

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**



**North Australian  
Aboriginal Family  
Legal Service**

# CONTENTS PAGE

1. Board Report
2. Chief Executive Officer's Report
3. NAAFLS – who we are and what we do
5. NAAFLS' Achievements against Strategic Goals
9. Directors Report and Auditors Declarations
10. Annual Financial Statements



*The 'soft launch' of NAAFLS new logo held in September 2021 with NAAFLS Directors unveiling the new logo with staff in the Darwin Office.*

# BOARD REPORT

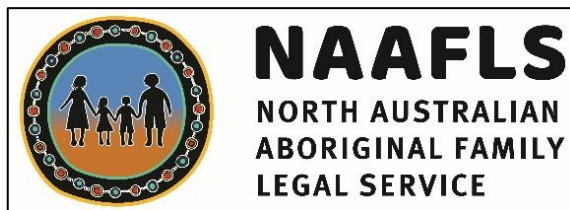
The Board is proud of the work that NAAFLS has been able to achieve during another year that has been significantly impacted by COVID-19 and ongoing worries about an outbreak in the Territory.

July 2020 saw the re-opening of remote communities following the biosecurity shutdowns that occurred from the middle of March 2020, with a visit to Maningrida on the 6th of July signifying the start of NAAFLS' trips back to the 43 remote communities we regularly visit. Since that time, NAAFLS staff have spent almost 300 days in remote communities, a 20% increase in the time spent among community residents from prior years.

The organisation has delivered a substantial volume of both legal and non-legal supports throughout the year, with a key focus on the provision of non-legal supports by our wonderful team of Client Support Officers.

An increased focus on community legal education will result in the future development of a range of video education resources, with an app also on the drawing board.

The Board identified a need to review our organisational profile this year, resulting in the development and launch of a new logo (*below left*). The logo, which represents the NAAFLS services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, from the blue saltwater country to the brown deserts, is now proudly emblazoned on our offices and uniforms. The new logo has replaced the original logo which was developed by Joanne Nasir and has been NAAFLS trademark for many years (*below right*).



The Board also redefined the organisation's vision and mission, as follows:

**Our Vision** - Safe and empowered communities where everyone understands their rights and has access to justice.

**Our Mission** - NAAFLS will advance and protect the rights of First Nations people through holistic and culturally appropriate legal and support services to Indigenous Residents in the Top End of the Northern Territory.

The NAAFLS Board is proud of the work of all our staff but would particularly like to recognise our Deputy CEO, Cassandra Carolin, who celebrated 10 years with NAAFLS during the year. Cassandra has been a critical employee within NAAFLS throughout those 10 years and we look forward to continuing working with Cassandra for many more years.

**Board Members:** Ada Parry, Therese-Marie Puruntatameri, Sue Wainwright, Peter Thomsen

I am honoured to have led NAAFLS through 2020-21, a difficult year right across the world, but still an exciting year to commence my employment with this critical organisation.

There have been so many personal and organisational highlights during the year, even while we provide services in an extremely difficult environment.

Early into the financial year, myself and the Board undertook a strategic planning retreat to develop a new 3-year plan that would provide the direction needed to ensure that we were delivering on the outcomes sought by the Board.

The Board identified 5 key strategic goals for the organisation to meet:

1. Deliver high quality legal and support services in a culturally proficient manner
2. Through targeted collaboration and partnership, build pathways with other service providers that deliver the best possible outcomes for our clients
3. Advocate and influence policy and law reform to ensure best possible outcomes can be achieved for our clients
4. Build a strong, sustainable, and professional organisation that empowers our staff to deliver high quality outcomes
5. Build a transparent, accountable and respectful organisational culture

These strategic goals are providing a sound roadmap for the organisation as we look at the best ways to deliver our services and have been used in this report to demonstrate our performance during the year.



*At Rockhole community*

I have been excited to experience the strong community connections that NAAFLS staff build and have been fortunate to attend a few community events that have highlighted this connection with our clients and residents of these communities, including a Community legal education and BBQ at Rockhole community (via Katherine).

