

Women's Ranger Strategy 2026–2030

*Honouring the Aboriginal
women who care for Country
and lead the way forward.*



**NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL**

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life



Description of Artwork

This artwork was created by ranger Theresa Lemon at the three-day Northern Land Council Women's Ranger Strategic Planning Workshop held in Katherine in March 2025. The heart represents women's shared responsibility to care for Country, culture, families and future generations. It reflects connection, strength and collective leadership – women standing together.

Artwork © Theresa Lemon, 2025. Used with permission.

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Front Cover Photo: Ngaliwurru Ngarinyman Rangers (Timber Creek) undertaking a freshwater sawfish monitoring project in the Victoria River, Northern Territory.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of these lands, waters and seas, and pay respect to Elders past and present. We honour the Aboriginal women who carry responsibility for Country as knowledge holders, carers, teachers and leaders. Their strength continues to guide Caring for Country today.

Foreword

Aboriginal women have always held cultural authority and responsibility for Country. We are custodians, knowledge holders, teachers and leaders. Our authority comes from Country, culture and responsibility passed down through generations.

Across the Northern Land Council region, our NLC women rangers care for Country every day. They protect women's sacred sites, keep culture strong and pass on knowledge to younger generations. This work is essential. It sustains Country, strengthens culture, supports communities and secures the future for generations to come.

Women who care for Country also carry deep and ongoing responsibilities. We are carers for children, grandchildren and Elders. We hold families together. We carry cultural knowledge, law, language and community obligations. These responsibilities are inseparable from our ranger work.

At the same time, women face real pressures, including kinship obligations, jealousy and domestic violence. These realities do not disappear when women work as rangers. They shape women's safety, participation and ability to remain in the workforce.

For too long, women have been expected to manage these pressures without adequate support. This is not acceptable.

Since the NLC's Caring for Country program began in the mid-1990s, women have consistently raised these issues. When ranger work is inflexible, when childcare is unavailable and when workplaces are not safe for women, participation is limited. These are not minor operational issues. They are structural barriers.

Safe ranger bases. Access to vehicles. Childcare. Flexible work arrangements. Strong policies on safety and respect. These are not extras. They are essentials. Without them, women are excluded. The Northern Land Council, local organisations, partners, funders and governments need to step up.



Women rangers need strong, supportive and accountable leadership. They need mentors. They need training pathways and supported opportunities to step into decision-making roles. Women need workplaces that are culturally safe, free from harassment and violence and built around women's realities. Women rangers also need spaces to come together, support one another, share knowledge and build collective strength and leadership across the region.

This Strategy has been developed at a time when the rights of Aboriginal people are being compromised across the Northern Territory, including through changes to the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989. It also comes at a time when the Northern Territory Government has cut funding for Aboriginal rangers. Now more than ever, we need to highlight the critical work that women do on Country. This is a vitally important Strategy and I am proud to put my name to it.

It sets a clear direction. It reflects what women have been saying for decades. It is not aspirational; it is necessary. It is also a call to action for the Northern Land Council, partners, funders and both the Territory and Australian Governments to listen, act and invest properly in the NLC Women's Ranger Program.

This Strategy recognises our authority, acknowledges the responsibilities we carry and commits to supporting Aboriginal women's leadership now and into the future.

Backing women is not optional. If we are serious about caring for Country, we must be serious about supporting Aboriginal women to do this work safely, with dignity and with authority.

