



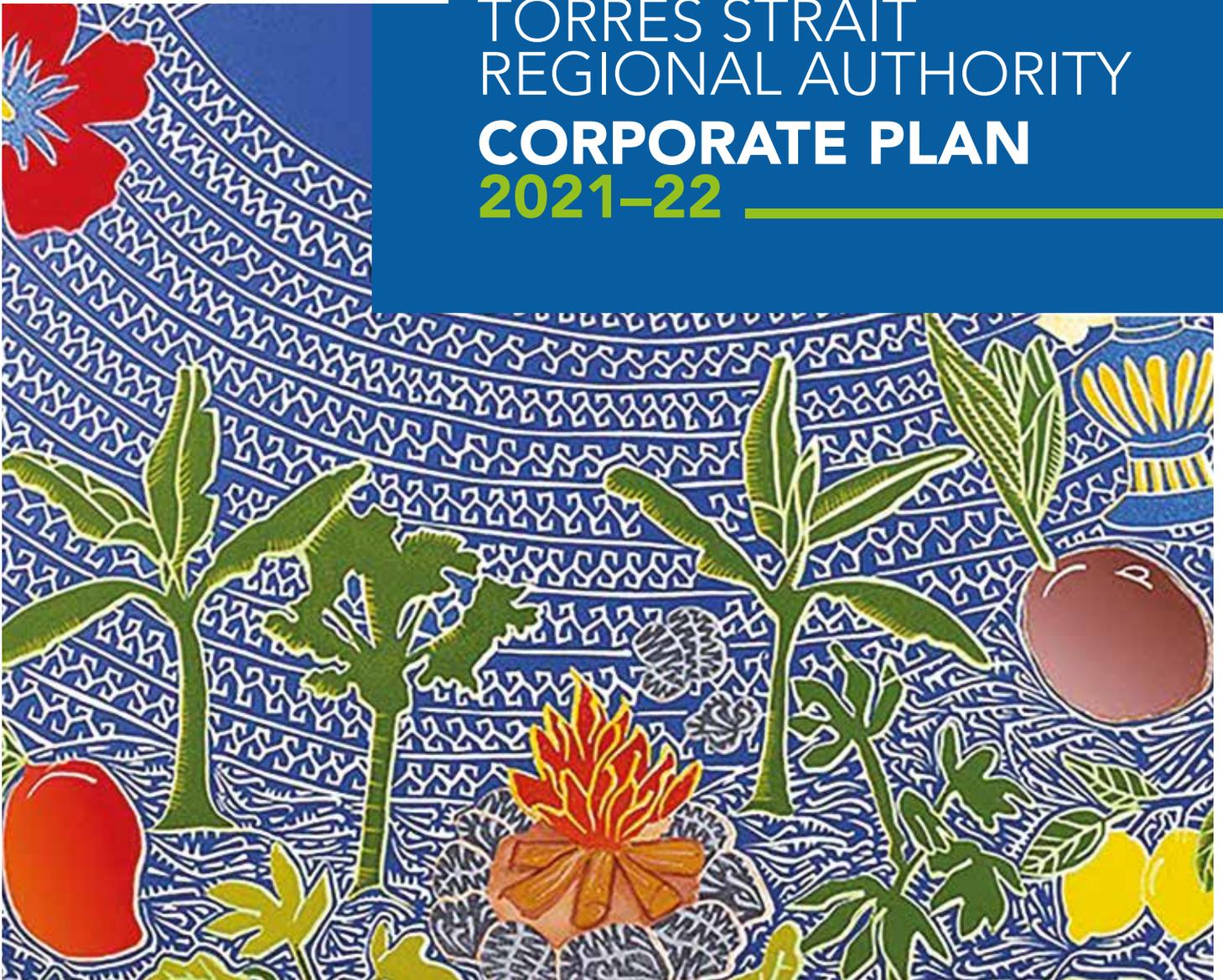
Australian Government



TSRA

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TORRES STRAIT REGIONAL AUTHORITY **CORPORATE PLAN** **2021–22**



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"Women in Pearling Days"

by Fiona Elisala Mosby and Paula Savage of Ngalmun Lagau
Mineral Torres Strait Islander Corporation – Moe Arts, 2019

Torres Strait Regional Authority, August 2021

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INTRODUCTION

As Chairperson of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Board (the Accountable Authority), I am pleased to present the 2021–22 TSRA Corporate Plan.

This Corporate Plan covers the period of 2021–22 to 2024–25, as required under section 35(1) (b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The Corporate Plan 2021–22 is aligned to the Torres Strait Development Plan 2019–2022, consistent with Section 142D of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005 (ATSIA) Act*.

It replaces the TSRA Corporate Plan 2020–21.

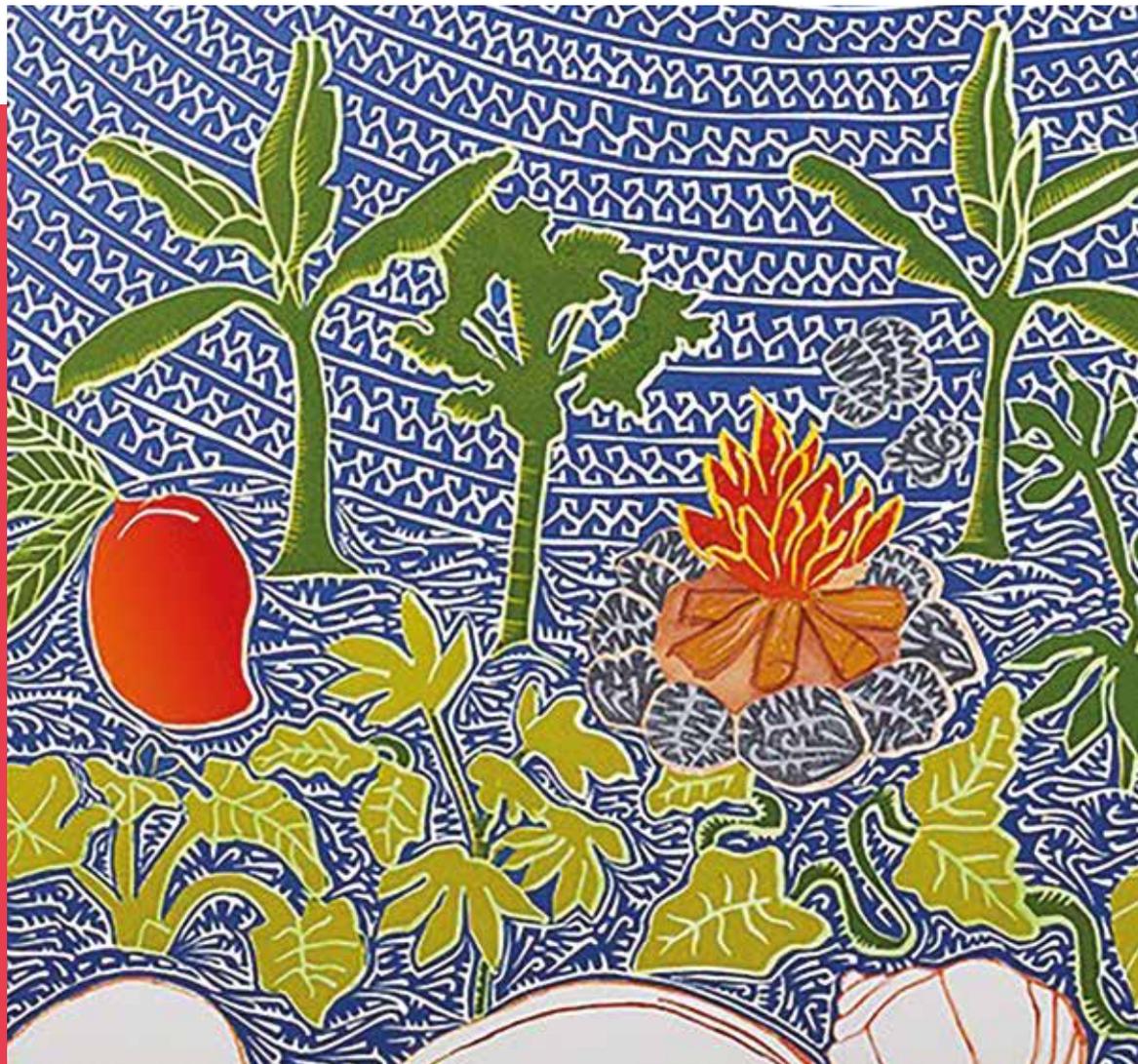
Mr Napau Pedro Stephen AM
Chairperson
TSRA



