

2026-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN



DARWIN**WATERFRONT**



Our Strategic Plan aligns with key Northern Territory Government Strategies, and works alongside the Northern Territory's Visitor Economy Strategy 2032:

Rebuilding the
Economy Strategy

Restoring the
Territory Lifestyle Strategy

Northern Territory **Visitor
Economy Strategy 2032**

Darwin Waterfront
Strategic Plan





Letter to the Minister
Minister Marie-Clare Boothby
Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
Parliament House, Darwin NT 0800

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the Darwin Waterfront Corporation's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan.

The plan sets out a clear agenda to solidify the Darwin Waterfront as the Territory's premier urban precinct, whilst aligning with the Northern Territory's Visitor Economy Strategy 2032 and supporting the Northern Territory Government's priorities of Restoring the Territory Lifestyle and Rebuilding the Economy.

Under this strategy, Darwin Waterfront Corporation will continue to enhance public spaces and facilities, increase residential and commercial tenancies, and grow the delivery of events and activations. The precinct will retain its position as a vibrant and welcoming place for Territorians and visitors alike.

The plan highlights the need to attract new private and public investment into visitor and conference infrastructure, and work alongside key partners to increase visitation, length of stay and visitor spend. Together, these activities will support local jobs, drive sustainable business growth for the Waterfront's retail operators and assure Darwin Waterfront's position as a 'must-visit' destination.

The strategy is underpinned by an organisational focus on continual improvement. Darwin Waterfront will build its capability, improve financial resilience, and establish plans for long-term asset maintenance and renewal, ensuring the Waterfront remains well-managed, contemporary and relevant to the local and visitor markets it serves.

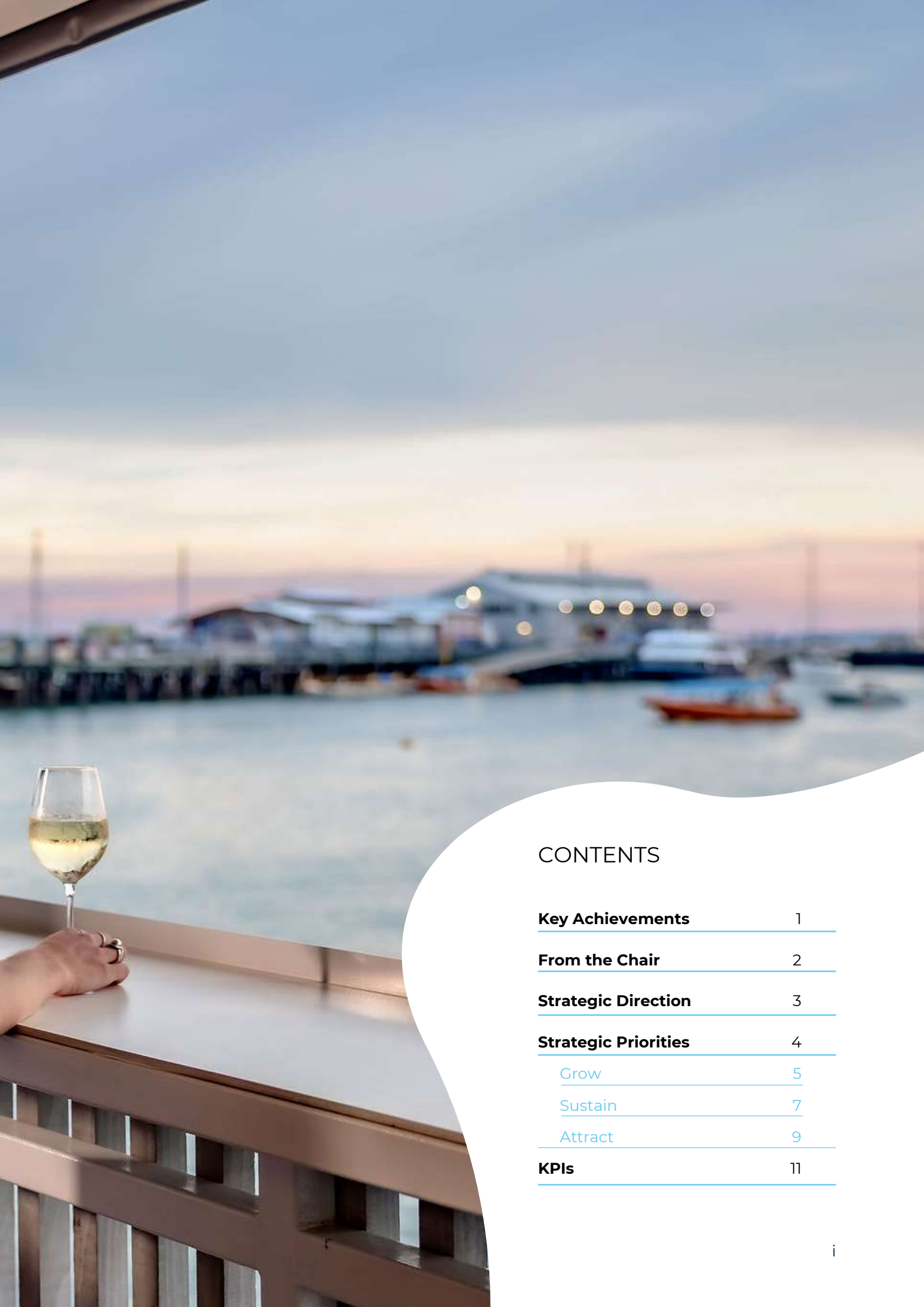
The strategic initiatives outlined in this plan will enhance the Territory lifestyle through community recreation and entertainment activities, celebrating Darwin's unique character. They will drive economic growth by evolving the precinct to attract more national and international visitation and delivering new accommodation to support workforce migration for key economic projects to be delivered in coming years. The Corporation looks forward to continuing to work closely with you and your Government to deliver these outcomes for the benefit of all Territorians.

