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WORKSHOP TO EXPLORE IMPACTS ON INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH RISING SEA LEVELS

The ability of Torres Strait communities to adapt to the effects of rising sea levels and its impact on vital infrastructure will be discussed at a workshop on Thursday Island from 21-23 July 2014.

The workshop is for decision makers to explore the consequences of sea level and sea temperature changes and to consider options to build regional resilience.

The TSRA Chairperson, Mr Joseph Elu, said the workshop would provide an opportunity for regional decision makers to better understand the challenges and to identify opportunities for the region.

“Whilst funds have been secured to progress vital infrastructure such as seawalls for some communities to help deal with immediate impacts, there are many other risks we need to consider beyond sea level rise,” Mr Elu said.

“The workshop represents the beginning of a journey to consider how the region can respond to a changing natural environment and is focused on the high level regional considerations.

“Some low-lying islands already face an uncertain future due to expected sea level rise, so understanding the challenges and opportunities enables community leaders to consider how individual islands can develop their own local scale adaption and resilience plans.”

The workshop will hear from a broad range of stakeholders and experts, including the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Bureau of Meteorology, James Cook University and the CSIRO, to help regional leaders to understand the many direct and indirect impacts that could affect daily life in the Torres Strait.

“Many of the climate impacts are not likely to occur for years or decades but it is important to start planning now to ensure these risks are considered in our decision making processes,” said Mr Elu.

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