Joy Cardona
NLC Council Member and
Chair of NLC Women's Committee



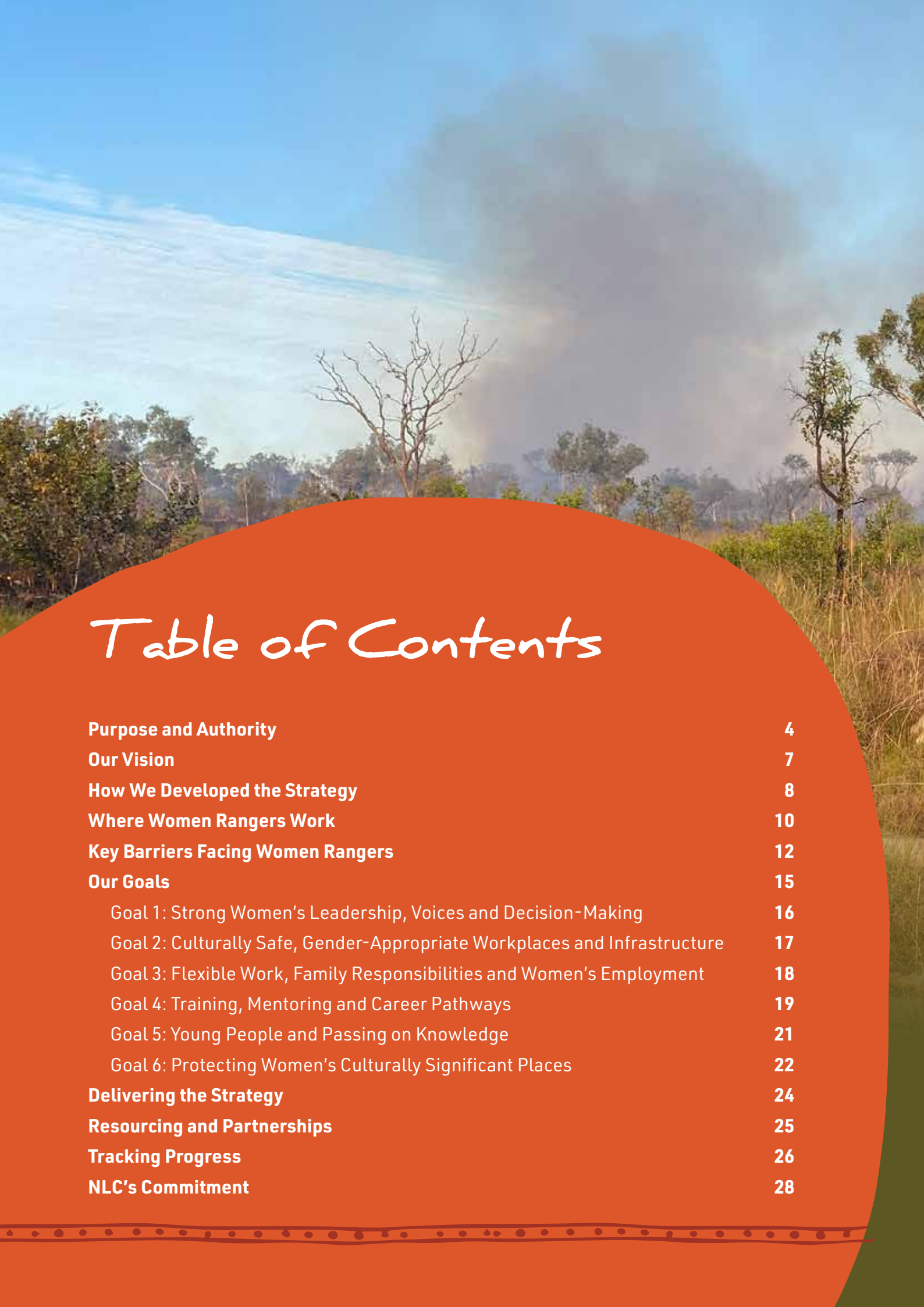
A landscape photograph showing a bushfire in progress. A large, billowing plume of dark smoke rises into a clear blue sky. A faint rainbow is visible within the smoke. In the foreground, there are green trees and bushes. A large, semi-circular orange shape is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing the text for the Table of Contents.

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"Our women are leaders. We teach the young ones, we guide our families, and we care for Country. We just need the same chances as the men to step up and be heard."

Purpose and Authority

For millennia, Aboriginal women have sustained cultural authority and responsibility for Country. Without women's leadership, Country cannot be properly cared for. Women rangers are central to the long-term strength and sustainability of the Northern Land Council's (NLC) Caring for Country program.

This Strategy applies to Aboriginal women rangers working within NLC-supported ranger groups across the NLC region. It builds on decades of advocacy by Aboriginal women for recognition of their cultural authority and equitable opportunities in ranger work. Developed by NLC women rangers in partnership with

NLC Caring for Country, it sets out a shared vision, key goals and practical actions. It affirms that women's knowledge and leadership are essential to healthy Country, strong culture, strong families and strong futures.

This cultural authority was expressed by women at the 2025 Women's Ranger Strategic Planning Workshop in Katherine. Opposite are some key comments made during the workshop.





"Aboriginal women have always had responsibility for Country. We are teachers, scientists, carers, knowledge holders and community leaders. We pass on culture, language and responsibility to young people so that knowledge stays strong and continues into the next generation.

We carry knowledge about plants and animals, bush foods and medicines, seasonal practices, water, ceremony and the right way to care for Country. This knowledge has been passed down through generations. We hold responsibility for women's sacred sites, many of which only women can visit and protect. Women must be part of caring for Country. Without our leadership, Country cannot be properly cared for.

Today, as NLC women rangers, we continue this work by caring for land and sea, teaching young people, and leading healing on Country, grounded in culture and Aboriginal law. Our authority in caring for Country is foundational to ranger work.

When women are supported and empowered in ranger roles and as leaders, the strength of their leadership flows through families, culture and community, creating lasting wellbeing and continuity for future generations."



