



Australian Government



TSRA

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TORRES STRAIT REGIONAL AUTHORITY
CORPORATE PLAN
2020-2021 TO 2023-2024

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Artist acknowledgment: Mr Dennis Newie, St Pauls Community - Moa Island
Title: Kamu (Mangrove Flower)





1. INTRODUCTION

As Chair of the Torres Strait Regional Authority Board; the accountable authority under section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), I am pleased to present the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Corporate Plan 2020-2021.

The plan is consistent with the obligations arising from the TSRA's enabling legislation, the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* (ATSI Act), and was prepared in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (PGPA Rule).

The TSRA Corporate Plan 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 is also aligned to the *Torres Strait Development Plan 2019-2022*, produced under Section 142D of the ATSI Act.

This plan has been prepared for the 2020-21 reporting period and includes information that covers the 2020-21 to 2023-24 reporting periods as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the PGPA Act. It replaces the TSRA Corporate Plan 2019-20.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NPS', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Mr Napau Pedro Stephen AM
Chairperson
Torres Strait Regional Authority



2. PURPOSE

The Torres Strait Regional Authority, under the direction of an Indigenous elected representative Board is the lead Commonwealth agency with responsibility to develop policy, implement programmes and coordinate service delivery for the benefit of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people of the region.

Established under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005*, the core of the TSRA Board and the agency's governing mandate is the recognition and maintenance of Ailan Kastom belonging to all Torres Strait Islanders, and to formulate and coordinate policies and programmes for Torres Strait Islanders, and Aboriginal persons living in the Torres Strait area.

Vision:

Empowering our people, in our decision, in our culture, for our future

'Ngalpun yangu kaaba woeydhay, a ngalpun muruyguw danalngan mabaygal kunakan palayk, wigel goeygoeyika' (KALA LAGAW YA)

'Buaigiz kelar obaiswerare, merbi mir apuge mena obakedi, muige merbi areribi tonarge, ko merbi keub kerkerem' (MERIAM MIR)

'Ngalpan moebaygal thoepoeriwoeyamoeyn, ngalpan ya kuduthoeraynu, ngalpan igililmaypa, sepa setha wara goeygil sey boey wigel' (KALA KAWAU YA)

3. KEY ACTIVITIES

The primary functions and responsibilities for the TSRA are defined in the enabling legislation under [section 142A](#) of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005* (Cth) (the ATSI Act).

The TSRA is required to formulate and implement a plan to guide the progress of the Torres Strait region towards the future through the *Torres Strait Development Plan 2019-2022*. The aim of the plan is to improve the economic, social and cultural status of Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal persons, living in the Torres Strait area. The *TSRA Corporate Plan 2020-2021 to 2023-2024* outlines the strategies and the policies that the TSRA intends to adopt in order to implement the *Torres Strait Development Plan 2019-2022*.

Separate functions are performed under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) as the Native Title Representative Body for the Torres Strait area.

The TSRA also aims to meet the goals and objectives stated in the *Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Plan (2009-2029)* as well as delivering the objectives and benefits stated in the *Torres Strait Development Plan 2019-2022*.

4. OPERATING CONTEXT

Environment

The TSRA operates in a unique environment characterised by a challenging social, economic, telecommunication and environmental issues. The governance arrangements over the Torres Strait environment are complex, involving two countries, local, state and national governments, and native title holders. The agency delivers services across the entire Torres Strait region, including 17 inhabited islands and the communities of Bamaga and Seisia in the Northern Peninsula Area of mainland Australia. As a statutory authority established under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005*, the TSRA is one of the most remote Australian Public Service agencies. The TSRA's head office is based on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, with a small administrative office in Cairns and Indigenous ranger offices operating in 14 outer island communities across 13 islands.

The Agency operates in a region that shares an international border with Papua New Guinea subject to the Torres Strait Treaty that provides the framework for the management of the shared border area. The Treaty recognises the importance of the Torres Strait environment and the traditional way of life and livelihood of traditional inhabitants. The Treaty establishes the Torres Strait Protected Zone and various consultative mechanisms, including the Environmental Management Committee.

More than 25 Australian Government departments are represented in the Torres Strait because of its unique political features, and strategic location for biosecurity, defence, surveillance and monitoring. This includes managing complex health, environmental, immigration, maritime safety and law and order challenges.

The important role of Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate (RNTBCs) as the recognised holders of native title is reinforced through strong governance and partnership arrangements in collaboration with all other service providers, and particularly the TSRA as the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) for the region.

Native Title

The TSRA Native Title Office has been appointed as the NTRB for the Torres Strait region until 30 June 2021.

In addition to its statutory functions under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*, the NTRB provides capacity-building support to the 21 RNTBCs in the region.

The TSRA has successfully undertaken the role of the NTRB for the Torres Strait Region continuously since 18 March 1996. There have been 27 determinations of Native Title resulting in the formation of 21 RNTBCs in the region. There are currently five claims in progress and there are additional land and sea areas for which a claims group has not yet been formed.

