
Media Release | Mayor Gela's Christmas Message

Firstly, I thank God for his many blessings and acknowledge our Elders, past and present, our Native Title holders, spiritual leaders across the Torres Strait.

I would also like to acknowledge the TSIRC family - all 370 of us - which is made up of our dedicated employees and Councillor's across 15 island communities. I thank our constituents, for their ongoing support and commitment to the betterment of our region.

To forge strong pathways into the new year it is important to consider future housing development for the region and inform you on our budget review process, and priority capital works projects for our 15 communities.

Positive change continues, as we embark on Council's second phase of enterprise bargaining for our valued employees. We also continue with the recruitment process of a new CEO to support the next phase of improved governance arrangements for our region.

Housing Development

In June 2018 the NPARIH (National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing) program ends.

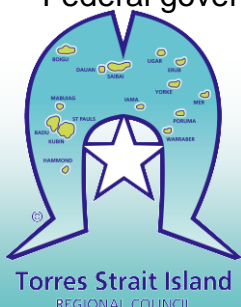
Eight years in to a 10-year program, 48 houses are complete and by early 2017, and an additional 77 houses are on track for completion. There are a further 76 houses planned for construction prior to June 2018, subject to resolution of land tenure.

To ensure that all of these 76 houses are built, it is essential that ILUAs (Indigenous Land Use Agreements) are resolved. Where ILUA's are not resolved in time, TSIRC will re-allocate new housing to communities where ILUAs are resolved. This will allow build completion (so that funding is not returned to Federal government) prior to June 2018.

NPARIH has targets for Indigenous employment and use of local businesses and their services. **TSIRC have exceeded both the Indigenous employment target by 448%, and the local business target by 202%.**

This is evidence of why programs such as these should be adequately resourced and managed at a community level. I have continued advocating at the highest levels for regional economic development opportunities.

After June 2018, the policy framework and funding for new builds are not yet clear. The Federal government is currently reviewing the performance of the NPARIH program. It is



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in the Federal government's best interest to take up the review recommendations and determine the learnings, benefits and improvements that can be made. Future direction should also meet the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) 'building block' targets to reduce homelessness and overcrowding.

Budget Review

This week (14th December) we will be meeting on Warraber to adopt a revised budget for known changes in our operating landscape. These changes have improved Council's operating position and cash flow projections.

Due to reallocations and additional funding, since the original budget adoption, TSIRC have secured a \$2.9M increase in our capital works budget. For people on the ground this means on top of the already committed 2016 – 17 projects, you will also be seeing the following project planning commence in the new year:

- Roads repaired on Badu, Boigu, Erub, KIRRIRI (Hammond) Mabuyag and Moa.
- Improved road safety projects at St Pauls, Kubin and KIRRIRI.
- Improved upgrades for the new wharf construction at KIRRIRI.
- Increased operations for our 5 desalination units – responding to prioritised community water shortages.
- Increased recoverable works for an additional 5 houses for land that has Native Title resolved (On-top of the 9 houses already secured).
- Additional funds awarded for the Badu Infrastructure Project for 11 new houses.

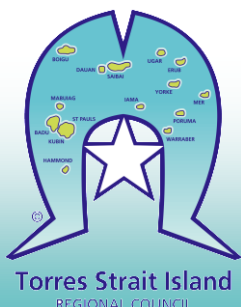
Capital Works Commitments and Priorities

TSIRC have several co-funded projects with TSRA which are 'dollar for dollar' funding opportunities. Already secured and underway are:

- Ugar Community Hall
- Boigu Gantry and Hoist repairs and relocation
- Erub Lagoon Fencing
- Arkai (Kubin) WTP shed repair / upgrade
- Wug (St Pauls) WTP shed repair/upgrade

TSIRC continue to negotiate with TSRA to secure funds for future community priority projects. These projects are prioritised per community, by Council and 'tested' through TSIRC's sustainability matrix tool as part of our Asset Management Plan process.

Council budgeted \$744,000, which will be used as a base to leverage 'match for match' funding opportunities to fund capital projects this financial year. Council has already



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committed \$359,000 and was successful in securing matching grant funds from TSRA's Minor Infrastructure Project. Council anticipates to be able to do the same for the \$385,000.

Employee Certified Agreement - Consultative Process

The new Industrial Relations Act will be effective March 2017 and a new Award will take effect from 01 January 2017. Both have significant implications for Councils.

The new Industrial Relations Act will herald in many changes with the majority of these placing Queensland Local and State Government employees in line with Federal Government conditions.

In the New Year, TSIRC will engage in an inclusive, and consultative process with experienced employee representatives so that enterprise bargaining can commence.

A special session for Council's that operate under an existing single award will take place in the New Year. This will be especially important for those Councils who rely on the award and local administrative arrangements to prescribe conditions, where enterprise bargaining agreements are not in place.

We look forward to fair negotiations with our valued employees to ensure TSIRC continue to operate as an employer of choice and strive for both best practice and innovation.

Moving forward with change | CEO Recruitment

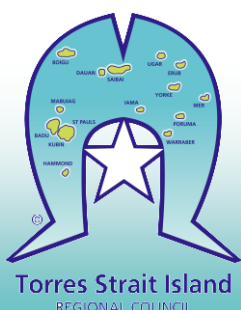
CEO Recruitment closed on the 2nd of December 2016, and the recruitment panel are now assessing applications. Shortlisting will occur prior to Christmas, with interviews scheduled for early in the New Year. I am pleased with the response and look forward to announcing our new CEO in the months ahead. Until this time, Chris McLaughlin, Executive Manager Corporate Services will continue to lead Council's operations in an acting capacity.

In closing, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year. I personally thank everyone in our region for your encouragement, patience and understanding. I acknowledge the immense support from our Elders and while everything unfolds around us during this time of the year, I wish everyone a safe festive season.

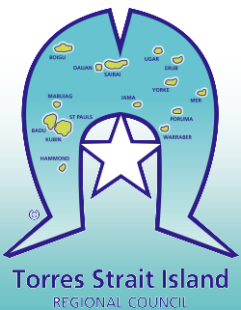
God Bless



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