Yours sincerely



Patrick Bellot, Chairperson
Darwin Waterfront Corporation
25 June 2026





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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



WATERFRONT TENANTS

293 PEOPLE

PEOPLE LIVING AT THE WATERFRONT

28

FOOD AND
BEVERAGE
OUTLETS

6

RETAIL
OUTLETS

2

HOTELS

1

CONVENTION
CENTRE



THE PRECINCT

32.3ha

UNDER
MANAGEMENT

7.15km

OF FOOTPATHS

140

STORAGE
LOCKERS

7

PARKLANDS

7

HERITAGE
SITES

11

PUBLIC ART
PIECES

5

OUTDOOR
SPORTING
ACTIVITIES

2

SWIMMING
LOCATIONS

1,419

CAR
PARKS

6

EV
CHARGING
POINTS

3

PUBLIC
BUS STOPS

8

SHUTTLE
BUS STOPS



ATTRACTION

OVER 1 MILLION

VISITORS ANNUALLY

NEARLY 250

COMMUNITY EVENTS ANNUALLY

MORE THAN **\$150K** ANNUALLY TO
EVENT SPONSORSHIP AND IN-KIND
SUPPORT

HOSTED **112** EVENTS AT DARWIN
CONVENTION CENTRE IN 2024-25

HOSTED OVER **60,000**
CONFERENCE DELEGATES IN 2024-25

8

HARBOUR
CRUISE
OPERATORS

FROM THE CHAIR

Darwin Waterfront holds a unique position in the hearts of Darwin locals and visitors. It is a welcoming, safe and vibrant precinct that brings locals and visitors together to enjoy curated public spaces, special events and high-quality recreational amenities that exhibit the very best of Darwin.

This strategic plan sets a clear direction to elevate that role, ensuring the Waterfront maintains relevance both locally and nationally when compared with similar precincts in other jurisdictions, and delivers economic, social and cultural value for the Northern Territory.

