

MEDIA RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE

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MAYOR MOSBY ECHOES REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONCERNS OVER CHINESE MULTIFUNCTIONAL FISHERIES FACILITY BORDERING THE TORRES STRAIT



Community leaders within the outer islands of the Torres Strait have raised concerns about the newly signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Government of Papua New Guinea and a Chinese company to build a \$204m “comprehensive multi-function fishery industrial park” on Daru Island.

Daru Island is only kilometres from several Torres Strait communities. The Torres Strait Islands share Australia’s only international border which is managed under a traditional treaty between 14 Torres Strait Island Regional Council communities and 13 coastal villages of Papua New Guinea. The proximity of this border can truly be felt when standing on the shores of one of our top western islands and looking directly at Papua New Guinea, which is only a short dinghy ride away.

The Torres Strait Treaty concerns matters of sovereignty and maritime boundaries and allows free movement of the traditional inhabitants for traditional activities, including fishing in the Torres Strait Protected Zone, which is an area recognised by Australia and Papua New Guinea as needing special attention. The main reason for this zone is to ensure traditional inhabitants can carry on their traditional way of life, and for preservation and protection of the land, sea and air of the Torres Strait, including the native plant, animal and marine life.

Earlier this week Cr. Phillemon Mosby, Mayor of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, stated: **“We, as the traditional inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands, are concerned that a Chinese company can simply just come in and build a large multifunctional facility right on our doorstep. We are concerned about the ramifications of this facility for the health and sustainability of our waters and marine life, and on our traditional way of living and the security of our borders.”**

After recent deputations with the Federal Government in Canberra, Mayor Mosby has echoed several regional leaders to call on the Prime Minister, Minister for Home Affairs, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs to meet with elected leaders to discuss the many environmental concerns and potential breaches of the original intent of the Torres Strait Treaty in light of this MOU.

Mayor Mosby has **“stressed the existing post pandemic, and future need should this venture continue, for increased surveillance and protection of Australia’s most porous border.”**

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