SARG Committee Meeting | Agenda

Date: 19 & 22 January 2024

Time: 9.00am to 4.00pm

Venue: Level 3, 111 Grafton Street, Cairns

Day 1 – Friday, 19 January 2024

Time	Agenda Item
9.00am	1. Welcome | Quorum Confirmation | Opening Prayer
9.10am	2. Apologies
9.15am	3. Conflict of Interest (COI) - Declarable/Prescribed
9.20am	4. Ratified Minutes of Previous Meeting (June 2023) ➢ *For information/noting.*
9.30am	5. Action Items from Previous Meetings
	6. CORPORATE SERVICES: Community Radio
	7. CORPORATE SERVICES: Economic Development Strategy *(verbal discussion)*
	8. CORPORATE SERVICES: Elphinstone Matters *(verbal discussion)*
	9. CORPORATE SERVICES: Transport Options – Ugar and Dauan Business Case *(verbal discussion of consultant report)*
	10. CORPORATE SERVICES: Advancing the Masig Statement
10:30am	Ms Sandy Killick of Democracy Matters will join the meeting at 10:30am
12.15pm	**LUNCH**
1.00pm	11. MOVE INTO CLOSED BUSINESS
	12. CORPORATE SERVICES: Torres Strait Islander Flag Policy *[Reason for closed discussion: This matter involves legal advice obtained by the local government or legal proceedings involving the local government including, for example, legal proceedings that may be taken by or against the local government]*
	13. CORPORATE SERVICES: Enterprise Divestment *[Reason for closed discussion: these matters involve negotiations relating to a commercial matter involving the local government for which a public discussion would be likely to prejudice the interests of the local government.]*
	14. CORPORATE SERVICES: Mirabou Energy – Renewable Energy Project *[Reason for closed discussion: these matters involve negotiations relating to a commercial matter involving the local government for*

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		which a public discussion would be likely to prejudice the interests of the local government.]
	15.	CORPORATE SERVICES: Beneficial Enterprise Proposal *[Reason for closed discussion: these matters involve negotiations relating to a commercial matter involving the local government for which a public discussion would be likely to prejudice the interests of the local government.]*
	16.	MOVE OUT OF CLOSED BUSINESS
2.00pm	17.	CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS DISCUSSED IN CLOSED BUSINESS
4.00pm	18.	Day 1 - Closing Remarks & Prayer

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Day 2 – Monday, 22 January 2024

Time	Agenda Item
9.00am	19. Welcome – Day 2 | Quorum Confirmation | Opening Prayer
9.05am	20. Apologies
9.10am	21. Conflict of Interest (COI) - Declarable/Prescribed
11.15am	22. Treaty Management Issues
	23. Safe & Healthy Housing Committee – (Verbal Update)
12.00nn	24. General / Other Business (on notice)
12.50pm	25. Next Meeting Date: 6 February 2024
12.55pm	26. Closing Remarks & Prayer

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Torres Strait Island
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Strategic Advisory Reference Group Meeting

Minutes

Date:	6 June 2023
Time:	1.00pm to 4.00pm
Venue:	(VC) VMR 8 – 0299 165 402 #Guest PIN 6905

1. Welcome (Chair)

Mayor Mosby opened the meeting at 1.15pm and welcomed Committee Members and TSIRC staff. The Mayor also gave respectful acknowledgements to honor both Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal peoples and their connection to Country.

2. Opening Prayer

The Mayor provided the opening prayer.

3. Attendance / Apologies

The following attendances were noted:

Mayor & Committee Chairpersons	
Mayor	Cr Phillemon Mosby
Climate Change Adaption & Environment Committee	Cr Hilda Mosby
Economic Growth Committee	Cr Rocky Stephen
Governance & Leadership Committee	Cr Getano Lui (Jnr) – Deputy Mayor
Housing and Safe & Healthy Communities Committee	Cr Keith Fell

TSIRC Officers	
Chief Executive Officer	Mr James William
Community Services	Mr Dawson Sailor
Executive Director - Building Services	Mr Wayne Green
Acting Executive Director – Corporate Services	Mr David Kempton *(left meeting at 2.15pm)*
Executive Director – Engineering Services	Mr David Baldwin
Acting Executive Director – Financial Services	Ms Nicola Daniels
Executive Assistant to the Mayor	Ms Trudy Lui
TSIRC Secretariat	Mr Darryl Brooks

The Committee noted that the Chairperson of the Cultural, Arts, Land and Heritage Committee was not in attendance for the meeting.

4. Conflict of Interest (COI) – Declarable/Prescribed

Mayor Mosby requested that members make any relevant conflict of interest declarations and advise if any relevant legal proceedings were current pertaining to Committee business to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

5. Confirmation of Draft Minutes of the SARG Meeting held on 4 April 2023

RESOLUTION:
Moved: Cr Hilda Mosby *Seconded: Cr Rocky Stephen*
The Committee confirmed the Minutes of the SARG Meeting held on 4 April 2023.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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6. Action Items from Previous Meeting

RESOLUTION:
Moved: Cr Rocky Stephen *Seconded: Cr Hilda Mosby*
The Committee notes the updates provided by the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Directors on action items arising from the previous meeting.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

An updated version of the action items is at Attachment A.

7. VERBAL DISCUSSION – Matters Arising from May 2023 Council Workshop

A. CORPORATE SERVICES (Mr David Kempton)

Top 10 Priorities document – currently repopulating the document based on discussions held at the Workshop, as well as reformatting the document for consideration at the June 2023 Council meeting.

Tenure Policy – to be formalised for consideration at the June 2023 Council meeting.

B. ECONOMIC GROWTH COMMITTEE (Cr Rocky Gela)

Currently reviewing priorities previously identified and will bring matters back to the November 2023 Workshop.

Economic Development Strategy Consultations – Poruma, Mabuiag, Erub and Masig have already confirmed dates. Waiting for other communities to advise.

Overall, very pleased with the Workshop, its new and improved focus and its outcomes under the leadership of the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer.

C. HOUSING AND SAFE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE (Cr Keith Fell)

Executive Director Building Services (Mr David Green) advised the Committee that a workshop with be held on Thursday Island on the Bluephone in the w/b 12 June 2023 and the Housing Investment Plan with key stakeholders. An update will be provided following that meeting.

Local housing plan - Currently discussing with QBuild about repairs and maintenance with a view to streamlining internal processes between the building team and the housing officers.

D. CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE (Cr Hilda Mosby)

The Committee will meet on 22 June 2023 to look at issues arising from the Workshop.

Cr Mosby advised that she was greatly encouraged to see the attendance of young students at the CHAS Workshop.

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Executive Director Engineering Services (Mr David Baldwin) advised the Committee on the following:

- that TSIRC is likely to secure additional funding for works on the Seawall project. A figure of $500,000 is currently being sought to add to either Warraber or Masig.
- CHAS Committee has been greatly encouraged by the Workshop and has instilled confidence in that Committee's decision-making around funding priorities.
- ED Engineering Services and the Chief Executive Officer met with the Department of Environment and Science (funding providers for CHAS). The Department is keen to help fund the closure study and design for Erub and potentially an audit on asbestos across the Torres Strait Islands. The Department is also happy to revisit the Warraber Transfer Station and potentially fund the pilot for Warraber (not the previous Pilot, but a far more advanced or robust) as well as a concrete waste processing plant somewhere in the region. The Department will also be funding an extension to the Waste Liaison Officer position.
- Marine issues: currently the Harbour Master and the District Director of TMR are due to visit Yam and have now visited, Boigu, Badu and Sabai to look at transport infrastructure. Visits to Erub and Masig are also planned.

Cr Lui encouraged continuing support for the Containers for Change initiative. There is a push for TSIRC take on the role of collection agent for the initiative, however current capacity to take on this role is limited and potential on-costs to Council will need to clarified.

E. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE (Cr Getano Lui)

Cr Lui advised the Committee that he has been encouraged by developments to date in relation to the Masig Statement and the discussions held at the May 2023 Workshop. The TSIRC needs to maintain the momentum currently growing in the community in relation to driving the Masig Statement and the issue of 'regional governance' needs to be very clearly developed so that it can be communicated to the community and governments. The Deputy Mayor recently met with the inaugural Ambassador for First Nations People (Mr Justin Mohamed) on Thursday Island and presented him with a copy of the Masig Statement and urged him to hand a copy to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Ambassador was also reminded that border issues in the region remain a high concern and a review of the day-to-day compliance measures by officials on the ground.

F. MAYOR UPDATE

The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor for assisting him with meetings held on Thursday Island during the recent Cultural Festival. The TSIRC will now look to formalising its relationship with the Ambassador for First Nations in relation to key national priorities, such as the Voice to Parliament Referendum, Treaty issues (in addition to the Australia/Papua New Guinea Torres Strait Treaty) and the Masig Statement. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the ED Corporate Services to meet and prepare relevant correspondence.

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A letter has been sent to the Premier of Queensland by Torres Strait local government leaders (TSIRC, Torres Shire Council and the TSRA) requesting that a coronial-type investigation be undertaken into the health system in the Torres Strait and to stand down the current Torres Strait Health Board owing to the unacceptable services being provided to the people of the Torres Strait region. The Queensland Opposition Leader (Mr David Crisafulli) – currently visiting the region – will meet with the three regional Mayors during the Indigenous Leaders' Forum in Cairns on 15 June 2023. The Mayors will then travel to Canberra in the w/b 19 June 2023.

Sandy Killick email re Masig Statement (email sent by Mayor to Councillors). Some very strong messaging/wording needs to be endorsed by the TSIRC on how to embed the Statement into the national debate. The Masig Statement needs to stand on its own, and not be overshadowed by current Voice to Parliament referendum or Path to Treaty agendas. A standalone strategy needs to be developed and implemented in order to encourage the Torres Strait Islander community to take ownership of the Masig Statement and also to embed the Statement into the arena of State and Federal Governments (including Opposition parties). The ED Corporate Services has prioritised the engagement of a strategist to prepare this and other high-level policies.

The Mayor requested that a finalised position on the Masig Statement (incorporating issues discussed at the May 2023 Council Workshop) be considered at the next SARG meeting prior to formal endorsement by the Council.

Regarding TSIRC/TSRA arrangements, the Mayor requested that a letter be sent to the Minister for Indigenous Australians to rescind the decision to have separate elections for the TSRA and the TSIRC needs to be followed up.

The Mayor requested advice on any follow-up on the letter sent regarding the Hammond Island Primary Health Centre.

Cr Keith Fell sought the Committee's support to ensure HS Radio services are maintained: the Torres Strait still dropping off-line and connectivity issues with the 4G continue making it imperative for HS Radio to be functioning well for emergency situations. Only two radios were recently working.

Service Provision Audit for the Torres Strait region (through DATSIP), in addition to the current audit infrastructure and capital works in the region. A similar audit was recently done for Mornington Island and the TSIRC will need participate in codesigning the scope of any audit to ensure it meets the TSIRC's requirements.

ACTION:

1. Executive Director Building Services (Mr David Green) to provide an update to Council on the outcomes of the workshop to be held on Thursday Island on the w/b 12 June 2023 regarding Bluephone and the Housing Investment Plan.

2. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the ED Corporate Services to meet and prepare relevant correspondence on formalising its relationship with the Ambassador for First Nations and to highlight Council's position in relation to key national priorities, such as the Voice to Parliament Referendum, Treaty issues (in addition to the Australia/Papua New Guinea Torres Strait Treaty) and the Masig Statement.

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3. Regarding TSIRC/TSRA arrangements, the Mayor requested that a letter be sent to the Minister for Indigenous Australians to rescind the decision to have separate elections for the TSRA and the TSIRC needs to be followed up.

