



NATSIHA
National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
Housing Association

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Strategy | 2024-2028

// NATSIHA is an important voice in the national conversation, filling knowledge gaps, and leading the advocacy we need to close the gap in First Nation's housing and homelessness."

Kate Colvin, Homelessness Australia



RECOGNITION

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First People of Australia and the Traditional Custodians of the lands, rivers, seas and sky throughout.

We pay our respect to Elders and acknowledge the continuous living Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, diverse languages, customs and traditions, knowledge systems and governance.

We acknowledge the significance of our Elders, for they hold the memories, the storylines, the traditions, and the cultures of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across our nation.



// *We demand the authority and stewardship over the resources that are meant to uplift our communities. It's time for a new era of accountability and progress, and we won't settle for less."*

Tom Slockee, NATSIHA Chair

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A NATIONAL VOICE FOR FIRST NATIONS HOUSING

For far too long, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have endured a housing crisis due to historical policy failures and government indifference. In 2021, over 4,500 households faced overcrowding, highlighting the severe housing shortage. Despite promises, First Nations people were disproportionately affected by homelessness, underscoring societal inequalities.

Generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices continue to be disregarded, falling on deaf ears as governments failed to address the pressing need for safe, secure, and culturally fitting housing. The cycle of broken promises and systemic neglect has left communities struggling, denying them the basic human right of shelter and security within their own ancestral lands.

Our strategic approach is a definitive departure from the history of neglect. We acknowledge the slow progress towards closing the gap and are committed to driving substantial change. NATSIHA's strategy is designed to counter these disparities by actively championing community-controlled solutions, thereby empowering First Nations people and ensuring their fundamental right to safe and culturally appropriate housing is recognised and realised.

TOM SLOCKEE

Butchulla-Tanna man



Message from our Chair

In the midst of our collective journey, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Housing Sector stands as a symbol of unyielding commitment and resilience, echoing the resounding call for our voices to be heard and our determination to strengthen.

The Housing Sector Strengthening Plan and Housing Policy Partnership shine as beacons of hope. We are steadfast in our plea for action aligned with the Priority Reforms of the National Closing the Gap agreement. We advocate passionately for comprehensive reform, empowering the community-controlled sector to address the pressing needs of our people.

As we embark on the journey ahead, we stand ready to champion the development of the National Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing. We emphasise the imperative to confront the acute housing challenges faced by our communities, underlining the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control in shaping a brighter future.

ROB MACFARLANE

Wiradjuri man



Message from our CEO

I am excited to announce the launch of NATSIHA's first Strategic Plan, aimed at addressing the urgent housing crisis faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Our vision is clear: "All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have housing that aligns with our diverse cultures and aspirations for the benefit of all Australians."

In this critical moment, where both a housing crisis and a shared determination to solve it converge, we must act with courage and commitment.

As the National Peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing, we are poised to collaborate and partner with all stakeholders to transform aspirations into reality. The NATSIHA Strategy is comprehensive, spanning a person's entire life journey. It encompasses social, affordable, private, home ownership retirement living and aged-care aspects while addressing housing-related infrastructure and homelessness.

Our goal is to create a future where housing reflects cultural identity, empowerment, and stability for Indigenous Australians. Together, let's unite in leveraging our collective strengths, resources, and innovation to achieve equitable housing for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"Economic self-determination is fundamental to secure First Nations people's culture and identity. Secure, affordable and culturally appropriate housing is the foundation and integral to economic self-determination."

Professor Peter Yu,
The Australian National University



WHO WE ARE



“The work of NATSIHA will optimise overall health and wellbeing and improve employment opportunities, access to education, connection to the community and sense of home.”

The Hon Julie Collins MP

As the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing, NATSIHA remains steadfast in addressing the housing needs specific to our communities. Our dedication lies in ensuring safe, secure, and culturally appropriate housing solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and families.

We empower our communities to shape housing solutions that cater to emergencies and diverse housing needs across the spectrum. Collaborating with State and Territory Peaks, our aim is transformative change in housing and infrastructure, combating homelessness and housing insecurity. We advocate for equity, dismantling systemic barriers along the way.

NATSIHA’s collective efforts are geared towards providing dignified housing for every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. We challenge existing systems to create a fairer society and stand as a new force, driving tangible improvements in housing and infrastructure within our communities.

Our Board

A NATIONAL VIEW

Our growing Board provides us with representation from across Australia.



SKYE THOMPSON

Aboriginal Housing NT



Skye is a proud Arrernte/Kaytetye woman from her mother’s side and has non-indigenous heritage from her father’s side from Alice Springs.

