



2019-2024 Strategic Plan

Prepared by

Board and Staff of Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd

With support from THE RW Agency

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For Review: 2023

The content of this document is based on evidence and opinions recorded during consultations, meetings, document review and associated communications and research.

The report does not constitute legal, financial opinion or advice.

It is the Company's obligation to obtain legal or financial advice on specific matters

VISION	3
Vision	4
Mission	4
VALUES	5
OBJECTIVES	5
BACKGROUND	6
LOCATION	7
STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS	9
Internal	9
External	10
LEGISLATIVE & GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK	10
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	11
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS	13
PELTS ANALYSIS	14
Political - Federal	14
Political - State	14
Political - Local	15
Economic	15
Legal	15
Technological	15
Socio-cultural	15
NEEDS ANALYSIS	16
SWOT ANALYSIS	17
SOURCE VISION BRAINSTORM	18
Events	18
Warrengulla/Property	19
MARKETING & PROMOTION	20
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM	21
STRATEGIC PLAN	21
1. Culture Of Trust, Safety And The Company's Reputation	22

2. Organisational Structure, Asset Protection & Staff Resources	24
3. Business And Social Enterprise Development	25
4. Board Capacity And Contribution	26
5. Community Development And Advocacy	28
OPERATIONS	29
1. Housing	29
2. Service Station	32
3. Warrengulla	34
4. Language Program	35
5. Commercial & Industrial Premises	36
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	37
RELATED DOCUMENTS	38
REFERENCES	38



VISION

In the 2014 Strategic Plan the vision for the Company was identified as *'a thriving community organisation committed to healthy family and quality of life.'*

The Board undertook a deeper analysis of their vision and at a workshop in Sept 2019, they spent considerable time reconnecting to the SOURCE VISION of the original people who started the Company - exploring what their intention was and whether anything had changed.

After great discussion about the practical desire to simply provide housing for Aboriginal people in the Lightning Ridge area, an awareness emerged that there were certain desires that Housing represented that was at the core of the Company's mission and these included:

- Safety
- Security
- Connection to the land
- Ownership

- Belonging
- Not suffering
- Family
- Easier life
- Togetherness
- Trust
- Comfort

It was agreed that the original source vision and desires were still very much at the forefront of the Company's work and vision in 2019 - however they wanted to see three more inclusions for the future vision

- Responsibility
- Empowerment
- Confidence

It was felt that a culture of entitlement may have inadvertently been fostered in the community and that self responsibility was important to be included in the new vision.

In 2019 the Board updated it's vision to be more encompassing of the programs, activities, objectives and dreams for the Company. It was interpreted in Yuwaalaraay language by Kelly Mahoney, a proud Barkindji woman.

Vision

We are gayaa (proud/happy) to provide gundhi (house) for our Yuwaalaraay dhiyaan (family)

....

A proud, thriving community organisation delivering excellence in service.

Mission

Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd are committed to providing quality housing and programs to support Aboriginal people and our Culture.

VALUES

The Company had not identified any values in previous plans and they felt it was important. The Company identified the following as their core values:

Respect - we respect each other

Transparency - we conduct all business with honesty because we have nothing to hide

Integrity - we act in the best interest of the company

Trust - we trust the person first and then we trust the process

Commitment - we are committed to our roles and work smart to achieve the goals we set

Responsibility -we take ownership of our actions and behaviour

Fairness - we treat everyone with fairness

Reliability - we do what we say we are going to do

Quality - we deliver a quality of service by being helpful, knowledgeable, approachable and supportive

It is intended that these Values will be made available and visible in Barriekneal premises, at meetings and in community engagement and communication with Members, partners and stakeholders.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd were substantially unchanged since the 2007 Strategic Plan. In the 2019 review, they were carefully scrutinized, recognising there had been significant changes in the operations and goals since then. These objectives were reviewed and updated by the Board of Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd in 2019.

The new Objectives of Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd are to:

- Provide social and other housing to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

- Establish and operate economically and socially successful commercial enterprises that result in additional projects and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including, but not limited to, property development and tourism activities.
- Maximise the potential of the Company's commercial and property assets to provide further development opportunity to achieve the company's objectives.
- Deliver training and capacity building opportunities to employees, board, members and the community.
- Provide and promote youth support and sporting activities to empower the next generation.
- Provide opportunities and activities to preserve, maintain and share traditional Aboriginal culture, conservation land management practices and language.
- Partner strategically with government, community services, schools, employment and training organisations, local clubs and other organisations towards meeting the identified needs of our members and community.

BACKGROUND

Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd (Barriekneal) has been operating in the Lightning Ridge community since 1978. The organisation operates under Memorandum of Association & Articles of Association that are largely unchanged since the organisation's original establishment, though they are being thoroughly reviewed in 2019.

Despite the many challenges it has faced as a Company and a rapidly changing operating environment, Barriekneal has a committed board and staff and has sound financial, reporting, tenancy and asset compliance. They have developed a culture of understanding among their tenants and community and achieve recognition from regulatory bodies as a company achieving excellence in their field.

In 2007, a Business Plan was developed for Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd by *Richard O'Neill* BE FAIM, Managing Director *Excelink Pacific*. This document provided a framework to develop opportunities and restructure after the separation (and income loss) from managing the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP), and major funding changes from Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The plan was ultimately seeking to support the Company to transition from a social service provider to a profitable business. The Company completed a review of their strategic objectives, Business Plan and governance practices in 2011, with assistance from *Ms Rebel Black* from *Community Practitioners Australia*. Some of the recommendations from this Business Plan were implemented, some were not; and the nature of the business has altered significantly since 2007, with the formation of

Barriekneal Fuels Ltd to manage the operations of the Barriekneal Fuels Service Station, expansion of the social housing business, the closure of the Good Homemakers furniture store and entering long-term leases for grazing and cropping on the Warrengulla property. In late 2014, the Board of Barriekneal Housing and Community Ltd received support from the Aboriginal Housing Office (NSW) and the NSW Federation of Housing Associations to review progress against the 2011 plan and to renew the company's Strategic plans. The resulting plans and updated Policies and Procedures were adopted by the Board. Attention of this work was mainly focused on the company's social housing operations but also considered the full range of the company's activities and opportunities. The Strategic Plan was adopted in February 2015.