4. The Mayor requested advice on any follow-up on the letter sent regarding the Hammond Island Primary Health Centre.

5. Cr Keith Fell sought the Committee's support to ensure HS Radio services are maintained: the Torres Strait still dropping off-line and connectivity issues with the 4G continue making it imperative for HS Radio to be functioning well for emergency situations. Only two radios were recently working.

6. Service Provision Audit for the Torres Strait region (through DATSIP), in addition to the current audit infrastructure and capital works in the region. A similar audit was recently done for Mornington Island and the TSIRC will need participate in codesigning the scope of any audit to ensure it meets the TSIRC's requirements.

8. General / Other Business (on notice)

A. Freight/Transport Update from Cost of Living Summit
Discussions have recently been held with the Queensland Department of Transport and Deloittes regarding the $64m budget commitment made by the Queensland Government for freight subsidy for the Torres Strait and NPA regions to clarify how this will be delivered. The TSIRC made it clear during those discussions that the community and the regions must be the ones to decide how the money should be spent – not the funding provider. Further updates will be provided to SARG and the Council as this matter progresses.

B. Horizon Airways
Cr Hilda Mosby advised that a new airline operator has started in the region and plans to base a plane at Horn Island and out at Masig at this stage. Cr Mosby has requested the new operators to write to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer to introduce their product.

C. Start-up Businesses
Cr Hilda Mosby advised that she is advising community members who seek assistance with start-up businesses to write directly to the Chief Executive Officer in the first instance.

D. Decision regarding $40-$80m funding for upgrades on closed Jetties
Cr Keith Fell requested an update on the situation regarding closed jetties. The Mayor confirmed that currently 5 jetties in the region have been closed. The Chief Executive Officer advised that more work will need to be done to sign-off on an approved methodology for TSIRC to use to prioritise each case, as the funding available is simply not enough to fix the existing closed jetties. The organisation is mindful of escalating tensions between communities over how these limited funds will be prioritised.

E. Masig Statement
Cr Rocky Gela strongly encouraged members to drive the Masig Statement within their communities with a view to having a plan in place by the November 2023 Council Workshop.

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F. First Councillors' Meeting (86th Anniversary to be observed on Badu)
The Mayor advised that he will visit Badu in the near future to meet with community and establish a local working committee on-ground. Funding has been secured from the TSRA in relation to this issue.

9. Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, 4 July 2023 (1pm to 4pm)

The Committee noted the next meeting date of 4 July 2023.

10. Closing Remarks & Prayer

The Mayor closed the meeting at 3.00pm and Cr Keith Fell delivered the closing prayer.

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Mr James William
Chief Executive Officer
Torres Strait Island Regional Council
Date: 13/9/2023

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Cr. Phillemon Mosby
Mayor
Torres Strait Island Regional Council
Date: 13/9/2023

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Torres Strait Island
REGIONAL COUNCIL

STRATEGIC ADVISORY REFERENCE GROUP MEETING

ACTION ITEMS

Agenda Item	Action	Action Area	Current Status
AI 7 Matters Arising from May 2023 Workshop	1. Executive Director Building Services (Mr David Green) to provide an update to Council on the outcomes of the workshop to be held on Thursday Island on the w/b 12 June 2023 regarding Bluephone and the Housing Investment Plan.	1. ED Building Services	
	2. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the ED Corporate Services to meet and prepare relevant correspondence on formalising its relationship with the Ambassador for First Nations and to highlight Council's position in relation to key national priorities, such as the Voice to Parliament Referendum, Treaty issues (in addition to the Australia/Papua New Guinea Torres Strait Treaty) and the Masig Statement.	2. ED Corporate Services	
	3. Regarding TSIRC/TSRA arrangements, the Mayor requested that a letter be sent to the Minister for Indigenous Australians to rescind the decision to have separate elections for the TSRA and the TSIRC needs to be followed up.	3. Chief Executive Officer	
	4. The Mayor requested advice on any follow-up on the letter sent regarding the Hammond Island Primary Health Centre.	4. Head of Community Services	
	5. Cr Keith Fell sought the Committee's support to ensure HS Radio services are maintained: the Torres Strait still dropping off-line and connectivity issues with the 4G continue making it imperative for HS Radio to be functioning well for emergency situations. Only two radios were recently working.	5. ED Engineering Services	
	6. Service Provision Audit for the Torres Strait region (through DATSIP), in addition to the current audit infrastructure and capital works in the region. A similar audit was recently done for Mornington Island and the TSIRC will need participate in codesigning the scope of any audit to ensure it meets the TSIRC's requirements.	6. Chief Executive Officer	

Actions to be Completed from Previous Meetings

Meeting Date/Agenda Item	Action	Action Area	Current Status
Apr 2023 AI 8	The Chief Executive Officer to send (by cob 5 April 2023) a letter to the TSRA requesting them to explore subsidising air services to Erub and Mabuiag either by charter or helicopter flights.	Chief Executive Officer	Not finalized. Ongoing discussions continue with TSRA, however it appears that those discussions are currently not receiving priority attention from the TSRA. A comprehensive and more formal communication will need to be made to the TSRA (Mayor to TSRA Chair) around a more broader transport strategy for the Torres Strait region, with a focus on Mabuiag, Erub, Ugar, Duan and Hammond issues as particular outstanding priorities. Head of Community Services to receive advice from TSRA (due w/e 9 June 2023) re subsidies for Ugar and Dauan. Current subsidies for Ugar ends on 30/6/23 and Dauan on 30/8/23. Priority that the letter from the Mayor to the TSRA to be drafted ASAP as TSRA Board will be meeting on 10 July 2023 and it is understood that an infrastructure paper will be considered by the TSRA at that meeting which may be addressing issues at Ugar and Dauan and operations around disability access and helicopter services. CEO and ED Corporate Services to prepare wording for Councillors to convey to their communities the TSIRC's efforts to improve air and ferry services in the region. Document to be provided by COB 6 June 2023.
Apr 2023 AI 11	The closed business agenda item "Trustee Policy Review" to be redirected to the next Trustee Meeting.	Secretariat	Paper currently planned for consideration at the June 2023 Council Trustee meeting. Considered at November 2023 Trustee Meeting, now subject to Community Engagement Planning.

7 Feb 2023 AI 6 Air Services returning to Mabuiag, Erub and Mer Islands General/Other Business	Chief Executive Officer will call CASA and speak to the head of regulations to see the possibility around special dispensation and what our options are. Chief Executive Officer instructed to draft and send a letter to various ministers both Commonwealth and State in order to address our situation and regain air services to Erub, Mer and Mabuiag Islands.	ED Corporate Services	Ongoing. Meeting held on 19 April 2023 between CASA CEO and Executives / TSIRC CEO, Mayor Mosby, Deputy Mayor and Council. Formal follow-up correspondence to be sent to CASA.
7 March 2023 AI 8 General/Other Business	(1) Write to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade regarding the following matters: • Movement under the treaty • Unauthorised visits. • Overstayers • Policy and Border Force concerns. (2) Write to Premier Anastasia Palaszczuk regarding the Joint Ministerial Advisory Committee for the One Boat Regional Governance.	CEO / ED Corporate Services	(1) To be completed. Issues may need to be reframed following meeting with DFAT and Australian Customs representatives at the May 2023 Council Workshop. (2) To be completed.

	(3) Write to the Torres Strait Regional Authority regarding • TSIRC objection to the establishment of the Regional Infrastructure Advisory Committee (RIAC). • Follow-up to Major Infrastructure Program MIP 7 list that was provided approximately 18 months ago.		(3) Pending. Awaiting sign-off on TSRIC's formal policy position in relation to this issue.
	(4) Write to Dr Chris Sara regarding LTC Funding.		(4) Pending. Recent reshuffle of Queensland Government Ministerial portfolios have caused a delay in directing correspondence to appropriate areas in the new Government, as new Ministers also mean that new senior bureaucrats are also appointed and/or transferred to new portfolios as well. Will write to Claire O'Connor (re LTC funding) and seek clarification on which sort of commitment was given under the LTC and whether that LTC arrangement will continue under her leadership, including commitment for monies to be spent within the next 6 months because of Masig Statement and Regional Governance priorities.

TORRES STRAIT ISLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

STRATEGIC ADVISORY REFERENCE GROUP

MEETING

MEETING:	January 2024
SUBJECT:	Community Radio
AUTHOR:	Gary Stevenson PSM – Acting Executive Director Corporate Services

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Recommendation:

That Committee endorses the recommendation of the Cultural Arts Land and Heritage Committee recommends to Council that;

1. The renewal of licenses update be noted,
2. The representations made to the Australian Communications and Media Authority be endorsed,
3. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to facilitate an expression of interest process to identify a suitable service broadcaster and,
4. The Chief Executive Officer be requested to present expressions of interest to the Cultural, Arts, Land and Heritage Committee as soon as practicable after the 2024 local government election for consideration of a recommendation to Council in April/May 2024.

Background:

TSIRC's community broadcasting services licences listed below were due to expire in 2022.

Licence Number	Licence Area	Callsign	Expiry Date
10200	SAIBAI ISLAND RA1 – 106.1 MHz	4ACR	4/10/2022
10185	BOIGU ISLAND RA1 – 106.1 MHz	4ACR	4/10/2022
10197	MURRAY ISLAND RA1 – 106.1 MHz	4ACR	4/10/2022
10188	DAUAN ISLAND RA1 – 105.7 MHz	4ACR	4/10/2022
10194	KUBIN RA1 – 105.9 MHz	4ACR	4/10/2022
10203	STEPHENS ISLAND RA1 – 105.9 MHz	4ACR	5/10/2022
10209	YORKE ISLANDS RA1 – 106.1 MHz	4ACR	4/10/2022

At its Ordinary meeting in March 2022, Council resolved to adopt recommendations of the Cultural, Arts, Land and Heritage Committee to;

1. Apply to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to renew Council's community broadcasting services licences that are expiring in 2022, including Saibai Island, Boigu Island, Murray Island, Dauan Island, Kubin (Moa Island), Stephens Island and Yorke Island; and

2. Delegate authority to the CEO pursuant to section 257 of the Local Government Act 2009, to apply to and liaise with the ACMA for the licence renewals.

Subsequently, application was made to ACMA and approval granted in August 2022, but ACMA noted that none of the services were operating.

ACMA also emphasised Council's "*obligations to comply with the licence conditions applicable to community broadcasting services at Schedule 2 to the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (BSA). As well as licence conditions prohibiting the broadcasting of advertisements for which the licensee receives any consideration in cash or in kind and limiting the amount time that may be spent broadcasting sponsorship announcements, the condition at paragraph 9(2)(d) in Schedule 2 requires licensees to provide community broadcasting services for community purposes. The non-provision of the services for a lengthy period may potentially breach this licence condition.*"

ACMA also requested additional information as follows;

- "*The proposed recommencement of broadcasting of the services, including how and when it will be achieved, and how much programming (e.g. number of hours per week) will be locally produced.*
- *The proposed partnership with Black Star, including how much programming will be provided or produced by Black Star.*"

ACMA also requested that Council Please also submit a completed B12 application form for each service to enable the ACMA to issue a related apparatus licence.

The Torres Strait Islanders Media Association Inc (TSIMA) has licences in place for use of Council premises at:

1. Iama BRACS facility,
2. Poruma BRACS facility,
3. Warraber BRACS facility, and
4. St Pauls BRACS facility.

At the time Council was also aware of interest by Blackstar Media (in partnership with TSIMA) which made a presentation to Councillors at the November 2021 workshop.

At the May 2023 workshop another presentation was made by Lonestar Productions with interest in community radio broadcasting as part of a broad media and communications strategy. The Executive Director Community Services met with the principal of Lonestar Production Group in November 2023 and the Acting Executive Director Corporate Services held further discussion in late December 2023 to confirm the company's interest.

Officers Comment:

Unfortunately, due to turnover of key officers, the fulfilment of the ACMA requirements lagged.