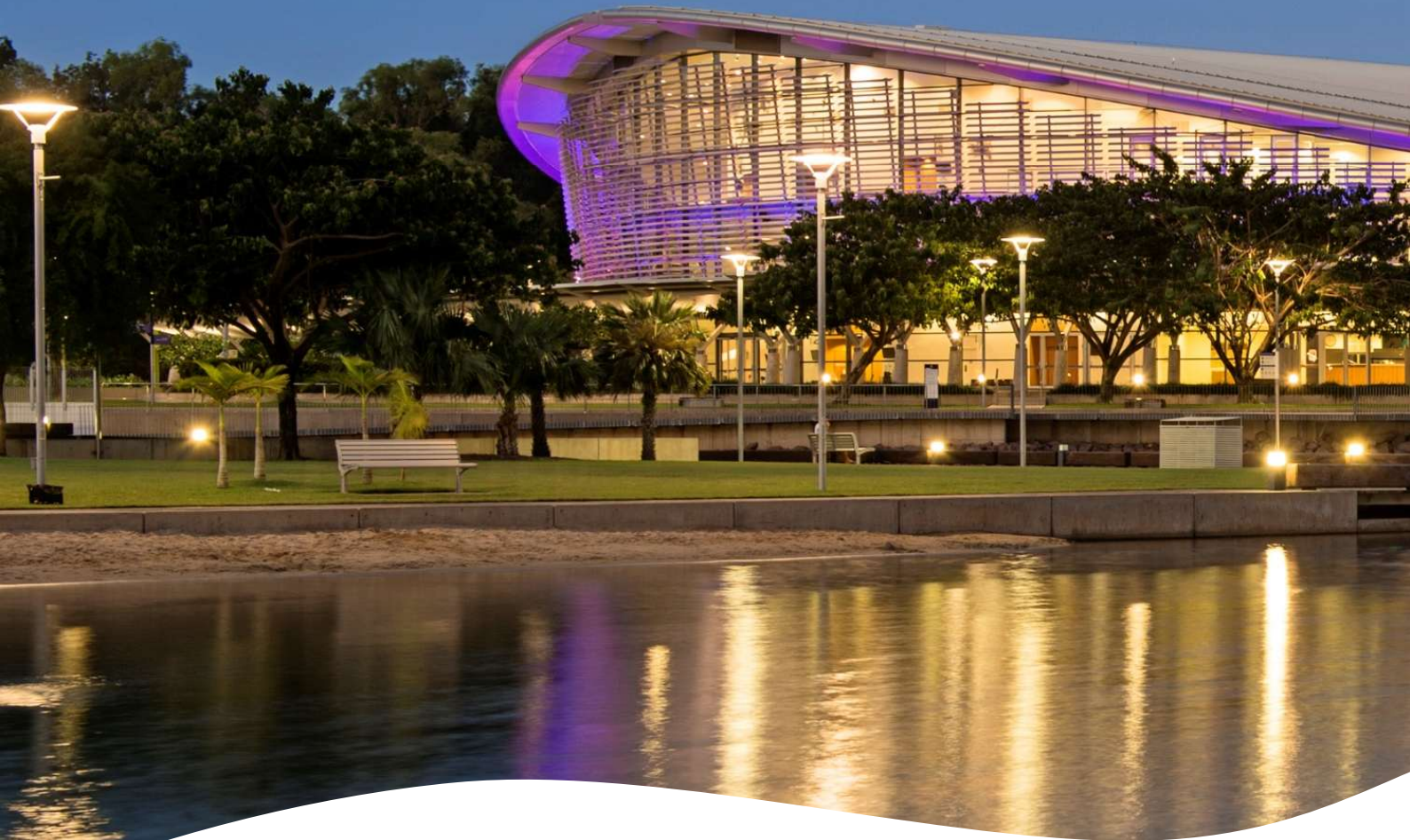
Over the coming years, the Corporation will focus on unlocking the precinct's unrealised residential, commercial and visitation potential. The Darwin Waterfront Corporation's Master Plan seeks to deliver new infrastructure on undeveloped land. Darwin Waterfront Corporation will work to attract new investment, grow the local population and tenancy base and, in turn, generate sustainable funding to deliver the public infrastructure and activations that define the Waterfront experience. In parallel, careful planning for asset maintenance and renewal will protect the Waterfront's existing asset base and ensure it continues to deliver opportunities for enjoyment.

