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Seasons Greetings from the TSRA Chairperson Mr John Toshie Kris

It has been a busy and productive year for the TSRA. We have had changes to our program structure in order to better meet the needs of the people living in the region, as well as the TSRA and staff continuing to work towards meeting our vision of "empowering our people, in our decision, in our culture, for our future".

We would not have had such a successful year if it wasn't for the much appreciated contribution from the region's Elders, the Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC), the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council (NPARC), the Torres Shire Council, Traditional Owners, Prescribed Bodies Corporate, the Community Fisher Group, community members and organisations as well as partner agencies who we worked closely with to progress and deliver positive social, cultural and economic outcomes for our region this past year.

The TSRA Board and staff would like to wish you all a safe, peaceful and joyful Christmas and New Year.

Mina Big Eso for your support and partnership this year and wishing you all the best for the coming year.



Mr John Toshie Kris, TSRA Chairperson



"Through the Eyes of a Diver"
TSRA Christmas card cover, artwork by Harry Nona
Photo: George Serras, National Museum of Australia.

New Program Structure for TSRA

When developing the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Plan 2009 - 2029 (Regional Plan), communities were consulted about what outcomes they wanted to see in the areas of:

- Art, Culture and Heritage (including Native Title)
- Economic Development
- Environmental management
- Infrastructure
- Public health
- Communities
- Social Services
- Housing
- Population Change
- Governance and leadership
- Cost of Living
- Schooling
- Early Childhood

The feedback from these community consultations (held in August and September 2008) was then used to develop the goals and objectives in the Regional Plan.

Because the Regional Plan represents the ideas and goals of ALL communities in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula region, the TSRA Chairperson, Mayor of Torres Strait Island Regional Council, Mayor of Torres Shire Council and Mayor of Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council all signed the Regional Plan committing their organisations to meeting the goals and objectives contained within it.

The TSRA then took the Regional Plan and, using this as a base because it represented what the community wanted to see happening in the future, used it to change its program structure so that TSRA could work towards these goals.

The TSRA's new program structure, goals and objectives are contained in the Torres Strait Regional Authority's Development Plan, and this will guide TSRA for the next four years from 2009 to 2013.

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Economic Forum on Mabuiaig



On Mabuiaig Is. From left: Ella Bowie, Geoff Milgate, Thor Lister, Walter Ivison, Sean McKinney, Shane McDonell, Elizah Wasaga, Cr Keith Fell and Mike Taylor

The TSRA Economic Development team hosted a two day economic forum on Mabuiaig Island on Tuesday 10th November 2009.

The forum was held in the community hall and throughout the two days a number of interested community members attended to hear presentations from guest speakers and take the opportunity to ask questions about TSRA economic development programs.

TSRA Member for Mabuiaig Island Cr Keith Fell welcomed participants and escorted the Economic development team around Mabuiaig to explain his vision for Mabuiaig's economic development.

The presentations at the forum were made by:

Thor Lister - AEC Group (Fisheries and Aquaculture)

Mr Lister is an economist and presented the report by AEC Group about making fishing enterprises within the Torres Strait viable and sustainable operations.

Geoff Milgate - Queensland Department of Employment Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI)

Mr Milgate discussed what DEEDI could provide, resources and options available to clients for grant funding.

Shane McDonell - TSRA

Mr McDonell discussed the Business Finance Scheme "BFS" and Home Ownership Program "HOP" run by TSRA, as well as the Islander Entrepreneur Program which is a partnership between National Australia Bank and TSRA.

Walter Ivison - Wesolutions

Mr Ivison discussed his business concept of

turning an air conditioner into a provider of water, where units can then produce 2,000 litres per day per unit. The water producing machine would work by using the exhaust from unit.

Mike Taylor - Low Cost Concepts

Mr Taylor discussed using block works as a low cost solution to building. This would involve basing a machine on site to make the blocks utilising local labour and then build using a clip lock system.

Sean McKinney - Thematic Presentation

Mr McKinney discussed water desalination plants, his company and the benefits of having the facility on a remote area.

Ella Bowie - Local Entrepreneur

Ms Bowie spoke about commencing her small business on Thursday Island. Ms Bowie explained the positives and negatives, what they thought they could achieve and what actually was achieved. Ms Bowie explained the vision of business, thoughts, processes and how you should listen to sound advice regarding your business.

