

TSRA BOARD MEETING 157 COMMUNIQUE

Tuesday 16 – Thursday 18 June 2026

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Board Meeting 157 was held at the Joey Nona Conference Room, Torres Haus on Thursday Island, 16-18 June 2026.

TSRA ELECTION RULES REVIEW

The TSRA Board has endorsed preferred reform options for changes to the TSRA Election Rules. These options were developed through Board workshops held in May and June 2026, supported by coordinated technical input from the Cross-Agency Working Group, comprising the TSRA, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

The proposed reforms align with the objectives of improving electoral administration processes and the voter experience, as approved by the Board in March 2026. Key preferred changes include enhancements to eligibility verification, simplification of postal voting arrangements, and adjustments to the election timetable.

TSRA is leading the policy review. The Board-endorsed reform options will be provided to the Minister for Indigenous Australians for consideration and approval to commence drafting the new Election Rules. Draft rule changes will be released for public consultation in late 2026 to early 2027.

Under Section 17 of the Legislation Act 2003, the Minister for Indigenous Australians must be satisfied that ‘reasonable and appropriate’ consultation has been undertaken when making or amending the TSRA Election Rules.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS AGENCY PRESENTATION

Kevin Brahim, Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Operations and Delivery, and Michael White, Engagement Director - North Queensland Region, of the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) presented to the TSRA Board on the agency’s functions and the growing partnership through the TSRA Administration.

This was the first visit for the Deputy CEO travelling to Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula communities, accompanied by the TSRA and local councils’ executives, to gain insight and understanding of the region’s challenges and opportunities.

NIAA shared overview on the government priorities and regional initiatives, such as the Prime Minister’s economic development reform - the First Nation Economic Partnership, the Remote Area Employment Services (RAES) and the Remote Jobs and Economic Development (RJED) programs, and the Indigenous Rangers program. *NIAA and TSRA are active members on the government-formed fuel security and food security working groups to monitor and mitigate impacts to essential resources.*



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The TSRA Board expressed issues with NIAA to consider with other government agencies and Ministers, highlighting financial pressures and need for fiscal growth, infrastructure and industry assets sustainability, security, foreign aid, and international border concerns.

NIAA remains committed to strengthening partnership with TSRA, including the importance the Minister for the Indigenous Australians engagement, and empowering stronger connections with other Commonwealth and State Government agencies.

As a commitment of this current TSRA Board, NIAA's deputation is a standing placeholder for all TSRA Board Meetings.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC INVESTMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

Keogh Bay Executive Director Mark Kucharewicz provided the Board with an update on the Economic Development Program Regional Economic Investment Strategy (REIS) Phase One Review.

REIS was developed by TSRA to identify and support business opportunities and key industry sectors with the highest potential for growth and benefit to Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal People in the region. Keogh Bay was commissioned by the TSRA to conduct an independent, comprehensive, and evidence-based assessment of REIS Phase 1 effectiveness and to develop actionable recommendations to inform the design and implementation of REIS Phase 2.

The preliminary findings report reaffirmed:

- REIS is an important and valued regional initiative with real potential to grow local business, create jobs, strengthen household income and promote community prosperity.
- TSRA's strong commitment to the program, alongside demonstrated success stories, particularly where the Business Growth Package (BGP) has helped capable operators to acquire assets, expand their services and employ staff.

The project end date is September 2026, to support presentation of the final report to the TSRA Board.

TSRA CORPORATE PLAN 2026-27

The TSRA Board endorsed the draft Torres Strait Regional Authority Corporate Plan 2026-27. The TSRA's key activities under this Corporate Plan align to Closing the Gap, with high focus on achieving strong outcomes for our communities and our region.

Corporate plans are a requirement under section 35 of the *Public Governance and Accountability Act 2013*. The Torres Strait Authority Regional Authority Corporate Pan 2026-27 is prepared in accordance with the *Public Accountability and Rule 2014* and will be acquitted in the annual performance statement published in the Annual Report 2026-27.

TSRA FINFISH SUNSET LEASING QUOTA 2026-27

Following the TSRA Board's decision in March 2026 to lease Finfish Quota when the Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) do not reach their full quota allocation, the Board agreed to allocate finish sunset leases to Transferrable Vessel Holders (TVH).

Fisheries Quota Management Committee (FQMC) recommended additional restrictions be placed on the Sunset licences to improve compliance which the Board agreed too.

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE PRESENTATION

Detective Inspector Kevin Goan — Cairns City & Torres Straits Crime Group and Detective Sergeant Andrew Abraham — Officer in Charge of the Thursday Island Child Protection and Investigation Unit, of the Queensland Police Service provided an agency update to the TSRA Board.

The presentation provided an overview of reported crime occurrences within the Torres Straits and Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) and the percentage of those crimes that have been cleared (solved). Whilst the total number of crime occurrences are of concern, the cleared rate for many crime types exceeded the state average for the solving of crimes that had occurred which Detective Inspector Goan said was indicative of the state police' commitment to keeping the communities of Far North Queensland (FNQ) safe. He commended the work of the Detectives and police generally who work within the QPS Torres Straits Patrol Group given the tyranny of distance and the logistics barriers that can exist for Police to travel within the straits and NPA. Inspector Goan also noted the support afforded to police from within community in their attempts to deter, disrupt and prevent crime from happening.

An update was provided on interagency engagements for the sharing of intelligence to ensure that all law enforcement entities are aware of crime impacts in the Torres Straits. Inspector Goan advised on how intelligence is operationalised by investigators and the role the recently formed North Queensland Joint Organised Crime Task Force (NQ-JOTCF) transnational crime that may have implications to residents in Far North Queensland. Finally, information was given on the community engagement programs that QPS members promote throughout the area including the Blue Light disco scheduled to occur on outer islands in the coming months.

NEXT MEETING

The Board agreed to their next meeting on 8-11 September 2026.