



Aboriginal Areas
Protection Authority
protecting sacred sites across the Territory

AAPA

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23



Ubirr, Kakadu National Park, NT

Cover image: Roper River, NT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

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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

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 2022 to 30 June 2023.

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

Yours sincerely

Bobby Nunggumajbarr
Chairperson
11 October 2023

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

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (the Authority) for the financial year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, in accordance with the Treasurer's Direction R2.1.6. 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 that employees under their 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 (or where this is not the case, details to be provided of any such instances);
- d) in accordance with the requirements of section 15 of the *Financial Management Act 1995*, the internal audit capacity available to the Authority is adequate and the results of internal audits have been reported to the accountable officer;
- 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 Scambary
Chief Executive Officer
11 October 2023

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Rapid Creek meets the Arafura Sea, NT

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.

Aboriginal sacred sites are places within the landscape that have special meaning or significance under Aboriginal tradition. Hills, rocks, waterholes, trees, plains, lakes, billabongs and other natural features can be sacred sites.

Sacred sites derive their status from their association with particular aspects of Aboriginal social and cultural tradition. This body of tradition is mainly concerned with the activities of ancestral beings, collectively known as 'Dreamings' whose travels across the land and sea are believed to have created the physical and social world that people now inhabit.



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

MR BOBBY NUNGGUMAJBARR

Chairperson

The Commonwealth Government released the report 'A Way Forward' in October 2021. This report outlines the findings and recommendations of the inquiry into the destruction of Juukan Gorge caves in the Pilbara in Western Australia. As Chairman I gave evidence in 2020 at the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia. I told them about my great sadness about losing this important place. I called for *munanga* law to be made strong. Our places, our sites, and our history deserve better. I demanded that our cultural heritage is respected and asked for strong reforms to protect our places for the benefit of all Australians.

I am pleased that the Commonwealth Government is seeking to reform the law with standalone Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation in partnership with Aboriginal people. The Authority has joined the First Nations Heritage Protection Alliance. We continue to support the strong and workable frameworks in place in the NT, and we are working with the Northern Territory Government to make the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* stronger in response to 'A Way Forward' recommendations. The Sacred Sites Act has always been a leader, and I am saying that our framework can be applied nationally to protect all of Australia's sacred sites.

The Authority is still prosecuting the Commonwealth Government for building a walkway at Gunlom in Kakadu National Park. That place is a very sacred place for Jawoyn Wurrkubarr people. I am disappointed with the decision of the Full Court of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory which found that the Director of National Parks cannot be prosecuted for offences under the Sacred Sites Act. But in May this year the Authority won the right to appeal this important complaint to the High Court. The Northern Land Council has joined the case to support the traditional owners who are the landlords who lease their land back to the National Park. The hearing is before the High Court later in 2023. It is important to challenge whether the Crown has immunity to destroy sacred sites.

I am sad about two great leaders from our community who passed away this year. Kunmanara Hoosan from Apatula (Finke) passed away suddenly while he was attending our Board meeting in November 2022. He was with the AAPA Board from August 2021. He was elected Chairperson of the Central Land Council in April 2022. He will be remembered as a leader and strong campaigner for women, children and domestic violence prevention, and raising the age of criminal responsibility. He was also a strong advocate for Aboriginal rights and for protecting the environment and sacred sites. Kunmanara worked as a policeman and also as a youth worker in Central Australia and co-authored an award winning book about mental health. On behalf of our Board members we are sad to lose this great man.

Yunupingu AM from north east Arnhem Land also passed this year. I knew him, he was an important man known across Australia and the world. He walked in both worlds working hard to help Aboriginal people take back control of their land. He was Chairman of the Northern Land Council for over 20 years, and played a key role in the Yirrkala bark petition, the Gove Land Rights case, and later the Barunga Statement calling for a Treaty. He was a senior man for Gumatj ceremony and community. But he fought all his life for all Aboriginal people and was on the Referendum Council to get a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

I welcome Geoffrey Matthews from the Warlpiri Nation in Lajamanu who joined the Board in June this year. Geoffrey is a Central Land Council executive member and is former deputy chair of the local board of the Central Desert Regional Council. The AAPA Board looks forward to working with Geoffrey.

I thank the staff of the Authority for meeting the challenges of the year past. The world we work in is changing and they once again showed that they can adapt and meet the needs of our community and achieve good outcomes for sacred site protection.

Ma!



VICE-CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

MS VALERIE MARTIN

Vice Chairperson

In February 2022 Munupi people from the Tiwi Islands successfully challenged approvals for the Barossa project. The Court found that the Tiwi people must be consulted about the project. As a result of this case, we have received increased enquiries from companies wanting to consult with Aboriginal people about activities that they would not normally talk to us about. Our voice becomes stronger with decisions like this, and I am happy that industry is responding to this decision positively by consulting with us. If we talk together and understand each other then we get better outcomes. I urge any proponents to engage early with us.

While consultation forms part of our core business, prosecuting companies that damage sacred sites is also a major part of our work. This year we prosecuted a pastoralist for knocking over a group of trees which formed a sacred site on Aboriginal land. The trees were of cultural and spiritual importance. We are devastated that these trees cannot ever be replaced. They were integral parts of the sacred site that has been impacted and this has permanently and irreparably diminished the sacredness and spiritual significance of the site. I invite the pastoral industry to talk to us to make them aware of our sacred sites so that we can work together to protect them.

Climate change is real and our people are noticing changes in their homelands. With this the work protecting Aboriginal sacred sites, land and water becomes even more important as we think about the impacts of development on the land. Our anthropologists are working hard at the Authority and this year spent 589 days in the field, on country, talking to us mob about our sacred places. We value the skills of our anthropologists who are in high demand. We continue to experience a backlog of site registrations and we are working towards a minimum of 40 registrations per year to address this backlog. In addition we are developing some specific site registration projects in high risk areas.

The Board has been very busy this year with two special meetings to discuss the Gunlom site damage prosecution and the Review of the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. Board meetings have been a combination of face-to-face meetings in Darwin and Alice Springs as well as via videoconference. I would like to thank all members of the Board and AAPA staff for their work with the Board.





Roper River, NT



DR BENEDICT SCAMBARY
CEO

This year the Authority progressed proposals to amend the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 and, redevelop the Authority's key enterprise business system. Both are significant multi-year projects.

Proposals to amend the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* are being developed with the intent of modernising and improving protection of Aboriginal sacred sites in the Northern Territory. These proposed reforms will enhance certainty for custodians of sacred sites and for business investment through streamlined and more efficient regulatory processes.

Simultaneously, we are commencing a multi-year project to develop a new integrated sacred site database. This will safeguard the record of sacred sites in the NT, streamline internal processes, enhance the client experience and achieve efficiencies in organisational performance. This will be accompanied by a modernised website.

These priority investments form part of our Strategic Plan 2023-2025 which are targeted at increasing overall performance, raising community awareness and improving our regulatory capacity in the protection of sacred sites.

The context within which we work is changing. Government initiatives to generate economic activity and private investment are creating an increase in the demand for the Authority's services. Our workload is typically in line with the economic profile of the NT given that the majority of significant projects engage with the Authority in the early stages of their approvals processes.

Accompanying this is an increased expectation for accountability for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage arising from the destruction of the Juukan Gorge in Western Australia, the ensuing public debate, and the recommendations of the subsequent Commonwealth Government inquiry.

Emerging industries such as on-shore gas and renewable energy are presenting increasing complexity for the Authority in the protection of sacred sites. Major projects such as the Australia - Asia Power Link Project and the Adelaide River Off Steam Storage Project (AROWS) have necessitated collaboration with land councils to address complex sacred site issues through the agreement making provisions of the Sacred Sites Act.

Agribusiness, cotton and the diversification of the pastoral estate, including associated water extraction, present significant and complex issues for the protection of sacred sites arising from

CEO REPORT

unaligned regulatory processes. The Authority consistently advises proponents of land clearing to obtain an Authority Certificate to ensure the protection of sacred sites that exist on the land. However, a number of land clearing proponents have expressed frustration about not being informed about the risks associated with sacred site damage through the land clearing application process. The Authority continues to work with other regulatory agencies to improve the alignment of regulatory processes.

The Authority holds records of thousands of sacred sites that are associated with water, and is increasingly responding to concerns from custodians about isolated and cumulative impacts of water extraction. Water resource management is not wholly consistent with the protection of sacred sites in the NT, and the Authority is building its capacity to assess and mitigate the impacts of water extraction on sacred sites.

The protection of broader Aboriginal cultural values in landscapes is emerging as an aspect of the Northern Territory's regulatory framework that requires greater clarity. The Authority has held discussions with the NT Environmental Protection Authority about accounting for aspects of tangible and intangible heritage that are not protected under the Sacred Sites Act or the *Heritage Act 2011*, and particularly in situations where the provisions of the *Native Title Act 1993* do not grant sufficient rights to recognise such values. Resolution of these issues remains a key challenge for the Authority and the Northern Territory.

The Authority is a learning organisation where professional growth is a priority. This year one of our anthropologists returned to work at the Authority while she finalised her PhD for assessment. Our Aboriginal Senior Business Officer is in her final year of a Bachelor of Business. Our Systems and Information Manager will complete a Master of Information Technology (Cyber Security) this year. This evidence based, contemporary knowledge enables the Authority to be innovative in its activities and drive reform in its strategic areas in order to better protect sacred sites.

The Authority is a regulatory body that operates at the interface of strong Aboriginal law and both Commonwealth and Northern Territory law. It is a highly contested space, but one which offers many solutions, opportunities and possibilities, both for development and the recognition and protection of cultural heritage of the NT.

I thank the Board for their strong leadership of the Authority and for their strong vision for the Northern Territory – for which they seek to make a difference.

Kubara area, Kakadu National Park, NT

OUR ORGANISATION

“The Authority is a regulatory body that operates at the interface of strong Aboriginal law and Common law in the Northern Territory”.

- Dr Benedict Scambary, CEO

OUR HISTORY

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has existed in several forms for 45 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 provides a foundation for the Sacred Sites Act.

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 NT. 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 chairpeople, including Mr Raphael Aputimi 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 *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act (1989)* and the establishment of the current Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

A key process of the current Act is the issuing of Authority Certificates which mandate consultation with custodians of sacred sites to set conditions for any development to occur.

Authority Certificates 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 its public works. Key agencies such as the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics use Certificates to guide their projects because they provide clear instructions about what can and cannot be done in and in the vicinity of sacred sites. Through the Authority Certificate process, the Authority has facilitated thousands of government and private sector projects across the NT.

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 all on-shore petroleum projects. Additionally, the Authority must be given a copy of any applications to undertake hydraulic fracturing 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 projects.

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has existed for **45 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.



Kakadu National Park, NT

KEY SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE AUTHORITY

The Authority manages the protection of sacred sites through:

- sacred site surveys and issuing Authority Certificates for any proposed development
- providing the public with information about sacred sites through abstracts of Authority records and access to the register
- registering 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 Authority 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 (with the exception of works subject of the Petroleum Regulations), 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 sacred sites, which can lead to prosecution, project delays and reputational damage.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Members of the public can seek advice on sacred sites by requesting access to the register of sacred sites. We also provide abstracts of records on where sacred sites are known to exist. Works should not be carried out near sacred sites without an Authority Certificate and any development proposals must take into account the existence of sacred sites.

THE REGISTRATION OF ABORIGINAL SACRED SITES

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

The Authority conducts anthropological research, including consulting with custodians and reviewing any historical information that may be available on the proposed sacred site to ascertain the site's location, boundaries and significance in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. Landowners are given an opportunity to comment on the proposed registration of sacred sites.

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.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023–2025

GOALS

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RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS	ELEVATE THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE	GROW OUR EXPERTISE
<p>We will grow community awareness of the importance of Aboriginal sacred sites across the Northern Territory</p>	<p>We will optimise our processes to achieve greater efficiencies and legal certainty</p>	<p>We will grow our expertise to drive our strategic priorities</p>
OUTCOME	OUTCOME	OUTCOME
<p>Increased community and stakeholder awareness.</p>	<p>Delivery of consistent service that meets client and stakeholder expectations through development of a streamlined service delivery model.</p>	<p>A high performing work-force that has the requisite and specialist expertise.</p>

<div style="border: 2px solid #4F3025; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">4</div>	<div style="border: 2px solid #C85130; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">5</div>
DRIVE LEGISLATIVE CHANGE	BUILD DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY
<p>We will modernise the <i>Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989</i></p>	<p>We will deliver digital platforms to streamline and enhance the AAPA experience for all users</p>
OUTCOME	OUTCOME
<p>A new Act that responds to contemporary and emerging risks to Aboriginal sacred sites that delivers certainty for all stakeholders.</p>	<p>Tailored digital platforms that are secure and responsive to the changing context of Aboriginal sacred site protection.</p>



Maurice John and Jeffrey John at Mulgan Camp (Yangman country), NT

ORGANISATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Authority registered

18 sacred sites

during Authority Board Meetings.

81% Authority Certificates were issued within 9 months.

The Authority completed

873 requests for information

from our records.

Authority staff and consultants spent

589 days in the field.

The Authority issued

131 Authority Certificates

for projects across the Northern Territory, including for tourism, infrastructure and mining.

The Authority subsidised community projects to the value of

\$234,315.

The Authority issued Authority Certificates for key projects including upgrades to existing tourist infrastructure at **Wangi Falls**; road maintenance and upgrades in Kakadu National Park including **Gunlom, Gimbat, Maguk and Jim Jim Falls**; Tennant Creek Small Mines Rehabilitation and expansion of **Mereenie Gas Fields** in Central Australia.

Near Wangi Falls, NT

GOVERNANCE

“We continue to support the strong and workable frameworks in place in the NT, and we are working with the Northern Territory Government to make the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act stronger”.

- Mr Bobby Nunggumajbarr

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority is made up of twelve members. Ten members are custodians nominated by the Northern Territory Land Councils: five men and five women. The other two members are nominated by the Northern Territory Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage.

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

APPOINTMENTS

Geoffrey Matthews was appointed to the Board in May 2023. Valerie Martin’s term was renewed for a further three years.

AUTHORITY BOARD MEETINGS

Under the Sacred Sites Act, the Authority meets at least four times each calendar year. In 2022-23 the Board met at the following times:

134th Board meeting	13-15 September 2022	Darwin
135th Special Gunlom board meeting	21 October 2022	Virtual, Darwin/Alice Springs offices
136th Board meeting - cancelled due to the passing of Kunmanara Hoosan	23-24 November 2022	Darwin
137th Board meeting	23-24 March 2023	Alice Springs
138th Special Legislation board meeting	26 May 2023	Virtual

BOARD ATTENDANCE

Board member 2022-23	13-15 September 2022	21 October 2022	23-25 November 2022 - cancelled	23-24 March 2023	26 May 2023
Bobby Nunggumajbarr	Y	Y		Y	Y
Valerie Martin	Y	Y		Y	Y
Jenny Inmulugulu	Y	Y		Y	N
Barbara Shaw	N	Y		Y	Y
Neville Petrick	Y	Y		Y	Y
Walter Kerinauia Junior	N	Y		Y	Y
Christopher Neade	Y	Y		Y	Y
Jennifer Yantarrnga	Y	N		Y	N
Kunmanara Hoosan	Y	Y		-	-
Lorraine Jones	Y	Y		Y	Y
Geoffrey Matthews	-	-		-	N
Amy Dennison	N	N		N	Y
Nigel Browne	Y	Y		Y	Y

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
Date re-appointed: 1 June 2021

Ms Barbara Shaw is from the Alice Springs Hinterland region and is a former 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.



MR NEVILLE PETRICK

Region: Plenty River Basin
First appointed: 27 March 2019
Date re-appointed: 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.



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. Mr Neade is an advocate for development opportunities in the Barkly and to ensure Aboriginal people are treated with fairness and respect.



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 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.



MR NIGEL BROWNE

Government Appointment
Date appointed: 13 July 2021

Nigel is a descendent of the Larrakia and Wulna peoples. He is the Chief Executive Officer of the Larrakia Development Corporation, having served as a Director on the board from 2006 and as Chair from 2010 to 2013. He is a Director with The Healing Foundation and Chair of the Australia Day Council (NT). Nigel studied at Northern Territory University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Law in 2001.

Previous professional roles include Crown Prosecutor (ODPPNT), Aboriginal Lands (SFNT), and Policy Adviser (Chief Minister's Office). Nigel has held board positions with the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, Law Society (NT) and various other government and industry boards and committees including the Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group (NIAA), Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee, Aboriginal Tourism Committee (Tourism NT), Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity and the Northern Australia Advisory Council.

In August 2011 Nigel was announced as the National Indigenous Legal Professional of the Year. He is also a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



MS VALERIE MARTIN

Vice Chairperson

Region: Yuendumu Hinterland
First appointed: 2 August 2016
Date re-appointed: 11 May 2023

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.