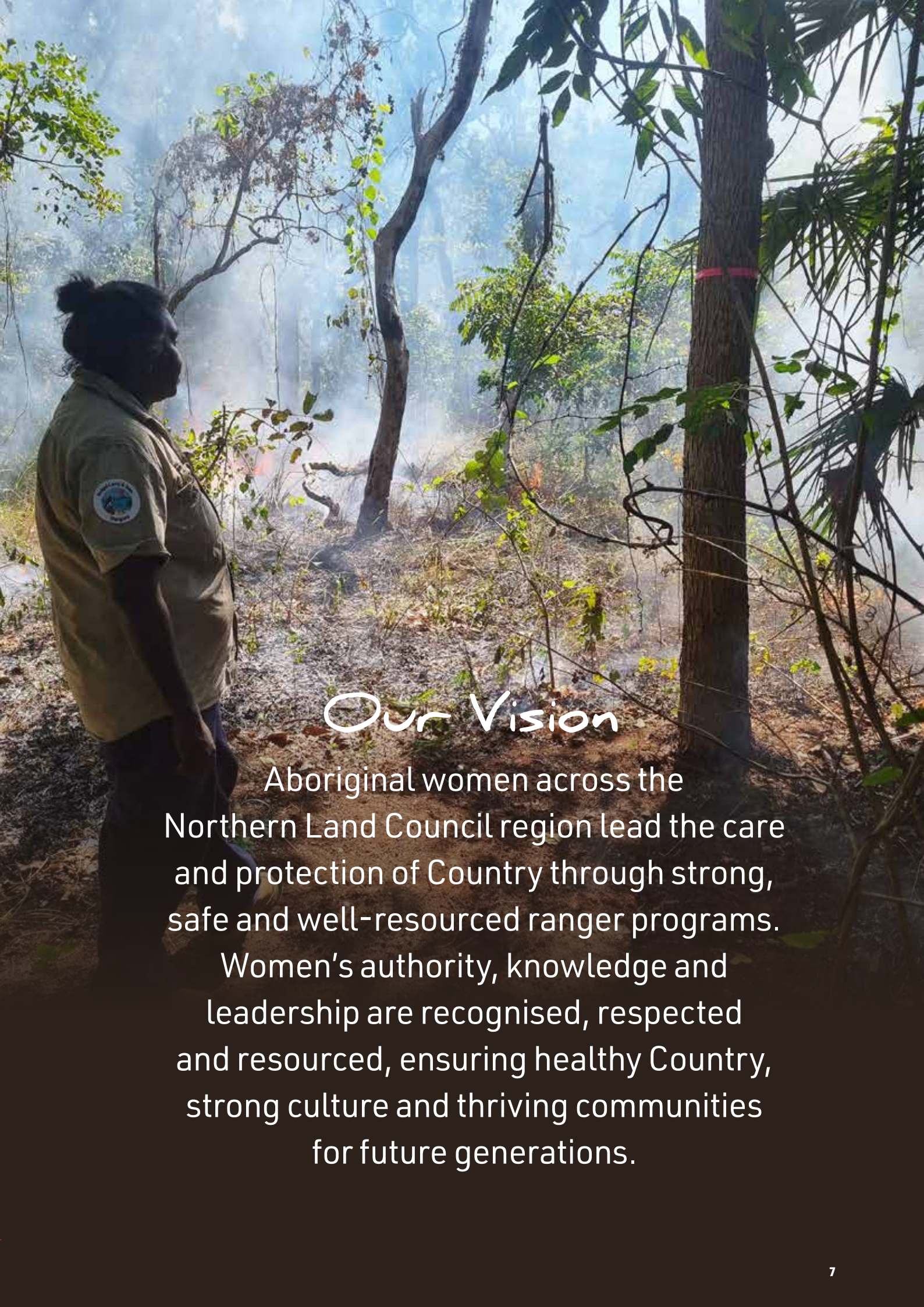
Despite this essential role, women continue to face barriers that limit their participation, leadership, recognition and cultural safety in ranger work. These include under-representation in senior roles, unequal access to resources and infrastructure, work arrangements that do not reflect family and cultural responsibilities, limited pathways to training and career progression, and broader social pressures affecting women's safety. Addressing these barriers is essential. Women's knowledge, leadership and authority must be properly recognised, supported and resourced.



This Strategy applies across the NLC and cannot be implemented by the Caring for Country service area alone. Its success requires coordinated commitment and action across the organisation. It is a commitment by the NLC to strengthen Aboriginal women's leadership across ranger programs, and to make sure women's authority and aspirations are reflected in policy, resourcing and everyday practice.

This Strategy is grounded in local priorities and women's lived experience. It also speaks to national and international commitments – the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – and to broader commitments on gender equity, cultural continuity and environmental justice.

"When we are empowered and employed to work on Country, everyone benefits. Our work strengthens families, communities and Country. We share knowledge with young people and create economic and social benefits for our families and communities."

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light-colored short-sleeved shirt with a circular patch on the sleeve and dark pants, stands in profile facing right. She is in a forest setting with trees and vines. A red band is visible on a tree trunk to her right.

Our Vision

Aboriginal women across the Northern Land Council region lead the care and protection of Country through strong, safe and well-resourced ranger programs.

Women's authority, knowledge and leadership are recognised, respected and resourced, ensuring healthy Country, strong culture and thriving communities for future generations.

How We Developed the Strategy

This Strategy builds on decades of Aboriginal women's leadership within NLC Caring for Country. Since the mid-1990s, women have consistently advocated for stronger recognition of their cultural authority, equitable employment opportunities, culturally safe workplaces and clear leadership pathways in ranger work.

There have been significant gains, but women continue to face barriers that limit their leadership, participation and authority. This Strategy responds to women's ongoing advocacy and their clear call for stronger action, better support and real change. It is an important step in strengthening Aboriginal women's leadership and recognising women's cultural authority and critical role in caring for Country.

Building on this sustained advocacy, a three-day NLC Women's Ranger Strategic Planning Workshop was held in Katherine from 25 to 27 March 2025. The workshop brought together women from all NLC-supported ranger groups, alongside women staff from Land and Sea Management Division and Caring for Country.

Over three days, women came together in a culturally safe space to talk about their work, share experiences across ranger groups and shape a new NLC Women's Ranger Strategy.

