
TSRA Sponsorship of the National Seafood Industry Leadership Program (NSILP)



Mr Michael Passi

In 2018, TSRA is sponsoring Michael Passi in the National Seafood Industry Leadership Program. Mr Passi is currently based on Murray Island and has been engaged in the Torres Strait fishing industry for over 20 years. The National Seafood Industry Leadership Program aims to provide skills, training and an insight of the seafood industry at a wider level to develop people's ability to grow to a state or national level. The program is a good way for the local Torres Strait fishers to connect and expand their connections with international markets. TSRA will look to sponsor another successful applicant in 2019.

Fisheries Cadetship



Ms Madeina David

The TSRA is pleased to announce its placement of the first Fisheries Programme Indigenous Cadet, Ms Madeina David. Originally from Iama Island, Madeina completed her secondary schooling at Tagai Secondary College on Thursday Island and is now based in Townsville studying at James Cook University, where she is undertaking a Bachelor of Science majoring in Marine Biology. Growing up in the central Torres Strait, Madeina has a deep understanding of the relationship of Torres Strait Islanders with the sea and what it provides.

"I want to help to maintain our marine life to ensure future generations have access to what the sea has to offer."

The Indigenous Cadetship Support is an Australian Government initiative that seeks to support Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal students through higher level education and improve their professional employment prospects. Madeina will continue to undertake her studies in Townsville while doing 12 weeks of work experience each year at the TSRA office on Thursday Island until graduating from her studies.

Grants program - Capacity Development for Fisher Associations

TSRA acknowledges that the fishers' associations play a vital role in the development of commercial fishing in the Torres Strait communities. TSRA aims to support stronger membership and good governance within the fishers' association. To assist with this, each year TSRA runs two rounds of funding to support essential day-to-day operations and governance capacity building for fishers' associations located in the Torres Strait.

Eligible projects for funding include the administrative costs associated with establishing and maintaining an association office and the delivery of activities that support association members, governance and meeting statutory reporting requirements.

Further information and applications can be found on the TSRA website.

Torres Strait Maritime Pathways Project and Growing our own

The TSRA funds Maritime Pathway projects to enhance the skills and capability of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people, residing within the Torres Strait region, to operate commercial vessels and create maritime career pathways in related industries such as fishing, tourism, coastal trading and the offshore maritime shipping industry. The Maritime Pathway projects target Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people in the region from Year 10 to Year 13 and through the Growing Our Own Tagai Transitions Maritime and Maritime Traineeships, and to adults through the Torres Strait Maritime Pathway Project (TSMPP).

The *Growing Our Own Tagai Transitions Maritime Project* is a partnership with the TSRA, Tagai State College, My

Pathway and TAFE North QLD. The project empowers students from Year 10 onwards to build their skills and gain nationally accredited training in the Maritime Industry.

The *Torres Strait Maritime Pathway Project (TSMPP)* is fully funded by the TSRA and is being delivered in partnership with My Pathway through its registered training organisation, Training Connections Australia (TCA). The current focus of training is Coxswain in line with the expiration of the AMSA exemption for TIB operators to hold a Coxswain by 2020. To meet this demand a Coxswain course has been schedule monthly.

PZJA Update Programme Team

Tropical Rock Lobster Management Plan

After listening to the concerns of the Torres Strait community and commercial fishers in the 2017-18 fishing season, the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) will consider implementing a Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Fishery Management Plan by 1 December 2018.

The immediate priority for the TSRA is to secure access of TIB fishers to their full 66.18 percentage ownership of the Australian share of the kairi fishery. The only way that this ownership can

be secured into the long term is through the agreement of a Management Plan.

Since a Management Plan was last consulted in 2016 the TSRA has taken a number of steps towards a model for community access and control over the increasing ownership of our fisheries resource. The TSRA is committed to ensuring a Management Plan supports the Regional Fisheries Ownership Framework and the successful operation of an independent, Torres Strait Islander owned, entity.

