

# Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation Strategic Plan

Building a Strong Foundation  
for our Future 2026-2035





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ONE PEOPLE  
ONE COUNTRY  
ONE DREAMING

# Letter from the Chair



As Chairperson of Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC, it's an honour to present our new Strategic Plan. This work continues a path begun long before us, carried by our Elders, shaped by their resilience, and strengthened by their guidance. This plan represents a commitment to bring our community together, and to lead with clarity, purpose, and cultural strength.

## Our Vision and Purpose

This Strategic Plan sets out our vision for the future; Kokatha people strong, connected, and thriving. It's about us standing proud as custodians of our culture, our Country, our waters, and our sky, and living well in every way—socially, spiritually, and economically. And it's about doing all of this with solid governance and leadership.

Our purpose is just as important. We're here to protect, strengthen, and grow Kokatha Country, culture, and community. That means leading our development in a way that will last, creating opportunities for our people, and making sure the generations coming after us have every chance to live well and succeed.

## Why This Plan, Now?

The Corporation stands in a time of significant growth, built on our strong foundations. Now is the moment to set a clear direction that keeps us united and focused. Guided by One People, One Country, One Dreaming, this plan grounds our continued future in our identity, our cultural responsibilities, and the knowledge passed down from those who came before us.

## How the Plan was Created

This plan belongs to our community. Through genuine consultation, our members shared their priorities—caring for Country, strengthening families, protecting culture, and ensuring strong governance. These voices, shaped by lived experience and cultural integrity, guided every decision in this strategy.

## The Board's Commitment

The Board remains committed to leading with honesty, transparency, and accountability. We will continue the work our Elders began; protecting our Country, waters and sky, strengthening our culture, and building opportunities for Kokatha people. We carry this responsibility with respect and humility, knowing the trust placed in us, and our duty to building a strong future for all Kokatha families.

Signed,

**Nyangu Thomas**  
Chairperson, Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC



# Walking Together

## What is A Strategic Plan?

A strategic plan is like a map that will help us figure out where we want to go as a Corporation and the steps we need to take to get there. It's important because it keeps us on track and helps us make good choices along the way, so we can reach our goals.

## Our Strategic Focus

### Strengthening Governance

- Clear policies and procedures
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Strong leadership and accountability

### Transparency and Accountability

- Open and consistent communication
- Clear and fair decision-making processes
- Improved reporting and documentation

### Community Engagement

- Stronger community voice and participation
- Respectful and structured input
- Inclusive decision-making

## What this means for our community

- Clear and consistent governance processes for all decisions
- Better communication and information sharing
- Genuine opportunities for community input and engagement
- Leadership that acts with integrity, respect and accountability

## Our Commitment

The 2026 KAC Board is committed to working alongside the Kokatha community with respect, honesty and transparency. We recognise the importance of culture, community values and strong relationships in everything we do.

The Board also acknowledges that the development of the Strategic Plan has been shaped by listening to our community. Your voices, ideas and feedback have guided this work. We have taken the time to reflect on where we have come from, the efforts made in the past, and what is needed to move forward in a positive and proactive way. The Strategic Plan will now guide the Board's decisions and priorities. It will act as our one clear direction, or 'North Star', ensuring we stay focused, accountable and aligned with what the community has asked for. The Board is committed to delivering on this plan and being accountable to the community every step of the way.

## Looking Ahead

By strengthening governance and working together to meet the objectives of our Strategic Plan, we are building a united, accountable and strong Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation.

# 2026 Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation Board of Directors

**The KAC Board of Directors is committed to strengthening the way we work for our community. This means clearer governance, better communication, and making sure community voices are heard and respected in everything we do. As we move forward, our focus is on building trust, improving transparency, and ensuring decisions are made in a fair, consistent and accountable way.**

**Nyani Thomas**  
Chairperson



**Glen Wingfield**  
Deputy Chairperson



**Denise Thomas**



**Paul Strangways**



**Joyleen Thomas**



**Carly Chamberlain**



**Leanne Strangways**



**Michael Turner**



**Margot Richardson**  
Independent Director



**Krista Dunstan**  
Independent Director



# Kokatha Timeline

The timeline captures the significant events and milestones of the Kokatha people and the Corporation, reflecting our journey of cultural strength, leadership, and self-determination.