The Torres Strait operates in a predominantly post-determination environment with the bulk of the Native Title Representative Body work focused on Indigenous Land Use Agreements, Future Act Notices, Deeds of Grant in Trust transfers, the settlement of Katter Leases, intra mural land disputes and compensation.

Environmental Management, Climate Change and Biosecurity

The Torres Strait stretches over 150km from the tip of Cape York Peninsula to the southwest coast of Papua New Guinea (PNG) and covers an area of about 48,000km², with more than 300 islands (17 inhabited) and a multitude of cays, sandbanks and coral reefs scattered throughout the region.

The Torres Strait region is known for its ecological complexity, biodiversity and relatively pristine marine and island environments. The region provides a multitude of habitats for the highly diverse Indo-Pacific marine flora and fauna, including dugongs and marine turtles. It has the largest continuous area of seagrass meadows in the world, significant areas of coral reefs with high biodiversity, extensive areas of mangroves, and productive fisheries.

The *Land and Sea Management Strategy for Torres Strait 2016-2036* is the guiding framework for environmental management in the region, through a collaborative approach involving Traditional Owners, all levels of government and other partners.

The TSRA is responsible for the management of three dedicated Indigenous Protected Areas in the region as part of the National Reserve System (NRS). The NRS is the system of formally recognised parks, reserves and protected areas primarily dedicated to the long-term protection of Australia's biodiversity. The protected areas in the Torres Strait occur on public and Indigenous land and are formally protected through legal or other effective means and managed in perpetuity. Only those areas that fall within the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) definition of a protected area form part of the National Reserve System.

According to the IUCN, a protected area is: 'A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values'.

The TSRA is part of the Torres Strait Invasive Species Advisory Group, who collaboratively developed and coordinate the implementation of the *Torres Strait Regional Biosecurity Plan 2018-2023*. The development of this plan has been the culmination of extensive consultation with Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council communities, RNTBCs, all levels of government and research providers. The plan has been developed in response to the significant threats to Torres Strait's economic, environmental, social and cultural assets and values posed by existing and potential pests from within and outside Australia, and in recognition that the most practical and effective way to manage a number of these threats is at the regional level while acknowledging and supporting the management approaches adopted by each of the Torres Strait island communities.

Biosecurity issues do not exist in isolation from broader land and sea management considerations. This is complementary to and supported by the goals and activities outlined in the *Land and Sea Management Strategy for Torres Strait 2016-2036*.

As a component of the national Capacity Building for Indigenous Rangers Strategy (CBIRS), the TSRA has established a specialist compliance management unit (CMU) in the TSRA to support compliance management responsibilities in the Torres Strait. The CMU assists individuals and entities undertaking activities in the region to do so in compliance with relevant legislation, policy, agreements (including culturally-based permissions), the Torres Strait Treaty and license conditions. This unit through a Training and Development Strategy also delivers nationally recognised compliance training and support to 60 TSRA Rangers supporting the critical role that Rangers play in the protection of this unique environment.

Climate change continues to pose a strategic current and unfolding risk for the region, with key impacts related to sea level rise, community health and wellbeing, and the region's marine species and ecosystems. Actions identified in the *Torres Strait Regional Adaptation and Resilience Plan 2016-2021* continue to be implemented. Besides addressing specific climate related risks, actions and planning are also focused on building local and regional resilience and sustainability. The resilience focus has multiple benefits beyond climate risks, particularly in relation to greater local and regional autonomy. Sea level rise and extreme weather are a particular concern to low lying island communities, with coastal erosion and inundation requiring major infrastructure projects such as seawalls and geo-textile sandbagging. Marine infrastructure such as jetties and barge landing facilities require ongoing upgrading to harden against the effects of storms and rising sea levels. Coastal engineering projects are delivered by the TSRA through the Major Infrastructure Program (MIP).

Fisheries

The TSRA is a key stakeholder and governing agency in the Torres Strait Fishery. The *Torres Strait Treaty* defines the maritime boundaries between Australia and Papua New Guinea. The *Torres Strait Treaty* sets out a framework to guide Australia and Papua New Guinea in providing for the management, conservation and sharing of fisheries resources in and around the Torres Strait Protected Zone. The primary purpose of the Torres Strait Treaty is to protect the way of life of traditional inhabitants within the Torres Strait Protected Zone.

The *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* provides the legal framework for the management of marine resources in the Australian area of the Torres Strait Protected Zone as defined by the *Torres Strait Treaty*. The *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* establishes the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA). The PZJA is responsible for the management of all fisheries in the Australian area of the Torres Strait Protected Zone.

The TSRA has the lead on behalf of the PZJA in the development of a roadmap towards 100 per cent ownership of the commercial fisheries by Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Traditional Owners. This is being implemented through the Community Management Framework project established to ensure that fisheries assets are managed in the Torres Strait for the benefit Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people across the region.