In late 2018 concern for the compliance and capacity of the current Board and team to deliver on increasing requirements and series of compliance gaps identified through the Self Assessment process for National Regulatory System for Community Housing providers, Barriekneal reached out to *Rebel Black of THERW Agency* to provide consulting support, including the development of an updated Strategic Plan as well as full revision of Policies & Procedures, Governance, the constitution and the organisational structure. This work has required considerable input from the Board and staff and was undertaken over a 12 month period, with varying degrees of intensity. For a 6 month period, Rebel Black was contracted to provide Executive Support to ensure compliance, workers compensation and other internal matters were being managed while the strategic work was being undertaken.

A future where Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd continues to be a profitable community business (Charity) achieving its objectives.

LOCATION

Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd's office is based in Lightning Ridge, a small town on the traditional lands of the Yuwaalaraay people in the north of the Walgett Shire in north western NSW.

Lightning Ridge is located approx 760km north west of Sydney and a similar distance south west from Brisbane.



Source: <http://www.lgam.info/walgett-shire-council>

The dominant industry is opal mining and agriculture with a considerable, and growing, tourism industry. It is a vibrant and multicultural community and despite its ranking in various reports, including Tony Vinson's [Dropping Off The Edge](#), as experiencing considerable social and economic disadvantage, it is a proactive and forward facing community.

It is reasonably resourced with an excellent supermarket, numerous service stations and basic shopping (retail, newsagency, electrical, clothing) stable health service, visiting physicians and allied health professionals and is serviced by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The nearest major shopping/health centres and airports are Moree (230km) and Dubbo (360km).

There is a daily bus transport link to Sydney via Dubbo and a bi-weekly service to Brisbane via Toowoomba.

Specialists of all descriptions can be accessed in Moree or Dubbo.

There is safe housing for women and children provided by a large not for profit organisation who has offices and staff locally and the only other social/public housing option is a small cluster of units managed by a local volunteer organisation and it has a long wait list.



Source: <https://www.walgett.nsw.gov.au/tourism/map/walgett-region-map/>

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd has an extensive stakeholder network, mostly informal but with some that are statutorily or contractually based:

Internal

- Members of Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd
- Board Members of Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd
- Staff of Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd
- Tenants of Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd
- Tenants of AHO properties managed by Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd
- Tenants of LALC properties managed by Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd
- Board of Barriekneal Fuels Pty Ltd
- Staff of Barriekneal Fuels Pty Ltd

External

NSW Aboriginal Housing Office
Lightning Ridge Local Aboriginal Lands Council
Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA)
Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association (ACHIA)
NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT)
Department of Communication and the Arts (Federal)
Walgett Shire Council
Lightning Ridge Central School
Lightning Ridge AECG
Mission Australia
Mackillop Family Services
Australian Unity
Contractor service providers including builders, plumbers, electricians, engineers
Crown Reserve Trust (Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd is Reserve Trust Manager for Ella Nagy Youth Hall)
Local employment agencies including Best Employment, Sureway
Centrelink
EPA
Various Consultants

LEGISLATIVE & GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

As a registered charity, employer, leasee, lessor and tenancy manager, Barriekneal operates under several legislative frameworks including:

- Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission
 - Annual reporting (Audited reports)
 - Updated persons of interest
- Residential Tenancies Act
- Corporations Act
- Superannuation Guarantee Administration Act 1992
- Fair Work Act
- Relevant Employee Awards
- Head/Sub Lease Agreements

It is the responsibility of the Board and Staff to ensure compliance with the relevant legislative and agreement requirements.

Failure to do so can result in dismissal, removal from the Board and may have significant consequences for the Company including sale of assets, legal action and fines.

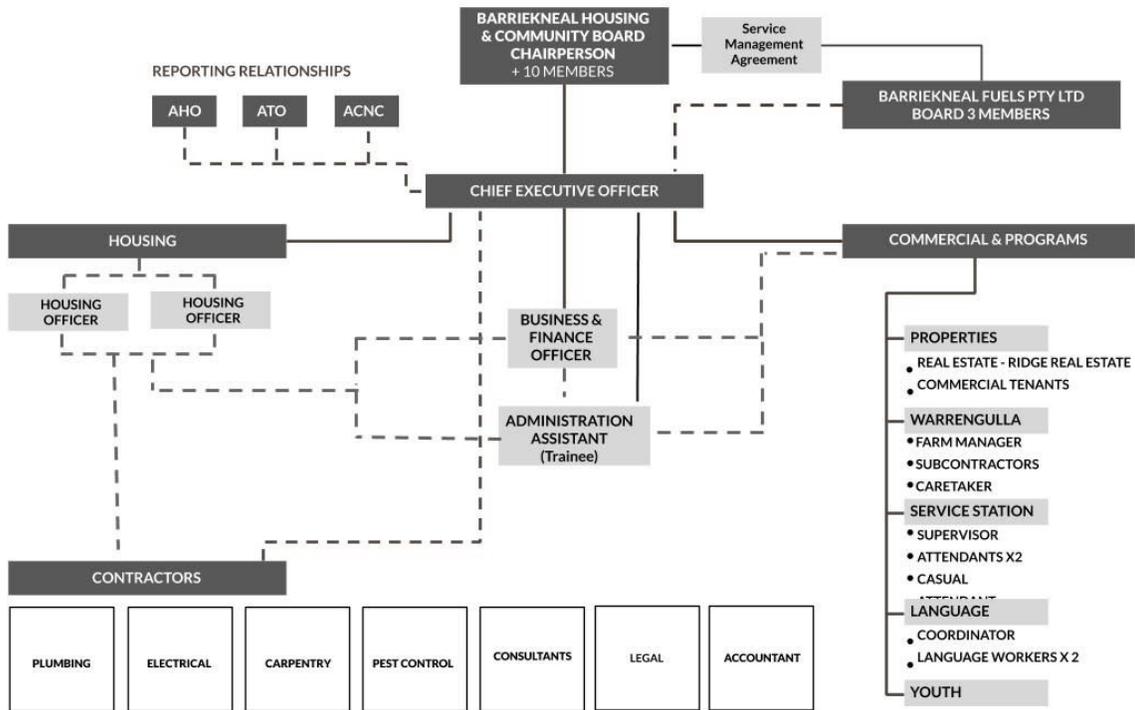
Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd has updated structures in place to ensure compliance, including Policies and Procedures related to the operations and governance of the Company. These Policies and procedures are reviewed by the Board and Staff annually and on a needs basis.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

In 2019 Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd committed to the restructure of their Company, recognising that, since 2011 it had discussed this but never implemented or acted upon changing the structure.

