational risk. To mitigate this risk, a rigorous call-in process is in place as well as regular remote first aid and four-wheel-drive defensive driving training for all new and ongoing staff who travel remotely. In addition, all new research officers are inducted through a number of joint fieldwork trips to ensure they are confident with remote travel and safety processes.

### WORKPLACE INCIDENTS

There were no workers' compensation claims in 2021-22.



Image: Maguk area, Kakadu National Park, NT

## DEVELOPING OUR WORKPLACE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

### TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

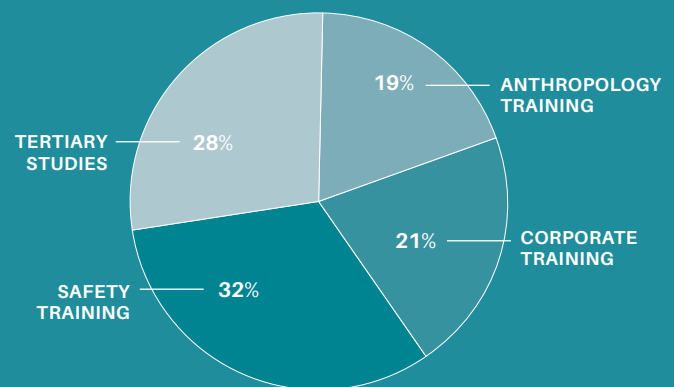
In 2021-22, investment in training and development increased by 24% with \$32,183 spent on a range of programs, with a focus on safety training for remote travel. The Authority focused investment on the Study Assistance program for staff to undertake tertiary qualifications.

Funding was also provided for a one-day staff workshop on anxiety training due to the changing environment that employees were working in and experiencing in their personal life with the COVID-19 pandemic and the concerns about safety for themselves but also for custodians and remote communities.

Further support was provided for staff to attend anthropological training, writing course and conferences as well a general corporate training in recruitment, policy and project management.

Over \$10,000 was invested in work health and safety (WHS) training, in topics such as remote first-aid and four-wheel-drive defensive driving for research officers as well as other staff that undertake remote travel. This training helps ensure the safety of our staff travelling in remote areas. All staff that undertake remote fieldwork or travel regularly are encouraged to attend refresher training every year prior to the peak travel season.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT



### AURORA PROJECT INTERNSHIPS

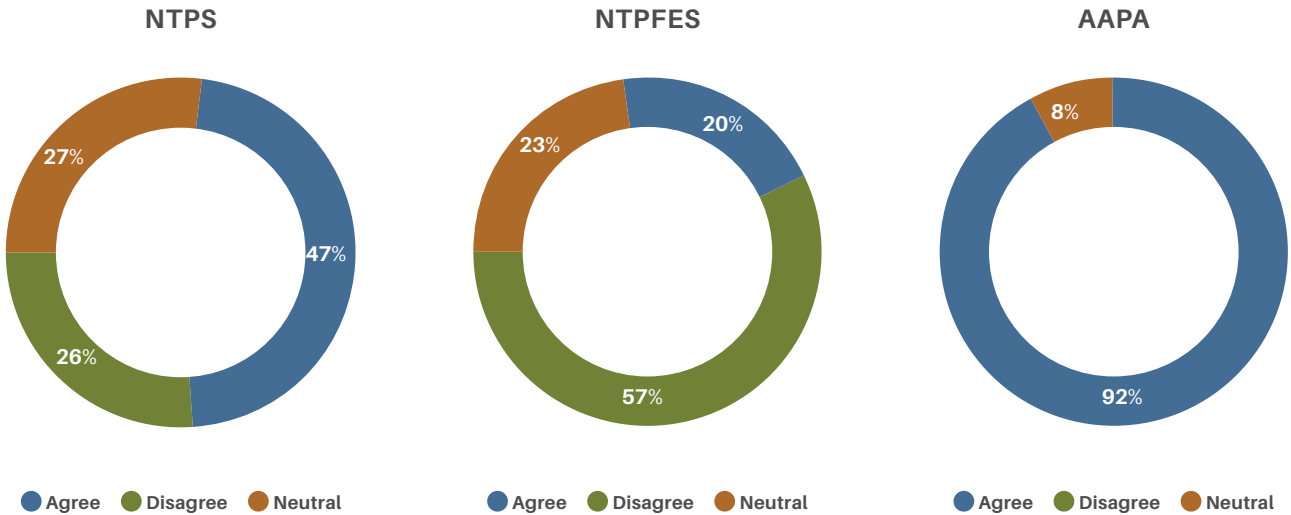
In 2021-22, the Authority did not host any Aurora Project interns. This is the first year that the Authority has not participated and was due to the continued travel restrictions and lockdowns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Authority is committed to the program and will recommence interns in 2022-23 if support and mentoring can be provided to the interns participating in the program.

### STUDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Five requests from Authority employees for study assistance were supported in 2021-22. Two staff members continued their studies for a Bachelor of Business and a Masters in Information Technology (Cyber Security). A staff member completed a Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping and two staff members completed a Certificate IV in Government Investigations to support the increased compliance and investigations of sacred site damage.

# People Matters Survey 2021 Results

*"Recruitment and promotion decisions are based on merit."*



**92% OF THE AUTHORITY STAFF  
AGREE THAT RECRUITMENT  
AND PROMOTION IS BASED ON  
MERIT COMPARED TO 47% OF  
BROADER NT PUBLIC SERVICE**

## PEOPLE MATTERS SURVEY 2021

In 2021 Authority Staff participated in a whole-of-government survey called People Matters.

The People Matters Survey is conducted every two years and provides an evidence-based feedback loop relating to performance, productivity and the attraction and retention of employees. The Survey provides an employee perception on a range of topics including employee engagement and job satisfaction, how well managers manage their teams and how well change is implemented by senior managers.

In 2021 86% of all Authority Staff participated in the survey and the overall results were:

- Over 80% of staff are proud to work for the Authority and feel motivated to achieve the objectives of the Authority and feel inspired to do the best in their job.
- 76% felt a strong personal attachment to the Authority.
- 88% of staff are confident to raise issues with their managers.
- 92% believe that the Authority behaves with impartiality and recruitment and promotions are based on merit.
- 84% say there are opportunities to innovate.
- 92% advise that the Authority and managers consider the wellbeing of employees is important.

The next People Matters Survey is scheduled for 2023.

## WORKFLOW AND PROCESS REVIEW

**“A GENUINE DESIRE FROM ALL STAFF TO WORK COLLECTIVELY AND COLLABORATIVELY WAS UNMISTAKABLE” -**

### CHANGING OUR NORMAL REVIEW

In March 2022 the Chief Executive Officer initiated an external review of the Authority’s workflows and processes. This review ‘Changing our normal’ was instigated by an evolving operating environment and a need to proactively provide a standard of client services that aligned to the complexities of proponent’s applications being received.

The Review’s purpose was to focus on four main issues:

1. Identify resourcing and skills required to support the professional standard of the Authority
2. Develop a framework that has the appropriate decision-making points and quality control mechanisms to ensure consistent, evidence based and authoritative advice
3. Create efficiencies in workflows to ensure the team is maximising its capabilities
4. Develop a framework to provide a customer service standard that formalises the Authority’s approach to client engagement

The review completed extensive consultations with staff and the Executive Management Group and draft recommendations are expected to be delivered to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration in July 2022.

## SUMMARY

This year was again a challenging one for all the staff at the Authority. The Authority saw the continuation of a high demand for services with added challenges of travel restrictions continuing and the effects of COVID-19 entering communities.

Recruitment has emerged as a new challenge for the Authority with a skill shortage in experienced staff in the fields of anthropology, environmental science and environmental and heritage law. The Authority is expanding promotion of its positions to universities to attract Masters students who have the experience and have gone on to further studies; advertising in online platforms such as recruitment and professional network online sites; and promoting through specialist associations in anthropology sciences and law. This will continue to be a challenge for the Authority in 2022-23.



Beach area near Rosie Creek Mouth, NT



## STAFF PROFILE

### Phil Adgemis, Anthropologist and Research Officer

Phil Adgemis has been working for three years as a research officer and anthropologist for the Authority.

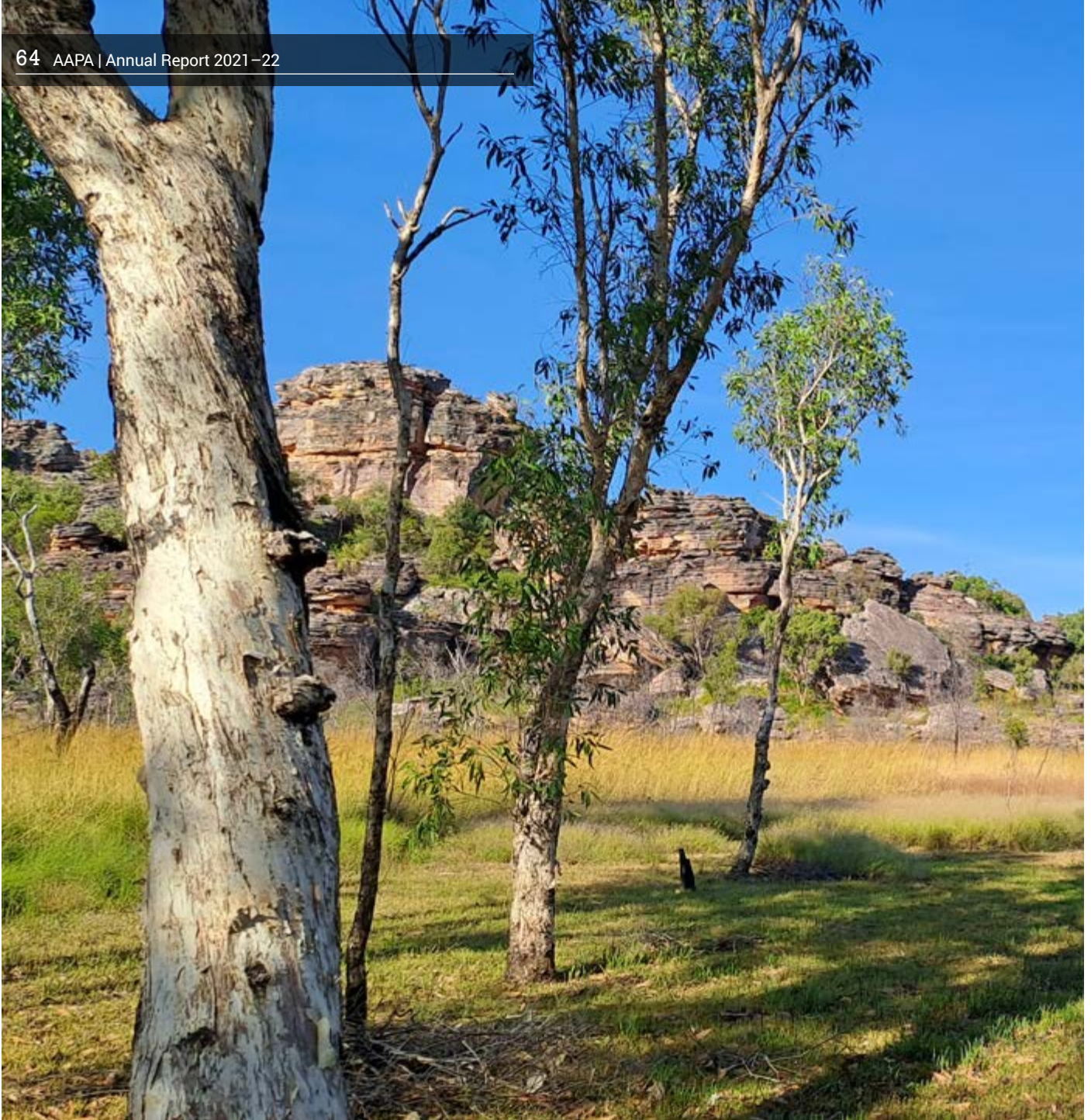
“Before this I was based at Monash University as researcher and teaching associate. And prior to that I spent a couple of years living in Borroloola doing PhD research with Yanyuwa families and working with the li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Ranger Unit. The generosity and openness of Yanyuwa, Garrwa, Marra and Gudanji families in Borroloola taught me a great deal about how people connect to and engage with their ancestral country. I was drawn to the applied anthropological work of the Authority as a way to contribute to the protection of sacred sites and to maintain those relationships in the southwest Gulf of Carpentaria.”

