



# PLAYBOOK

Nurturing Nature: Cultivating Culture  
Securing \$117.84M for Regional NRM



## LESSONS FROM QUEENSLAND'S WIN

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## About this document

In October 2024, both the Liberal National Party (LNP) and Labor Party in Queensland made a commitment to the state's regional NRM sector: the first time either political party (let alone both) made a pre-election commitment to invest into the sector.

Labor committed \$20 million to fund the sector's role in providing advice and support services for natural capital markets.

And in their pre-election commitment, the LNP, who were later elected to government, promised they'd invest \$117.84 million into regional NRM organisation – the single biggest investment by a state government in NRM history – through a new program called the NRM Expansion Program.

This playbook distils the key actions, strategies, and lessons which led to this landmark investment. It provides a practical guide for others aiming to secure significant, long-term government investment through coordinated strategy, collaboration, and advocacy.

## Acknowledgement

### ***Election Working Group members***

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Julie Boyd (Chair NRM Regions Queensland)

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This playbook has been compiled from debriefs, webinars, meetings and conversations which involved Working Group members, regional CEOs and Chairs, external observers and advisers, and the team involved in bringing the campaign to life.

# 1. Vision and Strategic Intent

## **Our objective**

Build a trusted, long-term relationship with the Queensland Government to become the provider of choice for sustainable land and water management solutions—not simply to secure funding.

## **Strategic framing**

In the past, and largely due to limited resources, Queensland NRM sector's election strategy was to approach politicians a couple of months before an election, asking for funding based only on our perceived self-importance and track-record. But everyone asking the government for money says the same thing: we're critical to society, we're cost-effective, we use the latest science. Eventually you blur into the noise and it becomes difficult to differentiate NRM from Surf Life Saving or the RSPCA. Everyone is essential and everyone is asking the government for resources!

From the outset, we knew if we wanted this 2024 election campaign to succeed we had to do something different.

With guidance from our Election Working Group, which met every two to three weeks for 18 months, we identified that to secure our long-term goal of accelerated on-ground impact and the resourcing to achieve that, we needed to focus on improving our relationship with the Queensland Government.

We recognised that to secure transformational investment, we needed to position ourselves not as applicants or recipients—but as trusted delivery partners for government. That meant changing the conversation. Instead of asking for money, we asked: how can we help solve the government's problems? Instead of coming to the government with projects, we came with a deep understanding of the threats to Queensland's natural assets.

Our vision was to be seen by government as essential infrastructure for landscape-scale resilience, regional prosperity, and community wellbeing. That meant showing up with credible data, tangible case studies, and a willingness to help government agencies meet their policy goals—across biodiversity, agriculture, water quality, disaster resilience, climate change and First Nations engagement.

Rather than focusing solely on what the sector needed, the campaign emphasised what the government needed: reliable, regionally-based partners capable of achieving outcomes that aligned with state priorities. This proactive stance—grounded in evidence and long-term relationships—was fundamental to securing cross-party political support and embedding NRM as a statewide policy priority.

## 2. Timeline Overview

Starting early was one of the hallmarks of our success. Planning for this campaign took place 2 years prior to the Queensland election.

With limited resources but time on our side, we mapped out a campaign timeline – from February 2023 when we began stakeholder mapping, through to 2028 – to encompass two state election cycles.



## Key milestones

Timeline	Key focus
October 2021	<b>Socio-economic impact research</b> , funded by the Queensland Government to capture intel on our economic impact, value-add and social networks.
October 2022 – March 2023	<b>Market research and stakeholder mapping</b> – engagement of a market research company and internal mapping of stakeholders based on power / influence and interest
February – May 2023	<b>Fact-finding</b> through intense schedule of ‘listening’ meetings with DGs, Ministers, Chiefs of Staff, peak bodies and former political decision makers
June – September 2023	<b>Project submission phase</b> – calling for projects from regional NRM organisations and building the campaign from both the bottom up (regional priorities) and top down (Queensland Government priorities)
October – December 2023	<b>Campaign development phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key messaging and audience identification</li> <li>• Developing collateral including campaign documents, briefings for CEOs and Chairs</li> <li>• Design of communication assets including brand, imagery, social media</li> <li>• Professional copywriting and designers engaged to ensure succinct but impactful campaign material</li> </ul>