However, the apparatus licence applications were lodged with ASCMA on 27 December 2023 by the Acting Executive Director Corporate Services (under delegated authority of the CEO).

ACMA has responded on 5 January to acknowledge Council's submissions. The risk of license lapsing appears therefore to have been averted.

The representations made to ACMA included the following;

- "Council acknowledges the delays and discontinuity of its handling of community radio broadcasting arrangements but clearly prioritises the relevant communities' best interests in all of its deliberations.
- With that in mind Council hopes to ultimately achieve a broader set of goals relating to media and communication in these communities. The community radio service is just one element of the potential broader strategy.
- Earlier this year Council received a presentation by Lonestar Productions Group regarding extensive community engagement and the potential to develop a comprehensive media strategy for the Torres Strait Islands. Council is attracted to this strategic approach and intends to facilitate if possible.

- During January 2024 it is my intention to present a report to Council to lay out a process whereby the strategy can be developed and enabled, and community radio broadcasting can recommence. The process will involve the negotiation with, and engagement of a suitable local broadcaster.
- It is anticipated that broadcasting will commence with the maximum practicable local programming in mid-2024.
- The detail regarding the broadcasting will be defined and can then be provided as a product of this process, hence I am not in a position to respond specifically to some aspects of your questions at present."

Given that there may be a number of suitable broadcaster interested in securing a licenses to provide community radio services, it is recommended that Council conducts a process to identify the most suitable service provider by calling for Expressions of Interest during February and March with a view to presenting the expressions of interest to the Cultural, Arts, Land and Heritage Committee as soon as practicable after the 2024 local government election.

The criteria for expressions of interest would address broader strategic objectives in addition to the community broadcasting services aligned to Council's Corporate Plan.

The Committee would then consider the submissions and make a recommendation to Council at the April or May 2024 Ordinary meeting.

It is anticipated that this would allow sufficient time for the newly appointed licensee to prepare for and commence broadcasting in mid-2024.

Consultation:

The Chief Executive Officer, the Executive Director Community Services and the Senior Legal Officer have been involved in discussions leading to this report.

The Mayor and the Chair of the Cultural Arts Land and Heritage Committee were provided an advance copy of the report for their awareness.

On 11 January the Cultural Arts Land and Heritage Committee considered the report and endorsed the recommendation which will be considered by Council's Ordinary Meeting on 23/24 January 2024.

Links to Strategic Plans:

TSIRC Corporate Plan 2020–2025

"4.1 Foster increased community consultation opportunities for direct and indirect Council services or programs.

- *Refresh Council's community engagement strategy via the Youmpla Voice program, focusing on clear consultation models and identified sectors of community.*
- *Utilise linguists and graphic specialists to ensure greater access to Council content.*

4.2 Evolve Council's communication channels and community's access to information.

- *Launch Council's digital enablement program, evolving online and enabling physical access points.*
- *Work with key agencies and partners to establish regular community information materials and updates."*

Statutory Requirements:

Disposal of interest in land (lease/license) requirements of the Local Government Act 2009 and Local Government Regulation 2012 may apply to the recommended path.

Conclusion:

It is recommended that Committee endorses the recommendation of the Cultural Arts Land and Heritage Committee to Council that;

1. The renewal of licenses update be noted,

2. The representations made to the Australian Communications and Media Authority be endorsed,

3. The Chief Executive Officer be authorised to facilitate an expression of interest process to identify a suitable service broadcaster and,

4. The Chief Executive Officer be requested to present expressions of interest to the Cultural, Arts, Land and Heritage Committee as soon as practicable after the 2024 local government election for consideration of a recommendation to Council in April/May 2024.

Recommended:
Gary Stevenson PSM
Acting Executive Director Corporate Services

Approved:
James William
Chief Executive Officer

Torres Strait Island
REGIONAL COUNCIL

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

BUSINESS CASE FOR ALTERNATIVE AND IMPROVED TRANSPORT OPTIONS FOR THE ISLANDS OF DAUAN AND UGAR (WITHIN THE TORRES STRAIT ISLAND REGION)

Contract No.: [INSERT CONTRACT NO.]

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This document is based on a template which forms part of the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils standard procurement suites produced in collaboration with Helix Legal.

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PART 1 – PREAMBLE
Torres Strait Island Regional Council invites Quotations from suitably qualified respondents for **the ;** **Development of a business case for alternative and improved method of transportation options on helicopter and ferry services for Dauan and Ugar Islands.** **Current travel between islands of Dauan and Ugar are provided on a subsidised basis through the federal government Torres Strait Island Regional Authority (TSRA). The current arrangement provides residents access to one helicopter flight per week to Horn Island (capacity of 3 people). These flights are for personal reasons and are not for emergency or healthcare related travel.** **TSRA is the only organisation that is currently funding this service.** as described in more detail in Part 5 – Scope.

PART 2 – GENERAL INFORMATION	
1. Contract details	**DEVELOPMENT OF A BUSINESS CASE FOR ALTERNATIVE AND IMPROVED TRANSPORT OPTIONS FOR THE ISLANDS OF DAUAN AND UGAR**
2. Communications by Respondents:	Communications regarding the Procurement Process must be submitted through Vendorpanel (as extended if at all, pursuant to the Procurement Process Conditions)
3. Submission of Quotation:	Responses must be submitted through Vendorpanel by no later than **5.00pm on 31/01/2024** *Note// Adequate time must be allowed for the Quotation and all supporting documents) to be uploaded or received by this time.*
4. Quotation to be valid for:	90 calendar days after the time stated in Item 3 (as extended if at all, pursuant to the Procurement Process Conditions)
5. Complaints:	Complaints regarding Procurement Process to be directed to Complaints process | Torres Strait Island Regional Council (tsirc.qld.gov.au)

PART 3 – PROCUREMENT PROCESS CONDITIONS

The Procurement Process is governed by, and this Request for Quotation is to be read in conjunction with, the Procurement Process Conditions:

☐ attached to or provided with this Request for Quotation;

☒ available for viewing or download from http://www.tsirc.qld.gov.au/your-council/tenders-opportunities;

PART 4 – CONTRACT]

☐ The contract with the successful Respondent shall substantially be in the form attached to or provided with this Request for Quotations and identified as

☒ The contract with the successful Respondent shall comprise the documents identified as forming the contract in clause 4 of the Principal's standard terms and conditions – goods and services, which can be found at http://www.tsirc.qld.gov.au/your-council/tenders-opportunities;

☐ The contract with the successful Respondent shall be made pursuant to and on the terms and conditions of Local Buy contract

☐ The Respondent must request a copy of the form of contract from the Principal.

PART 5 – SCOPE

☐ The Scope is described in the document(s) attached to or provided with this Request for Quotation and identified as

☒ The Scope is as follows: **the business case/feasibility must consider and/or incorporate the following**

HELICOPTER	FERRY
Prepare community engagement plan	Prepare community engagement plan
Community consultation - meeting with the community on-islands to hear the views of the people for additional services **on and off the Island**	Community consultation meeting with the community on-islands to hear the views of the people for a new ferry service between **neighbouring Communities of Darnley, Masig and Saibai**
Incorporate ideas from community to scope additional services for (Horn to Ugar return and **Ugar** to Masig return **and Ugar to Darnley return** and **Horn** to **Dauan** return and Dauan to Saibai return) with the current helicopter provider in Torres Strait ie GBR/ Nautilus.	Incorporate ideas from community to scope ferry services for (Ugar to Masig return, Ugar to Darnley return and Dauan to Saibai return).
Collate data and analyse costings of current helicopter services on Ugar and Dauan Islands	Define scope for a fit for multi-purpose vessel (similar to a navy/defence boat) for increased passenger movements but also cultural needs, potential freight cargo, tourism opportunities, and miscellaneous purposes
Engage with current helicopter service providers, ie GBR and Nautilus (Horn to Ugar return and **Ugar** to Masig return **and Ugar to Darnley return** and **Horn** to **Dauan** return and Dauan to Saibai return) to evaluate schedule options and costing models including subsidy	Collate historical data and analysis of costings of previous services on Ugar and Dauan Islands and if unavailable investigate other sources
Engage with current service providers, ie Skytrans, to evaluate schedule options and costing models including subsidy (Ugar to Erub/Masig return and Dauan to Saibai return **and Erub/Masig to Horn return and Saibai to Horn return**)	Investigate Ugar, Erub, Masig, Saibai and Dauan mooring facilities condition to allow for additional services and meet disability compliance including validation of asset ownership
Consideration of infrastructure for landing and passenger movements needing upgrading to allow for increased helicopter services and passengers on Darnley Island, Masig Island and Saibai Island	Investigate Ugar, Erub, Masig, Saibai and Dauan maintenance facilities condition to allow for additional services
Consult with relevant Divisional Councillors and Managers to understand perceptions of needs for accommodation and transfers	Consult with relevant Divisional Councillors and Managers to understand perceptions of needs for accommodation and transfers
Assess fuel supply and storage arrangements on Ugar, Darnley, Masig, Islands and Dauan and Saibai Islands with helicopter service provider	Consideration of overnight accommodation needs of passengers transiting through Darnley Island, Masig Island and Saibai Island (due to increases in services)
Consideration of overnight accommodation needs of passengers transiting through Darnley Island, Masig Island and Saibai Island (due to increases in services)	Assess relevant accommodation assets to determine needs and costs for upgrading or constructing new building
Assess relevant accommodation assets to determine needs and costs for upgrading or constructing new build	Assess fuel supply and storage arrangements on Ugar, Darnley, Masig, Islands and Dauan and Saibai Islands with TSIRC
Prepare alternative business case analysis for TSIRC subsidisation	Prepare business case analysis for private sector investment and identify potential service providers
Cost benefit analysis for each option	Prepare alternative business case analysis for TSIRC subsidisation
Consult with Council's Financial Services Directorate	Cost benefit analysis for each option

	Analyse ancillary costs including program management and administration	Consult with Council's Financial Services Directorate
	Produce report for community consultation on islands and for Council's final consideration	Analyse ancillary costs including program management and administration
		Engage with Government and Non-Government Organisation to gain support of utilising ferry service
		Produce report for community consultation on islands and for Council's final consideration

PART 6 – RESPONSE SCHEDULES	
☐	The Quotation must be submitted in the form provided in the Response Schedules attached to or provided with this Request for Quotation and identidied as
☐	The Respondent must provide the following information:
☒	The Respondent must submit a Response in the form of the Response Schedules attached below:

The Respondent submits a Quotation for contract **DEVELOPMENT OF A BUSINESS CASE FOR ALTERNATIVE AND IMPROVED TRANSPORT OPTIONS FOR THE ISLANDS DAUAN AND UGAR ISLANDS** in accordance with the Request for Quotation and these response forms. By submitting the Quotation, the Respondent acknowledges that the Quotation will remain valid and open for acceptance for the period stated in Part 2 – General Information of the Request for Quotation and that the Respondent has read and understood the terms of the contract referenced in Part 4 of the Request for Quotation.	
Signature of authorised representative of Respondent:	
Name of authorised representative of Respondent:	
Date:	
Response Form 1 - General details	
Respondent's company or other legal entity name:	
Trading name:	
ABN:	
ACN *Leave blank if the Respondent is not a company*	
Address:	
Contact Person (if different):	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Full name of each director: *Leave blank if Respondent is not a company*	
Full name of each partner *Leave blank if Respondent is not a partnership*	
Bank account into which payments are to be made:	Bank: Name of Account: BSB: Account number:
Response Form 2 - [NAME OF RESPONSE FORM]	
[DESCRIBE INFORMATION AND/OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION WHICH THE RESPONDENT IS TO PROVIDE.]	
Response Form 3 - [NAME OF RESPONSE FORM]	
[DESCRIBE INFORMATION AND/OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION WHICH THE RESPONDENT IS TO PROVIDE.]	