Once an application has been made for an Authority Certificate, the research officers are provided with a description of works and spatial information, and then they research the anthropology and the site record and develop an approach for consultation with people who have knowledge of the sacred sites in vicinity of the works. The custodians then provide instructions and advice on how the sites can be protected in accordance with their cultural values.

**“We talk to people. We use a lot of maps. We use the record and we survey the area. We go in vehicles. We go in helicopters. We take senior people with us that speak for sacred sites.”**

“Then I write that into a report,” Phil explained, “and I draft the Certificate for review. The process is rigorous and it can be challenging, particularly when working on projects that employ new modes of resource extraction and can potentially disturb large areas of land or waterways.

“That has definitely been a challenge but also invigorated my experience of the work here. I feel the work is of great value in the protection of sacred sites into the future.”



Kubara area, Kakadu National Park, NT

# SUSTAINABILITY



Sacred sites are fundamental to the cultural fabric and heritage of the Northern Territory. They are essential to a continuing body of practices, beliefs and Aboriginal laws and traditions. Sacred sites give meaning to the natural landscape and anchor cultural values and spiritual and kin-based relationships in the land. Protecting sacred sites is critical to sustaining Aboriginal culture.

In our role to protect sacred sites, the Authority helps deliver positive social outcomes through our key services: Authority Certificates, requests for information, registering sacred sites and prosecuting the desecration of sacred sites where required.

Through providing these services, we enhance relationships between Aboriginal custodians and the wider Territory community by increasing the level of certainty when identifying the constraints, if any, on land use proposals arising from the existence of sacred sites.

In 2021-22, the Authority issued 92 Authority Certificates to facilitate development projects whilst protecting sacred sites across the Northern Territory.

The Authority responded to 896 requests for information from its register of sacred sites, providing the public with information about sacred sites known to us and helping minimise the risk of inadvertent damage to the identified sites. We also identified where sacred sites are likely to be at risk if works were to be carried out.

The Authority staff and consultants spent 429 days in the field, conducting consultations.

The Authority registered 19 sacred sites, providing the sites with maximum protection under the Sacred Sites Act.

## THE AUTHORITY IN THE COMMUNITY

The Authority values the importance of giving back to the community by supporting small businesses, organisations and community activities. In 2021–22, we supported eight applicants (including local government, small business, NGOs and cultural organisations) by providing full or partial Authority Certificate waivers for projects.

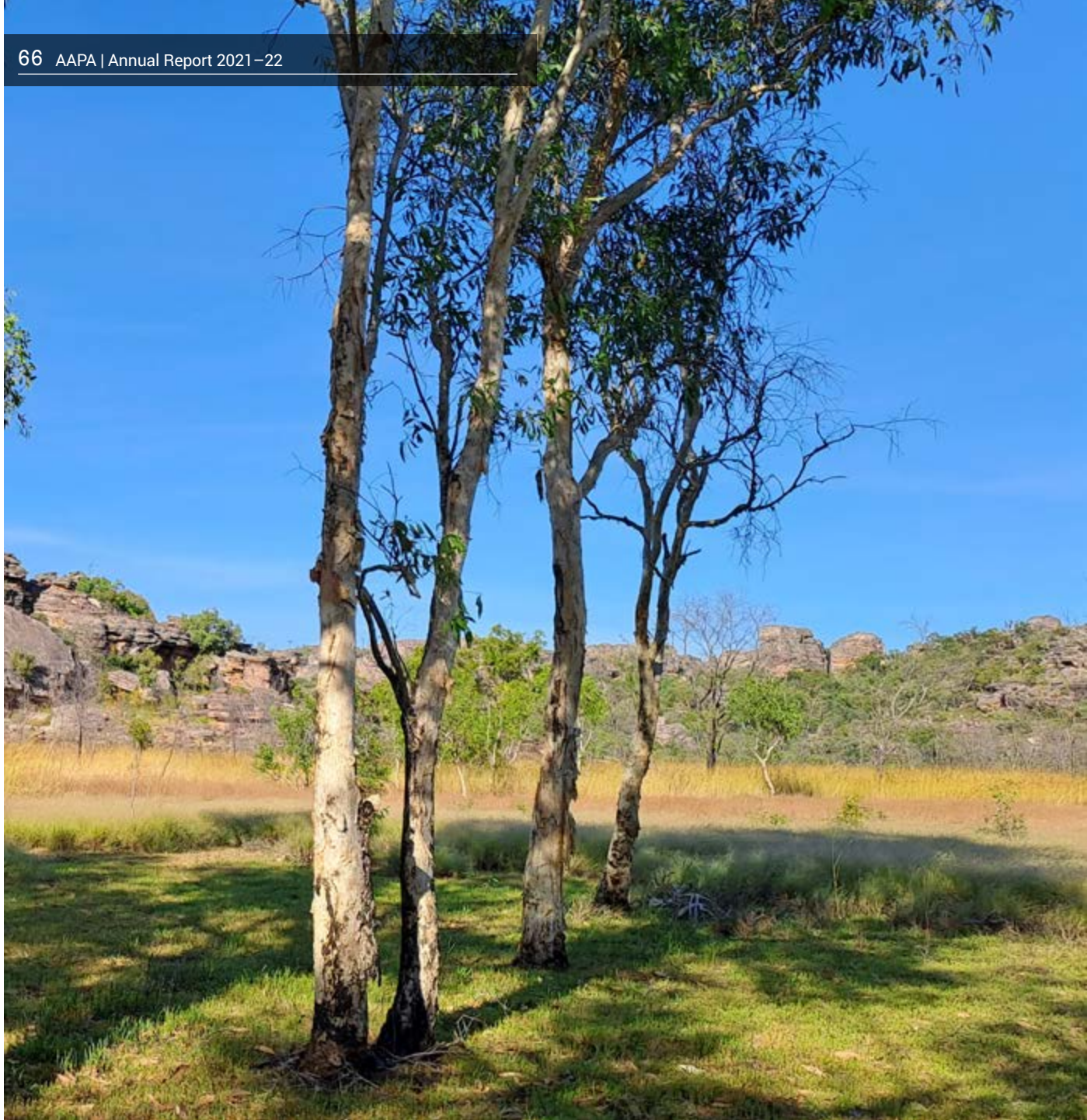
The total actual costs of those waivers were \$107,803. This included two waivers to support Aboriginal organisations for community development. Other projects included environment management programs, tourism developments and infrastructure. With support from the Authority, these organisations were able to receive Certificates for their respective projects. Providing these projects with full or partial waivers also supported economic development in the NT. The total value of waivers was 3.9% of the Authority's self-generated income for 2021–22.

## RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Authority supports the NT's Climate Change Response. The Authority reviewed and provided feedback on draft strategies related to the NT Government's climate change work. The Authority also participated in ongoing meetings led by DEPWS on climate change matters.



McArthur River, near Borroloola, NT



Kubara area, Kakadu National Park, NT

# FINANCIALS

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT OVERVIEW FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (the Authority) is a statutory authority established under the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 (NT) to administer sacred site protection in the Northern Territory.

In 2021-22 the Authority continued to see a sustainable increase in demand for services, achieving an overall budget surplus of \$85,000 and \$2.739 million in self-generated revenue. The government and mining industry were the predominant sectors seeking the Authority's services, for exploration, mining, and road upgrade purposes. The Authority also received additional output appropriation primarily related to the Interim cost recovery framework for onshore petroleum regulatory activities.

COVID-19 again affected the year's performance, largely due to the 'excluded communities' classification which prohibited non-essential workers from travelling to many remote communities. This restriction saw all fieldwork postponed for over four months throughout the year. Although this did affect the overall revenue position, the Authority was still able to achieve a surplus budget position.

Employee expenses, although the largest expense to the Authority of \$4.137 million in 2021-22, saw a significant underspend of \$0.714 million. This underspend was due to a number of unfilled vacancies, with some hard-to-fill positions in the professional stream such as anthropology. To mitigate this resourcing issue, which is being felt nationally and internationally, the Authority engaged anthropological consultants at a cost of \$0.278 million.

Purchases of goods and services grew by \$0.538 million from the previous year to \$2.217 million. This increase is due to the above-mentioned anthropological consultant engagement, the continuation of the information technology project (\$0.562 million) to scope, design and build a fully integrated sacred site data and client management system and legal advice and criminal prosecution costs (\$0.147 million).

Travel and Custodian consultations (\$0.578 million) related to fieldwork also contributed to the over-expenditure in purchases of goods and services and is reflective of the increased self-generated revenue from previous years. The Authority expended \$0.251 million in custodian consultation payments and \$0.146 million in helicopter and charter costs relating to fieldwork. This demonstrates the extensive consultation and engagement with custodians to ensure thorough and well researched anthropological assessments are undertaken, and reflects the complexities of Authority Certificate applications and the large subject lands being surveyed across the Northern Territory.

## CERTIFICATION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

We certify that the attached financial statements for the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority have been prepared based on proper accounts and records in accordance with the prescribed format, the Financial Management Act 1995 and Treasurer's Directions.

We further state that the information set out in the comprehensive operating statement, balance sheet, statement of changes in equity, cash flow statement, and notes to and forming part of the financial statements, presents fairly the financial performance and cash flows for the year ended 30 June 2022 and the financial position on that date.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render the particulars included in the financial statements misleading or inaccurate.



Dr Benedict Scambary  
Chief Executive Officer  
30 August 2022



Nicola Jackson  
Business Manager  
30 August 2022

## INCOME

The Authority is funded by a combination of Northern Territory Government appropriation, goods and services income, and services provided free of charge by the Department of Corporate and Digital Development (DCDD). The chart below illustrates the relative value of each income category. The income for 2021–22 was \$29,000 above budget. Income generated through the issuing on Authority Certificates equates to 37% of the Authority income for 2021–22. These figures are exclusive of Central Holding Authority revenue generated through the application fees for Requests for Information and requests for Authority Certificates.

