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WARRABERALGAHL AND PORUMALGAL IPA RECOGNISED AS PROTECTED AREA

The Warraberalghal and Porumalgal Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) has been recognised as part of the National Reserve System, Australia's national system of protected areas, in a dedication ceremony on Warraber Island today.

The IPA will be managed through a plan that sets out the cultural and natural values of the area, and the management and conservation projects that traditional owners, together with scientists and natural resource managers, have identified as necessary to help look after islands contained in the area.

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Chairperson, Mr Joseph Elu, said the IPA is based on Torres Strait Islander approaches to stewardship of lands and waters, and the specific cultural, historical and economic values of the islands, sandbanks and rocks that make up the recognised area.

"The people of Warraber and Poruma islands, owners of the Warraberalghal and Porumalgal IPA, are interrelated and have a shared history, so recognition of the IPA and the development of its management plan is an important step in natural and cultural resource management," Mr Elu said.

"The IPA comprises nine islands, sandbanks and rocks, with a total area of approximately 63 hectares, and together they are a cross-section of the varied island environments found in Torres Strait."

The National Reserve System is Australia's network of protected areas, conserving examples of natural landscapes and native plants and animals for future generations, and based on a scientific framework, is the nation's natural safety net against environmental challenges.

The reserve system includes more than 10,000 protected areas covering 16.52 per cent of the country - over 127 million hectares, and is made up of Commonwealth, state and territory reserves, Indigenous lands and protected areas, and farmers on their private working properties.

Vegetation in the Warraberalghal and Porumalgal IPA ranges from forest on some of the larger islands, to simple grass and herbland communities on the smaller sand cays.

The islands include Atub, Bara, Bini, Babui, Guiya, Maza Guiya, Miggi Maituin, Ugain and Ulu.

"The research and consultation process for the management plan has been supported throughout by the Land and Sea Management Unit of the TSRA who administer and implement the IPA project in Torres Strait with the traditional owners," Mr Elu said.

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