Skye is the CEO of Aboriginal Housing Northern Territory and has held various roles with Ingkerreke Services Aboriginal Corporation.

MARY DOCTOR

Umpi Korumba



Mary has connections to the Cobble Cobble, Kuku Yalanji, Quandamooka and Jinibara people of the Burnett Region, Far North Queensland and Southeast Queensland.

Mary is the General Manager of Umpi Korumba and sits on the Board of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing QLD.

TINA UGLE

Noongar Mia Mia



Tina is a proud Noongar Yorga woman from Ballardong and Yued with Wadjuk connections.

Tina is the Managing Director of Noongar Mia Mia and sits on the Housing First Homelessness Advisory Group.

DEB BUCKSKIN

SAACCON



Deb is a proud Kurna, Narungga, Wirangu woman currently working in strategic and operational governance of Culturally Responsive service delivery.

Deb sits on the Board of Kura Yerlo and Co-Convenor of the South Australia Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network and is a Lung Foundation Australia advocate.

TOM SLOCKEE

SEARMS Aboriginal Corporation
NATSIHA Chair



Tom was born on Bundjalung Country in NSW and started his schooling on his Mother and Grandmother’s Butchulla Country (Fraser Island Queensland), before moving back to Minjungbal (Tweed Heads).

Tom was one of the founding members and the inaugural Chairperson of the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office, he then went on to establish and Chair SEARMS Community Housing Aboriginal Corporation, and is a former Board Director of the NSW Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association (ACHIA).

OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

COORDINATION

We strive to be a unifying force, coordinating the efforts of stakeholders, governments, and communities in a collaborative manner. Together, we work towards housing and enabling infrastructure solutions that embrace the rich diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.



In partnership with local communities, we prioritise accountability and the development of enabling infrastructure, ensuring housing needs are met and voices heard and actioned. Through state and territory peaks, we maintain a responsive and transparent approach, valuing community expertise to deliver tailored solutions that reflect their aspirations.

COMMUNITY



In collaboration with government entities, we assertively advocate for policies that address housing challenges faced by First Nation communities emphasising the critical role of enabling infrastructure. Beyond partnerships, we hold agencies accountable to ensure policies recognise cultural nuances and actively contribute to solutions.

GOVERNMENT



Collaborating with industry partners, we leverage expertise to inform and unlock investment opportunities and create innovative and practical housing solutions. By engaging with the broader industry, we foster relationships that go beyond conventional boundaries, exploring new technologies, sustainable practices, and culturally informed designs.

INDUSTRY



// The mutual exchange through our partnership with NATSIHA gives KWM a unique opportunity to learn, build meaningful relationships and support an amazing and growing national peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisation on its refreshed journey to do critically important work in this country in housing for First Nations people and beyond."

Berkeley Cox, King and Wood Mallesons



WE ARE NEW BUT OUR JOURNEY IS LONG

// NATSIHA began as a movement driven by dedicated volunteers. These beginnings underscore the impact of unity and small-scale efforts in fostering lasting progress."

Ivan Simon, Inaugural Chair NATSIHA

2016 REDFERN STATEMENT

First Nation leaders met in Redfern and drafted the **Redfern Statement**, which called for the establishment of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Representative body.

2017 ADELAIDE WORKSHOP

The National Congress for Australia's First Peoples conducted a **National Housing Workshop** to discuss the creation of a National Indigenous Housing peak body for advocacy and advice.

2019 VOLUNTARY EFFORTS

Following the closure of the National Congress, First Nation leaders persisted in their voluntary efforts to establish a **National Indigenous Housing peak body**.

2020-2021 NATSIHA ESTABLISHED

In 2020 **NATSIHA was officially registered with ASIC** to address housing issues facing First Nations communities. In 2021 **NATSIHA registered on the ACNC as a charity**.

2022 CANBERRA LAUNCH

NATSIHA received a grant from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) to strengthen its capacity and mission. September 2022, the official launch of **NATSIHA in Canberra**.

2023 ACCELERATION

May | NATSIHA office opening event.
June | NATSIHA becomes co-chair of the Housing Policy Partnership.
December | Launch of First Strategy.

OUR STRATEGIC CONTEXT

In this crucial moment, NATSIHA stands at a critical juncture in our journey—a journey defined by the enduring strength of First Nations People and an unwavering commitment to self-determination. Our strategic plan, rooted in the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), is guided by the recognition encapsulated in these principles.

