

## Media Release **No. 609**

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### **ERUB AND UGAR RANGER VESSEL LAUNCH**

The ranger vessel, *Gur Erkep*, has been launched at Erub. This is the sixth ranger purpose built vessel operating in the Torres Strait. This vessel will be shared by the Erub and Ugar communities.

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) provided the funding for the vessel to aid the management of natural resources in the region.

The TSRA Chairperson, Mr Joseph Elu, said Rangers from the TSRA's Environmental Programme Land and Sea Management Unit have responsibility for managing land and sea resources in the regional. This additional vessel will extend this work to the coastal waters surrounding Ugar and Erub.

"The Erub and Ugar Rangers are now able to provide the eyes and ears for surveillance across the water as a result of the new vessel," Mr Elu said.

"The vessel allows Rangers to patrol sea country and provide reports to the community on the health of the resources it supports, including seagrass, mangroves, reef and turtle and dugong populations.

"It will also allow them to travel to other islands to undertake land management activities such as weed control and feral species management, sea, reef and beach clean-up, erosion control and also cultural site restoration and management."

Mr Elu said funding from the Australian Government's Working on Country initiative has been secured to continue the Ranger Program until June 2018.

"This funding will enable the ongoing delivery of training activities to Rangers, including Coxswains Certification and units counting towards a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management," Mr Elu said.

"Direct benefits include the creation of full time jobs, on-ground cultural and natural resource conservation outcomes, restoration and management of cultural sites as well as knowledge and skills development.

"The Ranger fleet will allow us to expand on this work and expertise while continually strengthening our traditional practices and knowledge alongside more modern science based approaches to natural and cultural management."

Mr Elu said the *Gur Erkep* will make it easier, safer and more practical for the rangers to undertake their daily activities and aid the community in managing land and sea country.

**ENDS**

TSRA Media Contact – Bruce Nelson on 0423 403 449



(Left to right) Damian Miley, former Programme Manager (Environmental Management); Wayne See Kee, CEO TSRA; Mr Siri Stephen; Erubam Senior Ranger Boggo Gela; Ugar Senior Ranger Noel Baker; Kenny Bedford, TSRA Member for Erub & Portfolio Member for Fisheries; Jimmy Gela; Jerry Stephen, TSRA Member for Ugar (Image: TSRA)



*Gur Erkep* prepared for the blessing (Image: TSRA)