



# Strategic Plan

## 2025–2030





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## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. We thank all Traditional Owners on whose lands and seas we work and who choose to partner with us to look after Country and create sustainable futures. The custodianship of Australia’s land and sea by Indigenous peoples spans tens of thousands of years. We recognise Indigenous knowledge, practices and traditions as the foundation of the work we undertake.



## *Building and sustaining our future*

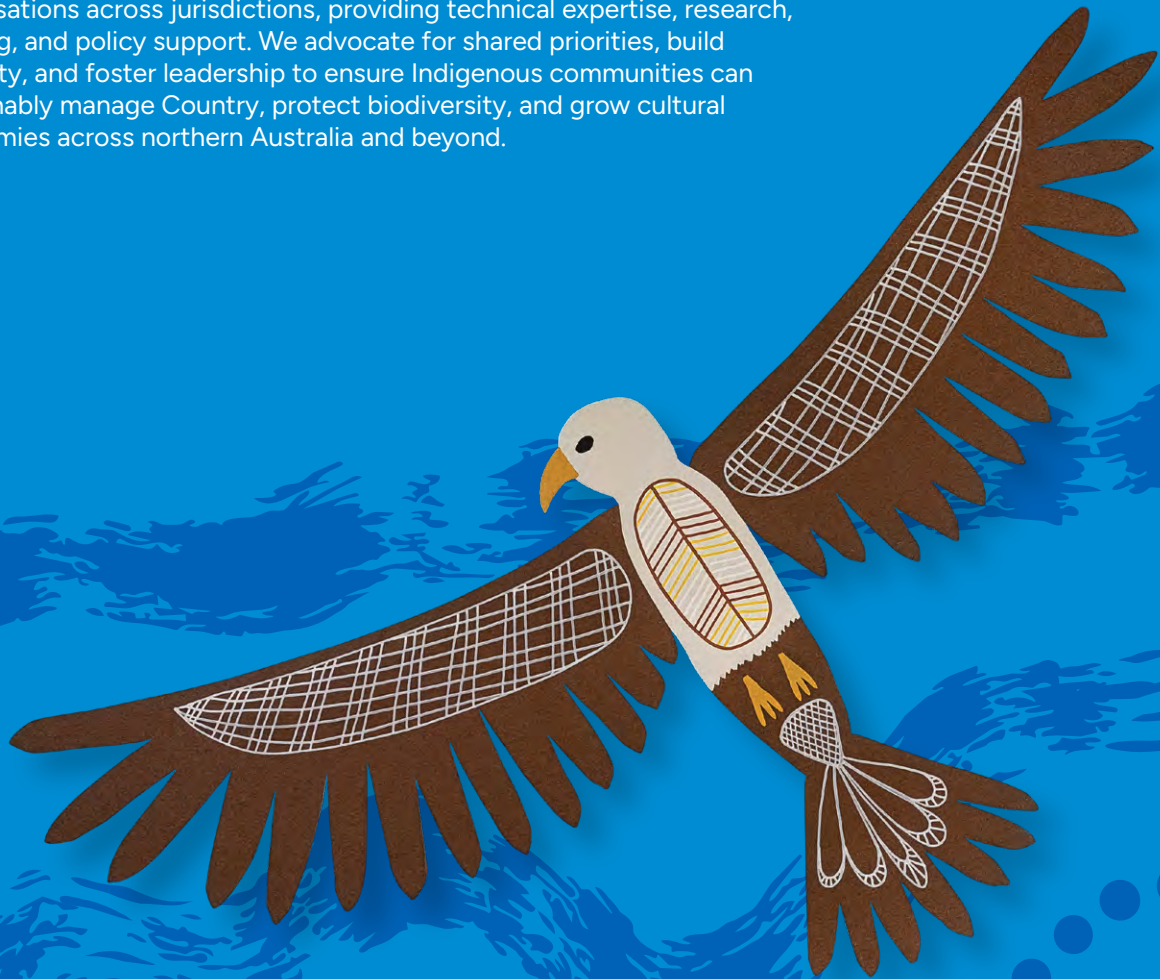
This Strategy guides NAILSMA in the delivery and support of Traditional Owner-led outcomes in land and sea management across northern Australia.

### Our vision

A northern Australia where Traditional Owners, lead as the rightful decision-makers and custodians of land and sea Country – empowered with the cultural authority, governance, resources, and economic opportunities to sustain strong, thriving, and resilient communities.

### Our mission

NAILSMA strengthens land and sea management by connecting Indigenous organisations across jurisdictions, providing technical expertise, research, funding, and policy support. We advocate for shared priorities, build capacity, and foster leadership to ensure Indigenous communities can sustainably manage Country, protect biodiversity, and grow cultural economies across northern Australia and beyond.



# How we change lives

NAILSMA exists to create lasting change for Traditional Owners – on Country, in communities, and across systems. We strengthen cultural authority by investing in Indigenous-led solutions that strengthen capacity and protect rights. Our approach opens pathways for economic, environmental, cultural and technological self-determination. We recognise the strength of Indigenous knowledge systems and work to bridge these knowledge systems.

We change lives by shifting power. From ranger networks to data sovereignty, from governance reform to nature-based economies, we equip Indigenous communities with the tools, partnerships, and platforms to lead. Our work is not about service delivery, it's about systems change. Every initiative is designed to amplify Indigenous voices, uphold cultural protocols, and ensure that decisions affecting Country are made by those with the responsibility and authority to care for Country.

*Looking after our Country, our way*



# Our values



## Indigenous Leadership

We champion Indigenous-led governance, ensuring decisions reflect self-determination and community priorities.



## Voice and Influence

We elevate Indigenous perspectives to shape policy, storytelling, and future directions.



