

## Media Release **No. 465**

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### **NATIONAL TREE DAY A FIRST FOR 13 TORRES STRAIT COMMUNITIES**

Members of 13 Torres Strait communities participated in National Tree Day for the first time over four days late last month planting over 90 fruit trees in community gardens and parks.

The Torres Strait Regional Authority Chairperson, 'Toshie' Kris, praised the Land Team's management of the activity.

"The Senior Rangers and the Land Team Operations staff put in a huge amount of work to make this event happen.

"Thanks go to them and to Planet Ark for pulling off an event which we hope will become a fixture on the Torres Strait's calendar.

"This event has been more of an achievement than most realise as Planet Ark had been trying to hold the event in the Torres Strait for a number of years.

"It's a cause for celebration that this event has finally taken place."

"Feedback from the Senior Rangers suggests that the event was a success across the thirteen communities, in particular on Warraber.

"The Warraberalgal Rangers expressed how meaningful the activity was and that it was very well received by all sectors of the Warraber community."

The TSRA Horticulture Program known as Mekem Garden made the decision to plant fruit trees on National Tree day.

"While on mainland Australia they plant native trees on this day, we made the decision to plant fruit trees to promote the health of our communities," Mr Kris explained.

"The Mekem Garden program has already seen successful fruit tree plantings on Mer and Thursday Islands and National Tree Day was a perfect opportunity to roll this program out to thirteen communities across the Strait."

“Later in the year, the fruit tree plantings will be followed up with native tree plantings so we can have the best of both worlds.”

“I hope that National Tree Day will become an annual event in the Torres Strait as it value adds to the extremely important work our Horticulture team are doing.

“Planting fruit trees is all about the health of our people, planting natives is all about the health of our environment and by focusing on both, we create a brighter future for our communities,” Mr Kris said.

Tree planting took place on Badu, Mabuiag, Boigu, Saibai, Dauan, Yorke, Yam, Coconut, Warraber, Erub and Horn islands as well as the communities of St Pauls and Kubin on Moa with Senior Rangers coordinating activities in each community.

National Tree Day is Australia's biggest community tree-planting event - more than 2.8 million people have planted over 17 million native trees and shrubs across Australia since the event was founded by Olivia Newton-John and Planet Ark in 1996. Find out more about National Tree Day at [treeday.planetark.org](http://treeday.planetark.org)



Caption: Certificates were presented to mark the participation of 13 Torres Strait communities in National Tree Day for the first time.

**ENDS**

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