After several iterations, the structure below was agreed upon, with a view that in the future, the preference would be that the Barriekneal Housing & Community and Barriekneal Fuels Pty Ltd Company's would be managed by 1 Company Board. The reason for this is the challenge in recruiting and retaining qualified and experienced Board Members to manage the Company effectively.

OPTION 3



This structure represents a significant new chapter for the Company with the recruitment of a CEO, expected to commence in October 2019. The expectation is that this role will allow for the Company to more effectively expand and invest in improved operations and profitability, navigate the national regulatory changes in the social housing sector and more easily achieve its objectives. The Board worked closely with existing staff to ensure there was understanding and input from them in the structure redevelopment and new contracts and positions will be offered. It is expected that this structure may change as required once it is implemented, to ensure it is effective and achieving the outcomes the Company requires.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

In the 2016 Census Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were 22.7% of the population of Lightning Ridge. The median household income had dropped more than \$30 since the 2011 Census and the average age had increased from 25 to 31.

	2011 ABS Data for Lightning Ridge	2016 ABS Data for Lightning Ridge
Total Population	1496	2284
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Population	427	517 (22.7%)
Male	782	1241
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Male	205	267
Female	714	1047
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Female	222	255
Median Age	42	51
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Median Age	25	31
Median Household Size	2.1	2
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Average household size	2.7	2.6
Median Weekly Household Income	\$642	\$681
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Median Household Income	\$767	\$733
Median Weekly Rent	\$130	\$150

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Median Weekly Rent	\$140	\$178
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Further information [HERE](#) Sources:

https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12320 &

https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2011/quickstat/UCL115098

PELTS ANALYSIS

The operating environment for Barriekneal Housing and Community has been subject to significant changes since the last planning exercise in 2011. In preparing for the 2015-18 strategic plan the board reviewed these influences through a PELTS Analysis, which looks at the:

- Political
- Economic
- Legal
- Technological and
- Socio-cultural drivers of change

The factors that are driving change for Barriekneal are:

Political - Federal

- Incumbent Coalition Government
- Reforming Social Housing - moving to a national model of Accreditation (2022)
- Continuing investment in Closing the Gap and Aboriginal programs

Political - State

- Incumbent Coalition Government
- Focus on National registration for Aboriginal Housing providers
- Focusing on affordable housing, home ownership and innovation in service
- Focus on

Political - Local

- At least one board Member is on local Council, however still not connected strongly with local council
- No significant history of council working towards housing affordability
- Responds to very local issues – roads, rates & rubbish

Economic

- Barriekneal income stable with increases from external maintenance program, increasing rent collections and pastoral lease
- Some Barriekneal assets not producing income
- Significantly increasing tourism economy (from approx 50,000 visitors/year in 2014 to approx 90,000 visitors/year in 2019)
- Federal investment in Australian Opal Centre (total project value \$34,000,000) will result in jobs and opportunity for the Lightning Ridge community
- Local economy stable / fluctuating
- Low employment/jobs growth (except for AOC Project)

Legal

- Registered Class 3 ACHP under PARS
- Qualification as tax exempt charity
- Awareness and compliance continues to improve and demands increasing
- New Residential Tenancies Act and greater use of CTTT
- Organisational structure needs development / constitutional review
- At time of writing, Warrengulla was the subject of a law suite, disputing a Contract signed, without Board consent, by 2 directors

Technological

- Significant IT resources in the office
- Use of broadband and teleconferencing for training
- Further integration of software packages –linking existing software with each other to reduce time spent by staff in data entry
- Server for improved document control and management
- Social media to improve engagement with tenants and community
- App development for Language program and possibly Housing Service delivery

Socio-cultural

- Increasing household welfare dependency
- Local drug and alcohol issues – particularly risk of increasing methamphetamine use and ice
- Lack of activity for young Aboriginal people to be engaged, particularly in connection to culture and traditional language
- Increasing incidence of single homeless Aboriginal men, an unintended consequence of a focus on investment in family housing

- Globally there are more positive conversations about and interest in Aboriginal language, culture and awareness of the value these hold for the broader Australian community
- Bridging the gap for Aboriginal Australians
- Improved service network connections for when Barriekneal can't assist

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Housing is an issue for all populations in Lightning Ridge, with no other public/social housing available other than a Safe House for Domestic Violence and some locally managed (not for profit community organisation) flats for older people.

At the time of writing this plan, there were 20 eligible applicants on the Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd Waiting List for housing, they include:

- 8 x flats (singles or couples)
- 6 x 3 bedroom homes (couple with 1 or more children or single with 1-2 children)
- 6 x 4 bedroom homes (couple with 2 or more children or single with 3 or more children)
- 0 x 5 bedroom (couple with 3 or more children or single with 4 or more children)

Reporting for AHO indicates there are approximately 275 people housed by Barriekneal which is approx 2.8 people per house and represents approximately 53% of the local aboriginal community.

It is estimated that there are an additional 20 properties managed for Aboriginal social housing in Lightning Ridge, by non-local providers, providing housing for approximately 56 residents.

Of the 102 tenancies Barriekneal manages, estimates indicate almost 70% of those tenants are receiving Centrelink benefits.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Opportunities
<p>Established service provider with 40 years experience</p> <p>Substantial diversified and debt-free asset base</p> <p>Clear agreed objectives to provide low cost housing, education and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people</p> <p>Dedicated and skilled staff who are passionate and have an outstanding work ethic</p> <p>Active board is representative of the community with good relationships internally</p> <p>Good business administration systems</p> <p>Compliant with all legislative, reporting and agreement requirements</p> <p>Language program gives connections to young people</p> <p>Established policies and procedures</p> <p>Supporting Aboriginal tradespeople where able</p> <p>Creative, innovative and forward thinking contributors to the Company</p> <p>High quality tenants - 95% rent collection and minimal arrears</p> <p>Tax Exempt Charity</p>	<p>Registration under NRS</p> <p>Existing assets / businesses can be further developed for a greater return and to support the Company to achieve its objectives</p> <p>Expansion of business to service the housing stock (eg new enterprise development)</p> <p>Seeking new sources of funding for specific projects</p> <p>Better financial and business performance with a new team and additional support</p> <p>Mapping plans and policies/procedures into software Members will use</p>
Weaknesses	Threats
<p>Attracting and retaining skilled and committed board members</p> <p>Board Members are mostly tenants, potential conflict of interest</p>	<p>Complex and changing rules, regulations, policies and legislation</p> <p>Increased compliance leading to inability to meet requirements and loss of funding, housing stock or other assets</p>