Several women rangers and leaders at the workshop are also part of the Strong Women for Healthy Country Network, a grassroots network of Aboriginal women caring for Country across the Northern Territory. The Network brings women together to support each other, share knowledge and speak with one strong collective voice.

"This is bigger than jobs. It's about women being respected as knowledge holders, leaders and restoring balance."



Across the three days, women worked together through discussion, group planning, cultural activities and shared reflection. They talked about their strengths, responsibilities and authority in caring for Country, as well as the barriers that continue to limit women's participation and leadership. Cultural activities, including a water blessing, were woven throughout the workshop. Women identified what was needed to strengthen their leadership, increase their voice in decision-making and make ranger workplaces safer, more supportive and better resourced. Women were clear that this Strategy should not sit on a shelf – it needed to lead to real change across ranger groups and the NLC.

"Our Ranger Program is a model of leadership grounded in love for Country and community. With the right support, it will flourish, and so will the next generation."

Together We Stand
For our Women's rights
On our Sacred Ground
With one strong voice.
Respect our culture.
OUR Country it's our Identity
Respect our songlines.



Protest artwork created during the March 2025 workshop and used in the public protest in Katherine.

Women standing up for sacred sites

The workshop was held at a time when Aboriginal people and organisations, including the NLC, were raising serious concerns about proposed changes to the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989. These proposed changes were a major concern for women at the workshop. Through workshop discussions, women rangers and leaders decided to take a public stand for the protection of women's sacred sites. They created powerful protest artworks, messages and public statements, asserting women's authority and responsibility to care for sacred sites. These artworks and messages became a feature of the public protest held in Katherine during the workshop. One of these artworks, "Country is Ours", became a key visual motif throughout this Strategy.

Women rangers and leaders publicly protesting in Katherine during the March 2025 NLC Women's Ranger Strategic Planning Workshop.



Where Women Rangers Work

The NLC Caring for Country service area sits within the Land and Sea Management Division. It currently provides operational and administrative support for 14 Aboriginal ranger groups across the NLC region. This map shows the spread of NLC-supported ranger groups across the region, where women rangers are working across a vast and diverse area of the Northern Territory.



Northern Land Council Ranger Groups



Bulgul Rangers



Garawa Rangers



Garngi Rangers



Kenbi Rangers



Kulumindini Rangers



Malak Malak Rangers



Mardbalk Rangers



**Ngaliwurru
Ngarinyman Rangers**



Njanjma Rangers



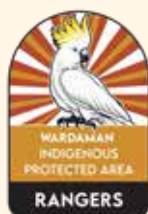
**Numbulwar Numburindi
Rangers**



Waanyi Garawa Rangers



**Wagiman Guwardagun
Rangers**



Wardaman Rangers



Yugul Mangi Rangers

Key Barriers Facing Women Rangers

Women's ranger work has too often been under-valued and under-resourced. Addressing this is about more than getting women into ranger jobs. It is about restoring balance, respecting culture, strengthening safety, and making sure women can work, lead and care for Country on their own terms.

At the workshop, women spoke clearly about the barriers that continue to limit their participation and leadership.

Women remain under-represented across many ranger groups, especially in senior ranger and coordinator positions. When there are more women in these roles, women's realities are better understood and more likely to be reflected in how ranger work is planned, resourced and run on the ground. Women in leadership also create stronger pathways for other women to follow, through mentoring, everyday support and practical decision-making that recognises what women need.

"Safe workplaces are not extras. We need proper ranger bases, private facilities and the right support to do our work safely."

Childcare was one of the biggest issues women raised. Childcare options are limited, inaccessible or unavailable in many communities where women rangers live and work. This matters because without adequate childcare, women who are the primary carers for children cannot take on or stay in ranger work.

Women also need work arrangements that are flexible enough to fit around family, cultural and community responsibilities. When rosters, travel, training schedules and participation requirements are not designed with women's lives in mind, it becomes harder for women to stay in ranger work and take on greater responsibility.



"We need two-way rule. We are mothers, aunts, grandmothers. We know our Country, we know our rules."

Women raised unequal access to vehicles, equipment, fieldwork opportunities and resources. When access is not equal, women cannot fully take part or step into senior roles. Vehicles and transport were raised as a major issue, and one that women have been raising for a long time. The NLC vehicle policy does not allow children to travel in work vehicles for safety reasons. The practical reality is that this creates significant challenges for women in their everyday work and limits women's ability to deliver cultural camps, junior ranger activities and on Country learning with young people.

Safety was one of the most critical issues women raised. Family and community violence, domestic violence, jealousy and avoidance relationships are realities that affect women at work, on Country and when travelling. These pressures do not disappear when women are at work. Women need workplaces that are safe, secure and designed for them – private facilities, safe accommodation, separate spaces where needed, reliable access to their own vehicles, trained supervisors, clear procedures and real support when women are at risk. These are not optional extras. They are essential to women's safety, dignity and ability to do their work.



Training can also be a barrier when it is designed without women's needs in mind. When women's training priorities are not identified, when training requires travel that women cannot manage without support, when local or flexible options are not available, or when women need women-only training with women trainers and that is not provided, women are disadvantaged or unable to participate. Women also need dedicated investment in leadership training, mentoring and pathways into senior roles.

