Torres Strait Regional Authority

Annual Report 2010 - 2011

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The Torres Strait Regional Authority recognises the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate. We acknowledge the past and present elders of all Indigenous people in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area and respect the culture and lore of all Indigenous people in the region.

The TSRA will always make every effort to respect Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people's cultural sensitivities when featuring the images or names of people who have recently died.

However please be advised that this document may contain images of persons who have died after this Annual Report was tabled in Parliament in October 2011 and we offer our apologies for any distress caused if this occurs.

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Empowering our people, in our decision, in our culture, for our future

Ngalpun yangu kaaba woeydhay, a ngalpun muruygaw danalagan mabaygal kunakan palayk, bathayngaka

Kala Lagau 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 igililmaypa, sepa setha wara goeygil sey boey wagel **Kala Kawau Ya**

The Indigenous people of the Torres Strait are of Aboriginal and Melanesian origin and speak two distinct traditional languages. In the Eastern Islands the traditional language is Meriam Mir, while the Western and Central Island groups speak either Kala Lagau Ya or Kala Kawau Ya, which are dialects of the same language. Torres Strait Creole and English are also spoken.

Our vision is expressed in the languages of our region, recognising the importance and diversity of our culture and traditional languages.

Our vision signifies that the heart of our region is our people, with culture an important part of our lives now and into the future. Empowering our people to contribute to, and make decisions regarding their future, ensures that our culture will remain strong and that the future will be guided by the people who live in the region and understand and promote its unique characteristics.

Highlights and Achievements

Highlights of 2010 - 2011

Engaging with our communities to build the future

- The TSRA is working with all levels of government to improve the delivery of integrated government services across the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area (NPA). The TSRA is leading Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) and is developing this approach as core business for all government entities and non-government organisations delivering services in the region.
- We have delivered feedback on the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Plan 2009 - 2029 to all communities in the region, detailing how information from the consultation process reflects regional aspirations.
- Our elected Board Members make frequent visits to Torres Strait communities. Almost all of our Board Members live and work in the communities that they represent. Through our Board Members, the TSRA is able to maintain close relationships with communities.
- Staff visit communities across the region on a regular basis to deliver information on government policies and program reforms. This is a two-way process with the community also providing feedback to the TSRA on program progress, outcomes and challenges.

Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage

- All of the TSRA's Programs are aligned with the *Torres Strait Development Plan 2009 - 2013* and the *Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Plan 2009 - 2029*. These plans align with the Council of Australian Government (COAG) targets for *Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage*. The TSRA's Integrated Services Delivery project focuses on the seven Building Blocks that underpin the achievement of the COAG targets. All TSRA funding (grant) approvals are tested against the objectives of the *Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Plan 2009 - 2029*, and the *Closing the Gap* targets.
- The Major Infrastructure Program (MIP) continues to deliver essential environmental health infrastructure throughout the region. Our communities are benefiting from MIP, with access to improved roads, drainage, sewerage systems, reticulated water supplies and airstrips.
- We are implementing economic development strategies in the region to build capacity in the commercial fisheries, tourism, construction and arts sectors.
- Employment opportunities in the region are increasing through the delivery of Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), and the skills base within each community continues to grow.

Promoting and advocating critical issues for the Region

- Our team met with key Australian Government and Queensland Government leaders, and negotiated successful joint initiatives including climate change studies, infrastructure developments, turtle and dugong research, border security initiatives under the *Torres Strait Treaty*, health partnerships and economic development initiatives.
- We worked with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet; the United Kingdom Natural History Museum and Torres Strait Communities to secure the repatriation of Indigenous Human remains and sacred objects to the Torres Strait. In 2010 - 2011, 138 sets of ancestral remains were repatriated.
- Submissions were provided in response to Queensland State Government discussion papers including the Home Ownership on Indigenous Communal Lands Discussion Paper and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 99-Year Residential Leases -Valuation Methodology Options.

Almost all of our Board Members live and work in the communities that they represent. Through our Board Members, the TSRA is able to maintain close relationships with communities.

- A cultural policy framework and guiding principles has been developed and will be embedded into our administrative procedures. The policy will be supported through publication of a handbook, TSRA Cultural Protocols Guide for TSRA Staff.
- The TSRA has promoted the work of Torres Strait artists across Australia; at the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair; the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair; the Tandanya Cultural Centre in South Australia; and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. These initiatives are supporting economic development in the region.
- Traditional Owners have been assisted to obtain legal recognition of native title over the land and sea in the Torres Strait. Support has also been provided to help Prescribed Bodies Corporate to manage existing native title.





Mabuiag Island.

Opportunities and Challenges Now and into the Future

Opportunities and Challenges for 2011 - 2012

Opportunities

- To Close the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in the region.
- To implement the best possible governance model for the region and ensure appropriate and effective representation for all communities on the TSRA Board.
- To improve the delivery of integrated whole of government services to all people in the region.
- To improve communication services throughout the region by developing the capacity of the Regional Indigenous Media Organisation and the Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Service.

Challenges

- To secure the resources required to deliver the program outcomes identified in the Torres Strait Development Plan 2009 - 2013 and the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Plan 2009 - 2029.
- To manage the delivery of our programs in a remote, geographically isolated area.
- To ensure that Integrated Service Delivery is the foundation of core business for all agencies and non-government organisations operating in the region.
- To proactively address international cross border issues by working in partnership with the Australian Government, the State Governments and the international community.
- To build a sustainable economic development base for future generations.
- To deliver major health related infrastructure through the Major Infrastructure Program (MIP).



Kubin Community, Moa Island.

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TORRES STRAIT REGIONAL AUTHORITY

The Hon. Jenny Macklin MP Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

It is with pleasure that I present you with the seventeenth Annual Report of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) for 2010 - 2011.

This Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with Section 144ZB of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005 (Cth) and Section 9 of the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 (Cth).

This Annual Report contains the Report of Operations, Financial Statements and Auditors-General Report on those Financial Statements, in accordance with Section 9 of the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 (Cth), and the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies (Report of Operations) Orders 2005 and the Finance Minister's Orders.

This Report of Operations is made in accordance with a resolution of the Directors at the Board meeting held on 18 August 2011.

During the reporting period the TSRA Board and Administration successfully worked together towards realising the objectives of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Plan 2009 - 2029, and towards Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage for Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people living in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area region. We look forward to building on our successes in the coming year.

Yours sincerely,

. T. Kr.

John T. Kris Chairperson Torres Strait Regional Authority

9 September 2011

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TSRA Rangers from the Environmental Management Program.