Back row left to right: Mr Bob Kaigey Member for Mer, Mr Charles David Member for Iama, Mr Yen Loban Member for Ngurapai and Muralag, Mr Patrick Mooka Member for Dauan, Mr Horace Baira Deputy Chairperson and Member for Badu, Mr Rocky Stephen Member for Ugar, Ms Tailisa Yusia Member for Bamaga, Mr Dimas Toby Member for Boigu, Mr Jimmy Gela Member for Erub, Mr Sereako Stephen Member for TRAWQ, Mr John Paiwan Alternate Deputy Chairperson and Member for St Pauls, Mr Nicholas Pearson Member for Poruma, Mr Marcus Warusam Member for Saibai, Mr Seriako Dorante Member for Hammond. **Front row left to right:** Mr Cygnet Repu Member for Mabuyag, Ms Hilda Mosby Member for Masig, Mrs Iris Billy Member for Warraber, Mr Napau Pedro Stephen AM Chairperson and Member for Port Kennedy, Mrs Karyn Sam Member for Seisia, Ms Danie Savage Member for Kubin and Ms Leilani Bin-Juda Chief Executive Officer.

02 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The TSRA pays respect to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters on which we work. We honour the resilience and continuing connection to land and sea country, culture and community of all Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people across Australia. We recognise the decisions we make today will impact the lives of generations to come.



03 TORRES STRAIT REGION

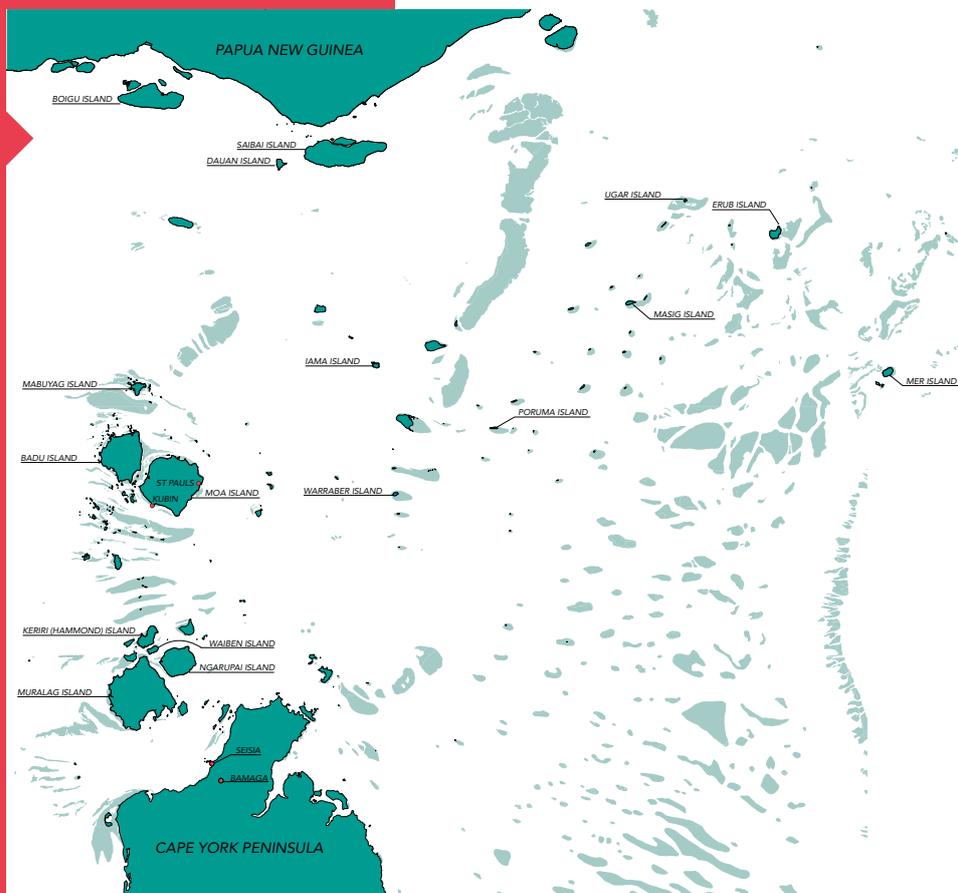


FIGURE 1 – MAP OF TORRES STRAIT

The Torres Strait is located in Australia and is part of the state of Queensland. The area is approximately 150 kilometres wide at its narrowest point and is situated between the tip of Queensland's Cape York Peninsula and Papua New Guinea (PNG).

The area consists of over 270 islands and reefs. The Torres Strait islands have a variety of topographies, ecosystems and formations. Several islands, closest to the PNG coastline are low lying and are

regularly inundated by sea water, and many of the western islands are hilly and steep. The central islands are predominantly coral cays and those to the east are volcanic.

The TSRA delivers programmes and services across the Torres Strait area which includes 17 inhabited islands and the communities of Bamaga and Seisia on the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) of mainland Australia.

04 PURPOSE

The TSRA is the lead Australian Government agency in the Torres Strait region on Indigenous affairs, including the communities of Bamaga and Seisia on the NPA. The TSRA is a statutory authority of the Australian Government and is accountable to both the Parliament of Australia and the Australian Government

Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP. The TSRA operates under the direction of a democratically elected Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Board, comprising of 20 local members from the region.

05 STRUCTURE

The TSRA consists of two parts, the elected Board and the Administration.