Women's ranger work also needs sustained, long-term funding and resourcing – not short-term or project-based support. Dedicated positions, leadership programs and women's priorities need to be properly funded. In remote locations, limited IT support, weak induction and difficult administrative systems make all of these challenges harder.

Women are equally clear about what strengthens their leadership and participation: more women rangers and coordinators, supportive managers and supervisors, mentoring, flexible and safe workplaces, skills development and opportunities to come together to build confidence and strengthen collective leadership. These are not aspirations. They are practical priorities that women identified and that shaped the six goals and priority actions in this Strategy.

"When women's leadership is properly resourced and respected, Country, culture and communities are stronger."

"It would be good to get more young girls working as rangers. Little kids come up to me and say, 'I want to be a ranger like you.' That makes me feel proud."



Our Goals

This Women's Ranger Strategy sets out six clear goals and priority actions to strengthen Aboriginal women's leadership, participation, safety, wellbeing and future pathways across the NLC Caring for Country service area. These goals reflect the voices, lived experience and cultural authority of women across the NLC ranger network.

1

Strong Women's Leadership, Voices and Decision-Making

Goal: Women's leadership, authority and voices are recognised, resourced and represented across the NLC ranger program.

2

Culturally Safe, Gender-Appropriate Workplaces and Infrastructure

Goal: Women work in safe, well-resourced and culturally supportive workplaces where they can carry out their roles with confidence, safety and respect.

3

Flexible Work, Family Responsibilities and Women's Employment

Goal: Ranger workplaces are flexible and supportive, helping women stay in ranger work while recognising caring responsibilities, cultural obligations and community roles.

4

Training, Mentoring and Career Pathways

Goal: Women and girls have clear, supported pathways into long-term ranger work and leadership, with access to gender-appropriate training, mentoring and career development.

5

Young People and Passing on Knowledge

Goal: Young people are connected to Country, culture and future ranger pathways through women-led teaching, mentoring and ranger leadership.

6

Protecting Women's Culturally Significant Places

Goal: Women rangers play an active role in caring for and protecting women's culturally significant places for future generations.





Strong Women's Leadership, Voices and Decision-Making

Goal: Women's leadership, authority and voices are recognised, resourced and represented across the NLC ranger program.

Our leadership strengthens ranger programs, improves safety and creates pathways for younger women. It includes formal leadership roles, cultural authority and the ability to influence decisions affecting our Country and communities.

Priority Actions

- 1.1** Maintain the Women's Engagement Coordinator as a permanent, core-funded position to coordinate delivery and review of this Strategy and to work across the NLC to support organisational accountability.
- 1.2** Secure multi-year funding from across the NLC and external partners to resource women's leadership, mentoring, gatherings and women-led activities.
- 1.3** Embed the priorities and actions of this Strategy into NLC plans, policies and reporting, including Healthy Country Plans, Ranger Work Plans and annual reporting, to ensure delivery is a shared responsibility across the organisation.
- 1.4** Strengthen leadership and succession pathways for women, including practical preparation for senior ranger, coordinator, governance and cultural leadership roles, supported by mentoring, acting opportunities, targeted training and participation in relevant NLC, Territory and national leadership programs.
- 1.5** Prioritise and resource mentoring opportunities for women rangers, connecting Elders, experienced rangers and emerging leaders across the network.
- 1.6** Fund, support and coordinate regular women's gatherings and leadership forums, including NLC-led gatherings and women's participation in relevant Territory and national networks.
- 1.7** Increase women's representation in Caring for Country governance, advisory and decision-making forums.



2

Culturally Safe, Gender-Appropriate Workplaces and Infrastructure

Goal: Women work in safe, well-resourced and culturally supportive workplaces where they can carry out their roles with confidence, safety and respect.

Safe, private and gender-responsive workplaces are essential to our participation, wellbeing and safety. Appropriate infrastructure, reliable equipment and culturally safe facilities are not optional improvements – they are core conditions for our ranger work.

Priority Actions

- 2.1** Secure capital investment to develop and upgrade ranger bases and workplaces so they are safe, private, culturally appropriate and family-friendly for women, prioritising sites where current facilities are unsafe, lack privacy or are otherwise not appropriate.
- 2.2** Ensure women have reliable and equitable access to vehicles, equipment and operational resources, including dedicated resources where needed.
- 2.3** Apply culturally safe and gender-responsive design standards to all future ranger base planning, construction and upgrades, including private facilities, safe accommodation and design that supports women's cultural safety.
- 2.4** Embed wellbeing, cultural safety and trauma-aware practice into ranger work planning, supervision and everyday workplace systems so that these are built into how ranger programs operate.
- 2.5** Build the capability of coordinators, senior rangers and managers to recognise and respond appropriately to family violence, cultural obligations and practical barriers affecting women rangers, including through clear policies and referral pathways.
- 2.6** Ensure all women rangers have access to culturally appropriate wellbeing, counselling and family violence support, including clear referral pathways to appropriate services.

"Proper facilities and safety are not extras. We need those things to do our job properly."



3

Flexible Work, Family Responsibilities and Women's Employment

Goal: Ranger workplaces are flexible and supportive, helping women stay in ranger work while recognising caring responsibilities, cultural obligations and community roles.