Our staff at NAAFLS focus on the development of these relationships within communities to build mutual respect and trust, which is critical to our work.

Another major highlight of 2020/21 was our inaugural Ochre Ribbon breakfast, a very well attended function, with keynote speaker Leanne Liddle introducing the Aboriginal Justice Agreement, one of the NT Government's key approaches to improving Aboriginal justice.

*Speaking at the NAAFLS Ochre Ribbon breakfast*



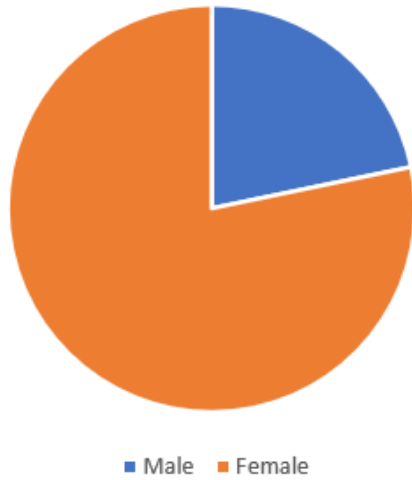
# NAAFLS - WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

As at 30 June 2021, NAAFLS employed 23 staff, with 5 male staff and 18 female staff and 13 staff identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

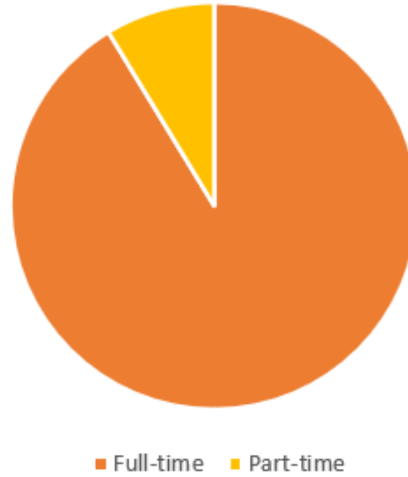


*NAAFLS staff attended the NAIDOC March in Darwin*

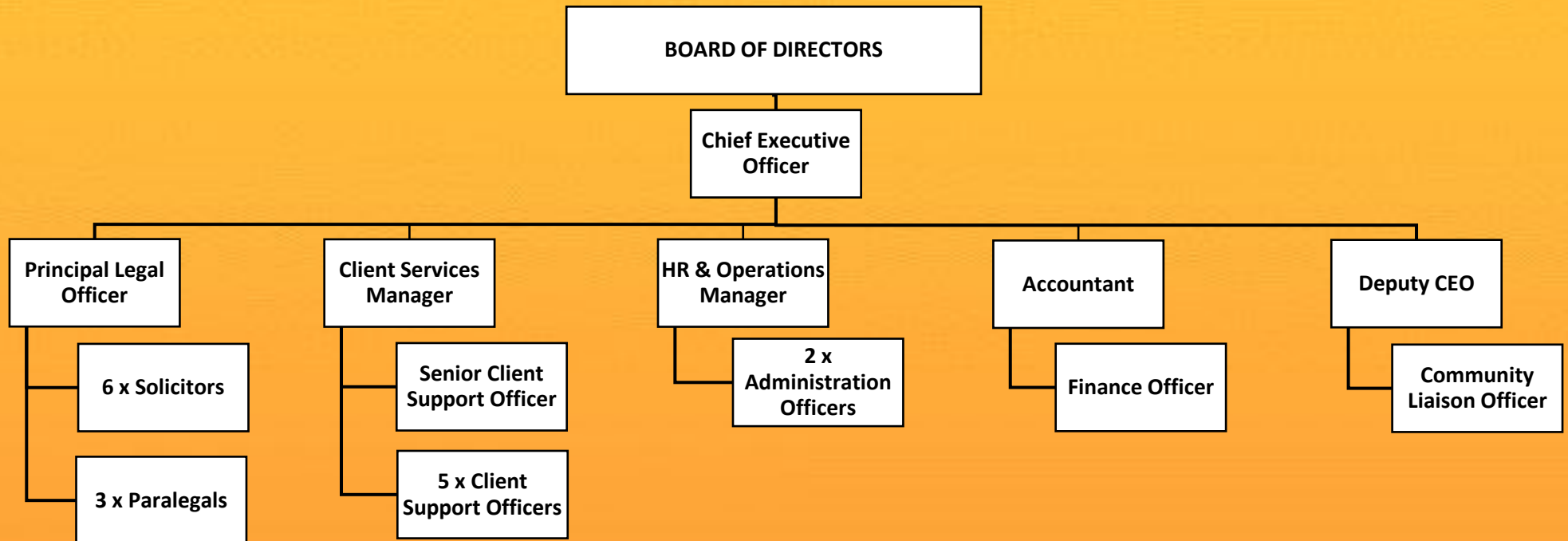
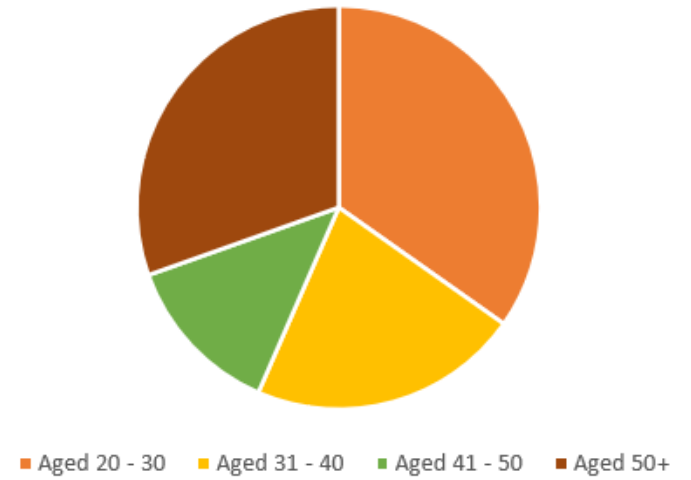
Gender diversity