Figure 15: Income received (\$'000)

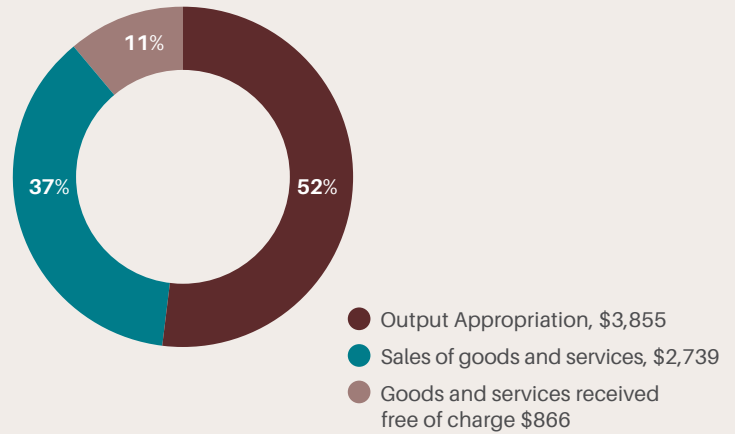
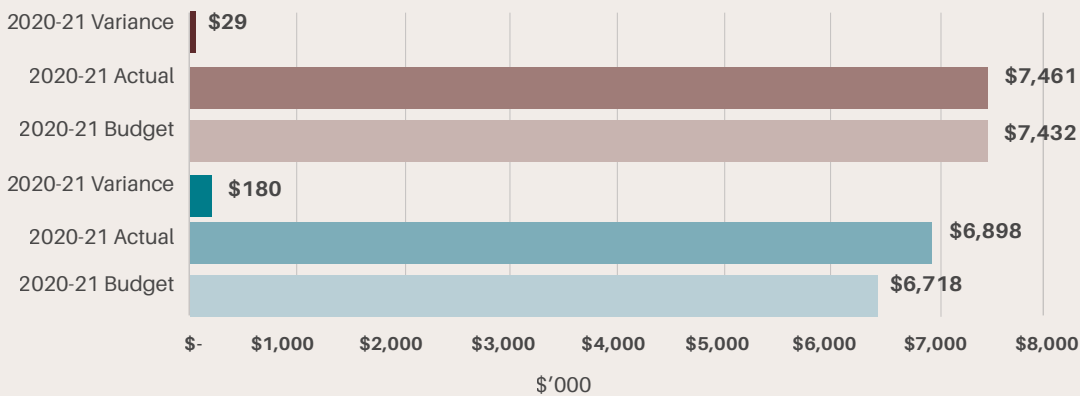


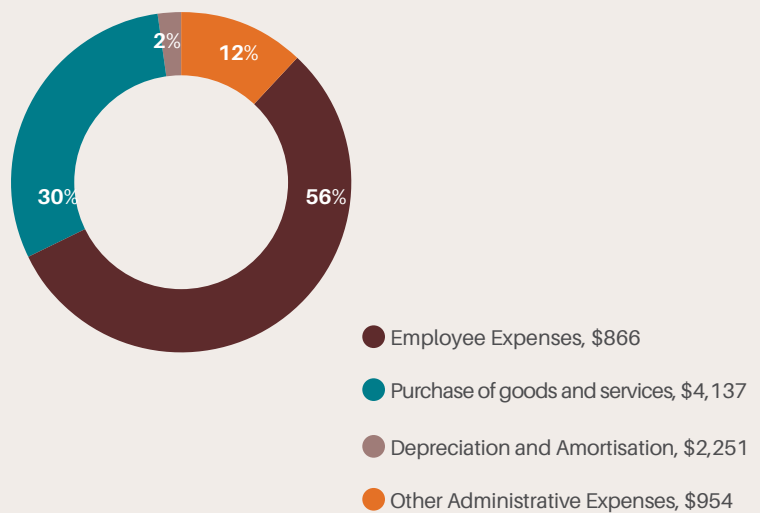
Figure 16: Total Income - Budget Versus Actual (\$'000)



## EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure is made up of four broad categories: employees, purchase of goods and services, depreciation and other administrative expenses (DCDD charges). In 2021–22, although personnel continued to be the largest expense for the Authority at \$4.1 million, it was below budget by \$714,000 due to vacancies throughout the year of hard-to-fill professional positions. The purchases of goods and services was \$655,000 over budget and this is reflective of the engagement of anthropological consultants, large complex Authority Certificate clearances in remote and regional locations at times requiring helicopters, the continuation of a future integrated business solution to support the Authority’s current and future business and client needs and the increase in legal services expenditure.

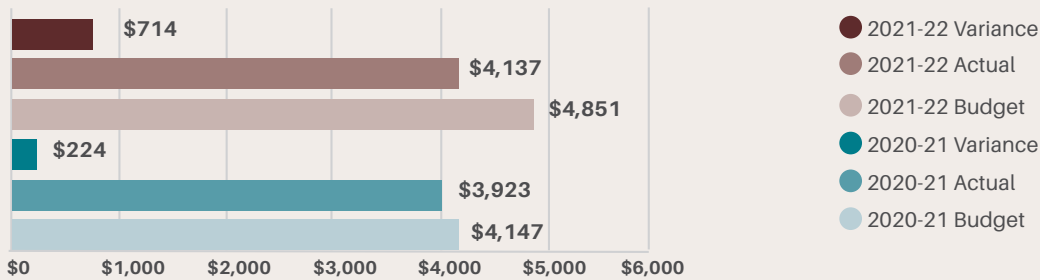
Figure 17: Expenses (\$'000)



## EMPLOYEE EXPENDITURE

During 2021–22, there were a number of vacancies throughout the year predominantly due to hard to fill professional stream positions in anthropology resulting in a budget underspend of \$714,000. Additional funding of \$452,000 was also provided through output appropriation in 2021–22 to support the personnel increase required as an interim cost recovery framework for onshore petroleum. The funding was allocated to three positions in land information and compliance.

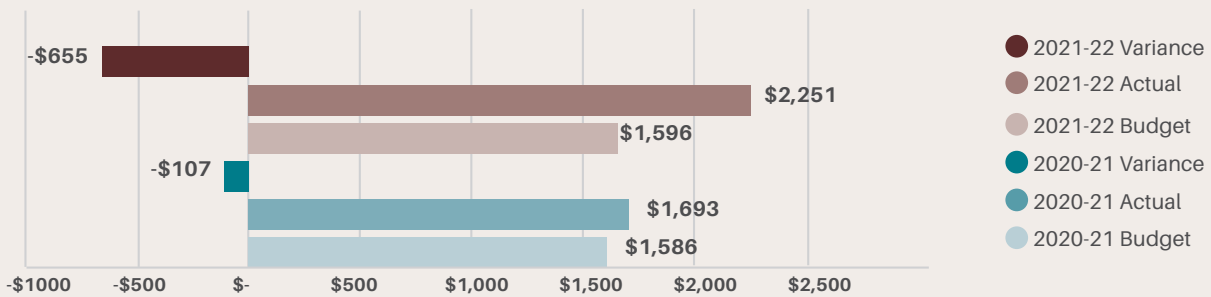
Figure 18: Total Employee - Budget Versus Actual (\$'000)



## GOODS AND SERVICES EXPENDITURE

Goods and services costs were over budget by \$655,000 due to large complex Authority Certificates clearances where \$578,000 was expended in travel and custodian consultations and \$278,000 was spent on the engagement of anthropological consultants. The continuation of the future integrated business solution saw a further \$562,000 invested.

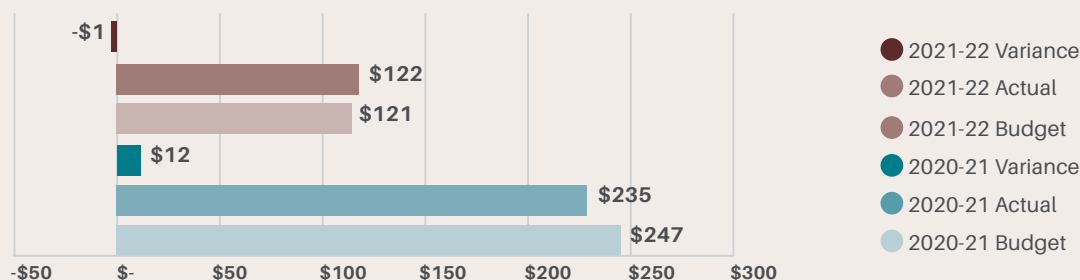
Figure 19: Total Purchases of Goods and Services Budget Versus Actual (\$'000)



## DEPRECIATION AND AMORTISATION

The depreciation and amortisation budget was on par with the actual expenditure in 2021-22. Overall the budget is reducing in comparison to previous years as major assets have fully depreciated and no further investment in physical or intangible assets has occurred.

Figure 20: Total Depreciation and Amortisation Budget Versus Actual (\$'000)



## BALANCE SHEET

### ASSETS

Total assets are made up of four main categories: cash and deposits, receivables, pre-paid expenses, and plant, property and equipment. Total assets increased by \$556,000 in 2021–22 compared to budget due to a \$230,000 increase in cash, a \$54,000 increase in receivables, a \$5,000 decrease in prepayments and a minor decrease of \$1,000 in fixed assets due to depreciation.

### LIABILITIES

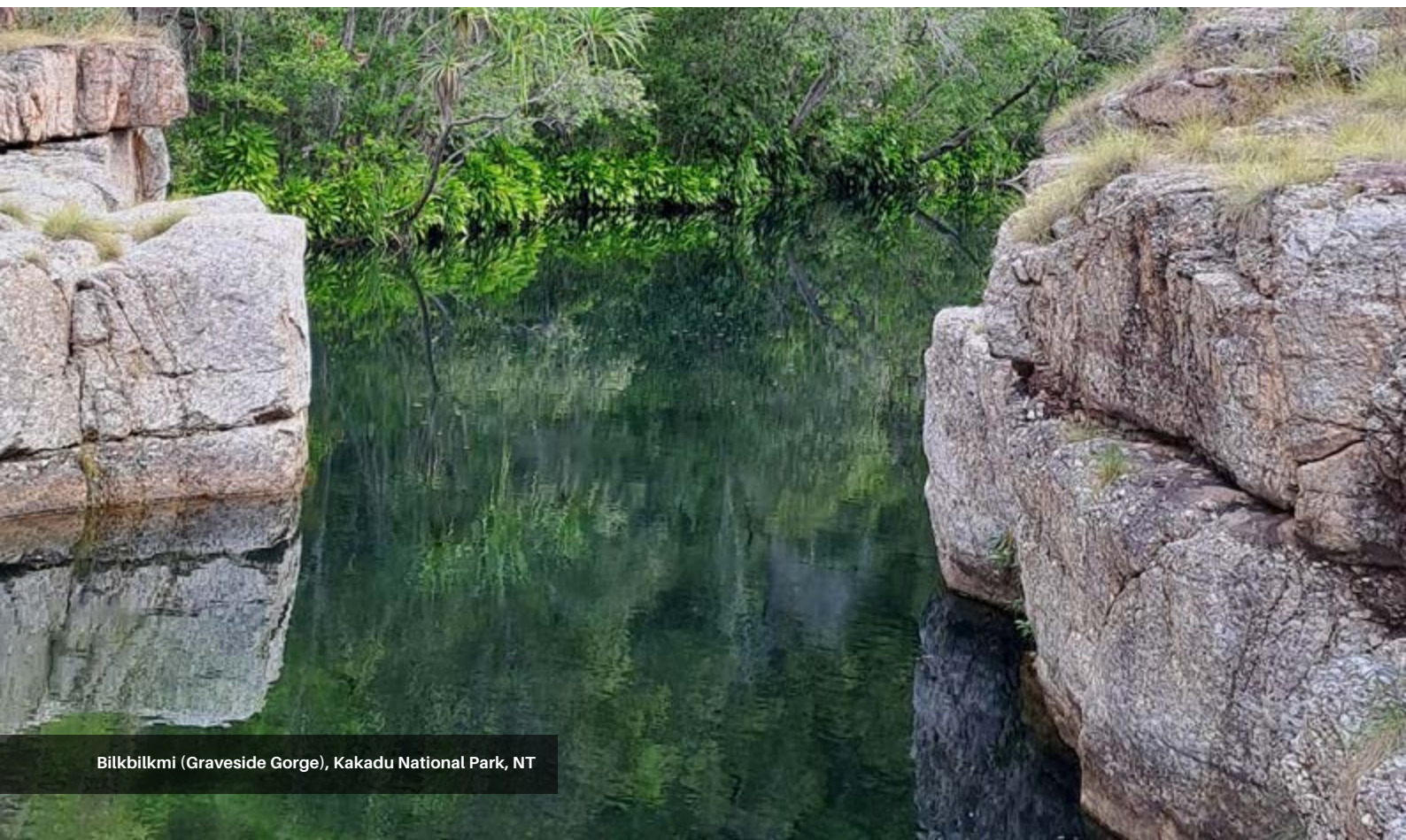
Liabilities are made up of payables and employee provisions. Total liabilities of \$554,000 are influenced by provisions for employee entitlements (leave provisions) of \$407,000. Total liabilities decreased by \$50,000 from the previous year predominantly due to helicopter requirements at the end of the financial year.

