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TORRES STRAIT REGIONAL AUTHORITY CELEBRATES 20 YEAR MILESTONE

In 2014 the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) marks its 20th year of operation, providing coordinated service delivery to facilitate better outcomes for Torres Strait Islanders.

Since its formation in 1994, the TSRA has attracted over one billion dollars in funding support to the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area. Fifty two Indigenous students from the region have been supported in their tertiary studies through the TSRA's university scholarships. A land and sea ranger presence has been established in 14 communities. Funding has been secured for the next phase of the Major Infrastructure Programme and the construction of sea walls to address tidal inundation in six vulnerable communities.

TSRA Chairperson, Mr Joseph Elu, said the TSRA's vision is to empower Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people to determine their own affairs based on the unique Ailan Kastom.

"Our aims have always been to strengthen the economic, social and cultural development of the Torres Strait in order to improve the lifestyle and wellbeing of our people," Mr Elu said.

"We have strived to achieve this through a range of initiatives such as scholarships and industry training, establishing cultural centres, improving infrastructure and implementing community based management strategies.

"In 20 years, the TSRA has established a solid framework recognising eight core programs that require ongoing support so we can promote unity and strength for our people, and improve their quality of life."

"The TSRA has a unique governance model with an independently elected board making policy decisions and setting service delivery strategies in the region for the region. No other Indigenous body in Australia has this level of independence and autonomy."

The TSRA Programs include: Economic Development, Fisheries, Culture, Art and Heritage, Governance and Leadership, Native Title, Environmental Management, Healthy Communities and Safe Communities.

Mr Elu said the TSRA has achieved great things in the past two decades through maintaining positive relationships within the region, nationally and internationally.

"TSRA works closely with all levels of government including the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, Torres Shire Council and the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council," Mr Elu said.

"We understand the value of collaborating with experienced bodies, including the 21 Prescribed Bodies Corporate in the region in order to achieve the best outcomes for our people.

“Key national relationships over the years have been maintained with partners such as James Cook University, the National Museum of Australia, Australian Marine Safety Association and many other research, training, and cultural organisations.”

For more information visit www.tsra.gov.au

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TSRA Media Contact – Bruce Nelson on 0423 403 449