Timeline	Key focus
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing tools for tracking advocacy activity including spreadsheet with all CEOs having access</li> </ul>
February 2024	<p><b>Launch of the Nurturing Nature: Cultivating Culture campaign</b> and Case for Support document with major event at Parliament House on the first sitting day of Parliament for the election year.</p> <p>Investment in NRM communication expertise - copywriting and design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campaign documents and accompanying landing page copywritten and professionally designed by experienced contractors</li> <li>Campaign documents tailored to major political parties (One for LNP, one for Labor, one for Katter’s Australian Party)</li> <li>Shadow Environment Minister Sam O’Connor acting as champion</li> <li>Two separate launch events – one for Labor and one for LNP - with multiple ministers / shadow ministers in attendance</li> <li>Endorsements and attendance from strategic peak organisation partners covering key themes in our proposal including: Queensland Conservation Council, Queensland Trust for Nature, AgForce, Queensland Farmers Federation, Local Government Association of Queensland, and Queensland Water and Land Carers</li> <li>Attendance at launches by regional NRM organisation Chairs and CEOs</li> </ul>
February – October 2024	<p><b>Advocacy and communication phase</b> – more than 250 meetings with politicians and decision makers accompanied by coordinated communication campaign delivered by NRM Regions Queensland and regional NRM organisations. Saturation was reached. Every meeting was tracked in a CRM. There were times when we were meeting advisors at Parliament House to discover unrelated staffers walking past holding our glossy campaign document.</p>
22 September 2024	Labor announcement: commitment of \$20 million to fund our role in advice and support services for natural capital markets
8 – 14 October 2024	LNP announcement: commitment of \$117.84 million (60% of our original ask of \$196.4 million) and inclusion in 100-day plan
26 October 2024	Queensland election – LNP win majority seats. NRM Expansion Program included in three ministerial charter letters
24 January 2025	MOU launched between the LNP Queensland Government and NRM Regions Queensland committing to delivery of the NRM Expansion Program
February – June 2025	Co-design of NRM Expansion Program with Queensland Government and submission of applications for agreed suite of projects.

## 3. Campaign Architecture

The architecture of the campaign reflected both the ambition of the ask and the maturity of the NRM sector. It was designed to enable regional voices to be coordinated into a single, persuasive pitch to government – with a focus on unity but not uniformity, recognising that our regional approach is the sector’s strength.

### 3.1 Core Leadership and Structure

***Election Working Group:*** An Election Working Group was formed two years prior to the election date. The group comprised a mix of CEOs, NRM staff, the NRM Chair and CEO, and the program manager and communication lead. This group met fortnightly and acted as the campaign’s engine room.

***Regional NRM CEOs and Chairs:*** Played active roles in reviewing content, testing political messages, and preparing for strategic engagement with local MPs and ministers.

***Support from external advisors:*** Political strategist (working pro bono), respected sector elders, and government relations professionals provided behind-the-scenes coaching and insight into parliamentary cycles, party strategy, and political messaging.

***Champion engagement:*** Shadow Minister for the Environment Sam O’Connor emerged as a powerful political ally, backed by early and consistent engagement by the sector. Other MPs were cultivated via regional project briefings and targeted advocacy.

### 3.2 Governance and Coordination

- Fortnightly updates and coordination through the Election Working Group and NRM communication lead.
- Uptake of shared planning tools, predominantly a cloud-based stakeholder engagement tracker (this was a simple Google Sheet), which tracked more than 200 meetings with sitting and prospective politicians and their advisers.
- All 11 regional NRM organisations remained aligned on language, tone, and priority themes, underpinned by shared key messaging and hard-copy and digital collateral — a level of cohesion noted by multiple government contacts as unique and highly professional.
- The campaign maintained a “one voice, many channels” principle — ensuring that while regions led local engagement, all communication pointed back to the same unifying proposition – the campaign documents and centralised landing page. NRM CEOs were regional spokespeople at launches and in front of the media.