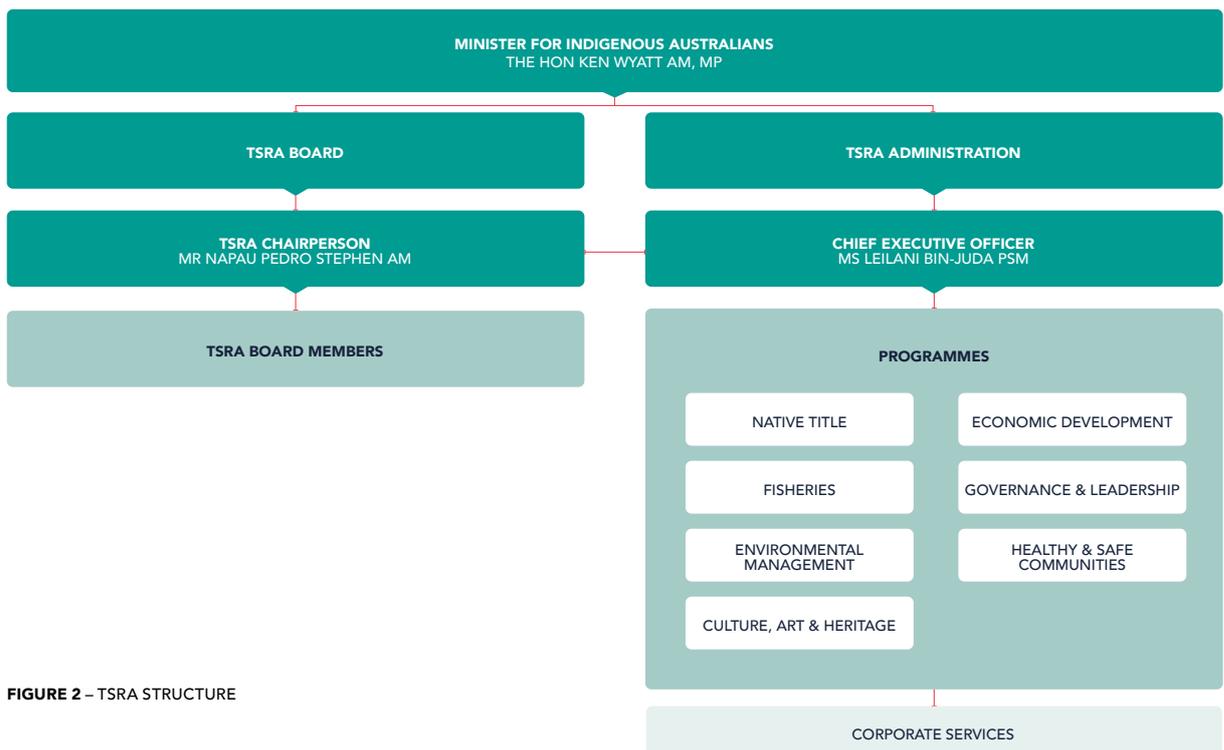


FIGURE 2 – TSRA STRUCTURE

06 VISION

The TSRA's purpose as defined by its vision is:

EMPOWERING OUR PEOPLE, IN OUR DECISION, IN OUR CULTURE, FOR OUR FUTURE

**'NGALPUN YANGU KAABA WOYDHAY, A NGALPUN MURUYGUW
DANALGAN MABAYGAL KUNAKAN PALAYK, WAGEL GOEYGOEYIKA'**

(KALA LAGAW YA)

**'BUAIGIZ KELAR OBAISWERARE, MERBI MIR APUGE MENA OBAKEDI,
MUIGE MERBI ARERIBI TONARGE, KO MERBI KEUB KERKEREM'**

(MERIAM MIR)

**'NGALPAN MOEBAYGAL THOEPOERIWOEYAMOEYN, NGALPAN YA
KUDUTHOERAYNU, NGALPAN IGILIMAYPA, SEPA SETHA WARA
GOEYGIL SEY BOEY WAGEL'**

(KALA KAWAU YA)

The TSRA seeks to provide greater autonomy to the Torres Strait and to better the lives of Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people living in the 18 communities of the Torres Strait and 2 communities of the NPA, through contributing to a healthier, safer and more prosperous region.

To achieve its purpose, the TSRA is required to formulate a Torres Strait Development Plan which covers a period of at least 3 years and not more than 5 years. The TSRA Development Plan is due to be redeveloped in 2022, in line with the strategic direction set by the newly elected Board.

07 COVID-19

COVID-19 and its fiscal impacts will have an ongoing effect across all areas of the Australian Government. While the extent of the long-term impacts of COVID-19 is still unclear, TSRA will continue to work closely with all level of Government to implement COVID-19 recovery measures, in an effort to monitor and reduce the impact on the Torres Strait region.

COVID-19 is expected to have an ongoing impact on a global scale for many years to come. However, the TSRA believes it is well positioned and will continue to demonstrate its strong leadership role in the region as recovery efforts are exercised.



TSRA believes it is well positioned and will continue to demonstrate its **strong leadership role** in the region as it recovers.

08 KEY ACTIVITIES

The primary functions and responsibilities for the TSRA are defined in the enabling legislation under section 142A of the *ATSI Act*.

Key functions include to:

- › recognise and maintain the special and unique Ailan Kastom of Torres Strait Islanders living in the Torres Strait region,
- › formulate and implement programs for Torres Strait Islanders, and Aboriginal persons, living in the Torres Strait region,
- › monitor the effectiveness of programs for Torres Strait Islanders, and Aboriginal persons, living in the Torres Strait area, including programs conducted by other bodies,
- › develop policy proposals to meet national, state and regional needs and priorities of Torres Strait Islanders, and Aboriginal persons, living in the Torres Strait region,
- › assist, advise and cooperate with Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal communities, organisations, and individuals at national, state, territory and regional levels,
- › advise the Australian Government Minister on: matters relating to Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal affairs in the Torres Strait Region. Including the administration of legislation; and the coordination of the activities of other Australian Government bodies that impact the Torres Strait area.

The **purpose** of the TSRA is encapsulated in the agency's single Portfolio Budget Statement outcome:

- › Progress towards closing the gap for Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people living in the Torres Strait Region through development planning, coordination, sustainable resource management and preservation and promotion of Indigenous culture.

To achieve on TSRA's purpose, functions and to contribute towards meeting the National Agreement on Closing the Gap targets, the TSRA is structured into Programme areas. Each Programme has defined accountabilities and responsibilities. These programmes include:

- › Economic Development
- › Fisheries
- › Culture, Art and Heritage
- › Native Title
- › Environmental Management
- › Governance and Leadership
- › Healthy and Safe Communities

Each Programme contributes to the fulfilment of the TSRA's purpose and therefore the work of each is considered as key activities in the Corporate Plan. The measures relating to each Programme are used to assess overall performance.

