



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure,  
Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

INCOMING GOVERNMENT BRIEFING 2025

# Northern Australia

## Table of Contents



# Northern Australia

Secretary's letter

Establishing your office

## About the department

---

Budget outcomes

Department budget

Organisational structure

Leadership team

Departmental staff

## Your portfolio

---

Programs

Portfolio entities

Other boards and structures

Significant ministerial roles

Portfolio legislation

## Your priorities

s47C



Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure,  
Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE

**Australian Government****Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts****Secretary  
Jim Betts**

The Hon Madeleine King MP  
Minister for Northern Australia  
Australian Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Congratulations on your election and reappointment, and welcome back to the Northern Australia portfolio.

This portfolio is crucial to delivering on the commitments made by your Government to the people of Australia.

Your Incoming Government Briefing is attached and comprises two volumes:

- The 'Your priorities' volume, s47C, s47E(d) [REDACTED]
- The 'Your portfolio' volume, which provides information on the department and your portfolio, including structure, significant roles, programs, budget and financials, and legislation.

As always, I can be contacted directly at any time, and my office is available to assist yours with any questions or requests as needed.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with you to deliver your priorities and the Government's agenda.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Betts".

Jim Betts

13 May 2025

OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE

## OFFICIAL

### Establishing your office

# Establishing your office

Our first priority is to assist you in establishing your office.

While you reach agreement with the Prime Minister's office on the number of staff allocated to your office, and staff are being appointed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* in the first three months, the department will support the establishment of your office through the provision of a 'transition team'.

Where you hold a number of portfolios, there will be discussions across relevant agencies and with the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet about how best to service your office, including which agency will take a lead support role.

The department provides a range of services to support you and the effective operation of your office.

**Within the next 48 hours:** Senior staff will be in contact with you and your office in the next day or so to commence discussions about your immediate and ongoing support requirements. Your incoming Chief of Staff will be separately provided with a detailed overview of available services.

The department will provide you and your Chief of Staff with a networked laptop, mobile phone and iPad. We have a dedicated Premier Support function to assist with your IT and mobile communications needs 24/7 in your Parliament House and Ministerial Offices. We will arrange for ICT access and provisional security clearances for your transition team.

**Within the next 2 weeks:** The department will support your media team with media services; support you to select one or more Departmental Liaison Officers to help manage the flow of briefing and correspondence between your office and the department; provide access and support to use the Parliamentary Document Management System (PDMS+) and the Cabinet system (CabNet+); and arrange briefings for staff on security and document handling.

These departmental services are in addition and separate to services provided by the Department of Parliamentary Services at Parliament House and the support provided by the Department of Finance's Ministerial and Parliamentary Services, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority. The services provided by these agencies may include briefing your key staff on Cabinet and security issues; determining your Parliament House office location and when it will be set up for you; allocating your Commonwealth Parliamentary Office/ Ministerial Office (this can take two weeks); coordinating secure communications for all your offices; and arranging a car with a driver.

#### The primary points of contact to assist you with establishing your office are:

##### Maree Bridger

Chief Operating Officer

Phone: (02) s22(1)(a)(ii)

Mobile: s22(1)(a)(ii)

##### Kate Feros

Assistant Secretary, Government Services

Phone: (02) s22(1)(a)(ii)

Mobile: s22(1)(a)(ii)

**Premier Support:** s22(1)(a)(ii), mobile: s22(1)(a)(ii) |  
s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

## About the department

The functions and work of the department touch the lives of Australians every day.

We work with our partners to enable connected, productive, safe, sustainable and culturally vibrant communities in our cities, regions and territories to improve the lives of Australians. Across the department and with our portfolio entities, we work collaboratively to deliver our programs, projects and services in the major infrastructure, transport, communications and arts sectors, supporting our regions, cities and territories.

