Prominent Torres Strait Islander artist, Dennis Nona, opened his latest exhibition titled, Sesserae: The Works of Dennis Nona, at the Gab Titui Cultural Centre, Thursday Island, on 13 September.

Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Portfolio Member for Education, Training, Employment and Art, Mr Jesse Sagaukaz, said the opening was a significant moment for Torres Strait art, with this being the first solo exhibition devoted only to Dennis’ creations and featuring pieces produced over the last 15 years of his career.

“Dennis is one of the region’s leading artists who has helped the Torres Strait emerge into the national and international arts market and has become a respected individual in the Indigenous art community,” Mr Sagaukaz said.

“He has introduced our culture and told our stories through his intricate lino-cut prints, informing the arts market of our beautiful islands and seafaring people.

“The TSRA has been proud to support artists such as Dennis in order to preserve, revitalise and promote Torres Strait arts and culture.

“Dennis Nona and TSRA Portfolio Member for Education, Training, Employment & Art, Mr Jesse Sagaukaz

“We are actively working with individuals as well as communities to ensure that our people have access to the appropriate infrastructure and opportunities to come together and practice and develop their skills.

“In addition, we are encouraging our artists and crafts-people to enter the arts market, to enhance their incomes as well as the local economy.

“Our arts and culture continue to play an important role in Torres Strait life - it is keeping our history alive and contributing to the maintenance of our culture and our people’s livelihood, and the Sesserae collection is evidence of this, depicting the rich and colourful Torres Strait way of life.

“I would like to acknowledge the support of the sponsors who assisted the TSRA in bringing Sesserae to the Centre - the Queensland Government, the Queensland Museum Gallery Services, Griffith University's College of Art and the Dell Company.

“Most importantly, I congratulate Dennis for his unique talent and commend him for his hard work in producing each piece to complete this inspiring collection and allowing it to come home to the Torres Strait, to share with his people,” Mr Sagaukaz said.

Sesserae: The Works of Dennis Nona will be on display at the Gab Titui Cultural Centre until 15 October, and features Dennis’ black and white lino-prints, hand coloured lino-prints and etchings. For more information, please contact the Centre on (07) 4090 2130.
News from TSRA Portfolio Member for Housing and Infrastructure - Mr Fred Gela

MIP has begun works to upgrade existing waste disposal facilities on 15 of our island communities. The improved facilities will help to enhance communities’ capacity and efficiency to safely dispose of house-hold waste by burial. As part of the project, larger bulk waste, such as old car bodies, white goods, tyres and scrap metal are being removed and transported out of the region for suitable disposal and or recycling.

In addition, MIP is also looking at creating Waste Management Guidelines to help our Island Councils identify new techniques in waste management.

The commencement of the Bulk Waste and Tip Upgrade Project would not have been possible without the assistance of all stakeholders, and in particular, I would like to acknowledge the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS), the Queensland Department of Primary Industries (DPI), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Tropical Population Health Unit (TPHU), and the Councils of Boigu, Dauan, Saibai, Ugar, Mer, Erub, Masig, Iama, Poruma, Mabuiag, Badu, Kubin, St Pauls, Warraber and Hammond Islands for their support in helping to protect and implement environmentally friendly waste management practices in our communities.

Housing Subdivisions

Through MIP, the TSRA, DLGPS&R and local Councils, are establishing new serviced housing subdivisions in some of our communities, to assist in reducing overcrowding and provide adequate housing, which will improve environmental health conditions for our families.

On Mer Island for example, works have been underway to service 48 housing lots. These lots will have access to telephone, water and water meters, electricity and drainage. The Mer subdivision is approximately 90% complete and will be ready for the construction of new homes on serviced lots in the near future.

Another positive outcome of MIP which is being demonstrated at the Mer Subdivision is community capacity building. Mer Island Council is overseeing the subdivision works, which is providing employment, up-skilling local community members and enhancing the region’s economy. Our skilled local workforce will be able to maintain the infrastructure and have the increased confidence to take part in future projects.

The TSRA recognises that a whole of government effort is needed to address the ongoing need for housing and infrastructure in our region. We will continue to work with our partners and people to develop and implement appropriate plans that will improve access to housing.

Through strategic planning, community consultation and working together, we can all contribute to improving the infrastructure needs of our region and help to raise the living standards of the Torres Strait.