The Board has indicated Regional Infrastructure as a key priority for the TSRA to focus on for the 2021–22 and 2022–23 financial years. TSRA will endeavour to play a greater advocacy role in the development of sustainable and relevant infrastructure projects.



KEY ACTIVITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Enhance the region's wealth by creating sustainable industries and increasing employment opportunities for our people equivalent to the wider Australian community.

Initiatives

- › Deliver concessional home and business loans
- › Provide business training and business support training
- › Identify employment and training opportunities

TSRA will continue to support **business skills development** and provide opportunities for **business growth packages** and **loans**.

Operating Context

Economic growth and sustainability are essential for the development of the Torres Strait and NPA region. The Torres Strait region is remote, sparsely populated and the cost of doing business remains high. The reason for the higher cost of business can be associated with limited critical infrastructure (such as telecommunications), expensive transport and supply chain costs compared with mainland Australia and the overall limited economic activity. To create sustainable industries and increase employment opportunities, TSRA will endeavour to build stronger partnerships with key stakeholders and increase its advocacy to improve infrastructure, supply chains, travel, tourism, and economic activity for the region.

The TSRA is committed to provide assistance which supports individuals' economic security. This includes through such measures as; support for delivery of education, employment, and skills training packages so that Indigenous people of the region can transition to full-time work, higher level jobs or operate their own business. TSRA will continue to support business skills development and provide opportunities for business growth packages and loans.

The Torres Strait region is in a strong position to reduce reliance on welfare provided through Government led initiatives such as the Community Development Programme (CDP) and return to a wages model. In the 2021 Federal Budget, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP announced a range of proposed changes to the CDP, and the TSRA will work closely with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) and the service provider on new initiatives in this space.

COVID-19 continues to impact economic opportunities, particularly in the fisheries and tourism industries. In the short-term, TSRA will continue to monitor and support those businesses significantly impacted by COVID-19 through such actions as moratoriums on business loans. While the long-term economic and trade impacts resulting from COVID-19 remain unclear, it highlights the need to explore new markets for future industry and job opportunities.





KEY ACTIVITY FISHERIES

Enhance the region's wealth by managing and maintaining sustainable fishing industries and increasing employment and economic opportunities for our people.

Initiatives

- › 100% Indigenous ownership of region's fisheries
- › Increase capacity of Indigenous fishers to participate in commercial fishing
- › Support TSRA and community engagement in the Protected Zone Joint Authority

Operating Context

The TSRA is a key stakeholder and crucial government agency in the Torres Strait Fisheries space. The *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* provides the legal framework for the management of the marine resources within Australia's jurisdiction of the Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ) as established under the Australian-Papua New Guinea Torres Strait Treaty. The Act also establishes the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) which is responsible for the management of commercial and traditional fishing in the TSPZ. The TSRA Chairperson, a member of the PZJA, represents the interests of the Torres Strait region and people in accordance with the Torres Strait Treaty. The TSRA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a member of the PZJA Standing Committee which includes the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) CEO and the Deputy Director-General for Queensland's Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

TSRA has long supported the goal of 100% Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal ownership of the region's commercial fisheries. The Torres Strait finfish, beche-de-mer, crab and trochus commercial fisheries are 100% owned



Torres Strait **finfish**, **beche-de-mer**, **crab** and **trochus** owned by Torres Strait communities

by Torres Strait communities with the tropical rock lobster at approximately 66% ownership. While the Torres Strait region is also home to prawn fishery, there remains nil Torres Strait community owned entities, mostly due to the high operational costs, and intensive labour requirements.

In a regional first, the Zenadth Kes Fisheries Limited (ZKF) was incorporated on 3 December 2020 and is a wholly Indigenous company comprising representatives from each of the island cluster groups. Historically, the TSRA holds fisheries assets, including catch allocations and commercial licenses on behalf of all Indigenous people of the region. However, these assets and the management role will be transitioned to ZKF within the next 3 years. TSRA will provide financial support to the ZKF over this outlook period to ensure a smooth transition, providing greater economic benefit of all people across the region.

The impacts of COVID-19 on international trade highlighted the industry's heavy reliance on the Chinese export-market. The tropical rock lobster fishers were hit particularly hard in 2020 as access to the export market saw trade decreased by up to 80%. TSRA is working with other agencies to explore new markets and opportunities for trade.

The impacts of climate change will continue to pose ongoing risks to the Torres Strait Fisheries, and the individual island communities. Tropical marine heatwaves are being predicted for the outlook years, which has historically resulted in strict management strategies and reduced catch allowances being imposed by the PZJA. TSRA will support ongoing scientific research and consultation to ensure the sustainability of the fisheries.



Torres Strait **tropical rock lobster** owned by Torres Strait communities

TSRA will support **ongoing scientific research** and consultation to ensure the **sustainability** of the fisheries.



KEY ACTIVITY CULTURE, ART AND HERITAGE

Protect, promote, revitalise and maintain Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal traditions and cultural heritage.

Initiatives

- › Preserve, maintain, develop and promote Indigenous languages through the Language Centre
- › Expand a regional arts industry
- › Protect Copyright and Intellectual Property rights
- › Develop cultural values and protocol guidance materials for use by Governments and Non-Government Organisations (NGO)

...ongoing support to three regional art centres, located on **Badu, Erub** and **Moa**, as well as the **Gab Titui Cultural Centre** on Thursday Island.

Operating Context

Ailan Kastom and Aboriginal cultural traditions of the Torres Strait and communities of Bamaga and Seisia on the NPA, are fundamental to the people of the region. The TSRA focuses on preserving culture, history and heritage through supporting traditional art, dance, language, and craft skills.

To ensure the continued preservation of traditional Indigenous languages, revival of Indigenous knowledge and customs along with traditional storytelling, art, dance and craft will be key. TSRA is committed to supporting communities to undertake activities in strengthening Ailan Kastom, including protocols, language and cultural maintenance.

Torres Strait art is unique in both its style and form. The TSRA encourages the development of a Torres Strait arts and cultural scene that continues to inspire audiences nationally, and internationally, as well as foster local artistic talents. TSRA will continue to support artists through ongoing support to three regional art centres, located on Badu, Erub and Moa, as well as the Gab Titui Cultural Centre on Thursday Island. By strengthening regional strategies for the art industry, the TSRA can monitor cultural maintenance priorities for the region.

There are increasing means of production, collaboration, and delivery of content, which will continue to evolve as technology advances. TSRA will continue to monitor the trends and facilitate opportunities for artists to increase their income from art and crafts, particularly through new online business opportunities, supported through the TSRA Regional Economic Investment Strategies Arts and Creative Industries assistance packages.

Over the outlook period, TSRA will continue to ensure copyright, intellectual property and traditional knowledge of the Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people in the region are protected, by collaborating with regional and national art and cultural institutions.

facilitate opportunities for **artists** to **increase their income** from art and crafts, particularly through **new online business**.





KEY ACTIVITY NATIVE TITLE

Protect, maintain and progress Native Title rights and recognition over the region's land and sea country. When Native Title has been determined for a region, a Prescribed Body Corporate (PBC) is established to manage the area. Compliance in the Native Title space is monitored by the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC).