## Pre-colonial

Kokatha ancestors manage and protect Country across over 140 000 km<sup>2</sup> in the central western desert region of South Australia. Oral traditions, language and cultural practices maintain social order and connection to Country.

## Colonisation

Kokatha language, cultural practices, social order and connection to Country is impacted by Kokatha people being taken from Country and placed in missions.

## 1970s

Western Mining Company came into Kokatha Country in the mid 1970s, further impacting on Kokatha people's ability to maintain social order and their connection to Country.

## 1979

Struggle for land rights by the Kokatha people began with the formation of the Kokatha Land Rights Committee in Port Augusta which later became known as the Kokatha People's Committee (KPC).

## 1980

At a Cabinet meeting on 28 July 1980, the State Government led by Premier Tonkin, rejected a recommendation that 'an ethnographic survey be undertaken as soon as possible to determine the extent and significance of traditional Kokatha interest in the area'. Cabinet decided that the survey was not required and the Premier should write 'to assure the company on this and related issues.'

## 1981

In response to increasing pressure from Western Mining company, the Kokatha People's Committee made a formal policy statement which detailed the extent of Kokatha Country.

## 1983 - 1984

Kokatha people protest against Roxby Downs project, including protest of 150 people at Canegrass Swamp.

## 1988

Olympic Dam mine opens and Aboriginal Heritage Act enacted.

## 2017 - 2019

**2017**  
Acquisition of Yon Street Office.  
**2018**  
Station facilities upgrades – started in 2018 and still continuing.  
First distributions of funds to the community from the Kokatha trusts.  
**2019**  
Lease of Press Road facility.

## 2015 - 2016

**3 February 2015**  
Kokatha Mining Services is established.  
**1 April 2015**  
Kokatha Pastoral is established.  
**2016**  
Kokatha General Trust is established.  
**3 November 2016**  
KAC/Oz Minerals partnering agreement is signed.

## 2014

A separate Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) was negotiated with BHP recognising Kokatha as sole Native Title holders of Country on which its Olympic Dam assets are located.

## Sept 2014

**Native Title Determination (Part A)**  
The Federal Court recognises Native Title rights for the Kokatha People.  
  
Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation (KAC) becomes the Registered Native Title Body Corporate (RNTBC) responsible for holding and managing these rights.

## Aug 2014

Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation (KAC) is officially registered with ORIC and the first KAC staff member is employed.  
Kokatha Charitable Trust is established.

## 2011 - 2012

**11 & 12 June 2011**  
Kokatha people held a mitigation ceremony at Roxby Downs.  
**26 July 2012**  
Purchase of 35 Flinders Terrace Office, Port Augusta.

## 2008 - 2009

BHP Olympic Dam Agreement (ODA) came into effect between Kokatha, Kuyani and Barngrarla.  
  
The Olympic Dam Native Title Party Representative Corporation was established through the ODA to manage heritage.  
  
**18 June 2009** Native Title Determination Application filed.

## 2004

Meetings held at Spear Creek by Kokatha, Marree, Maralinga Tjarutja, Yalata, and APY groups. Wati Tjuta (meeting of Senior Lore Men) confirm the boundary of Kokatha Country with a presentation of what was described as the Kokatha 'Title Deeds'. NNTT produced a map from the map that was made at Spear Creek.

## Sept 2019 - Oct 2020

**Special Administration**  
Due to perceived governance and membership issues, KAC is placed under Special Administration by ORIC. This ends in Oct 2020 after reforms that simplify the structure, introduce skills-based boards and Independent Directors, improve financial controls and strengthen the Rule Book.

