

Torres Strait Island Regional Council

# *Social Housing Strategy 2024*

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# Introduction

TSIRC Housing are dedicated to delivering housing solutions that respect, preserve and promote the rich cultural heritage of the Torres Strait Islander communities. We understand that housing is more than just shelter, it is a vital part of community life, cultural identity and well-being. By delivering quality, culturally appropriate housing, we ensure that our homes meet the unique social, cultural and environmental needs of the Torres Strait Islander people.

Every First Nations person in Queensland has a safe and secure place to call home that meets personal, location and cultural needs. This Home provides the foundations to thrive.

(Our Place: First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-2027)

Boost our Social Housing Big Build - 53,500 new social homes by 2046, providing 1200 social homes for First Nations communities.

(Homes for Queenslanders)







*Our region*

## OUR REGION

The Torres Strait is a strait between Australia and Papua New Guinea. It is 151 km (94 mi) wide at its narrowest extent. To the south is Cape York Peninsula, the northernmost extremity of the Australian mainland. To the north is the Western Province of Papua New Guinea, only 4 km from Saibai.

The Strait links the Coral Sea in the east with the Arafura Sea and Gulf of Carpentaria in the west. Although it is an important international shipping channel, it is very shallow (water depth of 7-15 metres) with a maze of reefs and islands with strong tidal currents in the narrow channels.

Geographically, the islands in the Torres Strait can be divided into four main groups: an eastern group of high volcanic islands; a central group of low sandy islands; a western group of high islands composed of volcanic and granitic rocks; and a northern group of low islands composed of mangrove mud and peats.



# Our region

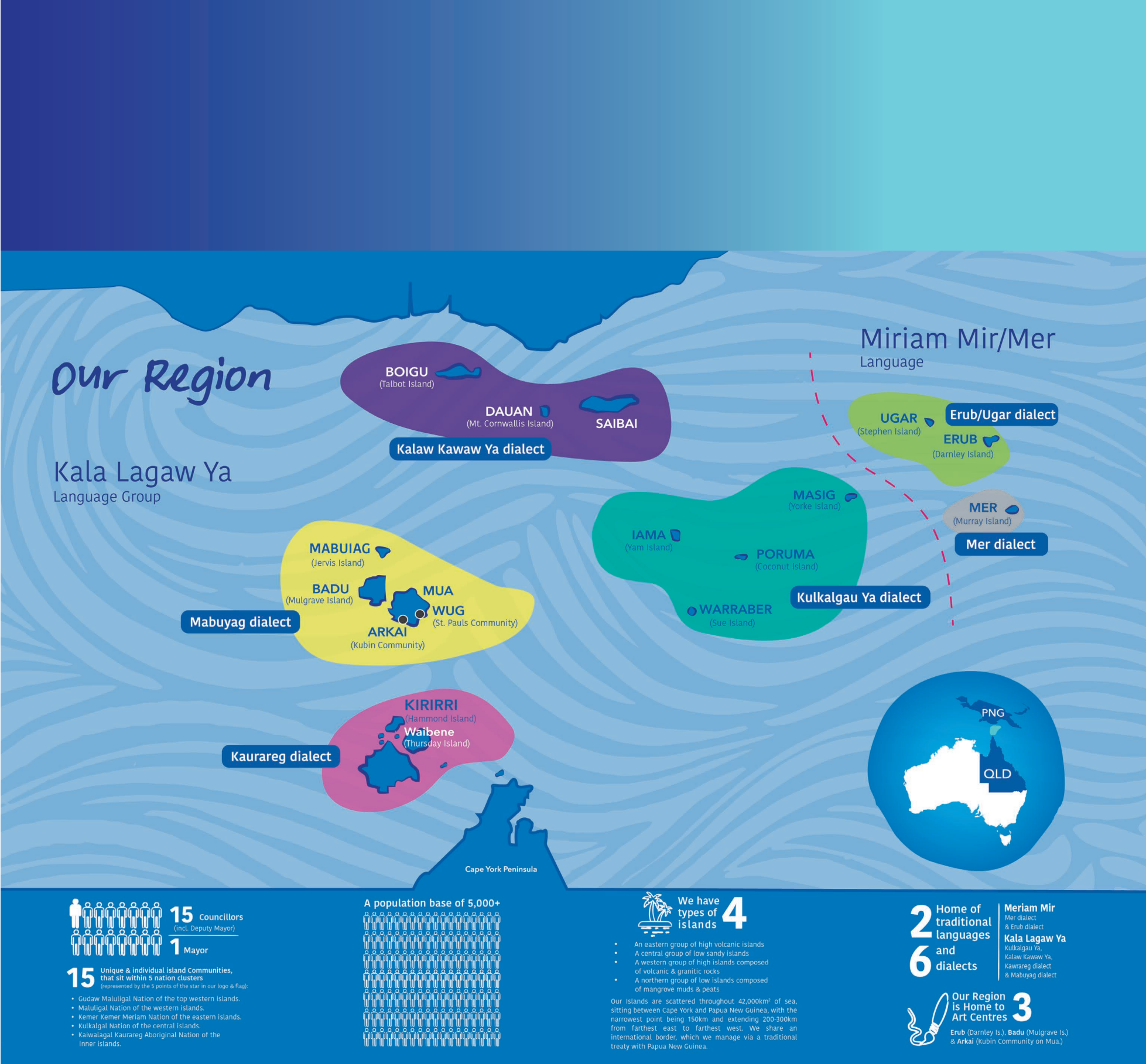
## REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Council’s local government area is rich in culture with two traditional languages and six dialects, as well as Youmpla Tok (Torres Strait Creole) and English spoken across the region.