Full/Part time employment



Age Diversity



# NAAFLS' ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST STRATEGIC GOALS

## 1. Deliver high quality legal and support services in a culturally proficient manner

NAAFLS has increased the amount of time our staff have been on the ground in remote communities per visit to ensure there is additional time available to provide face-to-face services and develop improved working relationships with stakeholder organisations in these communities.

NAAFLS staff spent around 20% more time in communities than pre-COVID visits, which has resulted in improved understanding among residents and stakeholders of the services that NAAFLS delivers and increased opportunities to provide community education.

While NAAFLS employs a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, with 100% of our client support team identifying as Aboriginal, there are still opportunities to improve the cultural competence of all NAAFLS staff. During 2020/21 NAAFLS worked closely with the NT Aboriginal Interpreter Service and the Aboriginal Resource Development Service (ARDS) to provide cultural safety training to all NAAFLS staff.

As at 30 June 2021, NAAFLS has 931 current clients (593 managed by the Darwin office and 338 managed by Katherine office). During 2020/21 NAAFLS assisted 335 new clients with almost 50% of new clients resulting from agency referrals and the remainder through self-referral.

NAAFLS delivered more than 150 community legal education sessions to 770 attendees or participants.

## 3. Through targeted collaboration and partnership, build pathways with other service providers that deliver the best possible outcomes for our clients

NAAFLS focuses on both formal and informal collaboration efforts with a large number of organisations operating in the domestic violence and child protection sectors in particular. The purpose of these collaborative partnerships are to ensure clients experiencing domestic violence, involved in family law matters or managing child protection matters receive support from the organisations that are best able to offer those required supports.

## 2. Advocate and influence policy and law reform to ensure best possible outcomes can be achieved for our clients

NAAFLS appointed a Policy and Advocacy Solicitor during the current financial year to work on identifying systemic policy and procedural changes and legislative changes that would deliver improvements to the child protection, family law and domestic and family violence sectors.

This work will increase into 2021/22 with the NT Government planning to bring a number of changes to legislation during the year and Territory Families, Housing and Communities demonstrating a preparedness to work collaboratively on changes to practices to benefit children and families.