DEMOCRACY MATTERS

Advancing the Masig Statement

A one hundred year journey to Ailan sovereignty

January 2024

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01. REPORT PURPOSE

Pre 1872, the people of the Torres Strait were self governing with a system of island leaders or *mamooses*. The seperate island communities were autonomous, independent and self-governing before being annexed by the British Colony of Queensland in 1872 and 1879.

This report documents the work of past and present Torres Strait Islanders striving to establish a balance between island based self governance and top down state/federal governance.

The first call for Ailan Government was in 1937 at the inaugural Torres Strait Island Councillors Conference on Masig Island. As the eighty fifth anniversary of the Conference approached, Torres Strait people faced the same health, housing and economic problems raised in 1937. Community discussions and action resulted in **Malungu Yangu Wakay, the Voice from the Deep -** the **Masig Statement** of 2022.

The **Masig Statement** is a fresh call for self determination and regional autonomy so Torres Strait peoples can freely pursue economic, social and cultural development.

It is a living statement from Torres Strait people to all partners - local, state, federal representatives, as well as public servants, private sector partners and other stakeholders.

To understand the significance and promise of the Masig Statement, it is necessary to understand the actions of Torres Strait people, especially since 1937. Here you can read the history behind the Masig Statement.

This report explains the necessity of a 'look, listen, adapt' approach going forward. Finally, it invites each of us to consider the purposeful actions we must take to bring the Masig Statement alive by August 2037.

02. CHALLENGES

OVERGOVERNED

Torres Strait people are overburdened with federal & state bureaucracy which doesn't meet local needs. Funding goes to bureaucratic overheads & external providers rather than meeting community needs.

INADEQUATE ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Service provision by external agencies leads to service inefficiencies, duplication, gaps, declining well being & further dilution of autonomy.

LIMITED EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Job opportunities are lost when external contractors & businesses provide services. Public sector roles do not offer career development.

SIGNIFICANT HEALTH PROBLEMS

Poor outcomes caused by very limited access to GPs + specialists + diagnostics, limited fresh food supply. Non TSI professionals recommend culturally inappropriate solutions.

UNMET HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE DEMANDS

High cost of contractor built housing & equipment maintenance. Limited housing & office supply. Port & airport infrastructure maintenance costly & inadequate. Telecommunications connectivity inconsistent across the islands.

02. CHALLENGES

LOSS OF ECONOMIC SELF RELIANCE

Commercial fishing profits go out of the region. Few Torres Strait Islanders are employed in this industry. Strong reliance on federal & state funding. Economic independence is a building block for regional autonomy.

TRANSPORT SAFETY CONCERNS

Inconsistent aviation regulation on aircraft maintenance creates unsafe air transport for community + visting specialists. Airstrip runways are not safe enough to meet new regulations, eg Mer, Erub & Mabuyag.

LOSS OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY

Repeal of Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984 (Qld) undermined cultural practices & decimated community driven services

AILAN KASTOM MARGINALISED

Wide dispersion of small TSI populations limits recognition & representation. External fishing & tourism services do not reflect traditional practices & customs.

03. THE 100 YEAR CAMPAIGN

The Torres Strait Islands were annexed by Queensland in two stages in 1872 and 1879, making it part of the British colony of Queensland, despite some islands being positioned closer to the New Guinea coast. Federation in 1901 made the Islands part of the State of Queensland.

The 1936 Maritime Strike by Torres Strait Islander workers against the Protector system imposed by the Queensland government was a turning point. It triggered the 1937 Councillors Conference and started a century of persistent and significant action towards self determination.

- August 23, 1937 the first formal call for Ailan Government is made at the inaugural Torres Strait Inter-Islander Councillors Conference on Masig Island.
- 1939 The second Inter-Islander Councillors Conference lays the ground work for the *Torres Strait Islanders Act 1939,* passed by Queensland parliament. For the first time Islanders are legally recognised as a separate people. Many restrictions from the Protector era still remain.
- 1962 Torres Strait Islanders obtain the right to vote in Federal elections and State elections in 1964.
- 1965 The *Torres Strait Islander Act, 1939* is repealed and replaced by the *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Act*. Almost all the restrictive clauses under the 1939 Act were removed, including the old restrictions on the right to travel to the mainland.
- 1984 Queensland parliament passes the *Community Services (Torres Strait) Act* 1984 based on a strong self governance framework.
- 1988 Thursday Island Leaders forum reaffirms self determination.
- Late 1980s TSI cultural leaders reclaim the name of the region with the acronym 'Zenadth Kes' describing the region's winds & geography.
- June 1992 Mabo case: the High Court of Australia finds Meriam people hold traditional ownership of the Mer lands, proving *terra nullius* is false.
- 1994 the Torres Strait Island Regional Authority (TSRA) is established. It is an Australian Public Service agency to support TSI programs.

03. THE 100 YEAR CAMPAIGN

A key moment: 1992 Mabo decision builds the case for sovereignty

In simple terms, sovereignty is about the authority and autonomy of a group to govern its own people and jurisdiction.

Sovereignty means Torres Strait Islanders have the right to be in decision making positions, to make informed decisions and choose their own ways of governing themselves, within the nation-state of Australia.

Sovereignty includes the right to preserve the different collective identity and cultures of the Torres Strait. It means absolute power over their community lies with the community itself.

At its deepest level, Indigenous sovereignty means the ancestral, spiritual relationship to the land. It encompasses the obligations to country and community that Aboriginal Elders and leaders hand on to new generations.

Sovereignty is a power commonly claimed by nation-states. It was historically asserted by settler colonial states, eg Britain, when they took over the lands of Indigenous peoples. A nation-state is a geographically bounded group of people who identify as a nation.*

Colonisation in Australia happened without any treaties with, or payment to, First Nations peoples. The British Empire justified this with the legal fiction of '*terra nullius*' that Australia was an 'empty land belonging to no-one'.

The Mabo case, brought by Torres Strait Islanders Eddie Koiki Mabo, Reverend David Passi, Celuia Mapoo Salee, Sam Passi and James Rice, overturned the legal fiction of *terra nullius*. It created momentum for Indigenous sovereignty.

*Source: aigi.org.au

The Mabo decision prompted the then Federal Minister for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs Senator, the Hon John Herron to call for a House of Representatives Standing Committee inquiry into Torres Strait Islanders autonomy in August 1996. It delivered the *New Deal for Torres Strait Island People* report in 1997.

CASE STUDY: A NEW DEAL FOR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

1997 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES INQUIRY REPORT

From 1996 - 1997 the Federal House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs examined the long term social, economic and political problems undermining the well being of the Zenadth Kes communities.

Many of the issues reviewed in 1997 were raised at the 1937 Torres Strait Island Councillors' Conference.

The bipartisan Standing Committee found ethical grounds exist for addressing the problems and that realistic solutions are available.

Their report ***'Torres Strait Islanders: A new deal. A report on greater autonomy for Torres Strait Islanders'*** highlighted multiple key findings including the fact Australia's federal system does not serve the people of the Torres Strait well:

"*While the distinct levels – Commonwealth, state and local government – provide a satisfactory means of delivering services and allowing democratic representation to most Australians, this has not been so for Torres Strait Islanders. The result for a small, contained and geographically isolated population has been inefficiency, duplication, a lack of services and a dilution of real autonomy." (Page ix)*

03. KEY FINDINGS

01

Necessity of local decision making
"The very act of being involved in decision making gives great hope to community members. .."*

02

Economic self reliance
Local economy based on fisheries, tourism, construction, health service delivery, entry level public sector jobs & careers.

03

Better service outcomes
Locally controlled, coordinated & culturally aligned services would correct delivery problems & increase accountability.

04

Employment & Training
Once set up, local businesses can support new apprenticeship programs & employment. State & federal cadetships & training should offer career pathways.

05

A role for elders
A Council of Elders advises on cultural & traditionally significant issues. This maintains social structures.

06

Preservation of Ailan Kastom
Local decision making, program design & delivery integrates cultural values safeguards & grows Ailan Kastom.

07

Greater regional autonomy
Is a worthy & achievable goal that offers enriched lives for current & future generations.

*From Kaurareg Land Council submission, Standing Committee report, page 14

03. 100 YEAR CAMPAIGN CONTINUED

- Despite the Standing Committee's strong support for regional autonomy and practical recommendations in the **'Torres Strait Islanders: A new deal. A report on greater autonomy for Torres Strait Islanders'** report, the then Commonwealth Government does not endorse this direction and little impact results from the inquiry.

- 2001 Bamaga Accord proposes a new regional governance framework for the Torres Strait, developed by the Greater Autonomy Task Force, initiated by the TSRA.

- 2008 the Queensland Government imposes amalgamation on fifteen TSI councils. Torres Strait Island Regional Council & NPARC are created.

- 2009 TSRA, TSIRC, TSC and NPARC collaborate to develop the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Regional Plan Regional Plan: 2009 - 2029.

- October 2011 Queensland Premier Bligh writes to Prime Minister Gillard requesting support for greater regional autonomy for the Torres Strait and to initiate a reform process.

- 2013/2014 discussions about governance reforms are held with Federal Minister Nigel Scullion, Warren Entsch MP, Warren Mundine Chair of Indigenous Advisory Council, plus various Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula stakeholders.

- 2014 Joint Leaders' Forum (Thursday Island) develops a 'One boat' Zenadth Kes Regional Assembly model.

- 2015, the *'One boat' Zenadth Kes Regional Assembly Model for Torres Strait* presented to Prime Minister Abbott. This meeting explores a self governed territory model, similar to Norfolk Island (pre 2016) plus options from New Zealand Government, Fijian Government, ACT/Northern Territory arrangements.

03. 100 YEAR CAMPAIGN CONTINUED

- 2015 Federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Nigel Scullion, publicly supports Torres Strait Islanders' aspirations to improve governance arrangements, confirmed by letter December 2nd, 2015.

- July 2016 TSIRC deputation to Queensland Government proposes regional government enacted via legislation.

- 2020 Queensland parliament passes the *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act*.

- 2021 the Zenadth Kes Secretariat Torres Strait Islander Corporation (ZKS) is incorporated under the CATSI Act as Torres Strait Islander Corporation.

- As the 85th anniversary of the 1937 call for 'Ailan Government' approaches, a new statement - the **Masig Statement** - is drafted.

- August 2022 - Torres Strait Islander community elders & members endorse the **Masig Statement**. Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, Torres Shire Council & the Torres Strait Island Regional Council elected representatives also endorse the statement.

- The **Masig Statement** aligns with Article 3 of the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (ratified by the Australian government in 2009). It calls for regional autonomy via self government as well as economic, social and cultural development.

- The Masig Statement requires State and Federal governments to work in partnership by stepping back and adopting a 'look, listen and adapt' approach to enable the community based decision making that sits at the heart of Indigenous sovereignty.

The Masig Statement offers a culturally united path to regional sovereignty by 2037.
It represents the culmination of a 100 year campaign.

THE MASIG STATEMENT
MALUNGU YANGU WAKAY
The Voice from the Deep
23 August 2022

Purpose

To establish principles and parameters on behalf of the peoples of the Torres Strait Island & Northern Peninsula Area to act together in unity, in order to pursue and achieve self-determination and regional autonomy and, in doing so, preserve our distinctive and diverse spiritual, material and economic relations with the lands, territories, waters, coastal seas and other resources with which we have a connection under Ailan Kastom and Aboriginal tradition.

Aims

1. In accordance with Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13th 2007 and supported by the Australian Government on 3rd April 2009 and the Preamble of the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld), we seek to achieve our right to self determination as the people of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area.

2. By virtue of our sovereign right, we have the right to freely determine our political status and to freely pursue our economic, social and cultural development.