## Cultural Authority

We honour and integrate Indigenous knowledge systems and custodianship across all our work.



## Economic Empowerment

We invest in culturally based, regenerative economies that strengthen livelihoods and community resilience.



## Equitable Partnerships

We cultivate respectful, power-balanced collaborations that uphold Indigenous governance and autonomy.



## Strengths-Based Practice

We build upon the existing leadership, wisdom, and capacity within Indigenous communities.



# Strategic priorities

## Indigenous-led economic self-determination

### Key Actions

- Lead the development of new opportunities for wealth creation and economic development for Indigenous people.
- Champion culture-based economies based on the values, consent and shared decision making of Indigenous communities.
- Forge partnerships with aligned institutions to unlock capital, technical expertise, and policy influence – on Indigenous terms.

### Outcome

Increased Indigenous land and sea businesses, entrepreneurship, and readiness to participate in nature-based opportunities and markets.

## A thriving, diverse, Indigenous-led land and sea management sector

### Key Actions

- Deliver programs that build capacity within Indigenous organisations to undertake Indigenous-led land and sea management outcomes and activities.
- Champion Indigenous land and sea management sector development and improved Indigenous ranger employment conditions and leadership pathways.

### Outcome

A thriving Indigenous workforce in land and sea management that supports people to work and live sustainably on Country.



# Direct Indigenous investment

## Key Actions

- Develop strategic partnerships and broker high-level investment from government, environmental non-government organisations (NGOs), and philanthropic entities that directly support Indigenous-led organisations and initiatives.
- Drive targeted investment strategies that seed and scale Indigenous-owned enterprises, unlocking sustainable wealth creation through land and sea-based economies, emerging markets, and culturally aligned industries.

## Outcome

Fundamental change in how Indigenous investments are made, aligning with cultural governance and increased direct investment into Indigenous organisations.

# Indigenous rights and interests in policy and legislation

## Key Actions

- Facilitate the voice and messages of Traditional Owners between policymakers and investors to align land and sea management policy with Indigenous aspirations.
- Develop and promote Indigenous-led policy that embeds cultural governance, economic opportunity, and ecological resilience into national and regional frameworks.
- Lead a strong strategic advocacy and policy platform.

## Outcome

Indigenous rights and leadership will be embedded in policy and investment decisions, resulting in stronger Traditional Owner decision-making, and more equitable resource allocation.



# Indigenous leadership, knowledge and equity in partnerships

## Key Actions

- Lead research projects to influence research practices, support cultural authority, and ensure Indigenous outcomes are achieved.
- Embed Indigenous knowledge, practices and equal decision-making into partnerships, the frameworks that support them and resource delivery.
- Facilitate investments and partnerships between research processes and mechanisms, and Indigenous aspirations.

## Outcome

Indigenous leadership and knowledge systems will be embedded as foundational pillars in research and partnership frameworks, resulting in culturally informed decision-making and equitable outcomes that reflect Indigenous priorities.

# Empowered next generation of Indigenous leaders

## Key Actions

- Establish an active youth leadership group that acts as a key voice to drive youth aspirations and policy positions.
- Support the training and development of Indigenous youth in the delivery of Indigenous land and sea management programs.
- Support young Indigenous people to enter the Indigenous land and sea management sector through employment and mentorship at NAILSMA.

## Outcome

Indigenous leaders with the confidence, cultural grounding, and networks to shape policy, lead enterprises, and manage Country, driving intergenerational change and economic self-determination.

# Supporting actions

To achieve our priorities, NAILSMA will commit to the following organisation-wide actions:

## 1. Work in deep partnership with Traditional Owners and communities

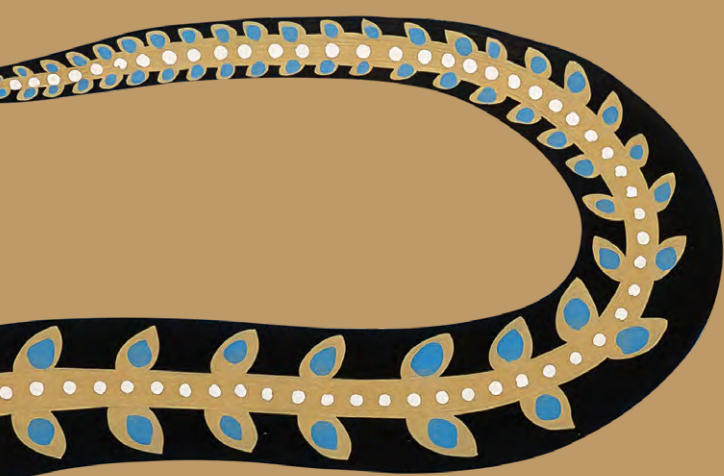
- Follow the guidance, authority, and aspirations of Traditional Owner organisations as the foundation for all decisions.
- Co-design opportunities, programs, and pathways that strengthen local governance, cultural authority, and community-led outcomes.
- Ensure every initiative reflects the priorities, knowledge systems, and responsibilities held by Traditional Owners.

## 2. Build and sustain transformative partnerships

- Develop alliances that amplify Indigenous leadership, innovation, and systems change across northern Australia.
- Collaborate with governments, research institutions, NGOs, and industry in ways that uphold cultural integrity and empower community-driven solutions.
- Foster long-term relationships that support shared learning, capability building, and collective impact.

## 3. Elevate the value and impact of Indigenous land and sea management

- Communicate the evidence, stories, and outcomes of Indigenous land and sea management to influence national policy, investment, and public understanding.
- Promote recognition of Traditional Owners' rights, expertise, and authority in caring for Country.
- Strengthen the visibility of Indigenous-led climate, biodiversity, and cultural governance work across Australia and internationally.





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Sea Management Alliance**

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