Delivering on this agenda requires a highly capable and agile workforce. The "Team Waterfront" model, delivered by a talented core team and supplemented with strong partnerships, provides strong curation and managements of complex spaces, make sound decisions, and bring new development opportunities to life. The Corporation aims to grow visitation, extend stays and solidify Darwin Waterfront's reputation as an urban tropical retreat and gateway to the Territory. This ambition will be achieved through collaboration with key partners; the Darwin Convention Centre, the Larrakia Cultural Centre, Tourism Top End and Tourism and Events NT.

This strategic plan reflects our commitment to excellence in place-making, prudent stewardship and disciplined commercial management. It focuses on our aspiration to evolve the Darwin Waterfront from a much-loved local precinct to a 'must-visit' destination, whilst retaining the welcoming character and community focus that have been key to its success.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION



PURPOSE

To develop, maintain and promote the Darwin Waterfront as a vibrant and welcoming precinct; celebrating the Territory's unique character, connecting community and uplifting the visitor economy.



VALUES

Connection

We create welcoming spaces where community and visitors feel comfortable and enjoy participating in Waterfront life.

Collaboration

We work with our partners to create opportunities for mutual success.



VISION

Darwin Waterfront is the gateway to the Territory; a premier destination of vibrant experiences and culture that uplifts visitation, lifestyle and community connection.

Sustainability

We manage the Waterfront responsibly, balancing economic returns and community benefit, whilst respecting cultural heritage and the environment.

Accountability

We act with integrity and transparency, ensuring our actions align with our commitments.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Grow

To deliver a vibrant mixed-use precinct by increasing residential and commercial tenancies, growing visitor capacity, and continually refreshing public spaces and events to enhance experience and connection.

Successful growth will result in additional available tenancies with low vacancy rates, increased turnover and profitability for commercial operators, increased hotel accommodation for visitors, increase in number of events and tactical activations, increase in event attendance and measurable positive qualitative feedback.



Attract

To be an iconic destination for visitors by enhancing and leveraging precinct assets to drive visitation and collaborating with key partners to build the Darwin Waterfront and Northern Territory destination brands.

Successful attraction will result in new, high-value infrastructure projects, diversification in investors, and an increase in intrastate, interstate and international visitation.



Sustain

To be high-performing, agile and financially resilient by attracting and maintaining a talented core team, engaging with like-minded delivery partners, diversifying revenue streams and aligning plans for long-term asset maintenance and renewal.

Success in sustainability will result in an engaged, dynamic and innovative “Team Waterfront”, with established succession plans, financial flexibility, contemporary facilities, and strong risk management.



To deliver a vibrant mixed-use precinct.

