

Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business Leeanne Enoch's announcement for the **\$2.135M for the Torres Strait digital infrastructure** project is welcome news for the region.

I would personally like to thank and recognise the ongoing support of both Premier Palaszczuk and Minister Enoch for their commitment to the future social and economic development of our communities.

### **TSIRC lobbies the State and Federal Government to ensure Digital Expansion for the region.**

To ensure this project gains momentum and **results** I have committed my Council to lobbying the State and Federal to ensure this project is not forgotten, or delayed any longer.

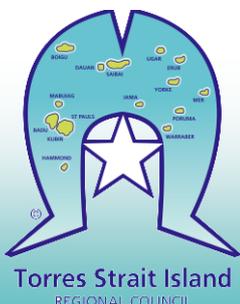
Mobile coverage is accessible for only 50% of our region. Despite our current high-cost, low coverage environment, we are committed to facilitating internet access and digital literacy for our communities. The Project is an infrastructure upgrade which will completely open up communications for *all* of our island communities.

Last May 2016, I travelled to Canberra to meet with Federal Ministers and Shadow Portfolio holders to articulate the critical importance of the project and seek necessary support for roll-out.

I also lobbied Queensland Premier Palaszczuk and Minister Enoch on her visit to the Torres Strait - and again with Minister Enoch and the offices of the Premier, the Treasurer and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Partnerships (DATSIP), back in 2016. These meetings are critical to moving forward with our region's critical infrastructure needs.

The current insufficient, outdated communications infrastructure restricts personal use and basic business operations and access to education and training, and essential services. This has life threatening and complex social and economic implications.

Communications infrastructure upgrades will deliver multiple socio-economic, educational, health and community safety outcomes. The Australian Human Rights Commission agrees that the right to Internet access is critical in "redressing structural disadvantage".



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in our culture, for our future.

## The Project

The **Torres Strait Digital Expansion Project** proposes to greatly increase the Core Network backbone capacity linking the mainland throughout the central and northern islands. This upgraded backhaul capacity will support upgrade of existing 3G mobile base stations at Moa, Iama, Masig and Mer to 4G capability and the establishment of new 3G/4G base stations at Mabuiag, Ugar, Boigu, Dauan, Warraber and Poruma as well as supporting provision of high-speed fibre services to Government agencies at all communities.

## Project Partnerships and Funding

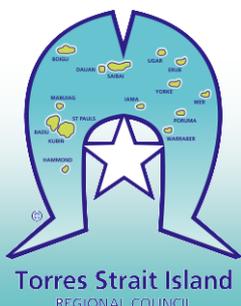
This is a unique and critical opportunity for Local, State, Federal Government and Telstra to work in partnership to achieve full mobile communications coverage to build personal and business digital literacy for our region's business, educational, health, emergency response needs.

The total project cost over the implementation lifespan is \$23.29M. Phase 1 is fully secured with financial support from Telstra, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and TSRA. TSIRC have now secured over three-quarters of the funds and are urging Federal Government to commit the additional \$6.39M through the Building Better Regions Fund so this 'game changer' project for our region can be fully realised.

Let us be part of the digital economy.

Mayor Fred Gela

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