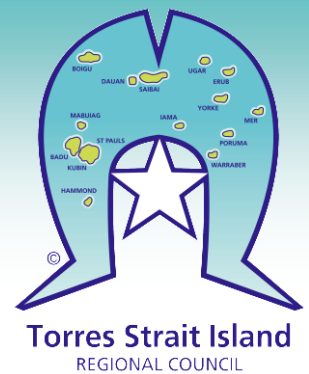


MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 28th April



TSIRC Council Meeting with Minister Enoch

Torres Strait Island Regional Council invited Leeanne Enoch, the Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Science and Innovation to visit the Torres Strait so she could gain a better understanding for people living on the islands. Mayor Gela said that Council was impressed that the Minister visited the islands to meet with them within 10 weeks of holding her portfolio. Council is pleased she had shown that she is committed to working with the Torres Strait Islander people at a local level.

Mayor Gela said that there were a raft of issues discussed, including Indigenous business ownership, employment and traineeships and apprenticeships. The purpose of the day was to advocate for improved social housing for our residents - including repair and maintenance, community capital works and advocating towards investment in home ownership. As a result of the meeting Mayor Gela commented that “home ownership for our people, is very real”

The Council also raised concerns over ongoing issues with social housing that had been left unresolved for too long. Mayor Gela requested that Council work more closely with the Minister on addressing these issues for our region. Minister Enoch expressed her vision of “Council working together with State Government to assess local strengths and weaknesses and see local housing providers established”.

Members of Council also discussed the capacity for our constituents to build and work on their own houses, which was often hindered due to policies that failed to consider the future of the region. Mayor Gela discussed the Indigenous Employment Policy, emphasizing particular concern around the policy’s lack of monitoring. Mayor Gela briefed the Minister on TSIRC’s own Indigenous Employment Opportunity Plan, urging the Minister to support the

plan and also discussed providing apprenticeship programs through the Council to improve repairs and maintenance in community.

Minister Enoch advised that money should be locked into the Torres Strait, rather than taken back out of community and given to FIFO companies and their employees. The Minister discussed the opportunity for bundling projects so the opportunity for 2 or 3-year contracts can be assured to employees. Minister Enoch recognised that regional policies need to be implemented and acknowledged that the Torres Strait has the capacity to build in their own region.

Minister Enoch encouraged TSIRC to continue to work on strategic issues and to set small, brave goals and create action around those goals.

For more information please contact:

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