

Strategic Plan 2023-2033

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters
Aboriginal Corporation

UPDATED: June 2026

Foreword

The GLaWAC Board and Executive have been reviewing our plans to ensure that our priorities are consistent with the current needs and expectations of our Mob.

As the organisation grows, our capacity and needs change also.

We have been in a period of growth for several years, which provides opportunity to further our Whole of Country Plan goals and aspirations.

This strategy reflects our current needs, is more confident of the positive future we seek and is more assertive regarding our self-determined pathway. As a living document it will be reviewed at regular intervals.

The Board has set a planning framework that establishes priorities and accountability and then guides our structure and actions.

It includes the following:

- A description of what we do (Our Work at a Glance)
- Our strategic focus areas
- Our implementation strategy and some key actions

On behalf of the Board and Executive, I present this strategy to you and invite you to partner with us.

Troy McDonald

Chair

We are the Gunaikurnai people
caretakers of our lands & waters

We pay our respects and acknowledge
the resilience and strength of our Ancestors
who came before us and cared for
this country for many of thousands of
years

We pay our respects and
Acknowledge our Ancestors, Elders,
Totems of our Land and Waters

We Acknowledge all Elders & Community
Members that have been on the journey
with us



Our Vision

That the Gunaikurnai community is proud of the way that we represent and include the mob in achieving broad respect for our culture, for the protection and healing of our land and to gain genuine economic independence.

Our Values

- Respect:** We respect our Elders, past and present, and the journey they have travelled to bring justice today.
- Encourage:** We encourage and value leadership by example, creativity and new ideas.
- Service:** We serve the good of all Gunaikurnai people.
- Persistence:** We are persistent in our journey towards self-determination and social justice.
- Empathy:** We listen to understand all views before judgement and decision-making.
- Courage:** We demonstrate courage and integrity in all we do.
- Teamwork:** We encourage and value teamwork.

Our work at a glance

1. The GLaWAC team supports our mob to reconnect with our living Culture, Country and Community.
2. We support opportunities for cultural events and storytelling.
3. We train people to participate in an effective workforce.
4. We are a voice for managing Country how we want to see it done.
5. We help our mob gain employment on Country and in other areas of interest.
6. We build and maintain mutual and enduring relationships.

Continued teamwork is critical to progress further towards our Whole of Country Plan goals, and to self-determination.



At GLaWAC, we are guided by the Gunaikurnai Whole of Country Plan (WOCP), established in 2015 in consultation with our mob.

The WOCP is designed for long-term success and outlines shared goals and responsibilities among various organisations, individuals, and groups.

The goals and success measures for the Gunaikurnai community are listed below. GLaWAC plays a major role in some of these:

1. To have a strong, healthy and happy mob

We will know we are achieving our goal when health indicators and housing rates improve, and our mob are participating in gatherings.

2. To heal our Country

We will know we are achieving our goal when we see the health of our Country improving, we are being involved in land management decisions, and have more of our mob working on Country.

3. To protect and practice our culture

We will know we are achieving our goal when our sites and artefacts are no longer being damaged, our Ancestors are returned to Country, and we have more ceremonies and cultural events being performed.

4. To be respected as the Traditional Owners of our Country

We will know we are achieving our goal when our Welcome to Country and other ceremonial services are in demand, we have partnership agreements with all of our key stakeholders and we have GLaWAC offices across our Country.

5. To have the right to use, manage and control our Country

We will know we are achieving our goal as our Aboriginal Title land estate grows, we have built up enterprises based on natural resource use, and have clear cultural copyright protocols in place.

6. To be economically independent

We will know we are achieving our goal as we build diverse enterprises providing income to the corporation and the mob, and employment of Gunaikurnai people increases.

7. To have a strong focus on learning

We will know we are achieving our goal when we see more young Gunaikurnai finishing school going on to secure employment, and our culture and stories are being taught.





Some great things we have achieved to date

1. The connection between the Elders, Mob and GLaWAC has strengthened, leading to an improved sense of purpose.
2. We have a greater involvement in land management decisions and on-ground works on Country.
3. We have increased the number of ceremonies and cultural events we hold, and many people are getting involved.
4. We have formal partnership agreements with some key strategic partners.
5. Our land estate and our own business enterprises have grown.
6. The number of people employed has increased by about 3 times in 10 years.