3. In keeping with Article 4 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in exercising our right to self determination, we have the right to autonomy or self government in matters relating to our internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

4. Therefore, we will create partnerships with Key Regional Stakeholders, the Queensland and Australian governments together with other relevant organisations; to better equip us to work together to achieve our regional goals and aspirations; and in working together as representatives of the peoples of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area obtain and safeguard our human rights enshrined in international, national and Queensland law.

PAST: 23 August 1937 was the beginning of regional autonomy - the Torres Strait Island Councillors Conference.

PRESENT: 23 August 2022 is the beginning of a new beginning, a culturally united path to regional sovereignty - the MASIG Statement.

FUTURE: 23 August 2037 will be the beginning of regional sovereignty.

Torres Strait Islander community members started endorsing the statement on August 23, 2022. It has also been endorsed by elected representatives on the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, Torres Shire Council & the Torres Strait Island Regional Council. Endorsing the Masig Statement is an ongoing process - community members and partners are invited to sign the statement.

05. THE MEANING OF SELF DETERMINATION, REGIONAL AUTONOMY & SOVEREIGNTY

The Masig Statement deliberately uses distinct terms - self determination, regional autonomy, self governance, sovereignty and Ailan Kastom. These terms explain the life Torres Strait Islanders want to establish for future generations and to keep Torres Strait culture strong.

Self determination is the 'fundamental right of people to shape their own lives.' It means Torres Strait Islanders:

- Have a choice in determining how their lives will be governed.
- Participate in decisions affecting their lives, including a right to formal recognition of group identities, values and beliefs.
- Have control over their lives and their future, including their economic, social and cultural development. (1)

Self governance is a vital part of self determination. Self governance means having genuine power to make decisions relating to internal and local affairs. It involves taking responsibility for what happens on Torres Strait land and sea. It requires external partners to be directly accountable to Torres Strait elders and community.

The impact of colonisation since the Torres Strait Islands were annexed in the late 1800s and interactions with state and federal governments has created governance structures, silos and habitual ways of working that don't align with Torres Strait values, beliefs and customs. It will take incremental steps to achieve sustainable self governance by 2037.

What does 'incremental self governance' look like?

- entering into agreements or contracts that steadily increase financial independence;
- building strong mechanisms for local control of decision-making or dispute resolution; and
- designing culturally-legitimate governance solutions. (2)

Self governance works for Torres Strait Islanders because they were self governing before 1872 and have continued to practice clan and community based democracy daily. Local government in the Strait has an expanded scope of operations, including managing the treaty agreement,

and the Torres Strait Protected Zone, between the border of mainland Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG), delivering housing services, meeting the needs of community living in remote locations, maintaining national maritime infrastructure, roads and airports as well as holding community courts and making community by-laws.

Good governance means finding solutions to challenges facing current and future generations. Torres Strait Islanders are best placed to design the solutions to address their challenges, with input from state/federal partners, experts and other stakeholders who are willing to use a 'look, listen, adapt' approach, rather than ready made solutions.

Regional autonomy means a power sharing arrangement between local decision makers and state/federal authorities. It implies a continuing degree of economic, political and cultural connection with constitutionally recognised authorities. At its strongest level, it can be described as 'internal self-government' within a state. It requires finding ways and means to finance autonomous functions. (3)

The people of the Torres Strait have high levels of cultural autonomy as a result of their unique Ailan Kustom being recognised by Australian judicial and legal systems. Examples include the Mabo case decision which extinguished terra nullius and established native title law and the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act (2020).

Political autonomy is high as well. For example the Strait is treated as a discrete administrative region by the Queensland Government and the Commonwealth Government. (4)

Economic autonomy, while at a lower level, can be strengthened by trying new structures, processes, enterprises and agreements. Regional autonomy offers Torres Strait communities stability against the changes of government policy and commitment following state and federal elections.

05. THE MEANING OF SELF DETERMINATION, REGIONAL AUTONOMY & SOVEREIGNTY

Regional autonomy is a formal goal the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, as set out in the Torres Strait Regional Authority's Regional Assembly Transition Plan (2018). Establishing a Regional Assembly model of government would enable a greater level of autonomy to discharge local, state and commonwealth powers in one governing entity, formally recognising the principles of Ailan Kustom, and traditional governance systems. (5) The Masig Statement identifies the first Inter-Island meeting of Councillors on Masig in August 1937 was the beginning of regional autonomy.

The final term to clarify is **sovereignty. T**he Masig Statement declares 23 August 2037 will be the beginning of 'regional sovereignty.'

"...sovereignty is the exercise by a people - whether a clan, a tribe or nation - of control over a particular territory through their political and social institutions." In law, it has three main features - control, territory and entitlement. It differs from land ownership. (6) In lore, it is established through continuous connection to country and Ailan Kustom.

In modern times, sovereignty is rarely vested in one person or entity. For example, since Federation 'Australian sovereignty' has been divisible between the Crown, the Commonwealth and the States and Territories. (7)

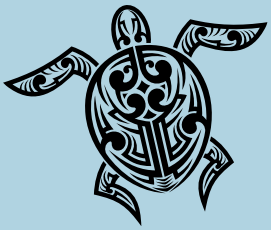
In his 1993 ABC Boyer Lecture, Councillor Getano Lui Junior reminds us Australia has three inhabited island territories: Norfolk, Christmas and Cocos Keeling, each with its own tailor made local constitution.... (to) suit local cultural, historical and environmental realities. And that a federation like Australia is made up of different levels of government - where and how they fit is a matter for review. (8)

Achieving regional sovereignty requires relationship building, respect, trust and deliberation. Imagination is also vital, to see different ways of sharing power, making decisions and institutional arrangements. With a commitment to collaboration by all stakeholders, self determination, regional determination and and nation building can become the norm.

HOW DO TSIRC COUNCILLORS FEEL ABOUT THE VOICE FROM THE DEEP?

The past and the present are coming together to create our future.

Ancestors are awakening.

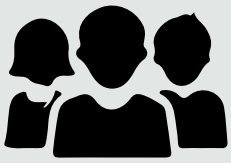


It's a cry from our region - we have been talking about the same issues for 85 years. .

We were at the front of the boat with a bow but no arrow. Now we have the arrow.

Sovereignty needs to be realised to overcome poverty, bring resources to communities and give young people a future.

It's a voice for the community. A statement of unity. We are working together.



Insights from the Masig Statement Workshop in November 2022 - Figure 1.

COUNCILLORS CONCERNS ABOUT REALISING THE MASIG STATEMENT

How might we involve younger generations?

What can we do when stakeholders are not listening?

How might we hold the attention of TSI people for 15 years?

How can we make the Masig statement practical in the regions?

What is the best way to maintain resources for this work?

How do we sing with one voice?

Figure 2 TSI Councillor concerns, November 2022 workshop

06. THE AILAN WAY - LOOK, LISTEN & ADAPT

The Ailan Way means all parties working on a challenge start go to the community to look at the situation, listen to the elders and community members about what is working and what is not, and adapt options to fit with what they have seen and heard.

Elders and community are involved in the process from the beginning to the end, providing feedback and sharing the wisdom that comes from living with a challenge.

The **Ailan Way** means our partners will **'look, listen and adapt'** by visiting community, building relationships, being curious about what does or doesn't work, and designing solutions with us.

"It's like a story - invite everyone to be part of it. Be open, be transparent, don't leave the community out."
Wayne Green, TSIRC Executive Director, Building Services

Fit for purpose housing in the Strait
Since July 2022 TSIRC, QBuild and the Office of Queensland Government Architect have been using a 'look, listen, adapt' approach based on three principles - community visits to build relationships and see properties, meeting with tenants and community to listen to them, and weekly communication to build trust and transparency. See the **Journey to Regional Sovereignty by 2037** section of the TSIRC website to track results

"The principles for Torres Strait... renewal are simple: we need to be able to make decisions about social, cultural, economic and environmental matters in our region, not just the right to attend advisory meetings which may or may not pass our ideas up the line."
Councillor Getano Lui Junior,1993 ABC Boyer Lecture,

This self determination & regional autonomy campaign must be anchored in the community - elders, young people, people with different experiences involved.
May 2023 'Advancing the Masig Statement' TSIRC workshop

07. NEXT STEPS TO REGIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

Action is necessary to secure regional sovereignty. Collaborative action using the Ailan Way approach - look, listen & adapt - is the most effective path to delivering sustainable solutions and strengthening self governance by 2037.

- **Act & reflect constantly:** Take action in each term of council. Run experiments, observe what emerges and learn through reflection. Avoid staying in discussion mode.
- **Challenge assumptions & old ways:** Ask questions constantly. What if the current approach was disrupted? Why do we do it this way?
- **Collaborate** to shift from an 'us vs them' mentality to an 'all of us' approach. Build trust and understanding through dialogue to discover key insights that can lead to new possibilities and ways of working.
- **Look, listen & adapt** each day to build your skills for working the Ailan Way.
- **Communicate openly and constantly** - everyone must know weekly what is happening on the ground, within a community, what has emerged.
- **Work across generations** - active, Intergenerational Taskforces in each community enable learning together and deepen leadership skills. They must speak directly and regularly to Council and external partners.
- **Look for chances to build strong relationships with the Masig Statement** - ensure Islanders have regular opportunities to sign the statement, share stories of their ancestor's involvement in the 100 year campaign, communicate what a satisfying future means to them and those they care about, encourage all to choose a part they can play in the journey to 2037.
- **Keep calling people into** the journey to 2037, invite them to help 'write' the story of how regional sovereignty in the Torres Strait was achieved. Artists, musicians, story tellers deepen the emotional connection to the journey.
- **Put the Masig Statement on the agenda** whenever Islanders meet - at community forums, Council meetings and stakeholder meetings.
- **Be accountable to elders and community** - look for chances to directly answer questions from community members and provide updates.
- **Focus on taking the next step,** rather than revisiting the problem.
- **Share successes, big and small** so people can see the new system of self determination and regional sovereignty growing around them.

08. REFERENCES

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- 'Self determination', Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, https://aigi.org.au/toolkit/self-determination-for-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples, accessed January 2024. (2)

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- As above. (4)

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- 'Treaty and sovereignty in Australia', Dr Lisa Strelein and Dr Belinda Burbidge, AIATSIS, Native Title Newsletter 2019, Issue 2. (7)

- 'Self determination', Getano Lui Junior, ABC Radio National Boyer Lecture - https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/bigideas/2022-boyer-lecture-one-noel-pearson-1993-boyer-getano-lui/102093404. (8)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners and native title holders of the Kemer Kemer Meriam Nation, the Kulkalgal Nation, the Maluligal Nation, the Kaiwalagal Kaurareg Aboriginal National and the Gadaw Maluligal Nations of the Torres Strait.

I pay my respects to the elders - past and present - of the lands, waters and winds of the Torres Strait Island community.

I express my gratitude to the Torres Strait Island Regional Council members for the opportunity to journey with you to 2037.

Sandy Killick, CEO, Democracy Matters

To amend or update this report, please email

sandy@democracymatters.com.au

or call +61 409 204 100

Proposed *Advancing the Masig Statement* Action Plan for TSIRC (2024 - 2028)

Purpose

To identify the key strategies required to strengthen self governance and progress regional autonomy. Over time, the collective impact of these strategies will deliver self determination and regional sovereignty.

