

Opening Statement - November 2022 Senate Estimates hearing

- The CLC was established at a meeting of Aboriginal communities in Central Australia in 1975, and its functions formalised when the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, 'ALRA', was legislated in 1976. The CLC's statutory functions are determined by the ALRA. The CLC is also a native title representative body (NTRB) under the Native Title Act.
- For over 45 years, the CLC have represented Aboriginal people in Central Australia, on a wide range of land-based and socio-political issues. The CLC ensures Aboriginal land ownership and interests are protected and enhanced, Aboriginal people's rights and interests are protected and represented, and their sacred sites protected. A key function of the CLC is to ensure the prior informed consent of traditional owners in relation to land use proposals.
- Our main office is based in Alice Springs, and we have 7 regional offices, together with 11 Ranger workplaces, and a further Ranger 3 workplaces in development.
- CLC staff travel more than 2.5 million kilometres each year to consult and work with constituents.
- As at 30 June, we had 266 full time and part time staff, 46% whom are Aboriginal.
- Our region is over half of the Northern Territory and comprises 9 administrative regions covering 777,000 square kilometres. It sprawls from the Victoria River area in the far northwest, through the Tanami Desert, across to the Simpson Desert and north of Tennant Creek across the Barkly. Our constituents live in townships, remote communities and outstations, and speak more than fifteen languages.
- Approximately 72% of the land in our region is either Aboriginal freehold or has received a native title determination.
- Based on 2021 census data, the CLC represents approximately 18,000 Aboriginal people, about 29% of the Indigenous population of the NT.
- The Council of 90 Aboriginal women and men are elected for a 3 year term by the 75 communities and outstations to represent them, elections occur in the respective community. Or where the Council have determined that a prominent

Aboriginal organisation should nominate a delegate to the Council, for example a registered native title body corporate.

- The Council meets 3 times per year for 3 days each time in different remote communities, and the Council's roles include determining the goals of the organisation, setting public policy priorities and guiding policy positions, checking the organisation is being well managed, and advocating for the rights and interests of Aboriginal people in the region.
- The Council delegates some functions to an Executive Committee, which comprises the Chair, Deputy Chair, and a representatives from each of the 9 regions - Council members from each region, select their representative and an alternate. The Executive Committee meets about 9 times each year.
- We have a proven record of effective governance, including unmodified (unqualified) audits of our financial statements, and timely compliant corporate plans and annual reports.