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 GEOFFREY MATTHEWS

Region: VRD/Barkly West
Date appointed: 11 May 2023

Mr Geoffrey Matthews was born on Mount Doreen Station and worked as a grader operator for the Wulainj Outstation Resource Centre in Lajamanu. He has also worked as an Aboriginal community police officer and for ten years as a liaison officer for the Central Land Council's anthropology team. An executive member of the Central Land Council and a former Deputy Chairperson of the local board of the Central Desert Regional Council, Mr Matthews feels strongly about supporting his community and making sure its needs are met.



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.

REMEMBERING KUNMANARA HOOSAN

The Authority remembers Kunmanara Hoosan, who sadly passed away in November 2022 (Kunmanara is a word used in place of the first name of a deceased person). At the time of his passing Kunmanara was serving on the AAPA Board and was Chairperson of the Central Land Council. Kunmanara dedicated his whole life advocating for Aboriginal people in the area of Finke where he lived and in the Northern Territory more broadly. He spoke up about the need for better housing and services in town camps. He interacted with government ministers, bureaucrats and Aboriginal people.

Kunmanara wanted to see change in his community and advocated strongly for raising the age of criminal responsibility and against violence towards women. He was a founding member of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Uti Kulintjaku Watiku (mens clear thinking) Program established by men to address domestic violence. He also co-authored a prize winning book *Tjanimaku Tjukurpa: How one man came good*, a novella for young men about mental health and healing.

Kunmanara had a variety of careers during his life – police officer, Central Land Council field officer, health worker and chair of the NT Uniting Church. He was known for his care and concern for vulnerable members of the community and was generous in sharing his experience, knowledge and culture with all. The Board and the Authority thank and will remember Kunmanara's wisdom, insight and his strength in ensuring the protection of Aboriginal culture, with sacred sites being at the forefront of every decision.

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 1995*.

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, Corporate Services, and Policy and Governance.



Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pours soil into the hands of traditional land owner Vincent Lingiari, Wattie Creek, street art Darwin, NT (Jesse Bell)

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



Yangman custodians Hannah Willy, Emily Pamela and Christine Conway, Warloch Ponds (Yangman country), NT

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:

'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 authorising 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.

SACRED SITE PROTECTION IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

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.

Offences in relation to sacred sites include section 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, Treaty Director, Department of the Chief Minister & Cabinet serves as the Authority's representative.

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

The Authority's Executive Management Group (EMG) is comprised 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 2022-2023 financial year, the EMG members were:

- Dr Benedict Scambary, Chief Executive Officer
- Dr Sophie Creighton, Director, Research
- Mr Cameron McInerney, Director, Policy and Governance

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, the Business Manager and the Alice Springs 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 of Research, Research Manager, Registrar, Business Manager, Director Policy and Governance and Systems and Information Manager.

Near Mary River, NT

SUSTAINABILITY

The Authority's practice in protecting sacred sites is seeking to be consistent with the United Nations' definition of sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

SACRED SITES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority holds records of approximately 15,000 sacred sites across the Northern Territory. We know that there are many more that we are yet to record. The strength of knowledge of custodians of sacred sites across the Northern Territory ensures that these places are managed in accordance with traditional cultural practices. However there are pressures on sacred sites arising from a variety of factors. These include increased development in more remote parts of the Northern Territory, land clearing, water extraction, the emerging onshore gas industry, and the increasing impacts of climate change are resulting in more unpredictable and severe weather events including flood, drought and fires.

Custodians are regularly highlighting the vulnerability of their sacred sites and cultural landscapes within which they occur. Changing weather patterns, increased temperatures, and hotter than usual late season fires are reported as having significant impacts on landscape systems and on sacred sites - many of which are trees, species of vegetation, or are related to water.

Custodians are concerned about how such changes in the landscape may affect their livelihoods including the availability of natural resources upon which they rely. Predictions published in the CSIRO Report 'Climate Change in Australia's Top End' (2014) estimate an increase in annual temperatures of 1.7 °C, an increase in days over 35°C and reduced annual rainfall in 2070. In this arid environment, water and its use, regeneration and comparative economic and cultural value is increasingly contested.

In order to respond to these challenges the Authority is developing its in-house expertise to evaluate impacts on sacred sites and to set appropriate conditions for their protection. A program of sacred site registration is underway to work with custodians to identify and protect sacred sites at risk. The Authority is also increasingly in dialogue with the NT Environment Protection Authority and the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security to consider environmental impacts on sacred sites and broader Aboriginal cultural values that are embedded in NT landscapes.

The Authority's practice in protecting sacred sites is seeking to be consistent with the United Nations' definition of sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"¹. We seek to respond to concerns from custodians through the Authority Certificate process. Preserving cultural landscapes for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory will not only benefit Aboriginal people but all Territorians and future generations.

¹ United Nations Academic Impact, Sustainability (2023)

THE AUTHORITY IN THE COMMUNITY

The Authority values the importance of giving back to the community by supporting small business, community organisations and activities. In 2022-23, the Authority supported 16 applicants (including Aboriginal organisations, Commonwealth and other government agencies, local government and private companies) by providing full or partial waivers of charges for Authority Certificates.

The total costs of these waivers were \$234,315, representing 2.4% of the Authority's self-generated income for 2022-23. Projects included:

- Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp Upgrade (Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp Aboriginal Corporation)
- Wanuwuy Walking Track (Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation)
- Gunbalanya Billabong Hard Structure (West Arnhem Regional Council)
- Re-excavation of Malanangerr Rock Shelter, Kakadu National Park (Private individual)

Karlu Karlu, near Tennant Creek, 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.

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:

- Wangi Falls Construction Works and ongoing maintenance – upgrades to existing tourist infrastructure
- Four Certificates for road maintenance and upgrades across Kakadu Park (Gunlom, Gimbat, Maguk and Jim Jim Falls)

DEFENCE

The Authority issued three Authority Certificates to support upgrades to training facilities at Mt Bundy, Kangaroo Flats and Bradshaw.

MINING/EXPLORATION

The Authority issued Certificates to the following mining companies:

- Tennant Creek Small Mines Rehabilitation – rehabilitation of legacy mines around Tennant Creek
- Australian Ilmenite Resources – mineral exploration in the Roper Basin
- Expansion of Mereenie Gas Fields – Central Australia
- Gove Alumina Refinery Decommission-Decontamination-Deconstruction, Land Re-Contouring and Ongoing Industrial and Shipping Activities – Certificate issued as part of mine closure activities in Nhulunbuy

PETROLEUM

The Authority continued to engage with the onshore gas industry and issued Authority Certificates to a number of companies including:

- Sweetpea – Roper Basin Region
- Imperial Oil and Gas – Barkly Central
- Santos – 3 Certificates in Central Australia

“Our aim is to balance the interests of custodians, landowners and developers whilst always ensuring the protection of sacred sites.”

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

PRESENTATIONS TO STAKEHOLDERS

In 2022-2023 the Authority delivered presentations to various industry stakeholders:

- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics – Crown Land
- Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security
- Department of Industry Trade and Tourism– Mines and Energy Branch
- Department of Cultural Heritage
- Four regional Aboriginal Land Councils
- City of Darwin Council

The Director of Research was a key note speaker at the '*Mining the Territory Conference*' and presented on 'Sacred Site Protection and Lessons from Recent Court Cases'.

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 Certificates to Rirratjingu Investments Pty Ltd for a new subdivision, Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation for track upgrades to improve access to Dhimurru IPA, Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp to upgrade the Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp Grounds, an Aboriginal led tourism venture and Gapuwiyak Culture and Arts Centre for a joint defence community project in Gapuwiyak.

STRATEGIC INPUT

The Authority works closely with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security by providing feedback on Environmental Management Plans, water licences and water allocation plans. Outlined below are major projects the Authority has provided comment on this year:

Singleton Agriculture

- provided comments to the EPA on the agriculture development proposal that includes a large volume of water extraction
- raised concerns for groundwater dependent sacred sites across a large area of predicted groundwater drawdown, with the potential to impact 35 sacred sites which have surface water features, and 30 sacred sites which are trees that may be groundwater dependent, based on existing Authority records

Mandorah Marina

- the plan to construct a breakwater and marina is predicted to cause erosion along the coastline which is a sacred site
- the proposal for ongoing mitigation is not considered to be sustainable and it has been recommended that further design work be undertaken

Onshore Petroleum-Related Developments

- the Authority provided comments on Environmental Management Plans for onshore petroleum-related developments to ensure environmental protections and mitigation measures protect sacred sites

Water Extraction Licences

- the Authority regularly liaises with the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security where there are concerns for sacred sites in an area from new water allocations



Front page NT News 20 May 2023

MEDIA

Public interest in the protection of sacred sites remained high during the reporting period.

The development of a new Federal legislative framework for Aboriginal cultural heritage protection, as well as the national debate around the Voice, an independent First Nations advisory body to the Australian Parliament, has intensified media attention in the preservation of Aboriginal heritage.

In 2022-23 the Authority distributed five media releases in relation to various sacred site prosecutions.

The Authority also provided additional media comment on issues such as the Defence Housing Australia development at Lee Point, the proposed development at Middle Arm, and ongoing issues of onshore gas, land clearing and water extraction across the NT.

SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS

MIDDLE ARM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Authority has been working with the Department of Infrastructure Planning and Logistics (DIPL) in relation to the Middle Arm Sustainable Development Project, to ensure the protection of sacred sites.

Initial consultations with custodians commenced in August 2022. During these consultations, Larrakia custodians expressed their concern about the protection of sacred sites located immediately adjacent to the proposed development. They requested that before proceeding with further consultations, a Larrakia led heritage survey be undertaken and that they should have the benefit of considering the outcomes of the draft Environmental Impact Assessment which is expected to be lodged in 2023.

The Authority is in regular communication with DIPL but is waiting on the submission of the Environment Impact Statement as well as the outcome of the request made by Larrakia Traditional Owners for DIPL to facilitate a Larrakia led cultural survey before resuming consultations.



Middle Arm - ABC News

Near The Gap, Alice Springs, NT



PERFORMANCE REPORT

Mission Statement:
 To protect sacred sites in the Northern Territory by recognising and respecting the interests of custodians of sacred sites, landowners and developers, for the benefit of all Territorians.

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.

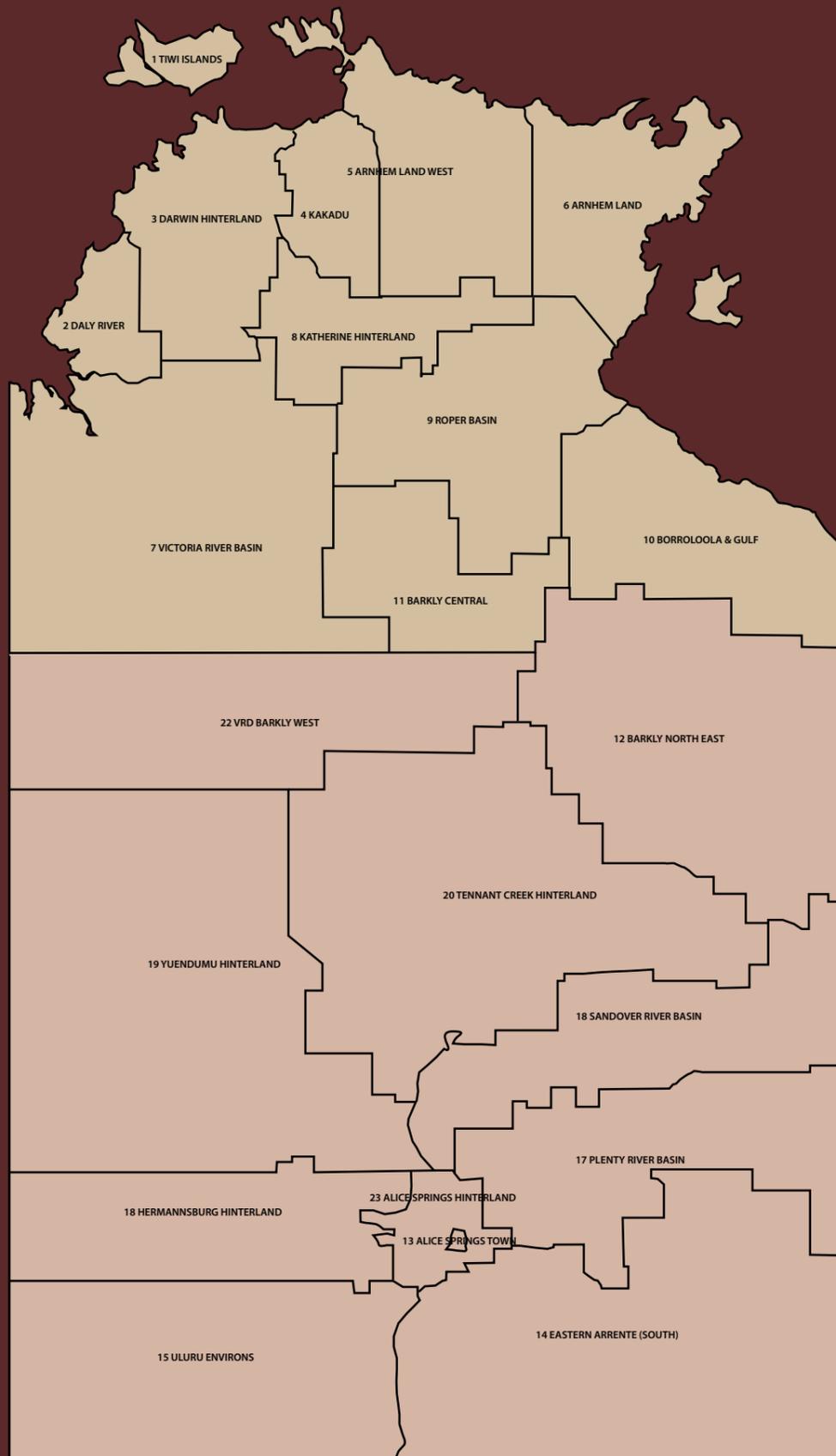
OUTCOME:

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

Figure 1: Key performance indicator

Key performance Indicator	Actual 2018-19	Actual 2019-20	Actual 2020-21	Actual 2021-22	Target 2022-23	Actual 2022-23
Authority Certificates issued	107	80	111	92	100	131
Requests for information completed	511	625	971	896	850	873
Average time between receiving Authority Certificate application and completing service	109 days	106 days	130 days	135 days	<= 130days	144 days*
Average time between receiving request for information and completing service	2.2 days	2.91 days	2.53 days	1.9 days	<=3days	2.2 days
Statutory appeals	1 appeal	1 appeal (ongoing from 2018-19)	1 appeal (ongoing from 2018-19)	0	<1%	0

*4 projects excluded from calculation due to extensive delays beyond the Authority's control



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.

Authority Certificates are based on consultations with custodians, which define clear conditions on what can and cannot be done in and around sacred sites.

An Authority Certificate provides a defence against prosecution if the applicant complies with conditions imposed to protect sacred sites.

While Authority Certificates are voluntary (except for onshore petroleum activities), 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, project delays and reputational damage.

QUANTITY

In 2022-23, the Authority received 137 Authority Certificate applications. A total of 131 Authority Certificates were issued for projects across the NT, and 38 applications were withdrawn.

ISSUED AUTHORITY CERTIFICATES

The 131 Authority Certificates issued by the Authority in 2022-23 is an increase from last year's total of 92.

WITHDRAWN AUTHORITY CERTIFICATES

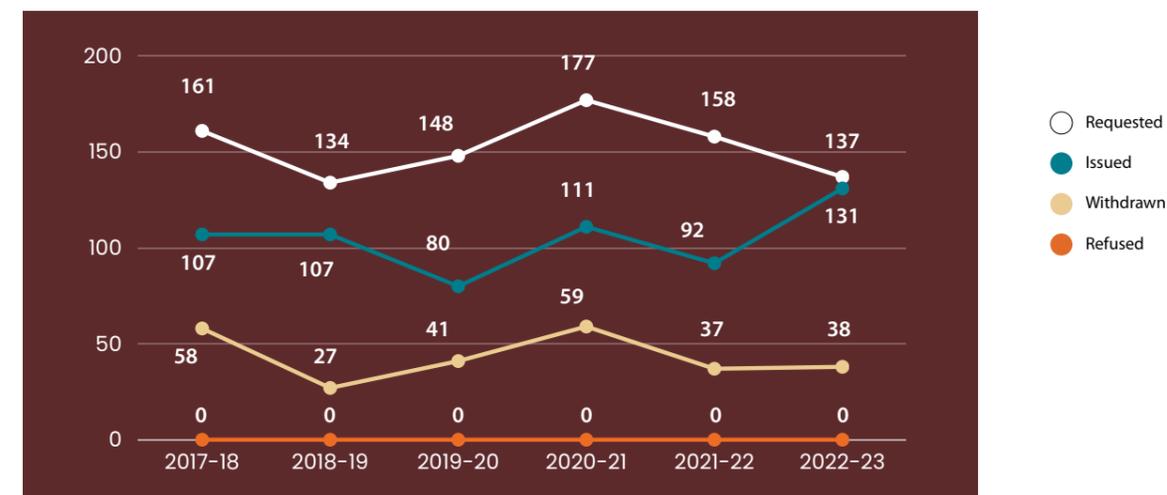
The 38 applications withdrawn by applicants in 2022-23 is a small increase from the 37 applications withdrawn in 2021-22.