This includes:

- steering nation-wide infrastructure projects that sustain economic and social development, disaster resilience and recovery, and create long-term productivity benefits for producers, businesses and communities;
- striving for the safe use of the transport network and supporting our transport modes to achieve long-term commercial sustainability, productivity improvements and decarbonisation;
- connecting and empowering communities across Australian cities, regions and territories to improve productivity and liveability;
- ensuring Australia's media policy settings are fit-for-purpose and Australians have access to the benefits of modern telecommunications and postal services; and
- working with the arts and cultural community realise the economic, cultural, educational and social importance of a vibrant sectors.

The department has a national footprint with people located in each state and territory capital city, regional areas, and non-self-governing territories. This broad coverage fosters greater collaboration both within the department and with our partners, strengthening our diversity and, most importantly, contributing to better outcomes for all Australians.

The department is working across government and with First Nations communities and organisations to deliver on our commitments under the National Closing the Gap Agreement, including the implementation of the four Priority Reforms to transform the way in which we work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations.

We aim to provide you with high-quality advice on policy, implementation and delivery. Our advice is evidence-based and informed by research, consultation, analysis and broader governmental objectives. We identify trends, gaps and emerging issues as well as risk in markets and society.

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

## Outcomes



### Outcome 1

Improved infrastructure across Australia through investment in and coordination of transport and other infrastructure



### Outcome 2

An efficient, sustainable, competitive, safe and secure transport system for all transport users through regulation, financial assistance and safety investigations



### Outcome 3

Strengthening the sustainability, capacity and diversity of Australia's cities and regions including northern Australia, including through facilitating local partnerships between all levels of government and local communities; through investment in infrastructure and measures that stimulate economic growth; and providing grants and financial assistance



### Outcome 4

Good governance and service delivery in the Australian territories including through the maintenance and improvement of the laws and services for non-self governing territories, and the overarching legislative framework for self-governing territories



### Outcome 5

Promote an innovative and competitive communications sector, through policy development, advice and program delivery, so all Australians can realise the full potential of digital technologies and communications services



### Outcome 6

Participation in, and access to, Australia's arts and culture through developing and supporting cultural expression

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

## Department budget

	2025–26 (\$ million)
<b>Total resourcing</b>	<b>16,557</b>
<b>Administered</b>	<b>15,881</b>
<b>Departmental</b>	<b>676</b>
Departmental appropriation	511
Departmental (capital)	16
*Non-operating resourcing (Prior year appropriations, section 74 external revenue, special accounts)	149

\*These amounts do not contribute to the department's ordinary operating funding.