We carry family, cultural and community responsibilities that are ongoing and inseparable from our work as rangers. Flexible work, practical family support and responsive workplace practices are essential if women are to stay in ranger work and take up leadership opportunities.

Priority Actions

- 3.1** Actively work with ranger groups to develop practical childcare and family support options for women rangers, including through partnerships with councils, childcare providers and community organisations.
- 3.2** Review and strengthen flexible work arrangements, work practices, training access and participation requirements across ranger programs so they support women's ongoing participation in ranger work.
- 3.3** Embed flexible, family-responsive work arrangements across all ranger programs that recognise caring responsibilities, cultural obligations and community roles.
- 3.4** Support ranger groups to recruit, retain and progress more women rangers through flexible employment pathways, local mentoring and practical workplace support.

"We carry a lot of responsibility at home and in community. If we want women in ranger work, we need work arrangements that reflect our real lives."



4

Training, Mentoring and Career Pathways

Goal: Women and girls have clear, supported pathways into long-term ranger work and leadership, with access to gender-appropriate training, mentoring and career development.

We want opportunities to learn new skills, take on greater responsibility and move into leadership roles. Training, mentoring and culturally grounded learning all build women's confidence, capability and pathways into senior ranger, coordinator and leadership positions. Training must be gender-appropriate and accessible, including women-only training delivered by women trainers where needed.

Priority Actions

- 4.1** Deliver practical, culturally appropriate training that supports women rangers' technical skills, confidence, leadership capability and career pathways, in partnership with appropriate training and education providers.
- 4.2** Embed women rangers' training needs, priorities and leadership pathways in NLC Learning and Development planning and workforce development.
- 4.3** Strengthen coordination and accountability between Caring for Country, Learning and Development and regional training partners to support women rangers' training and career development.
- 4.4** Provide clear, accessible orientation and ongoing IT, administrative and workplace support so women rangers in remote communities can understand and navigate NLC systems, policies, processes and safety requirements.
- 4.5** Deliver mentoring, peer learning and on Country knowledge exchange that strengthens women rangers' confidence, cultural knowledge and leadership skills.
- 4.6** Support and resource women-led learning spaces, forums and networks for knowledge sharing, cultural strengthening and collective leadership.





"We want to step up
and be leaders, but we
need the right training,
mentoring and support
that works for us."

5

Young People and Passing on Knowledge

Goal: Young people are connected to Country, culture and future ranger pathways through women-led teaching, mentoring and ranger leadership.

Women have always played a central role in teaching the next generation. As rangers and Elders, we pass on cultural knowledge, language, law and responsibility through on Country learning, cultural camps, junior ranger activities and school engagement. Our young people need to be on Country, learning culture and responsibility. They are the next generation of rangers, coordinators and leaders – and we need to invest in them now.

Priority Actions

- 5.1** Resource women rangers to lead, plan and deliver cultural camps, on Country learning, junior ranger activities and school engagement, including with primary school-aged children, with appropriate staffing and logistical support.
- 5.2** Prioritise and fund practical, safe and compliant transport options so children can safely participate in cultural camps, on Country learning and other appropriate ranger activities.
- 5.3** Coordinate with Learning on Country where relevant to support women-led cultural learning, youth engagement and intergenerational knowledge sharing.
- 5.4** Resource and support Elders and senior knowledge holders to advise on ranger programs and on Country activities, including through appropriate payment and practical support.



6

Protecting Women's Culturally Significant Places

Goal: Women rangers play an active role in caring for and protecting women's culturally significant places for future generations.

Women hold knowledge, cultural authority and responsibility for particular places on Country, including our sacred sites. These places face ongoing threats from weeds, uncontrolled fire, climate change, development pressures and feral animals, as well as policy and legislative changes. Caring for these places also means protecting the cultural knowledge, language and practices connected to them. Some knowledge is restricted and must be managed according to cultural authority and protocols. We need to support Traditional Owners to access, care for and protect these places for future generations of women.

Priority Actions

- 6.1 Resource women rangers to visit, monitor and care for women's culturally significant places under the direction of Traditional Owners and senior women, including responding to threats such as weeds, feral animals and fire.
- 6.2 Resource women rangers to undertake cultural mapping and knowledge recording with Traditional Owner consent and direction, and in line with cultural protocols.
- 6.3 Build practical links between women rangers, the NT Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and other cultural heritage bodies to support the monitoring, care and protection of women's culturally significant places.
- 6.4 Provide women rangers with clear information and advocacy support to understand and respond to law and policy changes affecting women's sacred sites.



Workshop artwork created by women rangers and leaders during the March 2025 NLC Women's Ranger Strategic Planning Workshop.

"It's hard for us sometimes – we want to be out there, but we've got our families, our old people and our kids too. We need work that fits with our lives, not the other way around."



Delivering the Strategy

Lead Responsibility

The Caring for Country service area has lead responsibility for coordinating delivery of this Strategy. This includes working with women rangers and ranger groups, collaborating across relevant NLC programs and service areas, working with external partners, and supporting monitoring, reporting and review.

The dedicated Women's Engagement role, based within Caring for Country, is central to implementing the Strategy. The role supports coordination across relevant NLC programs and service areas, strengthens engagement with women rangers and ranger groups, and helps track and report on progress.