The TSRA currently holds fisheries assets (catch allocations and commercial licences) on behalf of all Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people in the Torres Strait.

A key challenge facing the industry is the reliance on the Chinese market. This became evident with the impact of the COVID-19 (declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 11 March 2020) in the first quarter of 2020 with industry reporting a decrease in trade of 50-80%. China, the primary market for live Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) delivered by air from the region, saw demand plummet due to Chinese authorities imposing widespread quarantine, lockdown containment and travel restrictions measures.

Climate change continues to be a major challenge and diversification in harvest strategies for fishing TRL and bêche-de-mer (sea cucumbers) were implemented in December 2019, following several years of scientific research and consultation. This included augmenting scientific surveys with information from Indigenous fishers to work out sustainable catches. The new strategies followed a greatly reduced total allowable catch for TRL in 2018, when scientific surveys indicated that the TRL resource was being adversely affected by extreme El Niño events. As a result, the TRL fishery was closed prematurely, with substantial economic impact to the region. Similar tropical marine heatwave events are being forecast for 2020.

These two factors will be a major challenge in the coming year for the management of the Torres Strait Fishery by the PZJA to mitigate the loss to the livelihoods of TRL traditional fishers.

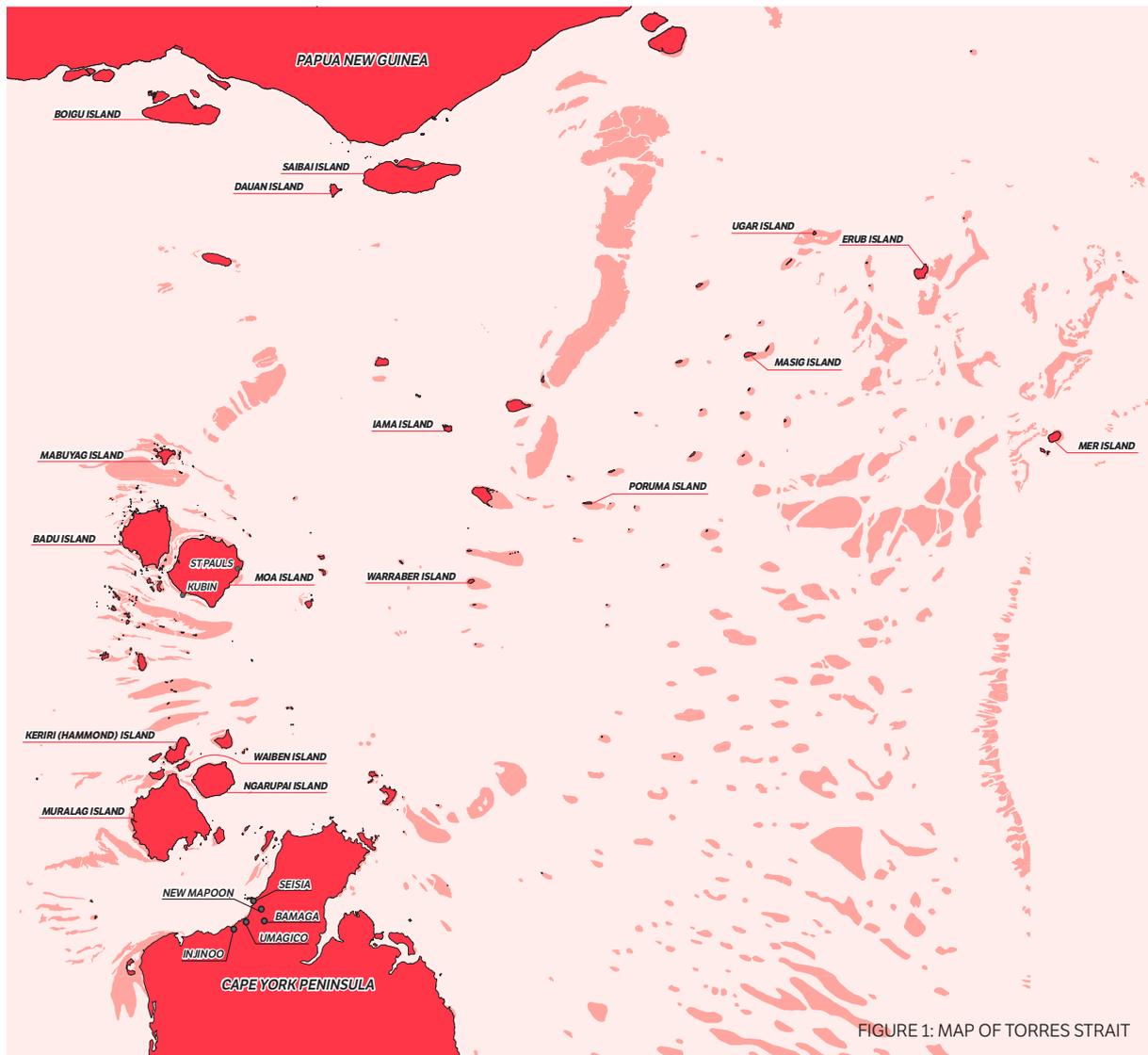


FIGURE 1: MAP OF TORRES STRAIT

Regional transport and communications

The TSRA, as with all other organisations and residents based in the region, rely on high cost air and sea links for the delivery of goods. Most travel within the region is restricted to small watercraft, helicopters and light aircraft. The main gateway to the Torres Strait is Ngurapai Airport, located on Horn Island, a 20-minute ferry ride from Thursday Island where the administrative hubs of the Australian Government, Queensland Government and two local government organisations are located. The bulk of goods and materials required by the region are shipped over 800 km by container vessel from Cairns and redistributed by barge from transshipment points on Thursday Island and Horn Island.

Robust and reliable mobile phone and internet communications across the Torres Strait remains a challenge. To address this, the TSRA in partnership with Telstra, has taken a lead role in the delivery of the Torres Strait Digital Expansion Project due for completion in 2021 with Dauan the last community to be upgraded.

The Torres Strait Digital Expansion Project will deliver multiple socio-economic, educational, health and community safety outcomes for the island communities and people of the Torres Strait region via a significant upgrade and expansion of the existing telecommunications network. Benefits for Australian Government agencies will include; enhanced bio-security, marine safety, defence support and border protection capability.

Socio Economic factors

Housing

The TSRA has provided funding to the Torres Shire Council (TSC) for the Horn Island Affordable Housing Project, to progress subdivision design and planning for the layout of the lots. This project will provide additional options for affordable home ownership in the region.