### 3.3 Tactics and Tools

**Stakeholder mapping and intelligence gathering:** We identified political champions, departmental influencers, marginal seats, and key gatekeepers early and incorporated this intel into our communication planning.

**Targeted briefings:** Separate campaign documents were tailored for each major party (Labor, LNP, KAP), using language and priorities aligned with their stated platforms.

**Communication strategy:** Delivered in two streams — (1) strategic messaging to politicians and peak bodies, and (2) local communication support to regions for site visits, MP engagement, and regional storytelling. This included the development of shared key messaging and regular briefing documents for Chairs and CEOs to ensure everybody stayed on-message.

**Event activation:** The campaign's launch event at Parliament House on the first parliamentary sitting day of 2024 - deliberately timed as a breakfast to maximise attendance of sitting politicians. When the LNP made a commitment to funding the program, an additional media event was held at a regional location (Bundaberg – a marginal seat) with a follow-up event on a property in Far North Queensland (Cairns - another marginal seat) three weeks later.

**Evidence-first framing:** Campaign messages were anchored in data and tangible case studies published regularly on NRMQR's website and shared via social media. The ask was never “support us”—it was always “here's what we're already delivering and how we can help you meet your policy goals.”

**Quick response times:** When politicians and their advisors asked for more information (such as a breakdown of Indigenous employment through our projects; or how many threatened species would be impacted), we produced it immediately to reinforce the key message that we are a data-driven, cohesive and forward-looking sector with the capacity to deliver at-scale.

### 3.4 Defining Principles

**Discipline over noise:** No off-message communication or separate asks from individual regions as well as a clear governance chain ensured confidence among Ministers and advisers. This was a major turning point for our sector and based on feedback through our fact-finding phase was something previously missing from past campaigns.

**Proactivity over reactivity:** The campaign anticipated concerns and had answers prepared—backed by sector intel, evidence, and professional presentation. This included tools such as a FAQ document for Chairs briefing Ministers. We anticipated the questions that might arise and how to address them using agreed key messaging.

**Unity without uniformity:** Each regional NRM organisation retained its identity but contributed to a unified statewide narrative. This was another major turning point for the sector.

## 4. Key Moves and Turning Points – activating the strategy

### 4.1 Early market research and stakeholder intelligence

In addition to socio-economic research undertaken by EY which clearly articulated our ability to leverage funds (\$4.20 for every dollar invested in NRM), and the number of jobs we create across Queensland, we also undertook formal market research with senior bureaucrats, peak bodies and communities.

Then, before we asked government for anything, we took time to understand how we were perceived through targeted interviews with Ministers, DGs and former political advisers. Through these activities, it became clear that the NRM sector was perceived as fragmented, reactive, and lacking political muscle. This research phase was uncomfortable but essential — it surfaced the perception gaps that the campaign needed to address head-on.

Some of the verbatim feedback we received from senior bureaucrats and ministerial advisers was focussed on:

- **How funding is used:** "There's a perception that you're administratively expensive and give funds to farmers for equipment they can sell on."
- **How we communicate our impact:** "You need to consistently and collectively lift your profile. It often feels like NRMs are always requesting handouts."
- **Governance inefficiencies:** "You come to the Minister as separate organisations, so there is no sense that you are one state or national movement."
- **Our ability to influence:** "You lack influence and clout. You're not on our radar."

#### **TURNING POINT:**

Realising we had to shift from being seen as 'fund seekers' to being essential public service infrastructure.

## 4.2 Launching a cohesive, customised campaign package

The “Nurturing Nature: Cultivating Culture” campaign wasn’t just a document — it was a whole suite of projects, data, materials and messages tailored to different audiences. The campaign was built from the ground-up, through the submission of regional projects which were then grouped into themes. It was also built from the top-down, using our new knowledge of government priorities and appetite for regional NRM.

All-in-all, we pitched 46 regionally-led signature projects, grouped into 7 statewide themes and packaged together as one clear ask with clear costings. We prioritised data, facts and science and used language that resonated with each target audience. We created three separate versions of our ask – one each for Labor, the LNP and the Katters.