### EQUITY

Equity has increased by \$85,000 in 2021–22 due to increased demand for services being experienced in the mining and development sectors. The impact of COVID-19 essential worker requirements for excluded communities did have an impact on the projected equity however the year achieved a positive budget position.

## CASH FLOW STATEMENT

The cash flow statement details how changes in income and balance sheet movements affect the cash situation of the Authority. It demonstrates that it was an extremely busy and productive year with large-scale Authority Certificate clearances, large projects being invested in internally to assist in modernising the business operations of the Authority in its current form and into the future business requirements. The Authority is in a respectable financial position with an increase of \$439,000 in cash held for 2021–22.



## COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

AASB101.10(b)(ea) AASB101.51(c)(d)(e) AASB101.113		2022	2021
	Notes	\$'000	\$'000
<b>INCOME</b>			
AASB 1058.38-41	Appropriation	4a	
AASB 101.85	Output	3,855	3,442
AASB 15.113(a)	Sales of goods and services	4b	2,611
	Goods and services received free of charge	5	845
AASB101.82(a),85	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	3	<b>7,461</b>
AASB 101.81A	<b>EXPENSES</b>		
AASB 101.99, 102	Employee expenses	4,137	3,923
AASB 101.99,102	Administrative expenses		
	Property management	34	40
	Purchases of goods and services	7	1,634
AASB 101.99,102,	Depreciation and amortisation	11, 12	235
AASB 138.118	Other administrative expenses <sup>1</sup>	866	863
AASB 101.99, 102	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	0	<b>7,376</b>
AASB 101.85	<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>		<b>85</b>
AASB 101.81A	<b>COMPREHENSIVE RESULT</b>		<b>202</b>
			<b>85</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes DCDD service charges and DIPL repairs and maintenance service charges.

The comprehensive operating statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

AASB101.10(a)(ea)(f) AASB101.51(c)(d)(e) AASB101.113		2022	2021
	Notes	\$'000	\$'000
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
AASB 101.60, 66	Cash and deposits	8	4,015
AASB 101.54 (i)	Receivables	10	352
AASB 101.54 (h)			303
	<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>4,367</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
AASB 101.54(a)	Property, plant and equipment	11	30
AASB 101.54(c)	Intangibles	12	43
	<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>74</b>
	<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>4,440</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
AASB 101.60, 69	Payables	13	147
AASB 101.54(k)	Provisions	15	407
AASB 101.54(l)	Other liabilities	16	330
AASB 101.55			863
	<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>884</b>
	<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>3,556</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
AASB 101.54(r), 78(e)	Capital	1,621	1,621
AASB 101.54(r)	Accumulated funds	1,935	1,850
	<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>3,556</b>

The balance sheet is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

AASB 101.10(c), AASB101.51(c)(d) (e)AASB 101.106 (d)AASB 101.113	Notes	Equity at 1 July	Comprehensive result	Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners	Equity at 30 June
		\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
<b>2021-22</b>					
AASB 101.106(d)	<b>Accumulated funds</b>	(1,845)	(85)	0	(1,930)
AASB 101.106A	Transfers from reserves	(5)	0	0	(5)
		<b>(1,850)</b>	<b>(85)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,935)</b>
<b>Capital - transactions with owners</b>					
AASB 101.106(d) (iii)	Equity injections				
	Capital appropriation	(564)	0	0	(564)
	Equity transfers in	11 (1,195)	0	0	(1,195)
	Other equity injections	12 (57)	0	0	(57)
	Equity withdrawals				
	Capital withdrawal	195	0	0	195
		<b>(1,621)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,621)</b>
	<b>Total equity at end of financial year</b>	<b>(3,471)</b>	<b>(85)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,556)</b>
<b>2019-20</b>					
AASB 101.106(d)	<b>Accumulated funds</b>	(1,643)	(202)	0	(1,845)
AASB 101.106A	Transfers from reserves	(5)	0	0	(5)
		<b>(1,648)</b>	<b>(202)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,850)</b>
<b>Capital - transactions with owners</b>					
AASB 101.106(d) (iii)	Equity injections				
	Capital appropriation	(564)	0	0	(564)
	Equity transfers in	(1,195)	0	0	(1,195)
	Other equity injections	(57)	0	0	(57)
	Equity withdrawals	195	0	0	195
	Capital withdrawal	(1,621)	0	0	(1,621)
	<b>Total equity at end of financial year</b>	<b>(3,268)</b>	<b>(202)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,471)</b>

*The statement of changes in equity is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.*



## CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

AASB 101.10(d)(ea), AASB101.51(c)(d)(e) AASB 101.113 AASB 107.18(a)		2022	2021
	Notes	\$'000	\$'000
AASB 107.10	<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
	<b>Operating receipts</b>		
	Appropriation		
	Output	3,855	3,442
AASB 107.14(a)	Receipts from sales of goods and services	3,124	2,822
	<b>Total operating receipts</b>	<b>6,979</b>	<b>6,264</b>
	<b>Total operating receipts</b>		
AASB 107.14(d)	Payments to employees	(4,147)	(3,943)
AASB 107.14(c)	Payments for goods and services	(2,393)	(1,666)
	<b>Total operating payments</b>	<b>(6,540)</b>	<b>(5,609)</b>
	<b>Net cash from/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>655</b>
	<b>Investing payments</b>		
AASB 107.16(a)	Purchases of assets	0	(21)
	<b>Total investing payments</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(21)</b>
	<b>Net cash from/(used in) investing activities</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(21)</b>
	Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	439	634
	Cash at beginning of financial year	2,3576	2,942
AASB 107.45	<b>Cash at end of financial year</b>	<b>4,015</b>	<b>3,576</b>

*The comprehensive operating statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.*

## INDEX OF NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Note			
1.	Objectives and funding	12.	Property, plant and equipment
2.	Statement of significant accounting policies	13.	Intangibles
3.	Comprehensive operating statement by output group		<b>Liabilities</b>
	<b>Income</b>	14.	Payables
4a.	Appropriation	15.	Provisions
4b.	Sales of goods and services	16.	Other liabilities
5.	Goods and services received free of charge	17.	Commitments
	<b>Expenses</b>		Other disclosures
6.	Purchases of goods and services	18.	Financial instruments
7.	Write-offs, postponements, waivers, gifts and ex gratia payments	19.	Related parties
	<b>Assets</b>	20.	Contingent liabilities and contingent assets
8.	Cash and deposits	21.	Events subsequent to balance date
9.	Cash flow reconciliation	22.	Schedule of administered Territory items
10.	Receivables	23.	Budgetary information
11.	Other assets	24.	Budgetary information: Administered Territory items

## 1. OBJECTIVES AND FUNDING

### AASB 101.138(b)

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (the Authority) is an independent statutory authority established under the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 (NT). The Authority is responsible for overseeing the protection of Aboriginal sacred sites on land and sea across the Northern Territory and recognising and respecting the interests of Custodians of sacred sites, landowners and developers for the benefit of all Territorians.

Additional information in relation to the Authority and its principal activities may be found in the introduction of the annual report.

### AASB 1052.15

The Authority receives a level of appropriation from the Northern Territory Government and also generates goods and services income derived from providing Authority Certificates to clients in order to maintain its operations. Employee expenses of \$4,137 million continued to be the largest expense accounting for 56% of total expenditure.

The Authority achieved a surplus of \$85,161 this year despite the effect of the COVID-19 excluded communities travel restrictions that saw fieldwork postponed for over four months throughout the year due to low vaccination rates in the majority of Aboriginal communities. This affected the capacity of income generation however, the Authority managed to achieve \$2.739 million in goods and services revenue for 2021-22.

Legal advice and criminal prosecution costs in 2021-22 were \$0.147 million, an increase of \$0.134 million on the previous year. The increase was primarily due to the matter of AAPA v Director of National Parks (NTSC No. 2 of 2021), which has involved an intervention by the previous Commonwealth Attorney-General and legal representation on constitutional issues.

2021-22 experienced the increase in anthropological fieldwork consultancies to manage the increasing demand for services with \$0.219 million expensed in consultancy contracts for anthropological fieldwork services in 2021-22 compared to \$0.108 million in 2020-21.

2021-22 also saw the finalisation of the Business Case and procurement planning and request for tender documentation for a fully integrated sacred site data and client management system that will enable procedural efficiencies, support investors through reduced approval timeframes, and safeguard data on sacred sites across the Territory. This Business Systems project was self-funded again in 2021-22 and saw \$0.52 million invested. The Business Systems project is now awaiting a successful funding outcome.

For reporting purposes outputs delivered by the Authority are summarised into two output groups. Note 3 provides summarised financial information in the form of a comprehensive operating statement by the output group.

## 2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

AASB 101.10(e), 113, 117AASB 101.10(e), 138AASB1054.8(b), AASB 110.17, TD R2.1.1

### a) Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Financial Management Act 1995 and related Treasurer's Directions. The Financial Management Act 1995 requires the Authority to prepare financial statements for the year ended 30 June based on the form determined by the Treasurer. The form of Authority financial statements should include:

1. a certification of the financial statements;
2. a comprehensive operating statement;
3. a balance sheet;
4. a statement of changes in equity;
5. a cash flow statement; and
6. applicable explanatory notes to the financial statements.