Implementation of the Fish Receiver System (FRS) in Torres Strait Fisheries

On behalf of the PZJA, AFMA has been working hard to replace the existing voluntary Torres Strait Seafood Buyers and Processors Docket Book system with a mandatory Fish Receiver System (FRS) for all the Torres Strait Fisheries (excluding Torres Strait Prawn Fishery) by 1 December 2017. The FRS requires all licence holders (including Traditional Inhabitants) to only dispose of commercially caught fish in those fisheries, to a holder of a Fish Receiver/buyer. It is

mandatory for holders of Fish Receiver licences to report to AFMA specific details of all fish received (landed) for each commercial fisher (this does not apply to fish caught for personal consumption).

As custodians of our resources, we must ensure delivering accurate catch data and in a timely manner to help inform Management keep yumi Fisheries sustainable for now and future generations.

PZJA Traditional Inhabitant representatives

The TSRA Fisheries Programme supports the engagement of traditional inhabitants in the management of the regions fisheries resources by providing support to representatives on PZJA consultative forums. Representatives attend working group and other meetings to advise on current and proposed management actions and issues in Torres Strait commercial fisheries.

The role of the Traditional Inhabitant Members and traditional fishing representatives is to contribute knowledge of fisheries and communities to working groups and fisheries expertise to achieve the best management of the fisheries, and to also regularly report to and liaise with other traditional inhabitants in the community on PZJA activities, including the issues being

dealt with at working groups and the possible solutions being considered.

Current representatives were selected by community members in 2015 and their term of appointment will finish at the end of this year. The TSRA would like to thank all current representatives for their knowledge and passion they have contributed in ensuring the sustainable management of the regions fisheries resource over their period of appointment.

The appointment of new members will be undertaken during the second half of 2018. Please contact the Fisheries Programme for more information.

TSRA Programmes

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



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TORRES STRAIT FISHERIES NEWSLETTER

Edition 9 – August 2018

In this edition, we highlight the steps that have been taken in progressing towards greater community ownership and control of the region's commercial fisheries resources, and increasing the benefit to communities from this ownership. This is being progressed through the Fisheries Regional Ownership Framework project.

Fisheries Summit

The Torres Strait Fisheries Summit is being held from the 28-30 August on Thursday Island.

The theme for this summit will be 2020 Vision. It will consider a range of fisheries activities and issues in the Torres Strait, including current project activities of the TSRA Fisheries Programme and issues affecting the Traditional Inhabitant Boat sector in PZJA managed fisheries in the Torres Strait.



Mr Jerry Stephen

Portfolio Member for Fisheries

Jerry Stephen is the TSRA Board Member for the Ugar Island Community. Jerry was re-elected for a second term on the Board and has been appointed as the Deputy Chairperson, as well as the Portfolio Member for Fisheries. As the Portfolio Member, he assists the TSRA Chairperson with policy setting and the strategic direction for the Fisheries Programme. The Fisheries Portfolio Member also represents the TSRA at a wide range of Protected Zone Joint Authority forums.

TSRA Fisheries Programme Outcomes

- A commercially viable fishing industry which is 100% owned and operated by Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people.
- Improved wealth of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people of the region.
- Sustainable management of fisheries resources.



TSRA Fisheries Programme – Roadmap to 100 per cent ownership

The Fisheries Programme supports Traditional Inhabitants to gain greater access to the region's commercial fisheries. This includes supporting the aspiration for a sustainable fishery that is 100 per cent owned by Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal traditional owners. This aspiration is also acknowledged by the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA), the Authority responsible for the management of fisheries in the Torres Strait.