Strong campaign visuals, identity and key messages allowed the sector to speak with one voice and we included testimonials from partner organisations to reinforce messaging around the need for this work as well as our standing in the community.

Through professional copywriting and graphic design underpinned by strategic communication planning, the following materials were developed:

- Campaign document – 3 unique documents tailored for LNP, Labor and KAP
- Landing page: <https://www.nrmrq.org.au/nurturing-nature-cultivating-culture-nrm/>
- Case studies and news stories highlighting significant on-ground outcomes, published to the NRM Regions Queensland website and to the landing page and LinkedIn (our LinkedIn grew from 0 to 2000 over the campaign period)
- Social media strategy with regular content reinforcing our key messages
- Social media packs for regional NRM organisations driving complementary messaging through all 11 member groups (and acknowledging that not every NRM organisation has a dedicated communication role)
- Briefing packs for CEOs and Chairs charged with regional advocacy including key messages, FAQs and information to respond to trends as they emerge. This also included an agile response to support CEOs and Chairs urgently requiring additional supporting information.

### **TURNING POINT:**

The creation of high quality, impactful campaign documents - outlining project impacts and employment and economic benefits - built trust within our sector as well as with external partners. Regional NRM organisations were proud to share campaign material and were well-equipped to undertake advocacy on behalf of the whole sector.

### **4.3 Strategic Event Timing and Framing**

The campaign was launched on the first sitting days of Parliament in February 2024. Two separate events, attended by approximately 40 people each, were held at breakfast— one for Labor and one for the LNP, designed to attract politicians before formal business began.

Framing it as being solutions-focussed rather than a funding ask was a deliberate move that positioned the sector as proactive, professional, and ready. These launch events took place in February 2024 – a whole 8 months prior to the state election.

#### **TURNING POINT:**

Choosing the first day of Parliament for the launch ensured visibility and gave the campaign momentum from day one.

### **4.4 Elevating a political champion**

Shadow Environment Minister Sam O'Connor became the face of support for the campaign within the LNP. His early engagement, willingness to listen, and eager endorsement gave the campaign a clear political anchor. The sector worked hard to maintain that relationship and give him opportunities to be seen as backing a smart investment.

#### **TURNING POINT:**

Having a known, trusted political voice carry the campaign message gave the campaign legitimacy inside the Party and inside Parliament.

### **4.5 Localised storytelling and statewide consistency**

Each region identified and pitched one or more “signature” projects that aligned with statewide themes. This meant MPs could see relevance in their own electorates while also understanding how it connected to broader impact. This was backed by coordinated messaging and regular briefings from NRM Regions Queensland.

Regional NRM organisations could use their place-based regional NRM plans to inform the development of their signature projects knowing that communities would be supportive and that politicians would back investment into their electorates.

#### **TURNING POINT:**

The ability to localise the message while maintaining one unified brand shifted the perception of NRM from fragmented to coordinated.

## 4.6 Creating Advocacy Saturation

By mid-2024, the campaign had hit near saturation point. Anecdotally, multiple MPs and advisers commented that “everywhere they turned” someone was talking about the NRM proposal. This included social media content, face-to-face meetings, community partners, and the physical appearance of campaign documents on desks and meeting tables – both inside and outside of Parliament.

Our CEO Chris Norman and Chair Julie Boyd spoke of security guards at Parliament House knowing their names. We’d see political staffers with our campaign material under their arms as we walked the halls. We had the Shadow Environment Minister quoting budgets and outcomes from our proposal when meeting with other peak bodies.

In total, more than 250 advocacy meetings took place. Each of these meetings were tracked on a shared Google Sheet with all regional CEOs and Chairs updating it in real time adding to our cohesiveness and ability to speak with one voice.

### TURNING POINT:

Reaching saturation meant that by the time Cabinet was making funding decisions, the NRM pitch was already familiar with the perception of significant backing – both by the community and inside the halls of power.

## 4.7 Bipartisan Commitment Secured

The LNP announced a 60% funding commitment (the original ask was \$196.4 million) and included it in their 100-day plan if elected. Labor signalled support through a \$20 million commitment. Following their election win, the new LNP government included the program in three separate ministerial charter letters — a first for NRM to be embedded in such a long-term commitment.