Of the 38 withdrawn applications, six were withdrawn by the Northern Territory Government. The other main user groups that withdrew their applications included exploration and mining sector, the Commonwealth Government and local government.

REFUSED AUTHORITY CERTIFICATES

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

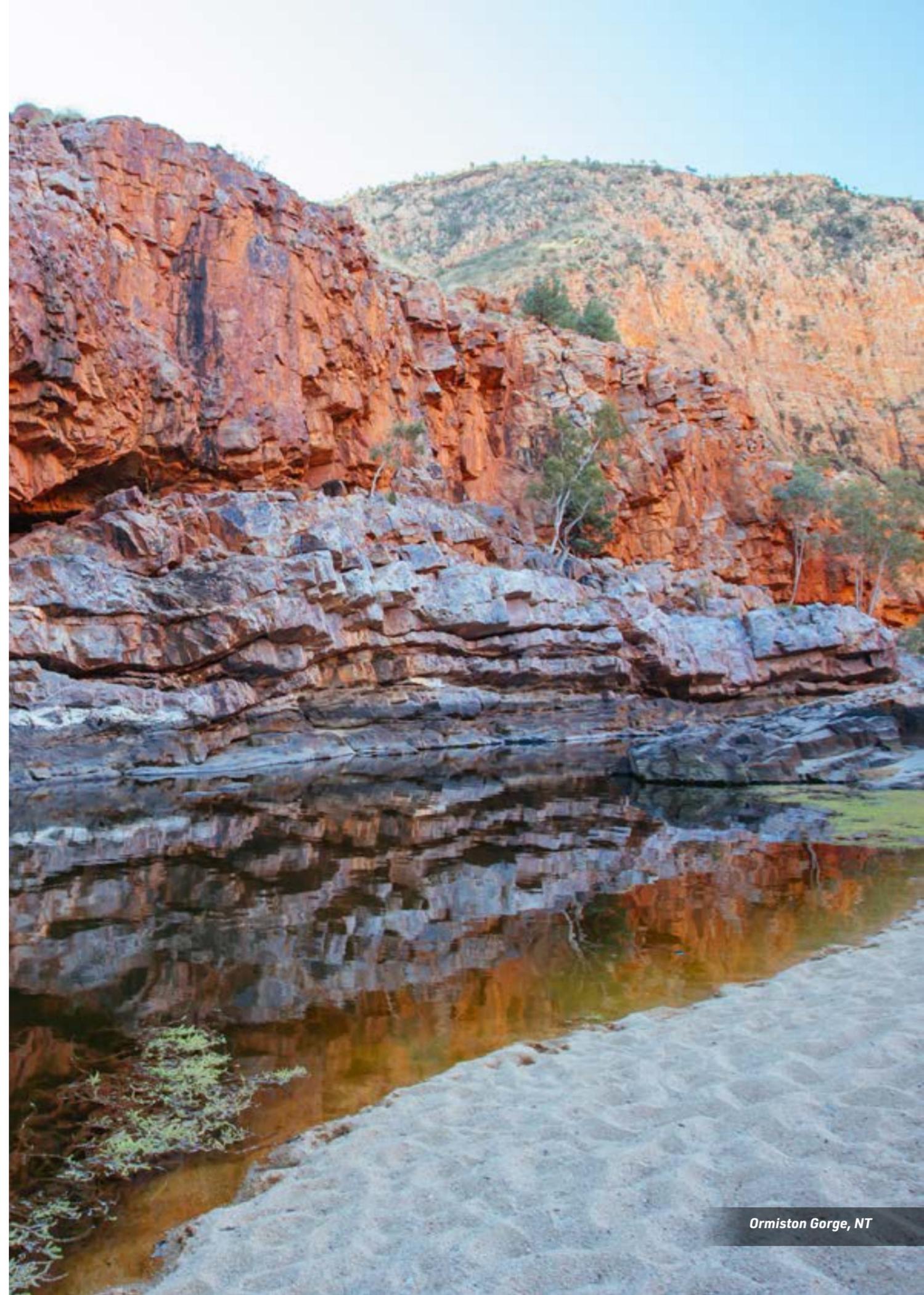
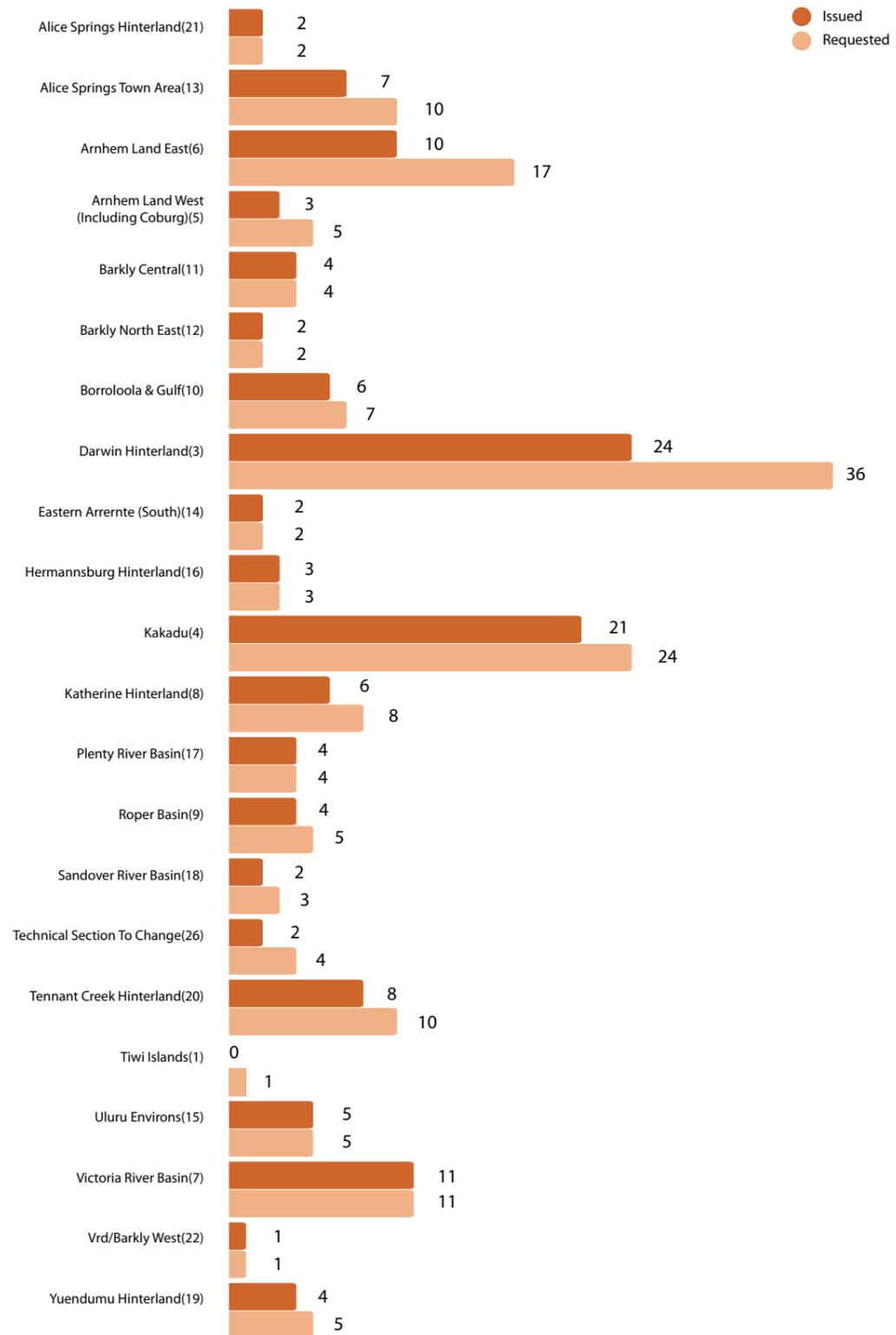
Figure 2: Number of certificates received, issued, withdrawn and refused from 2017 to 2023



REGIONAL PICTURE

In 2022-23, the highest demand for Authority Certificates were in the regions of the Darwin Hinterland (36), Kakadu (24) and Arnhem Land East (17).

Figure 3: Issued Certificate User group



Ormiston Gorge, NT

SERVICE USERS

The NT Government was issued the largest number of Authority Certificates in 2022-23 receiving 28% of all Certificates issued. The government's public works included infrastructure and planning, tourism-related activities, roadworks and natural resource management across the NT. The second largest demand came from the exploration/mining sector, with 20% or 26 Certificates issued.

Overall, the private sector (which includes mining, pastoral and private/individual/companies) accounted for 42% of all Authority Certificates issued, but accounted for 47% of total revenue.

PROJECT TYPES

In 2022-23, infrastructure and exploration/mining activities were the most common project types covered by Authority Certificates with 18% of Certificates issued for both project types. Roadworks was the next most common with 11% (15). 11 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. This is an increase of 5 Certificates compared with the 2021-22 statistics when 6 Certificates were issued. The Certificates issued in 2022-23 for petroleum-related activities were:

- Central Petroleum Ltd – Zevron Seismic Program
- Imperial Oil & Gas Pty Ltd – EP167/168 – 2022 seismic, drilling, completion and production test program
- Sweatpea Petroleum Pty Ltd – EP136 creek crossing, road upgrade and water extraction
- Central Petroleum Ltd – variation to C2021/084 – Zevron seismic testline & Mereenie Gas Acceleration
- Santos Ltd – South Amadeus EP112 Dukas 2 Program, South Amadeus EP 82 Mahler Program, South Amadeus EP125 Mt Kitty 2 Program, Variation to C2023/018 South Amadeus EP 125 Mt Kitty 2 Program, Variation C2023/020 – South Amadeus EP 112 Dukas 2 Program
- Tamboran B2 Pty Ltd – Tamboran Kyalla 117 N2 Petroleum Exploration and Appraisal

Figure 5: Issued Certificate User group

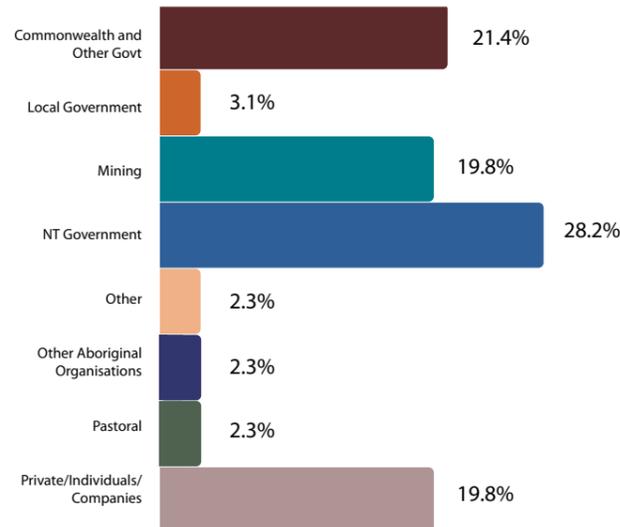
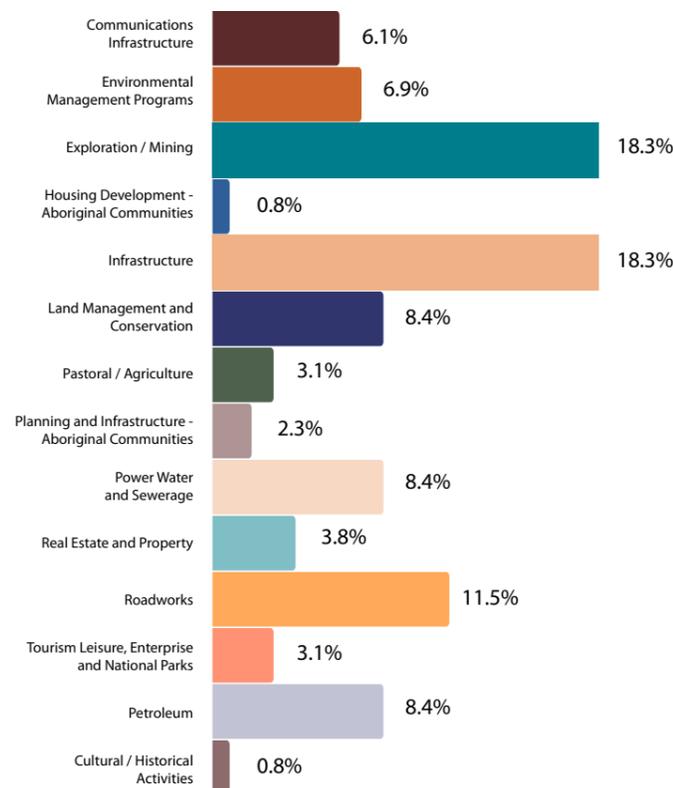


Figure 6: Issued certificate Project type



TIMELINESS

In the 2022- 2023 financial year the Authority continued to manage the on-going impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic which had resulted in a backlog of applications for Authority Certificates. When restrictions lifted and travel resumed to remote communities the Authority was one of many organisations attempting to resume normal business activities. This resulted in significant pressures on custodians and the need to prioritise projects. Custodian availability was a unique challenge for this financial year. In addition previously reported factors such as the complexity of project proposals, resourcing availability and late amendments to applications by clients continue to be factors in delayed timeframes.

Despite these extended timeframes, the Authority issued an increased number of Authority Certificates compared to the last financial year. A total of 131 Authority Certificates were issued this year compared with 92 last year.

Figure 7: Average days to issue

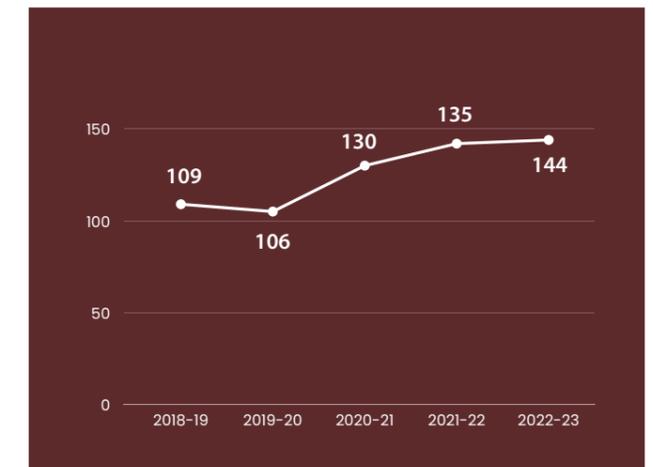


Figure 8: Days to issue by project type

Row Labels	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-9 months	9-12 months	12-15 months	18-21 months	15-18 months	Grand Total
Communications Infrastructure	5	3						8
Cultural / Historical Activities	1							1
Environmental Management Programs	2	1	3	2	1			9
Exploration / Mining	8	5	6	2	2		1	24
Housing Development - Aboriginal Communities	1							1
Infrastructure	6	13	3	1	1			24
Land Management and Conservation	3	1	1	6				11
Pastoral / Agriculture	1	1		1	1			4
Petroleum	3	2	4	2				11
Planning and Infrastructure - Aboriginal Communities		2	1					3
Power Water and Sewerage	2	3	1					6
Power Water and Sewerage - Aboriginal Communities		3	1	1				5
Real Estate and Property	2	3						5
Roadworks	5	2	6	1	1			15
Tourism Leisure, Enterprise and National Parks		1	1	1		1		4
GRAND TOTAL	39	40	27	17	6	1	1	131

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

QUANTITY

In 2022-23, the Authority received and responded to 873 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 (2), inspections of the Authority Certificate Register (58), inspections of the Register of Sacred Sites (18) and other requests (6) (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 873 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 2018 and 30 June 2023.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Abstract of Records	462	576	895	781	789
Digital Data Request	5	3	4	3	2
Inspection of Authority Certificate Register	18	26	54	83	58
Inspection of records	18	1	0	0	0
Inspection of Sacred Sites Register	8	12	15	18	18
Other	0	7	3	11	6
GRAND TOTAL	511	625	971	896	873

SERVICE USERS AND PROJECT TYPES

The three main groups requesting information are the private sector (419); mining, oil and gas (160); and the NT Government (159).