## Other funding administered by the department

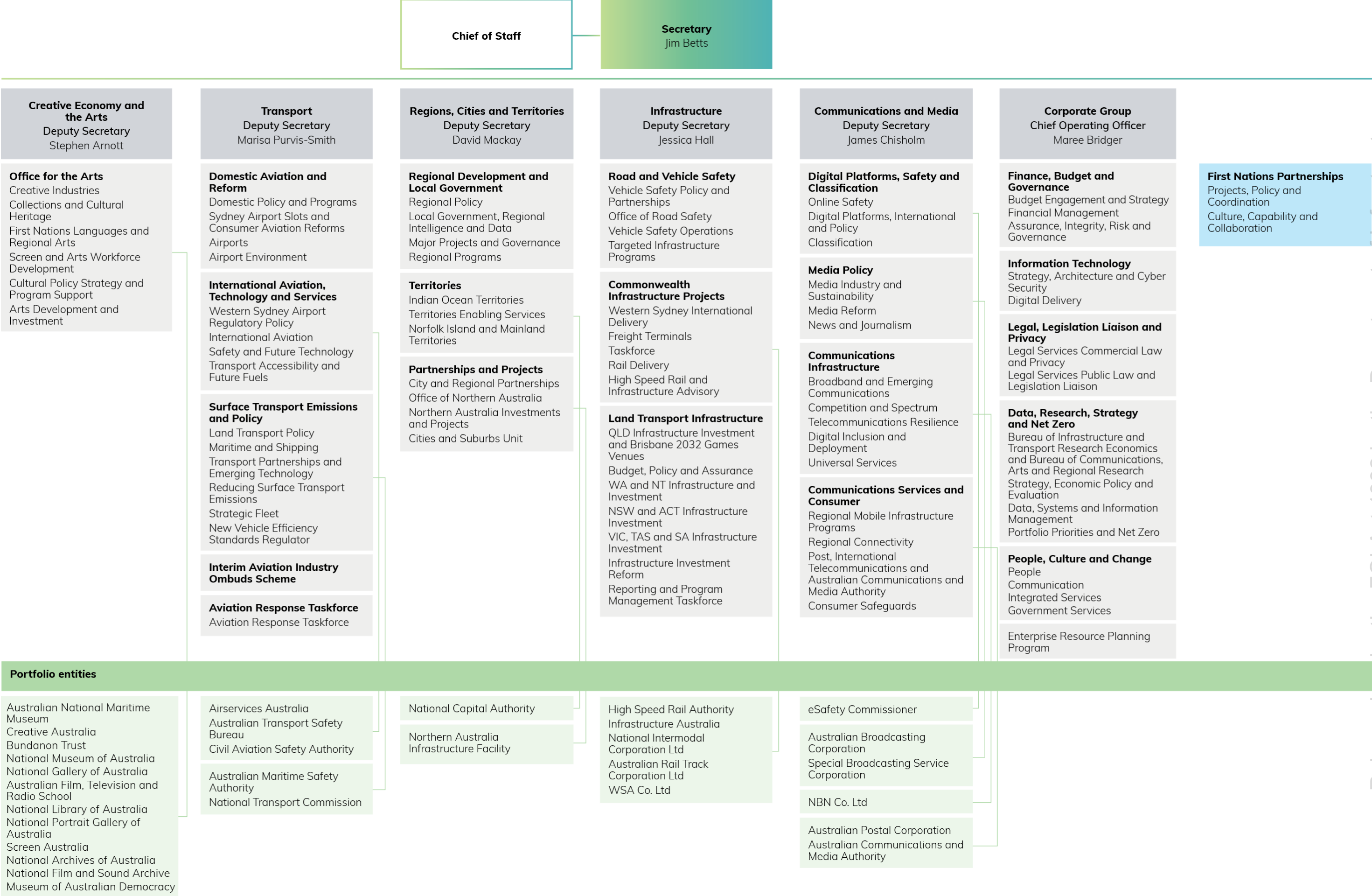
	2025–26 (\$ million)
Administered funding paid to states and territories through the Treasury and National Partnership payments (not included in the total resourcing)	15,150
Funding paid through the department to portfolio entities	2,766

In 2023 the department commissioned independent financial analysis to inform a Functional Review (the Review) of the department, which was completed in 2024. Undertaking the Review was a recommendation of the 2023 capability review of the department by the Australian Public Service Commission.

s47C, s47E(d)

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**







**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

## Leadership team

The department's executive comprises the Secretary and six Deputy Secretaries. Deputy Secretaries support the Secretary and oversee portfolio policy, regulatory and operational responsibilities across all business divisions.



**Jim Betts,**  
**Secretary**

Jim commenced as Secretary in July 2022.

Jim has more than 35 years public service experience in government agencies across the UK, Victoria, New South Wales and now the Australian Public Service.

Prior to becoming Secretary, Jim was a partner at strategy consultancy EY Port Jackson Partners, having previously led the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) from 2019 to 2021 where as Secretary he oversaw the state's infrastructure program and led development of two State Infrastructure Strategies. From 2013 to 2019, Jim was Chief Executive Officer of Infrastructure NSW and, before that held a number of senior Victorian Government roles including Secretary for the Transport Department and Director of Public Transport.

Jim is a Commissioner on the National Transport Commission and sits on the Boards of Roads Australia and Infrastructure Partnerships Australia. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Modern History (Hons) from Oxford and a Masters in Management Science from Imperial College, London.