### TURNING POINT:

Inclusion in Ministerial charter letters locked in departmental accountability and showed that the campaign had achieved policy-level traction — not just political lip service.

## Key moves – in a nutshell

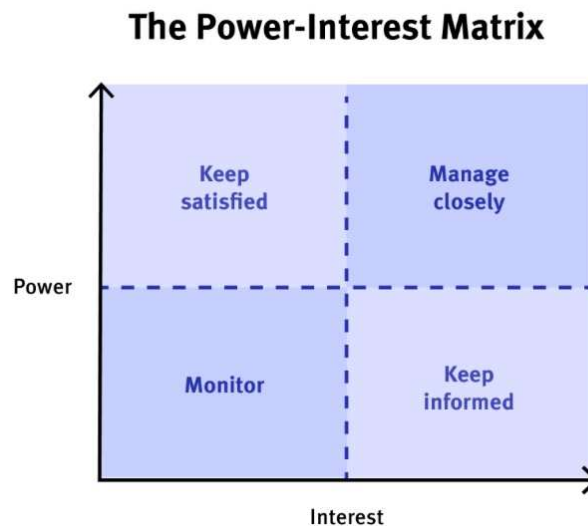
- **Market research and stakeholder intel** - early listening sessions with ministers and chiefs of staff revealed outdated perceptions of the sector which anchored our future key messaging.
- **Unified campaign package** - "Nurturing Nature: Cultivating Culture" included 46 well-defined projects grouped under seven themes, presented in adaptable formats.
- **Political timing** - launched at Parliament House with cross-party appeal. Campaign anticipated and responded to election cycles.
- **Having a champion**- shadow Minister Sam O’Connor became a high-profile supporter, later promoted within government.
- **Localised pitch** - each region presented one or more signature projects with strong local impact and alignment with statewide goals.

## 5. Tools and Templates

The success of the campaign was underpinned by a consistent, well-prepared suite of tools and templates designed to enable quick decision-making, strong alignment across regions, and professional presentation to external stakeholders. These resources ensured everyone—from a CEO meeting a Minister to a communication officer drafting social posts—was working from the same page.

### 5.1 Strategic Campaign Tools

- **Stakeholder mapping matrix** – Power / interest grid analysis that mapped political and departmental targets, their alignment, and relationship status. The results of this stakeholder mapping matrix guided targeted engagement and ensured all regions knew who to focus their advocacy on. After identifying stakeholders and mapping them, we identified existing relationships with regional CEOs and Chairs and then documented engagement actions.



- **Advocacy tracker (shared Google sheet)** – This simple cloud-based spreadsheet captured more than 250 meetings and briefings held across the sector including who was met, what was discussed, next steps, and shared intelligence to avoid duplication. This meant subsequent meetings could pick up where the last one left off.
- **Campaign timeline and action plan** - Clear sequencing of campaign phases meant coordinated delivery across regions and ensured everyone understood deadlines and expectations.

## 5.2 Messaging and Branding Assets

- **Messaging and positioning guide** - Included key messages and phrases, talking points, and alignment with major party language. This helped spokespeople stay on-message in media, meetings, and events.
- **Brand identity and templates** - professionally designed social media graphics, all built around the “Nurturing Nature: Cultivating Culture” campaign. This maintained visual cohesion across public-facing activity.
- **Campaign collateral (party-specific versions)** - tailored campaign documents and summaries developed for the LNP, Labor and KAP. This ensured maximum political resonance while holding our core narrative steady.

## 5.3 Support for local and high-level engagement

- **Briefing packs for CEOs and Chairs** - Included FAQs, short pitches, electorate-specific talking points, and fallback responses. These were updated regularly as questions and political developments evolved.
- **Minister and MP briefing decks** - Campaign documents with a strong call to action were designed to be left behind after meetings and were regularly cited as clear, persuasive tools.
- **Post-meeting follow-ups** - Regular check-ins took place between CEOs around advocacy and progress being made.