Figure 11: Requests for information by user groups between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2023

User group	Requests for information completed				
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
NT Government	59	80	134	118	159
Commonwealth and Other Govt	6	58	60	39	35
Local Government	4	10	17	2	8
Aboriginal organisations and Land Councils	60	29	42	51	54
Private/Individuals/Companies	258	252	356	412	419
Mining, oil and gas	110	178	305	251	160
Non-Government Organisation	13	16	56	22	28
Site custodian*	10	24	10	6	11



REGIONAL PICTURE

Requests for information were the highest in the Darwin hinterland region (202), followed by Alice Springs town area (95) which is consistent with the trend from 2021-22.

Figure 10: Requests for information by region.

ALICE SPRINGS HINTERLAND	12	DARWIN HINTERLAND	202	TENNANT CREEK HINTERLAND	27
ALICE SPRINGS TOWN AREA	95	EASTERN ARRERNTJE (SOUTH)	74	TIWI ISLANDS	8
ARNHEM LAND EAST	44	HERMANNSBURG HINTERLAND	26	ULURU ENVIRONS	17
ARNHEM LAND WEST (INCLUDING COBURG)	12	KAKADU	22	VICTORIA RIVER BASIN	53
BARKLY CENTRAL	19	KATHERINE HINTERLAND	41	VRD/BARKLY WEST	16
BARKLY NORTH EAST	37	PLENTY RIVER BASIN	30	YUENDUMU HINTERLAND	32
BORROLOOLA & GULF	43	ROPER BASIN	25	GRAND TOTAL	873
DALY RIVER	14	SANDOVER RIVER BASIN	24		

TIMELINESS

The Authority's timeframe for to delivery this service increased from 1.90 days in 2021-22 to 2.36 in 2022-23.

Average number of days to complete each type of request for information in 2022-23

Row Labels	Average of Elapsed Days
Abstract of Records	2.36
Digital Data Request	0.00
Inspection of Authority Certificate Register	0.80
Inspection of Sacred Sites Register	0.28
Other	1.00
Grand Total	2.20



Jalalapyng Yangman custodians, NT

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 Board of the Authority makes the decision to enter sites into the register of sacred sites. The register makes information about the location, boundaries and custodian group 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. All sacred sites, whether the Authority has a record of them or not, are protected by the Sacred Sites Act.



Anthropologist, John Dooley and Data Integrity Officer, Tilly Kiefel-Johnson share results from a fieldwork trip and consolidate site data

QUANTITY

The Authority registered

18 sacred sites
in 2022-23

Sacred sites are registered at Authority board meetings which occur four times per year.

The Authority recorded

121 new sacred sites

through fieldwork in this reporting period.

In total the Authority has 2208 registered sacred sites and 11,538 recorded sacred sites in its database, bringing the total number of documented sacred sites in the Northern Territory to

13,746
in 2022-23.

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.

2208 Total Registered Sites

11,545 Total Recorded Sites

18 New Sacred Sites Registered

23 Site Registration Requests Received

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 is established to:

- work with stakeholders in the public and private sector to engage with the Authority Certificate process and voluntarily comply with the conditions set out in any Authority Certificates issued;
- 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.

FIELDTRIPS

In the 2022-23 financial year, the Compliance Unit undertook 10 fieldtrips across the NT to investigate allegations of damage to sacred sites. The compliance audits focused on development activities posing a high risk to sacred sites due to the nature of the works undertaken and/or the vicinity of the works 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 2022-23, THE AUTHORITY

RECEIVED
28 alleged site damage reports

RESOLVED
18 cases

AT THE END OF THE 2022-23 FINANCIAL YEAR

4 cases were under investigation

PROSECUTIONS

Ongoing

The Authority has four ongoing 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.

In early 2019, Parks Australia realigned and upgraded the walking track to the pools located at the top of Gunlom Falls, which forms part of the Gunlom sacred site. Following an investigation, the Authority determined that the track realignment had been constructed within the Gunlom sacred site without an Authority Certificate or Minister's 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 Supreme Court found that the Director of National Parks was not criminally liable for interfering with a sacred site at Gunlom Falls in Kakadu because the Commonwealth Government is not bound by the Territory's sacred site laws.

In May 2023 the High Court of Australia agreed to hear an appeal by AAPA against the decision of the Full Court of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. The appeal is expected to be heard in late 2023.

AAPA v Alice Springs Sand Supply Pty Ltd

Alice Springs Sand Supply Pty Ltd (ASSS) has been charged with one count of carrying out work on or using a sacred site, and one count of contravening or failing to comply with the conditions of an Authority Certificate issued to them by AAPA.

AAPA alleges that, between 1 July 2018 and 31 December 2019, ASSS carried out work or used a sacred site near Kulgera in the Northern Territory of Australia. This was in contravention of the conditions of an Authority Certificate that was issued by AAPA.

This matter is listed in the Darwin Local Court for a four day hearing commencing on 27 November 2023.

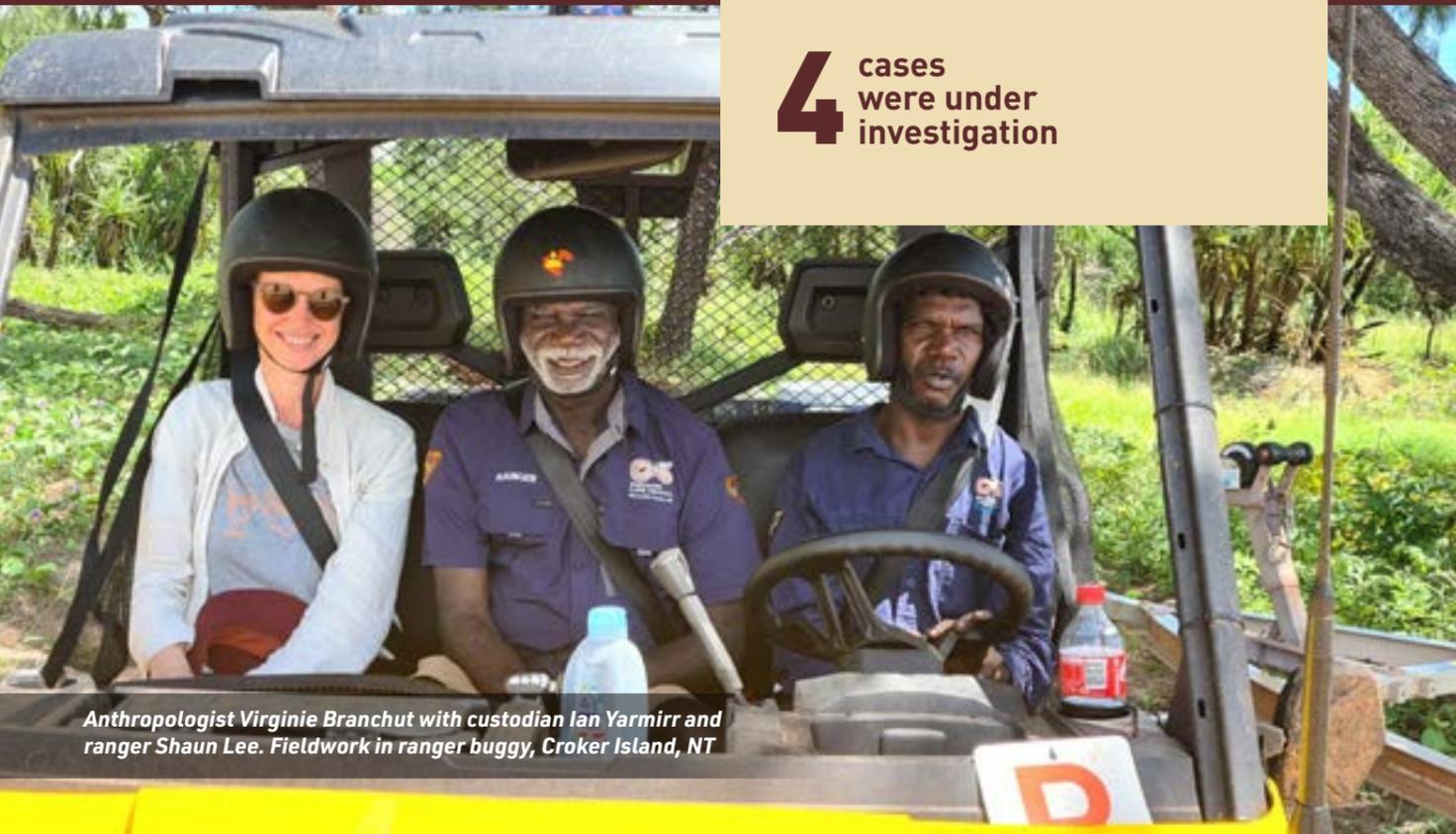
AAPA v DIPL – Arlparra

On 17 November 2022 AAPA filed a complaint in the Darwin Local Court against the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL). The complaint alleges that DIPL, between 24 June 2021 and 17 September 2021, carried out works on a sacred site at Arlparra in contravention s34(1) of the Sacred Sites Act.

This matter is listed for a hearing in May 2024.

STATUTORY APPEALS

There were no statutory appeals in the last financial year.



Anthropologist Virginie Branchut with custodian Ian Yarmirr and ranger Shaun Lee. Fieldwork in ranger buggy, Croker Island, NT

King River Station, near Katherine

OUR PEOPLE

"We all work closely with each other, you can really see how all the different roles contribute".

- Dr Jo Thurman

2022-23 SNAPSHOT

Our **full-time** equivalent staff numbers were **33.44** in 2022-23 compared to **29.77** in 2021-22.

Our **headcount of staff** was **38** in 2022-23 compared to **34** in 2021-22.

64% of the **workforce** were female in 2022-23 compared to **61%** in 2021-22.

The **average age** of staff was **40** in 2022-23 which is consistent with 2021-22.

58% of our staff were aged between 25 and 44 in 2022-23 compared to **59%** in 2021-22.

50% of our staff were ongoing **permanent** employees in 2022-23 compared to **59%** in 2021-22.

The Research and Land Information unit **restructured** and **7.5 FTE non-anthropological** positions transferred to the Client Services team within the Policy and Governance division.

13% of our staff identified as **Indigenous** in 2022-23, compared to **15%** in 2021-22.

21% of our staff identified as being from a **culturally and linguistically diverse** background in 2022-23 compared to **18%** in 2021-22.

0% of our staff identified as having a disability in 2022-23, which is consistent with 2021-22.

68% of the **workforce** has worked for the Authority for less than **five years**.

29% 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%**).

45% of our staff had **flexible work** agreements in place and a further **21%** work part time.

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

\$49,499 was spent in 2022-23 compared to **\$32,183** in 2021-22 on **training and development** for our staff.

\$3,261 was spent on providing 14 **individual support** services for staff.



It was the four years that Jo spent working at the Authority in the central desert and her experiences of working with custodians that inspired her to embark on a PhD. "Doing fieldwork as an the Authority researcher I always felt like I was just scratching the surface of a different cultural world. I wanted a deeper understanding of the lives and experiences of Indigenous people in the communities of central Australia". Jo spent her PhD fieldwork living with a Warlpiri family at Nyirripi for about nineteen months. Nyirripi is a community to the north west of Alice Springs, on the edge of the Tanami Desert, with a population of 250 people. On her PhD topic, Jo explains "broadly speaking my topic was about material things, I had a question about the role and meaning of material things in the everyday lives of Warlpiri people".

There were a number of themes that emerged from Jo's research. The major overarching theme was the concept of 'relatedness' – "the role and meaning of material things in Warlpiri lives has to be understood through a relational way of being in the world. There are a number of ways I explore this in my thesis. One is around sharing practices between family members which lends a different view to ideas of ownership and belonging to what you might think of through a western point of view. There was a lot of movement of things. Material things have their own mobility; they move through many hands. I explored the nuances of sharing practices between family – a term which of course in the Warlpiri context has to be understood through the kinship system, family is much broader than just those you are biologically related to."

"Another theme involved the order of things in Warlpiri homes, the way material things are lived with and organised in people's houses and yards, which I tracked by developing maps and drawing in the location of material things. The maps can tell a story of how things moved around. They show how we moved around, sleeping in different rooms and areas in the yard, and how each time material things, for example cars, beds and other

things, were organised in a way to establish the boundary or threshold of a camp, or create particular kinds of social places. The next day things could be dismantled, and the meaning of the place became very different. One of the concepts I explore in my thesis is 'ngurra' - the Warlpiri word for 'home' and while there is a broad meaning that corresponds with country, there is also a way in which a sense of home can be realised or manifested in a localised and often temporary way, like a camp in a room, in a yard or even out bush – I was interested in the way material things sort of 'made' those places, both structurally and symbolically."

During her fieldwork Jo spent a lot of time travelling around Warlpiri country (and beyond), visiting family at other communities and also visiting more remote areas. "We went hunting pretty much every week and we went on a few camping trips to visit fairly remote country areas and sacred sites. It was such a valuable experience; it gave me a deeper understanding of the relationship Warlpiri people have with their country and the ancestors and other beings within it. Although Warlpiri-specific, there are lessons and perspectives from that time that apply more broadly I think; that inform my approach to the work at the Authority and my understanding of its importance."

Jo is photographed with Brownie, a Warlpiri dog who 'adopted' Jo on her first night at Nyirripi. He moved with her to Canberra (Ngunnawal and Ngambri country) and now they live on Larrakia country, in the city of Darwin.

STAFF PROFILE

DR JO THURMAN

Anthropology Manager

Jo Thurman first started working at the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority in 2010 in Alice Springs as a Research Officer/Anthropologist, a position she held for four years. In March 2022, after completing her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the Australian National University, she re-joined the Authority in the role of Anthropology Manager. Jo works closely with co-Anthropology Manager Shannon Tchia; Jo manages the in-house team of researchers/anthropologists and Shannon manages consultant anthropologists. Together, they maintain operational oversight of all Authority Certificate applications and sacred site registration requests across both offices of the Authority.

This requires a significant amount of organisation, assisting the team to manage existing high workloads while also planning for incoming work and ensuring required resources are available. The role also involves contributing to the strategic, forward planning of the organisation. Jo enjoys the collaborative nature of her work, not only with her team, but also with those in other sections, "We all work closely with each other, you can really see how all the different roles contribute". Describing the way the research team works, Jo is, "Really proud of the integrity they each bring to the work they do, and how they support each other. It is nice to watch them operate in the way they do".





STAFF PROFILE

MS TIAHNE CLARKE

Business Support Officer

Tiahne commenced working at the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority in March 2022 and is part of a team of four in the Corporate Services area.

Tiahne loves working at the Authority and considers the work of the organisation to be of great significance. She feels that the Authority is not only respected by custodians and First Nations people in the Northern Territory but also by First Nations people around Australia: "the Authority's work is so important and vital for their communities and culture". Tiahne feels connected to culture through her Nan's side of the family and often visits a family outstation located on the Cobourg Peninsula. She enjoys being surrounded by family because it gives her a sense of connection to land and her culture.

As Business Support Officer, Tiahne's role involves managing the money coming in and going out. She works closely with the anthropologists and custodians in preparing for fieldwork trips and during the research process. She manages bookings when they go out in the field. There is also a close relationship with the the Authority's technical team in raising invoices for requests for information and Authority Certificates. In the time Tiahne has worked at the Authority, she has established a good rapport with board members who feel comfortable to ask her questions. She admires the board members who remain connected to country and culture and are holders of critical knowledge.



STAFF PROFILE

MR XIN LI

Senior Land Information Office

Commencing at the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority in 2018, Xin works in a small team providing maps for the Authority in different parts of the organisation. Xin also maintains the spatial database for the Authority's records, historical records and new data created by researchers. There are occasions when Xin assists researchers in their fieldwork in sites that are hard to access on foot; drones are used to locate the sites and to record new sites. Describing his work, Xin explains "it is quite interesting, there are different things every day. I like the variety in the work I do; exploring different options and contributing to the design of the new IT system at the Authority".

Originally from Jiang Xi province in China, Xin moved to Australia when he was 16 years old. His geologist father got a job with a mining company working in central Australia and Xin relocated with his parents to Darwin. Xin first learnt about Aboriginal culture through his father's work. Growing up in China, Xin had

always been interested in geography in general. His parents bought maps for him to look at; a map of China and world map. His father showed him the geospatial software he was using for work.

Xin completed Years 11 and 12 at Darwin High School. Compared to his school in China, the content was much easier. He excelled in maths, winning a medal in a New South Wales maths competition. He also won a place to travel to Canberra and attend the Australian National University National Mathematics Summer School for 2 weeks. On completion of school, Xin stayed on in Darwin for tertiary education and studied a Bachelor of Science (Geographic Information Systems) at Charles Darwin University. Xin is looking forward to assisting with the development of the IT system at the Authority and ensuring that it meets the requirements of managing spatial data.