02 s22(1)(a)(ii) | s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:infrastructure.gov.au)



**Jessica Hall,**  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Infrastructure**

Jessica is the Deputy Secretary for Infrastructure.

This role includes responsibility for over \$120 billion of Commonwealth investment in transport infrastructure including Commonwealth-only infrastructure projects, such as Western Sydney International Airport, land transport infrastructure jointly funded with other jurisdictions, and Olympic and Paralympic sports infrastructure; as well as road and vehicle safety policy and regulation.

Previously, Jessica was First Assistant Secretary in several roles across the department, including in Surface Transport Policy during COVID, where she negotiated opening state borders to the movement of freight. She has had senior roles in the science, and education portfolios, including reforming the international students market in Australia, and has amassed over 20 years of experience in addressing economic, regulatory and social policy matters within the Australian Public Service.

Jessica has completed an Executive program in infrastructure financing at Harvard Kennedy School, and attained Masters degrees in both International Law and Asian Studies.

02 s22(1)(a)(ii) | s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:infrastructure.gov.au)

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

**Marisa Purvis-Smith,**  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Transport**

Marisa is the Deputy Secretary for Transport.

This role includes responsibility for International Aviation, Technology & Services, Domestic Aviation & Reform, and Surface Transport Emissions and Policy Divisions. Between November 2024 and April 2025, Marisa led the Aviation Response Taskforce responsible for the Government's response to Rex Airline's voluntary administration. This is now included within Transport Group.

Marisa brings a wealth of experience, including a strong understanding of government, regional and community issues, including as Deputy Secretary of Water Infrastructure and Northern Australia and First Assistant Secretary, Regional Development, Local Government and Regional Recovery. Prior to joining the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, Marisa worked in the federal Treasury in a range of roles, including tax policy, tax costings and analysis, Commonwealth-State relations, and economic forecasting.

02 s22(1)(a)(ii) | s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)



**David Mackay,**  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Regions, Cities and**  
**Territories**

David is the Deputy Secretary for Regions, Cities and Territories.

This role includes responsibility for over \$3 billion in grants programs, for governance, infrastructure, and service delivery in Australia's non-self-governing territories, and for policy advice on economic growth and living standards in Australia's regions and cities. The group comprises approximately 400 staff located in cities and regional centres across Australia, and in the external territories. Prior to this role, David served as First Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Investment, and for Cities.

David has also held senior executive roles in the Attorney-General's Department, in the Department of Health and Ageing, and in the Department of Finance. He has served in senior leadership roles in the New Zealand Treasury, and in McKinsey & Company's Australian public sector practice.

David is the Commonwealth-appointed Director of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, and is a Councillor of the Institute of Public Administration Australia (ACT). He holds degrees in Arts and Communications from the University of Sydney and Monash University, is a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and is an alumnus of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

02 s22(1)(a)(ii) | s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

**James Chisholm,**  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Communications and Media**

James is the Deputy Secretary for Communications and Media.

This role includes responsibility for broadband, telecommunications, media and digital platform industry policy, infrastructure investment and consumer policy, radio-communications policy, online safety as well as oversight of the government's shareholding interests in Australia Post and the National Broadband Network.

Prior to joining the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, James was the Chief Executive Officer of the Net Zero Economy Agency. James previously worked in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in a number of roles leading on matters including environment; energy and climate policy; resilience and climate management; agriculture and water; industry policy; infrastructure; regional development; communications; tax and employment policy; trade; and digital technology.

James spent a number of years in the Department of Treasury in the areas of competition policy, financial markets policy and international finance and development. James has also worked as a lawyer in the private sector and at the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

02 s22(1)(a)(ii) | s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:infrastructure.gov.au)



**Stephen Arnott,**  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Creative Economy and the Arts**

Stephen is the Deputy Secretary for Creative Economy and the Arts.

Stephen has more than 20 years' experience in the Australian Public Services in arts, screen, creative industries, communications and technology policy areas.