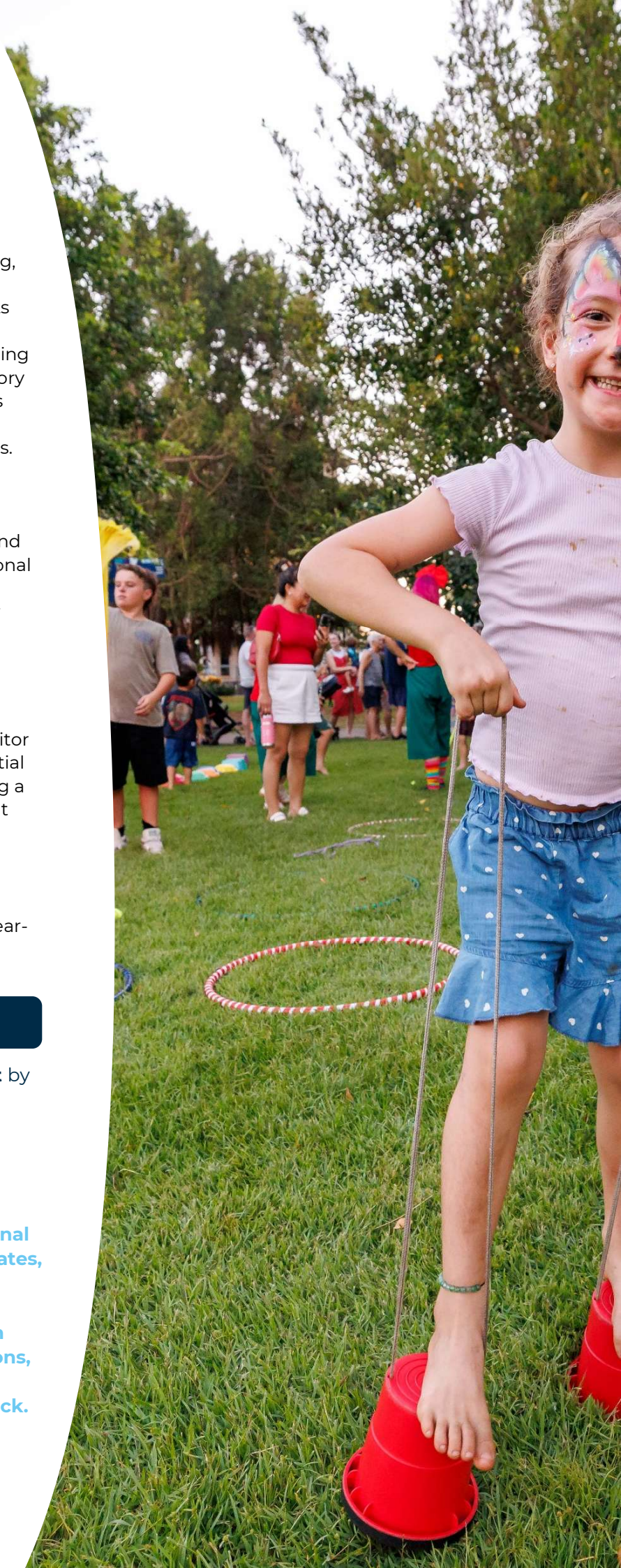
Darwin Waterfront is known as a welcoming, safe and vibrant place where visitors and residents celebrate milestones, enjoy events and experience the best of Darwin. The Waterfront plays an important role in bringing visitors to Darwin and enhancing the Territory lifestyle through delivery of business events and public entertainment, high-quality recreational facilities and welcoming spaces. Significant unrealised opportunity exists to elevate the Darwin Waterfront's impact through improved quality, diversity and perpetual renewal of experiences, year-round activation of spaces on seasonal and rotational basis to encourage repeat visitation, and delivery of retail offerings that are distinctly Territorian.

With significant undeveloped land and masterplan support for additional development, Darwin Waterfront seeks to deliver new residential, commercial and visitor accommodation projects. Growing residential and commercial tenancies is key to building a stronger local population and rate base that can sustainably fund high-quality public infrastructure. High-quality visitor accommodation is crucial in attracting interstate and international visitors for business-related and recreational travel. Year-round utilisation is crucial to supporting commercial operators within the precinct.

Strategic priority

To deliver a vibrant mixed-use precinct by increasing residential and commercial tenancies, growing visitor capacity, and continually refreshing public spaces and events to enhance experience and connection.

