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BIANNUAL AUSTRALIAN MARINE TURTLE SYMPOSIUM TO BUILD FUTURE PARTNERSHIPS

Ronald Fujii and Tristan Simpson from the Torres Strait Regional Authority's (TSRA) Land and Sea Management Unit attended the Biannual Australian Marine Turtle Symposium in Perth last month.

Put on by the Department of Parks and Wildlife Western Australia, the Symposium assembled scientists, industry, government, community and Indigenous groups from across Australia to share their knowledge and understanding about marine turtles and build future partnerships.

TSRA Chairman, Mr Joseph Elu, said the presentations demonstrated the current primary issues plaguing marine turtle populations around mainland Australia, including feral animal predation, industrial and coastal development, light pollution, habitat loss and marine debris.

"Fortunately, the Torres Strait is unaffected by many of these issues, however, as marine turtles migrate across regional, national and international boundaries, our marine turtle populations are not immune to the impacts of other regions," Mr Elu said.

"Ron gave a presentation on the Torres Strait's Dugong and Turtle Community Based Management Plans, detailing the activities and outcomes of our program over the last two years and giving an insight into its future direction.

"The presentation was very well received and all attendees showed a high interest to our approach."

Shane Preston and Justin Smith from James Cook University gave presentations on the recent research outcomes from Maizab Kaur's (Bramble Cay) green turtle rookery and Warul Kawa's (Deliverance Island) flatback turtle rookery.

Mr Elu said there was a large Indigenous ranger group attendance at the conference, with representatives from across northern Australia present.

"Their presentations highlighted the fantastic work that rangers and communities are contributing towards the management and research of marine turtles in their respective regions," Mr Elu said.

"Daniel Oades from Kimberly Land Council took the opportunity to form an Indigenous ranger discussion group to talk about the key issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities in relation to marine turtle management, and share lessons and stories.

Ron participated in the discussion, sharing his knowledge and experience with the group and listening to their experiences, and forming valuable networks and friendships."

The Symposium emphasised the importance of building networks with turtle research and management groups from mainland Australia to learn about new strategies and outcomes.

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Caption: Ronald Fujii, TSRA (centre) sharing knowledge with Crocodile Island Rangers, Jarrod Gingiri (L) and Neil Djandjan (R) (Image: Tristan Simpson, TSRA)



Image: Ronald Fujii, TSRA (L) with William Bush, Cape York Land Council (centre) and Warrick Angus, Ranger Supervisor, Crocodile Islands (R) (Image: Tristan Simpson, TSRA)