



STRATEGIC PLAN

2022 - 2032

We acknowledge and pay respect to our Elders past and present and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, please be aware that this document may contain names and images of deceased persons.

VISION

'To grow First Nations-controlled marine and seafood industry related businesses'.

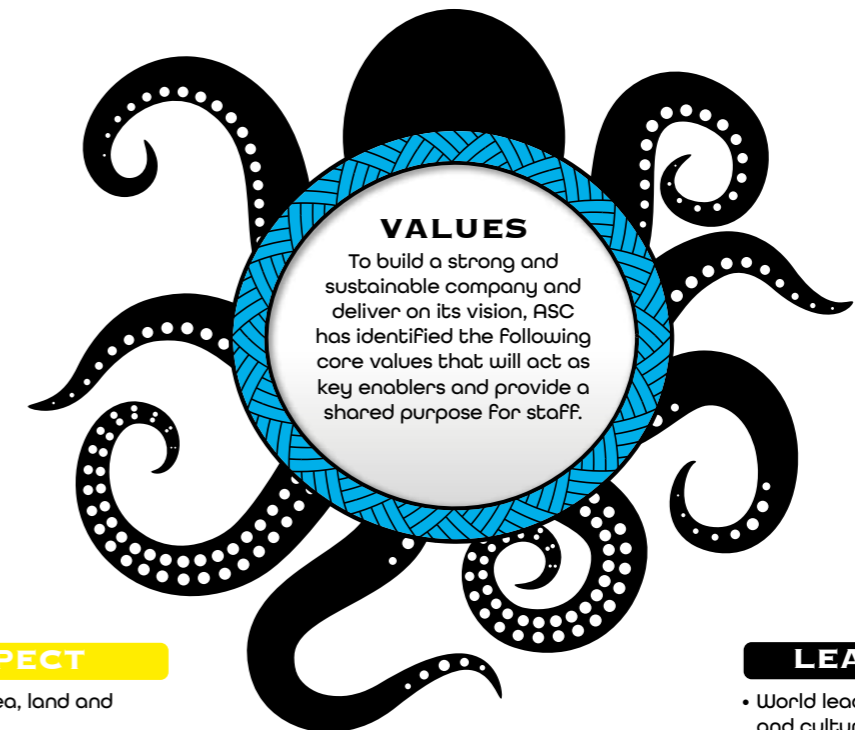
To support this vision, the Aboriginal Sea Company (ASC) will focus on two key areas:

1. Maritime Investments

- Acquire commercial licences
- Operate fishing tourism businesses
- Support and invest in aquaculture opportunities
- Explore freight logistics opportunities
- Explore retail marine supply opportunities
- Provide resource management and explore co-operative models
- Provide marketing and sales advice

2. Social Opportunities

- Support and invest in blue carbon initiatives
- Support governance via a cultural advisory model at a local context
- Provide leadership in the sector through training, educating and inspiring others
- Support autonomy-based business models with individuals, families, clan groups and communities.



VALUES

To build a strong and sustainable company and deliver on its vision, ASC has identified the following core values that will act as key enablers and provide a shared purpose for staff.

RESPECT

- For country, sea, land and sacred sites
- For culture, lore/law practices and native title rights
- For people - listening to other voices and communicating openly

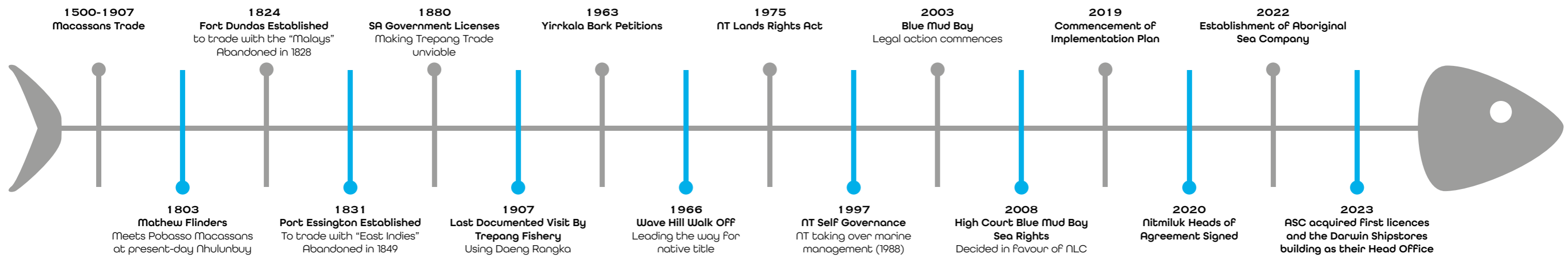
INTEGRITY

- Doing the right thing through the right processes
- Following through with what we say
- Acknowledging where we come from and who we represent
- Decisions are made in the interests of people, country and natural resources

LEADERSHIP

- World leaders in environmental and cultural stewardship
- Create an enduring legacy
- Grow wealth in remote areas
- Peak body leadership for our people and members interest in sea country

THE HISTORY OF ABORIGINAL FISHING AND TRADE PRACTICES IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ABORIGINAL SEA COMPANY



Pre-colonisation, the saltwater people along the Northern Territory (NT) coastline and its islands managed their own fishing practices. Fishing regulations were originally part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, and dictated when and where people could fish, as well as management of trading and exporting activities.