**23 September 2019 – 9 October 2020**  
Administration

## 2020 - present

**Rebuilding and Growth**  
After returning to member control in October 2020, KAC adopts a new constitution and begins rebuilding trust. The Culture and Heritage Committee is established and Kokatha Pastoral (KP) and Kokatha Mining Services (KMS) come under the banner of a new subsidiary - Kokatha Enterprise.

## 2022

First on country program – Arcoona Lakes bird survey.  
  
First education scholarship awarded.

## 2023

MoU with Arid Recovery formalises a partnership to combine traditional knowledge and conservation science.  
  
The initial stage of the Kokatha Indigenous Ranger Program is launched.  
  
KMS secures major road maintenance and potable water contracts with BHP, creating jobs for Kokatha people and generating ongoing revenue for the Corporation.

Community Assistance Program is rolled out to support members' wellbeing.

## 2024 - 2025

KAC negotiates ILUA with BHP for the Oak Dam Retention Lease and engages in Northern Water project negotiations.  
  
KAC is admitted as a member of the Indigenous Desert Alliance.  
  
**September 2024**  
10 year Consent Determination anniversary.

## 2025

Lease of Railway Terrace office in Port Augusta  
**12 February**  
Community Development Programs established.  
**13 February**  
Indigenous Ranger Program and healthy country grant awarded by NIAA.  
**April**  
First artwork sold from the Community Development Program artists.

## 2025 - 2026

Strategic Planning process underway.  
  
Review of governance and structure.  
  
**8 August 2025**  
KAC becomes a member of the National Native Title Council'.  
**28 October 2025**  
KAC becomes a member of the South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON)

# Vision, Values & Outline



## VISION

The Kokatha people live strong, connected lives, caring for our culture, Country, waters and sky. We support our communities socially, spiritually and economically, and are guided by clear governance and responsible leadership.

## PURPOSE

We care for and strengthen Kokatha Country, culture and community by supporting sustainable development, empowering our people, and creating a strong, prosperous future for generations to come.

## VALUES

### One People

'One People' means all Kokatha people are united by shared culture and ancestors, and we act fairly and openly to strengthen our community, now and into the future.

### One Country

'One Country' means our deep connection and responsibility to care for Kokatha land, protecting culture and heritage, while ensuring development respects Country for future generations.

### One Dreaming

'One Dreaming' means respecting Kokatha Lore and Tjukurpa as well as passing on our stories and knowledge, so culture and identity stay strong as we grow.

## STRATEGIC PILLARS

Our Strategic Pillars create the platform for KAC to achieve our Vision and Purpose, strengthening Kokatha Culture, Country and People. Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation will unite its efforts to enable our community to thrive across three strategic pillars: Kokatha Culture, Kokatha Country, and Kokatha People.

With an aspirational view of where we want to be in 10 years' time, the strategy's immediate focus is to establish the foundations to build from. This will be achieved through delivering on actions across each Strategic Pillar, supported by a series of strategic enablers to guide the strategy's success.

## DEFINITION OF KOKATHA FOR THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

For the purpose of this Strategic Plan, 'Kokatha' refers to the members and Common Law Holders of Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC.

# Our Strategic Plan 2026-2035



## Our Strategic Plan 2026-2035

### Building Phase:

**Laying strong foundations** (2-years)

Outlines a two year vision for the Strategic Priority. This will build the foundations for our organisation to grow from, focusing on stability, planning, and embedding Kokatha values across all operations.

### Strengthening Phase:

**Growing Capability and Influence** (5-years)

Provides a vision for the Strategic Priority after five years - We grow capability and influence by developing our people, programs, and partnerships. KAC has the trust of our members to deliver meaningful outcomes for culture, Country, and our Community.

### Thriving Phase:

**Self-determined Growth and Prosperity** (10-years)

Provides a vision for the Strategic Priority after ten years - We achieve self-determined growth and prosperity grounded in cultural strength. KAC leads with confidence, creating intergenerational impact and sustainable success for our Community.