Initiatives

- › Finalising native title determinations before the Federal Court
- › Providing post-determination support for PBCs and Native Title holders, including:
 - › negotiating Future Acts Notices, Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) and other agreements with appropriate compensation;
 - › settling intramural disputes
- › Transitioning Native Title Representative Body (NTRB) functions to another entity.

...supporting **PBCs** and Native Title holders to **protect** and **maintain** their **native title rights** and **interests** over land and sea country, creating economic and social opportunities.

Operating Context

Since 2006, the TSRA has been the recognised NTRB, under the *Native Title Act 1993*, for the Torres Strait area. In June 2021, the Minister re-recognised the TSRA as the NTRB for a further 12 months until 30 June 2022. During this time, the TSRA will develop and implement a transition plan to transfer the NTRB functions to another entity. The TSRA will work with stakeholders including PBCs, Traditional Owners, Gur A Baradharaw Kod Torres Strait Sea and Land Council Torres Strait Islander Corporation (GBK), NGOs, and government entities on the transition.

A continued focus of the Native Title Programme is progressing the native title claims before the Federal Court through to determination, and supporting PBCs and Native Title holders to protect and maintain their native title rights and interests over land and sea country, creating economic and social opportunities.

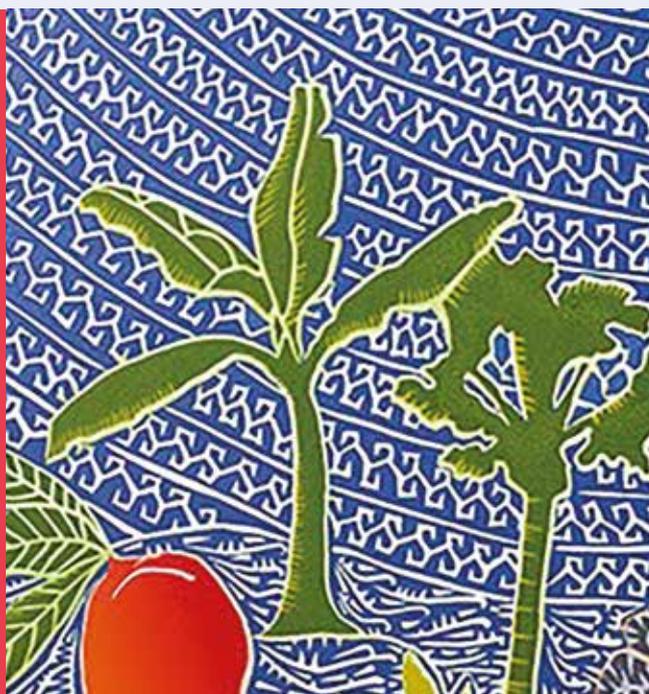
To resolve overlaps in sea country, the Torres Strait Regional Seas Claim (TSRSC) Part B applicants (QUD27/2019), the Kaurareg applicants (#1 (QUD26/2019), #2 (QUD10/2019) and #3 (QUD24/2019), the Northern Peninsula applicants

(QUD114/2017) and North Eastern Peninsula applicants (QUD115/2017) have developed a contingent timetable to progress a single Unified Sea Claim.

Working closely with the Cape York Land Council (NTRB for Northern Peninsula and North Eastern Peninsula applicants), the TSRA is providing facilitation and assistance support to the Unified Sea Claim Working Group (comprising of applicants from each claim) to resolve the remaining overlaps, combine the remaining claims, and achieve consent determinations of native title without the need for costly and time-consuming litigation.

The TSRA acknowledges while moving forward to a post-determination environment challenges do remain, including intramural disputes, compensation claims, complex land tenure, and mapping of traditional boundaries (land and sea country).

Across the region, there is a growing interest in traditional boundary mapping for sea country and establishing cultural protocols for fishing and other commercial activities. The TSRA will continue to work with GBK, PBCs, Traditional Owners and key agencies such as PZJA and AFMA to explore opportunities to protect the rights and interests of Traditional Owners while balancing rights of commercial operators.





KEY ACTIVITY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

To protect the ecological complexity and biodiversity of the Torres Strait region, and the strong and enduring connection of Torres Strait Islander people to their islands and sea.

Initiatives

- › Undertake biodiverse land and sea planning, including turtle and dugong management
- › Maintain Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs), traditional ecological knowledge, and community engagement
- › Enhance environmental education within community and undertake compliance activities in culturally appropriate ways
- › Developing compliance management capacity
- › Assist the region to mitigate the impacts of climate change

Community-based environmental management is the **principal mechanism** to **help ensure** the **sustainability** of **key cultural** and **natural resources** of the region into the future.

Operating Context

The Torres Strait region supports an array of marine and island environments. The region holds both national and international significance for its biological diversity and natural beauty, including its extensive seagrass meadows, dugong and turtle populations and coral reefs. This is accompanied by the cultural practices of the region which has evolved in unison with the natural environment, to be both unique and sustainable. Community-based environmental management is the principal mechanism to help ensure the sustainability of key cultural and natural resources of the region into the future.

In more recent times the Torres Strait environment has become subject to growing threats from climate change, invasive species, shipping, marine development and ocean debris. According to the *Torres Strait Regional Adaptation and Resilience Plan*, climate change is likely to have increasingly significant impacts on the region's marine, coastal and terrestrial species and ecosystems. Sea level and temperature rises, and increased weather variability pose a risk to communities' health and wellbeing, culture and economies.

Building community resilience, self-reliance and sustainability will be a key goal for TSRA to help the region meet these challenges.

The TSRA's Environmental Management Programme guides and supports a range of activities including environmental monitoring, regional and community-based planning, research, capacity building, education and on ground management actions to ensure the strategic and cost-effective delivery of the *Land and Sea Management Strategy 2016-2036*. TSRA is in a unique position in its ability to enforce compliance measures through collaborative arrangements with Traditional Owners/communities. TSRA will continue to monitor the environment through a range of a high-level management and protection measures that are both region-specific and culturally appropriate.



TSRA will continue to **monitor the environment** through a range of a **high-level management** and **protection measures** that are both region-specific and culturally appropriate.

The Torres Strait Indigenous Rangers Project (Ranger Project) is at a pivotal point with a new multi-year funding agreement process underway. While funding from the NIAA for the current Ranger Project has been extended to 31 December 2021, TSRA has applied for future funding (of up to 7 years) through the national Indigenous Rangers Program extension announced in March 2020. TSRA views this as an opportunity to strengthen its Ranger Project and to build the capacity of Indigenous organisations in the region with a view to progressing to alternative on-ground delivery models. Outcomes from the Indigenous Ranger Program grant round outcomes are currently pending NIAA delegate decision.

In May 2021, TSRA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) to facilitate enhanced cooperation and collaboration in marine science research. Building on this MoU, TSRA looks forward to working with AIMS to improve information sharing and data collection, which will provide TSRA with the science for better decision making for the protection of the Torres Strait environment.