<p>New organisational structure untested Narrow funding sources and reliance on Barriekneal assets for revenue Under-staffed for the volume of work Board training for governance and business skills is limited and difficult to access and requires significant time Members can not always commit to Policies and Procedures updated but not being 'used' well by Board/Staff Loss of knowledge / skills when Board members leave – no succession plans Risk assessments not complete Current Constitution is limiting Potential of community to influence Board decisions</p>	<p>NRS registration requirement for AHO management and other funding/support Housing Pathways leading to culture change in tenants and community Inability to manage opportunities due to lack of assessment process Cost of expansion too great for the Company to manage Community and family factions Natural disaster and weather reducing income from Warrengulla property Bad publicity Loss of market share - external housing managers taking local business opportunities Increasing cost or decreasing availability of tradespeople - Unable to contract or afford the cost of tradespeople (no local, have to go regional) or not enough options to ascertain best price</p>
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SOURCE VISION BRAINSTORM

When the Board reviewed the Company's Source Vision there was a lengthy discussion about 'how' the Source vision could be realised (in practical terms, how the desires that are at the heart of their work, can be brought into real life)

Much of what was discussed was for ideation or reinforcement of what is contained in latter sections of this plan, however the Board wanted their ideas recorded for future planning and implementation.

Events

- Participate more in those that are happening in town organised by other providers/organisations
- Host our own eg Yarn Up
- Host a Ball/Community event annually

Partnerships

- Improve partnerships with local providers including Mission Australia, Police, Health

- Partner to engage a Social worker to provide additional support to Tenants

Healthy Lifestyle

- No drugs/alcohol
- Health bar at service station (fresh and quick)
- Bush Tucker
- Tenant program for healthy lifestyle
- Soup Kitchen at the Ella Nagy Youth Centre

Youth

- Get the Youth Centre back up and running with Council
- Youth programs on Country (eg camping)
- Tenancy education in different areas for youth (preparing them for tenancies)
- Aunty/Uncle Program

Story/History

- Capture the Elders stories
- Develop more Art programs and tell our story through art

Warrengulla/Property

- Camping
- Overnight Camps
- Cultural Tourism
- Arts, tools and artefact making on country
- Dancers
- Drug and Alcohol activity on country
- Cultural Intervention (partnership with other organisations)

Programs to Do the right thing

- Peer pressure
- Environment
- History repeating
- Social and cultural support

Housing

- Emergency housing, particularly for youth and men
- Elders Village
- Single men (youth) flats or duplex
- Safe house for children
- Commercial rental

Employment/Training

- Providing employment and training opportunities that feed into the needs of the company for service eg trades people (plumbing, building, electricians)
- Create traineeships where possible and pathways for employment

- Youth workers
- Focus on young people
- Look at reinstating CDEP or similar activity based work projects

Team

- Support the team, including access to outside the company support (mentoring, training, counselling etc)
- External HR support
- Training in social work or counselling

Non-Aboriginal people

- Do we provide housing for non-aboriginal people who are at risk or who can't access social housing (as there is none)?

MARKETING & PROMOTION

Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd has done very little marketing and promotion of its activities as it hasn't needed to (small community, intimately connected to their tenants), however it does require more attention to improve tenant and community engagement and the promotion of the services and story of the Company.

Current Marketing and Promotion

- Survey to members
- Advertising for staff with local employment networks, Koori Mail and SEEK as required
- Occasional posting on Facebook page
- Posters/fliers in window on streetfront

The development of a Community Engagement Strategy will inform the Marketing and Promotion for the Company which will largely be focused on educating and informing rather than marketing for new business.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Company has in place or are working on the development of the following plans, policies and procedures:

- Business Policies and Procedures
- Housing Policies and Procedures
- Asset Management Plan
- Risk Management Plan
- Work Health & Safety Plan
- Financial Management Plan

STRATEGIC PLAN

The general observation from the Board and Staff review is that while Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd has strong foundations and a high level of commitment, the organisation's governance, policies and procedures, structure and office administration systems and therefore capacity for growth is being hampered by under-resourcing.

The staff and board express overwhelm and low levels of trust and safety have developed, which need addressing.

For many years, the Company was operating in 'survival' mode, re-building, saving, planning, operating from a focus on 'getting by' and as a result, the organisation is financially sound, has an excellent business model and high levels of company intelligence. However, there is a new mindset and way of doing business required if they are to move into a 'thriving' future.

The intent of this plan is to map a clear plan so the Company can move into 'thriving' and take the foundations it has built to succeed and start to achieve more of its big visions and objectives.

Despite the best efforts of staff and the Board, much of what was identified in the 2015 - 2018 Strategic Plan remains unchanged and either incomplete or not commenced.

The recommendations of this Plan will be to refocus the Board and staff on these priorities - as their relevance and necessity remains.

The main opportunity is to continue with the development direction identified in previous business plans, particularly to:

- continue to enhance board and staff capabilities
- increase the financial and social return on Barriekneal assets
- develop new business, social influence and employment activities

Several strategic planning workshops identified the following priority areas for the next 5 years and it's these that the Board remain committed to:

1. Culture of trust, safety and the Company's reputation
2. Organisational structure, asset protection and staff resources
3. Business and social enterprise development
4. Board capacity & contribution
5. Community development

1. Culture Of Trust, Safety And The Company's Reputation

“Our Company reputation reflects our commitment to our values and we are responsible to our people.”

Barriekneal Community and Housing Ltd has a four decade history of service to the Lightning Ridge community and a wonderful story to tell in the achievement of its objectives and goals. It has a reputation of delivering great value to the community and for much of it's term, has experienced sound management.

During these years, changes in government policy and funding, increasing regulatory compliance and diminishing local capacity have presented significant challenges to the Company, at times, forcing the organisation to go into 'survival' mode to ensure it's continuation.

This has a cost. The decisions and actions taken by the Barriekneal Board and staff impact on access to housing, employment and other opportunities for individuals and the Aboriginal community generally. There will always be reputational risk in the decisions taken by the board and staff and the need to actively manage information, consultation, complaint, dispute and promotional communications.

Trust of people, processes and systems is critical to the ongoing success of the Company and building a culture of safety, trust and transparency will be foundational for their future.

Trust & Safety

A number of incidents involving staff and board members during the course of 2018/2019 highlighted a trust and safety 'gap' in the Company that needs addressing and focusing on.