The TSRA's works to secure whole-of-government investment for infrastructure to support healthy homes, healthy living environments and affordable home ownership available across the region. Despite this, economic pressures beyond the control of the TSRA such as the demand for housing required for multiple government agencies operating across the region, complex land tenure arrangements, a lack of freehold land and long-tenure leasehold land remain challenges to increasing Indigenous home ownership.

This will contribute to meeting Target 9 of the current National Agreement on Closing the Gap, that: By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent.

Health and wellbeing

Health and wellbeing remains a challenge for Torres Strait Islanders for the coming year. The COVID-19 pandemic remains a major challenge for health services and agencies operating in the region. Torres Strait Islanders with pre-existing medical conditions are at particular risk.

The mortality rates for Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal males in the 35-44 age group were over four times higher than rates for non-Indigenous males. The mortality rates for Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal females in the 25-29 age group and the 35-39 age group were five times higher than rates for non-Indigenous females.

To address these priorities the TSRA plans to host a regional forum bringing together government and non-government organisations to develop a region health and wellbeing strategy.

This will contribute to meeting the following targets of the current National Agreement on Closing the Gap:

- **Target 1:** Close the Gap in life expectancy within a generation, by 2031.
- **Target 2:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies with a healthy birthweight to 91 per cent.
- **Target 14:** Significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero.

Education

The number of Torres Strait residents undertaking some form of education captured in the 2016 Census was 3,641. The Tagai State College average school attendance rate in 2016, across years 1 to 12, was 89 per cent. This is slightly below the whole-of-Queensland average attendance rate of 90 per cent.

In the context of the current National Agreement on Closing the Gap this will require the development of strategies to meet the following targets:

- **Target 3:** By 2025, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children enrolled in Year Before Fulltime Schooling (YBFS) early childhood education to 95 per cent.
- **Target 4:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) to 55 per cent.
- **Target 5:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (age 20-24) attaining year 12 or equivalent qualification to 96 per cent.
- **Target 6:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-34 years who have completed a tertiary qualification (Certificate III and above) to 70 per cent.
- **Target 7:** By 2031, increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth (15-24 years) who are in employment, education or training to 67 percent.

THE TSRA ENGAGES WITH A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS IN DELIVERING ON ITS FUNCTIONS AS MANDATED IN THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES-STRAIT ISLANDER ACT 2005

Local Government

- Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council
- Torres Shire Council
- Torres Strait Island Regional Council