KEY ACTIVITY GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Effective and transparent governance, while promoting strong leadership in the region.

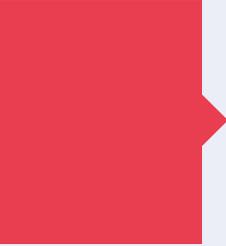
Initiatives

- › Effective communication between Australian, State, local government and NGOs
- › Stronger leadership through governance and leadership capacity building
- › Financial assistance for undergraduate students leaving the region to study
- › Indigenous Broadcasting Program
- › TSRA Board Secretariat

Operating Context

The TSRA is investing in a range of leadership and capacity building programmes, to foster and develop leadership skills within the community. Since 2008, the Governance and Leadership Programme has worked in partnership with the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation to deliver targeted training and mentoring programs for women and youth in the region. With over 130 graduates since 2008, TSRA's capacity building will now expand to support a Leadership Alumni, with additional training and mentoring. This will provide the alumni with a platform to offer advice to government on the development of policy and programs impacts on the Torres Strait region, and its people.

The TSRA has a mandate to monitor the performance of government programs delivered in the Torres Strait regarding the needs of communities. To achieve appropriate outcomes the TSRA facilitates consultation across the region with individuals, communities, elected representatives, and organisations who deliver services in the region. Closer cooperation and communication with stakeholders is critical to ensuring services are beneficial to communities and achieve value for money.



130

graduates of TSRA's leadership programs since 2008

A new, democratically elected Board was inducted in February 2021. During the Board's strategic planning process held in May 2021, the Board identified the following regional priorities for the TSRA to progress over the forward outlook period: infrastructure, economic development, cultural revitalisation and regional governance.

There is an increasing expectation of elected Torres Strait and Aboriginal leaders involvement in Government decision-making, including representation through the National, Regional and Local Voice

Co-design process. The TSRA considers that these will be key mechanisms for Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people to influence legislation and policy decisions directly impacting communities. In May 2021, the TSRA Board expressed solidarity with other Regional Leaders for greater autonomy and regional self-governance for the Torres Strait region (the nation of Zenadth Kes). The TSRA Board agreed to support the establishment of a Regional Governance Committee through existing mechanisms within TSRA, with the aspiration of self-determination.

The Governance and Leadership Programme provides secretariat support to the TSRA Board, Executive Committee and Audit Committee. Meetings are generally convened quarterly with additional special purpose meetings called as required.



...the TSRA Board expressed **solidarity** with other Regional Leaders for **greater autonomy** and **regional self-governance** for the Torres Strait region



KEY ACTIVITY SAFE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

To support the community's capacity to be healthy and safe, increase the overall quality of life of the people in the region.

Initiatives

- › Assist with the delivery of non-mainstream community and social services, including capacity building in communities
- › Shape regional planning and service delivery, including health and social services
- › Support safe and accessible community infrastructure and delivery of essential services
- › Advocate for adequate, culturally appropriate, and affordable housing
- › Support health education initiatives including sport and recreation activities
- › Advocate for healthy and affordable food options in the region

Operating Context

Improving the health and wellbeing of Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people in the region continues to be a challenge for all levels of Government. Closing the Gap data has indicated the average health and life expectancy outcomes of Indigenous people remains in stark contrast to that of Australia's non-Indigenous populations. The TSRA will continue to advocate for improved health outcomes, including ensuring essential health infrastructure (e.g. water and waste systems) and a higher living standard are accessible to the people of the region. This is demonstrated through a collaborative approach of Australian Government, State and local government initiatives which are managed through the Major Infrastructure Projects (MIP) and the newly established Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee. Through the TSRA Board's strategic planning process, Infrastructure was identified as a key priority for TSRA to focus over the outlook period. To support greater advocacy and engagement on this issue, a Regional Infrastructure Portfolio Board Member position was established.

The TSRA will continue to **advocate** for **improved health** outcomes for the people of the region.

A key priority for the future years will be a Regional Health Forum. This will bring together government agencies and NGOs to identify challenges, priorities, and initiatives to be captured in a regional health and well-being strategy.

COVID-19 will remain an ongoing concern for both resourcing and logistics, including health service providers and border protection agencies operating in the region. Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people with pre-existing health conditions will remain a priority as they are particularly at risk and require appropriate access to vaccinations and enhanced protection measures. The TSRA will remain involved in the Local Disaster Management Group, as part of the local, state and National response to COVID-19. The TSRA also has an open dialogue with relevant border agencies and government departments, and will continue to advocate for the interests of the Torres Strait.

Lack of suitable housing, overcrowding and low levels of home ownership by Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people is an ongoing issue for the region. TSRA acknowledges Native Title, complex land tenure arrangements and/or lack of freehold land across the region will continue to hinder Indigenous home ownership. While inadequate and overcrowded housing is a risk factor to health, wellbeing, and safety, the TSRA remains committed to advocating for whole-of-government funding to support healthy homes, improved living environments and affordable home ownership options, including through TSRA's investment in the Horn Island Affordable Housing Project.

Education remains a priority. Access to quality education locally will continue to concern parents, and many children will relocate to the mainland for high school education. The TSRA will continue to engage with the Queensland Government to ensure the standards of education are prioritised within the region – providing better access for all.

TSRA will continue to advocate for adequate and culturally appropriate social services that responds to the identified needs of the communities including, greater access to essential services, counselling and emergency services.

09 COOPERATION

In working towards our purpose, we engage closely with a range of stakeholders across the Torres Strait, NPA and throughout Australia. At the core, is our strong partnerships with Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people living in our region. TSRA's engagement with communities guarantees a meaningful contribution that influences better policy making and resourcing decisions for improved regional outcomes.

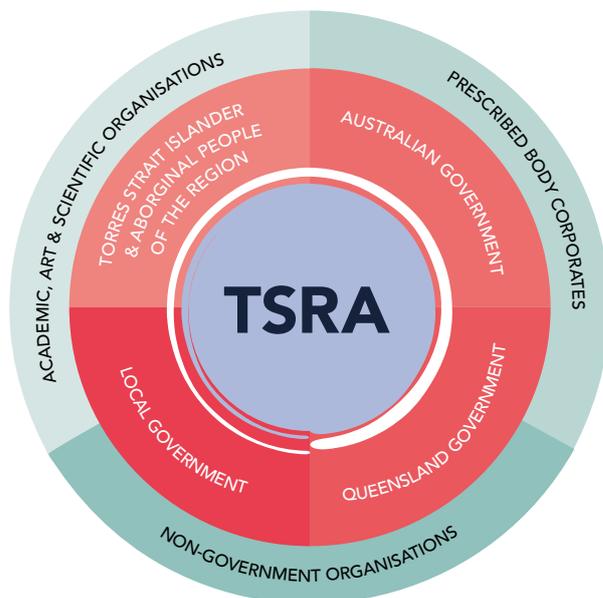
Across all our TSRA's Programmes, we work with community, portfolio partners, Australian, Queensland and Local government, businesses and investors, scientific and research organisations, non-government organisations, community organisations, artists, and media

organisations to develop policy, implement programs and coordinate service delivery for the benefit of Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people of the region.