Our strategic focus areas

We will be more focused, not busier, to ensure we get to the next stage towards the Gunaikurnai WOCP Goals as follows:

1. **Returning to our cultural and social connection**

We will practice our culture and share our stories more often and in a coordinated way.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 3

2. **Building a strong and respectful Corporation that can deliver on Gunaikurnai aspirations**

We will focus on learning and development, and values and behaviours to work as one mob. – Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 1 & 7

3. **Improving our communication**

We will focus on communicating through formal and informal means.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 1 & 7

4. **Taking care of our Country**

We will set our expectations for managing Country properly and negotiate expectations with our partners.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 2

5. **Strong and effective partnerships**

We will establish self-determination agreements with all our major partners and ensure they are implemented.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 4 & 5

6. **Leveraging economic opportunity**

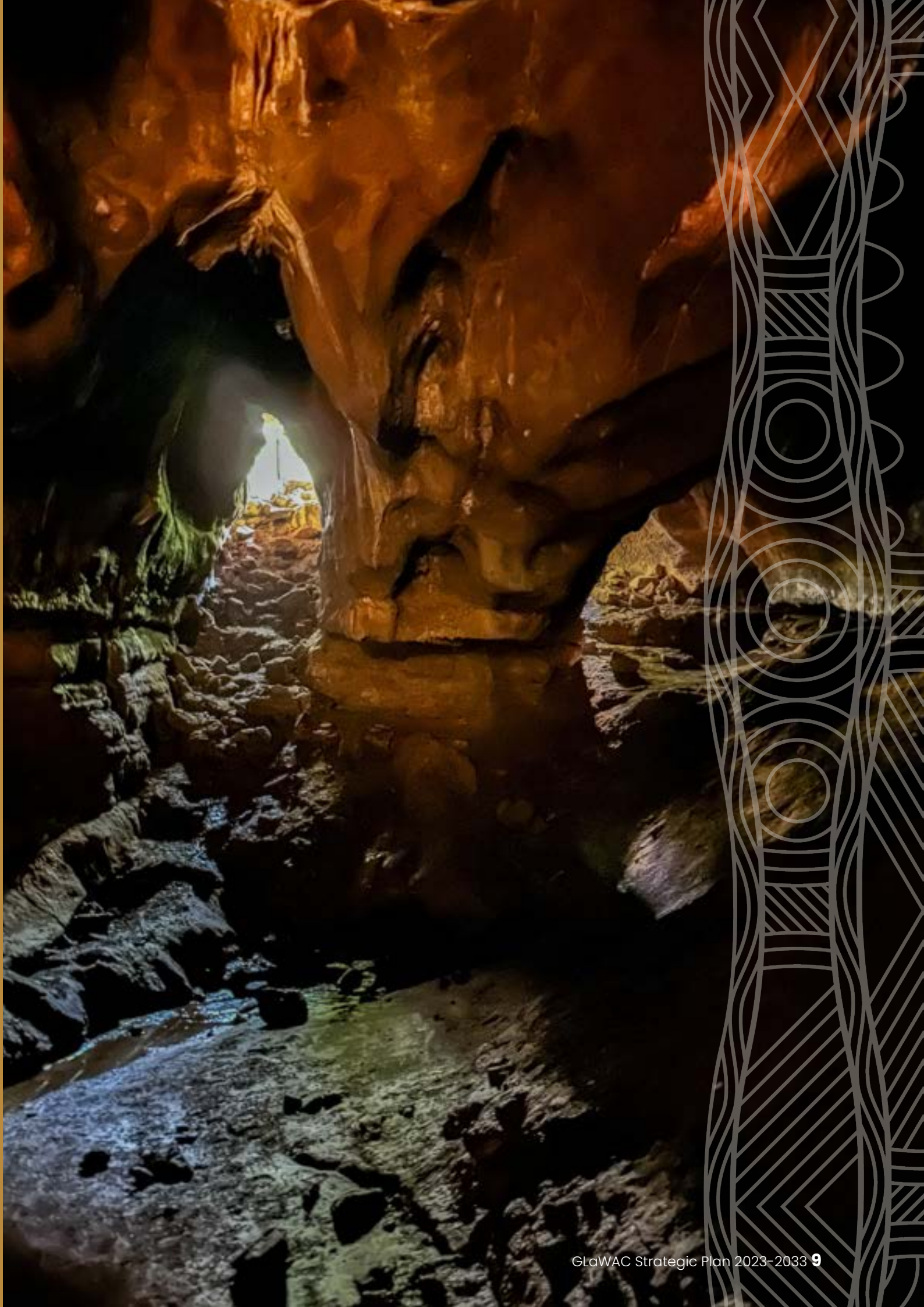
We will sustain GLaWAC with funds we source for ourselves.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goal 6

7. **Building a better future**

We will continue discussing our next steps together and plan to implement our goals over the long term.