NGO's and other community organisations

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (Qld)
- Adaptation and Resilience Committee
- Australian Rural Leadership Foundation
- Badhulgaw Kuthinaw Mudh TSI Corporation - Badu Art Centre
- Balkanu – Cape York Development Corporation P/L
- Cairns Indigenous Art Fair
- Cape York Land Council
- Community Justice Groups on the outer islands.
- Community Owned Enterprises
- Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair
- Erub Erwer Meta TSI Corporation - Erub Art Centre
- Gur A Baradharaw Kod Torres Strait Sea and Land Council
- Kerkar Bau Men's Group
- Lena Passi Women's Shelter
- Many Rivers
- Masigalgal eco-tourism ventures
- Meriba Ged Ngalpan Mab (CDP Joint venture)
- Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre
- Mura Kosker Sorority Inc.
- Ngalmun Lagau Minaral TSI Corporation - Moa Art Centre
- OXFAM
- Port Kennedy Association Inc.
- Queensland Rural Fire Service
- Queensland State Emergency Service
- Queensland Volunteer Marine Rescue
- Registered Native Title Body Corporates (RNTBC's) throughout the Torres Strait.
- Tagai College, Masig Campus
- Thursday Island Justice Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Corporation
- Torres Health
- Torres Strait Community Fisher Associations and Groups
- Torres Strait Islander Regional Education Council - Yumi Education
- Torres Strait Islands Media Association
- Torres Strait Islands, Seisia and Bamaga communities
- Torres Strait Local Disaster Management Group
- Torres Strait Youth and Recreational Sporting Association
- TRAWQ Indigenous Corporation
- UMI Arts
- Wakai Waian Healing

Stakeholders and Partnerships

Queensland Government

- Arts Queensland
- Biosecurity Queensland
- Crown Law
- Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
- Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
- Department of Environment & Science
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs
- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Maritime Safety Queensland
- Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
- Minister for Fisheries
- Office of Fair Trading
- Queensland Government Torres Strait Champion
- Queensland Health Service
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Treasury
- TAFE Queensland & Tagai TAFE campus
- Tagai State College
- Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service

Australian Government

- Attorney-General's Department
- Australia Council for the Arts
- Australian Border Force
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Federal Police
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority
- Australian Government Solicitors
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- Australian Institute of Marine Science
- Australian Maritime Safety Authority
- Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
- Department of Defence
- Department of Finance
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications – Office of the Arts
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Federal Court of Australia
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
- Indigenous Business Australia
- Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation
- Minister for Fisheries
- Minister for Indigenous Australians
- National Gallery of Australia
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- National Museum of Australia
- National Native Title Tribunal
- Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations
- Protected Zone Joint Authority
- Protected Zone Joint Authority Standing Committee

Other stakeholders

- Art Gallery of New South Wales
- Cairns Regional Gallery
- Community Enterprises Queensland (IBIS)
- Government of Papua New Guinea
- Indigenous Art Centre Alliance
- James Cook University
- Museum of Contemporary Art
- My Pathway
- National Bank of Australia
- National Gallery of Victoria
- Queensland University of Technology
- Supply Nation
- Telstra
- Tropwater
- University of Queensland
- University of Wollongong (ANCORS) Australian National Centre for Ocean resource and Security
- Western Australian Museum

Workforce capability planning and proposed staff restructure

A major change to the agency's staffing structure for the coming year is the creation and recruitment of a Deputy CEO position. Working to the CEO, the Deputy CEO will lead and provide Senior Executive direction to the Chief Financial Officer and Programme Managers across the TSRA, proactively engaging with highly complex and sensitive policy matters that contribute to the TSRA's strategic policy direction.

Over the coming year an internal organisational review of the TSRA will be undertaken to examine the most efficient structure to assist the TSRA more effectively reach its vision. A key priority will be the formation of a Policy Unit as well as exploring ways to centralise services provided by several areas across the TSRA to ensure consistency and more timely advice is available to stakeholders.

Risk oversight and management

In our challenging operating environment, success depends on TSRA's ability to engage with risk, capitalise on opportunities and encourage innovative practices.

Maintaining a robust risk framework

The TSRA has standardised its processes for the identification, documentation and management of risks and issues. All TSRA projects and managed activities include risk assessments as part of the project planning and approval process.

The TSRA's risk management system is based on the better practice principles and processes outlined in ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management – Guidelines. The system is:

- dynamic – by being responsive to change and assisting corporate learning and continuous improvement
- systematic – by being rigorous, transparent and explicit and taking into account stakeholder perspectives
- integrated and embedded – in so far as practicable, by reviewing established management planning, decision-making and reporting processes.

Responsibilities for the management of risk are contained in the Risk Management Policy. At the project and activity level, the TSRA's standard Risk and Issue Register is used to assign responsibilities for specific risks.

The TSRA has developed a standard Risk and Issue reporting template used for the identification and management of risk at the project and activity level.

The TSRA's risk management policy and supporting practices are reviewed through the Internal Audit process, Australian National Audit Office performance audits and the TSRA Audit Committee. The TSRA Audit Committee identifies risks to be raised with the TSRA Board.

The agency manages disruption to service delivery and core functions through the TSRA Business Continuity Plan (BCP). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the TSRA activated its BCP in March 2020. The proactive approach to business continuity enabled the TSRA to protect the safety and wellbeing of staff and Indigenous communities across the region. In particular the TSRA's significant investment in mobile and remote information and communications technology (ICT) capability ensured the agency was able to successfully maintain service delivery and support to the coordinated regional response as a member of the Torres Strait Local Disaster Management Group.