Trust and safety is built over time and through being true to your word, being transparent in communication and decision making and doing what you say you will do all create a safe environment.

By focusing on a VALUES based decision making model and having the Company values and vision at the forefront of Board, Staff and community members minds, trust and safety can be rebuilt easily, but it takes deliberate and strategic action.

Being open to feedback and seeking feedback from people who are usually quiet (looking for unique ways to engage this) will also help build trust and safety, particularly where there is no risk of embarrassment or punishment for the provision of honest feedback. More open and regular communication, that is engaging and active, will improve trust for the Company and having many voices sharing the communication will help to (eg Board members and staff involved)

Reputation

Due to under resourcing and the challenges already identified, Barriekneal has had an inward facing focus when it comes to reputation - focusing on reputation with funding, regulatory and compliance bodies and tenants rather than an outward desire for the community to know and relate to their contribution. An improved reputation in the community, will, no doubt, provide opportunities for increased membership, development of new programs or enterprises, partnerships and possible new Board members and/or volunteers and staff.

Barriekneal intends to focus on communication and in particular a focus on communicating through the Values of the Company. They want all activity and communication to represent these values whether it be building reputation internally, to members and community or to external stakeholders.

Recommendations

- Celebrate 40 years anniversary with a community event to truly celebrate the milestones and achievements of the Company and its people
- Develop an interactive Annual Report (and share with Members) outlining Company achievements
- Host regular community events and activities or participate in those that are happening locally already
- Engage with tenants and community in different ways, host meetings at times and in places when/where a majority of people can attend (or host the same meeting more than once)
- Regular communication of activity/outcomes on social media and in other forms locally (eg noticeboards, mailbox drop)

- Seek more honest and critical feedback (and solutions) using creative ways to engage the 'silent' members of the Company and community, ensuring there is no punishment or consequence for the provision of this feedback
- Have a focus on building safety and trust in all communications
- Development of a community app where tenants can gather and connect with each other and the Company
- Development of a Communications plan within the Community Engagement Strategy
- Look for opportunities where you can tell the story of the Company and its community
- Foster risk taking in the Company, for Board Members and Staff to share their ideas and be creative in the achievement of the goals
- Create safe ways for healthy conflict to be nurtured, engage the board and staff (and community) in training in trauma-informed practice, healthy communication, conflict management/resolution etc

2. Organisational Structure, Asset Protection & Staff Resources

“We always ensure there is transparency in our decision making and we will diligently protect the rights of our people.”

Developing an organisational structure and asset protection that works for the Company and the human resources of the Company is a priority for Barriekneal. At the time of writing (August 2019) the Company was recruiting a CEO, had completed an organisational restructure and was working through a constitutional change.

Based on recommendations from previous plans, they were also continuing to explore their options for asset protection and management of assets that are owned in different corporate entities.

In 2009 a new company, Barriekneal Fuels Ltd was created to ensure asset protection. This company owns and manages the Service Station and is wholly owned by Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd. It has 3 directors, elected by the board of Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd. This separation has, historically, caused confusion about the ownership and management and responsibility for the Service Station, so in 2019 reporting from Barriekneal Fuels Ltd to the Board of Barriekneal Housing & Community was initiated, to mitigate the risk of misunderstanding and to ensure effective governance and operations.

The Board has discussed options for further quarantining assets by having different corporate entities hold different assets (social housing, Warrengulla) and be the trading company, but it has not made any decisions as the primary issue was having enough people who would be able to govern multiple entities.

Barriekneal continues to seek specialist legal and accounting advice on the best path forward.

This will also be imperative, if the Company, before 2022, decided to apply for registration under the National Regulatory Social Community Housing as the Registrar has significant powers over Company activity and the asset management and activity of the Company has significant impact on the sSocial Housing portfolio.

The Staff of Barriekneal are the Company's greatest asset, many have been there for a decade or much longer, and they need to remain at the forefront of the Company's decision making and investment. There needs to be a consolidated effort to provide appropriate education and training, support and mentoring and acknowledgement of service and achievement.

Recommendations

- Continue to review organisational structure, as it is implemented, ensuring the company and staff needs are being met and adapting if necessary
- Implement appropriate Staff Performance management including regular reviews (Board of CEO and CEO of staff) and act accordingly
- Review the asset protection of the company with the aim of ensuring adequate structural protection of the Company's assets and operations and enabling effective management of all assets and entities
- Improve reporting and delegated relationships with Barriekneal Fuels to ensure effective Governance and efficient operations
- Implement revised Constitution through appropriate process
- If the Company decides to pursue registration under NRSCH, it may be necessary to create completely new companies that separate the commercial and other activity from Barriekneal Housing & Community, leaving the social housing as an entity in its own right.
- Develop a staff training, mentoring and achievement strategy that ensures staff are nurtured and supported in their roles and personal growth

3. Business And Social Enterprise Development

“We create successful enterprises that provide employment for our people and share our cultural knowledge.”

A review of progress against the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan found that Barriekneal's assets were not returning desired levels of income or achievement against the Company's social, economy and employment objectives for the local Aboriginal community. Pathways for contribution for Aboriginal people remain entrenched in employment outcomes and since the cessation of CDEP, no alternative pathways have been provided. Community analysis and anecdotal accounts indicate increasing

unemployment, welfare dependency and increasing adverse social indicators including drug use, crime and family dissolution.

Creating pathways for meaningful employment in the Aboriginal community remains a key community need and central objective of the Company.

Even in a limited economy such as Lightning Ridge, social enterprise and business development has the potential to play more of a role in achieving the company's objectives and access to the Internet and technology provide additional avenues to explore.

Several ideas arising from the Company's existing assets were identified, including development of the Matrix Street land for social or private rental (possibility of an Elders Village), cultural tours at Warrengulla, a food outlet (cafe) at the service station, re-instituting art sales and Trade services enterprise providing service to the Company and community in trades that are currently in shortage locally. Further enterprise development will be supported with the addition of the CEO position and one of their key performance measures will be the implementation of profitable and socially successful development.

Recommendations

- Identify priority areas for enterprise development leveraging existing Barriekneal Assets fully to achieve the Company's objectives and implement
- Seek to form new mutually beneficial partnerships to achieve enterprise development and ensuring employment, that result in the realisation of the Company's objectives
- Explore new technology and online based opportunities
- Seek to develop an enterprising and entrepreneurial culture in the community and look at how Barriekneal can partner or develop programs and enterprises that achieve this (eg Incubator programs or enterprise development support)

4. Board Capacity And Contribution

"We value good Governance and ensure all members are able to contribute to building a strong Company."

