

## Media Release 467

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### **HORN ISLAND FINALIST IN A NATIONAL LANDCARE OUTSTANDING EFFORT AWARD**

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) has welcomed the selection of a Horn Island woman as a finalist for a National award recognising outstanding individual effort in encouraging Australians to adopt sustainable and productive agricultural practices.

The TSRA provided financial and technical support for Mrs Agnes Fox who started development of the Harmony Garden in the grounds of the Horn Island Tagai campus in 1999.

The inaugural Bob Hawke Award was presented at the National Landcare Awards in Sydney on 4 September 2012 to New South Wales dairy farmer, Lynne Strong.

The TSRA Chairperson, Toshie Kris, said Mrs Fox's selection as one of three national finalists was an outstanding acknowledgement of her humble and tireless efforts.

"It is also significant recognition for the sustainable management aspirations of Torres Strait communities and the rise in national awareness of the unique differences between mainland Landcare activity and those being explored in remote regions such as Torres Strait," Mr Kris said.

"The Torres Strait Islands have a rich history of sustainable horticulture and community food gardens with evidence of subsistence agriculture and gardening occurring across the region for over 2,500 years.

"However, since settlement and the introduction of grocery stores and processed western food the practice of 'mekem gaden' (making gardens) has declined.

"This is why the work of people such as Agnes Fox is so important in encouraging healthy eating through community gardening.

"Agnes runs the volunteer group that meets to tend the well-established garden and harvest the resulting fruit and vegetables.

"She has also played a pivotal role in researching a variety of local plants, with the diversity of tropical fruit trees growing over time." Mr Kris said.



Caption: Landcare award national finalist, Agnes Fox, gets some help with vegetable seedlings from Moigeta, Simmie and Dulcie Loban.

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TSRA Media Contact – Ken Orr (07) 4069 0700 or 0448 005207