



Australian Government



Torres Strait Regional Authority

Application Form for the Torres Strait: Pearl Industry Training Scheme

	Please complete this column and circle your answer
Name	
Date of Birth (day/month/year)	
In the case of emergency, who should TSRA contact and on what phone numbers/email?	
Origin of community(s) in the Torres Strait Region	
Address/Contact details (phone)	
Describe your occupation	
Highest level of Education	
Briefly describe your work and travel experiences, including travel outside of Australia.	
Do you have an Australian passport?	Yes/No
Are you willing to have a medical examination?	Yes/No
Will you be able to travel from August-October 2010 to Japan?	Yes/No

Briefly explain why you want to undertake this Industry Training Opportunity?

Additional Information

The Torres Strait Pearl Industry Training Scheme

Background

Perljwe Kabira Co, one of the largest Pearl Companies in Okinawa, Japan, is interested in establishing joint ventures in Torres Strait. In June 2009, a delegation of Japanese investors, led by Kazufumi Tokashiki, President, Perljwe-Kabira Co, Ryukyu Pearl Company Pearls visited the Torres Strait Regional. Accompanied by Adam Vai Delaney, Project Manager, Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), and Frederick Marchant, Chief Executive Officer of then Far North Queensland Area Consultative Committee, the team visited potential pearl farm sites in Erub and Masig.

Other members of the team were; Mr Hajime Masaki, Hidenori Nakamo, Farming Manager, Perljwe-kabira Co., and Tetsu Hidai , Photographer/Liaison Officer from Cairns.

The Team met with community leaders to share ideas and build trust between the parties for longer term relationship in developing joint enterprises. The mission received verbal assurances of high-level support from Council and community elders with regards to pearl farming in traditional waters. Site and natural shell sample assessments were observed and deemed to be excellent. The Japanese experts provided an overview of what is required in the preliminary stage to help determine science facts; levels of commercialisation and business feasibility.

The long term plan is to establish two pearl sea-farms in Erub and Masig by the end of 2011. Depending on the success of these projects, and availability of resources, it is likely that other farm sites within the region may be considered as well.

Ryukyu Pearl is now very interested in establishing a long term relationship with Torres Strait communities and empowering local Torres communities to have a leading role in the production of pearl products. In establishing this joint venture Ryukyu Pearl has offered to provide a six month training program to suitable Torres Strait people. In February 2010, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Cairns by the Partners paving the way for much closer cooperation starting with the offer by Ryukyu to train Torres Strait islanders at its facilities in Okinawa.

Training Objectives:

1. Provide wide training for the Trainees in all facets of the pearl industry from aquiculture to final product using world class Japanese expertise;
2. Provide an opportunity to share and exchange personal cultural values and experiences;
3. To use this training opportunity to establish protocols for future dealings between the two cultures and the success and sustainability of setting up a joint venture operations in the Torres Strait.

Training Framework

Six (6) Trainees, out of the ten (10) candidates initially selected and having completed the language and culture training, will finally be selected to travel in September 2010 to Japan. TSRA will cover the cost for travel to Japan. Trainees will arrive in Ishigaki Island and will be initially billeted as home-stay to be immersed into everyday Okinawan life.

Trainees will begin their work for a short time in Ryukyu Pearl jewellery shops. Here, they will learn about the end product; how pearls are made; marketed and sold. This will give trainees an insight into the variety of quality in pearls, and what makes a pearl worth more than another. They will experience the work that goes into retailing and gain an appreciation of why there is so much to growing and caring for pearls in the farming operation. When they eventually go to the sea-farm they will have an appreciation of producing the perfect pearl and better understand why so much effort is required in caring for the pearl and every facet of the production over its life time.

Trainees will then do Pearl-Farm training. Accommodation will be on-site in individual rooms. The Trainees will learn how to seed the pearl and understand the need for the highest level of husbandry.

Trainees will also learn all aspects of pearl farming by working out on the pontoons and breeding facilities.

Trainee fees

Whilst working with Ryukyu Pearl, the Trainees will be provided a stipend fee to be negotiated when the Trainees sign An Agreement prior to taking up their travel to Japan. This will meet day-to-day costs and to enjoy their short stay in Okinawa.

Cultural Shock and Homesickness

Living with the locals on Ishigaki Island can raise some “cultural challenges” to the Trainees. Although there is much to commend the warmth and friendliness of Okinawan people, their food and healthy lifestyle, their laid back approach to life and many other wonderful things about the Okinawans. The trainees will need to be well prepared for possible cultural shock.

Ishigaki is home to about 48,000 people and has all the bustle of any Japanese city. Naha City on the Okinawan mainland (20 minutes by plane) has more than 700,000 pop.

Selected Trainees will need to appreciate that getting homesick will be a natural part of this enterprise; however they will be kept very busy throughout their stay to distract them. Arrangements for breaking the 6 months into two tours is negotiable and could be worked around the training schedule, however there will be the obvious extra costs of transiting trainees to and from home.

Okinawa/FNQ Connection and History

There are strong historical connections between the two regions with Okinawans coming to the Torres Strait in the 1880s for pearl diving. By 1900, more than a thousand Japanese people were living throughout the Torres Strait Islands. Today many of the local Torres people can directly trace their family connection to Okinawa and indeed a few Okinawan-born people still reside in the Torres area. Some 110 years later FNQ and Okinawa have been reunited through activities with the sugar industry and now there is the exciting prospect of an Okinawa/Torres Strait joint venture in pearl farming.

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