Stephen was promoted to the Senior Executive Services in 2009. He was awarded a Public Service Medal in 2005 for his work reforming Australia's symphony orchestras. Previously Stephen helped run a small business providing data security services to corporate clients in Sydney. Stephen has a doctorate in French Philosophy from the University of New England where he lectured in both philosophy and psychology for a number of years.

02 s22(1)(a)(ii) | s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:infrastructure.gov.au)

Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

**Maree Bridger,**  
**Chief Operating Officer**

Maree is the Chief Operating Officer.

Maree has worked in the Australian Public Service for 17 years across a range of policy, program, regulatory, corporate and service delivery functions and she has held senior roles at Services Australia, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection and the Australian Customs Service.

Prior to joining the Australian Public Service Maree had 17 years in the private sector and held a variety of roles at the Shell Company, Osborne Computers and Austar United Communications. She also spent eight of these years working as a management consultant, with a specific focus on organisational change, strategic planning, maximising competitive advantage and building organisational capability.

Maree has a Bachelor of Economics from ANU, an Executive MBA from the AGSM at UNSW and is a Certified Practicing Accountant.

02 s22(1)(a)(ii) | s22(1)(a)(ii)

s22(1)(a)(ii) [@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:s22(1)(a)(ii)@infrastructure.gov.au)

Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure,  
Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

## About the department

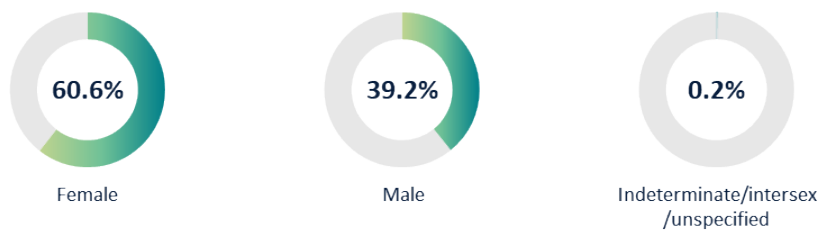
## Departmental staff

As at 31 March 2025 the department had a total employee headcount of 2,426 people<sup>1</sup>, excluding staff on long-term unpaid leave or temporary transfer to external agencies. Over 78.2 per cent of these staff are located in the ACT, but the department has staff located in all other states and territories as well as internationally.

### Staff levels



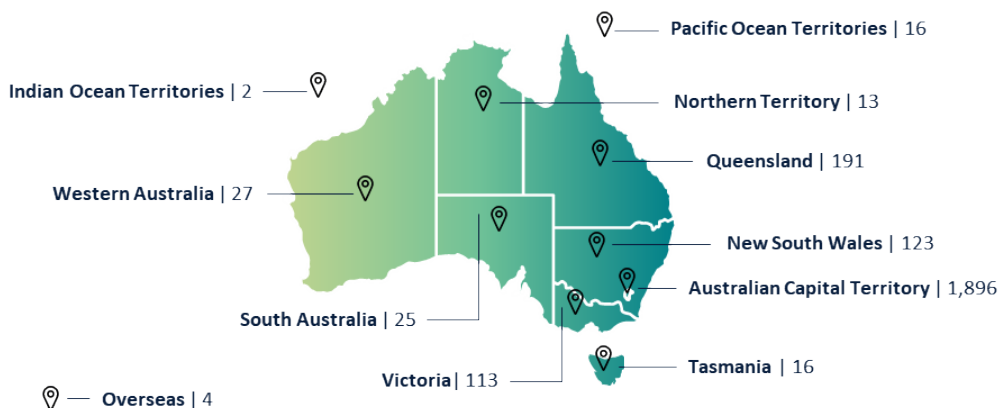
### Department gender split



### Ongoing vs non-ongoing



### Location of staff



<sup>1</sup> While the above section refers to ASL as a way of aligning staffing data more readily to the department's budget allocation, this data is based on headcount – the actual employees of the department.