### b) Basis of accounting

AASB 101.27, 112(a) The financial statements have been prepared using the accrual basis of accounting, which recognises the effect of financial transactions and events when they occur, rather than when cash is paid out or received. As part of the preparation of the financial statements, all intra agency transactions and balances have been eliminated.

### AASB 101.112(a), 117(a)

Except where stated, the financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

### AASB 1054.7-9

The form of the Authority financial statements is also consistent with the requirements of Australian accounting standards. The effects of all relevant new and revised standards and interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that are effective for the current annual reporting period have been evaluated.

### Standards and interpretations effective from 2021-22

Several amending standards and AASB interpretations have been issued that apply to the current reporting periods, but are considered to have no or minimal impact on public sector reporting.

### Standards and interpretations issued but not yet effective

No Australian accounting standards have been early adopted for 2021-22.

### AASB 108.30

Several amending standards and AASB interpretations have been issued that apply to future reporting periods but are considered to have limited impact on public sector reporting.

### c) Reporting entity

#### AASB 101.138(a)

The financial statements cover the Authority as an individual reporting entity. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority ("the Authority") is a Northern Territory entity established under the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 (NT).

#### AASB 101.138(a)

The principal place of business of the Authority is: Level 4 RCG Centre, 47 Mitchell Street, Darwin Northern Territory 0800.

### d) Agency and Territory items

#### TD F.2.2

The financial statements of Authority include income, expenses, assets, liabilities and equity over which the Authority has control (agency items). Certain items, while managed by the Authority, are controlled and recorded by the Territory rather than the Authority (Territory items). Territory items are recognised and recorded in the Central Holding Authority as discussed below.

## Central Holding Authority

TD F2.2 AASB 1050.7 1050.24

The Central Holding Authority is the 'parent body' that represents the government's ownership interest in government-controlled entities.

The Central Holding Authority also records all Territory items, such as income, expenses, assets and liabilities controlled by the government and managed by agencies on behalf of the government. The main Territory item is Territory income, which includes taxation and royalty revenue, Commonwealth general purpose funding (such as GST revenue), fines, and statutory fees and charges.

The Central Holding Authority also holds certain Territory assets not assigned to agencies as well as certain Territory liabilities that are not practical or effective to assign to individual agencies such as unfunded superannuation and long service leave.

The Central Holding Authority recognises and records all Territory items, and as such, these items are not included in the Authority's financial statements. However, as the Authority is accountable for certain Territory items managed on behalf of government, these items have been separately disclosed in Note 22 – Schedule of administered Territory items.

### e) Comparatives

AASB 101.38

Where necessary, comparative information for the 2020-21 financial year has been reclassified to provide consistency with current year disclosures.

### f) Presentation and rounding of amounts

AASB 101.51(d)(e)

Amounts in the financial statements and notes to the financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars, with amounts of \$500 or less being rounded down to zero. Figures in the financial statements and notes may not equate due to rounding.

### g) Changes in accounting policies

AASB 108.14

There have been no changes to accounting policies adopted in 2021-22 as a result of management decisions. Changes in policies relating to COVID-19 are disclosed in k) below.

### h) Accounting judgments and estimates

AASB 108.32

The preparation of the financial report requires the making of judgments and estimates that affect the recognised amounts of assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses and the disclosure of contingent liabilities. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the results of which form the basis for making judgments about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

AASB 108.34,36,37

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

Judgments and estimates that have significant effects on the financial statements are disclosed in the relevant notes to the financial statements.

### i) Goods and services tax

AASB Interpretation 1031.6-11

Income, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred on a purchase of goods and services is not recoverable from the Australian Tax Office (ATO). In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included as part of receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

Cash flows are included in the cash flow statement on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities, which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are classified as operating cash flows. Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable or payable unless otherwise specified. Gross GST recoverable on commitments is disclosed separately in the commitments note.

### j) Contributions by and distributions to government

TD A4.2

The Authority may receive contributions from government where the government is acting as owner of the Authority. Conversely, the Authority may make distributions to government. In accordance with the Financial Management Act 1995 and Treasurer's Directions, certain types of contributions and distributions, including those relating to administrative restructures, have been designated as contributions by, and distributions to, government. These designated contributions and distributions are treated by the Authority as adjustments to equity.

The statement of changes in equity provides additional information in relation to contributions by, and distributions to, government.

### k) Impact of COVID-19

The continuation of travel and border restrictions impacted the Authority's ability to undertake fieldwork in cross-border Authority Certificate clearances. This effected the Authority's ability to travel with custodians across borders in the north west and south west of the Northern Territory to areas that crossed the Western Australian border primarily. The continuation of lockdowns interstate also effect the Authority's capacity to contract anthropological consultants to undertake priority project consultations compounding the timeframes and the Authority's ability to meet client expectations

The Chief Health Officer on 6 January 2022 declared exclusion zones that limited movement across the Northern Territory and in particular Aboriginal communities that had a vaccination rate lower than 85% for five year olds and above to only essential workers. The Authority at the time had not declared itself essential worker status and assessed the risk to Aboriginal custodians it works with as well as staff and determined that all travel to remote communities would cease until such time as vaccination rates increased and strict protocols could be established to ensure the safety of all Aboriginal custodians and staff. This approach was consistent with Northern Territory land councils and on advice from the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory.

This decision suspended all remote fieldwork and as such reduced the Authority's ability to generate income for the sales of goods and services through the issuing of Authority Certificates. This is demonstrated by the Authority not meeting or exceeding its sales of goods and services budget of \$2.8 million by \$0.061 million. However, this did not affect the overall budget position of the Authority and it achieved a surplus budget outcome overall.

On 6 April 2022 after a strict testing and safety regime was implemented for all remote travel that was deemed essential to Authority Certificate applications that had critical timeframes, the Chief Executive Officer of the Authority declared all staff and consultants for the purposes of remote fieldwork as essential workers.

### 3. COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT BY OUTPUT GROUP

AASB 1052.15		Protection of Sacred Sites		Corporate and Shared Services		Total		
		2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	
		Note	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
AASB 1052.15(d)	<b>INCOME</b>							
	Appropriation							
	Output	4a	2,891	2,582	964	860	3,855	3,442
	Sales of goods and services	4b	2,739	2,611	0	0	2,739	2,611
	Goods and services received free of charge	5	650	634	216	211	866	845
	<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>6,280</b>	<b>5,827</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>7,460</b>	<b>6,898</b>
AASB 1052.15(c)	<b>EXPENSES</b>							
	Employee expenses		3,358	2,748	779	1,175	4,137	3,923
	Administrative expenses							
	Property management		3	9	31	31	34	40
	Purchases of goods and services	6	1,015	1,015	838	619	2,217	1,634
	Depreciation and amortisation	12, 1	92	176	30	59	122	235
	Other administrative expenses <sup>1</sup>	3	650	647	216	216	866	863
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>5,482</b>	<b>4,595</b>	<b>1,894</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>7,376</b>	<b>6,696</b>
	<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>		<b>798</b>	<b>1,232</b>	<b>(714)</b>	<b>(1,029)</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>202</b>
	<b>COMPREHENSIVE RESULT</b>		<b>798</b>	<b>1,232</b>	<b>(714)</b>	<b>(1,029)</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>202</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes DCDD service charges and DIPL repairs and maintenance service charges.

This comprehensive operating statement by output group is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

#### Income

Income encompasses both revenue and gains.

Income is recognised at the fair value of the consideration received, exclusive of the amount of GST. Exchanges of goods or services of the same nature and value without any cash consideration being exchanged are not recognised as income.

### 4. REVENUE

AASB 15.114

Revenue from contracts with customers have been disaggregated below into categories to enable users of these financial statements to understand the nature, amount, timing and uncertainty of income and cash flows. These categories include a description of the type of product or service line, type of customer and timing of transfer of goods and services.

#### a) Appropriation

AASB 1058.26 AASB15.113(a)	2022			2021		
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	Revenue from contracts with customers	Other	Total	Revenue from contracts with customers	Other	Total
Output	0	3,442	3,442	0	3,181	3,181
<b>Total appropriation</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,442</b>	<b>3,442</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,181</b>	<b>3,181</b>

AASB 1058.38-39  
TD Income 29

Output appropriation is the operating payment to each agency for the outputs they provide as specified in the Appropriation Act. It does not include any allowance for major non-cash costs such as depreciation. Output appropriations do not have sufficiently specific performance obligations and are recognised on receipt of funds.

The Authority did not receive Commonwealth appropriation.

AASB 15.9  
AASB 15.119 AASB 1058.10  
AASB 1058.31-36

Where appropriation received has an enforceable contract with sufficiently specific performance obligations as defined in AASB 15, revenue is recognised as and when goods and or services are transferred to the customer or third party beneficiary. Otherwise revenue is recognised when the Authority gains control of the funds.

AASB 15.114

Revenue from contracts with customers have been disaggregated below into categories to enable users of these financial statements to understand the nature, amount, timing and uncertainty of income and cash flows. These categories include a description of the type of product or service line, type of customer and timing of transfer of goods and services.

## b) Sales of goods and services

	2022			2021		
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	Revenue from contracts with customers	Other	Total	Revenue from contracts with customers	Other	Total
AASB 15.113(a) AASB 1058.24						
Sales of goods and services	1,819	1,159	2,739	1,819	792	2,611
<b>Total sales of goods and services</b>	<b>1,819</b>	<b>1,159</b>	<b>2,739</b>	<b>1,819</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>2,611</b>

## Rendering of services

AASB 15.31, 119, 123  
AASB 15.124-125

Revenue from rendering of services is recognised when the Authority satisfies the performance obligation by transferring the promised services. The service the Authority provides is an Authority Certificate that protects sacred sites from damage by setting out the conditions for using or carrying out works proposed by a proponent on an area of land and/or sea. These conditions relate to sacred sites in the area or in the vicinity of the proposed works, so that they are not damaged. It is a legal document issued under the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 (NT), and indemnifies the holder against prosecution under the Act for damage to sacred sites in the area of the Authority Certificate provided the proposed work or use has been carried out in accordance with the conditions of the Authority Certificate. The Authority typically satisfies its performance obligations once the Authority Certificate conditions have been drafted for delegate approval and all costs have been finalised.

AASB 15.114

Revenue from contracts with customers have been disaggregated below into categories to enable users of these financial statements to understand the nature, amount, timing and uncertainty of income and cash flows. These categories include a description of the type of product or service line, type of customer and timing of transfer of goods and services.

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Type of good and service:</b>		
Regulatory services	0	0
Service delivery	1,581	1,819
<b>Total revenue from contracts with customers by good or service</b>	<b>1,581</b>	<b>1,819</b>
<b>Type of customer:</b>		
Australian Government entities	105	236
State and territory governments	37	0
Non-government entities	1,438	1,583
<b>Total revenue from contracts with customers by type of customer</b>	<b>1,581</b>	<b>1,819</b>
<b>Timing of transfer of goods and services:</b>		
Overtime	0	0
Point in time	1,819	1,819
<b>Total revenue from contracts with customers by timing of transfer</b>	<b>1,581</b>	<b>1,819</b>

## 5. GOODS AND SERVICES RECEIVED FREE OF CHARGE

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
Corporate and information services	833	809
Repairs and maintenance	12	8
	845	817

Resources received free of charge are recognised as revenue when, and only when, a fair value can be reliably determined and the services would have been purchased if they had not been donated. Use of those resources is recognised as an expense. Resources received free of charge are recorded as either revenue or gains depending on their nature.