STAFF PROFILE

MS YVONNE FORREST OAM

Librarian

Yvonne commenced working as the part-time Librarian at the then Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority in 1980. Subsequently becoming the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority in 1989, she has been here ever since. Over the past 40 years at the Authority, Yvonne has collected information relating to issues relevant to Northern Territory Aboriginal groups with particular collections on land rights and the Ranger Uranium environmental inquiry. She explains “because the history of Aboriginal people is mostly oral, it is important to keep transcript, exhibits and documents produced in support of issues which can trace the history of different groups and areas and this can include information from across borders”.

Yvonne trained in Victoria at the State Library at a time when you were required to work in a library and study in the evenings. “We learnt different cataloguing systems, Dewey for public

and school libraries, Moys for legal libraries, Universal Decimal Classification for scientific libraries etc. which enabled me to think outside the square and develop a cataloguing system unique for the Authority, as the information needed by staff is quite often very different to usual library users”. She has always worked as a ‘Special Librarian’; in Melbourne at the Flying Unit of the then Department of Civil Aviation and in England on the inquiry desk of the Commonwealth Relations Office.

Moving to Darwin in 1975 she set up the library at the Museum, the Northern Land Council and at the Aboriginal Sacred Sites Protection Authority. “I love Darwin, my friends, the weather and particularly my work – if I had stayed in the south life would not have been so interesting and I would have learnt very little about Aboriginal people and their lives”.

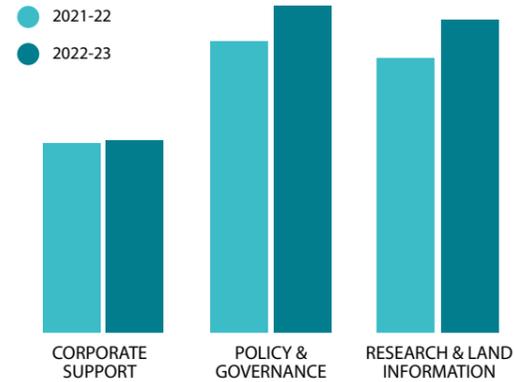


Jeffrey John, Robert Conway, Christine Conway and Janet John on Western Creek Rd, Yangman country

WORKFORCE PROFILE

The Authority's workforce in 2022-23 increased by 3.67 full time equivalent (FTE) staff to 33.44, compared to 29.77 in 2021-22. This increase was primarily due to recruiting hard to fill positions and creating a number of short term positions to assist in fast tracking major project Authority Certificate applications and the legislative reform project. The Authority continues to find recruiting to Alice Springs highly challenging especially for staff with the required skills and expertise in anthropology.

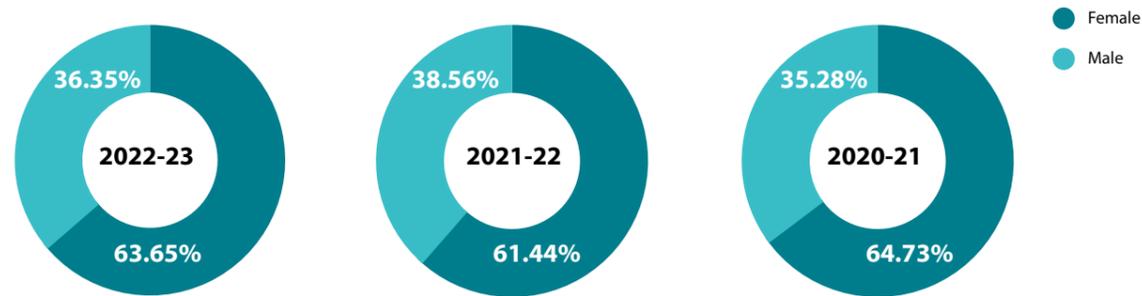
Figure 12: Full Time Equivalent (FTE) by Financial Year



GENDER COMPARISON

There was a slight increase in the number of female employees in 2022-23 to 64% compared to 61% in 2021-22. Over the last three years, males have made up 35% to 39% of staff, and this year saw a slight reduction to 36% from 39% the previous year.

Figure 13: Staffing by Gender and Age Group (excluding Board Members)



EMPLOYEES BY AGE AND GENDER

At 30 June 2023, 58% of the workforce was aged between 25 and 44. In 2022-23, the average age of employees is 40 which demonstrates a continuation of a predominantly young workforce for the last six years fluctuating between 38 and 40. Female employees are still mostly in the 35 to 54 age range. Male employees continue to be largely in the 25 to 44 age range, and this is consistent with the previous years.

Figure 14: Staffing by Gender and Age Group (excluding Board Members)

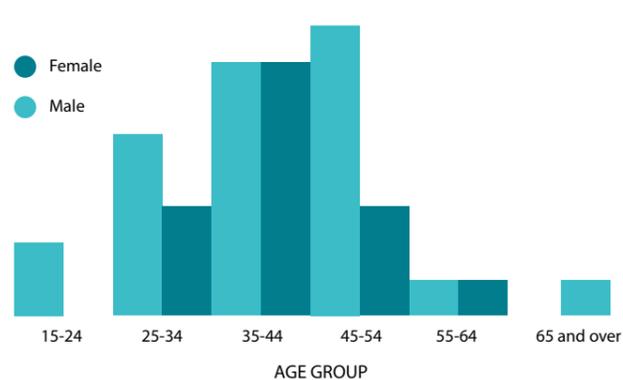
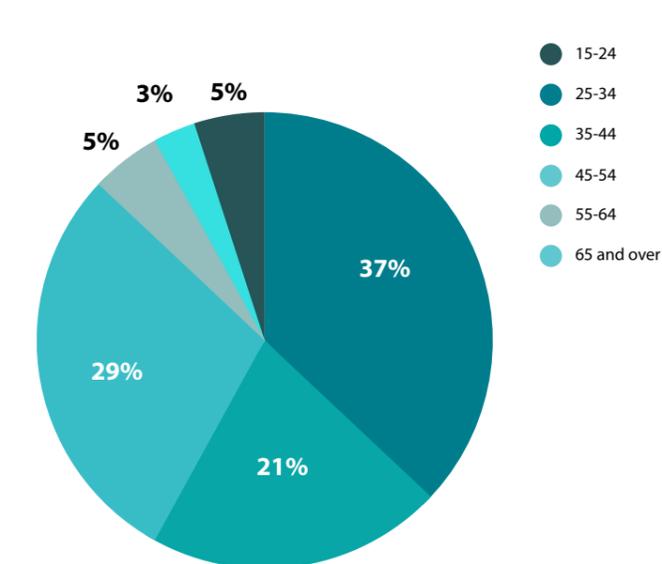


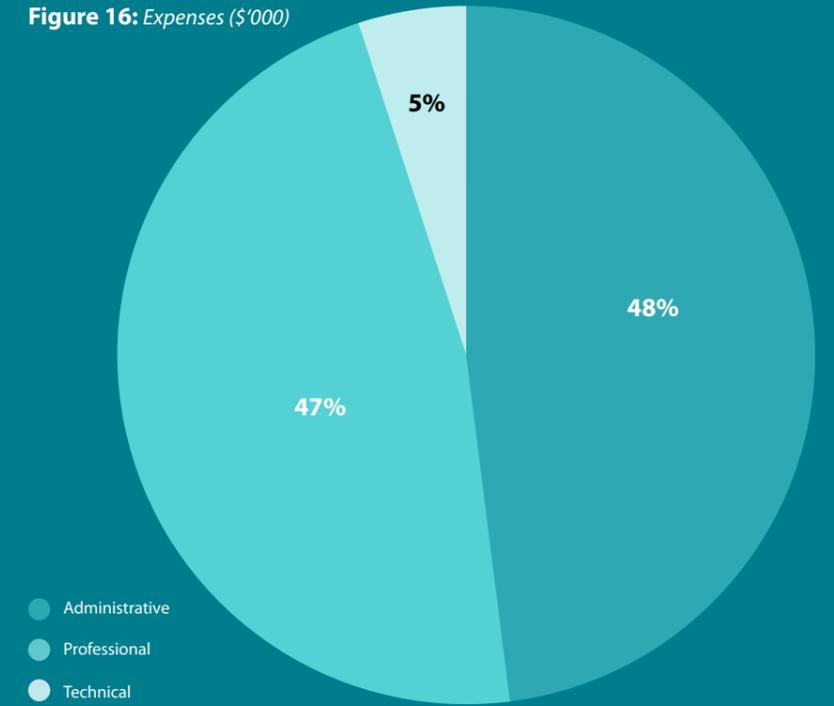
Figure 15: Staffing by Age Group (excluding Board Members)



EMPLOYEES BY STREAM

In 2022-23, the administrative stream employed 48% of the workforce, a minor increase of 1% from the previous year. Similarly the professional stream increased by 1% to 47%. Of staff within the professional stream, 72% were anthropologists in research-based positions; this is a 3% reduction into active anthropology roles and can be related back to vacancies in Alice Springs. The technical stream stayed consistent at 5%. Overall the split between employment streams was fairly consistent with the previous year with only minor fluctuations.

Figure 16: Expenses (\$'000)

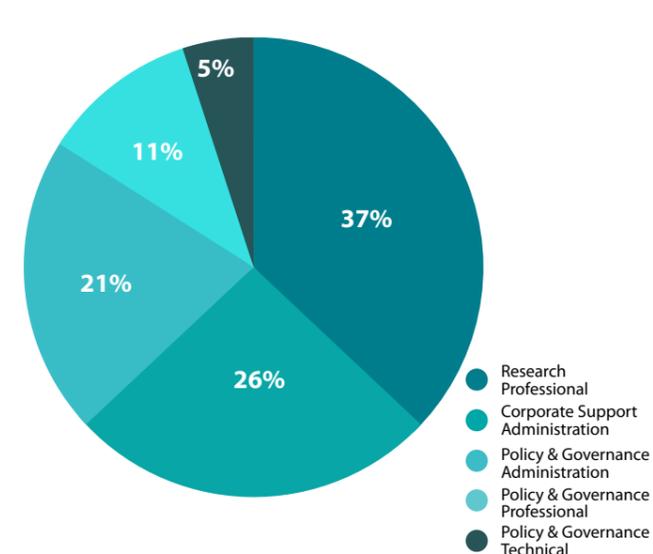


EMPLOYEES BY UNIT

In 2020-21, Research and Land Information Section comprised anthropological research and the former technical units which undertake the Authority's anthropological and technical services and was the largest unit, employing 59% of our staff. In January 2023 the former Technical Unit now called the Client Services Unit transferred to the Policy and Governance Section seeing a transfer of six staff from the previous year and an increase of 2.5 FTEs. This transfer saw the smallest Section in the Authority now on equal footing at 39% FTE each with the Research Section.

The Corporate Support Section has seen a reduction in the overall FTE from 26% of the workforce to 22% and is now the smallest Section in the Authority.

Figure 17: Employee by Work and by Stream



RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

In 2021-22, there were 13 new commencements and 13 separations, including seven resignations and six contracts ceasing. Of the 13 new commencements, four identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and were employed in the corporate support and technical units.

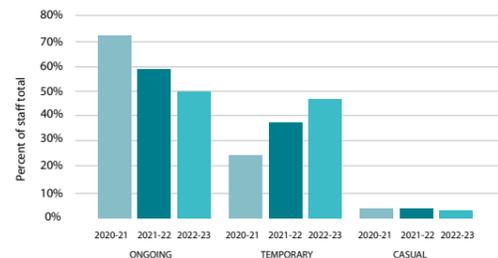
Sixteen recruitment actions were advertised in 2021-22 and only six were successful. Of the 10 unsuccessful recruitment rounds, seven were unable to identify a suitable applicant with the relevant skills, knowledge and experience required for the role. Recruitment to positions has been exceptionally difficult, especially to professional stream anthropological positions. In 2021-22 the Authority undertook six recruitment rounds specifically for anthropologists with minimal success in achieving the required recruitment numbers 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.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Separations	10	13	9
Commencements	10	13	17
Total	20	26	26

EMPLOYMENT TYPES

In 2022–23, the Authority’s ongoing employed workforce again reduced from 59% to 50% with three ongoing employees resigning. Temporary positions increased by five to 47% of the workforce and eight of all temporary positions directly relate 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 and has been progressively working through the Authority’s positions for work value assessments to ensure currency of position levels and attracting the right staff with the right skills and expertise to undertake positions at the Authority.

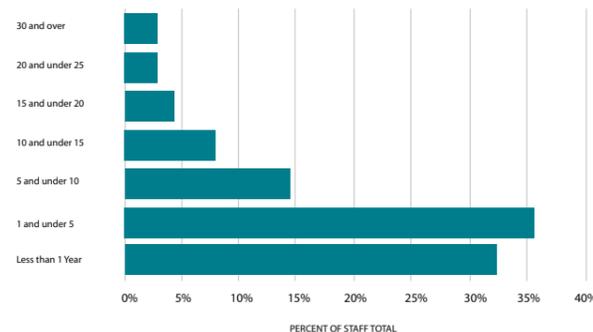
Figure 18: Employment type by year



RETENTION

In 2022-23, 68% of the workforce had been employed by the Authority for less than five years. This rate was slightly higher than 59% the previous year due to the temporary nature of short term project and funding based positions. This year 18% of the workforce had been employed by the Authority for 10 years or more, a slight increase from the previous year demonstrating an evolving workforce. 2021-22 and 2022-23 was affected by a range of short term temporary positions for specific and dedicated projects. This will continue in future years to manage fluctuations in projects, however these two years specifically were impacted by this fluctuation in positions and projects.

Figure 19: Years of Service

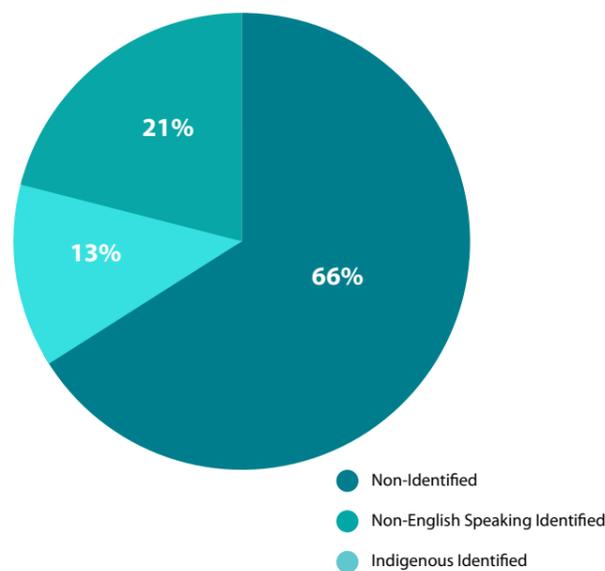


DIVERSITY

The Authority is committed to the principles of inclusion, equity and diversity. Overall this year, the percentage of staff identifying as Indigenous decreased from 15% to 13%. This decrease has been evident for two consecutive years and is something the Authority is highly conscious of. The percentage of staff identifying as being from a culturally and linguistically diverse background increased from 18% to 21%. The percentage of staff that identified as having a disability remained at 0% for the fifth year in a row. In 2022-23 the Authority continued to mandate the special measures principles to increase Aboriginal employment, however it has been noted that Aboriginal applicants for positions are a rarity. In 2022-23 there was again a noticeable decline 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%.

Figure 20: Workforce Diversity



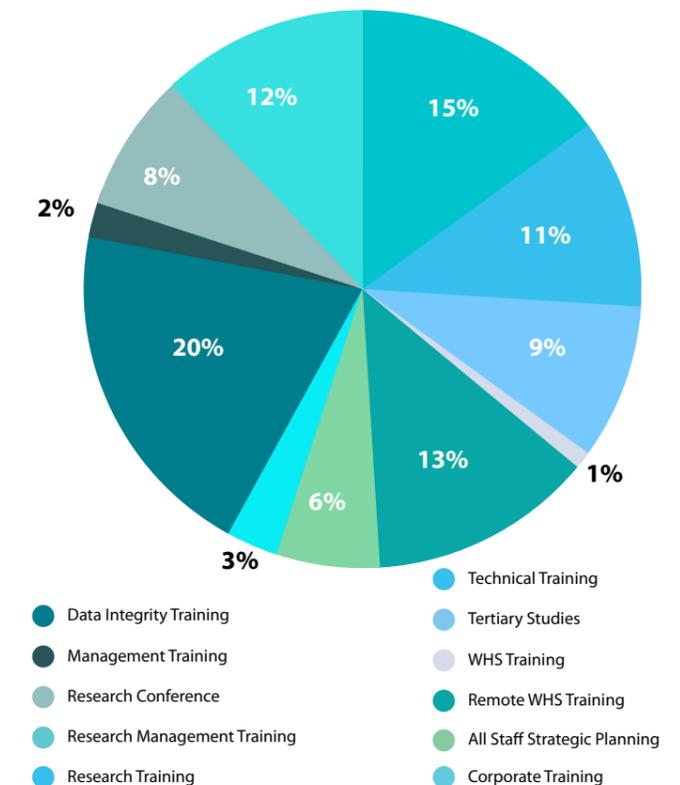
DEVELOPING OUR WORKPLACE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2022-23, investment in training and development continued to be heavily invested in with \$49,499 spent on a range of programs, the largest training and development budget for the Authority. \$33,393 or 67% was spent on research training ranging from management, anthropological and remote travel safety training. The Authority focused investment on the Study Assistance program for three staff to undertake tertiary qualifications. Further support was provided to staff for general corporate training in recruitment, management and project management.