The TSRA Economic team supplied application kits, and contact details to all participants.

New Program Structure for TSRA

Continued from page 1.

The TSRA Board also elected Portfolio Members from amongst its membership to represent each of the program areas. The new Programs and Portfolio Members are:

Culture, Art and Heritage

Mr Pillemon Mosby (Poruma)

Economic Development

Ms Napcia Bin Tahal (Horn and Prince of Wales Islands)

Governance and Leadership

Mr Tosh Kris (St Pauls and TSRA Chairperson)

Healthy Communities

Mr Keith Fell (Mabuiaig)

Safe Communities

Mrs Nancy Pearson (Hammond)

Fisheries

Mr Kenny Bedford (Erub)

Native Title

Mr Don Banu (Boigu)

Environmental Management

Mr Walter Mackie (Iama)

The TSRA will be visiting communities in the new year to explain in more detail both the Regional Plan and TSRA Development Plan and what communities can expect to see happening in the future.

Gab Titui achieves Queensland and international recognition

The Gab Titui Cultural Centre (GTCC) has been acknowledged over the last two months both statewide and internationally for its strong community focus and high standard of exhibition displays over recent years.

In November GTCC was presented with a Queensland Gallery and Museum Achievement Award (GAMAA) recognising it in the category of 'Organisations with Staff of 5 or more' for its nomination, Ephraim Bani Gallery Cultural Maintenance Program, the Bipotaim and Zamiyakal exhibitions, by Premier of Queensland and Minister for the Arts, Anna Bligh.

Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Chairperson, Mr Toshi Kris said today that this award is a testament to the TSRA's Culture, Arts and Heritage Program's contribution to the preservation, maintenance and revitalisation of Torres Strait Culture.

"The TSRA and the Torres Strait community are proud that our very own Gab Titui Cultural Centre has won such a prestigious award. Our culture, art and heritage are unique in the world and we take every opportunity to promote this in an effort to raise awareness and appreciation throughout Australia and internationally events such as GAMAA are a great platform," Mr Kris said.

At the same time the exhibition Zamiyakal: Torres Strait Headdresses and Dance Machines commenced its tour to Honolulu's East West Center Gallery, Hawaii and is currently on exhibit until January 2010.

Exhibiting at facilities like the East West Centre Gallery in Hawaii provides a means for Torres Strait culture to gain international exposure and generate interest in our region.

"This is the first time an exhibition from Gab Titui on Thursday Island has travelled overseas. It is the perfect opportunity to showcase this interactive exhibition, educate people from other countries about our traditional dance and apparatuses and share in the richness of our unique culture," said Mr Kris.

"The Gab Titui staff were key in the concept design, implementation and international touring of the exhibition. It was through this that staff gained experience in the complexity of developing exhibitions to international standards and touring exhibitions. Staff were also able to undertake gallery talks to over 30 students and academics about the exhibition, the role of Gab Titui Cultural Centre within the Torres Strait region and what projects and outcomes have been undertaken over the past five years of the Centre's existence."



Above: Zamiyakal - Torres Strait Headdresses and Dance Machines on exhibition in Hawaii



East-West Center Staff with Gab Titui's Aven Noah & Robyn Fernandez (4th & 5th from the left)

Michael Schuster, Ph.D., Curator at Honolulu's East-West Center Gallery commented on what a remarkable experience it was to work with Gab Titui Cultural Centre.

"The professionalism of the exhibition and staff have allowed for an excellent exhibition to be part of the East West Center program. The uniqueness of Torres Strait dance has been effectively captured in the Zamiyakal exhibition. Being such a remote Centre and overcoming the hardships associated with this, Gab Titui

Cultural Centre should be proud of such a professional exhibition, and we at the East West Center are extremely fortunate to have developed this partnership with Gab Titui. We have had a lot of positive response about the exhibition and interest in the region's cultural heritage," said Dr Schuster.



The Land and Sea Management Unit



Turtle tagging

The Land and Sea Management Unit achieved a number of significant milestones this year.

Ranger Program:

As a joint partnership between the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, island PBC's and the TSRA, three Ranger teams are now established on Mabuiag, Badu and Boigu with plans to roll the program out across another five communities in 2010. The program has created employment opportunities for local Indigenous people, and is continuing to develop their capacity to deliver integrated land, sea and cultural resource management initiatives in the Torres Strait.