Repairs and maintenance expenses and associated employee costs are centralised and provided by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and forms part of goods and services free of charge of the Authority.

In addition, corporate services staff and functions are centralised and provided by Department of Corporate and Digital Development and forms part of goods and services free of charge of the Authority.

## 6. PURCHASES OF GOODS AND SERVICES

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
AASB 101.97 The net surplus/(deficit) has been arrived at after charging the following expenses:		
<b>Goods and services expenses:</b>		
<i>Custodian Consultation</i>	251	270
<i>Consultants (majority Anthropological)</i>	301	138
<i>Information technology consultants</i>	562	295
<i>Media Consultant</i>	4	5
Consultants <sup>1</sup>	1,117	708
Advertising <sup>2</sup>	0	1
Marketing and promotion <sup>3</sup>	6	11
Document production	18	77
Legal expenses <sup>4</sup>	147	13
Recruitment <sup>5</sup>	6	6
Training and study	32	26
Official duty fares <sup>6</sup>	159	143
Travelling allowance	25	35
Information technology charges and communications	209	181
Motor vehicle expense <sup>7</sup>	195	193
Authority Board <sup>8</sup>	109	86
Relocation	20	4
Other	173	150
	2,217	1,634

<sup>1</sup> Includes marketing, promotion, IT consultants and Custodian of sacred sites payments as legislated under Schedule 2 of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Regulations.

<sup>2</sup> Does not include recruitment related advertising or advertising for marketing and promotion.

<sup>3</sup> Includes advertising for marketing and promotion but excludes marketing and promotion consultants' expenses, which are incorporated in the consultants category.

<sup>4</sup> Includes legal fees, claim and settlement costs.

<sup>5</sup> Includes recruitment-related advertising costs.

<sup>6</sup> Includes helicopter charters for land surveys.

<sup>7</sup> The Authority maintains a fleet of 4WD vehicles due to the requirement for staff to travel to regional and remote locations.

<sup>8</sup> The Authority Board is required to hold 4 meetings per calendar year under the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 (NT).

Purchases of goods and services generally represent the day-to-day running costs incurred in normal operations, including supplies and service costs recognised in the reporting period in which they are incurred.

## 7. WRITE-OFFS, POSTPONEMENTS, WAIVER, GIFTS AND EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS

	Agency				Territory items			
	2022	No. of trans.	2021	No. of trans.	2022	No. of trans.	2021	No. of trans.
	\$'000		\$'000		\$'000		\$'000	
<b>Write-offs, postponements and waivers under the Financial Management Act 1995</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Represented by:								
<b>Amounts written off, postponed and waived by delegates</b>								
Irrecoverable amounts payable to the Territory or an agency written off	16	0	16	12	0	1	0	0
Asset Write Off	22	0	22	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total written off, postponed and waived by delegates</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## 8. CASH AND DEPOSITS

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
Cash on hand	1	1
Cash at bank	3,576	3,576
	<b>3,577</b>	<b>3,577</b>

AASB 107.6-8, 45-46, AASB 101.54(i)

For the purposes of the balance sheet and the cash flow statement, cash includes cash on hand, cash at bank and cash equivalents. Cash equivalents are highly liquid short-term investments that are readily convertible to cash. Cash at bank includes monies held in the Accountable Officer's Trust Account (AOTA) that are ultimately payable to the beneficial owner. The Authority does not hold an AOTA.

## 9. CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION

### a) Reconciliation of cash

AASB 107.45

The total of Authority 'Cash and deposits' of \$4,015 million recorded in the balance sheet is consistent with that recorded as 'Cash' in the cash flow statement.

AASB 1054.16, AASB 107. Aus20.2

### Reconciliation of net surplus/deficit to net cash from operating activities

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Net surplus/deficit</b>	85	202
<i>Non-cash items:</i>		
<b>Depreciation and amortisation</b>	122	235
Asset write-offs/write-downs	0	22
Asset donations/gifts	0	0
Gain/loss on disposal of assets	0	0
<i>Changes in assets and liabilities:</i>		
Decrease/increase in receivables	(48)	126
Decrease/increase in inventories	0	0
Decrease/increase in prepayments	0	0
Decrease/increase in other assets	0	0
Decrease/increase in payables	(28)	101
Decrease/increase in provision for employee benefits	(22)	(34)
Decrease/increase in other provisions	0	5
Decrease/increase in other liabilities	330	0
<b>Net cash from/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>655</b>

## 10. RECEIVABLES

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
AASB 101.78(b) AASB 7.6		
AASB 101.78(b) AASB 7.35H		
<b>Current</b>		
Accounts receivable	257	305
Less: loss allowance	0	(1)
Interest receivables		
AASB Interpretation 1031 AASB 101.78(b)		
GST receivables	(32)	(17)
AASB 101.78(b)		
Prepayments	11	16
Other receivables	115	0
	94	(1)
<b>Total receivables</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>303</b>

AASB 9.5.1.1, AASB 9.5.1.3

Receivables are initially recognised when the Authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument and are measured at fair value less any directly attributable transaction costs. Receivables include contract receivables, accounts receivable, accrued contract revenue and other receivables.

AASB 9.4.1.2, AASB 9.5.4.1

Receivables are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairments.

Accounts receivable and contract receivables are generally settled within 30 days and other receivables within 60 days.

AASB 9.5.5.1

The loss allowance reflects lifetime expected credit losses and represents the amount of receivables the Authority estimates are likely to be uncollectible and are considered doubtful.

AASB 7.35M

### Credit risk exposure of receivables

AASB 9.5.5.15

Receivables are monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure exposure to bad debts is not significant. The entity applies the simplified approach to measuring expected credit losses. This approach recognises a loss allowance based on lifetime expected credit losses for all accounts receivables, contracts receivables and accrued contract revenue. To measure expected credit losses, receivables have been grouped based on shared risk characteristics and days past due.

The expected loss rates are based on historical observed loss rates, adjusted to reflect current and forward-looking information. In accordance with the provisions of the FMA, receivables are written-off when there is no reasonable expectation of recovery. Indicators that there is no reasonable expectation of recovery includes a failure to make contractual payments for a period greater than 120 days past due.

The Authority's credit risk exposure has not materially changed due to minimal business disruption experienced as a result of COVID-19. There is no material impact on the Authority's expected credit losses due to COVID-19.





The loss allowance for receivables and reconciliation as at the reporting date is disclosed below.

### Loss allowance for receivables

	2022				2021			
	Gross receivables	Loss rate	Expected credit losses	Net receivables	Gross receivables	Loss rate	Expected credit losses	Net receivables
	\$'000	%	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	%	\$'000	\$'000
AASB 7.35M(b), 35N								
Internal receivables								
Not overdue	18	0	0	0	63	0	0	0
Overdue for less than 30 days	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overdue for 30 to 60 days	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overdue for more than 60 days	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total internal receivables</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
External receivables								
Not overdue	176	0	1	0	228	0	5	0
Overdue for less than 30 days	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overdue for 30 to 60 days	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overdue for more than 60 days	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total external receivables</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Total amounts disclosed exclude statutory amounts and prepayments and include contract receivables and accrued contract revenue.

Total amounts disclosed exclude statutory amounts and prepayments; and include contract receivables and accrued contract revenue.

### Reconciliation of loss allowance for receivables

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
AASB 7.35H		
Internal receivables		
Opening balance	0	0
Written off during the year	0	0
Recovered during the year	0	0
Increase/decrease in allowance recognised in profit or loss	0	0
<b>Total internal receivables</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
External receivables		
Opening balance	1	5
Written off during the year	0	1
Recovered during the year		0
Increase/decrease in allowance recognised in profit or loss	(1)	(4)
<b>Total external receivables</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

### Prepayments

Prepayments represent payments in advance of receipt of goods and services or that part of expenditure made in one accounting period covering a term extending beyond that period.

## 11. OTHER ASSETS

### a. Agency as a lessor

AASB 16.61-62

Leases under which the Authority assumes substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of an asset are classified as finance leases. Other leases are classified as operating leases.

TD Leases 22-25

Subleases are classified by reference to the right-of-use asset arising from the head lease, rather than by reference to the underlying asset. A sublease is an arrangement where the underlying asset is re-leased by a lessee (intermediate lessor) to another party, and the lease (head lease) between the head lessor and original lessee remains in effect.

#### Finance leases

AASB 16.67

At the lease commencement date, the entity recognises a receivable for assets held under a finance lease in its statement of financial position at an amount equal to the net investment in the lease. The net investment in leases is classified as financial assets amortised cost and equals the lease payments receivable by a lessor and the unguaranteed residual value, plus initial direct costs, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease Initial direct costs.

AASB 16.75

Finance income arising from finance leases is recognised over the lease term, based on a pattern reflecting a constant periodic rate of return on the lessor's net investment in the lease.

The Authority does not have any finance lease or sublease arrangements.

### b. Contract cost asset

AASB 15.95

Costs to obtain a contract are expensed where goods and services will be transferred within one year or less and only capitalised if deemed material. Territory Government employee costs that satisfy the criteria for recognition as a cost to fulfil a contract are not capitalised and expensed immediately. Other costs to fulfil a contract are accounted for as a contract cost asset if deemed material. For the 2021-22 and 2020-21 reporting periods, no costs were capitalised as a contract cost asset

## 12. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Plant and equipment</b>		
At fair value	1,375	1,375
Less: accumulated depreciation	(1,353)	(1,336)
	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Computer Hardware</b>		
At fair value	32	32
Less: accumulated depreciation	(24)	(20)
	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Total property, plant and equipment</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>51</b>

### 2022 Property, plant and equipment reconciliations

Property, plant and equipment includes right-of-use assets under AASB 16 Leases and service concession assets under AASB 1059. A reconciliation of the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end year is set out below:

	Plant and Computer				Total
	Land	Buildings	equipment	hardware	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Carrying amount as at 1 July 2021	0	0	39	12	51
Depreciation/amortisation expense	0	0	(123)	(3)	(126)
<b>Carrying amount as at 30 June 2022</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30</b>

### 2021 Property, plant and equipment reconciliations

Property, plant and equipment includes right-of-use assets under AASB 16 Leases and service concession assets under AASB 1059. A reconciliation of the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment at the beginning and end year is set out below:

	Plant and Computer				Total
	Land	Buildings	equipment	hardware	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Carrying amount as at 1 July 2020	0	0	163	15	178
Additions			(1)		(1)
Depreciation/amortisation expense	0	0	(123)	(3)	(126)
Additions/disposals from asset transfers			(22)		(22)
<b>Carrying amount as at 30 June 2021</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>51</b>

### Acquisitions

AASB 116.15,16,31

Property, plant and equipment are initially recognised at cost and subsequently revalued at fair value less accumulated depreciation and impairment. Cost is the amount of cash or cash equivalents paid or the fair value of the other consideration given to acquire the asset at the time of its acquisition or construction or, where applicable, the amount attributed to that asset when initially recognised in accordance with the requirements of other accounting standards.