The “Closing the Gap” priorities stand as the driving force behind NATSIHA’s strategic pillars. Our approach is purposefully directed towards addressing these priorities head-on within the First Nations housing sector. We recognise the persistent challenges in securing adequate housing and resolutely reject merely aiming to close the gap. Instead, our strategy boldly champions self-determination as the catalyst for removing disparities. We draw inspiration from innovative, First Nation-led initiatives that passionately advocate for the fundamental right to shape homes and communities, directly impacting the identified priorities.

NATSIHA’s strategic approach significantly impacts the “Closing the Gap” priorities. Through targeted efforts and collaborative partnerships, we actively seek and implement innovative solutions to housing challenges. This proactive engagement serves as a catalyst for substantial progress, directly contributing to the realisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s rights as outlined in the identified priorities.

As we chart our trajectory, NATSIHA remains steadfast in our leadership role, directly influencing the “Closing the Gap” priorities and driving advancements in housing rights through

the empowerment of self-determination for First Nations people. Our strategic plan stands as an instrumental tool firmly embedded within the “Closing the Gap” framework, guiding us towards a future where housing disparities are significantly diminished, and self-determination becomes an irrefutable cornerstone within thriving and empowered First Nations communities.

Strategy on a page

OUR NATIONAL STRATEGY



WHY WE EXIST

OUR PURPOSE

Provide national leadership on First Nations Housing that empowers community-controlled solutions and self-determination.

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

OUR VISION

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have housing that aligns with our diverse cultures and aspirations for the benefit of all Australians.



WHAT WE STAND FOR

OUR VALUES

EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

COMMUNITY-LED SELF DETERMINED FUTURES

CULTURAL PRESERVATION

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

WHAT WE STRIVE FOR

OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS

EXCELLENCE IN FIRST NATIONS HOUSING



01 Driving National Leadership: Championing excellence in First Nations Housing to reshape narratives and enact policy shifts, ensuring equitable solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES



02 Empowering First Nation communities through strengthened representation, sustained collaboration, and targeted capacity-building, fostering self-determination and improved outcomes across the housing continuum.

SYSTEMIC AND STRUCTURAL REFORM



03 Urgent systemic reform, reimagining funding for swift community impact, leveraging diverse partnerships to forge a more just and equitable future.

IN DETAIL

OUR VALUES

Equity and Accessibility

Ensuring equal access to safe and affordable housing for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, regardless of location or socio-economic status, to address historical injustices and close the housing gap.

Cultural Preservation

Recognising the importance of cultural identity and connection to land in shaping housing policies and initiatives, integrating traditional knowledge and practices into housing design and construction, and **promoting culturally appropriate housing solutions.**

Community-led Self-determined Futures

Promoting **self-governance and community-led decision-making processes**, enabling First Nation communities to determine their housing needs, strategies, and solutions fostering sustainable development and long-term prosperity.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Engaging in meaningful partnerships with government and non-governmental organisations, to develop cooperative approaches that address systemic issues, build capacity, and mobilise resources towards sustainable housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



IN DETAIL

OUR PILLARS

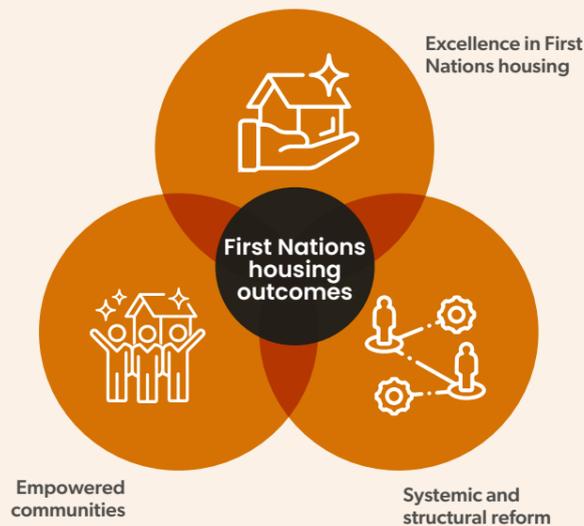
As we chart our course for the future, we have honed in on three foundational pillars that will guide our work in the years to come.

The three pillars of our plan are:

- Systemic and Structural Reform
- Empowered Communities
- Excellence in First Nations Housing.

Each pillar is defined by a set of focus areas.

Further NATSIHA acknowledge that Country, Culture and Kinship are intrinsic to, and fundamental for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's health and wellbeing and that they must be the heartbeat and guiding force of our operations.