Current state	Comments made at TSIRC workshops in May and November 2023
Where we are now	Patchy awareness of Masig Statement in TS communities. Masig Statement must be community centred. Each TSI community must connect meaningfully with the Masig Statement. The Masig Statement is not part of TSIRC's planning and budget processes. Some key stakeholders are in the boat, some are out of the boat. Key stakeholders do not have the same level of information and understanding about the Masig Statement. Sovereignty is misunderstood and is a block for some stakeholders, eg Queensland government

Key strategies	Rationale	Responsibility & core action
1. The Masig Statement is an everyday business for TSIRC.	The Masig Statement outcomes can only be realised if they become the part of the day to day business of community and Council.	Governance and Leadership Committee identifies the most appropriate processes, budgets, events and discussions where the Masig Statement should be on the agenda for regular discussion, action and review.
2. Council always has one or two 'Ailan Way - Look, listen & adapt' pilot projects occurring at any time, to help participants 'feel their way forward' towards	Pilot projects involving external stakeholders are the best way to understand how self governance and regional autonomy can work. Pilot projects are powerful because they shift stakeholder's focus from the problem to the solution. A pilot project makes it possible to 'see the future', makes it possible for new forms of agreement making to emerge and helps all	SARG with CEO and Executive Directors identify pilot projects that can address core and significant issues facing TS people, eg the housing pilot project. Working on the key challenges facing TS

	stakeholders see how community centred decision-making works and the benefits it offers. Reporting to elders and community members increases accountability.	people will deliver the greatest shift towards self determination and regional sovereignty.
3. There is intergenerational understanding and ownership of the Masig Statement.	Intergenerational Task Forces are elected in each community for a set term. They agree on a meeting schedule for listening to the community. They have direct and regular dialogue with Council and external stakeholders to provide feedback, communicate issues, concerns, successes and impact. They are a strong link between community, council and partner agencies.	Governance and Leadership Committee ensures that the Intergenerational Task Forces are operating, understand their purpose and processes are in place to ensure direct and regular dialogue with Council and external stakeholders.
4. Regional dialogue with Torres Shire Council, NPARC, GBK and TSRA identifies existing processes or projects where an 'Ailan Way - Look, listen & adapt' approach can be incorporated.	*'Starting something new is appealing, however the important work is fixing existing but broken or underperforming initiatives and organisations.'* (Radical Collaboration Guidebook) Choosing existing processes/projects where a 'Ailan Way - Look, listen & adapt' approach is the most straightforward way of incorporating the Masig Statement goals at regional level. Piloting a 'Look, listen & adapt' approach allows regional partners to 'feel their way forward' to understand how power needs to be distributed differently and the types of collaboration required for regional autonomy. Each stakeholder will need to reflect on their own assumptions and actions - are they enabling or disabling progress towards regional autonomy? Reporting to elders and community members helps to reality check solutions and increases accountability to the community.	ROC? TSRA? Regional assembly? To be confirmed To build upon the drafting and signing of the Masig Statement, a dialogue focused on identifying which existing processes or projects are most appropriate for a 'Look, listen & adapt' approach is recommended. There is a danger of staying at a discussion level only and not making any impact. To generate momentum towards 2037, dialogue and trialing a 'Look, listen & adapt' approach can work together.
5. 'Communicating the journey towards 2037' is a core priority.	Communication is a simple yet powerful strategy in the journey towards 2037. The importance of communication is often overlooked and insufficient time is given to it. However, when it is a key priority, it can strengthen people's connection to the Masig Statement and bring new people 'into the boat'. It is strongly recommended that the TSIRC website has a new	Governance and Leadership Committee, Community Services Executive Director, CEO and council media team work together to identify the most appropriate channels for sharing stories that TSIRC allies can understand and want to be part of. Share stories of small

	section dedicated to communicating any actions taken to achieve Masig Statement outcomes. For example, celebrations involving the Masig Statement, stories about Ailan Way pilot projects, historical timeline of actions since 1937, stories of ancestral connection to the 100 year journey, existing videos by elders/councilors about the Masig Statement can be consolidated into one place on the council's website. *"It's like a story - invite everyone to be part of it. Be open, be transparent, don't leave the community out." Wayne Green, TSIRC Executive Director, Building Services housing pilot case study*	successes or insights frequently. Share stories of hope to keep people engaged and strong until 2037. Engage creative people to share the stories - musicians, story tellers (traditional and digital), artists, social media creatives - of the new system of self governance and regional autonomy growing in the Torres Strait.
6. Stakeholders are curious about, and committed to, collaborating for impact	If the people leading the strategies outlined above aren't willing to open up to the views and challenges of others and to incorporate some of these into what they're doing, then there's not going to be any success. If collaborators accept different perspectives, opportunities, constraints and powers, then conflict and insights will come out in a constructive way. *"What really helped is a sense of mutuality, equality, and win-win - and an absence of dictating. The biggest lesson for me was how to dissolve boundaries of power relationships when we're working in collaboration, because if the organisations we work with had felt that we were trying to teach them something, then nothing would have worked. I've come to see that impactful shifts often start with a change in mindset - from an "us vs them" mentality to a more collaborative "all of us" approach."* (Radical Collaboration Guidebook) Achieving the Masig Statement outcomes of self determination and regions sovereignty will feel like radical change for some stakeholders. Working towards 2037 will require deep collaboration and honest reflection. Differences between stakeholders will produce disagreements and discomfort.	Governance and Leadership Committee tracks collaboration processes. What enables deep collaboration? What disables it? How can collaborators get the assistance they need to build their capacity for collaboration that will produce long lasting outcomes?

	People will enter a collaboration convinced that they are right and others are wrong. You can't erase these differences and you don't have to: usually it is possible and necessary to advance together in spite of, even because of, such continued differences. If you insist on complete agreement and alignment, you will not be able to advance.	

"The way forward to self determination and regional sovereignty will rarely be clear or straightforward. It is not a highway: you can't clear away the obstacles and make a straight road before you start. The only way to advance with speed, scale, and justice is through rapid, disciplined, iterative experimentation.

The August 2037 timeline creates pressure for decisive and definitive action, but advances will not always be linear or predictable. Take small steps quickly to learn through trial and error what works, and to build your confidence, capacity, and momentum." Adapted from the Radical Collaboration Guidebook (https://radicalclimatecollaboration.reospartners.com)

TORRES STRAIT ISLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

STRATEGIC ADVISORY REFERENCE GROUP

MEETING

MEETING:	19-22 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Advancing the Masig Statement
AUTHOR:	Gary Stevenson PSM – Acting Executive Director Corporate Services

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Recommendation:

That Committee recommends to Council that;

1. The report entitled "Advancing the Masig Statement – a 100 year journey to Ailan governance" be adopted and that the Council expresses its appreciation to its author Ms Sandy Killick of Democracy Matters.
2. The Chief Executive Officer be requested to strengthen the report by describing the process of drafting, agreeing and endorsing the Masig Statement which would allow regional stakeholders to identify with the document.
3. The Masig Statement Action Plan be adopted.
4. The Chief Executive Officer be requested to allocate action responsibilities to relevant officers for further development of the actions, outcomes and timing.
5. The Chief Executive Officer be requested to incorporate the report findings into relevant strategic Council documents including the next version of Council's Corporate Plan.
6. The Chief Executive Officer be requested to prepare and submit to Council, a three-year Advocacy Strategy with a clear focus on the Commonwealth Government's next election to secure support/commitment to meaningfully advance the attainment of Masig Statement objectives no later than the end of May 2024.
7. The Chief Executive Officer be requested to prepare and submit to Council, a three-year Community Engagement Strategy (including activation of the regional Taskforce) to engender community awareness and enduring commitment to meaningfully influence relevant Commonwealth and State Government policy and financial settings no later than the end of May 2024.
8. The Chief Executive Officer be requested to change Council's website to include a dedicated page called "The journey to Ailan sovereignty by 2037" no later than end of May 2024.
9. The web page includes promotion of the Action Plan, the Advocacy Strategy and the Community Engagement Strategy and that the case study 'Delivering climate suitable, healthy and affordable housing the Ailan way' be published as an example of a 'look, listen, adapt approach' and that other case studies using the Ailan Way be added over time.
10. The Chief Executive Officer be requested to include adequate provision in the draft 2024/25 operational budget to facilitate the implementation of relevant stages of the Action Plan and the implementation of the Advocacy Plan and the Community Engagement Plan.
11. The Chief Executive Officer reports to Council post-election on the merit of establishing a role for one of Council's Standing Committees to monitor progress on advancing the Masig Statement.

DRAFT

Background:

Council commissioned Democracy Matters to facilitate a workshop in November 2022, following Mayor Mosby's attendance at the 2022 ALGA National Congress where he engaged with the Director of Democracy Matters, Ms Sandy Killick.

Since that time Ms Killick has facilitated further workshop discussions with Councillors in May 2023 and November 2023, and has completed a report entitled "Advancing the Masig Statement – a 100 year journey to Ailan governance" (December 2023).

A copy of the report is attached along with November 2023 workshop notes and a draft Action Plan.

The Strategic Advisory Reference Group discussed progress of the report's development at its meetings in April and June 2023.

At the July 2023 Ordinary Meeting, Council agreed on establishing a taskforce which consists of community members, to represent communities and spearhead the Masig Statement and ensure the three LGAs (TSIRC, Torres Shire Council and Northern Peninsula Regional Area Regional Council) continue the advocacy on achieving objectives of the Masig Statement ie formation of the RoC.

Council also submitted a motion ("Masig Statement – Malungu Yangu Wakay") to the Local Government Association of Queensland for consideration at its 2023 Annual Conference, but the LGAQ Agenda Committee rejected the proposed motion.

While this was not considered to be acceptable (as recorded in the September 2023 Ordinary Council meeting minutes), it is noted that LGAQ in its correspondence committed to providing advocacy support including media support, advocacy and intergovernmental relations advice, securing meetings with State and Federal representatives, preparing briefing notes and supporting Council before, during and after those meetings and working to find opportunities to drive Council's agenda forward.

The Acting Executive Director Corporate Services has engaged recently with LGAQ's Head of Advocacy and has confirmed that the offer of assistance remains current.

At its November 2023 Councillors' workshop the following recommendations were captured;

- *"The Qbuild project is a powerful illustration of a 'look, listen, adapt' approach. Strongly recommend documenting the process and making it available on TSIRC website. Other opportunities for broadcasting this example of community developed solutions. (Can link to the Qld Productivity Commission 2017 Service Delivery in Remote and Discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.)*
- *There is a significant risk of staying in discussion mode. In the next term of council, it is very important to shift into 'doing' mode. Are there any opportunities in the Council Strategic Plan for experimenting? Experimenting allows stakeholders to step out of their political roles and be TS people.*
- *Link the 'Advancing the Masig Statement Action Plan' to Council's strategic plan.*
- *One of Council's committees be made responsible for nominated driving monthly discussion on advancing the Masig Statement.*
- *Plan ways to work at both local and regional levels throughout the next cycle of council to continue to make progress, bring more people into the discussion and generate momentum.*
- *Develop a Masig Statement section on the TSIRC website which showcases QBuild casestudy, August community celebrations and has links to any media about the Masig Statement to date."*

Officers Comment:

The report entitled "Advancing the Masig Statement – a 100 year journey to Ailan governance" (December 2023) records the current and recent phase of the journey and is a very sound reference document that will guide Council and the communities for the future.

The tenet of workshop conversations though clearly describes a need for progress to be emboldened with actions rather than words.