Our local government area is the most northern Council in Australia, distributed across 42,000km2 of sea. Our region consists of 15 divisions across 14 islands, extending 200 to 300km from far east to far west of our local government area.

Our local government area is an area covered by several governance frameworks with an internal border, the Torres Strait Protected Zone and the Torres Strait Treaty zone.

Council’s portfolio of responsibilities extends beyond the standard remit of local government. Our operations are spread across 42,000km2 and include the provision of 75 home support services and the management of regional transport infrastructure.





# The Masig statement

## THE MASIG STATEMENT

23 August 2022

### MALUNGU YANGU WAKAY

The Voice from the Deep

#### PURPOSE

To establish principles and parameters on behalf of the peoples of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area to act together in unity, in order to pursue and achieve self-determination and regional autonomy and, in so doing, preserve our distinctive and diverse spiritual, material and economic relationship with the lands, territories, waters, coastal seas and other resources with which we have a connection under Ailan Kastom and Aboriginal tradition.

#### AIMS

- In accordance with Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13th September 2007 and supported by the Australian Government on 3rd April 2009 and the Preamble of the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld), we seek to achieve our right to self-determination as the peoples of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area.*
- By virtue of our sovereign right, we have the right to freely determine our political status and to freely pursue our economic, social and cultural development.*
- In keeping with Article 4 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in exercising our right to self-determination, we have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to our internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.*
- Therefore, we will create partnerships with Key Regional Stakeholders, the Queensland and Australian governments together with other relevant organisations to better equip us to work together to achieve our regional goals and aspirations; and in working together as representatives of the peoples of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area obtain and safeguard our human rights enshrined in International, National and Queensland law.*

<b>PAST</b>	23 August 1937 was the beginning of regional autonomy ✓ The Torres Strait Island Councillors Conference.
<b>PRESENT</b>	23 August 2022 is the beginning of a new beginning, a culturally united path to regional sovereignty The MASIG Statement.
<b>FUTURE</b>	23 August 2037 will be the beginning of regional sovereignty.

“Access to housing is a fundamental human right that still needs to be realised for many of our 15 isolated and remote island communities, particularly those impacted by our unique location near international borders.

As the current Housing Service Provider we continue to deliver both tenancy and property management services. Ensuring safe, affordable and secure housing for our people across the region is a challenging endeavour, however it can also be a real opportunity, with the right policy setting, investment from Government and strong partnerships with our communities.

To achieve better health outcomes, creating healthier, safer and thriving communities, providing appropriate housing is essential. When families are happy and feel safe, they can flourish, prosper and thrive and most importantly feel valued, enabling them to maintain kinship and their deep affiliations to land and sea country.

Our ten-year strategic plan for social housing offers a clear road map for Council to engage in dialogue, and advocate to all levels of Government to work in collaboration and partnership with our Council as we move toward achieving our aims outlined in The Masig Statement.”

