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MASIG TEAM EFFORTS CUTS INVASIVE LEUCAENA WEED DOWN TO SIZE

Rangers and trainees from the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) have partnered with the Masig community to eradicate a highly invasive weed found throughout Torres Strait.

The Leucaena eradication program on Masig was completed early this month and was also used as a teaching exercise for Rangers, Community Enterprises Australia and Tagai staff.

The TSRA Chairman, Mr Joseph Elu, said there was strong support from Masigalgal Traditional Owners for the eradication work.

“The spread of Leucaena through the Torres Strait has reached coral and mud cays and the granite continental islands and it is particularly a nuisance on creek banks and coastal areas.

“The last remaining six patches of mature Leucaena on Masig were cut and treated with herbicide.

“There is still plenty of follow-up to do with smaller plants but this represents a major milestone in the battle against this weed started by Masigalgal Traditional Owners and the Rangers several years ago.

“Exceptional leadership was shown by Senior Ranger Francis Nai and Rangers Richard Kepa, Aken Baragud, Mark Pearson and Freddy Wapau who ‘coached’ the trainees and greatly influenced the workplace health and safety of the project.

“It was a great week thanks to the hospitality of the Masig community, the level of inter-agency co-operation, positive attitude, safety consciousness and good humour of all personnel involved,” Mr Elu said.

One of the training activities involved assisting a local family with breaking down a very large tree that had collapsed during recent bad weather and was posing a significant safety risk to the occupants of a house.

The tree was safely cut down into smaller pieces by the training team and will be used for various carving projects by Masigalgal community members.

Trainees completing the course received six credits towards the Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management, with skills assessed including their ability to control weeds, use chemicals safely, maintain equipment and harvest and trim trees.



Caption: The Leucaena eradication team on Masig involved TSRA Rangers, CEA and Tagai workers.

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TSRA Media Contact – Ken Orr (07) 4069 0700 or 0448 005 207