## Strategic Pillars

### Kokatha Culture

We keep Kokatha culture strong by bringing our language back to life, protecting and celebrating our culture, and passing our knowledge on to future leaders.

### Kokatha Country

Restore and care for our lands, waters and biodiversity through self-determined management and healthy Country initiatives.

### Kokatha People

Strengthen the Kokatha community through connecting our people to education, jobs and wellbeing support pathways.

## Strategic Priorities

### Preserving Kokatha Language

We bring Kokatha language back to life by helping our people reclaim it, learn it, and speak it every day.

### Cultural education for Kokatha kids

We support Kokatha children to grow up strong in their culture, with pride and a clear understanding of who they are and where they come from.

### Sharing, practicing and preserving Kokatha culture

We protect and share Kokatha culture so it stays strong, visible, and is passed down to future generations.

### Celebrating Kokatha

We help our community celebrate Kokatha culture, respect our Elders, share our history and heritage, and recognise our people and their achievements.

### Securing Kokatha's Future

Through Kokatha Enterprise, we build strong and sustainable businesses that create direct benefits for our people, culture and Country, now and into the future.

### Protection of Cultural Heritage

We protect Kokatha heritage by building cultural knowledge and clear processes into how KAC works every day.

### Connection back to Country

We strengthen wellbeing and belonging by creating opportunities for Kokatha people to return to Country, work on it and care for it.

### On-Country Employment

We create meaningful jobs for Kokatha people through land management work, ranger programs and partnerships with industry.

### Caring for Country activities

We protect and heal Kokatha Country, water and wildlife by bringing together cultural knowledge and modern land management practices.

### Reclaiming our Country

We work to restore Kokatha ownership of Country so our people have stronger connections, greater self-determination, and more cultural and economic opportunities.

### Kokatha Health and Wellbeing

We support the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of Kokatha people through culturally informed partnerships and community-led care.

### Training, Skills, and Career Pathways

We support Kokatha people with training, qualifications and pathways that lead to meaningful jobs, successful businesses and financial independence.

### Education and Early Childhood Support

We make sure Kokatha children and families have access to early learning that is culturally strong and builds confidence, that provides a solid foundation for future education.

### Kokatha Leadership

We support Kokatha people, including our youth and Elders, to become leaders by helping them connect to culture, build skills and take part in community decision-making.

### Develop Kokatha to Lead our Organisations

We build the skills, confidence and career pathways of Kokatha people to lead, manage and grow Kokatha organisations.

## Strategic Enablers

**Partnerships | Communication | Capturing Knowledge  
Ongoing Review | Strong Corporation**

# Kokatha Culture



# Kokatha Culture

**We keep Kokatha culture strong by bringing our language back to life, protecting and celebrating our culture, and passing our knowledge on to future leaders.**

## Strategic Priorities for Kokatha Culture

### Building:

Establishing strong foundations  
*(2-year vision for Strategic Priority)*

### Strengthening:

Consolidating progress, growing capacity  
*(5-year vision for Strategic Priority)*

### Thriving:

Achieving independence, excellence, and cultural vitality that endures across generations.  
*(10-year vision for Strategic Priority)*

**Preserving Kokatha Language**  
We bring Kokatha language back to life by helping our people reclaim it, learn it, and speak it every day.

Kokatha is putting the right systems, learning pathways and partnerships in place to bring our language back to life and keep it protected.

Kokatha looks after our language by creating opportunities for people to learn it and by protecting language materials through a central archive and digital platforms.

Kokatha language is being spoken and respected as a living part of our Country and culture.

**Cultural education for Kokatha kids**  
We support Kokatha children to grow up strong in their culture, with pride and a clear understanding of who they are and where they come from.

Kokatha is creating a strong cultural environment where our children can grow up connected to Country, learn from Elders, and share.

Kokatha children learn and live their culture and values through everyday learning, family life and time on Country.

Kokatha children grow up strong in culture, proud of who they are, and connected to their Country and community.