## TD A2.2.2

All items of property, plant and equipment with a cost or other value, equal to or greater than \$10 000 are recognised in the year of acquisition and depreciated as outlined below. Items of property, plant and equipment below the \$10 000 threshold are expensed in the year of acquisition.

## AASB 116.16

The construction cost of property, plant and equipment includes the cost of materials and direct labour, and an appropriate proportion of fixed and variable overheads.

**Complex assets**

Major items of plant and equipment comprising a number of components that have different useful lives, are accounted for as separate assets. The components may be replaced during the useful life of the complex asset.

**Subsequent additional costs**

## AASB 116.13

Costs incurred on property, plant and equipment subsequent to initial acquisition are capitalised when it is probable that future economic benefits in excess of the originally assessed performance of the asset will flow to the Authority in future years. Where these costs represent separate components of a complex asset, they are accounted for as separate assets and separately depreciated over their expected useful lives.

**Revaluations and impairment****Revaluation of assets**

## AASB 116.31, 73(a), TD A2.4.2

Subsequent to initial recognition, assets belonging to the following classes of non-current assets are revalued with sufficient regularity to ensure the carrying amount of these assets does not differ materially from their fair value at reporting date:

- land
- buildings
- infrastructure assets

## AASB 116.73(a), TD A2.4.3

Plant and equipment are stated at historical cost less depreciation, which is deemed to equate to fair value.

## TD Leases.33, 35 AASB 16.29

For right-of-use assets, the net present value of the remaining lease payments is often an appropriate proxy for the fair value of relevant right-of-use assets at the time of initial recognition. Subsequently, right-of-use assets are stated at cost less depreciation, which is deemed to equate to fair value.

**Impairment of assets**

## AASB 136.8

An asset is said to be impaired when the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount.

## AASB 136.9, AASB 136.59

Non-current physical and intangible Authority assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis or whenever there is indication of impairment. If an indicator of impairment exists, the Authority determines the asset's recoverable amount. The asset's recoverable amount is determined as the higher of the asset's current replacement cost and fair value less costs to sell. Any amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount is recorded as an impairment loss.

## AASB 136.60,61, Aus61.1

Impairment losses are recognised in the comprehensive operating statement. They are disclosed as an expense unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount. Where the asset is measured at a revalued amount, the impairment loss is offset against the asset revaluation surplus for that class of asset to the extent an available balance exists in the asset revaluation surplus.

## AASB 136.114,117

In certain situations, an impairment loss may subsequently be reversed. Where an impairment loss is subsequently reversed, the carrying amount of the asset is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognised in the comprehensive operating statement as income, unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount, in which case the impairment reversal results in an increase in the asset revaluation surplus.

Authority property, plant and equipment assets were assessed for impairment as at 30 June 2022. No impairment adjustments were required as a result of this review.

**Depreciation and amortisation expense**

## AASB 116.50, 73(b), AASB 16.31

Items of property, plant and equipment, including buildings but excluding land, have limited useful lives and are depreciated using the straight-line method over their estimated useful lives.

## AASB 116.73(c), AASB 138.118(a)

The estimated useful lives for each class of asset are in accordance with the Treasurer's Directions and are determined as follows:

	2022	2021
Plant and Equipment	10 years	10 years
Computer Software	5 years	5 years
Computer Hardware	5 years	5 years

Assets are depreciated from the date of acquisition or from the time an asset is completed and held ready for use.

The estimated useful lives disclosed above includes the useful lives of right-of-use assets under AASB 16 and service concession assets under AASB 1059.

**13. INTANGIBLES**

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Other intangibles</b>		
At valuation	586	586
Less: accumulated amortisation	(542)	(441)
Written down value - 30 June	43	144
<b>Total intangibles</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>144</b>

The Authority's intangibles comprise computer software for the Administration, Research and Management System (ARMS) that records, maps and documents sacred sites, genealogies, Aboriginal custodianship, and traditional narratives.

## AASB 138.81,124

There is no active market for any of the agency's intangible assets. As such, intangible assets are recognised and carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and any accumulated impairment losses.

## AASB 138.97,118(b) AASB 138.118(a)

Intangibles with limited useful lives are amortised using the straight-line method over their estimated useful lives, which reflects the pattern of when expected economic benefits are likely to be realised.

The estimated useful lives for finite intangible assets are determined in accordance with the Treasurer's Directions and are determined as follows:

	2022	2021
Computer software	2 to 5 years	2 to 5 years

## AASB 136.9,10, AASB 138.108-109

Intangible assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis or whenever there is indication of impairment.

Authority intangible assets were assessed for impairment as at 30 June 2022. No impairment adjustments were required as a result of this review.

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Reconciliation of movements</b>		
<b>Other intangibles</b>		
Carrying amount at 1 July	144	252
Additions		
Disposals		
Amortisation	(101)	(108)
<b>Carrying amount as at 30 June</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>144</b>

## 14. PAYABLES

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
AASB 101.77		
Accounts payable	17	13
Accrued expenses	130	162
Other payables	0	0
<b>Total payables</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>175</b>

Liabilities for accounts payable and other amounts payable are carried at cost, which is the fair value of the consideration to be paid in the future for goods and services received, whether or not billed to the agency. Accounts payable are normally settled within 20 days from receipt of valid invoices under \$1 million or 30 days for invoices over \$1 million.

## 15. PROVISIONS

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
AASB 101.77,78		
<b>Current</b>		
<i>Employee benefits</i>		
Recreation leave	287	300
Leave loading	50	59
Other employee benefits	0	0
<i>Other current provisions</i>	0	0
<i>Other provisions (Payroll Tax and Superannuation Contribution)</i>	70	70
<b>Total provisions</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>429</b>

The Authority employed 29.77 employees as at 30 June 2022 (32.54 employees as at 30 June 2021).

### Employee benefits

AASB 119.9,11,16

Provision is made for employee benefits accumulated as a result of employees rendering services up to the reporting date. These benefits include wages and salaries and recreation leave. Liabilities arising in respect of wages and salaries, recreation leave and other employee benefit liabilities that fall due within twelve months of reporting date are classified as current liabilities and are measured at amounts expected to be paid. Non-current employee benefit liabilities that fall due after twelve months of the reporting date are measured at present value, calculated using the government long-term bond rate.

No provision is made for sick leave, which is non-vesting, as the anticipated pattern of future sick leave to be taken is less than the entitlement accruing in each reporting period.

AASB 119.131

Employee benefit expenses are recognised on a net basis in respect of the following categories:

- wages and salaries, non-monetary benefits, recreation leave and other leave entitlements
- other types of employee benefits.

As part of the financial management framework, the Central Holding Authority assumes the long service leave liabilities of government agencies, including the Authority and therefore no long service leave liability is recognised in the Authority's financial statements.

## 16. OTHER LIABILITIES

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Current</b>		
Unearned contract revenue liability	330	0
<b>Non-current</b>		
Unearned contract revenue liability	0	0
<b>Total other liabilities</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>0</b>

- Northern Territory Government and Public Authorities Superannuation Scheme (NTGPASS)
- Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS)
- or non-government employee nominated schemes for those employees commencing on or after 10 August 1999.

The Authority makes superannuation contributions on behalf of its employees to the Central Holding Authority or non-government employee-nominated schemes. Superannuation liabilities related to government superannuation schemes are held by the Central Holding Authority and therefore not recognised in the Authority's financial statements.

### Unearned contract revenue liability

AASB 15.117

Unearned contract revenue liability relate to consideration received in advance from customers in respect of six significant Authority Certificates with an estimated earning capacity of \$0.439 million. Unearned contract revenue liability balances as at 30 June 2022 is \$0.33 million (balance at 1 July 2021 was zero).

AASB 15.118

The unearned revenue relates to six separate Authority Certificate applications from the same client that are interrelated. Fieldwork commenced in June 2022 on two of the Authority Certificate applications and it is expected that all six applications will be completed by 30 June 2023.

### Superannuation

Employees' superannuation entitlements are provided through the:

## 17. COMMITMENTS

Commitments contracted represent future obligations or cash outflows that are not recognised as liabilities on the balance sheet and can be reliably measured.

Disclosures in relation to capital and other commitments are detailed below

	2022		2021	
	Internal	External	Internal	External
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Other expenditure commitments</b>				
Other non-cancellable expenditure commitments not recognised as liabilities are payable as follows:				
<b>Within one year (1)</b>	0	276	0	0
Later than one year and not later than five years	0	0	0	0
Later than five years		0	0	0
<b>Total commitments (inclusive of GST)</b>	0	276	0	0
Plus: GST recoverable	0	23	0	0
<b>Total commitments (inclusive of GST)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## 18. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

AASB 132.11

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

AASB 9.3.1.1

Financial assets and liabilities are recognised on the balance sheet when the Authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument. The Authority's financial instruments include cash and deposits; receivables; advances paid; investment in shares; payables; advances received; borrowings and derivatives.

AASB 132.AG12

Due to the nature of operating activities, certain financial assets and financial liabilities arise under statutory obligations rather than a contract. Such financial assets and liabilities do not meet the definition of financial instruments as per AASB 132 Financial Instruments: Presentation. These include statutory receivables arising from taxes including GST and penalties.

The Authority does not have any exposure to interest rate risk, foreign exchange risk, credit risk, price risk and liquidity risk arise in the normal course of activities. The Territory Government's investments, loans and placements, and borrowings are predominantly managed through the NTTC adopting strategies to minimise the risk. Derivative financial arrangements are also utilised to manage financial risks inherent in the management of these financial instruments. These arrangements include swaps, forward interest rate agreements and other hedging instruments to manage fluctuations in interest or exchange rates.

### a) Categories of financial instruments

AASB 7.8 The carrying amounts of the Authority's financial assets and liabilities by category are disclosed in the table below.

Fair value through profit or loss	Mandatorily at	Designated at fair	Amortised cost	Fair value	Total
	fair value	value		through other	
	\$'000	%		comprehensive	
				income	
			\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>2020-21</b>					
Cash and deposits			3,576		3,576
Receivables			287		287
Prepayments			16		16
<b>Total financial assets</b>			<b>3,880</b>		<b>3,880</b>
Payables			175		175
Provisions			429		429
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>			<b>604</b>		<b>604</b>
<b>2019-20</b>					
Cash and deposits			2,942		2,942
Receivables			419		419
Prepayments			10		10
<b>Total financial assets</b>			<b>3,371</b>		<b>3,371</b>
Payables			74		74
Provisions			459		459
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>			<b>533</b>		<b>533</b>

### Categories of financial instruments

The Authority's financial instruments are classified in accordance with AASB 9.

AASB 9.4.1.1

Financial assets are classified under the following categories:

- amortised cost
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)
- fair value through profit and loss (FVTPL).

AASB 9.4.2.1

Financial liabilities are classified under the following categories:

- amortised cost
- fair value through profit and loss (FVTPL).

AASB 9.4.1.1

These classification are based on the Authority's business model for managing the financial assets and the contractual terms of the cash flows. Where assets are measured at fair value, gains and losses will either be recorded in profit or loss, or other comprehensive income.

AASB 9.4.4.1

Financial instruments are reclassified when and only when the Authority's business model for managing those assets changes.

AASB 9.4.3.2, 4.3.3

Financial assets with embedded derivatives are considered in their entirety when determining whether their cash flows are solely payment of principal and interest.