The TSRA currently holds some fisheries assets (catch allocations and commercial licences) on behalf of all Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people in the Torres Strait. The 'Fisheries Regional Ownership Framework' project has been established to investigate the best

way for fisheries assets to be managed in the Torres Strait to benefit Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people in the region. The Fisheries Regional Ownership Framework was previously called the 'Community Management Framework' – the new title emphasises the important link of this project to the ownership of fisheries resources as part of the Roadmap to 100 per cent.

The TSRA Board has established a project steering committee to oversee the progression of this critical project. The Steering Committee consists of the TSRA CEO, TSRA Chair Mr Napau Pedro Stephen AM, Fisheries Portfolio Member Mr Jerry Stephen, Member for Badu Mr Horace Baira, and Member for Ngarapai and Muralag Mr Yen Loban.

New Zealand Community Fisheries Management Model

In July 2017 the Fisheries Programme supported a group of leaders from the Torres Strait to travel to New Zealand to investigate the way in which the New Zealand Maori manage their fisheries assets. The delegation travelled to Wellington, Gisborne and Auckland, where they met with a range of stakeholders including; New Zealand government officials, Maori Iwi groups and Maori controlled commercial entities. They also visited Maori owned seafood processing facilities and spoke with Maori community members about their experience.

The study tour identified that as a priority, the delegation should share with Traditional Owners their learnings from the study tour and seek the mandate to move forward with developing a Torres Strait Community Management model. The first round of community consultations on this project aimed to share the learnings from the visit to New Zealand with all Torres Strait Communities and seek a mandate for the TSRA to proceed to the next phase.



Delegation to New Zealand: Left to Right: Jerry Stephen, Alistair McIlgorm, John Ramsay, Napau Pedro Stephen AM, Maluwap Nona, Yen Loban, Wayne See Kee, Mariana Nahas

Torres Strait Regional Fisheries Ownership Framework



Fisheries Portfolio Member Jerry Stephen with Terra Moana director Tony Craig at community consultations as part of the Regional Fisheries Ownership Framework Project Phase One

From January to March 2018 the TSRA travelled to communities in the *Torres Strait* to consult on the potential development of a community-owned fisheries entity. The purpose of these visits were to explain:

- the nature and extent of Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal interests in commercial fishing rights within the Torres Strait region
- an outline of the fisheries assets held in trust by TSRA
- how those assets are currently administered by TSRA

Finfish Quota Management Committee (FQMC)

The Finfish Quota Management Committee provides advice to the TSRA Board on the leasing of finfish catch allocations. It is a community process for allocating the catch in the fishery which is 100 per cent owned by Torres Strait Islanders. The membership of the FQMC is the TSRA Board Member and a community fisher representative for the four main finfish communities (Erub, Masig, Mer and Ugar). The Committee also includes an independent chair appointed by the TSRA Board. The term of FQMC membership is the same as the term for the TSRA Board. In 2018 the FQMC was established as a formal advisory body to the TSRA Board under s142M of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005*.

- an overview of the 2017 visit to New Zealand and the Maori development model/s and approach pre and post the 1992 Fisheries Settlement
- a potential way forward for self-management of the assets through a new commercial entity owned and operated by Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people in the region.

Meeting participants were asked to consider four key questions associated with ongoing ownership and management of the assets to gain community endorsement on a potential approach going forward.

- Do you believe the ownership, control and management of the fisheries assets should rest with Torres Strait Islanders?
- Do you believe the assets should be kept together (not split up) under a single entity?
- Do you believe the assets should be grown for the benefit of all communities?
- Do you give the TSRA permission to identify the best structure to deliver a solution to the previous questions and report back to communities?

Overall, the consultation process has provided a significant mandate from which the TSRA has now moved to Phase 2 of this project.



Members of the FQMC meeting on Mer in February 2018.

Back row: Mr John Tabo Jr, Mr Horace Baira (observer), Mr Jimmy Gela, Mr Daniel Sailor,

Front row: Mr Aven Noah, Mr John Morris, Mr Jerry Stephen, Mr Yen Loban, Mr Daniel Stephen. Absent: Ms Hilda Mosby.