The challenge for the Barriekneal Board is having enough Aboriginal people and Members of the Company, who are willing, able to commit and are confident and competent to join the Board and contribute effectively. This is a challenge for all local boards/committees as the volunteer numbers decrease each year.

Previous Strategic Plans have focused on developing and implementing a Training plan for the Board which has been achieved, to varying degrees. Most of the current Board members have achieved some level of Governance training, which has been achieved at no cost to the organisation because of partnerships with TAFE. Getting attendance at

longer training can be a challenge for the Board, so a variety of strategies is important to consider.

Governance in action

During 2019 the Board has met reasonably regularly on a Tuesday evening for 1-2 hours for a 'workshop', these have focused on the work required on planning, policies and procedures and governance. While it is not ideal to be having a weekly commitment for Board Members, it is a good way of engaging the Board in the development of skills and deepening their understanding and contribution to the function of the Company rather than attending a 1 or 2 day workshop where there can be an information overload.

Equally, the model of four 'board days' each year, with a mix of training, action on specific major projects and review of progress on the strategic plan would enhance board member capacities and collective board contribution to the management of the organisation. The board could set new learning and action priorities for the following year, as suggested by the annual review of progress against the strategic plan.

A skills audit for the Barriekneal Board reveals Board members bring a range of relevant skills and qualifications, including governance and business and the Staff members possess valuable, relevant skills and qualifications, however there are significant gaps and decision making and understanding of complex issues remains a challenge

There are a significant number of the current Board members who are also staff. Though the historical context and rationale for this is reasonable (fewer Board members available and limited reporting meaning Board not well informed), it is not an ideal model of governance and needs addressing at a constitutional and organisational reporting level.

Recommendations

- Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd Member recruitment drive, with a focus on looking for people who could make great Board Members and could be recruited or nurtured through training/engagement in workshops etc
- Focus on new Board Member recruitment as a priority with informed and supportive onboarding processes as well as a plan for skills, capacity and healing for individuals
- Staff should not be Board members, the Board could consider creating a single 'staff' role on the Board that is non-voting or ensure reporting to the Board is appropriate so the historical need for staff to be on the Board is diminished
- Consider 'Advisory' committees that bring in non-Board members as part of the development/decision making process back to the Board on specific areas of interest eg Housing, social enterprise, Cultural development etc
- Continue with regular workshops hosted by staff/board on specific topics (perhaps 1-2/month)
- Invest in training and capacity building in decision making, organisational culture, trauma healing, strategic thinking, creativity

- Identify ways to commence education, motivation and inspiration for young people to become Board Members of the Future
- Explore the skills gaps and look at other ways of engaging these on the Board (eg Associate members or non-local members)
- Recruit non-tenant Board Members to mitigate the risk of a heavily weighted tenant Board and the risk associated with this in skewed decision making
- Explore ways for the Board and Staff to engage and collaborate in team building, cultural activity or 'fun'.

5. Community Development And Advocacy

“We represent our people in respectful ways in all situations.”

While the other four focus areas are inward facing, this one speaks specifically to the community Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd influences and serves.

As has been articulated in earlier sections of the document, including the Company objectives, there is considerable desire and vision for the thriving and healthy community.

The Company is well connected to local networks through interagencies and engagement through tenant services etc, however these are not formalised nor documented or communicated networks.

With the engagement of a CEO there will be greater capacity for these networks and more community development activity to occur, including Advocacy at a local, state and national level.

Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd represents a significantly marginalised people and they have an obligation and a desire to improve conditions in their community - in all aspects of their members, tenants and community lives.

The Community Engagement Strategy will inform this work

Recommendations

- Development and implementation of a Community Engagement Strategy
- Values based decision making in all aspects of development for the Company activities
- Identify key areas for advocacy and become involved in whatever capacity the Company can manage (eg through ACHIA)
- Explore options to engage a Social Worker to provide more formalised linkages through the tenants to other support services

OPERATIONS

1. Housing

“To operate a social and commercial housing enterprise that meets the needs of the community and the tenants, with housing stock that is repaired and maintained fully and is self-financing and not reliant on government funding.”

The current housing stock is 102 premises, of which 60 are owned by Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd, 38 are owned by Aboriginal Housing Organisation (AHO) and managed by Barriekneal under various head/sub lease agreements. 4 are owned by the Local Aboriginal Land Council and managed under lease arrangement with AHO. Seven of the AHO properties are located in Walgett.

Barriekneal also owns a vacant residential block in Matrix Street, Lightning Ridge, which the Board has identified for additional housing in previous Strategic Plans and to date has not achieved this development.

At the time of this plan, there were 20 eligible applicants on the Waiting List for housing, they include:

- 8 x flats
- 6 x 3 bedroom homes
- 6 x 4 bedroom homes

In 2012 Barriekneal was successfully registered as an Aboriginal Community Housing Provider (ACHP) - Category 3, through the Provider Assessment Registration System (PARS). This was endorsement of their improved policy and procedural improvements made by the Board and Staff and secured the company's ability to continue to deliver housing and community services in Lightning Ridge and the region.

A full review of the Company was completed in 2015.

With changes in the community and social housing sector pending, by 2022, Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd will be required to achieve full accreditation through the National Regulatory System (NRS) for Community Housing if they are to maintain agreements with AHO for management of their housing stock and to be able to continue to operate as a Social Housing provider.

This structural adjustment presents both opportunity and challenge for the Company. Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd identified, through a self assessment process, that there were substantial updates and changes required by the Company if they were

to achieve Registration and in 2019 the Board commenced work, supported by THE RW Agency, with a view to applying for registration.

However, in July 2019 representatives from CHIA and AHO provided a 2 day workshop in Lightning Ridge, for the Board and provided deeper insights and understanding into the NRS registration implications for the Company and the Board.

It challenged the Boards previous assumption that the best (or only) option was to proceed with Registration.