### Financial assets at amortised cost

AASB 9.4.1.2

Financial assets are classified at amortised cost when they are held by the Authority to collect the contractual cash flows and the contractual cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest.

These assets are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less impairment. The Authority's financial assets categorised at amortised cost include receivables, advances paid, leases receivables, term deposits and certain debt securities.

Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss

AASB 9.4.1.4-5

Financial assets are classified at FVTPL where they do not meet the criteria for amortised cost or FVOCI. These assets are initially and subsequently recognised at fair value with gains or losses recognised in the net result for the year.

The Authority's financial assets categorised at FVTPL include investments in managed unit trusts and certain debt instruments. Unrealised gains in relation to these investments are recognised in other economic flows in the comprehensive operating statement, however realised gains are recognised in the net result.

The Authority does not have any financial liabilities under this category.

Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss

AASB 9.4.2.2

Financial liabilities are classified at FVTPL when the liabilities are either held for trading or designated as FVTPL. Financial liabilities classified at FVTPL are initially and subsequently measured at fair value with gains or losses recognised in the net result for the year.

For financial liabilities designated at FVTPL, changes in the fair value of the liability attributable to changes in the agency's credit risk are recognised in other comprehensive income, while remaining changes in the fair value are recognised in the net result.

The Authority does not have any financial liabilities under this category.

#### Derivatives

The Authority may enter into a variety of derivative financial instruments to manage its exposure to interest rate risk. The Authority does not speculate on trading of derivatives.

Derivatives are initially recognised at fair value on the date a derivative contract is entered into and are subsequently remeasured at their fair value at each reporting date. The resulting gain or loss is recognised in the comprehensive operating statement immediately unless the derivative is designated and qualifies as an effective hedging instrument, in which event, the timing of the recognition in the comprehensive operating statement depends on the nature of the hedge relationship. Application of hedge accounting will only be available where specific designation and effectiveness criteria are satisfied.

#### Netting of swap transactions

The Authority, from time to time, may facilitate certain structured finance arrangements, where a legally recognised right to set-off financial assets and liabilities exists, and the Territory intends to settle on a net basis. Where these arrangements occur, the revenues and expenses are offset and the net amount is recognised in the comprehensive operating statement.

#### b) Credit risk

AASB 7.33

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation

The Authority has limited credit risk exposure (risk of default). In respect of any dealings with organisations external to government, the Authority has adopted a policy of only dealing with credit worthy organisations and obtaining sufficient collateral or other security where appropriate, as a means of mitigating the risk of financial loss from defaults.

The carrying amount of financial assets recorded in the financial statements, net of any allowances for losses, represents the Authority's maximum exposure to credit risk without taking account of the value of any collateral or other security obtained.

Credit risk relating to receivables is disclosed in Note 10.

#### c) Liquidity risk

AASB 7.33

Liquidity risk is the risk the Authority will not be able to meet its financial obligations as they fall due. The Authority's approach to managing liquidity is to ensure it will always have sufficient funds to meet its liabilities when they fall due. This is achieved by ensuring minimum levels of cash are held in the Authority bank account to meet various current employee and supplier liabilities. The Authority's exposure to liquidity risk is minimal. Cash injections are available from the Central Holding Authority in the event of one-off extraordinary expenditure items arise that deplete cash to levels that compromise the Authority's ability to meet its financial obligations.

#### d) Market risk

AASB 7.App A, AASB 7.33

Market risk is the risk the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. It comprises interest rate risk, price risk and currency risk.

##### (i) 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 market interest rate.

The Authority is not exposed to interest rate risk as the Authority's agency financial assets and financial liabilities, are non interest bearing.

##### (ii) Price risk

AASB 7.33

The Authority is not exposed to price risk as the Authority does not hold units in unit trusts.

##### (iii) Currency risk

AASB 7.33, AASB 7.Appen A

The Authority is not exposed to currency risk as the Authority does not hold borrowings denominated in foreign currencies or transactional currency exposures arising from purchases in a foreign currency.

## 19. RELATED PARTIES

### i) Related parties

AASB 124.9

The Authority is a government administrative entity and is wholly owned and controlled by the Territory Government. Related parties of the Authority include:

- the portfolio minister and key management personnel (KMP) because they have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the department directly
- close family members of the portfolio minister or KMP including spouses, children and dependants
- all public sector entities that are controlled and consolidated into the whole of government financial statements
- any entities controlled or jointly controlled by KMP's or the portfolio minister, or controlled or jointly controlled by their close family members.

AASB 124.9

#### i) Key management personnel (KMP)

Key management personnel of the Authority are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the Authority. These include the minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, the Chief Executive Officer and the two members of the executive team for the Authority as listed below:

- Dr Sophie Creighton, Director Research and Land Information;
- Mr Che Walsh, Director Policy and Governance (ceased on 27 August 2021)
- Mr Robert Pocock, Acting Director Policy and Governance (ceased on 1 November 2021); and
- Mr Cameron McInerney, Director Policy and Governance (commenced on 22 October 2021)

#### ii) Remuneration of key management personnel

AASB 124.17

The details below excludes the salaries and other benefits of minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage as the minister's remunerations and allowances are payable by the Department of the Legislative Assembly and consequently disclosed within the Treasurer's annual financial statements.

The aggregate compensation of key management personnel of Authority is set out below:

	2022	2021
	\$'000	\$'000
AASB 124.17		
Short-term benefits	598	577
Post-employment benefits	72	70
Long-term benefits	8	0
Termination benefits	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>676</b>

### i) Related party transactions:

AASB 124.26

#### Transactions with Northern Territory Government-controlled entities

The Authority's primary ongoing source of funding is received from the Central Holding Authority in the form of output and capital appropriation and on-passed Commonwealth national partnership and specific-purpose payments.

The following table provides quantitative information about related party transactions entered into during the year with all other Northern Territory Government-controlled entities.

2022 Related party	Revenue from related parties	Payments to related parties	Amounts owed by related parties	Amounts owed to related parties
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
All Territory Government departments (including local councils) Australian Government	1,196	879	18	0
	210536	0	98	0

2021 Related party	Revenue from related parties	Payments to related parties	Amounts owed by related parties	Amounts owed to related parties
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
All Territory Government departments (including local councils) Australian Government	792	583	76	0
	236	0	22	0

## 20. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

### a) Contingent liabilities

AASB 137.86

The Authority had no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2022 or 30 June 2021.

### b) Contingent assets

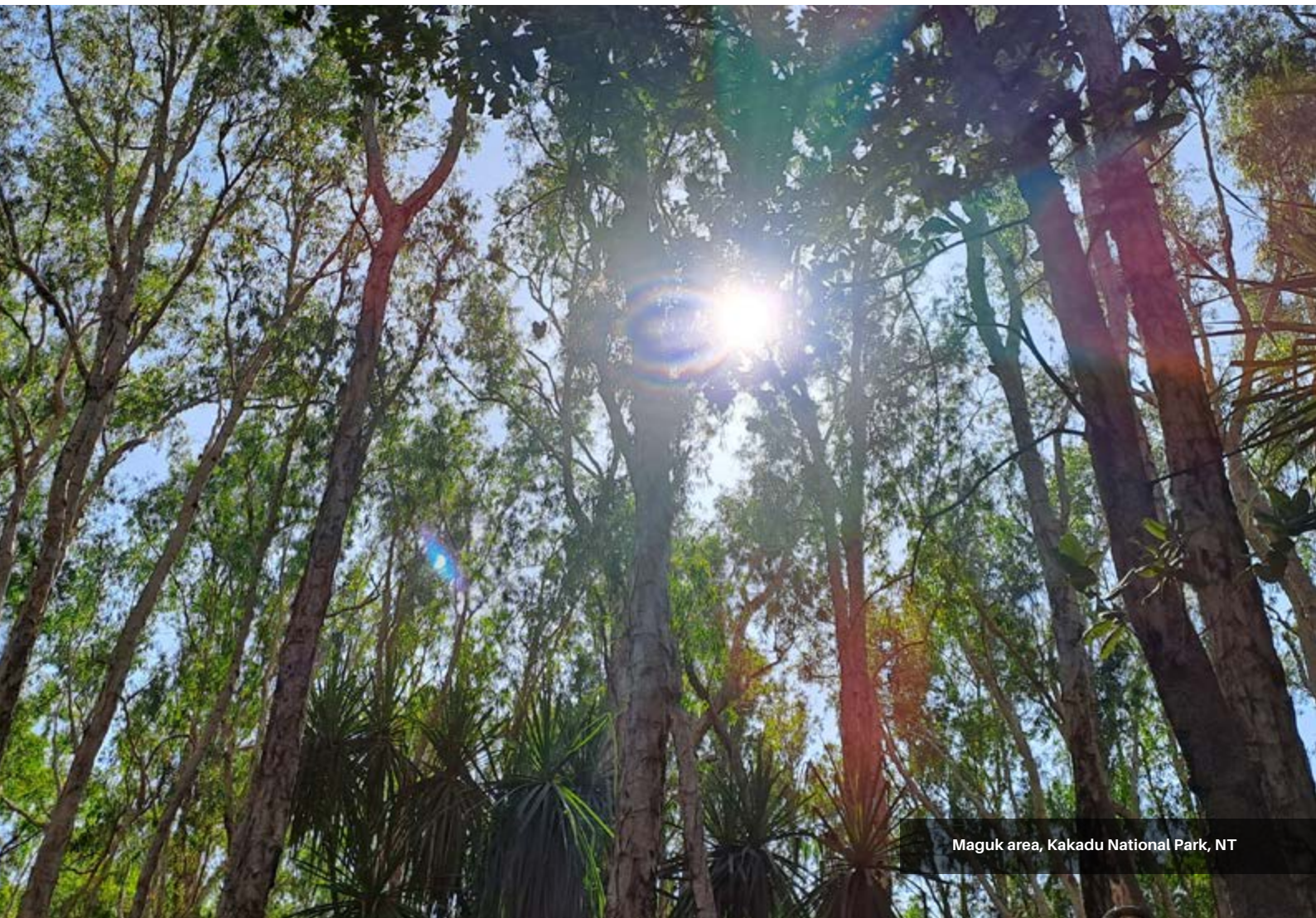
AASB 137.89

The Authority had no contingent assets as at 30 June 2022 or 30 June 2021.

## 21. EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO BALANCE DATE

AASB 110

No events have arisen between the end of the financial year and the date of this report that require adjustment to, or disclosure in these financial statements.





AAPA Chairperson Bobby Nunggumajbarr viewing East Arm, NT



“MOST IMPORTANTLY,  
UNDER THE SACRED SITES  
ACT, THE AUTHORITY  
CANNOT AND DOES  
NOT AUTHORISE  
THE DESTRUCTION OF  
SACRED SITES IN THE NT.  
WE MUST CONSULT  
WITH CUSTODIANS,  
PROVIDE CERTAINTY  
FOR CUSTODIANS AND  
DEVELOPERS ALIKE,  
AND PROSECUTE  
WHEN PEOPLE DO  
THE WRONG THING.”



Aboriginal Areas  
Protection Authority  
*protecting sacred sites across the territory*

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Protection Authority**  
*protecting sacred sites across the territory*