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Torres Strait Marine Safety Program connects with Australia's shipping industry

The Torres Strait Marine Safety Program (TSMSP) is for the first time providing training to place Indigenous students directly into employment in the offshore shipping industry.

Training initiatives of the TSMSP are jointly funded by the Torres Strait Regional Authority's (TSRA) Economic Development Program.

The TSRA Chairperson, Mr Joseph Elu, said until now most training had been focused on locally based recreational or near coastal commercial industry.

"As part of this new training, two students have been selected to undertake extensive training as Integrated Ratings (IR) at the Australian Maritime College (AMC) in Tasmania," Mr Elu said.

"IR training is associated with the Torres Strait Marine Pathways Program, part of the TSMSP, which works to provide pathways for Torres Strait Islanders into the Australian near coastal and offshore maritime industry.

"Since the programme's inception in 2006 there has not been specific training with employment in the offshore shipping industry as the core focus for Indigenous students."

After 11 weeks of theory, the students will be placed on an Australian ship to complete their 18 months traineeship. After successfully completing the traineeship they will be fully qualified to work on deck during anchoring and berthing operations, complete routine maintenance, assist with navigation, watch keeping duties and various other roles.

Mr Elu said this initiative represents a significant opportunity for the trainees involved in both skills and economic development.

"IRs are paid a training wage during the traineeship, and on completion the hard work is repaid with generous salaries starting at around \$100,000 per year," Mr Elu said.

"On top of this, they have excellent working conditions including an equal work to leave roster.

The Torres Strait Marine Pathways Program is a partnership between the TSRA, Maritime Safety Queensland, Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Queensland Water Police and the National Maritime Safety Authority of Papua New Guinea.

The industry placement is ensured through a partnership between AMC and Maritime Employment Training Ltd.

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