Specifically as a result of each of the workshops Ms Killick has advised as follows;

> *"The deliverable from the Workshop One in November 2022 is a report called 'Advancing the Masig Statement - A one hundred year journey to Ailan sovereignty'. The report is written for a wide audience, covering the actions since 1937 lead up to the development of the Masig Statement. One section explains the meaning of self determination, regional autonomy and sovereignty. Other sections cover the Ailan Way - Look, listen & adapt' as well as 'Next steps to regional autonomy.' It helps people understand the vision and ambitions of the Masig Statement.*
>
> > *Recommendation 1: That the report 'Advancing the Masig Statement - A one hundred year to Ailan sovereignty' be adopted by Council in the January 2024 meeting.*
> >
> > *Recommendation 2: The report be strengthened by describing the process of drafting, agreeing and endorsing the Masig Statement - this would allow regional stakeholders to see themselves in this document.*
>
> *The focus of Workshop Two in May 2023 was an Action Plan for TSIRC. Attached is a draft Masig Statement Action Plan proposing 6 key strategies.*
>
> > *Recommendation 3: The Masig Statement Action Plan be reviewed by the SARG committee at the January 9th 2024 meeting. Changes can made in time for January 2024 Council meeting.*
> >
> > *Recommendation 4: The Masig Statement Action Plan approved by the SARG is tabled for adoption at January 2024 Council meeting. Once adopted, the parties responsible for each strategy can develop the next stage of the action plan - the actions, outcomes and timing for 12 month periods.*
>
> *Workshop 3 in November 2023 (post the Voice referendum) highlighted the significance and strength of the Masig Statement for moving Torres Strait Islanders towards a better future. The workshop also highlighted the need to move from discussion into action to achieve Masig Statement outcomes by 2037. The 'Ailan Way - Look, listen and adapt' approach was discussed an effective vehicle for moving into action. A case study about the current housing pilot 'Delivering climate suitable, healthy and affordable housing the Ailan way' has been developed to show the benefits of the Ailan Way.*
>
> > *Recommendation 5: A new section be developed on the TSIRC website called 'The journey to Ailan sovereignty by 2037.'*
> >
> > *Recommendation 6: The case study 'Delivering climate suitable, healthy and affordable housing the Ailan way' be published as an example on the TSIRC website as an example of a 'look, listen, adapt approach' and that other case studies using the Ailan Way be added over time."*

These recommendations are considered to be essential elements of the platform for the next phase of the journey and have been incorporated into the Officer's Recommendation in this report along with suggestions regarding planning for advocacy, community engagement, strategic planning and budgeting summarised in short as follows;

1. Adoption and strengthening of the report entitled "Advancing the Masig Statement – a 100 year journey to Ailan governance"
2. Adoption of the Action Plan.
3. Embedding the Masig Statement objectives and actions into Council's strategic documents.
4. Preparation of a 3-year Advocacy Strategy aimed at influencing the next Commonwealth Government election.
5. Preparation of a 3-year Community Engagement Strategy.

6. Enhancement of Council's website to dedicate a page to inform readers about the journey to sovereignty by 2037.
7. Future budget allocation to achieve the above.

Consultation:

The Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director Community Services have been consulted.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor have been provided with an advance draft of this report.

Ms Sandy Killick was consulted regarding the report and recommendations.

Links to Strategic Plans:

Each of the strategic pillars described in the Corporate Plan are relevant as are several of the Outcomes including;

Outcome 1: We preserve cultural heritage, history and place.

Outcome 2: Our communities are safe, healthy and active.

Outcome 3: We ensure accessibility to community support services.

Outcome 5: We plan effectively for the future of our individual communities and region.

Outcome 7: Our communities are consulted around liveable places, aligned to lifestyle and environmental suitability.

Outcome 10: We advocate and foster regional prosperity through enterprise development.

Outcome 11: We invest in the retention of key skills within our region.

Outcome 12: We bring opportunity to our region and put our culture on the world stage.

In particular the following Objective and Key Deliverable are most relevant;

Objective 4.3 Ensure community advocacy and engagement at all levels of government.

Deliverables:

- Facilitate Round Table Meetings and regular liaison with State and Federal Government Members, providing appropriate community feedback.
- Work with Community to provide a regional legal framework which addresses both State and Traditional Lore requirements.
- Continue implementation of regional governance via One Boat and Regional Plans.

Statutory Requirements:

Local Government Act 2009
Local Government Regulation 2012
Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2013
Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984

Conclusion:

On the back of the earnest deliberations of the past two years it is appropriate and timely for Council at the end of its current term to establish a platform for future advancement of the Masig Statement.

Recommended:
Gary Stevenson PSM
Acting Executive Director Corporate Services

Approved:
James William
Chief Executive Officer

DEMOCRACY MATTERS
Making democracy grow between elections

Charting a path to Masig Statement goals by 2037
November 2022 Workshop report
Prepared for TSIRC by Democracy Matters

Background

Mayor Mosby invited Sandy Killick, Democracy Matters CEO to facilitate a workshop focusing on the Masig Statement for TSIRC councillors and senior staff in Cairns in November 2022. Two workshops followed in May and November 2023.

Democracy Matters is a non partisan leadership training organisation committed to growing democracy between elections. We work with local, state and federal representatives to build their skills and confidence to respond to the challenges in their term of office.

Purpose of this confidential report

This report records the discussion of the TSIRC Councillors and Executive Directors present at a workshop facilitated by Sandy Killick in Cairns on November 10th, 2023. By using a future scenarios exercise, participants started considering 'What steps could this and successive TSIRC councillors take to realise the Masig statement by 2037?'

Group discussion 1: Personal connection to the Masig statement

Councillors and Executive Directors were asked *'How do you feel about the Voice from the Deep?'*

- *The past and present are coming together to create our future.*
- *Empowered, privileged and challenged.*
- *It's a voice for the community. A statement of unity. We are working together.*
- *The statement has been a long time coming. Moving forward feels good.*
- *Ancestors are awakening.*

- *Pride in the region. Connected across the region. Aspiration for our region.*
- *It's a cry from our region - we have been talking about the same issues for 85 years.*
- *I think of a trumpet shell from the deep, calling to others.*
- *We were at the front of the boat with a bow but no arrow. Now we have the arrow.*
- *Sovereignty needs to be realised to overcome poverty, bring resources to communities and give a future to young people.*
- *We have had a voice to listen to since 1937.*
- *Frustration about neglect of region - same issues for 85 years.*
- *Masig statement is useful for knocking on the door.*
- *It's a powerful statement.*

There is a very strong sense of connection to the Masig statement and a high degree of alignment between the council members present. The language and images in the responses from Councillors and Executive Directors could be used to communicate with island communities and external stakeholders.

Councillors and Executive Directors were asked to *'What concerns do you have about realising the Masig statement?'*

- How might we involve younger generations?
- What can we do when stakeholders are not listening?
- Adequate resourcing for this work.
- How do we take the Voice from the Deep to others?
- How can we make the Masig statement practical in the regions?
- How can we bring others along?
- How might we hold the attention of TSI people for 15 years? How do we handle times when the community is losing focus?

These concerns are noted in Section 2: Principles & possible action plan framework

Group discussion 2: 2037 Future scenarios exercise

Participants formed three teams - Eastern, Central, Western - and were asked to imagine two future scenarios. (Responses shown in Diagram A)

- Scenario A: Imagine it's 2037 and the Masig statement is fully operational. This is the start of self determination and regional autonomy. What do you see?
- Scenario B: Imagine it's 2037. Little progress has been made and the region is unlikely to realise the elements of the Masig statement. What do you see?

A note about working with scenarios:

Scenarios are not predictions, preferences or projections - they are intended to trigger new possibilities. They help participants better adapt to the emerging future/futures. They are a preparatory process that underpins strategic planning. The value of scenarios is they can show you what can go wrong & helps to identify early warning signs, allowing timely intervention.

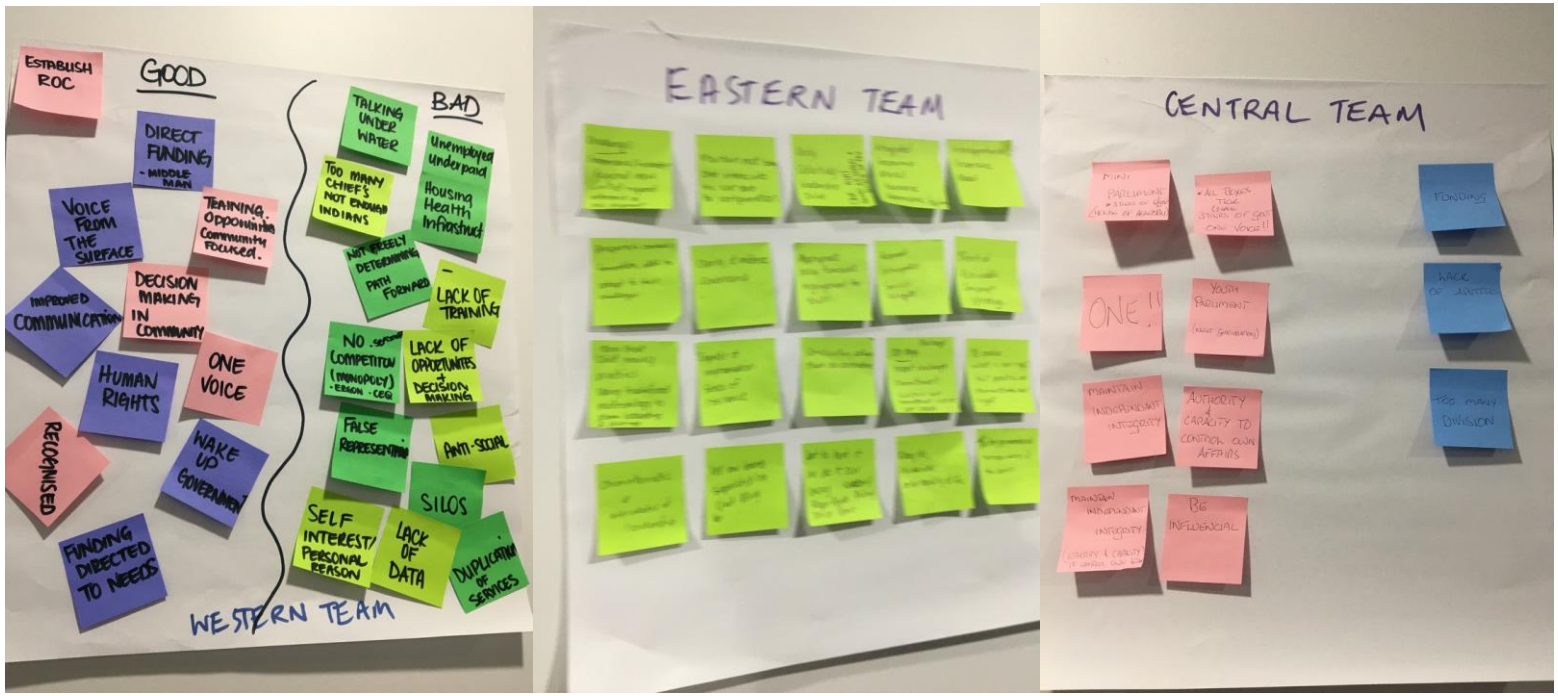


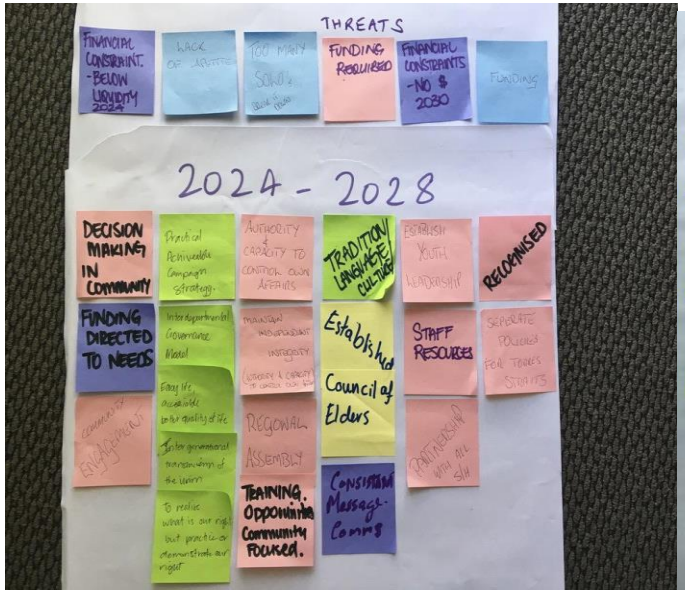
Diagram A: Eastern, Central and Western responses to two scenarios

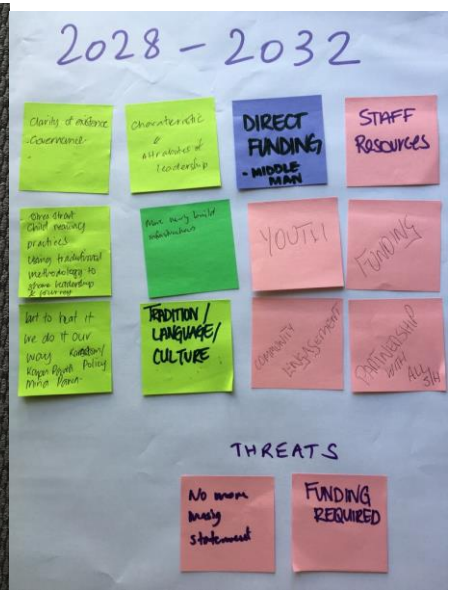
Group discussion 3: Taking action in each Council term

Between now and 2037 there are 5 cycles of council: 2022 - 2024, 2024 - 2028, 2028 - 2032 and 2037 falls in the 2036 - 2040 council term. When looking at the sheets on the wall for each council term, one councillor commented “There’s not many councils to 2037.”