If you would like more information about MIP, please contact the TSRA’s Policy Coordination and Development Section by telephone (07) 4069 0700, toll free 1800 079 093 or email info@tsra.gov.au. Alternatively, you can also visit the TSRA office on Level 1, Torres Strait Haus, Victoria Parade, Thursday Island.
The Torres Strait Regional Authority’s (TSRA) Land and Sea Management Unit (LSMU) is working in partnership with the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) and the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Tropical Savannas, to coordinate a Dugong and Marine Turtle Project, by taking an innovative approach to community-driven sustainable management of these unique marine species.

The Project, funded through the Australian Government’s Natural Heritage Trust and supported by the Queensland Government, is driven by project partners from Northern Australia, including the Torres Strait, Cape York, the Kimberley, Top End of the Northern Territory, and the southern Gulf of Carpentaria.

Lachlan Sutherland, has the role of implementing a Regional Activity Plan for Torres Strait (RAPTS). The Plan was developed by TSRA in collaboration with CRC Torres Strait, to guide the implementation of activities under this Project. The RAPTS includes four key components:

- Community management plans for dugong and marine turtle
- Monitoring programs
- Catch sharing
- Education and awareness-raising

Unlike anywhere else in Australia, dugong and marine turtle are classified under the Torres Strait Treaty between Australia and Papua New Guinea as a "Traditional Fishery." This means that, under the management of the Commonwealth, the sustainability of the fishery must be regularly assessed under the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999.

As a result, a month long community consultation was undertaken by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) during July and August of this year. Lachlan accompanied the AFMA team to community meetings, where views on traditional management practices and the social, cultural and economic importance of dugong and turtle in the Torres Strait were documented.

The TSRA’s LSMU will now work towards delivering the community feedback to the Australian Minister for the Environment, who will then formulate recommendations on how the fishery should be managed.

TSRA Portfolio Member for Health and the Environment and Iama Island Council Chairperson, Mr Walter Mackie, said it is important that sustainable community based management practices, like the NAILSMA Dugong and Marine Turtle Project are supported to preserve the region’s dugongs and turtles.

“‘The NAILSMA Project will assist our communities by delivering resources and appropriate skills to help community members, such as our local Rangers, to maintain their island’s dugong and turtle populations,” said Mr Mackie.

“The community approved and managed plan will have immediate benefits for participating communities by providing employment, training and building community confidence and capacity to manage such an important project.

“Dugongs and turtles play an important role in Torres Strait culture and way of life, so it is important that all stakeholders work together in partnership and support community members participating in this project to sustainably manage the region’s natural assets,” Mr Mackie said.

For more information on this Project, please contact Mr Lachlan Sutherland at the TSRA’s LSMU on (07) 4069 2957 or email info@tsra.gov.au.

Alternatively, you can visit the LSMU Office, located on the corner of Blackall and Victoria Parade, adjacent to the Gab Titui Cultural Centre, Thursday Island.
TSRA Visits Bamaga and Seisia Communities

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) conducted its second consultative community visit on 25 September by visiting the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) communities of Bamaga and Seisia.

TSRA Chairperson Mr Toshie Kris said this was an information sharing exercise for all who attended, with participants informed on TSRA’s role and services, and the TSRA learning of current community issues.

“Representing the TSRA were TSRA’s Portfolio Member for Housing and Infrastructure and Hammond Island Council Chairperson, Mr Fred Gela, TSRA Portfolio Member for Small Business, Economic Development, Marine and Fisheries and Yorke Island Council Chairperson, Mr Donald Mosby, the TSRA’s General Manager, Mr Wayne See Kee, and myself,” said Mr Kris.

“We met with Council representatives, with an invitation to community members extended through their respective Councils.

“Similar to our previous community consultation in Boigu and Mabuiag, we focused on TSRA Programs that are currently available to individuals and organisations, in particular in the area of economic development, such as the TSRA’s Community Economic Initiatives Scheme (CEIS) and the Business Funding Scheme (BFS).

“It is important that both organisations and individuals in our region are aware that these services are offered by the TSRA to help create economic independence for our people.

“TSRA also gathered information from the communities, particularly of current local issues, and will work in partnership to help them address these matters.

“On behalf of the TSRA, I would like to thank the Councils of Bamaga and Seisia for their participation and welcoming us into their Communities, and I look forward to meeting other Councils and community members in the coming months,” Mr Kris said.

The TSRA will conduct similar visits to other island communities in the near future.