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE

# Your portfolio

‘Your portfolio’ volume provides an overview of the administrative, governance and funding arrangements for the portfolio. This includes:

## Programs

This section lists your portfolio programs and summarises funding, and program length. The program funding outlined in this section relates to administered funding and special accounts.

## Portfolio entities

The portfolio encompasses oversight of an entity governed under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

## Other boards and structures

This section provides you with an overview of the various boards and governance bodies associated with the portfolio, including statutory boards, advisory councils, committees and panels.

## Significant ministerial roles

You hold a significant position on the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum, summarised in this section. The department supports your participation as well as the effective operation of this Forum.

## Portfolio legislation

Included in this section are details of your portfolio’s legislation. The legislation outlined is current as at 4 May 2025 and may not match the Administrative Arrangements Order (AAO) created on 13 October 2022 (as amended on 29 July 2024).

The AAOs will be updated by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to align with the swearing in of the Ministry.

Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure,  
Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE



**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

## Programs

Program	Total funding over forward estimates 2025–26 to 2028–29 (\$m) Administered	Program terminating date or 'ongoing'	Contact
<i>Program 3.4 – Northern Australia</i>			
<b>Northern Australia Development Program</b> The program is closed, but residual payments remain. It provided grants to support businesses and projects in the north that contribute to transformational change in their local region.	\$1.0	30 June 2025	Lisa Rauter, First Assistant Secretary, Partnerships and Projects Division; 02 s22(1)(a)(ii)   s22(1)(a)(ii)

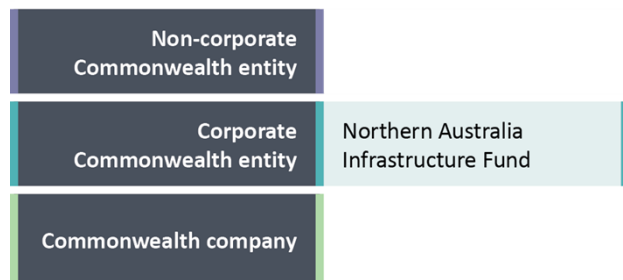
Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

## Portfolio entities

### Northern Australia portfolio



## Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF)

### Outcome 3

#### Description

The Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) is a \$7 billion special investment vehicle. Its primary purpose is to support economic growth in northern Australia through financial (loan) support for infrastructure. NAIF provides financial assistance, primarily in the form of loans, to private sector project proponents to deliver infrastructure projects. NAIF also seeks to facilitate sustainable First Nations economic outcomes through supporting First Nation's owned projects, and facilitating First Nations procurement and employment opportunities in NAIF supported projects.

NAIF supports projects in a diverse range of sectors, including resources, agriculture, transport and logistics, critical minerals and renewable energy. NAIF has also supported social infrastructure projects in housing and student accommodation. Examples of recent NAIF projects include the Arafure Nolans Bore Rare Earths project (mining neodymium and praseodymium) near Alice Springs, the Alpha high purity alumina (HPA) First Project in Gladstone and the Cairns Seniors Community (modular) Housing project.

NAIF came into existence on 1 July 2016 as a corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Act 2016* (NAIF Act). The responsible Ministers, you (the Minister) and the Minister for Finance must, by legislative instrument, give directions to the NAIF Board about the performance of NAIF's functions. This is known as the 'Investment Mandate'. The current Investment Mandate is the *Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Investment Mandate Direction 2023*. It is also customary for the responsible Ministers to provide NAIF with a new Statement of Expectations.

#### Your role and responsibilities

You are responsible for:

- Administering the NAIF Act and the Investment Mandate (issued jointly with the Minister for Finance).
  - Under section 9 of the NAIF Act, the responsible Ministers must, by legislative instrument, give directions to the Board about the performance of the NAIF's functions.
  - You will issue a Statement of Expectations, which outlines expectations, priorities and guidance for the NAIF Board to consider in discharging its responsibilities, to shape the NAIF's delivery of its

**OFFICIAL:SENSITIVE**

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

responsibilities. There is no set period or expiry date for the Statement of Expectations, and it can be updated as needed to ensure alignment with Government policies and priorities (note: the last Statement of Expectation was signed on 7 December 2022).