**Sharing, practicing and preserving Kokatha culture**  
We protect and share Kokatha culture so it stays strong, visible, and is passed down to future generations.

Kokatha is strengthening and sharing our culture through places, programs and experiences that protect cultural knowledge and bring our community together on Country.

Kokatha culture is lived and shared through Kokatha programs that build pride, and keep people connected to Country.

Kokatha culture is strong and ongoing, led by Elders, practiced by families, and shared across the community and on Country.

**Celebrating Kokatha**  
We help our community celebrate Kokatha culture, respect our Elders, share our history and heritage, and recognise our people and their achievements.

Kokatha is creating opportunities for our people to come together through events, gatherings and storytelling that honour Elders, share culture and build strong connections across generations.

The Kokatha community stays connected throughout the year, with our history shared, taught and celebrated.

Kokatha is a strong community, known for its deep connection to culture.

**Securing Kokatha's Future**  
Through Kokatha Enterprise, we build strong and sustainable businesses that create direct benefits for our people, culture and Country, now and into the future.

Kokatha Enterprise is building the foundations and opportunities for Kokatha-owned businesses to grow, through skills development, strong partnerships and good governance, so prosperity is shared across our community.

Kokatha Enterprise is strong and sustainable, earning income that supports community priorities and strengthens Kokatha culture and independence.

Kokatha wealth supports future generations by building a strong, independent economy where business success benefits our people, culture and Country.

# Kokatha Country

# Kokatha Country

Restore and care for our lands, waters, sky, and biodiversity through self-determined management and healthy Country initiatives.

## Strategic Priorities for Kokatha Country

### Building:

Establishing strong foundations  
*(2-year vision for Strategic Priority)*

### Strengthening:

Consolidating progress, growing capacity  
*(5-year vision for Strategic Priority)*

### Thriving:

Achieving independence, excellence, and cultural vitality that endures across generations.  
*(10-year vision for Strategic Priority)*

**Protection of Cultural Heritage**  
We protect Kokatha heritage by building cultural knowledge and clear processes into how KAC works every day.

Kokatha is putting strong systems and connections in place to protect cultural heritage, build cultural knowledge into everyday work, and manage Country with care, authority and respect.

Kokatha people lead the care of cultural heritage, supported by clear processes, trusted governance and skilled local workers who protect Country.

Kokatha is recognised across Australia for leading best-practice cultural heritage protection that follows cultural lore and is supported by modern systems and clear compliance.

**Connection back to Country**  
We strengthen wellbeing and belonging by creating opportunities for Kokatha people to return to Country, work on it and care for it.

Kokatha is creating ways for our people to return to and reconnect with Country, by developing places, programs and experiences that strengthen culture, wellbeing and community.

There are regular and ongoing opportunities for people to connect with Country, helping build wellbeing and a sense of belonging across generations.

Kokatha people have the chance to live, learn and work on Country, maintaining a strong and lasting spiritual connection to place.

**On-Country Employment**  
We create meaningful jobs for Kokatha people through land management work, ranger programs and partnerships with industry.

Kokatha is helping our people build strong futures on Country through training, partnerships and businesses that support meaningful work and caring for Country.

Kokatha people are the main caretakers of our Country and are employed in stable, long-term cultural and environmental roles through Kokatha programs, businesses and industry working on Country.

Kokatha people have access to meaningful jobs and skills development on Country through Kokatha businesses and strong partnerships.

**Caring for Country activities**  
We protect and heal Kokatha Country, waters, sky, and wildlife by bringing together cultural knowledge and modern land management practices.

Kokatha is strengthening how we care for Country, water and sky by bringing together cultural knowledge, community leadership and science to protect Country for future generations.

Traditional knowledge guides how the environment is cared for, supported by skilled Kokatha Rangers and active community involvement.

Kokatha Country is healthy and strong, with fire, water, sky and wildlife cared for through a mix of cultural knowledge and modern science.