Building a strong risk culture

Strategic level risk is identified by the CEO and Programme Managers working with the Chairperson of the TSRA Audit Committee. Strategic level risk is published in the TSRA Risk Management Policy.

The TSRA conducts risk management training for all programme and project managers to develop a positive risk culture where risk is appropriately identified, assessed, communicated and managed across all levels of the TSRA.

Communication and consultation about risk takes place at the TSRA Programme Steering Committee and the TSRA Audit Committee. These committees meet quarterly. Programme related risks can be raised at weekly programme manager/CEO meetings and during fortnightly programme status reports.

Factors in full control

The TSRA Board has the mandate to shape policies for service delivery in the Torres Strait area for those projects and activities that are the TSRA's responsibility.

Within the limitation of appropriation and external funding the TSRA has full control of its programme delivery structure and full-time equivalent establishment. Except for the CEO, who is appointed by the Minister for Indigenous Australians, all TSRA staff are members of the Australian Public Service. The TSRA has the capacity to supplement its workforce through contracting and consulting.

The TSRA Board has full control over the allocation of appropriation to programme outcomes. The board sets out its strategic priorities in the TSRA's Development Plan and approves programme budgets in June each year.

The TSRA administration has full control over the projects and activities delivered by each of its programme areas, within the budgets allocated by the TSRA Board at the June meeting each year. Within programmes, priorities are agreed at quarterly Programme Steering Committee meetings.

The TSRA manages its own grant funding to Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people and corporations in the Torres Strait area. The TSRA conducts two grant rounds (Common Funding Rounds) each year and through its Risk Assessment and Grant Assessment panels determines which applicants are allocated funding. Funding is allocated to activities which support goals and outcomes stated in the *Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Regional Plan 2009-2029*, and the *Torres Strait Development Plan 2019-2022*.

Factors in Partial Control

The TSRA has been appointed by the Minister for Indigenous Australians to act as the Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) for the Torres Strait area. The Minister invites the TSRA to reapply for recognition and determines the appointment after considering the TSRA's application. The TSRA has been appointed to undertake the NTRB role to 30 June 2021.

The TSRA Ranger Programme is delivered through an external funding agreement with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) through the Working on Country initiative. The TSRA's Environmental Management Programme is structured to support this externally funded activity but is highly dependent on ongoing external funding for the Ranger Project. If funding is reduced or discontinued there are numerous flow-on impacts affecting the successful delivery of other internally and externally funded projects led by the Land and Sea Management Unit (LSMU).

TSRA is collaborating with health agencies and health researchers to assess the impacts of climate change on community health and wellbeing. Heat stress as well as increased risk of vector borne diseases and increases in climate related respiratory conditions add to the existing high levels of health burdens in the region. A regional health forum will be held this financial year to address the issues impacting the health of communities in the region.

The TSRA Culture Art and Heritage Programme receives external funding from Arts Queensland, the Australia Council and the Ministry for the Arts. The TSRA matches this funding from its appropriation to provide grant funding to Torres Strait and Aboriginal artists and to support the operation of three art centres in the Torres Strait area. The TSRA has the capacity to adjust the level of service to artists and art centres based on future external funding

The TSRA Governance and Leadership Programme delivers a range of leadership and capacity building programmes to Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people in the Torres Strait area. Participation in these programmes is voluntary so the TSRA's role is to create an environment for active participation rather than to control the number of graduates from the programmes. Increased advertising and greater use of social media has improved the nomination rate generally, and courses are fully subscribed.

The Major Infrastructure Program (MIP) is the flagship infrastructure investment programme for the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area. MIP is co-funded by the Australian and Queensland governments. The TSRA secured the funding for the continuation of a MIP Stage 6 Program. These projects focus on water and health related infrastructure for the region. The regional local government bodies and the funding partners have control over the prioritisation of MIP projects, however, the level of funding is determined by the Australian and Queensland governments.

The TSRA is the agreement manager for the Community Development Projects (CDP) programme in the Torres Strait area. While CDP policies are determined by the Australian Government the TSRA is able to influence the CDP projects and activities undertaken by the service provider to ensure they remain aligned with the *Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Regional Plan 2009-2029*, and the *Torres Strait Development Plan 2019-2022*.

Factors Beyond Control

The geography of the Torres Strait area, outlined in section 5.1, influences our capacity to deliver services to the Torres Strait area. The cost of delivering services and infrastructure to the Torres Strait area is significantly higher than most other areas in Australia due to the air and sea travel and freight costs. Contracting wage costs also tend to be higher due to remote area expenses and allowances.

