



National  
Native Title  
Tribunal



# Strategic Plan 2013–2014

*Facilitating timely and effective outcomes.*

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# Introduction

The National Native Title Tribunal was established in 1994 by the *Native Title Act 1993* (the Act). The Preamble to the Act describes it as a special measure for the advancement and protection of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders (Indigenous Australians). The Act is intended to further advance the process of reconciliation among all Australians.

The Act creates an Australia-wide native title scheme, the objectives of which include:

- a) to provide for the recognition and protection of native title
- b) to establish a mechanism for determining claims to native title
- c) to establish ways in which future dealings affecting native title (future acts) may proceed.

The Act, as amended, gives the National Native Title Tribunal (the Tribunal), a range of functions which include:

- testing claimant applications for registration purposes
- providing assistance to clients (including geospatial information)
- assisting with the negotiation of indigenous land use agreements (ILUAs) and assessing them for registration
- mediating, arbitrating and conducting inquiries about certain future acts
- maintaining registers of claims, determinations of native title and ILUAs
- keeping other information on native title determination applications, future acts and ILUAs.

The Act established the Tribunal as an independent body which, in carrying out its functions, may take account of the cultural and customary concerns of Indigenous Australians.

On 8 May 2012 the Commonwealth Attorney-General announced a number of significant reforms to native title functions and administration, which reforms were to affect the Tribunal and the Federal Court of Australia (Federal Court).

On 1 July 2012, the following institutional reforms came into effect:

- the transfer of the responsibility for the mediation of native title claims to the Federal Court, along with the claims-related ILUA negotiation assistance function; and
- the transfer of the Tribunal's corporate services functions (human resources, finance and information technology) and of certain corporate and operational staff members to the Federal Court.

Funding for the Tribunal is contained within a dedicated sub-program of the Federal Court. The Tribunal and the Federal Court have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding which preserves the operational independence of the Tribunal.

Since 1 January 2013, most native title claims are not in mediation with the Tribunal, and are managed by the Federal Court. All of the Tribunal's other statutory functions remain with the Tribunal.

The Tribunal continues to be well placed to:

- ***offer an informed perspective:*** the Tribunal has a significant role in native title proceedings, from providing pre-claim assistance and assessing native title claims for registration, to registering native title determinations; as well as a range of functions in respect of the Act's future act regime, including assisting people to negotiate ILUAs and the arbitration of future act determination applications
- ***provide a national view:*** the Tribunal has offices in four states and deals with clients and stakeholders in all jurisdictions
- ***facilitate agreement-making:*** the Tribunal provides high-level specialist support and assistance to clients to enable them to reach enduring future act agreements and ILUAs.

# Vision

Timely, effective native title related outcomes

# Mission

The Tribunal's mission is to:

- facilitate the achievement of timely and effective outcomes
- carry out our functions in a fair, just, economical, informal and prompt way.

# Our Values

The Tribunal affirms the values of the Australian Public Service which include professionalism, integrity, impartiality and responsive service. We recognise and respect cultural and other diversity. In particular, we acknowledge the richness of Indigenous Australian cultures and their importance to Australian society.

In addition, the Tribunal adopts the following values:

- excellence
- fairness
- collegiality
- collaboration
- innovation



# Strategic Priorities

## Clients and stakeholders

1. Engage effectively with our clients and stakeholders
2. Develop, implement and evaluate innovative ways of enhancing our value to clients and stakeholders

## Services

3. Continuously strive for excellence in our services
4. Deliver high-quality future act mediation and ILUA agreement-making services; arbitral decisions; and claims and ILUA registration decisions

## Workplace culture

5. Foster a culture of achievement and high performance
6. Maintain a working environment that attracts and retains quality employees and in which diversity is respected

## Accountability

7. Manage our resources strategically and effectively, and account for our work
8. Ensure open and transparent processes and consistent approaches to decision-making



# • Clients and stakeholders

## 1. Engage effectively with our clients and stakeholders

Goals	Strategies
1.1 Exercise our functions and powers appropriately and effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continually monitor, review and improve the ways in which we exercise our functions and powers</li> </ul>
1.2 Promote the services which the Tribunal provides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We clearly explain how our roles, functions and powers can assist clients and stakeholders</li> <li>• We keep clients and stakeholders up to date through effective and timely communication</li> </ul>
1.3 Seek and respond effectively to client feedback about our processes and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We consider issues identified in client feedback and address them promptly</li> <li>• We publish findings and actions which we have taken in response to client feedback</li> </ul>
1.4 Maintain and enhance high-quality relationships with our clients and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We engage productively and effectively with our clients and stakeholders consistent with the Tribunal's Client and Stakeholder Engagement Plan 2012-14</li> </ul>