There were three primary concerns raised after this workshop

1. the Board's capacity to deliver on the high level of compliance required (including specific skills)
2. the Registrars authority over all aspects of the Company, including the entities not related to Housing
3. the future for their tenants

In August 2019 the Board further workshopped the opportunities and risks/barriers for pursuing registration under the NRS to enable them to set their strategic direction

OPPORTUNITY	RISKS/BARRIERS
Being able to keep and manage the houses owned by AHO	Getting people with appropriate skills and capacity on the Board is already challenging and the requirements under the NRS will be increased and concerns the Board would be unable to achieve the requirements
Tenants continue to be supported by local Housing provider	More Housing stock increases the possibility of high risk tenants and increased cost to the Company
Opportunity to expand the Housing portfolio and manage properties within a 3hr radius of Lightning Ridge	Failure to expand successfully
Job opportunities for Aboriginal people (within an expanded Housing portfolio)	Being controlled by the Registrar
Opportunity to establish additional enterprises to support increased housing portfolio including trades/services and tenancy support	Risk to the housing portfolio of the other businesses owned by Barriekneal

OPPORTUNITY	RISKS/BARRIERS
Access to funding from the Government	Increased personal risk to the Board Members
Rigorous compliance should mean improved operation	

After this process it became apparent that unless significant changes are made in the area of Board capacity, the Company would not have the Board skills and capacity to meet the requirements of the NRS.

When the Board then considered not proceeding with registration under NRS the most significant impact identified was for their AHO tenants who would, after 2022 (or earlier) would be managed by a non-local provider. The Company, they agreed, would be okay managing their own Housing stock and could leverage their other assets and opportunities to achieve their community objectives.

In order to mitigate the risk for their tenants, the Board decided to focus on 4 key outcomes, in order of preference listed below

- Encourage the tenants in the AHO owned properties to purchase their homes
- Negotiate with AHO for Barriekneal to acquire the properties
- Barriekneal to purchase the properties
- Develop wrap around services to be offered to AHO or the provider to ensure continued localised support for tenants

These outcomes will be reflected in their short and medium term goals.

The 2015-2018 Strategic Plan did not identify any new housing goals for Barriekneal, instead cited goals from 2011.

In this Strategic Plan, Barriekneal wanted to refresh their goals and set their sights higher, leveraging the opportunities and their excellent position for the achievement of their Housing and community objectives.

Short term goals (12 months)

- Continue to gather information and data on the national registration scheme, process, opportunities, risks etc to make informed decision and plan accordingly
- Focus on home ownership for Aboriginal people through the development and implementation of a Home Purchase Scheme and working with AHO and IBA to educate and support tenants to purchase their homes.
- Improve the case-load of the Housing Officer with a different organisational structure for Housing, including the addition of another Housing Officer position.

- Acquisition/Purchase/Development of properties - negotiate with AHO to acquire properties currently under offer but incomplete transfer, explore options to purchase AHO properties and commence development on Matrix Street, to reduce the housing list or as a commercial investment providing housing for Aboriginal people who are not in the social housing market
- Improve tenant and community engagement through regular communication including surveys, newsletters, gatherings and by implementing an incentivisation strategy to reward excellent tenants and foster a culture of care and responsibility by rewarding leadership
- Improve the financial management of the Trust Funds (for cyclical maintenance for the 3 property portfolios to ensure maximum return on the capital)
- Encourage Members of Barriekneal who are non-Tenants to join the Board to ensure diversity in the decision making process
- Continue to improve Board capacity, governance and structure to ensure that if the Board decided to proceed to National Registration before 2022 deadline, they will be compliant

Medium term goals (2-3 years):

- Housing Assets are owned independently of other Barriekneal Housing & community Assets to provide additional protection
- To be able to build or purchase enough homes to provide housing for applicants on the Waiting List
- Social or commercial enterprise developed that mitigates the risk of trade shortages and provides employment or business opportunities for Aboriginal people
- Improve the financial performance of capital funds related to housing to enable further capacity of Barriekneal to deliver its housing objectives

Long term goal (5 years):

- Continued financial independence and profitability enabling re-investment
- No waiting list
- Depending on a decision to pursue National Registration - Property ownership has increased 10-20% and we have more properties under lease with AHO and other providers
- Depending on a decision to pursue National Registration - Providing Housing Management Services to stock owned by other providers in towns in our region, providing further employment in the Housing department

2. Service Station

“Barriekneal Fuels Ltd is a functioning company managing the financially profitable operations of the Service Station, providing full time, part time and casual employment for Aboriginal people across the service station and kitchen enterprises”

In 2009, Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd transferred ownership of the Shell Service Station to Barriekneal Fuels Pty Ltd, a company in which Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd is the sole shareholder. This provided some protection of Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd's assets, but has not alleviated the burden of management from the staff or board.

During the period 2011-2016 the Service Station was a financial burden for Barriekneal Fuels Pty Ltd, as it had poor management. Since 2016/2017, however, with improved control of fuel and stock and new supervision, the prospects for this business have improved, with profits achieved in 2017 and 2018 Financial years.

Premises at the rear of the Service Station is currently tenanted with a long term tenant, this is managed through the Ridge Real Estate for \$260+ gst per week.

Barriekneal Fuels Pty Ltd will have its own Strategic and Business Plan (in development at the time of writing) but the identified goals are:

Short term goals (12 months)

- Implement service agreement with Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd to alleviate issues of ownership/management etc
- Management and responsibility for the growth of the Service Station to be identified within Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd organisational structure eg staff and operations managed by CEO
- Effectively communicate and report the activity of the Service Station to Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd
- Implement the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan
- Develop and implement Policies and Procedures for the Service Station operations
- Implement appropriate monitoring of underground wells, after exemption is concluded
- Invest in new underground wells/monitoring
- Invest in upgrades (including paint, cleaning etc) in the premises that will improve customer flow and allow for new development in the cafe/food and retail section
- Cafe and retail further developed to add profit to the Company and create new jobs
- Develop and implement a Marketing Plan
- Ensure consistent income from rental of the premises at the rear of the service station or implement an income generating enterprise in the space
- Explore options to brand with a company eg Inland Petroleum

Medium term goals (2-3 years):

- Research and review options to install car wash facilities (if the shed has not been leased out)

Long-term goal (5 years):

- Barriekneal Fuels operates a professional, profitable enterprise providing employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people.

3. Warrengulla

“Warrengulla is a financially profitable and regenerative land based enterprise employing and providing training for Aboriginal people and displaying the best practice and experiences in land, cultural and environmental management.”

Warrengulla is 3644ha (9600ac) property approx 15km from Lightning Ridge and consists of approx 2000 ha of prime lake bed farming country.

A Farm Business Plan was developed by Mark Gardner of Vanguard Business Services in 2017 and should be referenced as it provided excellent advice for the advancement of the objectives of Barriekneal through the development of the property.