01



First Nations housing excellence

Driving National Leadership: Championing excellence in First Nations Housing to reshape narratives and enact policy shifts, ensuring equitable solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Through national leadership, inclusive engagement, and a dedicated focus on achieving tangible change, **our aim is to redefine the narrative surrounding First Nations housing.** We are committed to crafting policies that not only acknowledge the unique challenges faced but actively work towards resolving them.

Central to our approach is the empowerment of voices within our communities. We prioritise establishing supported structures that amplify perspectives across generations, ensuring that the wisdom of Elders and the innovative viewpoints of our youth contribute to shaping their futures.

Internally, our dedication extends to strengthening NATSIHA as a transparent, trusted, and high-functioning peak body for the sector. We aim to enhance its capabilities, fostering an environment of transparency and reliability, ensuring it effectively represents and serves the needs of the community.

“ The NATSIHA strategy exemplifies the unwavering dedication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people toward achieving true equality and justice. With a focus on First Nations excellence, it drives transformative change for a brighter future, recognising the right to a secure and appropriate home for all.”

Zachariah Mateysek, NATSIHA COO

02



Empowering communities

Empowering First Nation communities through strengthened representation, sustained collaboration, and targeted capacity-building, fostering self-determination and improved outcomes across the housing continuum.

To foster self-determination within communities, a thriving and supported sector that meets the needs of individuals across the housing continuum is imperative. NATSIHA is committed to building and leveraging diverse relationships to introduce innovative funding approaches for communities and to fortify a robust First Nations housing sector.

We recognise the need for a fundamental shift in community consultation methodologies, transitioning towards a model designed by and for the community. This transformation ensures the sovereignty of community data, empowering communities to shape and control the narrative surrounding their unique needs and aspirations.

“ Change does not come easy unfortunately, it takes time, resources, passion, commitment, collaboration, and understanding Aboriginal people and culture. This is something that myself our Board and staff work tirelessly towards. There are obvious challenges ahead to successfully end homelessness in Western Australia and it requires a concerted effort from governments, the community services sector, and community more broadly.”

Tina Ugle, Noongar Mia Mia

FOCUS AREAS



Lifting the narrative on the First Nations housing sector

Promoting awareness to elevate the profile and perception of the First Nations housing sector.



User-centred housing solutions

Implementing strategies to ensure that the voices of diverse groups, including youth, Elders, and individuals with disabilities, are heard and contribute to the development of housing policy and solutions.



Culturally informed research, evidence and policy

Facilitate the development of culturally informed research, evidence and evaluation that will have a positive impact on and enhance outcomes across the First Nations housing continuum.



Respected and accountable housing peak body

Establish and strengthen our position as a respected and accountable voice for First Nations housing and homelessness.



Strong strategic collaborations

Form and strengthen strategic partnerships.

FOCUS AREAS



Empower and develop the First Nations housing sector

Through the establishment of a federated model of state and territory housing peak bodies, NATSIHA will empower and provide ongoing strength and support to the First Nations sector.



Assured community-owned consultation

Establish an assured community consultation framework, for government and policymakers that gives community control over the collection and ownership of their data.



Financial sustainability and diversification

Engage with partners and stakeholders to enhance funding and investment opportunities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing and develop strategies to support the ongoing sustainability of the sector.



Increase and diversify First Nations housing

Advocate for policies targeting affordable housing for First Nation communities, collaborate with stakeholders to address barriers to affordable housing, and facilitate the sharing of best practices for construction and management.

03



Systemic and structural reform

Urgent systemic reform, reimagining funding for swift community impact and leveraging diverse partnerships to forge a more just and equitable future.

NATSIHA recognises the urgent need for a fundamental shift in institutional structures, directing decision-making power to those directly affected by the outcomes. We are reimagining funding pathways to ensure a swift and efficient flow of resources directly into communities.

By streamlining funding mechanisms, NATSIHA aims to empower communities promptly, facilitating the implementation of impactful policies. Through our powerful and diverse network of partners we are forging collaborations with stakeholders to strengthen the collective effort towards a more just and equitable landscape.

“ Systemic and structural change isn’t about minor adjustments or relocating teams. It’s a dedicated commitment to sweeping transformation across the entire government landscape, not just incremental improvements. ”

Rob Macfarlane, NATSIHA CEO

FOCUS AREAS



Community direct funding

Streamline the transfer of government funds to NATSIHA, ensuring swift and targeted distribution into communities based on need.



Formal strategic partnerships

We seek to establish formal strategic partnerships that align with our vision for housing reform. These partnerships will enable us to leverage resources, expertise, and influence to drive positive change in housing outcomes for our communities.



