



Queensland Government Deputations
October 2016



Torres Strait Island
REGIONAL COUNCIL



Waste Management in the Torres Strait Region

Presented by: Mayor Fred Gela

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Recommendation:

That the Queensland Government:

- Fund the initial \$5m waste metal clean up of the Torres Strait region
- Engage with TSIRC and the Federal government regarding long-term, sustainable and environmentally sensitive regional waste management strategy and infrastructure for the Torres Strait region.

Background:

Generations of whitegoods, car bodies, plant and metal waste are piling up on our pristine islands. Insufficient land is available to stockpile metal waste in the one location. There has never been a waste metal clean-up on the islands.

As a result, Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC) waste depots are in breach of our environmentally relevant activity license (notice given by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection). Landfills are licensed for the trenching method of disposal, but are full and now stockpiling above ground level.

Council urgently needs funds to eliminate this historical problem so we can go forward into a sustainable waste management strategy.

Key Issues:

The accumulated waste metal poses major health risks to our communities including:

- Disease sources
- Ground water contamination
- Breeding sites for pests and feral animals.

TSRA initially funded \$1.1 million for landfill remediation. However during our recent water shortage crisis TSRA redirected Council's entire fund towards providing emergency desalination units. Waste metal removal solutions are immediately available, and can be commenced as soon as funding is available. Council have approached waste metal contractors regarding this issue.

The cost of a one-off waste metal clean up of the region will cost up to \$5 million, extending the useful life of the landfills. This will provide a safe living environment for families living in our island communities.