Over \$6,000 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 to 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 and regular safety and call-in procedures are refreshed with staff and consultants to ensure consistent safety practices are in place.

Figure 21: Training and Development Investment



AURORA PROJECT INTERNSHIPS

In 2022-23, the Authority hosted one Aurora Project intern who assisted in the legislative reform project. In 2022-23 the Authority did not host any anthropology interns due to high workloads and a lack of time that could be dedicated to support an intern. In 2023-24 the Authority will again commence hosting interns where it is possible to provide a supportive environment with mentoring. The Authority has previously benefited by such internships and a number of previous anthropology interns have returned to the Authority for future employment.

STUDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Three requests from Authority employees for study assistance were supported in 2022-23. Two staff members continued their studies for a Bachelor of Business and a Masters in Information Technology (Cyber Security). A staff member commenced a Graduate Certificate of Arts for Yolngu Language and Cultures program.

The staff undertaking tertiary studies this year also received a number of high results and were awarded:

- NEC Award for the Highest Academic Achievement for a Local Female Student in Information Technology
- Outstanding Academic Achievement by a First Nation student in Accounting and Business.

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 2022-23, six staff were employed on a part-time basis due to family and lifestyle commitments. A further 17 staff, although working full time, had flexible workplace arrangements to vary their standard working hours. This means that 66% of our workforce are employed under flexible working arrangements, whether that be part-time employment or a variation of the standard working hours, a 4% increase from the previous year.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Authority continued to promote the Employee Assistance Program in 2022-23 and encouraged staff and family members to access the free and confidential counselling service through the whole-of-government contract.

In 2022-23, staff and family members participated in 14 individual, confidential counselling sessions.

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 2022-23, 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 including in Aboriginal communities.

In January 2022 excluded communities classifications were declared by the Chief Health officer which prohibited non-essential workers from travelling to the majority of remote communities with a requirement that a community must reach a vaccination rate of 85% for five year olds and above, before a community was removed from the excluded zone listing. This restriction saw all fieldwork postponed for over four months throughout the year in 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 2022-23 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. No incidences occurred that a recovery was required in 2022-23.

WORKPLACE INCIDENTS

There was one workers' compensation claim in 2022-23.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Staff participated in a number of cultural recognition events this year. In May all Authority staff participated in a Reconciliation Week morning tea. At this event it was noted by staff that often we don't take the time to stop and celebrate these important days of recognition or important milestones in Aboriginal history. It was also recognised that a reason why the Authority doesn't is due to its function where every day Aboriginal culture, achievements and history is celebrated by the work it does.

Staff all reflected on this and plans were made to participate in a number of 2023 NAIDOC Week events that showcase the Authority, its work and the importance of protecting sacred sites.



Casuarina Beach, NT

MILESTONE

YVONNE FORREST OAM – 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

On 5 April 2023 all staff of the Authority gathered to celebrated Ms Yvonne Forrest OAM 40 years of service as the Authority's Librarian. Yvonne has worked for every Chief Executive Officer of the Authority. Yvonne commenced at the Authority on 5 April 1983, her extensive historical knowledge and her ability to track down information, find particular authors of subject experts in anthropology and Aboriginal culture has been a fabulous asset to the Authority. Yvonne has a wide range of networks and at times, with very little information, can use not only her networks but her own knowledge to find the ever elusive information someone is looking for.

CHRIS CAIRNCROSS – 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Chris commenced at the Authority on 7 January 2013 on a part-time short-term contract. Chris is now a full-time ongoing staff member who is the cornerstone of the in-house database that stores all the information relating to sacred sites. Chris is an Oracle certified professional who is the expert in-house at modifying, fixing and maintaining the in house database system that is critical to all of the Authority's operations. Chris is a highly valued and impressive team member who has a wide range of experience in database management.

NATALIE MERIDA – 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Natalie commenced at the Authority on 12 November 2012 as the Senior Executive Officer. Natalie has provided a breadth of support to the Authority, coordinating all of its secretariat functions, preparing the annual reports, representing the Authority on a number of external working groups and has been instrumental in the legislative reform project at its commencement in 2016. Natalie recently took extended leave to concentrate on her tertiary studies.



Anthropologist Diana Popic and custodian Robert Conway at Warloch Ponds (Yangman country), NT

PEOPLE MATTER SURVEY RESULTS 2023

Authority Staff participated in a whole of government survey called People Matter Survey. The People Matter 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 employee perceptions 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 2023, 86% of all Authority Staff participated in the survey and the overall results were:

- 100% of staff believe the work they do is important and in the purpose and objectives of the Authority
- Over 90% of staff believe the Authority provides high quality services to the Northern Territory community
- 93% of staff confirm their managers see their wellbeing as important
- Over 80% of staff are proud to work for the Authority and the importance placed on avoiding conflicts of interest
- 69% of staff do not feel burnt out and 83% agree that bullying and harassment are not tolerated at the Authority
- 90% of staff identified that their work unit always tries to improve its performance and 97% have a clear understanding of their work unit's role and how it contributes to the Authority's goals

The three focus areas for continued improvement are:

1. Improve performance feedback discussions at all levels and with a particular focus on managers providing regular performance and career pathway discussions with a clear criteria to assess performance;
2. Improve decision making timeframes and feedback loops from senior management and
3. Health and wellbeing of staff are important to the Authority and strategies to improve the workplace culture and support are required to help staff manage their health and wellbeing

The next People Matter Survey is scheduled for 2025.

WORKFLOW AND PROCESS REVIEW

In March 2022 the Chief Executive Officer initiated an external review of the Authority's workflows and processes. 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 has been completed and in January 2023 the former Technical Unit transferred to the Policy and Governance Unit and was renamed the Client Services Unit. This unit is now implementing the four focus areas.

Near Alice Springs, NT

FINANCIALS

END OF FINANCIAL YEAR POSITION

2022-23 was a high performing year for the Authority and saw the continuation of a high demand for services in response to the economic reform agenda. The Authority made a surplus budget position of \$1.875 million and delivered a record 131 Authority Certificates.

BUDGET MOVEMENTS

There were a number of significant budget movements and adjustments throughout the year. At the commencement of 2022-23 the goods and services income budget commenced at \$2.5 million. During the year it was evident that this would be a highly productive year and the budget was adjusted to \$3.8 million, a \$1.3 million increase and the goods and services budget adjusted by this amount from \$1.513 million to \$2.813 million. It also saw \$0.5 million being transferred from the Employee expenses budget to the goods and services expenses budget that then adjusted the final goods and services budget to \$3.313 million. The increase of \$1.8 million to the goods and services expenses budget from an increase in income and a transfer from the employee budgets was to fund the engagement of anthropological consultants at a cost of \$0.678 million and offset other expenses such as \$255,000 on IT consultants, the \$153,000 on helicopters for sacred site clearances and \$100,000 in legal fees related to prosecutions.

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 to the right illustrates the relative value of each income category.

The income for 2022-23 was \$404,000 above budget. Income generated through the issuing on Authority Certificates equates to 41% of the Authority income for 2022-23. These figures are exclusive of Central Holding Authority revenue generated through the application fees for Requests for Information and requests for Authority Certificates.

Figure 22: Income received (\$'000)

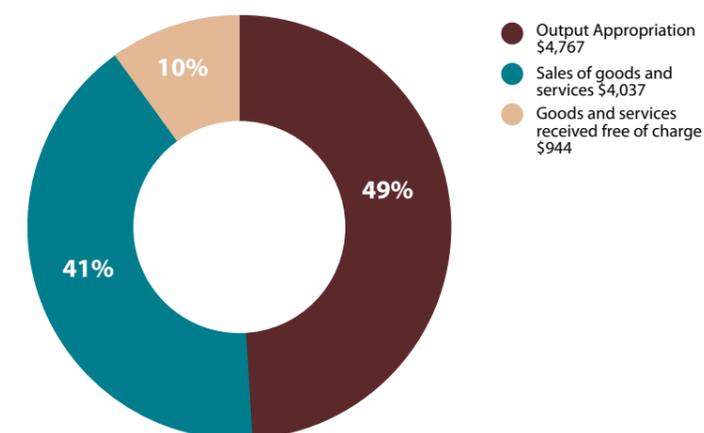
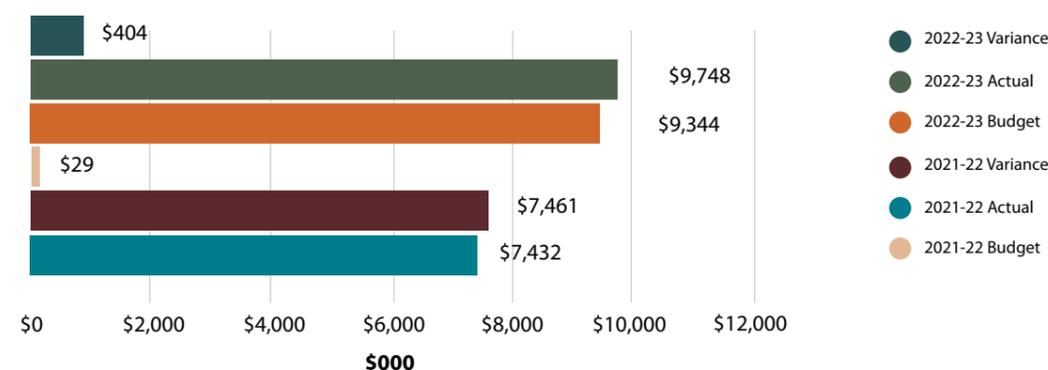


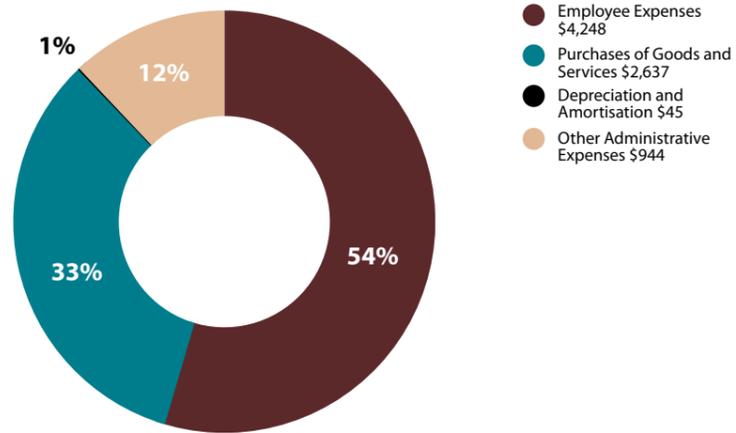
Figure 23: Total income – budget versus actual (\$'000)



EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure is made up of four broad categories: employees, purchase of goods and services, depreciation and other administrative expenses (DCDD charges). In 2022–23, although personnel continued to be the largest expense for the Authority at \$4.2 million, it was below budget by \$798,000 due to vacancies throughout the year of hard to fill professional positions.

Figure 24: Expenses (\$'000)

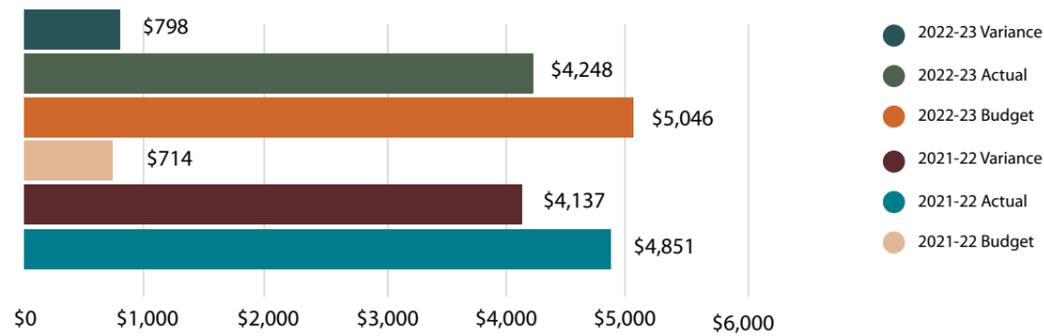


EMPLOYEE EXPENDITURE

During 2022–23, 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 \$798,000. Additional funding of \$1.374 million was also provided through output appropriation in 2022–23 to support the personnel increase required as a final year of funding an interim cost recovery framework for onshore petroleum (\$422,000) and first of two year funding for the fast tracking of major development projects (\$922,000).

The new funding for fast tracking major development projects was allocated to six positions relating directly to fast tracking Authority Certificate applications and one position dedicated to the legislative reform project.

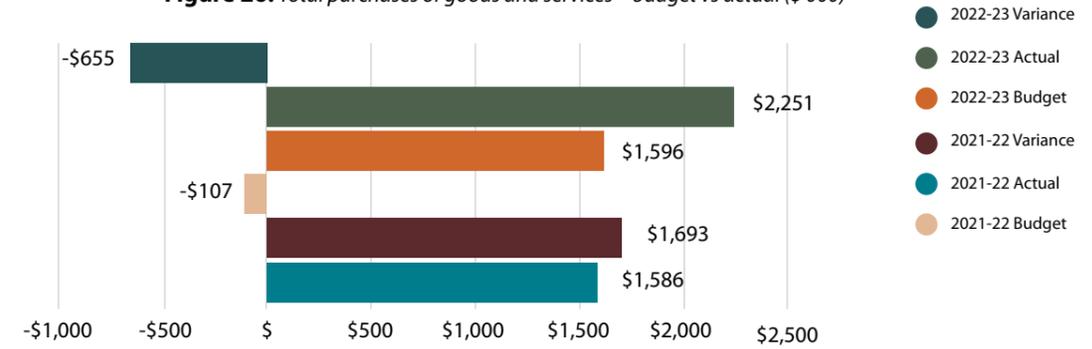
Figure 25: Total Employee - Budget Versus Actual (\$000)



GOODS AND SERVICES EXPENDITURE

Goods and services costs were under budget by \$676,000, this is reflective of a budget movement and significant self-generated revenue achieved to accommodate a significant increase in the engagement of anthropological consultants.

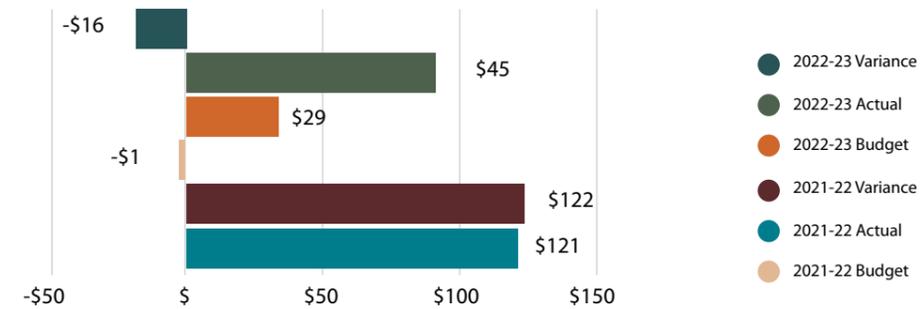
Figure 26: Total purchases of goods and services – budget vs actual (\$'000)



DEPRECIATION AND AMORTISATION

The depreciation and amortisation budget was over budget by \$16,000 in 2022-23. This was due to office upgrades undertaken during the year that were then transferred to an asset in June 2023. Due to the building lease expiring within the next seven months, the depreciation value was aligned to this rather than the standard 10 year depreciation value. Due to this treatment the budget impact is reflected in the over budget position at the end of 2022-23.