For centuries, the Makassar people (also referred to as the Macassans) from the region of Sulawesi in Indonesia would venture into these coastal waters searching for Trepang (a sea cucumber that is still highly valued by South Asian communities). They would arrive in their ships, called Perahu, at the start of the dry season and return to Sulawesi before the wet season started, often allowing community members to return with them. Access for the Macassans to sea and land for fishing and camping activities were negotiated with the various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the coastline. Trade was large, with evidence suggesting some 1,000 Macassans would travel each season to the NT's shores and are reflected in various songs, language, paintings and traditions of the saltwater people.

In the early 1900's, the establishment of foreign government structures and systems removed ownership and control of sea country away from Traditional Owners. During this period, regulations and tariffs were introduced that made the trepang becoming economically unviable, resulting in the last documented visit by a Perahu occurring in 1907. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities always remained in contact with these waters, keeping their culture and knowledge alive within the family groups and trading with each other.



Fishing with nets and spears, Darwin, NT, c.1920. Photograph by Bernard Leslie Hornshaw. AIATSIS Collection, from the aiatsis.gov.au website.

In 2008, almost 100 years after the last Perahu departed, the Blue Mud Bay native title decision rightly recognised this continual contact of Aboriginal Territorians and their custodianship of the sea and intertidal zones along it.

Custodianship and formal control of these designated waters were handed back to the coastal communities that fall under the jurisdictions of the Northern Land Council (NLC), Tiwi Land Council (TLC) and Anindilyakwa Land Council (ALC).

The last 15 years have seen discussion and planning on the most effective means of managing these fisheries, helping communities to develop sustainable business models, and keeping culture alive and ongoing.

In 2019, the NT Seafood Council, the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT, the NT Guided Fishing Industry Association and the NT Government (NTG) worked together to develop the Blue Mud Bay Implementation Action Plan. The Plan was signed-off by the NLC and NTG in July 2020, and in 2022 the Aboriginal Sea Company was established to oversee the transition of Fisheries back to Aboriginal businesses and communities in the Territory.

Sea country continues to play an important role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture today, as it provides a constant food source for communities, as well as a place for families and community to gather and practice their traditions, ceremonies and cultural knowledge.



THE CEO ROBERT (BO) CARNE

Bo Carne was born in Darwin but is of Jabirr Jabirr and Bardi descent from the Dampier Peninsula in WA. He is the inaugural Chief Executive Officer for the Aboriginal Sea Company which is made up of members from across the Anindilyakwa, Tiwi and Northern Land Councils. Bo joined ASC after 25 years in the Northern Territory Government across multiple roles including, the Director Local Decision Making (LDM) and Director Aboriginal Interpreter Service with the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet (DCMC). Prior to joining DCMC, Bo worked with NT Fisheries for 17 years, influencing the development of many of the Indigenous engagement and development strategies (both Territory and National), including Indigenous employment, economic development, resource management and research. Some of which have been recognised by a number of Territory and National Awards.



THE ORGANISATION

On 18 February 2022, the ASC was established and incorporated as an outcome of the Blue Mud Bay Implementation Action Plan. With over 85 percent of the NT coastline already subject to Aboriginal ownership, the ASC will play a pivotal role in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' to unlock and grasp the opportunities presented in the fishing, seafood, marine and aquaculture industries in Australia.

At a high-level, ASC's key purpose will be to:

- **Support the protection of the cultural rights and management** of sea country and sacred sites with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- **Provide education, training, and mentoring supports** to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses;
- **Investing in new business opportunities** in the commercial fishing, seafood, marine and aquaculture industry;
- **Advocating for the best interests** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and the sector more broadly; and
- **Supporting the development of research, government policy and data collection** on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sector.

In the 18 months since its inception, the company established its Board, purchased an office space, as well as a marine business and acquired a number of mudcrab licences, black jewfish quotas and barramundi licences and purchased the Darwin Fish Market.

THE BOARD

The ASC Board of Directors is made up of equal senior representatives from the NLC, TLC and ALC.

Each Director brings their unique understanding of fisheries and business management from a traditional aspect, as well as an understanding of non-Indigenous commercial practices. Their oral history on management of the seas and intertidal zones stems back thousands of years, well before the Macassans and colonial settlement took place. It is fortunate this knowledge has been protected to date and the company is grateful that it can now utilise and benefit from Board members' knowledge to again sustainably manage sea country.