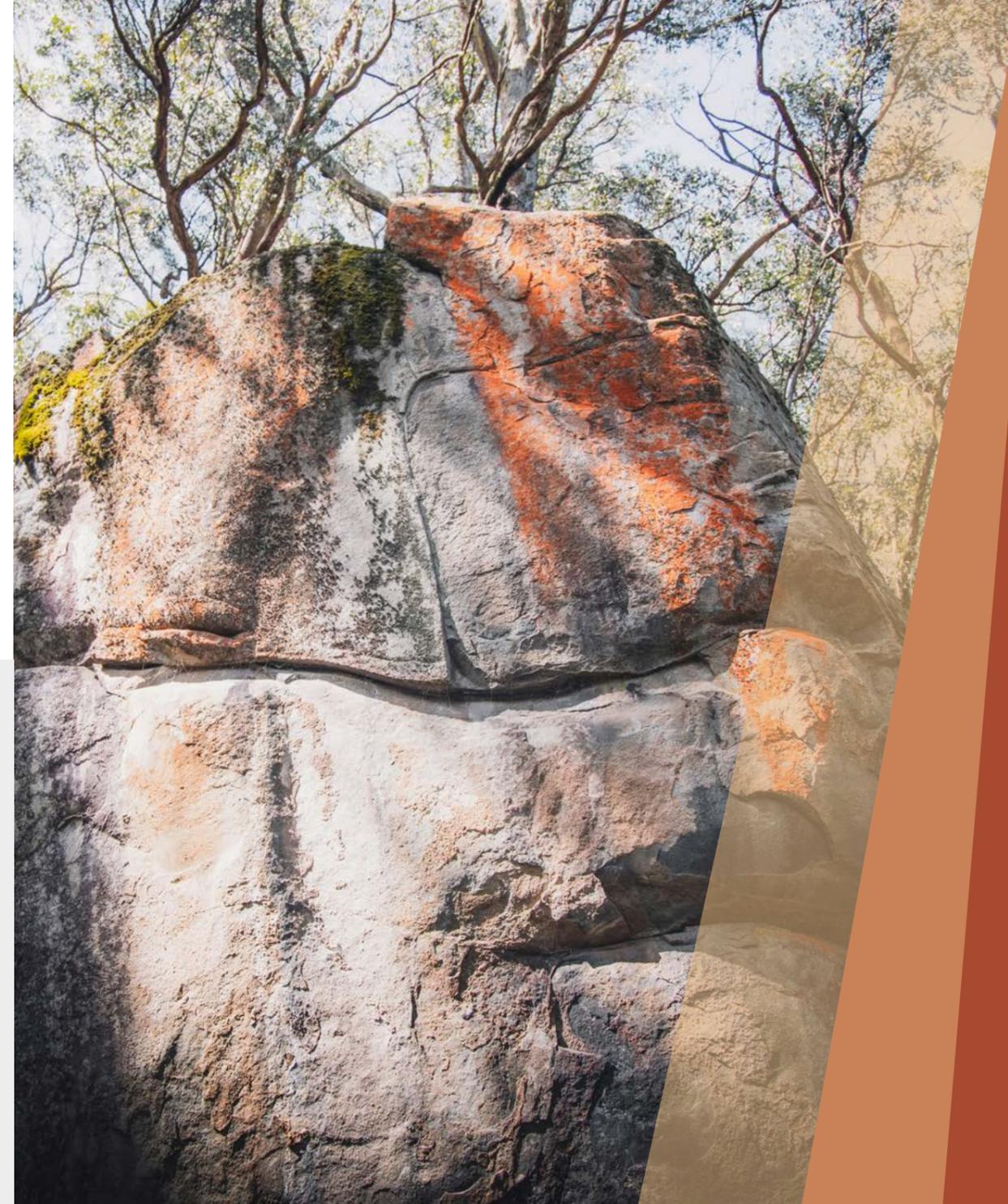
Owning the housing mandate

This mandate will provide NATSIHA with the authority and resources needed to influence housing policy and decision-making. It will ensure that the voice and needs of our communities are recognised and prioritised in all housing-related matters.



Policy reform

Promoting policy reform at different government levels. We will champion policy changes aimed at tackling systemic inequalities, fostering cultural empowerment, and facilitating the establishment of secure, affordable, and sustainable housing options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.





OUR OFFICES

3.01/24 Montgomery St.
Kogarah, NSW

23/25-31 Grafton St.
Cairns, QLD

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www.natsiha.org.au

We recognise the resilience, courage and commitment of all First Nations people and those who have dedicated themselves to serve our people in addressing First Nations housing and homelessness.