Continued increases in sea level and sea surface temperatures pose substantial risks for low-lying communities and the region's fisheries and marine ecosystems. TSRA is working in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) to monitor and assess climate change risks to Torres Strait fisheries and sensitive marine species and ecosystems. TSRA is working with the Queensland Government, TSC and Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC) on the development of coastal adaptation plans funded by the Queensland Coastal Adaptation Plan funding programme.

Both economic development initiatives and infrastructure development are impacted by complex land tenure arrangements throughout the Torres Strait area. The TSRA is delivering services on land under Native Title, Freehold (owned and leased), Torres Strait Freehold, Katter Leases (both granted and under application) and Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT). Most infrastructure projects require Future Act notification, Cultural Heritage clearance and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA). The process is highly dependent on the Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate and Traditional Owners in the Torres Strait area and for the most part is outside of the control of the TSRA.

While the TSRA's Native Title Office (NTO) performs the NTRB function for the Torres Strait area it has little to no control over the Native Title determination process. At present, there are three Native Title claims still to be determined. While determination is an outcome of the NTO and a key performance indicator for this programme, the timing of determinations is controlled by the Federal Court of Australia.

Most Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal fishers in the Torres Strait area operate with Torres Strait Traditional Inhabitant Fishing Boat (TIB) licenses issued under the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* (Cth). TIB fishers are not required to maintain catch logs or to report catch. Accurate catch data for the Torres Strait area is therefore not available and the TSRA relies on estimates provided by the AFMA to report on the performance of initiatives undertaken by the TSRA Fisheries Programme.

Collaborating on shared risks

Shared risks extend across multiple parties and require shared oversight and management. In delivering the objectives of this corporate plan, the TSRA must manage several shared risks with other Australian Government entities, State and Local Governments, the private sector and non-government organizations.

Managing shared risks requires a fundamental and agreed understanding of the obligations of TSRA and other parties. This is achieved through formal agreements including memoranda of understanding, contracts and partnership agreements.

The management of shared risk has been identified as an area requiring further development.

Capability

The TSRA is a small agency with a large and important remit across a number of complex areas with different and competing factors. Over the term of this Corporate Plan, TSRA will continue to strengthen and enhance our capabilities in order to ensure ongoing sustainability and maintain out stakeholder confidence.

The TSRA will continue to build on its reputation and standing within the Torres Strait through ongoing respectful and culturally appropriate engagement that clearly demonstrates TSRA's intent on reaching its vision to improve the wellbeing of Torres Strait and Aboriginal people in the region. The TSRA will continue to work with the Australian Government as well as State and Local government organisations to support their aspirations in improving the lives of indigenous Australians living in the region.

The effective working relationship forged with the NIAA will allow increased collaboration and a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of people living in the Torres Strait.

The TSRA will continue to partner with key organisations to better position the agency to meet key objectives and encourage collaboration to reduce duplication of services to the Torres Strait.

Our systems and our assets need to enable innovation, efficiency and high performance. An agile workforce, able to anticipate and respond to challenges is fundamental to TSRA achieving its objectives. Staff development and focusing on having people with the right capabilities in the right roles and at the right time, working to their full potential will be a priority for the life of this corporate plan.

Over the period of this plan, TSRA will further build capability by focusing on:

- Strengthening our leadership
- Ensuring staff have the skills required to undertake their duties
- Improving governance arrangements
- Increase information sharing and collaboration across all levels of government
- Exploring services offered through the Australian Government [Shared Services Program](#) to improve efficiency
- Improving the way we promote ourselves and our work

ICT capability, business needs planning and implementation

The TSRA ICT Strategy 2016-2019 has expired. Due to unexpected key staff absences the renewed ICT Strategy for 2020-2024 is yet to be completed and is expected to be finalised by October 2020. This process will include a whole of agency consultation on business needs and priorities for ICT support to inform the development of the plan.

The TSRA is currently finalising a solution for an electronic document workflow system integrated with automated records management capability, expected to be implemented over the coming year.

The system will enable the TSRA to meet its legislative and regulatory requirements as a Commonwealth agency under the *Archives Act 1983* and the principles and practices set out in the following whole-of-Government policies and standards endorsed by the National Archives of Australia (NAA).

In addition, TSRA Corporate Services will continue to review the offerings available under the Australian Government Shared Services Program to drive budget savings and efficiencies. One priority area in the coming year will be to undertake a cost analysis, functional assessment and testing of the agency's current web services provider against the whole of Australian Government service GovCMS.

5. PERFORMANCE

This section sets out how the TSRA will measure its performance in achieving the agency's purpose. It includes the performance measures that will be reported against in the 2020-2021 Annual Report which are aligned with the 2020-2021 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS).

The corporate plan is the Agency's primary planning document. The annual performance statement closes the reporting cycle by highlighting our performance against the corporate plan and PBS.

The TSRA's sole outcome 'Progress towards closing the gap for Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people living in the Torres Strait Region through development planning, coordination, sustainable resource management, and preservation and promotion of Indigenous culture' is measured through 12 Key Performance Indicators set out below.