## 5.4 Communications and public engagement tools

- **Social media content calendar + tile packs** - regular LinkedIn content, ready-made visuals and captions for regions to localise and post. This enabled saturation without duplication.
- **NRM Regions Queensland campaign landing page** - Central hub for the campaign ([www.nrmrq.org.au/nurturing-nature-cultivating-culture-nrm](http://www.nrmrq.org.au/nurturing-nature-cultivating-culture-nrm)), regularly updated with news, case studies, endorsements, and downloadable collateral.
- **Testimonial and endorsements** - For peak bodies, partners and stakeholders to voice support—used strategically to show community, industry and cross-sector backing.

## 6. Lessons Learned

The campaign succeeded because of strategy, unity, and starting early. But it was also shaped by its challenges—gaps in understanding, strained relationships, and the sheer weight of carrying a sector-wide ask through a volatile political cycle. Here, we outline the most valuable lessons, as reflected in team debriefs and a strain/success retrospective undertaken in May 2025.

### 6.1 What Worked

#### **Investing in relationships (early and often) - we listened before we asked.**

From Ministers and MPs to Chiefs of Staff and senior bureaucrats, the campaign was built on relationships, not just briefing notes. A long lead-in allowed trust to grow and meant we weren't introducing ourselves the month before the election.

#### **One voice, many faces – we stayed on-script.**

The unified campaign structure, aligned messaging, and tailored assets allowed all 11 NRM regions to speak with confidence and consistency—without sacrificing their local voice. This strategic cohesion was repeatedly cited by Ministers and advisers as impressive and unusual.

#### **Confidence through preparation - we did our homework.**

From messaging guides to FAQs and fallback responses, we prepared for every question and scenario. This built confidence among sector leaders and earned respect among political stakeholders.

#### **The power of story + structure - stories with structure stick.**

The campaign combined data and evidence with real case studies, regional stories and local champions – mostly our regional CEOs and Chairs. Facts alone can be forgettable – but when you shape them into a story, people pay attention. Doing this meant that our champions didn't just present statistics, but told stories of the numbers as well as the faces and places behind our work. While each regional project is local and unique every one of them connects to a bigger, statewide outcome.

#### **Team culture and leadership dynamics – we worked as a team.**

At critical points we had to adjust our collective ask and that meant making difficult choices together. This included larger NRM organisations backing smaller ones to strengthen our overall position and that willingness to compromise built trust and credibility both internally and externally.

## 6.2 What Could Improve

**Don't mistake Ministerial support for system-wide understanding.** While Ministerial engagement was strong, departments were slower to come on board—and in some cases, resistant. Earlier engagement with mid-level and senior departmental staff would have reduced friction and helped align delivery expectations.

**Simplify without oversimplifying.** The campaign's strength was its unified brand. But in some cases, the complexity of NRM was difficult to distil. Future campaigns could benefit from more modular content — e.g. short, thematic briefing packs (biosecurity, soil health, disaster response) for targeted audiences.

**Co-design means different things to different people.** The NRM sector lives and breathes co-design with communities. Government departments, however, are process-driven and less familiar with co-design at this scale. Recognising this gap – and being patient with departmental culture – will be critical for future collaborations.

**Winning the ask is the start of the next advocacy cycle.** Securing \$117.84 million is a success story — but it brought heightened scrutiny, capacity pressures, and assumptions that "the sector is now fully funded." We underestimated the perception shift and now need to manage expectations and messaging about what the funding does—and doesn't—cover.

### Additional Insights

- People are everything: It was our people — chairs, CEOs, staff — who carried the message and relationships.
- Boards matter: Early engagement with boards helped build internal mandate and governance backing. Regional MPs want to hear from regional Chairs not a peak body CEO based in the capital city.
- Champions need support: Identifying a political champion is not enough — they need stories, time and attention.

## 6.3 Strategic themes and emerging priorities

These reflections extend beyond campaign mechanics. They offer insights into what it takes to lead, manage, and scale a sector-wide strategy through a high-stakes political process.