At the time of writing, as a result of a legal case against a previous leaseholder, Warrengulla property has considerable cash savings and potential for multiple ventures to commence. Also at the time of writing, a legal case was being actioned against a new lease that was signed, without the Board knowledge, by two directors with a third party for a lease. The Board agreed to pursue the extinguishment of the Lease if possible and will take action against the Board members, as appropriate.

In addition to opportunities Barriekneal Housing & Community have identified as possible on Warrengulla including:

- Bush Tucker farming
- Goat farming
- Cultural Knowledge Sharing Activity
- Cultural and Educational Tourism
- Farm stay

Warrengulla property has the ability to provide two primary leases on the accessible country:

- Grazing lease – includes grazing country, Homestead, Shearing Quarters, Cottage, Shearing and Machinery Sheds.
- Lake lease – includes cropping country

Short term goals (12 months):

- Secure the property with the extinguishment of the Lease
- Focus on low impact, low management income generating activities including agistment and short term leases on the farming land
- Manage agistment stock on the grazing country with flexible terms
- Develop clear roles for Warrengulla for management and expansion

- Ensure the homestead and other infrastructure on the property are well maintained and improved where possible
- Develop Policies and Procedures for the management of the property
- Implement the Property Farm Business Plan
- Undertake survey and mapping of the culturally significant sites on the property working in partnership with Environment & Heritage and other relevant departments
- Mitigate the risk of illegal shooting, firewood collection and trespassing
- Improve the fencing so the property is ready for additional stock/activity
- Undertake Bush Tucker Farm Business Planning (proposed by Mark Vanguard)
- Develop possible appropriate and financially profitable lease options for grazing country, if desired

Medium term goals (2-3 years):

- Commence implementation of Bush Tucker Farming Plan
- Research and review cultural tourism enterprise options for Warrengulla including cultural camps for adults and young people, cultural site and bush food tours
- Research and review environmental practices options including carbon trading schemes

Long-term goal (5 years):

- Internationally recognised tourism venture providing cultural and land management education experiences for locals and visitors
- A profitable export bush tucker business
- Providing employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people

4. Language Program

The Lightning Ridge Language Program is currently funded for three years under Department of Communications and the Arts from September 2018.

This program builds on previously funded Programs (through Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts).

The program employs two Language Workers and a part time Administration Assistant.

The program provides services to revitalise and empower Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people to work collectively to develop and maintain language, art and culture.

The language program continues to operate successfully and meet the expectations of the company and community.

The key deliverables of the Language Program include:

- Development of a mobile app/dictionary

- field/cultural trips
- Language classes
- Art/Craft classes
- Adding songs in the mobile app/dictionary

Short term goals (1 year)

- Deliver on the key outcomes as identified in the Program
- Increase engagement in the Program
- Develop strategies to enable the program to become less reliant on government funding and subsidies, with a view to developing commercial enterprises and gallery space

Medium term goals (2-3 years):

- Implement strategies to enable the program to become less reliant on government funding and subsidies, with a view to developing commercial enterprises and gallery space
- Reapply for funding
- Employ more Aboriginal people under the program

Long term goals (5 years+)

- Program implemented without reliance on Government funding, but with support of funds received
- Providing employment for 5 or more Aboriginal people
- A profitable social enterprise operating in conjunction with other Barriekneal activities (including Warrengulla and the Service Station)

5. Commercial & Industrial Premises

“Managing commercial premises effectively to use the spaces available to help Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd achieve it’s community goals and/or generate a return to the Company that enables employment and activity in other areas of the business.”

Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd owns a number of commercial and industrial premises, some of which are leased, some of which remain empty or are used as storage space for Barriekneal Housing & Community machinery, equipment and housing materials for repairs and maintenance.

All of the properties are own unencumbered by loans or caveats.

Properties include:

- Office at Lot 8 Opal Street (3 office spaces)
 - a) Front office (available for lease)

- b) Back office (used by Barriekneal Housing & Community staff and board)
- c) Large office (language program and art facilities)

- 6x Industrial Sheds
 - 13-17 Nobby Road Corner Sheds (vacant) advertised through real estate
 - Next to it (tenanted for \$150+gst/week)
 - Old Gallery (Vacant)
 - 19-21 Nobby Road Old Homemakers (Used by Barriekneal for storage and a Tenant pays \$250/month for storage too)
 - 34 Lot 8a & b Nobby Road Old CDEP (Two tenants - \$220 inc gst/week - \$185 inc gst /week)

Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd are also Reserve Trust Managers for the:

- Ella Nagy Youth Centre

Short term goals (12 months):

- Clear out spaces that require vacating or emptying so they can be leased/sold
- Get a scope of works completed on the Ella Nagy Youth Centre so the funding available (\$40,000) can be spent and the Centre can become operational in late 2019 with Council engagement
- Explore the sale of 13-17 Nobby Road or make the premises work better for the objectives of the Company

Medium term goals (2-3 years):

- To be generating profit from the premises owned by the Company and using those that can be utilised for enterprise development (if applicable)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

An action plan covering the short term actions was identified within the 2011 and 2015 Business plans and during the time since, very few of the actions were implemented and the plans were not really used by the Board or staff. This indicates staff overwhelm, lack of leadership and calls into question the useability of the planning process.

The first priority of the CEO should be to develop and train staff to use an easily managed and useable framework for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The two frameworks recommended are:

1. Mapping the key deliverables of the Strategic Plan into a single document that can be used for reference, staff planning and deliverables (this has been completed for both Operational and Strategic Implementation)
2. Mapping the key deliverables of the Strategic Plan into [ASANA app.asana.com](https://app.asana.com) (a project management software the Company has invested in to manage workflow, planning, projects etc)

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Community Engagement Strategy
Barriekneal Fuels Pty Ltd Business Plan
Barriekneal Housing & Community Ltd Policies and Procedures
Warrengulla Farm Strategic Business Plan
Bush Tucker Plan Proposal - Warrengulla

REFERENCES

2007 Business Plan developed by Richard O'Neil BE FAIM, Managing Director Execlink Pacific
2011 Business Plan developed with assistance from RBlack Community Practitioners Australia
2014 Business Plan developed with support from Aboriginal Housing Office NSW and the NSW Federation of Housing Associations
Warrengulla Farm Strategic Business Plan by Mark Vanguard
Bush Tucker Plan Proposal - Warrengulla by Mark Vanguard
Australian Bureau of Statistics
Walgett Shire Council