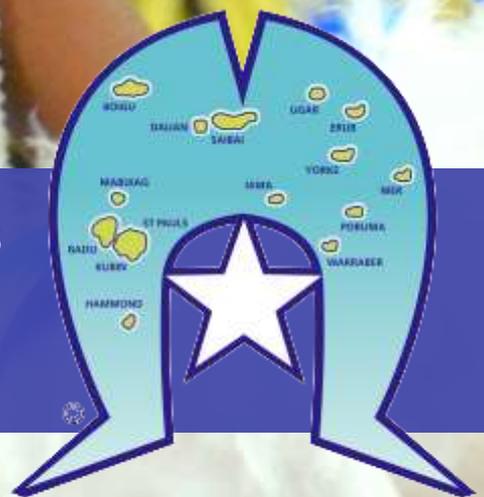




Queensland Government Deputations
October 2016



Torres Strait Island
REGIONAL COUNCIL



Climate Change Adaptation

Presented by: Mayor Fred Gela

Author: Torres Strait Island Regional Council

Presented: 4 – 7 October 2016

Recommendation:

That the Queensland Government:

- Commit further investment for Climate Change Adaptation in the Torres Strait, for priorities outlined in the 2014 *Repair and Construction of Seawalls in the Torres Strait* agreement with TSRA, including:
 - Sea, wave return and bund walls
 - Sand replenishment
 - Foreshore maintenance to protect important cultural sites and essential to life infrastructure.

Background:

The Torres Strait is experiencing dramatic changes to our weather patterns and environment unlike anywhere else in Australia. The recent El Nino weather pattern saw extensive coral bleaching and rises in ocean temperatures, which are having immediate and devastating effects. Families are watching their communities being washed away.

During king tides, which occur around 15 times a year, the wastewater system has to be shut down at Saibai (treatment plant microorganisms will not survive in salt water), and emptied, untreated, into the sea.

These tidal impacts are not only a public health issue. Exposure of the wastewater system to salt water this frequently leads to accelerated corrosion and deterioration of critical to life infrastructure. Components of Council's wastewater systems with a standard expected useful life of 50 years need replacing after only 10 years of service given Council's environment and conditions.

Key Issues:

The \$26.2 million granted to deliver seawalls is clearly not enough and leaves Council in our current difficult position where we are being forced to decide which of our communities survive and which do not.

It is likely that the final cost for the current seawall construction at Saibai alone will come in around \$25 - 26 million, and that is with significant in-kind contribution from Council.

The seawall for Boigu was initially costed by the consultant at \$2.6 million. Latest costing for Boigu based on recent market testing indicate the cost will be closer to \$6.9 million.

Poruma Island, a sand cay, is being washed away and is in immediate need of beach replenishment. Our other sand cay islands, Warraber, Iama and Masig also face immediate threat of inundation and erosion.

TSIRC is working with TSRA on a submission to the QCoast2100 Coastal Hazard Adaptation program to fund a 1-2 year systems-based, data driven plan for Climate

Change Adaptation over time. This funding program is a valuable opportunity to continue to develop robust data and planning for Climate Change Adaptation in our region.

While this planning occurs we have climate adaptation needs which require immediate action, as outlined in our original 2014 Repair and Construction of Seawalls in the Torres Strait agreement with TSRA.