A key part of the rangers' training is their participation in exchange opportunities and in June 2009, the Mabuygiw Rangers travelled to the remote community of Wadeye, some 420km south west of Darwin in the Northern Territory, to visit the Thamarrurr Rangers in an Indigenous Protected Area knowledge exchange.

TSRA Environmental Management Portfolio Member Walter Mackie said the entire trip was

an extremely valuable. "This is an opportunity for us to share information, show case what we're doing here and to identify opportunities that would suit us locally. We want to use this information to help us work with our community to ensure that the Mabuygiw Ranger program provides a leading example," he said.

The Rangers are also instrumental in assisting the region's Dugong and Turtle officers to implement the eight draft management plans being developed. Training is central to this role, and during the year the Dugong and Turtle officers and Rangers were part of two turtle tagging and monitoring programs in conjunction with James Cook University researchers.

The training applies western research techniques and combines this information with traditional knowledge for a better overall understanding of how marine turtles should be managed and builds a greater awareness of issues affecting turtle populations to underpin future management activities to ensure the long term sustainability of the fishery.

Horticulture Program:

Community sustainability, health and wellbeing are central to the sustainable horticulture program. The program is being run in partnership with local councils and communities across three islands Masig, Hammond and Horn. In September, the St Paul's community celebrated the blessing and official launch of the onground works to revitalise their community garden.

The TSRA Chairperson, Mr Toshi Kris said the program aims to help communities to reinvigorate the long held traditions of community gardening. "This initiative enables communities to produce fresh traditional and introduced food crops by combining traditional knowledge with contemporary horticulture practices."

Technical support is being offered to other

islands and 2010 will see the completion of Torres Strait specific horticulture guidelines.

Climate Change and Coastal Management Program:

LSMU's climate change and coastal management program was pleased to be recognised along side project partner Conics Cairns, who took out honours at the recent Queensland Spatial Excellence Awards (QSEA), winning the JM (Mac) Serisier Award for Overall Excellence for the Torres Strait Sustainable Land Use Planning (Pilot) Project. The award recognised the innovative use of spatial techniques in sustainable land use planning in the Torres Strait. The plans assist communities to identify, protect and manage their environmental assets, and deal with environmental risks and constraints.

Marine and Fisheries Program:

The marine and fisheries program has continued to provide coordination and support to the 24 Torres Strait Community Fisher Group (CFG) representatives of the PZJA consultative structure, who oversaw the recent successful tender process to lease the Torres Strait finfish quota, following the full buyout of non-Indigenous fishing entitlements in 2007. The income generated from leasing the finfish quota will initially be used to build the capacity of Torres Strait Islander fishers in the communities of Erub, Masig, Mer and Ugar - the islands central to the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery.

A five-year business plan for the Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Fishery is being developed, which when completed will identify pathways on how Torres Strait Islanders can achieve their immediate aspiration of a 70% holding of the TRL resource, as well as recommend practical measures to fully utilise the Torres Strait TRL Fishery in accordance with the introduction of planned output controls.

TSRA's Healthy and Safe Communities Program

As part of its new program structure the TSRA has developed the Healthy and Safe Communities program

The last few months have been focused on setting up the new program areas, continuing the work of existing projects and identifying possible initiatives to be implemented in the new year.

Within the Healthy and Safe Communities Program the following projects are underway:

- **Healthy Homes** - This initiative involves working with TSRA's Land and Sea Management Unit to support the

establishment of community market gardens throughout the region.

- **Healthy Lifestyle** - The TSRA aims to work in partnership with key stakeholders such as Queensland Health to support the delivery of joint health education awareness campaigns across a broad range of preventable health related conditions.
- **Monitoring of Health Services** - The TSRA will continue to play an active role in monitoring the delivery of health in the region through the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Health

Partnership and the Regional Planning Group for Health where partners work together to achieve the health goals stated in the Regional Plan and the Council for Australian Government's Closing the Gap reform.

Social Services, Sports and Recreation, Major Infrastructure Program (MIP), Heavy Equipment Management and Training Program (HEMTP), and Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) are also part of the part of the Healthy and Safe Communities Program.

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