As the region's NTRB, TSRA is also working with PBCs to increase capacity and compliance with the PBCs' statutory functions and to decrease intramural disputes. TSRA is working with peak Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal bodies to improve coordination and collaboration, reduce duplication of efforts and maximising advocacy for our region's PBCs and Native Title Holders.

TSRA will continue to invest in our relationships and work in cooperation with communities and key contributors through formal consultation processes, inter-governmental forums, and other initiatives at the local, regional, and national levels.

TSRA Stakeholders:



10 MEASURING PERFORMANCE

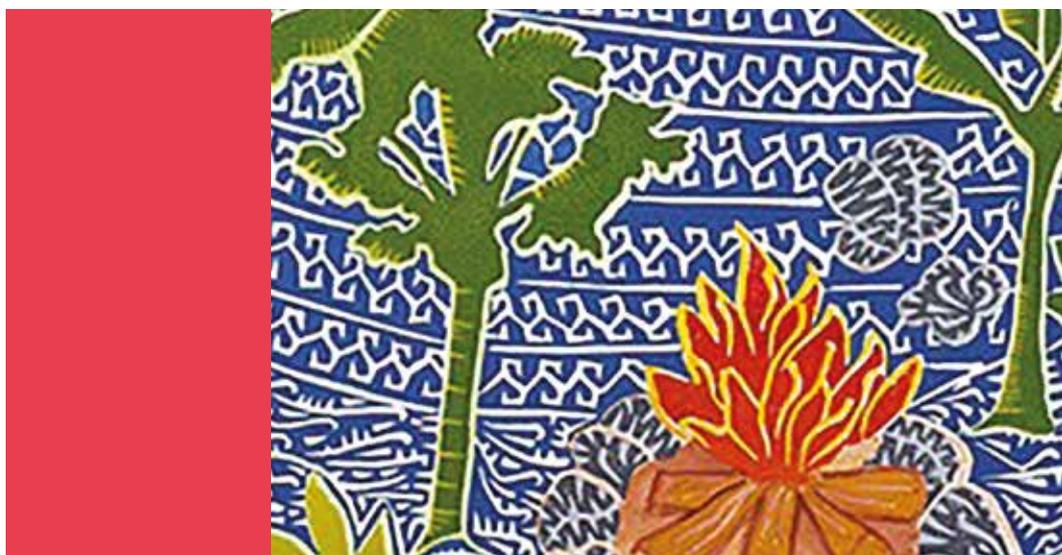
The performance of the TSRA is measured and assessed against the criteria in the Torres Strait Regional Development Plan consistent with the *ATSI Act (2005)* and TSRA's Portfolio Budget Statement outcome:

- › Progress towards closing the gap for Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people living in the Torres Strait Region through development planning, coordination, sustainable resource management and preservation and promotion of Indigenous culture.

To support the delivery on identified outcomes, there are currently 12 high-level performance measures. The performance of the TSRA for 2021–22 and outlook period will be reported in TSRA's Annual Report.

Given the establishment of a new Board in 2021, a review of the 12 measures will be undertaken to ensure continued alignment with the Board's strategic direction. The TSRA expects to develop a new set of performance measures for 2022–23 which will strengthen this alignment, meet enhanced performance reporting requirements of Government, and draw from a greater mix of data to provide a more holistic overview of the achievement of the TSRA's purpose.

Noting the performance review underway, only targets and measures for 2021–22 are shown.



Performance Measures 2021–22

The following table provides the 12-high level performance measures relating to each Programme. These measures will be reported against in the TSRA 2021–22 Annual Report:

KEY OUTCOMES	PERFORMANCE TARGETS	MEASURED BY
Enhance the region's wealth by creating sustainable industries and increasing employment opportunities for our people equivalent to the wider Australian community	1. Increase in the number of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal owned commercially viable businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Number of business loans administered by TSRA. › Monitor long term success of business previously assisted.
	2. Increased availability of approved business training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Monitor the effectiveness of courses via feedback evaluation sheets. › Monitor and evaluate attendance data from courses offered.
Enhance the region's wealth by managing and maintaining sustainable fishing industries and increasing employment and economic opportunities for our people	3. Increase in catches by Torres Strait and Aboriginal Fishers relative to Total Allowable Catch (TAC), strengthening claims for increased ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › AFMA Fisheries Receiver Licence Reports and AFMA TAC advice. › Monitor the effectiveness of fisheries capacity building initiatives. › Increased Indigenous employment in the Fisheries.
	4. The percentage ownership of Torres Strait Commercial Fisheries by Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal People in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Develop a roadmap to monitor ownership of commercial fisheries by Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Traditional Owners.
Protect, promote, revitalise and maintain Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal traditions and cultural heritage	5. Increase in the number of emerging and professionally active artists and cultural practitioners that have access to information and support to ensure copyright and intellectual property rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Artists' attendance at copyright information sessions. › Educate artists on signing appropriate agreements where their rights have been highlighted. › Encourage artists to sign up to VisCopy, Copyright. › Australia Artists' license fees paid through Gab Titui Cultural Centre Sales.

KEY OUTCOMES	PERFORMANCE TARGETS	MEASURED BY
Protect, maintain and progress Native Title rights and recognition over the region's land and sea country	6. Number of Native Title claims successfully determined.	› National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) Register
	7. Number of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) that have compensation or other benefits as part of ILUA terms.	› NNTT Register and Native Title Office records
	8. 100% of PBC achieve ORIC compliance	› Ensuring PBCs achieve compliance with their statutory reporting obligations. This includes the conduct of an Annual General Meeting and the submission of a General Report.
To protect the ecological complexity and biodiversity of the Torres Strait region, and the strong and enduring connection of Torres Strait Islander people to their islands and sea	9. Number of endorsed community-based management plans for the natural and cultural resources of the region being actively implemented.	› Research Reports. › Ranger Working on Country Plans. › Dugong and Turtle Management Plans. › Indigenous Protected Area Plans of Management. › Biodiversity Profiles. › Ecological Fire Management Plans.
Effective and transparent self-government, with strong leadership	10. Increase the level of engagement of elected Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal leaders in policy development and decision-making	› Regular engagement between TSRA Board Members or the CEO with Australian Ministers, State Ministers, their advisors and Senior Public Servants.
To enhance healthy communities and our living environment and achieve the provision of adequate, appropriate and affordable housing	11. Increased investment into new and existing regional environmental health infrastructure	› Participating in the MIP. › Continuing to deliver coastal protection work under the Torres Strait Seawalls Programme.
	12. Improve regional environmental health, telecommunications and marine infrastructure.	› Continue to support projects through the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme. › Explore MoU opportunities with other government agencies.

