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RANGERS TAKE CONTROL OF SEAGRASS MONITORING PROGRAM

A recent workshop has equipped Rangers from the TSRA's Land and Sea Management Unit (LMSU) to take greater control over their seagrass monitoring program in the Torres Strait.

TSRA Rangers from Badu (Mura Badhulgau), Mer (Meriam Gesep A Gur Keparem Le), Iama (Iamalgal), Moa (Mua Lagalgau) and Mabuiag (Mabuygiw) received further training to ensure for sound management of these important near shore areas.

TSRA Chairman, Mr Joseph Elu, said the workshop provided an opportunity for the Rangers to test their existing knowledge and to take their participation in the program to the next level.

"The health of seagrass throughout the Torres Strait is important for all people in the region. Seagrass meadows support turtle and dugong and are important for fishing," Mr Elu said.

"The Torres Strait Seagrass Observers Program has been running since 2004 and currently involves the monitoring of 11 intertidal seagrass meadows across the Torres Strait.

"The Rangers ensure the monitoring is carried out accurately and on a regular basis."

"The Rangers have now gained additional skills to ensure that the data they submit to the central database is ready to be analysed by the program scientist," Mr Elu said.

"It is an important step toward self-governance that can be replicated in other programs."

Rangers were tested on their knowledge of seagrass species, survey methodology and data entry.

All Rangers performed well with scores ranging from 85-92%, indicating that the program is in good hands.

Mr Elu praised the Rangers for their commitment to the program and thanked Dr Jane Mellors from James Cook University for her dedication to the program over the past decade.

ENDS



Caption: TSRA Land and Sea Management Unit Rangers and staff upgrading their skills in seagrass data management at the recent Seagrass Observers Program Workshop held on Thursday Island.



Caption: TSRA Land and Sea Management Unit Rangers and staff with Dr Jane Mellors at the recent Seagrass Observers Workshop held on Thursday Island.