The TSRA recognizes its current performance measures are difficult to measure tangibly and are in the process of reassessing its KPI's to improve capability to measure outcomes quantitatively.

| PBS KPI Number 1 and 2 | | |
|---|--|--|
| PERFORMANCE MEASURE | GOAL (ONGOING) | MEASURED BY |
| Increase in the number of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal owned commercially viable businesses. | Enhance the region's wealth by creating sustainable industries and increasing employment opportunities for our people equivalent to the wider Australian community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development Projects audit of businesses in the Torres Strait area. Number of business loans administered by TSRA |
| Increased availability of approved business training | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback evaluation sheets from course participants to ensure effectiveness of courses. Attendance records Number of courses offered |

| PBS KPI Number 3 | | |
|--|--|---|
| PERFORMANCE MEASURE | GOAL | MEASURED BY |
| Increase in catches by Torres Strait and Aboriginal Fishers relative to Total Allowable Catch (TAC). | Enhance the region's wealth by managing and maintaining sustainable fishing industries and increasing employment and economic opportunities for our people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AFMA Fisheries Receiver Licence Reports and AFMA TAC advice the effectiveness of a range of fisheries capacity building initiatives undertaken by the programme. Increased Indigenous employment in the Fisheries |

| PBS KPI Number 4 | | |
|---|--|---|
| PERFORMANCE MEASURE | GOAL (ONGOING) | MEASURED BY |
| Increase in the number of emerging and professionally active artists and cultural practitioners that have access to information and support to ensure copyright and intellectual property rights. | Protect, promote, revitalize and maintain Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal traditions and cultural heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artists' attendance at copyright information sessions. Artists that have signed appropriate agreements where their rights have been highlighted. Number of artists signed up to VisCopy, Copyright Australia Artists' license fees paid through Gab Titui Cultural Centre Sales. |

PBS KPI Number 5 and 6

| PERFORMANCE MEASURE | GOAL | MEASURED BY |
|---|---|---|
| Number of Native Title claims successfully determined. | Protect, maintain and progress Native Title rights and recognition over the region's land and sea country | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register of Native Title Claims Advice from Traditional Owners |
| Number of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) that have compensation and other benefits as part of the ILUA terms. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native Title Office records National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) Federal Court Records impact of ILUAs or compensation settlements in compensating Traditional Owners for the use of Native Title land and sea. |

PBS KPI Number 7

| PERFORMANCE MEASURE | GOAL | MEASURED BY |
|--|--|---|
| Number of endorsed community-based management plans for the natural and cultural resources of the Torres Strait area being actively implemented. | To protect the ecological complexity and biodiversity of the Torres Strait region, and the strong and enduring connection of Torres Strait Islander people to their islands and seas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Reports. Ranger Working on Country Plans Dugong and Turtle Management Plans Indigenous Protected Area Plans of Management Biodiversity Profiles Ecological Fire Management Plans. |

PBS KPI Number 8

| PERFORMANCE MEASURE | GOAL | MEASURED BY |
|---|---|--|
| Increase in the level of engagement of elected Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal leaders in policy development and decision-making. | Effective and transparent self-government, with strong leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of engagement between TSRA Board Members or the Chief Executive Officer with Australian Government Ministers, Queensland Government Ministers, their advisors and Senior Public Servants |

PBS KPI Number 9

| PERFORMANCE MEASURE | GOAL | MEASURED BY |
|--|--|--|
| Number of Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC) that achieve ORIC compliance as at 31 December each year | 100% of PBCs achieve ORIC compliance as at 31 December each year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of PBCs that achieved compliance with their statutory reporting obligations. This includes the conduct of an Annual General Meeting and the submission of a General Report. Regional PBC Maturity Model Survey |

PBS KPI Number 10

| PERFORMANCE MEASURE | GOAL | MEASURED BY |
|--|---|--|
| Increased investment into new and existing regional environmental health infrastructure. | To both enhance both healthy communities and our living environment and achieve the provision of adequate, appropriate and affordable housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Infrastructure Program (MIP) quarterly reports • Various interagency meetings including the Major Infrastructure and Other Projects Trustees Meeting, Technical Management Committee Reporting specification in Standard Funding Agreements |

PBS Additional KPI's

| PERFORMANCE MEASURE | GOAL | MEASURED BY |
|--|--|--|
| The percentage ownership of Torres Strait Commercial Fisheries by Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal People in the region. | Enhance the region's wealth by managing and maintaining sustainable fishing industries and increasing employment and economic opportunities for our people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PZJA records of fishing rights • Finfish and TRL Quota Leasing Records |
| Improve regional environmental health, telecommunication and marine infrastructure. | To both enhance both healthy communities and our living environment and achieve the provision of adequate, appropriate and affordable housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in relevant infrastructure • Delivery of infrastructure projects in the region |