11

CAPABILITY

The TSRA is a small agency with a large and important remit across a number of complex areas with different and competing factors. Over the term of this Corporate Plan, TSRA will continue to strengthen and enhance our capabilities to ensure ongoing sustainability and maintain our stakeholder confidence.

The TSRA will continue to build on its reputation and standing regionally and nationally through ongoing respectful and culturally appropriate engagement that clearly demonstrates TSRA's intent to improve the wellbeing of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people in the region. TSRA will continue to work with Australian, Queensland and Local government to improve the lives and livelihoods of Indigenous Australians living in the region.

The effective working relationship forged with the NIAA will allow increased collaboration and a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of people living in the Torres Strait. The TSRA will continue to partner with key organisations to better position itself to meet key objectives and encourage collaboration to reduce duplication of programs and services to the Torres Strait.

People

The TSRA has a committed workforce of 154 employees, in multiple locations predominately across the region who are fundamental to the TSRA achieving its objectives. Of the 154 employees, 120 identify as being Indigenous which includes

120

TSRA employees identify as being Indigenous
which includes **Torres Strait Islanders,**
Aboriginal and those who **identify as both.**

Torres Strait Islanders, Aboriginal and those who identify as both. Staff census results indicate that levels of job engagement are high, with staff feeling motivated by their contribution to the region.

The TSRA's vision is building a strong, high performing and capable workforce and has several initiatives to build a skilled staff base. In July 2021, the TSRA launched its *Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy 2021–24*. The implementation of this plan over 2021–22 and the forward outlook period will support the attraction and retention of the right people for the organisation, focusing on developing capabilities and attributes that are most highly valued by the organisation. This implementation is consistent with Commonwealth policy. TSRA continues to encourage a workplace that fosters inclusion, personal growth and positive interpersonal relationships.

In 2021, the TSRA piloted a revitalised Cultural Awareness Training to provide staff with enhanced understanding of the culture and protocols of the Torres Strait and NPA region. The pilot was well received and will be rolled-out to all staff to improve TSRA's capacity to engage in a respectful, appropriate and effective manner.

Key to workplace performance will be the refinement of the TSRA's Performance Development Programme (PDP). Through ongoing conversations and formal feedback cycles, the PDP uses a strengths-based approach to build a high performing and capable workforce. When knowledge or capability gaps are identified through this process, TSRA contracts external facilitators to provide training and support. Pre-existing training programmes, as well as the deliverables identified in the *Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Recruitment and Career Development Strategy 2021–2024*, will ensure the organisation is well positioned for future challenges and opportunities.

The TSRA continues to promote a continuous learning environment and also provides study assistance to employees for approved vocational and tertiary studies. Mobility within the agency is encouraged to allow for cross-skilling and capacity building. TSRA will continue to build on its inter-agency relationships within the Australian Public Service. Exploring short-term secondments for Indigenous employees in other departments and through the Institute of Public Administration Australia remains a priority to encourage career and skills development and highlight external opportunities.

ICT and Infrastructure capability

TSRA has invested in significant telecommunication infrastructure to support robust mobile phone and internet connection services in the Torres Strait. Working in partnership with Telstra and the Queensland Government, the Torres Strait Digital Expansion Project was completed in late 2020 and provides a significant upgrade and expansion to the previous telecommunication network. The benefits to the region include improved socio-economic, education, health and community safety outcomes; as well as benefits to the delivery of biosecurity, border protection, defence and maritime safety capabilities of the Australian Government.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is a key enabler of the TSRA's business practices and plays a significant role in the TSRA achieving its business outcomes. ICT enables faster access to data analysis and provides for a highly mobile workforce, operating across a vast and remote region. TSRA ensures relevant data is made accessible through easy-to-use platforms and its website.

Ensuring appropriate business continuity capability will remain a priority over the short-term. Further security ICT projects expected to be implemented in the short-term will ensure measures are in place to keep TSRA's data safe, improve business workflows and record-keeping practices and create alignment with the Australian Government Protective Security Policy framework.

12 RISK OVERSIGHT & MANAGEMENT

The TSRA is committed to engaging with risk, capitalising on opportunities presented and encouraging innovative practice in support of its purpose, and ultimately toward achievement of its vision.

Risk Framework

The TSRA's risk management framework and risk methodology, provides a standardised mechanism for the identification, documentation, and treatment of risks across the organisation and encourages continual monitoring of the dynamic environment that the TSRA operates in. The risk management system is based on the principles and processes outlined in ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management – Guidelines. Responsibilities for the management of risk are contained within the Risk Management Policy, which facilitates effective ownership, assessment, treatment, and reporting of risks.

All staff, regardless of level, are responsible for identifying, assessing, reporting and managing risk. A positive risk culture promotes a proactive approach to risk. TSRA is committed to improve risk culture and capability and conducts risk management training.

Governance

The TSRA CEO is the highest-level decision-making authority within the administration arm of the TSRA and supports the direction of the elected Board.

The CEO is supported by the Programme Steering Committee which meets quarterly to provide updates on agreed priorities for each Programme and makes recommendations on the allocation of resources consistent with the TSRA's purpose and goals. Risk management policy and supporting practices are reviewed through the Internal Audit process and Australian National Audit Office performance audits.

The TSRA Audit Committee – a requirement under the *ATSI Act 2005* – has a role in overseeing risk management practices. The Audit Committee provides independent assurance to the TSRA Board on the administrative financial and performance reporting responsibilities, risk oversight and management and internal control systems and assurances.

Key Enterprise Risks

The TSRA's key areas of risk affecting delivery of the TSRA's functions, outcomes and key activities:

RISK AND IMPACT	MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES
Failure to deliver effective programmes and services to the Torres Strait and NPA region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Regular Programme and project monitoring and reporting › Budget and expense monitoring and reporting › Internal audits › Reporting on short- and long-term implications, enabling informed decision making earlier
Failure to adequately improve the capability of staff to achieve the purpose and vision of the TSRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Workforce planning › TSRA Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Recruitment & Career Development Strategy 2021–2024 › Professional development opportunities › Flexible employment policy
Unable to respond effectively to emerging priorities or changes to the operating environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Support a culture of innovation and encourage positive engagement with risk › Continuous improvement through feedback mechanisms › Ensure ongoing positive stakeholder engagement
Failure to engage effectively with key stakeholders and communities resulting in a loss of trust and confidence in the TSRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Cultural competency training opportunities for TSRA employees › Appropriate community engagement processes › Feedback mechanisms in place from communities › Communication and media strategy
Reputational damage due to failure to misuse of assets and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Financial, asset and credit card policies › Recruitment policy and personnel checks prior to employment
Funding changes or project over-expenditure results in resourcing constraints and reduction of opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Maintain strong Government relations › Budget and expense reporting including robust project management costing tools › Investment policies and procedures
Unsafe work environment or security incident impacts staff safety and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Work Health and Safety (WHS) policy and procedures – incident and risk management › WHS committee › WHS audit and checks › Training and education
ICT interruption or data compromise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ICT security policies and procedures › Business Continuity Plans

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