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MEETING SETS THE SCENE FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMITS

The first in a series of *Torres Strait Economic Development Summits* has been held, laying the foundations for a further two summits to help guide the creation of commercially viable industries to contribute to wealth creation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the region.

Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Chairperson, Mr Joseph Elu, said the summit provided an opportunity for participants to hear from a range of experts to better understand the issues behind establishing new enterprises and growing commercially viable industries.

“We heard from some very knowledgeable people who were able to offer their perspectives on economic development in regional and remote areas and the employment opportunities they can provide,” Mr Elu said.

“Their insights gave us a valuable framework to help recognise both the challenges and the opportunities that lay ahead”.

“Industry development and employment are intrinsically linked, and without new enterprises our employment options are limited.”

Presentations were provided by Indigenous Business Australia, Ecotourism Australia, Regional Development Australia (FNQ and Torres Strait), and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs.

Participants included TSRA Board members, Councillors and PBC Chairs.

Mr Elu said a second summit will be held early next year and will take an industry and local business focus to build on work from the first summit.

The next summit will be where we discuss specific industry development and how local businesses can be part of this broader development” Mr Elu said

“The final summit around mid-2015 will be where we as a region can present planning initiatives regarding industry development in the Torres Strait to key decision makers in government and other organisations to attract interest and investment in our region.

“This series of summits will help enable our communities to work together and to think regionally to promote our area’s natural advantages and demonstrate that the Torres Strait is **open for business.**”

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