– Gunaikurnai WOCP Goals 1 - 7







How we will implement the strategy

Our actions and behaviours

1. The Board and staff will communicate the strategy to all partners.
2. The CEO and Executive will ensure our structure, projects and programs align with our strategy.
3. Our Managers will ensure team work-plans are completed with actions in line with the strategy. The teams will report against the actions to their Managers.
4. To stay focused, we will decline involvement in work that is not leading us towards our goals.
5. To continue to build respect, everyone will work together to ensure our behaviours are consistent with the expectations of GLaWAC.

Our Strategic Plan Actions

We have developed some high-level actions to guide our strategic focus areas. They are described to provide guidance regarding strategic priority as follows:

Returning to our cultural and social connection

1. Include Elders and young people in cultural discussions, meetings, gatherings and youth development activities. Increase gender diversity in these matters.
2. Focus on delivering high quality cultural events and services, invite GLaWAC community members to take part.
3. Set up a Gunaikurnai Language Committee to guide language use and include language in everyday work.
4. Share and teach Gunaikurnai culture with staff, include culture in all programs, and strengthen connections to culture and Country.
5. Ensure Gunaikurnai cultural heritage materials are well looked after in fit for purpose keeping places.



Building a strong and respectful Corporation that can deliver on Gunaikurnai aspirations

1. Keep staff informed and engaged with GLaWAC's work by improving internal communications.
2. Strengthen leadership by improving people management skills and creating a supportive environment for team and individual growth.
3. Focus on supporting our Mob, help Gunaikurnai people learn and grow in their jobs and make more opportunities for Gunaikurnai people.
4. Strengthen how the organisation is run, manage money well, improve systems, and meet all requirements to be more accountable and sustainable.

Improving our communication

1. Advocate for Gunaikurnai people in Gippsland, and create respectful engagement opportunities where Mob are heard.
2. Hold regular community updates and discussion forums so members can contribute to the corporation and its business.
3. Tell people about the value of GLaWAC, particularly the cultural and social outcomes we create.
4. Engage with the government on policy matters under three priority areas; water use and rights, energy and mining, and Gunaikurnai land management and caring for Country.

Taking care of our Country

1. Deliver On Country programs effectively.
2. Use cultural landscapes work to explain Gunaikurnai values for country so they lead our work.
3. Secure and protect Gunaikurnai rights and interests on Country (e.g. Native Title, RAP Appointments).
4. Diversify revenue sources for on country work so GLaWAC can employ more people and provide revenue for the corporation.
5. Revisit and the review the Gunaikurnai Whole of Country Plan.

Leveraging economic opportunity

1. Negotiate and implement Recognition and Settlement Agreement outcomes.
2. Make sure grant and funding outcomes have benefits that align with our strategic plan.

Strong and effective partnerships

1. Use our partnership approach to make sure developments in our region have long term benefits for our mob and our corporation.
2. Create external employment opportunities for our people, insisting on early discussions with partners about best ways to employ our mob.
3. Establish formal self-determination agreements with all our major partners.

Building a better future

1. Help community to look to the future and contribute to discussions about GLaWAC's priorities. E.g. treaty and RSA
2. Build the Gunaikurnai Nation by working on Treaty, RSA review and renegotiation, future fund and other long term benefits identified by community.
3. Identify issues affecting our Country and make sure GLaWAC is involved in decision-making discussions about them.





Funding our Strategic Plan

Our work at a glance listed at the front of this strategy underpins our service offer for community, agencies and businesses working with GLaWAC. We cannot separate the value of these services for financial purposes as many are so closely intertwined. For instance, if we are asked to plant trees, the outcome for our community and the investor is far greater than just trees planted.

Our own purpose and self-determined goals guide the service offer we provide, so these matters are a high priority for GLaWAC that must be funded in some way.

Therefore, GLaWAC will move gradually to a pricing model that better represents the full-service offer. Our decisions in regards to allocation of those resources will be guided by our own strategic priorities.

Implementation will be gradual. Initially, we will develop, communicate and apply full cost pricing based on our service offer for all projects delivered with our government and agency partners.

Further, GLaWAC will seek to retain the capital balance of our trust account and fixed assets to the equivalent of accumulated CPI. This means we are aiming for the original \$10 million trust fund, any additional funds and purchased fixed assets to retain the same value including inflation. Surplus funds above that mark may be allocated to our self-determined priorities.

The GLaWAC Board will monitor the performance of these funding changes on an annual basis and adjust our pricing or priorities accordingly.





**Gunaikurnai Land and Waters
Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)**

Under the guidance of the Board of Directors and Elders Council, GLaWAC is the Registered Aboriginal Party that represents Gunaikurnai people and their aspirations for Native Title, cultural heritage, land, water and natural resource management.

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