Purchase of TRL licences

In our last newsletter we announced the purchase of two of the remaining 12 Transferable Vessel Holder (TVH) Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) fishing licences. We are pleased to announce that the TSRA has since purchased a third TRL TVH licence and this has increased the Traditional Inhabitant Boat sector share of the Australian fishery to 66.18 per cent under a future Management Plan. There are now only nine TRL TVH fishing licences left in the fishery. This is a significant achievement towards the 100 per cent ownership aspirations for Traditional Owners and communities within the region. The TSRA now holds these three licences on behalf of Torres Strait communities.

Project Activities Update

Baitfish Scoping Project

Following the outcomes of the Finfish Action Plan in 2016, a project to investigate the feasibility of developing a baitfish fishing industry in the Torres Strait was initiated. The Project Team, including Professor Charles Gray and Fisheries Programme staff, visited Erub, Masig, Mer and Warraber in August 2017 to talk to communities about their potential interest in participating in a baitfish fishery. Potential bait species include garfish (for targeting mackerel) and sardines (for coral trout and

other reef fish), which are present in large numbers around some islands.

The project identified some interest in developing this fishery for both bait and food. It also identified the opportunity for this as a small-scale profitable venture for a number of operators. As the report is finalised, it will be made available on the TSRA website and community members interested in more information or wanting to discuss their business plan for a baitfish business should contact the TSRA Fisheries Programme.

Fisheries Infrastructure and Services Audit



*Fisheries Infrastructure and Services Audit visit to Ugar
Left to Right - Karl Dai, William Stephen, Ewan Colquhoun,
Kenny Bedford, Daniel Stephen, Jerry Stephen, Robert Modee,
Shawn McAtamney, Rocky Stephen, Pau Stephen.*

Community consultations for the *Fisheries Infrastructure and Services Audit of the Torres Strait* have now been completed, being undertaken between August and November 2017. The aim of this project was to identify gaps and develop a plan to guide future investment and maintenance of fisheries-related infrastructure and services to increase participation and employment in fishing and related services. The TSRA Fisheries Programme is looking forward to working with Torres Strait communities on the implementation of the outcomes of this project.

Torres Strait Fisheries Investment Project

Following the completion of the Fisheries Infrastructure and Services Audit in the Torres Strait an Implementation plan has been developed. The plan was accepted by the TSRA Board to commence repairs, renovations and new builds of live product and fish processing facilities across islands identified in the audit report.

Each island will be visited to identify extent of works, develop fair and equitable costs and schedules for operating facilities. Some freezers require relatively simple machinery upgrades and equipment replacements, others significant renovations to structures and replacement of equipment. A few islands will require new buildings constructed and equipment provided.

CSIRO Fisheries Science Workshop



*Back Row L-R; Dr Leo Dutra, Charles David, Mibu Fischer,
Nicole Murphy, Gavin Mosby, Tipoti Nona, Rocky Stephen, Mick
Haywood, Mark Tonks*

*Front Row L-R; Dr Eva Plaganyi, Joe King, Ned Larry, Michael
Passi, Cass Hunter, Tim Skewes.*

In October 2017, the Fisheries Programme organised for a delegation of TIB fishers and representatives to travel to Brisbane as a group to meet with CSIRO researchers and field stations officers in and around Brisbane to develop their knowledge of the science that underpins fisheries management in the Torres Strait. Representatives were identified through their participation in fulltime fishing across different fisheries in the Torres Strait and attendance at Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) consultative meetings. The visits were designed by TSRA and CSIRO to maintain and build on the knowledge and understanding of the TIB Sector and to assist representatives meaningfully engage in the development of Harvest Strategies and the design of Stock Assessment Methodologies. This is the second time CSIRO and the TSRA have supported this visit and the Fisheries Programme is committed to supporting more TIB fishers to undertake similar capacity building activities in the future.