Eastern, Central and Western team members were invited to move their post it note comments to the most appropriate part of the timeline (based on Council terms) and to add new post it note comments if they wished. The timeline posters are found in Diagram B (below). .

2022 - 2024
HUMAN RIGHTS
ONE VOICE
TRADITION/ LANGUAGE/ CULTURE
Est. House of Review
ONE!!
ROC
Est. ROC.
VOICE FROM THE SURFACE
WAKE UP GOVERNMENT
LTC Paths to Treaty
YOUTH PARLIMENT
Partnership
MAINTAIN INDEPENDANT INTEGRITY
BE INFLUENCIAL
bipartisan Support
Inter departmental Committee
IMPROVED COMMUNICATION
Partnership with Government
state + federal governments are accountable to TSIRC
FUNDING
THREATS
Unemployed Underpaid
Housing Health Infrastruct
TOO MANY CHIEF'S NOT ENOUGH INDIANS
No more musig Statement


THREATS
FINANCIAL CONSTRAINT. -BELOW LIKELIHOOD 2024
FUNDING REQUIRED
FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS -NO $ 2030
2024 - 2028
DECISION MAKING IN COMMUNITY
FUNDING DIRECTED TO NEEDS
TRADITION/ LANGUAGE/ CULTURE
RECOGNISED
Established Council of Elders
STAFF RESOURCES
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
TRAINING. Opportunities Community Focused.
Consistent Message. Comms


2028 - 2032
DIRECT FUNDING - MIDDLE MAN
STAFF RESOURCES
YOUTH
FUNDING
TRADITION / LANGUAGE/ CULTURE
THREATS
No more musig statement
FUNDING REQUIRED

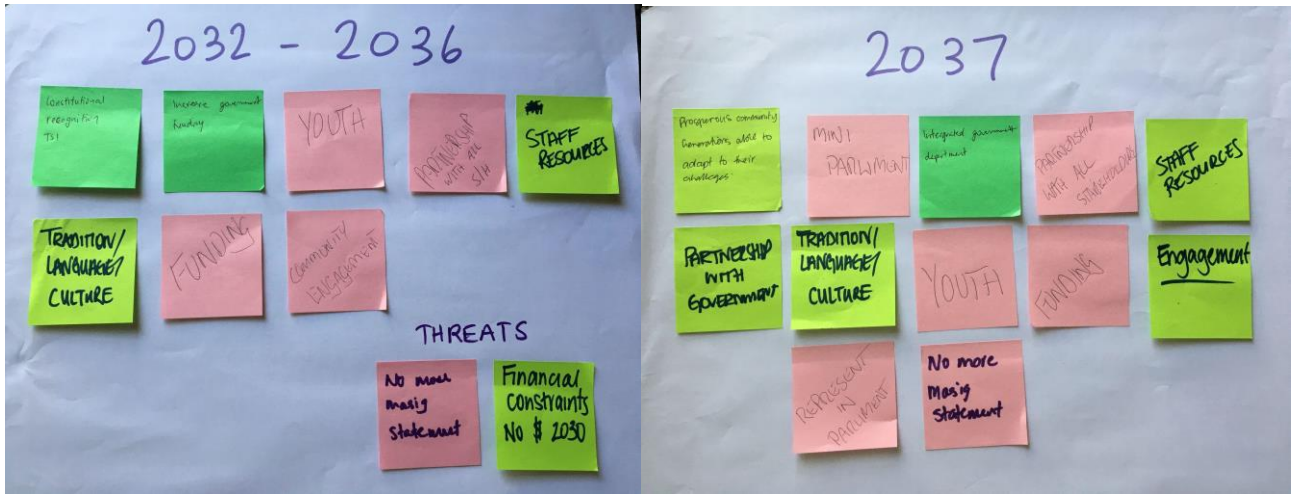
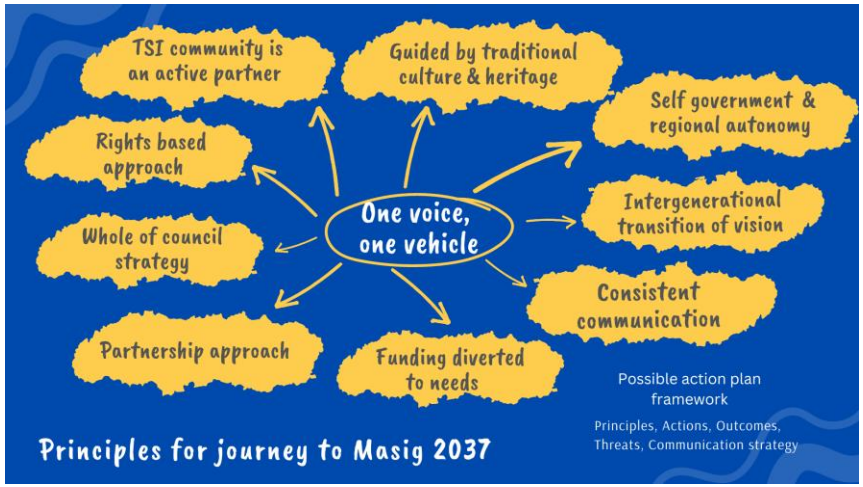


Diagram B: Timeline of actions across 5 council cycles

The timeline exercise is just a starting point for considering what is required to make the Masig statement a reality. It can be added to over time. The scenarios and timeline exercises can be carried out at community level and also with Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula council colleagues as a way of taking as many people as possible on the journey and creating ownership for the Masig process.

A number of *themes* emerged from the timeline exercise. The themes are presented as principles in Diagram C below:



Section 2, the next section of this report, combines the principles with the comments in timeline exercise to create an action planning framework for Councillors and the Executive team to consider. The comments from the 2022 - 2024 poster have been entered into an action plan framework to show how it might work.

Section 2: Draft TSIRC Action Planning Framework showing 2022 - 2024 cycle (NB all content is from TSIRC councillors/executive directors workshop input)

Principles (based on themes)	**2022 - 2024 actions to realise the principles**	**2022 - 2024 outcomes & measures**	**Risks/Threats /Challenges**	**Communication strategy**
TSI community is an active partner	House of Review set up to oversee cultural sensitivity, protocol & lore *Community & capacity building activities (LO comment) TBC*	Unity House of Review operational	Underemployed, underpaid How might we take community on the journey?	Change happens at the community level - take time to speak with community members & across the region
Rights based approach **Keep ppl at the table, engaged, common interest, invested in it**	Guided by the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	Preserve distinctive & diverse spiritual, material and economic relationship with lands, territories, waters, coastal seas and other resources - connection under Ailan Kastom & Aboriginal tradition	Push back from external stakeholders	
Guided by traditional culture, language & heritage	Respect traditional language and culture		How might we hold the attention of TSI people for 15 years? How do we handle times when the community is losing focus?	
Intergenerational transition of vision	TSI history is taught in Queensland schools Youth engagement strategy developed Investment from all levels of government to deliver Youth Strategy	Next generation understands, values & supports Masig statement Leadership skills developed by many Ensuring new councillors understand their own history, the journey to the Masig	How might we involve younger generations? What is the vehicle that will carry us to 2023? Lack of education about TSI history in schools Sustaining commitment & drive	Socialising regional message

	Youth Parliament held	statement, its significance, the challenges and the need to speak with one voice	for our Masig vision No more Masig statement	
Partnership approach	Stakeholder mapping to work out who needs to listen Reestablish state/federal interdepartmental committee as described by Councillor Lui	One voice across 3 tiers of government State/federal governments accountable to TSIRC/TSC/NPA People listen to understand, not to respond	How can we make the Masig statement practical in the regions? How might we build relationships with other stakeholders?	
Funding diverted to needs	A comment was made about conducting an audit - could be included here	Adequate/integrated regional services	How to secure funding for strategic discussions to realise the Masig goals? Financial constraints below liquidity in 2024 Inadequate housing, health & infrastructure funds	
Whole of council approach			'Too many chiefs, not enough indians' Adequate resourcing for this work	*"The work starts now - how to communicate to community."* *"Lightbulb for me - 15 islands, 15 lifestyles but we can sing one song"* *Quotes from TSIRC Councillors Nov 10th*
Self government & regional autonomy -	ROC established & learns from other ROCs that are operating well (ALGA assistance with this?) LTC Paths to Treaty Re-establish Joint Ministerial	Integrated/harmonised governance model Influential in region Maintain independence & integrity	What can we do when stakeholders are not listening? Regional misalignment	How do we take the *Voice from the Deep* to others? How can we bring others along?

Hilda Mosby: wear many hats, relationship with community most important	Advisory Committee? Clr Lui	*Keep governance structures crystal clear (not over governed) Cmwth funds LG/ROC directly and steps back (from meeting with Dr Sara) TBC*	Fragmentation of governance structures & messages Sustaining commitment & drive for our Masig vision No more Masig statement Masig is overshadowed by the other priorities	

This action plan is incomplete. For example, it doesn't consider the mechanism for TSIRC, TSC and NPARC collaboration. It is intended to be a starting point which is updated following discussions at community, regional and council levels over the next 15 years.

To increase Council's reach & impact, the action plan can link to cultural elements that are shared across the TSI region - music, community dialogues, culture & customs around ancestors, history, historical celebration days eg Aug 23rd.

Post workshop observations

- Local government is the core vehicle for driving the Masig Statement forward. The other levels of government or agencies join TSIRC, TSC and NPARC to implement your vision in the region.
- In local government, your authority comes from the decisions made at a properly constituted council meeting. Your authority with state and federal counterparts comes from your meetings, so continue to make agreements about next steps on the Masig Statement in council meetings.
- You have a united team on Council at the moment - go for it! The support of all councillors may not be consistent across 15 years. Manage the ebbs and flows by accelerating TSIRC's work when you can.
- When someone says no to Masig, listen to understand. There is always wisdom in the 'no'. In change programs, spend a lot of time listening to the 'no' - it is where the *real* story unfolds. *"There is a crack in every system that lets the light in."*
- Swap the story line from *'We need to change!'* which requires resources to *'There is an abundance of change happening all around us and people who are making the transition can help others*" to show that change is possible, people are willing to try new ways and self determination is the norm that is gaining momentum.

This confidential report was prepared for TSIRC by Sandy Killick, CEO, Democracy Matters.

Democracy Matters is a non partisan leadership training organisation committed to growing democracy between elections. We work with local, state and federal representatives to build their skills and confidence to respond to the challenges in their term of office. Democracymatters.com.au