- NAIF Board appointments.
  - Under section 15 of the NAIF Act, you are responsible for appointing the NAIF Board. Board members are appointed on a part-time basis for no more than three years. They are considered significant appointments under the Cabinet Handbook. There are two board appointments expiring in December 2025.
- Considering all proposals by the Board to provide loan financing.
  - Under section 11 of the NAIF Act, you have 21 days after notice is provided to you to consider a proposal to provide financial assistance. During this time, you may, by written notice:
    - › extend your consideration period to 60 days;
    - › notify the NAIF you do not intend to reject the proposal; or
    - › reject the proposal (also known as a veto).
  - You may only reject a proposal where it would:
    - › be inconsistent with the objectives and policies of the Australian Government; or
    - › have adverse implications for Australia's national or domestic security; or
    - › have an adverse impact on Australia's international reputation or foreign relations.
- Responding to the 2024 statutory Review of the NAIF Act:
  - Section 43 of the NAIF Act required a review of the NAIF Act after 30 June 2024. The Independent Expert Panel established to conduct the Review provided its report to the Minister on 12 February 2025.

Under section 43 of the NAIF Act, the Minister is required to table the report in each House of Parliament within 15 sitting days after the report is given to the Minister. The report has not yet been tabled, and there are 10 sitting days remaining within this deadline.

Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE****Board members and leadership****Name:** Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Board**Type:** Management board

**Description:** The Board was established on 1 July 2016. Its legislative functions include making investment decisions within the scope of the NAIF's Investment Mandate and ensuring the proper, efficient and effective performance of the NAIF's functions. The Board has extensive experience and expertise in northern Australia across a range of sectors, including infrastructure, government, finance, construction and law.

Section 13 of the NAIF Act, requires the Board consist of the Chair, between four and six other members, and the Secretary or their designated alternative (the Ex-officio member), totalling six to eight members.

Member's name	Position	Current term expiry date
Ms Tracey Hayes	Chair	30 June 2026
Ms Vanessa Elliott AM	Director	30 June 2026
Mr Stephen Margetic	Director	30 June 2026
Ms Kate George	Director	31 December 2025
Mr Grant Cassidy OAM	Director	31 December 2025
Mr Robert Edel	Director	30 June 2027
Ms Lisa Hewitt	Director	30 June 2027
Mr Jim Betts	Director	Determined by the appointer

**Funding profile**

The NAIF is not directly appropriated. Appropriations are made to the department, which are then paid to the NAIF and are considered 'departmental' for all purposes. The NAIF Act Review recommendations propose that this current funding arrangement be changed to provide the NAIF with more independence.

As at 2025–26 Budget	2025–26 (\$m)	2026–27 (\$m)	2027–28 (\$m)	2028–29 (\$m)
Revenue from Government	22,212	22,851	23,111	23,410
Other Revenue	2,315	1,175	1,175	1,175
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>24,527</b>	<b>24,026</b>	<b>24,286</b>	<b>24,585</b>
<b>Average Staffing Level</b>	<b>1*</b>	-	-	-

\* The average staffing level for NAIF within the Portfolio Budget Statement is 1.0 (representing the CEO). All other staff are employed under the NAIF Act.

**Contacts**

**Department contact:** Lisa Rauter, First Assistant Secretary, Partnerships and Projects Division; 02 s22(1)(a)(ii) | s22(1)(a)(ii)

**Portfolio entity contact:** Craig Doyle, Chief Executive Officer; s22(1)(a)(ii)

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE

## Other boards and structures

### Program 3.4 – Northern Australia

**Name:** Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group (IRG)

**Established by/under:** Minister for Northern Australia

**Type:** Non-statutory advisory structure

**Appointed by:** The Minister.

**Description:** The Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group (IRG) is an expertise-based advisory group comprised of First Nations people with experience in First Nations economic development in northern Australia. Members provide policy advice to you and the Minister for Indigenous Australians on practical actions to enhance the economic and social prosperity of First Nations people.