### Successes: what strengthened the campaign

- **Strategic planning pays off:** Long lead-in, clear milestones, and regular coordination made the campaign feel inevitable—not opportunistic.
- **Messaging alignment builds trust:** Co-designed messaging, early document release, and visible consistency made it easier for Ministers and MPs to engage.
- **Leadership + trust = momentum:** Having the right people in key roles—and trusting them—kept the sector aligned and motivated.
- **Champions need platforms:** Sam O'Connor's support was unlocked by well-timed opportunities and political space to lead.
- **Evidence earns respect:** The sector's professional, solution-oriented approach gave credibility well beyond its traditional base.

### Strains: where tensions or risks emerged

- **Single-department control increases risk:** Narrow governance concentration (ie. A single department) has created some disconnect tension between Ministerial intent and how the department delivers.
- **Capacity is finite:** Delivery demands grew faster than workforce and systems could respond.
- **Political cycles outpace project cycles:** The long delivery arc of NRM doesn't always match the fast pace of political attention or election timing.
- **Mid-level disconnects are real:** Messages can be lost or diluted if you don't engage middle managers as actively as Ministers.
- **"Fully Funded" Is a dangerous perception:** The size of the win created assumptions that further investment wasn't needed—threatening future streams.

## 7. Tips for Replication

- **Start early.** Build relationships and intel at least 18-24 months ahead of any election.
- **Get your house in order.** Align on shared messaging, goals, and themes before you approach decision-makers.
- **Be specific.** Create tangible, budgeted, shovel-ready projects that match local needs and state priorities.
- **Identify your leaders.** A fully engaged Chair prepared to have difficult conversations and able to lead with strength is critical to success.
- **Play politics smartly.** Develop versions of your pitch for different parties, tailored to their language and priorities.
- **Invest in comms.** Strategic, professional communication is non-negotiable.
- **Stay united.** The strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack.

This campaign was built over two years, supported by three decades of trust, and shaped by a sector-wide commitment to unity and professionalism. Replicating that kind of success requires discipline, planning and culture—not just content.

Below are our most important tips for any organisation or sector seeking to replicate this model.

### ***Start Early — much earlier than you think***

Build your relationships, stakeholder map, and narrative 18–24 months out from the next election. By the time you “launch,” decision-makers should already be familiar with who you are and why you matter.

### ***Map and manage stakeholders strategically***

Don't just list your contacts—map them by influence, alignment, and intel. Track who is engaging where, what their interests are, and who influences them behind the scenes. A shared tracker or CRM tool is essential for collaboration.

### ***Speak with one voice, many accents***

Maintain message discipline across the whole network. Use shared language, key messages, and visual identity—but give each regional NRM organisation permission to localise and personalise the story. Unity is not uniformity.

### ***Invest in tools, templates, and training***

Develop a full campaign kit: briefing packs, political decks, social media tiles, meeting scripts, media FAQs. Then train people to use them. The more prepared your team, the more confident and consistent your advocacy will be.

### ***Make it easy for politicians to say yes***

Show up with solutions, not just problems. Make your campaign visually engaging, backed by data, costed and shovel-ready. Align it with their platform—not yours. Tailor your pitch to each major party, including talking points and photo ops.

### ***Build a core Working Group and run it like a campaign***

Treat the process like an election campaign. Have a dedicated Working Group with decision-making authority. Set meeting rhythms, track tasks, test messages, and close feedback loops quickly.

### ***Secure a political champion—then back them in***

Identify someone in the party room who gets it. Then give them stories, wins, media opportunities and reasons to keep backing you. Champions need maintenance.

### ***Evaluate as you go (not just at the end)***

Track meetings, feedback, communications impact and gaps in real time. Make decisions based on live intel—not memory or guesswork. Constantly reframe key messages, pitches and supporting documents.

### ***Align with government language and priorities***

Use the words and framing that government uses. Position your ask as a solution to their problems—not just your needs. Reference state strategies, budget priorities and public value. Where possible, use their diagrams, not just yours.

### ***Think beyond the win***

Plan for what happens after the commitment is secured. Who delivers? Who owns communication? Who manages risk, visibility, and relationships? Campaign success can quickly create delivery strain if you're not ready.

## **8. Final Words**

This success wasn't luck. It was the product of decades of credibility, two years of hard strategy, and months of relentless collaboration. We hope this playbook helps you build your own pathway to political influence and lasting investment in your regions.

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