Figure 26: Total depreciation and amortisation – budget versus actual (\$'000)



STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Equity at 1 July	Comprehensive result	Transactions with owners in their capacity as owners	Equity at 30 June
	\$000	\$000	\$000	
2023				
AASB 101.106(d) Accumulated funds	(1,930)	(1,875)	0	(3,805)
AASB 101.106A Transfers from reserves	(5)	0	0	(5)
	(1,935)	(1,875)	0	(3,810)
AASB 101.106(d)(iii) Capital – transactions with owners				
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				
Capital withdrawal	195	0	0	195
	(1,621)	0	0	(1,621)
Total equity at end of financial year	(3,556)	(1,875)	0	(5,431)
2022				
AASB 101.106(d) Accumulated funds	(1,845)	(85)	0	(1,930)
AASB 101.106A Transfers from reserves	(5)	0	0	(5)
	(1,850)	(85)	0	(1,935)
AASB 101.106(d)(iii) Capital – transactions with owners				
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				
Capital withdrawal	195	0	0	195
	(1,621)	0	0	(1,621)
Total equity at end of financial year	(3,471)	(85)	0	(3,556)

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 2023

	2023	2022	
	Note	\$000	\$000
AASB 101.10(d)(ea), AASB101.51(c)(d)(e) AASB 101.113 AASB 107.18(a)			
AASB 107.10			
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Operating receipts			
Appropriation received			
Output		4,767	3,855
AASB 107.14(a) Receipts from sales of goods and services		3,824	3,124
Total operating receipts		8,591	6,979
Operating payments			
AASB 107.14(d) Payments to employees		(4,270)	(4,147)
AASB 107.14(c) Payments for goods and services		(2,713)	(2,393)
Total operating payments		(6,984)	(6,540)
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	10	1,607	439
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Investing payments			
AASB 107.16(a) Purchases of non-financial assets		(79)	0
Total investing payments		(79)	0
Net cash from/(used in) investing activities		(79)	0
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held			
		1,528	439
Cash at beginning of financial year			
		4,015	3,576
AASB 107.45 CASH AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR	9	5,544	4,015

The cash flow statement is to be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.

INDEX OF NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Note	12.	Property, plant and equipment
1.	13.	Intangibles
2.		Liabilities
3.	14.	Payables
	15.	Provisions
4.	16.	Other liabilities
5.	17.	Commitments
6.		Other disclosures
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7.	19.	Financial instruments
8.	20.	Related parties
	21.	Contingent liabilities and contingent assets
9.	22.	Events subsequent to balance date
10.	23.	Schedule of administered Territory items
11.	24.	Budgetary information
	25.	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 \$4.248 million continued to be the largest expense accounting for 54% of total expenditure.

The Authority achieved a surplus of \$1.875 million and accomplished \$4.037 million in goods and services revenue. This revenue was the outcome of 131 Authority Certificates being issued in 2022-23 with 56% of issued Authority Certificates relating to exploration and mining (27%), infrastructure (18%) and roadworks (11%).

2022-23 experienced a significant increase in demand for services. The Authority managed this influx and major project applications through the engagement of anthropological consultants. In 2022-23, 33 contracts were issued that engaged 16 consultants which resulted in 57 Authority Certificates being issued and generated \$2.164 million in revenue, 54% of total revenue.

2022-23 also saw an increase in Authority Board meetings with two special meetings called to seek the Board's instruction on the matter of AAPA v Director of National Parks Northern Territory Supreme Court decision and progression to the High Court and the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* review. The Authority Board costs increased by \$54,497 to \$166,748 compared to \$112,250 in 2021-22.

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), 138, AASB 1054.8(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 agency 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's 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 2022-23 financial year

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 adopted early for 2022-23 financial year.

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.

AASB 2022-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards – Fair Value Measurement of Non-Financial assets of Not-for-Profit Public Sector Entities

This standard amends the application of AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement to non-financial assets of not-for-profit public sector entities not held primarily to generate cash inflows. It applies prospectively to annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2024, with earlier application permitted.

This revised standard provides clarification and further guidance on the current requirements for measuring non-financial assets including:

- when an asset's use is considered 'financially feasible'
- application of the cost approach in measurement of an asset's fair value
- costs to be included in the calculation of replacement cost
- indicators of economic obsolescence.

This standard is not expected to have a material impact on the financial statements when first adopted for the year ending 30 June 2025.

Several other 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 F2.2

The financial statements of the Authority include income, expenses, assets, liabilities and equity over which the Authority has control (agency items) and is able to utilise to further its own objectives. Certain items, while managed by the Authority, are administered 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 agency's financial statements. However, as the agency is accountable for certain Territory items managed on behalf of government, these items have been separately disclosed in Note 23 – Schedule of administered Territory items.

e) Comparatives

AASB 101.38

Where necessary, comparative information for the 2021-22 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 2022-23 financial year as a result of management decisions.

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.

3. COMPREHENSIVE OPERATING STATEMENT BY OUTPUT GROUP

	AASB 1052.15 AASB 1052.15(d)	Note	Protection of Sacred Sites		Corporate and Shared Services		Total	
			2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
			\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
INCOME								
Appropriation		0						
Output			3,814	2,891	953	964	4,767	3,855
Sales of goods and services	5		4,037	2,739	0	0	4,037	2,739
Goods and services received free of charge	6		755	650	189	216	944	866
TOTAL INCOME			8,606	6,280	1,142	1,180	9,748	7,460
EXPENSES								
Employee expenses			3,457	3,358	791	779	4,248	4,137
Administrative expenses								
Property management			3	3	30	31	33	34
Purchases of goods and services	7		2,014	1,379	589	838	2,603	2,217
Depreciation and amortisation	0, 13		36	92	9	30	45	122
Other administrative expenses ¹			755	650	189	216	944	866
TOTAL EXPENSES			6,265	5,482	1,608	1,894	7,873	7,376
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)			2,341	798	(466)	(714)	1,875	85
COMPREHENSIVE RESULT			2,341	798	(466)	(714)	1,875	85

¹ 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. APPROPRIATION

Appropriation recorded in the operating statement includes output appropriation and commonwealth appropriation received for the delivery of services.

	2023			2022		
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
	Revenue from contracts with customers	Other	Total	Revenue from contracts with customers	Other	Total
AASB 1058.26 AASB 15.113(a)						
Output	0	4,767	4,767	0	3,855	3,855
Total appropriation in the operating statement	0	4,767	4,767	0	3,855	3,855

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 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.

5. SALES OF GOODS AND SERVICES

	2023			2022		
	\$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						
Other goods and services revenue	2,855	1,182	4,037	1,819	1,159	2,739
Total sales of goods and services	2,855	1,182	4,037	1,819	1,159	2,739

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.

	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000
Type of good and service:		
Service delivery	4,037	2,739
Total revenue from contracts with customers	4,037	2,739
Type of customer:		
Commonwealth Government	228	105
State and territory governments	1,209	1,199
Non-government entities	2,601	1,196
Total revenue from contracts with customers	4,037	2,739
Timing of transfer of goods and services:		
Overtime		
Point in time	4,037	2,739
Total revenue from contracts with customers	4,037	2,739

6. GOODS AND SERVICES RECEIVED FREE OF CHARGE

TD A6.3.13

	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000
Corporate and information services	941	865
Repairs and maintenance	3	2
Total goods and services received free of charge	944	866

AASB 1058.18-22

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 incurred on the Authority's assets and costs associated with administration of these expenses are centralised and in the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics on behalf of the Authority, and form part of goods and services received free of charge by the Authority.

In addition, the following corporate services staff and functions are centralised and provided by Department of Corporate and Digital Development on behalf of the Authority and form part of goods and services received free of charge by the Authority:

- financial services including accounts receivable, accounts payable and payroll
- employment and workforce services
- information management services
- procurement services
- property leasing services.

7. PURCHASES OF GOODS AND SERVICES

		2023	2022
		\$000	\$000
AASB 101.97	The net surplus/(deficit) has been arrived at after charging the following expenses:		
	Goods and services expenses:		
	Custodian Consultation	204	251
	Consultants (majority Anthropological)	873	301
	Information Technology Consultants	255	562
	Media Consultant	9	4
	Consultants¹	1341	1,117
	Advertising ²	1	0
	Marketing and promotion ³	3	6
	Document production	15	18
	Legal expenses ⁴	100	147
	Recruitment ⁵	13	6
	Training and study	50	32
	Official duty fares ⁶	191	159
	Travelling allowance	36	25
	Information technology charges and communications	240	209
	Motor Vehicle expenses ⁷	238	195
	Authority Board ⁸	144	109
	Relocation	7	20
	Other	223	173
	Total purchases of goods and services	2603	2,217

1. Includes marketing, promotion and IT consultants.

2. Does not include recruitment related advertising or advertising for marketing and promotion.

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

4. Includes legal fees, claim and settlement costs.

5. Includes recruitment-related advertising costs.

6. Includes helicopter charters for land surveys.

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

8. The Authority Board is required to hold a minimum of four meetings per calendar year under the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 (NT) in 2022-23 two additional special meetings were called.

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.

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

	Agency				Territory items			
	2023	No. of trans.	2022	No. of trans.	2023	No. of trans.	2022	No. of trans.
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Authorised under the Financial Management Act 1995								
Write-offs, postponements and waivers approved by delegates								
Irrecoverable amounts payable to the Territory or an agency written off	0	0	16	2	0	0	0	1
Asset write Off	0	0	22	1	0	0	0	0
Total write-offs, postponements and waivers approved by delegates	0	0	38	0	0	0	0	1

Write-off

Write-offs reflect the removal from accounting records the value of public money or public property owing to, or loss sustained by the Territory or agency. It refers to circumstance where the Territory or an agency has made all attempts to pursue the debt, however, is deemed irrecoverable due to reasons beyond the Territory or an agency's control. Write-offs result in no cash outlay and are accounted for under 'Other administrative expenses' in the Comprehensive Operating Statement.

Waiver

Waivers reflect the election to forego a legal right to recover public money or receive public property. Once agreed with and communicated to the debtor, it will have the effect of extinguishing the debt and renouncing the right to any future claim on that public money or public property. Waivers result in no cash outlay, and are accounted for under 'Current grants and subsidies expense' in the Comprehensive Operating Statement.

Postponement

A postponement is a deferral of a right to recover public money or receipt of public property from its due date. This has no effect on revenues or expenses recognised but may affect cash inflows or assets in use.

Gifts

A gift is an asset or property, deemed surplus to government's requirements, transferred to a suitable recipient, without receiving any consideration or compensation, and where there is no constructive or legal obligation for the transfer. Gifted property is accounted under 'Other administrative expenses' in the Comprehensive Operating Statement.

Ex gratia

Ex gratia payments or act-of-grace payments are gratuitous payments where no legal obligation exists. All ex gratia payments are approved by the Treasurer. Ex gratia payments result in cash outlay and are accounted for under 'Purchases of goods and services' in the Comprehensive Operating Statement.

9. CASH AND DEPOSITS

AASB 107.6-8,45	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000
Cash on hand	1	1
Cash at bank	5,543	4,015
Total cash and deposits	5,544	4,016

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.

10. CASH FLOW RECONCILIATION

a) Reconciliation of cash

AASB 107.45

The total of the Authority's 'Cash and deposits' of \$5.544 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

	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000
Net surplus/deficit	1,875	85
Non-cash items:		
Depreciation and amortisation	45	122
Asset write-offs/write-downs	0	0
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
Decrease/increase in receivables	(111)	(48)
Decrease/increase in payables	104	(28)
Decrease/increase in provision for employee benefits	(43)	(22)
Decrease/increase in other provisions	1	0
Decrease/increase in other liabilities	(264)	330
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	1,607	439

11. RECEIVABLES

		2023	2022
		\$000	\$000
AASB 101.78(b) AASB 7.6	Current		
AASB 101.78(b)	Accounts receivable	409	257
AASB 7.35H	Less: loss allowance	0	0
		409	257
AASB Interpretation 1031	GST receivables	12	(32)
AASB 101.78(b)	Prepayments	13	11
AASB 101.78(b)	Other receivables	29	115
		54	94
	Total receivables	463	352

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.

Prepayments

Prepayments represent payments made in advance of receipt of goods and services. Prepayments are recognised on an accrual basis and amortised over the period in which the economic benefits from these assets are received.

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.

In accordance with the provisions of the FMA, receivables are written off when based on demonstrated actions to collect, there is no reasonable expectation of recovery for reasons beyond the Authority's control.

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 at reporting date represents the amount of receivables the Authority estimates is likely to be uncollectible and is considered doubtful. Ageing analysis and reconciliation of loss allowance for receivables as at the reporting date are disclosed below.

Internal receivables reflect amounts owing from entities controlled by the Northern Territory Government such as other agencies, government business divisions and government owned corporations. External receivables reflect amounts owing from third parties which are external to the Northern Territory Government.

Ageing analysis

	2023			2022		
	Gross Receivables Loss rate	Expected credit losses	Net receivables	Gross receivables Loss rate	Expected credit losses	Net receivables
AASB 7.35M(b), 35N	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Internal receivables						
Not overdue	43	0	43	18	0	18
Overdue for less than 30 days	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overdue for 30 to 60 days	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overdue for more than 60 days	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total internal receivables	43	0	43	18	0	18
External receivables						
Not overdue	3	0	3	176	0	176
Overdue for less than 30 days	0	0	0	44	0	44
Overdue for 30 to 60 days	67	0	67	0	0	0
Overdue for more than 60 days	106	0	106	18	0	18
Total external receivables	176	0	176	239	0	239

Total amounts disclosed exclude statutory amounts and prepayments as these do not meet the definition of a financial instrument and therefore will not reconcile the receivables note. It also excludes accrued contract revenue where no loss allowance has been provided.

Reconciliation of loss allowance for receivables

	2023		2022	
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
AASB 7.35H Internal receivables				
Opening balance	0	0	0	0
Written off during the year	0	0	0	0
Recovered during the year	0	0	0	0
Increase/decrease in allowance recognised in profit or loss	0	0	0	0
Total internal receivables	0	0	0	0
External receivables				
Opening balance	0	1	0	1
Written off during the year	0	0	0	0
Recovered during the year	0	0	0	0
Increase/decrease in allowance recognised in profit or loss	0	(1)	0	(1)
Total external receivables	0	0	0	0

12. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

a) Total property, plant and equipment

AASB 101.78(a) AASB 116.73(d)	2023		2022	
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Plant and equipment				
At fair value	1,436		1,375	
Less: accumulated depreciation	(1,356)		(1,353)	
	80		22	
Computer hardware				
At fair value	17		32	
Less: accumulated depreciation	(12)		(24)	
	5		8	
Total property, plant and equipment	85		30	

AASB 16.95, AASB 116.73 (e)

b) Reconciliation of property, plant and equipment held and used by the agency

	2023		
	Plant and equipment	Computer Hardware	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000
Carrying amount as at 1 July	22	8	30
Additions	79	0	79
Depreciation/amortisation expense	(21)	(3)	(24)
Carrying amount as at 30 June	80	5	85

	2022		
	Plant and equipment	Computer Hardware	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000
Carrying amount as at 1 July	39	12	51
Depreciation/amortisation expense	(123)	(3)	(126)
Carrying amount as at 30 June	22	8	30

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**

ASSB 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

AASB116.73(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.

TD Leases.36, AASB 16.Aus25.1,29

For right-of-use assets under leases that have significantly below-market terms and conditions principally to enable the Authority to further its objectives, the Authority has elected to measure the asset at cost. These right-of-use assets are not subject to revaluation.

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 Authority assets are assessed for any indicators of impairment on an annual basis. If any 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. Impairment loss may only be reversed only if there has been change in the assumptions used to determine the asset's recoverable amount. Where an impairment loss is subsequently reversed, the reversal is limited so that the carrying amount of the asset does not exceed the revised estimate of its recoverable amount, nor exceed the net carrying amount that would have been determined had not impairment loss been recognised for the asset in the prior years. 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.

AASB136.9

Authority property, plant and equipment assets were assessed for impairment as at 30 June 2023. 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.

AASB116.73(c), AASB138.118(a)

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

	2023	2022
Plant and Equipment	10 years	10 years
Computer Hardware	5 years	5 years
Computer Software	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.

13. INTANGIBLES

a) Total intangibles

	2023	2022
Intangibles with a finite useful life		
Computer software		
Gross carrying amount	586	586
Less: accumulated amortisation	(563)	(542)
Carrying amount at 30 June	22	43
Total intangibles	22	43

AASB 138.21, AASB 138.24,Aus24.1

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. The Authority recognises intangible assets only if it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the Authority and the costs of the asset can be measured reliably. Where an asset is acquired at no or nominal cost, the cost is the fair value as at the date of acquisition.

AASB 138.81,124

There is no active market for any of the Authority'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)

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

	2023	2022
Computer software	5 years	5 years

AASB 136.9,10,

Intangible assets with finite useful life are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. If any indicator of impairment exists, the Authority determines the asset's recoverable amount. If the recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount, the carrying amount is reduced to recoverable amount and the reduction is recognised as an impairment loss.

AASB 138.108-109

Intangible assets with indefinite useful lives are not amortised, but are tested for impairment annually. The assessment of indefinite life is reviewed annually to determine whether the indefinite life continues to be supportable. If not, the change in useful life from indefinite to finite is made on a prospective basis.

