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Segar Passi Announced Winner of 2012 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award

Segar Passi has been named winner of the prestigious Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award, taking home \$5,000 for his painting, *Native Title: Our Land and Sea Rights*, during opening night celebrations held at the Gab Titui Cultural Centre on 30 May.

The Torres Strait Regional Authority Alternate Deputy Chairperson, Mr Kenny Bedford congratulated Mr Passi and commended all artists on their unique entries.

“An impressive variety of artwork, including headdresses, paintings, weavings, sculptures and carvings, has been submitted by 44 artists across 14 communities in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area”, Mr Bedford said.

Mr Bedford described the calibre of works entered into the Award as “outstanding” but said that this was not surprising given the immense talent that exists within communities in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area.

For the second time, a theme was selected for the Art Award creating an opportunity for local artists to communicate the importance of Native Title and their connections to the land and sea areas in the Torres Strait.

Nancy Naawi was awarded ‘runner-up’, for her etching, *Ring Tides*, receiving \$2,000 in prize money.

Sub-category winners were – ‘Best Craft Work’: Rachel Emma Gela (Erub); ‘Best Cultural Artefact’: Gordon Hammond (Horn); and ‘Best Work on Paper/Canvas’: Jeff Waia (Saibai).

The ‘National Museum of Australia - History Through Art Award’, which recognises artworks that best capture aspects of the histories of Torres Strait Islander lives and experiences, went to Joseph Au for his lino print, *Badu Harbour*.

Highly commended awards went to – Betty Tekahika ,Mer; Laurie Nona ,Badu; Maryann Bourne,Erub; Mersane Loban, Moa and Solomon Booth ,Moa.

Commended awards went to – Frank Whap, Mabuiag; Ella Rose Savage ,Erub; Andrew Passi Snr, Mer; Zacharia Gaidan , Badu and Weldon Matasia, Badu.

Guest judge, Mr Tom Mosby, Executive Manager of Indigenous Research and Projects at the State Library of Queensland based his selection of artworks on artistic quality, composition and individuality.

“As usual, the entries this year reflect the diversity of contemporary Torres Strait Islander art practice, and the number of entries continues to demonstrate the recognition of the importance of the visual arts to personal development”, Mr Mosby said.

“The task of choosing a winning work and category winners is a difficult and unenviable one, particularly when faced with such a range of materials and techniques, and I would like to congratulate each artist on their entry”.

Community members still have a chance to vote for their favourite work, which will help to decide the winner of the 2012 People’s Choice Award.

This winner will be announced in the Torres News in July and is set to receive a total of \$1,000 in prize money.

A catalogue showcasing all works featured in the 2012 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award will be available for purchase from Gab Titui Cultural Centre from August 2012.

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TSRA Media Contact – Communications Coordinator Ken Orr - (07) 4069 0700 - 0448 005207