#### 4. Build a strong, sustainable, and professional organisation that empowers our staff to deliver high quality outcomes

NAAFLS has invested in considerable professional development throughout the year, including a business planning workshop in September 2020, and all staff training workshops during January 2021 and April 2021 covering training needs in areas from Creating a Behavioural Framework, Giving & Receiving Feedback, Cultural Safety, Signs of Safety Framework and Time Management.

#### 5. Build a transparent, accountable and respectful organisation culture

The NAAFLS Board meet regularly throughout the year and provided strategic policy advice and guidance to the organisation. In September 2020 the Board set the organisation's new strategic direction and have since developed a new logo and positioning of the organisation.



#### NAAFLS' ACHIEVEMENTS CASE STUDY

*NAAFLS solicitors and client support officers are involved in a wide range of advice and support activities, as required by community residents from time to time.*

*In October 2020, NAAFLS supported, during a coronial investigation, the family of a 13 year old boy who died from petrol sniffing.*

*Coroner Greg Cavanagh held a joint inquest into the deaths of Miss B, 17, Master W, 12 and Master JK, 13 who died in remote communities after a long history of volatile substance abuse.*

*Speaking after the inquiry, NAAFLS issued a media release saying that each child lost their life “despite pleading from the families and the community”.*

*The media statement continued, highlighting that “when you have people sniffing in community at such a young age this screams of a range of problems, some of which are clearly the responsibility of the departments we have heard from this past week”.*

*NAAFLS identified that the lack of support from government agencies in the lead up to the children's deaths was “not a question of resources” but “about using those resources appropriately at a local level”. NAAFLS asked government to understand “the differences that make each community unique and special and help the people to embrace their culture, their history and each other to help avoid a repeat of the deaths of Master JK, Master W and Miss B.”*



# Directors' Report

30 June 2021

The directors present their report on North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation for the financial year ended 30 June 2021.

## 1. General information

### Information on Directors

The names of each person who has been a director during the year and to the date of this report are:

- Therese Puruntatameri, *Member for full year*
- Ada Parry, *Member for full year*
- Sue Wainwright, *Member for full year*
- Peter Thomsen, *Appointed in October 2020*

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

### Principal activities

The principal activities of North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation during the financial year were to:

- provide holistic support to families that are victims of family violence,
- provide legal assistance in family matters to women, men and children in specified communities,
- reduce the incidence of violence and abuse in communities through community legal education, early intervention and prevention and advocacy,
- increase the recognition of the problem of violence and abuse in communities through community legal education,
- to operate and maintain a gift fund to be known as "The North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service – Aboriginal Corporation Gift Fund" in accordance with the requirements of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

No significant changes in the nature of the corporation's activity occurred during the financial year.

## 2. Operating results and review of operations for the year

### Operating results

The surplus (deficit) of the Corporation after providing for income tax amounted to \$ 368,431 (2020: \$ (140,255)).

## 3. Other items

### Significant changes in state of affairs

There have been no significant changes in the state of affairs of the Corporation during the year.

### After balance date events continued

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Corporation, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Corporation in future financial years.

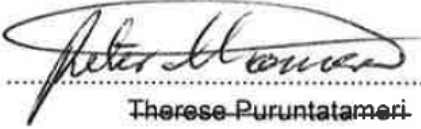

### Environmental issues

The Corporation's operations are not regulated by any significant environmental regulations under a law of the Commonwealth or of a state or territory of Australia.

**Auditor's independence declaration**

The lead auditor's independence declaration in accordance with section 339-50 of the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006, for the year ended 30 June 2021 has been received and can be found on page 3 of the financial report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:

Director:  Director:   
~~Therese Puruntatameri~~ Peter Thomsen ~~Sue Wainwright~~ Ada Parry

Dated this 22nd day of November 2021

**Auditor's Independence Declaration under Section 339-50 of the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 To the Directors of North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation**

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2021, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2001* in relation to the audit;
- and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.