The Board views clear, transparent and frequent communication to all stakeholders as being critical to ASC's success and a reflection of its values - Respect, Integrity and Leadership. Through the combined cultural and business knowledge and expertise of the ASC Board of Directors, the ASC will be guided through a complex operating environment while upholding and protecting the culture and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This Strategic Plan outlines the key priorities that the ASC Board will focus on over the next 10 years to achieve its vision, and drive positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, business and communities.



THE STAKEHOLDERS

The Aboriginal Sea Company recognises that there are many sectors that the company will engage with – the fishing, seafood, marine and aquaculture sectors. In addition, the company recognises that success will also involve working with non-Indigenous businesses, industry groups, State and Federal Government stakeholders and ENGO's.

ASC is committed to engaging with each of these stakeholders in a manner that is reflective of our values and encourages respectful listening, acknowledgement of our practices, culture and rights, and supports shared learning and innovation.

ASC GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1

Reclaiming rights and resuming control

The rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to sea country and coastline is recognised and acknowledged.

PRINCIPLE 2

Respecting different voices

The diversity, context and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is understood, and that partnership and engagement practices reflect diverse and multiple voices.

PRINCIPLE 3

Communication is key

Communication from ASC is clear and transparent.

PRINCIPLE 4

Cultural competence

Partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and communities are characterised by high levels of cultural safety, whereby engagement is culturally appropriate and respectful.

PRINCIPLE 5

Sustainable benefits

Partnerships that are mutually beneficial, where knowledge and expertise are shared in ways that benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and ASC.

PRINCIPLE 6

You can't be what you can't see

Capacity building through partnerships that support participatory governance, shared learning and supporting young people to be future leaders.

PRINCIPLE 7

Learning for the future

Decisions made are drawn from the cultural knowledge and wisdom of Elders and communities, and supplemented with evidence-based data.

PRINCIPLE 8

Self-determination

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination is recognised and respected.

BRINGING THE VISION TO LIFE

To achieve our vision, the ASC Board has identified a number of key strategic priorities for the company to focus its efforts on over the next 10 years. These priorities have been organised into a three-staged approach:

- **Year 1 (Foundational Year)** – The strategic priorities listed will help ASC to build a solid base or foundation that will strengthen the company’s operating model and set the company up for long-term success.
- **Year 2 & 3 (Medium Term)** – The strategic priorities listed will focus on developing, planning and embedding more permanent solutions and business opportunities to ensure there is a stable revenue stream.
- **Year 4 – 10 (Long-Term)** – The strategic priorities listed will focus on providing direction for the company to achieve sustainability and improve its market position in the Australian fishing, seafood, marine and aquaculture industry.

The guiding principles and values are recognised as key enablers to ASC achieving its vision, and therefore will underpin the Strategic Plan, as well as the behaviours of ASC staff, who will be expected to demonstrate and reflect this in their ongoing engagement with ASC’s members, partners and key stakeholders.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

YEAR 1	<p>THE FOUNDATION YEAR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design and promote ASC branding and materials. 2. Develop a Communication Strategy. 3. Strengthen and maintain relationships with key stakeholders and community. 4. Establish an MOU arrangement with land councils. 5. Explore investment and business opportunities in the marine and seafood industry (NT priority). 6. Develop a business plan to support the acquired mud crab licences. 7. Purchase an office and identify any other assets/infrastructure needs. 8. Identify and explore partnerships in the aquaculture industry.
YEAR 2 & 3	<p>THE MEDIUM TERM</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Purchase commercial/fishing tour operator (FTO) licenses. 2. Maintain and expand seafood industry education and mentoring programs. 3. Engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses who hold Aboriginal coastal licenses to support their growth and market presences (ACLs, Fish Traps, Aquaculture). 4. Execute on joint venture opportunities identified in Year 1 as approved by the Board. 5. Provide input into and support for the implementation of Sea Country Management Plans. 6. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commercial fishing businesses to operate with a social license as ‘environmental and cultural stewards’. 7. Engage with Traditional Owners to inform Federal and State Government fishing and seafood regulations in policy, advocacy and research.
YEAR 4-10	<p>THE LONG TERM</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use equity to purchase commercial fishing licenses. 2. Increase Aboriginal participation in employment in the seafood and marine industry. 3. Become an internationally known brand. 4. Be the major contributor to decision-making with government and peak body/industry groups that are in the best interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses in the fishing, seafood, marine and aquaculture industry. 5. Become an industry leader in environmentally sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices. 6. Support Aboriginal participation and decision-making in the development of fishing and aquaculture regulations, strategic management planning, harvest strategies and associated industries.



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