Shared NLC Accountability

Caring for Country cannot deliver the Strategy alone. Many of the priorities identified by women rangers require action from other service areas across the NLC, including recruitment, training, workplace safety, infrastructure, vehicles, technology and communication.

The Strategy is aligned with existing NLC corporate, strategic and operational planning and policy commitments. It gives practical effect to NLC commitments to strengthen Aboriginal women's employment, leadership, cultural authority and participation in caring for Country, including the NLC Corporate Plan, the NLC Strategic Plan, and the Caring for Country Strategic Plan 2024-2029. It also supports relevant NLC policies and commitments relating to gender equity, workforce development and cultural safety.

As NLC plans, policies and programs are reviewed, updated or replaced, the priorities in this Strategy should continue to be reflected and embedded.

Shared NLC Accountability at a Glance

Caring for Country

Leads coordination, monitoring, reporting and review.

Infrastructure / Assets / Fleet

Supports ranger bases, workplaces, vehicles and equipment.

Learning on Country

Supports young people's learning on Country and future ranger pathways.

Governance, Strategy and Communications

Embeds priorities in policy, planning, communication and reporting.

People and Culture / Human Resources

Supports recruitment, flexible work, wellbeing and career development.

Information and Communication Technology

Supports communication and technology access.

Learning and Development

Supports training, mentoring and leadership pathways.

Regional Development

Supports regional planning, engagement and local implementation.

Resourcing and Partnerships

The NLC has a direct responsibility to invest in the priorities set out in this Strategy. However, the priorities cannot be delivered through NLC resources alone. Coordinated investment and partnerships with governments, funders, training providers, philanthropic organisations, research institutions, community and environmental organisations will be critical to delivering the Strategy.

The NLC will work with ranger groups, Traditional Owners, governments and partners to strengthen and align resourcing opportunities that support the goals of this Strategy.

"We need long-term funding so women's ranger work can grow and stay strong."

Priority Areas for Resourcing

Women's Engagement Coordinator and implementation support

Leadership, mentoring, gatherings and women's forums

Safe ranger bases, workplaces and infrastructure

Vehicles, transport and access solutions

Training, accredited pathways and professional development

Cultural camps, junior ranger activities and on Country learning

Childcare partnerships, flexible work and wellbeing support

Protection of culturally significant places and sacred sites

Tracking Progress

Monitoring and reporting for this Strategy will align with existing NLC planning and reporting systems to ensure accountability is built into everyday organisational practice. Progress will be tracked through the Caring for Country Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework, ensuring alignment with broader program reporting and avoiding duplication.

Tracking progress is not only about measuring activity. It is about understanding whether women feel safer, stronger, better supported and more able to lead in ranger work.

2026

Year 1: Establishing the Monitoring Approach

During the first year of implementation, the Women's Engagement Coordinator will develop a monitoring and reporting plan to support the Strategy.

This will include:

- Establishing a baseline of women's participation across ranger groups, leadership roles, training, mentoring, access to vehicles and equipment, and key workplace facilities and safety needs
- Reviewing existing reporting arrangements across ranger programs, funding streams and organisational plans
- Identifying opportunities to embed tracking of women's ranger priorities within existing NLC planning and reporting systems, including Healthy Country Plans, annual Ranger Work Plans and relevant corporate reporting processes

Annual Review

Each year, the Women's Engagement Coordinator will prepare a progress report outlining women's participation across ranger groups and leadership roles, key achievements, challenges and emerging issues, and priorities for the coming year.

Information for this report may include:

- Numbers of women rangers, senior rangers, coordinators and cultural advisors
- Women's participation in leadership activities, training, mentoring and forums
- Access to vehicles, equipment and operational resources
- Infrastructure improvements and upgrades
- Childcare, family support, transport barriers and practical participation issues affecting women rangers
- Policy, system and workplace changes supporting women's participation
- Feedback from women rangers on safety, support, leadership and what is changing on the ground

The report will draw on information already collected through ranger programs, organisational reporting and engagement with ranger groups.

Annual reporting will also be informed by direct feedback from women rangers across the region. This may include discussions at ranger group level, women's gatherings or other opportunities for women to share their perspectives on progress, challenges and priorities. Women's voices are central to this Strategy and must remain central to how progress is understood and reported.

2027

Annual Review

"When women's leadership in Caring for Country is strong, Country, culture and communities are stronger."

Annual Review

Engagement and Forward Planning

The Women's Engagement Coordinator will engage with ranger groups across the NLC region to:

- Share updates on progress implementing the Strategy
- Gather feedback from women rangers on priorities, challenges and emerging needs
- Identify local priorities for the coming year

These discussions will respect that ranger groups have different priorities and will be designed to reflect local needs, not impose a one-size-fits-all approach. Where appropriate, these discussions may also inform updates to Healthy Country Plans, annual Work Plans and other planning processes.

Information gathered through this process will inform the Women's Engagement Coordinator's annual work plan and help keep the Strategy responsive to the local needs and priorities of women rangers.

