

9 December 2021

MEDIA STATEMENT: CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE TORRES STRAIT

The following statement can be attributed to Mayor Phillemon Mosby, Torres Strait Island Regional Council:

I am deeply concerned that our island communities, ecosystems, infrastructure, livelihoods, and wellbeing are being significantly impacted by the changing climate.

The impact of sea level rise combined with extreme weather events leading to tidal inundation and island erosion is a major worry for all Torres Strait residents.

Places of significance such as burial sites have recently been impacted by climatic changes, and the prospect of losing more such sites is a reality.

Council will continue to have serious conversations around climate change, and advocate for further investments for the implementation of protection works to priority island communities.

This includes building seawalls, sand replenishment, and maintaining foreshores to protect cultural sites of importance.

In particular, Council is currently lobbying for Government funding for the following projects, which are ready to commence:

- \$500,000 for Resilience Champions.
- \$20 million to commence and complete critical work of known at-risk areas and identified areas that will sustain greater adverse impact due to climate change.
- \$15 million for management and future prevention of climate-related impacts on road and drainage.

A commitment to enable the engagement of 'Resilience Champions' to run community-based adaptation and resilience programs will support a wider strategy to ensure communities are aware of how they can contribute to climate resilience.

These roles were highlighted as a recommendation in the Torres Strait Regional Adaptation and Resilience Plan 2016-2021.

It's hard to predict exactly what our islands will look like in 30, 40 or 50 years' time.

However, with rising sea levels, we have to face the reality that if we do nothing about it now, there could be catastrophic events ahead.

Coastal protection and climate resilience will inform our ability to protect our land, preserve our important sites, and continue living where we do.

We all have a responsibility to work together to help protect our communities, islands, and culture from the threat of climate change.

Ends