## 2. Develop, implement and evaluate innovative ways of enhancing our value to clients and stakeholders

Goals	Strategies
2.1 Monitor and report on relevant native title matters and contribute to strategic discussions and forums at national and state/territory levels, optimising the use of the Tribunal's Integrated Case Management and Future Act System (ICaFAMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We provide timely and accurate information and assistance to clients and stakeholders as appropriate</li> <li>• We provide data and analysis, including from ICaFAMS, that informs strategic discussions across the country</li> <li>• We advise the Australian Government of emerging issues about the operation of the Act</li> </ul>
2.2 Provide focused and targeted assistance to key client groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We provide assistance and information according to client and stakeholder needs and our resources</li> </ul>
2.3 Assist clients and stakeholders to enhance outcomes following native title-related decisions and agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We cooperate and provide assistance as appropriate and subject to available resources</li> </ul>

# • Services

## 3. Continuously strive for excellence in our services

Goals	Strategies
3.1 Respond effectively to current and emerging needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We anticipate changes in our operating environment and equip ourselves to respond effectively and in a timely manner</li> </ul>
3.2 Maintain or improve the quality and timeliness of all our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We regularly assess our products and services, and improve them as required</li> </ul>
3.3 Maximise the efficient use of our equipment, resources and corporate support to enable effective service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We maintain a client and service delivery focus in all areas of the Tribunal</li> <li>• We allocate resources strategically to support timely and effective service delivery</li> </ul>

## 4. Deliver high-quality future act mediation and ILUA agreement-making services; arbitral decisions; and claims and ILUA registration decisions

Goals	Strategies
4.1 Work with clients to develop timely and effective native title related outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We help clients identify and secure high- quality, innovative solutions and effective results</li> </ul>
4.2 Use our cross-cultural mediation experience and our geospatial and other specialist expertise to deliver effective services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We establish and maintain a skilled workforce that functions effectively and delivers services, tailored as required, to meet the needs of clients</li> </ul>
4.3 Ensure that decisions are of a consistently high standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We make high-quality decisions and meet internal and statutory timeframes for decision-making in relation to future acts (expedited procedure and future act determinations) and registration decisions (native title determination applications and ILUAs)</li> </ul>

# • Workplace culture

## 5. Foster a culture of achievement and high performance

Goals	Strategies
5.1 Develop a dynamic learning culture through sharing knowledge and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We enrich our work through better information sharing within the Tribunal</li> </ul>
5.2 Support members and employees to do their best work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We provide effective corporate and other support and services to foster the achievement of high-quality results</li> </ul>
5.3 Anticipate and meet our skill and knowledge requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We implement effective workforce planning so that we can apply resources in a flexible and timely fashion</li> <li>• We find innovative and flexible ways of developing and training employees</li> </ul>

## 6. Maintain a working environment that attracts and retains quality employees and in which diversity is respected

Goals	Strategies
6.1 Demonstrate strong leadership and good governance throughout the Tribunal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We provide training to support effective leadership within the Tribunal</li> <li>• We consult with employees in respect of matters which affect them, make management decisions in a fair and timely manner and keep employees informed about those decisions</li> <li>• We consider the results of employee surveys promptly and take appropriate actions</li> </ul>
6.2 Foster a safe, collegial and supportive work environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We promote effective teamwork and build positive working relationships with one another</li> <li>• We recognise and acknowledge the work of members and employees</li> <li>• We create a positive and safe workplace and offer various forms of support to employees</li> </ul>
6.3 Implement effective initiatives for recruiting Indigenous employees and developing and utilising their unique skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We meet the targets within the Tribunal's Reconciliation Action Plan</li> </ul>



# • Accountability

## 7. Manage our resources strategically and effectively, and account for our work

Goals	Strategies
7.1 Use our resources in a targeted, efficient and effective way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We consistently meet our strategic, operational and other performance objectives within available resources</li> <li>• We use our resources in a flexible way that allows clients' needs to be met as appropriate</li> </ul>
7.2 Achieve increased efficiencies and cost-effective practices and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to incorporate the Tribunal's guiding theme of Simplify, Perform, Engage' into our activities and processes</li> </ul>
7.3 Conduct our business operations effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We integrate risk management, monitoring, review and evaluation processes into business operations and decision-making</li> <li>• We apply project management processes as appropriate</li> </ul>

## 8. Ensure open and transparent processes and consistent approaches to decision-making

Goals	Strategies
8.1 Act consistently with our respective roles, responsibilities and accountabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear and well understood within the Tribunal</li> <li>• We meet agreed and other timeframes for all lines of business</li> <li>• We continue to achieve high-level compliance and audit results</li> </ul>
8.2 Institute and apply high-quality policies, procedures and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We develop, apply, monitor, review and revise our policies and procedures to facilitate effective and efficient practices</li> <li>• We comply with Tribunal policies, procedures and practice and with Federal Court policies, procedures and practice as applicable</li> </ul>
8.3 Apply ethical standards to all our work practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We demonstrate ethical standards in our decision-making and other work practices</li> </ul>
8.4 Manage our records, data and information as a national resource efficiently, effectively and consistently with relevant law and Government policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We create full and accurate records, and meet information management compliance requirements</li> </ul>



## National Native Title Tribunal



For more information about native title and services of the Tribunal please contact the National Native Title Tribunal, GPO Box 9973 in your capital city or **Freecall 1800 640 501**. Information is also available at [www.nntt.gov.au](http://www.nntt.gov.au) .

The National Native Title Tribunal has offices in Brisbane, Cairns, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.