Authority intangible assets were assessed for impairment as at 30 June 2023. No impairment adjustments were required as a result of this review.

b) Reconciliation of carrying amount of intangibles

	2023		
	Computer software	Other intangibles	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000
AASB 138.118 (e)			
Intangibles with a finite useful life			
Carrying amount at 1 July	43	0	43
Amortisation	(21)	0	(21)
Carrying amount as at 30 June	22	0	22

	2023		
	Computer software	Other intangibles	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000
Intangibles with a finite useful life			
Carrying amount at 1 July	144	0	144
Amortisation	(101)	0	(101)
Carrying amount as at 30 June	43	0	43

14. PAYABLES

	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000
AASB 101.77		
Accounts payable	24	17
Accrued salaries and wages	95	73
Other accrued expenses	132	57
Total payables	251	147

AASB 101.117

Liabilities for accounts payable and other amounts payable are carried at amortised 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 Authority. Accounts payable are normally settled within 20 days from receipt of valid invoices under \$1 million or 30 days for invoices over \$1 million.

Salaries and wages that are expected to be settled wholly within 12 months after the end of the period in which the employees render the service are recognised and measured at the amounts expected to be paid.

15. PROVISIONS

	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000
AASB 101.77,78		
Current		
Employee benefits		
Recreation leave	244	287
Leave loading	50	50
Other current provisions		
Other provisions (Payroll Tax and Superannuation Contribution)	71	70
Total provisions	365	407

AASB 119.9,11,16

Employee benefits

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 recreation leave and other employee benefit liabilities that fall due within 12 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 12 months of the reporting date are measured at present value of estimated future cash flows, calculated using the appropriate government bond rate and taking into consideration expected future salary and wage levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service.

All recreation leave is classified as a current liability.

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 within these financial statements.

The Authority employed 33.44 employees as at 30 June 2023 (29.77 employees as at 30 June 2022).

16. OTHER LIABILITIES

	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000
AASB 101.77,78		
AASB 15.116		
Current		
Unearned contract revenue liability	66	330
Total other liabilities	66	330

Unearned contract revenue liability

AASB 15.117, AASB 15.118

Unearned contract revenue liability relate to consideration received in advance from customers in respect of an Authority Certificate with an estimated earning capacity of a minimum of \$66,000. Unearned contract revenue liability balances as at 30 June 2023 is \$66,000 (balance at 1 July 2022 was \$330,000). The significant variance from 2023 to 2022 is attributed to the completion of six Authority Certificates in 2022-23 that had an estimated earning capacity of \$0.439 million. The unearned revenue liability will vary from year to year depending on client requests and on risk assessments undertaken.

AASB 15.120

The Authority anticipates to recognise as revenue, any liabilities for unsatisfied obligations as at the end of the reporting period in accordance with the time bands below:

	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000
Not later than one year	66	330
Later than one year and not later than five years	0	0
Later than five years	0	0
Total	66	330

Superannuation

Employees' superannuation entitlements are provided through the:

- 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 agency financial statements.

17. COMMITMENTS

Commitments represent future obligations or cash outflows that can be reliably measured and arise out of a contractual arrangement and typically binds the Authority to performance conditions. Commitments are not recognised as liabilities on the balance sheet.

Commitments may extend over multiple reporting periods and may result in payment of compensation or return of funds if obligations are breached.

Internal commitments reflect commitments with entities controlled by the Northern Territory Government such as other agencies, government business divisions and government owned corporations. External commitments reflect those to third parties which are external to the Northern Territory Government. Disclosures in relation to capital and other commitments are detailed below.

a) Other non-cancellable contract commitments

Other non-cancellable contract commitments predominantly comprise anthropological and IT specialist contracts. These contracts are expected to be payable as follows:

	2023		2022	
	Internal	External	Internal	External ¹
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Not later than one year	0	158	0	276
Later than one year and not later than five years	0	48	0	0
Later than five years	0	0	0	0
Total other non-cancellable contract commitments (exclusive of GST)	0	0	0	276
Plus: GST recoverable	0	20	0	23
Total other non-cancellable contract commitments (inclusive of GST)	0	226	0	299

¹ Excludes capital and lease commitments, but includes maintenance contracts. Also excludes amounts recognised as unearned revenue in the Authority's financial records.

18. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT

AASB 13.9

Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

AASB 13.27

Fair value measurement of a non-financial asset takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use. The highest and best use takes into account the use of the asset that is physically possible, legally permissible and financially feasible.

AASB 13.61

When measuring fair value, the valuation techniques used maximise the use of relevant observable inputs and minimise the use of unobservable inputs. Unobservable inputs are used to the extent that sufficient relevant and reliable observable inputs are not available for similar assets/liabilities.

Observable inputs are publicly available data relevant to the characteristics of the assets/liabilities being valued. Observable inputs used by the agency include, but are not limited to, published sales data for land and general office buildings.

Unobservable inputs are data, assumptions and judgments not available publicly but relevant to the characteristics of the assets/liabilities being valued. Such inputs include internal agency adjustments to observable data to take account of particular and potentially unique characteristics/functionality of assets/liabilities and assessments of physical condition and remaining useful life.

AASB 13.72-90

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within the following fair value hierarchy based on the inputs used:

AASB 13.76

Level 1 – inputs are quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities

AASB 13.81

Level 2 – inputs are inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly

AASB 13.86

Level 3 – inputs are unobservable.

The fair value of financial instruments is determined on the following basis:

- the fair value of cash, deposits, advances, receivables and payables approximates their carrying amount, which is also their amortised cost
- the fair value of derivative financial instruments are derived using current market yields and exchange rates appropriate to the instrument
- the fair value of other monetary financial assets and liabilities is based on discounting to present value the expected future cash flows by applying current market interest rates for assets and liabilities with similar risk profiles.

a) Fair value hierarchy

The Authority does not recognise any financial assets or liabilities at fair value as these are recognised at amortised cost. The carrying amounts of these financial assets and liabilities approximates their fair value.

The table below presents non-financial assets recognised at fair value in the balance sheet categorised by levels of inputs used to compute fair value.

AASB 13.93(a)	Level 1		Level 2		Level 3		Total fair value	
AASB 13.93(b)	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
Assets								
Plant and Equipment	0	0	0	0	85	30	85	30
Intangible Assets	0		0	0	22	43	22	43
Total assets	0	0	0	0	107	74	107	74

There were no transfers between Level 1 and Levels 2 or 3 during 2022-23 financial year.

b) Valuation techniques and inputs

Valuation techniques used to measure fair value in 2022-23 are:

AASB 13.93(d)	Level 2	Level 3
	techniques	techniques
Asset classes		
Plant and Equipment	-	Cost approach
Intangible Assets	-	Cost approach

There were no changes in valuation techniques from 2021-22 to 2022-23.

c) Additional information for level 3 fair value measurements**(i) Reconciliation of recurring level 3 fair value measurements of non financial assets**

AASB 13.93(e)	Plant and equipment	Intangible assets	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000
2023			
Fair value as at 1 July	30	43	73
Additions	79		79
Depreciation/amortisation	(24)	(21)	(45)
Fair value as at 30 June	85	22	107
2022			
Fair value as at 1 July	51	144	195
Additions			
Depreciation/amortisation	(21)	(101)	(122)
Fair value as at 30 June	30	43	73

(ii) Sensitivity analysis

AASB 13.93(h)(i)

Unobservable inputs used in computing the fair value of buildings include the historical cost and the consumed economic benefit for each building. Given the large number of agency buildings, it is not practical to compute a relevant summary measure for the unobservable inputs. In respect of sensitivity of fair value to changes in input value, a higher historical cost results in a higher fair value and greater consumption of economic benefit lowers fair value.

19. 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 has limited exposure to financial risks as discussed below.

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 fair value	Designated at fair value	Amortised cost	Fair value through other comprehensive income	Total
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000
2023					
Cash and deposits			5544		5544
Receivables ¹			463		463
Total financial assets			6006		6006
Payables ¹			251		251
Provisions			365		365
Other Liabilities			66		66
Total financial liabilities			682		682
2022					
Cash and deposits			4015		4015
Receivables ¹			352		352
Total financial assets			4367		4367
Payables ¹			147		147
Provisions			407		407
Other Liabilities			330		330
Total financial liabilities			884		884

AASB 132.AG11-12

¹Total amounts disclosed here exclude statutory amounts, prepaid expenses and accrued contract revenue.

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 classifications 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 agency'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 liabilities at amortised cost

AASB 9.4.2.1

Financial liabilities at amortised cost are initially measured at fair value, net of directly attributable transaction costs. These are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. The Authority's financial liabilities categorised at amortised cost include all accounts payable, deposits held, advances received, lease liabilities and borrowings.

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 11.

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 Authority financial assets and financial liabilities, with the exception of vehicle leases are non interest bearing. Lease arrangements are established on a fixed interest rate and therefore do not expose the Authority to interest rate risk.

(ii) Price risk

AASB 7.33

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

20. 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 department 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.

ii) Key management personnel (KMP)

AASB 124.9

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 are listed below:

- Dr Sophie Creighton, Director Research
- Mr Cameron McInerney, Director Policy and Governance

iii) 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 the Authority is set out below:

	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000

AASB 124.17

Short-term benefits	558	598
Post-employment benefits	74	72
Long-term benefits	8	8
Termination benefits	0	0
Total remuneration of key management personnel	640	678

iv) Related party transactions:

Transactions with Northern Territory Government-controlled entities

AASB 124.26

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.

	2023			
	Revenue from related parties	Payments to related parties	Amounts owed by related parties	Amounts owed to related parties
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000

All NTG

Government departments including local government councils

879	438	44	34
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	2022			
	Revenue from related parties	Payments to related parties	Amounts owed by related parties	Amounts owed to related parties
	\$000	\$000	\$000	\$000

All NTG

Government departments including local government councils

1196	879	18	0
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The Authority's transactions with other government entities are not individually significant.

21. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

a) Contingent liabilities

AASB 137.86

The Authority had no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2023 or 30 June 2022.

b) Contingent assets

AASB 137.89

The Authority had no contingent assets as at 30 June 2023 or 30 June 2022.

22. 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.

23. SCHEDULE OF ADMINISTERED TERRITORY ITEMS

In addition to operating revenues controlled and utilised by an agency to fund its activities that are included in the financial statements, the Authority also acts on behalf of the Territory Government in the management of administered items. These include the application fees for a Request for Information, Sacred Site Register viewing or an Authority Certificate. An agency is unable to use administered items to further its own objectives without authorisation.

Administered items are transferred to and reported by the Central Holding Authority, as the parent entity of government. Administered income and expenses are not recognised in the Authority's operating statement but are reported separately in accordance with Australian accounting standards.

The following Territory items are managed by the Authority on behalf of the government and are recorded in the Central Holding Authority (refer to Note 2d).

	2023	2022
	\$000	\$000
TERRITORY INCOME AND EXPENSES		
AASB 1050.7(a) Income		
Fees from regulatory services	152	88
Total income	152	88
AASB 1050.7(b) Expenses		
Central Holding Authority income transferred	152	88
Total expenses	152	88
Territory income less expenses	0	0

24. BUDGETARY INFORMATION

The following tables present the variation between the 2022-23 original budgeted financial statements, as reported in 2022-23 Budget Paper No. 3 Agency Budget Statements, and the 2022-23 actual amounts reported in the financial statements, together with explanations for significant variations.

Note that no changes to budgeted appropriations from the 2022-23 original budget to 2022-23 final budget occurred, however changes to sales of goods and services income budget did change from and original budget of \$2.5 million to \$3.8 million. Employee expenses budget changed from \$5.546 million to \$5.046 million and purchases of goods and services budget changed from \$1.513 million to \$3.313 million.

AASB 1055.6	Comprehensive operating statement	2023 Actual	2023 Original budget	Variance	Note
		\$000	\$000	\$000	
	INCOME				
	Appropriation				
	Output	4,767	4,767	0	
	Sales of goods and services	4,037	2,500	1,537	1
	Goods and services received free of charge	944	777	167	2
	TOTAL INCOME	9,748	8,044	1,704	
	EXPENSES				
	Employee expenses	4,248	5,546	1,298	3
	Administrative expenses				
	Purchases of goods and services	2,636	1,513	(1,123)	4
	Depreciation and amortisation	45	29	(16)	5
	Other administrative expenses	944	777	(167)	2
	TOTAL EXPENSES	7,873	7,865	(8)	
	NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	1,875	179	1,696	
	COMPREHENSIVE RESULT	1,875	179	1,696	

Notes:

The following note descriptions relate to variances greater than 10 per cent, or where multiple significant variances have occurred.

1. significant increase in demand for services related to major projects, mining, exploration, infrastructure and roadworks.
2. reflective of increased DCDD services.
3. variances in staffing levels throughout 2022-23, specifically the challenges with recruitment to specialist positions.
4. higher engagement of specialist anthropological consultants to meet the demand for services and the lack of in house staff to meet the priority project timeframes.
5. addition of an asset with a high depreciation rate due to it relating to a minor fit out of office space in a building with a lease due to expire in December 2023.

AASB 1055.6	Balance Sheet	2023 Actual	2023 Original budget	Variance	Note
		\$000	\$000	\$000	
	ASSETS				
	Current assets				
	Cash and deposits	5,544	3,993	1,551	1
	Receivables	449	287	162	2
	Prepayments	13	16	3	
	Property, plant and equipment	85	23	62	3
	Other assets	22	23	(1)	
	Total current assets	6,113	4,342	1,777	
	LIABILITIES				
	Current liabilities				
	Payables	251	176	103	4
	Provisions	365	429	(43)	
	Other liabilities	66	0	66	5
	Total current liabilities	682	605	126	
	NET ASSETS	5,431	3,737	1,694	
	EQUITY				
	Capital	1,621	1,621	0	
	Accumulated funds	3,810	2,116	1,694	1
	TOTAL EQUITY	5,431	3,737	1,694	

Notes:

The following note descriptions relate to variances greater than 10 per cent variances have occurred.

1. 2022-23 continued to see a positive income generation due to increasing demand for services in line with the economic growth initiatives.
2. Variance demonstrates a large debtor management approach due to the increased demand for services in 2022-23.
3. Increase in property aligns to a minor office fit out that was completed in 2022-23 and recognised as an asset in the same year.
4. Largely related to accrued salary expenses and travel costs associated with fieldwork that were accrued at the end of the financial year.
5. Variance due to unearned revenue for a six part major Authority Certificate project being completed in 2022-23, the balance relates to a new Authority Certificate that is due to be completed in 2023-24.

AASB 1055.6	Cash flow statement	2023 Actual	2023 Original budget	Variance	Note
		\$000	\$000	\$000	
	CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
	Operating receipts				
	Appropriation				
	Output	4,767	4,767	0	
	Receipts from sales of goods and services	3,824	2,500	1,324	1
	Total operating receipts	8,591	7,267	1,324	
	Operating payments				
	Payments to employees	(4,270)	5,546	1,276	2
	Payments for goods and services	(2,713)	1,513	(1,200)	3
	Total operating payments	(6,984)	7,059	75	
	Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	1,607	208	1399	
	CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES				
	Investing payments				
	Purchases of non-financial assets	(79)	0	(79)	4
	Total investing payments	(79)	0	(79)	
	Net cash from/(used in) investing activities	(79)	0	(79)	
	Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	1,528	208	1,321	
	Cash at beginning of financial year	4,015	4,015	0	
	CASH AT END OF FINANCIAL YEAR	5,544	4,223	1,321	

Notes:

The following note descriptions relate to variances greater than 10 per cent or where multiple significant variances have occurred.

1. Increased demand for services due to the economic reform and major project initiatives.
2. staffing variations through the year due to challenging recruitment for specialist positions related to major projects funded positions under a two year additional appropriation arrangement from 2022-23 to 2023-24.
3. significant increase in the engagement of anthropological consultants, special board meetings, legal expenses and fieldwork travel costs.
4. construction of an office space to accommodate staffing fluctuations.

25. BUDGETARY INFORMATION: ADMINISTERED TERRITORY ITEMS

The following table presents the variation between the 2022-23 original budget for administered items as reported in 2022-23 Budget Paper No. 3 Agency Budget Statements and the 2022-23 actual amounts disclosed in Note 23 of these financial statements together with explanations for significant variations.

AASB 1055.7(a) (b),13	Administered Territory items	2023 Actual	2023 Original budget	Variance	Note
		\$000	\$000	\$000	
	TERRITORY INCOME AND EXPENSES				
	Income				
	Fees from regulatory services	152	56	96	1
	Total income	152	56	96	
	Expenses				
	Central Holding Authority income transferred	152	56	96	1
	Total expenses	152	56	96	
	Territory income less expenses	0	0	0	

Notes:

The following note descriptions relate to variances greater than 10 per cent or where multiple significant variances have occurred.

1. The variance reflects businesses increasingly seeking information to determine potential sacred site risks prior to undertaking works or seeking an Authority Certificate.



Robert Conway and Sheila Joshua, Roper River at 12 Mile, Elsey National Park (Murlarag, Yangman country), NT

“Preserving cultural landscapes for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory will not only benefit Aboriginal people but all Territorians and future generations”.

- Dr Benedict Scambary



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

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