Adam Dohnt (FCA)  
Registered Company Auditor  
Darwin  
Dated: 22 November 2021

# ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation

## Statement of Financial Position

As At 30 June 2021

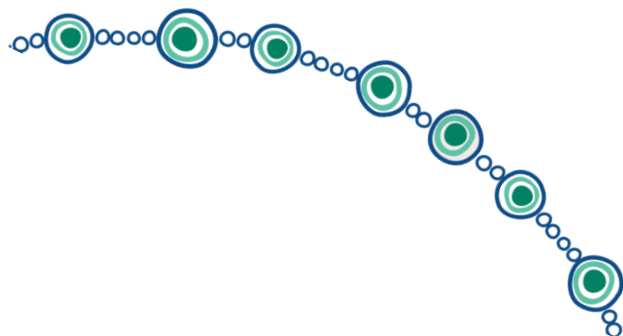
North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
Revenue		43,018	118,142
Interest income	5	2,095	3,869
Other income	4	3,582,689	2,973,286
Employee benefits expense		(2,115,144)	(2,107,316)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(255,842)	(293,136)
Consultancy fees		(39,278)	(15,473)
Travel		(363,616)	(238,459)
Meeting expenses		(1,257)	(1,399)
Other expenses		(462,612)	(549,783)
Finance expenses	5	(21,622)	(29,988)
<b>Surplus (deficit) for the year</b>		<b>368,431</b>	<b>(140,257)</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>368,431</b>	<b>(140,257)</b>

	Note	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	660,235	812,157
Trade and other receivables	7	48,098	52,600
Other assets	8	61,809	68,109
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>770,142</b>	<b>932,866</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	9	197,613	199,748
Right-of-use assets	10	364,957	543,177
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>562,570</b>	<b>742,925</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>1,332,712</b>	<b>1,675,791</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	11	138,660	567,278
Lease liabilities	10	178,427	198,547
Short-term provisions	12	145,231	107,338
Other liabilities	13	6,268	149,354
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>468,586</b>	<b>1,022,517</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Lease liabilities	10	203,383	360,962
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>203,383</b>	<b>360,962</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>671,969</b>	<b>1,383,479</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>660,743</b>	<b>292,312</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained earnings		660,743	292,312
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>660,743</b>	<b>292,312</b>



North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation

For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

**Income and Expenditure Statement**

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>Income</b>		
Interest income	2,095	3,889
Legal Practitioners Fidelity	17,142	15,000
Grants	3,431,315	2,958,287
Other revenue	43,018	118,142
<b>Total income</b>	<b>3,493,570</b>	<b>3,095,298</b>
Advertising	53,196	140,799
Auditors remuneration	12,940	11,000
Bank charges	774	1,237
Casework disbursements	7,914	1,896
Cleaning	24,637	28,557
Computer expenses	16,449	19,001
Depreciation	255,842	293,138
Electricity and water	19,801	23,598
Equipment < \$5,000	25,471	39,141
Interest charged - ATO	137	-
Interest expense on lease liability	21,485	29,998
Insurance	49,547	33,516
Movement in leave provisions	37,892	10,819
Motor vehicle expenses	31,425	31,916
Office equipment	48,108	40,385
Postage	1,570	1,778
Contribution expenditure	8,000	-
Printing and stationery	562	5,138
Project costs	31,456	32,938
Repairs and maintenance	39,498	12,562
Practicing certificates	16,670	14,130
Salaries	1,903,598	1,918,331
Storage costs	3,646	3,538
Subscriptions	5,525	10,138
Sundry expenses	1,928	643
Superannuation contributions	173,654	166,311
Telephone and fax	43,015	48,957
Workers compensation insurance	-	11,855
Workshop expenses	20,332	48,599
Consultancy fees	39,278	15,473
Travel and accommodation	363,616	238,459
Meeting expenses	1,257	1,399
Other operating expenses	148	323
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3,259,371</b>	<b>3,235,555</b>
	<b>234,199</b>	<b>(140,257)</b>
<b>Other items:</b>		
Gain on disposal of assets	134,232	-
	<b>134,232</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<b>368,431</b>	<b>(140,257)</b>

