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Media Release **No. 442**

For Release 24 April 2012

SEA CONNECTIONS EXHIBITION A HIGHLIGHT OF GAB TITUI BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The Gab Titui Cultural Centre celebrated eight years of operation on April 24, with the opening of a new exhibition, titled *Sea Connections*, in its Wabunaw Geth Gallery.

More than 100 guests joined the celebrations, which also featured the launch of a new Torres Strait documentary, a Meriam Mir learner's guide and phrase book and performances by Berlibal Dance Team.

Torres Strait Regional Authority Deputy Chairperson, Napcia Bin Tahal, who officially launched the night's festivities, said *Sea Connections* was an exhibition of artworks created by Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal artists in the Torres Strait region.

"It has been developed not only to promote the work of our local artists, but also to help promote the important relationship that Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people have to the sea".

Ms Bin Tahal described the exhibition as an exciting development in Gab Titui's programming, referring to a guided tour and range of children's activities that have been specifically developed to accompany the display.

"I invite all members of the community to take advantage of these resources as a way of engaging with the Centre, and especially with the works of our very talented artists in the region".

The Cultural Centre, located on Thursday Island, is an initiative of the TSRA focusing on Torres Strait culture and the development and promotion of local Indigenous art.

Kicking off the night's events, Ms Bin Tahal commented on the ways that the Cultural Centre has grown and developed since its establishment in 2004.

“In its eight years of operation, Gab Titui has come to be regarded as a true hub for showcasing the art and culture of our Torres Strait region.

“The Centre supports many Indigenous artists in the development and sales of their work through solo and group exhibitions, and continues to foster opportunities for all local Indigenous artists to develop their skills” Ms Bin Tahal said.

The night’s celebrations commenced with the launch and a special sneak preview of *Ailan Kastom*, a TSRA film project highlighting the lifestyle and culture of the Torres Strait region.

“I would like to extend a sincere thanks to all of those who contributed to the production of *Ailan Kastom*” Ms Bin Tahal said.

“I particularly thank those members of our Torres Strait communities who generously donated their time and knowledge to make this important cultural maintenance project a possibility”.

The night also saw the launch of *Kara Ged a Kara Mir*, a Meriam Mir learner’s guide and phrasebook compiled by Mr Benjamin Mabo and supported by the TSRA’s Culture, Art and Heritage program.

“The preservation and promotion of our traditional Indigenous languages is vital to maintaining Indigenous identity, culture, and well being.

“For this reason I am honoured to support Mr Mabo on the launch of this phrasebook and congratulate him on his achievement”, Ms Bin Tahal said.

The Berlibal Dance Team travelled from Bamaga to join the celebrations and entertain audiences with traditional dance.

Ms Bin Tahal concluded the night’s formalities by attributing much of the success of Gab Titui to the ongoing support of the Torres Strait communities that it services.

“Gab Titui’s achievements would not have been possible without the ongoing support of our people, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community – koeyma eso, au esoau”, said Ms Bin Tahal.

Ailan Kastom: the living culture of the Torres Strait is available to the public for viewing in the Gab Titui Cultural Centre’s Ephraim Bani Gallery.

Kara Ged a Kara Mir is available for purchase from the Gab Titui Gallery Shop. For more information the *Sea Connections* exhibition, tours and activities, contact Gab Titui on 07 4069 0888.

Ends

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