The most recent iteration of the IRG ended on 31 December 2024. In November 2024, the Minister for Northern Australia extended the model for two years to December 2026. In February 2025, an expression of interest was undertaken and a suitable pool of candidates has been identified. <sup>s47C</sup>

**Members:**

- To be determined.

**Contact:** David Mackay, Deputy Secretary, Regions, Cities and Territories; 02 <sup>s22(1)(a)(ii)</sup> | <sup>s22(1)(a)(ii)</sup>

OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

## Significant ministerial roles

### Northern Australia Ministerial Forum (NAMF)

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The Northern Australia Ministerial Forum (NAMF) is a collaborative policy forum, facilitating a pan-northern approach to identifying and progressing shared priorities for developing northern Australia.</p> <p>NAMF membership comprises ministers with responsibility for development in northern Australia across the Australian Government and the Queensland, Western Australian and Northern Territory Governments.</p> <p>In recognition of the critical importance of improving First Nations prosperity to the success of the northern Australia agenda, the Minister for Indigenous Australians has been extended an invitation for membership of the NAMF.</p>
<b>Current status</b>	<p>The NAMF meets twice yearly in a northern Australia location.</p> <p>The NAMF strategic priorities include addressing critical housing challenges through collaborative initiatives; optimising local benefits from Defence investment; and refining regional migration policies to support population and workforce growth in the north.</p> <p>As a standing item, the NAMF also works with the Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group to shape government initiatives that support First Nations businesses and communities in northern Australia.</p> <p>A revised and contemporary Terms of Reference will ensure these priorities are effectively addressed, reflecting recent federal and state government election outcomes. At its next meeting, the NAMF will review and further consider the findings of the northern Australia housing needs assessment.</p>
<b>Your role and responsibilities</b>	<p>You chair the NAMF. You will have oversight of developing the agenda and liaising with Queensland, Western Australian and Northern Territory Ministers on the direction of the forum and its outcomes.</p>
<b>Resourcing/ funding information</b>	<p>Secretariat for the NAMF is provided by the department. The Australian Government's costs associated with the forum are absorbed by the department.</p>
<b>Contact</b>	<p>David Mackay, Deputy Secretary, Regions, Cities and Territories; 02 s22(1)(a)(ii)   s22(1)(a)(ii)</p>

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**



**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

## Portfolio legislation

### Northern Australia

---

#### ***Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Act 2016***

Purpose	Establishes the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility for economic development projects.
Contact	Lisa Rauter, First Assistant Secretary, Partnerships and Projects Division; 02 s22(1)(a)(ii)   s22(1)(a)(ii)

---

Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

Pages 22-29 deleted pursuant to s22(1)(a)(i)

**Exempt material – section 47C**

Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure,  
Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

## Appointments

Boards relating to the Northern Australia portfolio that have current and upcoming vacancies arising until December 2025 are listed below.

Board	Current vacancies and vacancies arising until December 2025	Contact
<i>Program 3.4 – Northern Australia</i>		
Northern Australia Indigenous Reference Group	<b>All positions vacant:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expression of interest for a new term was completed in February 2025. A pool of suitable candidates has been identified.</li> </ul>	David Mackay, Deputy Secretary, Regions, Cities and Territories; 02 s22(1)(a)(ii)   s22(1)(a)(ii)
Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility Board	<b>December 2025:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr Grant Cassidy OAM, Member; and</li> <li>Ms Kate George, Member.</li> </ul>	David Mackay, Deputy Secretary, Regions, Cities and Territories; 02 s22(1)(a)(ii)   s22(1)(a)(ii)

Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

**OFFICIAL: SENSITIVE**

Pages 31-57 deleted pursuant to s22(1)(a)(i)

**Exempt material – section 47C**

Released under the FOI Act 1982 by the Department of Infrastructure,  
Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts