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GAB TITUI CELEBRATES ITS SEVENTH YEAR OF OPERATION

The Gab Titui Cultural Centre reached a milestone on April 14, celebrating seven years of operation.

The Cultural Centre, located on Thursday Island, is an initiative of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), focusing on Torres Strait culture and the development and promotion of local Indigenous art.

Portfolio Member for the TSRA's Culture, Art and Heritage, Mr Phillemon Mosby said Gab Titui is a significant international icon, recognised as the Torres Strait's first keeping place for historical artefacts and contemporary Indigenous art.

Mr Mosby officially launched the Cultural Centre's birthday celebrations, announcing Gab Titui's new audio tour guides, touch screen computers and renovation plans by architect Mr James Davidson.

In true Gab Titui style, the celebrations took a local focus with the unveiling of the latest cultural maintenance display, *Sibuwanay/Tar Digri*, giving of the gift.

"Sibuwanay in Kala Lagaw Ya and *Tar Digri* in Meriam Mir are similar in meaning and describe the generosity of individuals, families and communities who have loaned material from their personal collections," Mr Mosby said.

A highlight of the celebrations was entertainment provided by local artist, Mr Kura Stephen, who featured songs from his new album, *'This is my Island Home'*.

The production Mr Stephen's new album was supported through sources including the Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund.

Since opening in 2004, over 70 000 people have visited Gab Titui, including political representatives and United Nations delegations.

The Cultural Centre received Tourism Awards in 2005, 2006 and 2007 and was entered into the Tourism Hall of Fame in 2008.

"The Cultural Centre has supported over 100 artists in the development and sales of their work through solo and group exhibitions and many artistic works have been acquired for State and National Gallery collections," Mr Mosby said.

In 2009 Gab Titui took out a prestigious Gallery and Museum Achievement Award for the Ephraim Bani Gallery and was highly praised for its strong community focus and advocacy for the region.

"During its seven years of operation, the Gab Titui Cultural Centre has made an outstanding contribution to the arts community and I would like to sincerely thank all who have been involved with our growth and achievements," Mr Mosby said.

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