**Reclaiming our Country**  
We work to restore Kokatha ownership of Country so our people have stronger connections, greater self-determination, and more cultural and economic opportunities.

Kokatha is finding and securing opportunities to bring Country back into Kokatha ownership, building the partnerships and investment needed to protect, manage and use Country for culture, community and enterprise.

Kokatha is bringing important lands and assets back into Kokatha ownership so they can be used for culture, caring for Country and sustainable businesses that strengthen connection to land.

Kokatha Country is once again managed by Kokatha people, supporting culture, community and a strong economy through good governance, cultural authority and deep connection to Country.



# Kokatha People

# Kokatha People

**Strengthen the Kokatha community through connecting our people to education, jobs and wellbeing support pathways.**



## Strategic Priorities for Kokatha People

### Building:

**Establishing strong foundations**  
(2-year vision for Strategic Priority)

### Strengthening:

**Consolidating progress, growing capacity**  
(5-year vision for Strategic Priority)

### Thriving:

**Achieving independence, excellence, and cultural vitality that endures across generations.**  
(10-year vision for Strategic Priority)

**Kokatha Health and Wellbeing**  
We support the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of Kokatha people through culturally informed partnerships and community-led care.

Through partnerships and culturally strong programs, Kokatha improves access to health, wellbeing and healing services so our people can live healthy, connected lives guided by culture and community care.

Health and wellbeing services are easy to access, culturally safe, and meet the needs and values of Kokatha families and Elders.

Kokatha leads health and wellbeing programs that are culturally grounded and supported by strong community partnerships.

**Training, Skills, and Career Pathways**  
We support Kokatha people with training, qualifications and pathways that lead to meaningful jobs, successful businesses and financial independence and where they come from.

Kokatha is building partnerships and programs that help our people gain skills, find jobs and grow businesses, supporting long-term economic independence.

Kokatha people can access training that leads directly to real jobs, career growth and business opportunities, with clear pathways into skilled, long-term work.

Kokatha runs its own accredited training and employment programs, led by Kokatha trainers and mentors. Strong Kokatha businesses create jobs, economic independence and shared prosperity.

**Education and Early Childhood Support**  
We make sure Kokatha children and families have access to early learning that is culturally strong and builds confidence, that provides a solid foundation for future education.

We support Kokatha families to raise confident learners by making sure children start school connected to their culture, language and Country.

Every Kokatha child starts school confident in who they are, supported by family-led learning and culturally safe education.

Kokatha families lead strong early learning environments, where language, culture and community are central to every child's development.

**Kokatha Leadership**  
We support Kokatha people, including our youth and Elders, to become leaders by helping them connect to culture, build skills and take part in community decision-making.

Kokatha supports our people, including youth, and Elders through mentoring, cultural connection and involvement in decision-making, helping them build confidence, develop leadership skills and shape our future.

Kokatha people have a say in decisions across Kokatha organisations and help shape planning, culture and community development.

Kokatha Elders and young people are connected to Country and have a strong voice in the Corporation to support new ideas and planning for the future.

**Develop Kokatha to Lead our Organisations**  
We build the skills, confidence and career pathways of Kokatha people to lead, manage and grow Kokatha organisations.

Kokatha creates opportunities for our people to learn, train and work in our own organisations, supports students into education and careers, and helps our people build skills for leadership and specialist roles.

Kokatha people are working, learning and progressing within Kokatha organisations, supported by clear career paths, ongoing training, mentoring and strong leadership.

Kokatha organisations are led and managed by Kokatha people, with a skilled and confident workforce supporting self-determination and long-term community growth.

# Strategic Enablers

The Strategic Enablers ensure our Strategic Plan is implemented with strong governance, cultural integrity, and continuous learning, through transparent partnerships, effective communication, robust knowledge systems, and regular review.



We are building a strong foundation for the future of Kokatha people.





**Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC**

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Images by photographer Ben Searcy

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ONE COUNTRY  
ONE DREAMING