Successful growth will result in additional available tenancies with low vacancy rates, increased turnover and profitability for commercial operators, increased hotel accommodation for visitors, increase in number of events and tactical activations, increase in event attendance and measurable positive qualitative feedback.



GROW: Strategic initiatives

Initiative	2026 - 2028	2029 – 2030
Maintain year-round activation of public spaces and events.	- Retain calendar of year-round rotating and seasonal experiences, events, and tactical activations and align with TENT's <i>Visitor Economy Strategy 2032</i>. - Uses the DCC's event calendar to drive paid precinct activity (ticketed concerts, delegate only experiences, pre- and post-event functions). - Activate underutilised areas through release of expressions of interest. - Work with property owners and operators to curate retail and hospitality mix that showcases the Territory (Territory-led dining concepts, regional product tastings, brewery/distillery)	- Explore semi-indoor and indoor spaces, allowing concerts, markets and community activities to continue in the wet season. - Establish mature audience social and liveability programmes in Community Centre. - Advocate for tropical lagoon and surf-park developments. Seek public/private partnerships
Enhance public recreational and entertainment amenities.	- Deliver new playground infrastructure. - Establish a new Community Centre. - Strengthen the Waterfront to CBD integration (paths, wayfinding, precinct planning). - Deliver curated linkages between Larrakia Culture Centre, DCC and DWC. - Leverage the existing Fort Hill parklands to create larger activation space for events. - Assess need and deliver upgraded or expanded fitness and outdoor sporting infrastructure to support growing health and wellness tourism trends and appeal to a broader fitness demographic. - Seek to develop a more deliberate heritage interpretation and activation programme.	- Expand aquatic recreation offerings through potential additional activations such as non-motorised watercraft hire, guided water experiences or floating infrastructure - Facilitate ecosystem health and improve the quality of the recreational lagoon. - Introduce permanent public art and cultural installation programme by establishing a rolling acquisition and commissioning programme that keeps the precinct visually fresh and reinforces the Territory's cultural identity.
Facilitate development of new residential, commercial and visitor accommodation.	- Work with NTG to establish interest of development partners and financing for new residential / commercial development. - Work with NTG to secure development partners, financing and construct Convention Centre Hotel.	- Masterplan residential zones. - Work with NTG to secure development partners. - Explore and deliver new residential and commercial development.
Success measures	KPI numbers 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 22	

To be an iconic destination for visitors.

Darwin Waterfront has long been enjoyed by conference delegates, cruise passengers, and other visitors to Darwin. Nonetheless, the current mix and scale of offering does not yet make Darwin Waterfront the primary motivation for visitors to travel to the region.

Maximising existing assets, including the secure swimming lagoon, wave pool, Darwin Convention Centre, and Larrakia Cultural Centre will help sustain visitation by encouraging longer stays for those visitors already in Darwin. However, development of signature attractions is necessary to grow the Darwin Waterfront's profile at a national and international level. Targeted investment in game-changing new infrastructure, such as additional enhanced aquatic experiences, facilities to host major events, and resort-style recreational facilities, will significantly elevate the Darwin Waterfront's status to that of a "must-visit" destination in its own right.

For those visitors with time to adventure and explore, the Waterfront will serve as the gateway to the Territory; a window into the unique and diverse character of the Territory's regions, providing opportunity for visitors to begin, orient and plan their journey, thereby fostering regional dispersal.

Strong partnerships with Tourism and Events NT, (TENT) the Darwin Convention Centre and the Larrakia Cultural Centre are essential in attracting visitors and delivering a compelling experience.

Whilst Darwin Waterfront will carry its own brand, its contribution to the Northern Territory's wider brand is significant. Consistency in marketing is key to success. This will be delivered through a layered-audience approach. Darwin Waterfront Corporation will lead marketing at the precinct level, whilst national and international marketing will be delivered in partnership with TENT and Tourism Top End to ensure alignment with Territory-wide brand architecture and campaigns.

