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UPDATING THE LAND AND SEA MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE TORRES STRAIT

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) is supporting the development of a new *Land and Sea Management Strategy for Torres Strait*.

This new strategy guides the management of the Torres Strait's unique environment and cultural connections to islands and seas at a regional level.

The original strategy was developed in 2005 with the support of a community-based reference group. The now decade-old document needs updating to reflect developments in native title, environmental science and Indigenous management practices.

The need to update the Land and Sea Management Strategy was recently discussed at a series of workshops on Thursday Island attended by TSRA Board members, staff and Rangers, Traditional Owners, Commonwealth and State government agency representatives, and Local Government officers.

The new strategy will include a State of the Environment Report Card, which will provide an overview of the world-class environmental values of the Torres Strait, their significance and condition, to help guide management decisions and directions.

The new strategy will reflect and reinforce community-level plans, traditional knowledge and local management priorities, and will include island environmental profiles for inhabited islands that will provide information to assist native title holders and communities with local management, planning, promotional efforts and decision-making.

Additionally, the new strategy will include a framework to guide the development of funding submissions and an investment prospectus.

A draft of the new strategy will be circulated to Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate and other key partners in coming months, before being considered by the TSRA Board for approval in early 2016.

The TSRA Chairperson, Mr Joseph Elu said that the new Land and Sea Management Strategy would reflect TSRA's ongoing commitment to support the sustainable management of the Torres Strait region in partnership with Traditional Owners, communities, all levels of government and research organisations.

"It is vital that we all work together to preserve the environment and cultural values of the Torres Strait, through a collaborative approach that enables all of us to play a part in looking after our islands and seas for the future" Mr Elu said.

Mr Elu thanked all of the stakeholders, including Traditional Owners, Gur A Baradharaw Kod Torres Strait Sea and Land Council members, TSRA Board members, rangers and staff and government partners for their contribution to the strategy. **ENDS**

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Image: TSRA Deputy Chair, Aven Noah gave a motivating opening address to the participants at the workshop to discuss the updated Land and Sea Management Strategy for Torres Strait (Image: John Rainbird, TSRA)



Caption: TSRA Land and Sea Management Unit Rangers and staff provided valuable input to the revised Land and Sea Management Strategy for Torres Strait (Image: Tristan Simpson, TSRA)



Caption: TSRA LSMU Project and Partnerships Officer Miya Isherwood discussing the Land and Sea Management Strategy for Torres Strait with Mr Milton Savage, Kaurareg Traditional Owner (Image: Tristan Simpson, TSRA)