2029

2029 Review

A full review will be undertaken in 2029, led by women rangers through an NLC-wide women's ranger gathering. The review will:

- Assess progress against the six goals
- Identify systemic barriers that remain
- Strengthen or adapt priority actions based on women rangers' lived experience
- Inform the development of the next Women's Ranger Strategy

Women rangers will play a central role in shaping the review and priorities for the next Strategy. A summary of review findings will be provided to NLC Full Council as part of the NLC's corporate planning cycle.

2030

2028

"We need to know this plan is making a real difference for women on the ground, not just words on paper."

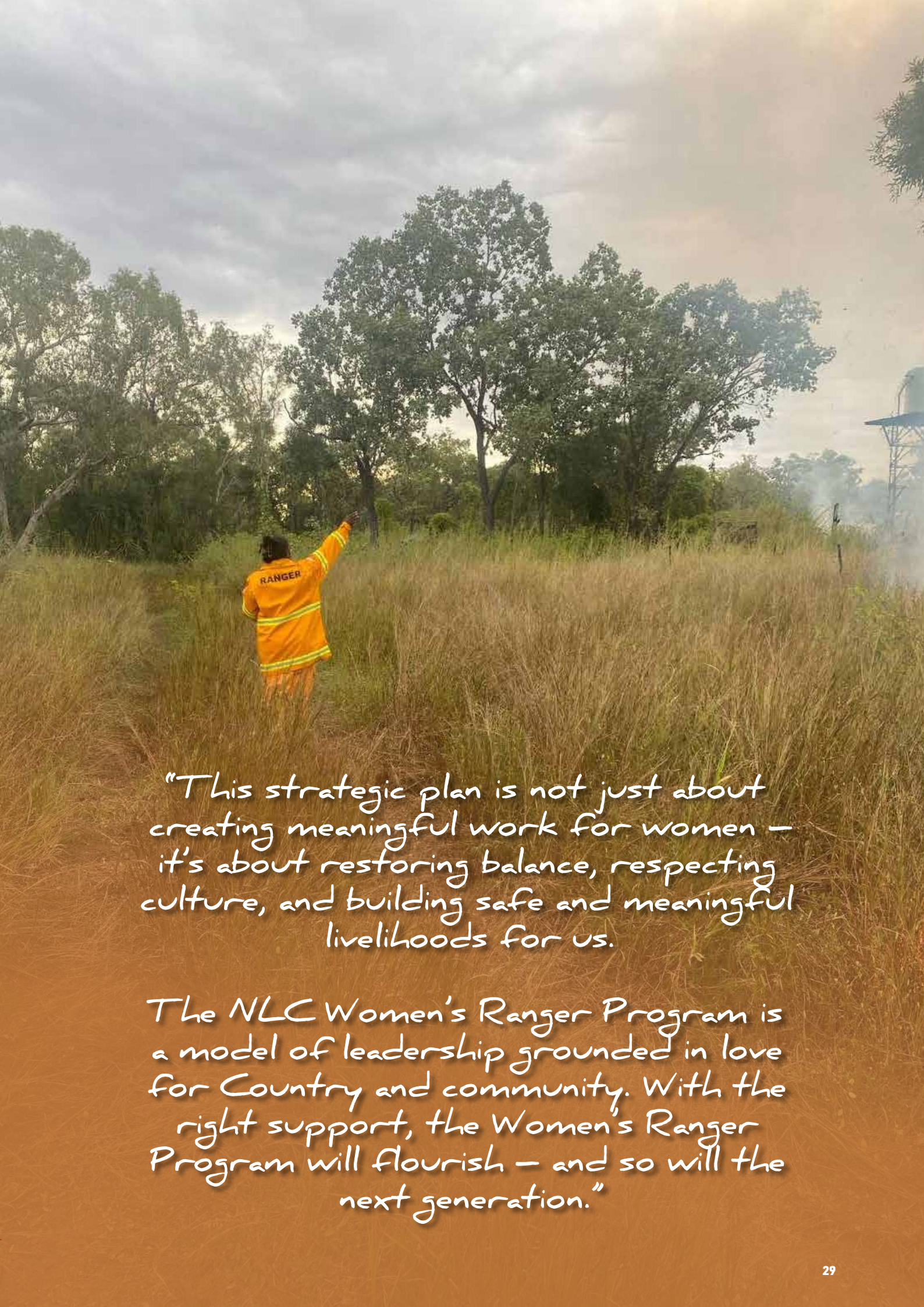




NLC's Commitment

The NLC commits to walking in genuine partnership with women rangers and Traditional Owners to deliver the priorities set out in this Strategy. The Strategy's goals were shaped by women's voices, lived experience, cultural authority and leadership. Implementing this Strategy is an ongoing organisational commitment that supports the long-term strength and sustainability of Caring for Country programs across the NLC region.

Delivering on these priorities will also require governments, partners and funders to step up and invest in the work that Aboriginal women do on Country every day.



"This strategic plan is not just about creating meaningful work for women – it's about restoring balance, respecting culture, and building safe and meaningful livelihoods for us.

The NLC Women's Ranger Program is a model of leadership grounded in love for Country and community. With the right support, the Women's Ranger Program will flourish – and so will the next generation."

Suggested citation: Northern Land Council (2026).
Northern Land Council Women's Ranger Strategy 2026–2030.
Darwin: Northern Land Council.

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