Strategic priority

To be an iconic destination for visitors by enhancing and leveraging precinct assets to drive visitation and collaborating with key partners to build the Darwin Waterfront and Northern Territory destination brands.

Successful attraction will result in new, high-value infrastructure projects, diversification in investors, and an increase in intrastate, interstate and international visitation.



ATTRACT: Strategic initiatives

Initiative	2026 - 2028	2029 - 2030
Leverage existing precinct assets to drive visitation.	- Establish integrated experiences between DWC, DCC and Larrakia Cultural Centre. - Work with TENT to establish major event partnerships.	Work with TENT to explore major events to be delivered leveraging new infrastructure with a view to becoming a preferred 'events' location.
Deliver new large-scale visitor infrastructure development.	- Finalise and socialise detailed masterplan and business case, allowing individual projects to be progressed as funding or market windows open. - Establish clear swimming lagoon. - Develop clear strategy for integration of The Waterfront to State Square and CBD.	- Deliver large-scale recreational attraction. - Masterplan Southern and Northern precincts. - Develop clear strategy for south-west green space (bounded by The Esplanade; Hughes Avenue to Kitchener Drive). - Secure development partner and financing for large-scale recreational attraction.
Build the Darwin Waterfront brand	- Deliver visitor improvements to entice visitors to the Waterfront (ie. from cruise ships). - Establish installations to support "Territory-led experience" and regional dispersal (visitor information, clear wayfinding and storytelling, themed activations, and multilingual signage and interpretation). - Establish new brand identify for Stokes Hill Wharf as an iconic destination, both as its own experience, and as part of the Waterfront. - Encourage Waterfront businesses to collaborate with TTE to introduce packaged experiences (ie. accommodation, dining and experience packages, and day-use packages for cruise passengers.) - Pursue opportunities to feature Darwin Waterfront in workforce attraction materials for the Northern Territory. - Drive positive media about the precinct and leverage local ambassadors (retailers, well-known operators). - Explore collaborative campaigns to grow visitation. - Commission an independent economic impact assessment to quantify the Waterfront's contribution to the NT visitor economy to support ongoing advocacy, funding cases and investor attraction.	- Deliver a destination brand campaign that is owned, funded, and multi-channel, targeting interstate and international markets through TENT partnership. - Position Darwin Waterfront as an essential destination for Tourism Australia. - Leverage formal cruise line partnerships to embed the Waterfront in pre-booking itineraries and shore excursion programmes.
Success measures	KPI numbers 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 22	

To be high-performing, agile and financially resilient.

The Darwin Waterfront is a regionally significant precinct with ageing assets, limited funding, and rising expectations to keep pace with similar precincts emerging in other jurisdictions. Meeting these expectations will require an agile and highly capable team that can make timely and sound commercial decisions.

Darwin Waterfront achieves success by maintaining a talented core team and partnering with like-minded delivery partners to scale its precinct management. 'Team Waterfront' is crucial for safely managing complex public spaces and unlocking new development opportunities across the precinct.

Deliberate planning for long-term asset maintenance and renewal is necessary to maintain the precincts appeal to residents and visitors. The expenditure required to maintain and renew the asset over time is substantial, and Darwin Waterfront Corporation aims to diversify its revenue streams to gain financial agility in its ongoing asset management.

Strategic priority

To be high-performing, agile and financially resilient by attracting and maintaining a talented core team, engaging with likeminded delivery partners, diversifying revenue streams and aligning plans for long-term asset maintenance and renewal.

Success in sustainability will result in an engaged, dynamic and innovative “Team Waterfront”, with established succession plans, financial flexibility, contemporary facilities, and strong risk management.



SUSTAIN: Strategic initiatives

Initiative	2026 - 2028	2029 – 2030
Attracting, maintaining and delivering through “Team Waterfront”.	- Enhance DWC presence through ground-level office relocation. - Systematically capture visitor, resident and leaseholder data to evidence impact and share insights with key partners to inform broader planning and marketing. - Maintain tight controls over anti-social behaviour. - Actively deploy visitor data insights to informing precinct programming, commercial decisions and partner marketing. - Conduct a workforce capability review to assess whether Team Waterfront's skills profile remains fit for the next phase as new assets come online. - Establish succession plans for key roles and identify opportunities for development within the team.	- Review and refresh succession plans to ensure frameworks remain current as the organisation grows and new infrastructure assets require different management expertise. - Formalise delivery partner performance framework through structured KPIs, contract terms and renewal criteria replacing relationship-based management. - Begin DCC post-PPP transition planning by building the capability and capacity to absorb or oversee DCC operations before the transition becomes urgent. - Actively engage in advocacy through participation with industry bodies.
Diversify revenue bases.	- Secure additional rate base through development of new residential and commercial accommodation. - Secure new income through delivery of new commercial attractions under EOI process. - Review pricing for events and experiences. Seek to create exclusive zones to generate event income. - Consider borrowing for cash-flow positive projects.	- Explore Darwin Convention Centre management options post-Public Private Partnership, ensuring continuity for conference marketing and bookings in the transition period. - Create an environment to receive unsolicited business proposals and assess for alignment with policy and strategy. - Develop redeployment plan for PPP maintenance costs.
Long term asset maintenance and renewal.	- Develop Darwin Waterfront's 10-year Capital Expenditure Plan. - Delivery of Asset Management Plan.	- Delivery of Darwin Waterfront's 10-year Capital Expenditure Plan. - Secured funding of asset renewal and maintenance programme.
Success measures	KPI numbers 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21	

KPIs

KPI	Description	Target
1	Membership renewals and purchases	70% renewal and 18% growth
2	Online reviews including responses and time to respond	GRI should be maintained and response rate should sit at 90%
3	Ranking on Trip Advisor	Both listings should be in the Top 10
4	Maintain approx. 250 events per year including approx. 25 significant community events	3% growth each year.
5	Third-party investment in activations	10% third-party investment
6	Delivery of new community infrastructure including a new playground, community room, expanded parklands and pickleball courts	Each year >1 new community infrastructure initiative
7	Positive event feedback including surveyed and unsolicited feedback	70+% positive feedback
8	Anecdotal feedback from commercial partners	70+% positive feedback
9	Positive media coverage both locally and nationally	85% positive or neutral media coverage and annual media value of at least \$1.5M per annum
10	Grow the waterfront 'footprint'	Year on year increase in developed area (sqm)
11	Grow and develop the Waterfront's brand identity	5% annual increase in social media and website visitation
12	Create a new brand identity for Stokes Hill Wharf	Brand identity completion and online launch by 30 September 2026. Completion of signage by 30 June 2027.
13	Improved financial flexibility through diversified and increased revenue streams	Year-on-year growth in self-generated revenue.
14	Increase in rate paying tenancies.	Increased in number of rate paying tenancies.
15	Low staff turnover.	Staff turnover <15%
16	A healthy and supportive workplace culture.	Evidence of wellbeing initiatives being implemented and flexible work arrangements supported where operationally appropriate.
17	Ongoing commitment to strong governance, reporting and transparency	Maintain unqualified audit opinion with no high-risk audit observations
18	Increase delegates and economic benefits delivered through the continued oversight of the public-private partnership concession deed for the Darwin Convention Centre	>10% growth in delegates
19	Precinct availability and reliability	Core assets available as scheduled >98% of operating hours per quarter
20	Planned vs reactive maintenance	>90% of planned maintenance tasks completed by contractors within agreed timeframes each quarter
21	Incident and safety performance	Year-on-year reduction in incidents per 100,000 visitors by 50%
22	Overall precinct satisfaction from consolidated feedback (visitors, residents, tenants), plus complaint resolution time	Year on year reduction in complaints. 90% of service complaints resolved within 5 working days



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DARWIN**WATERFRONT**