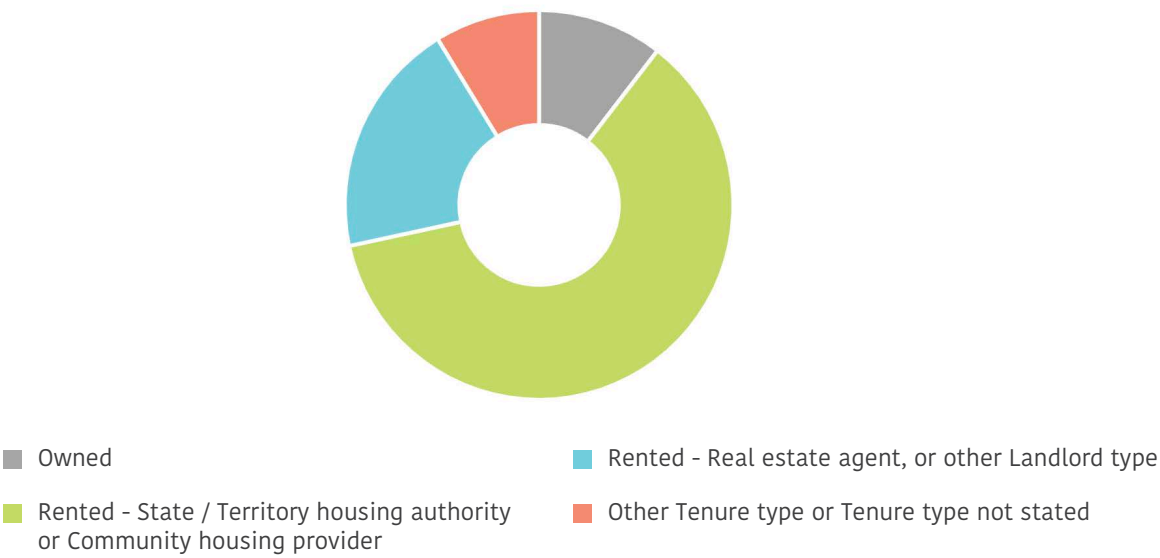
Phillemon Mosby  
TSIRC Mayor



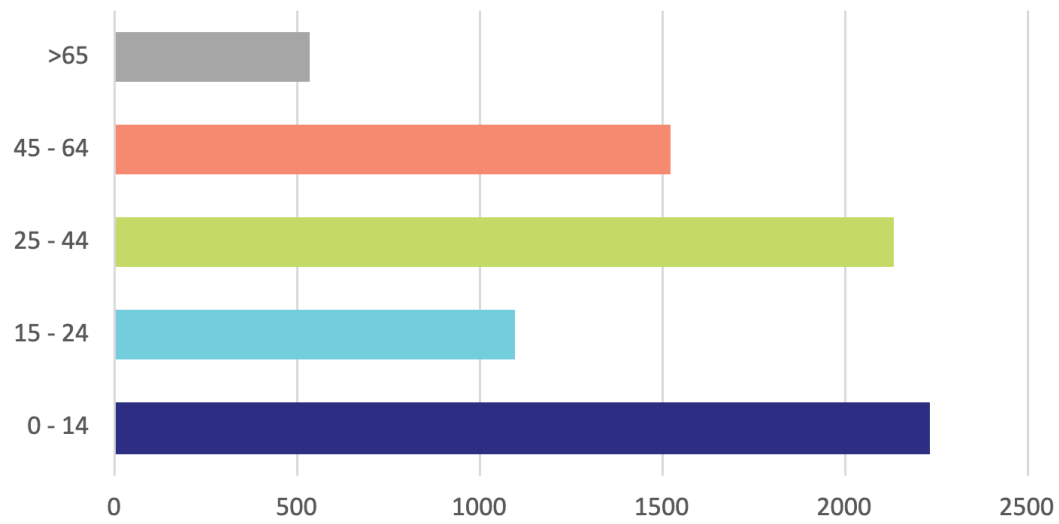


# Our communities

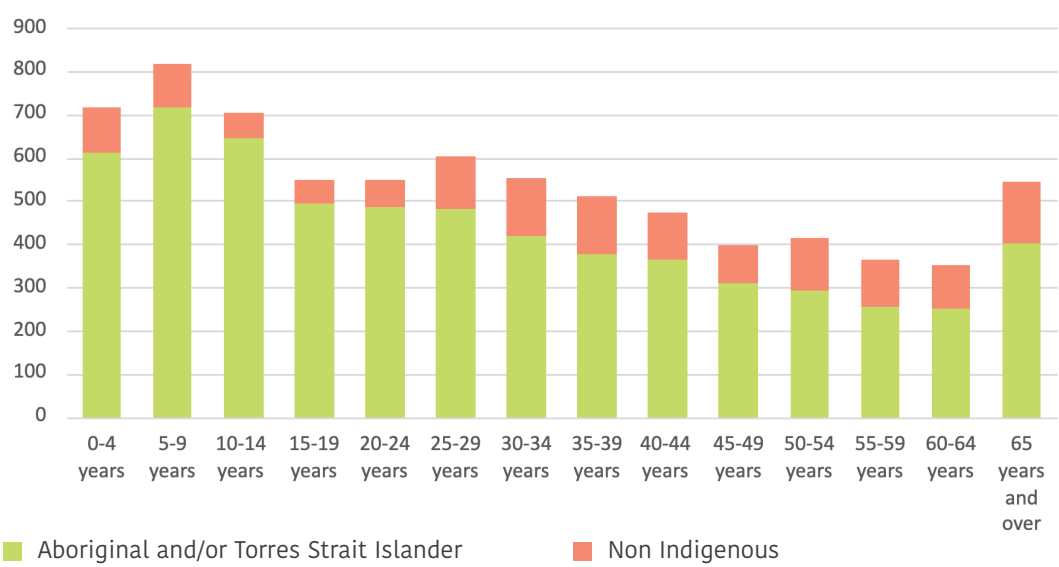
## Tenure



## Age



## First Nations status



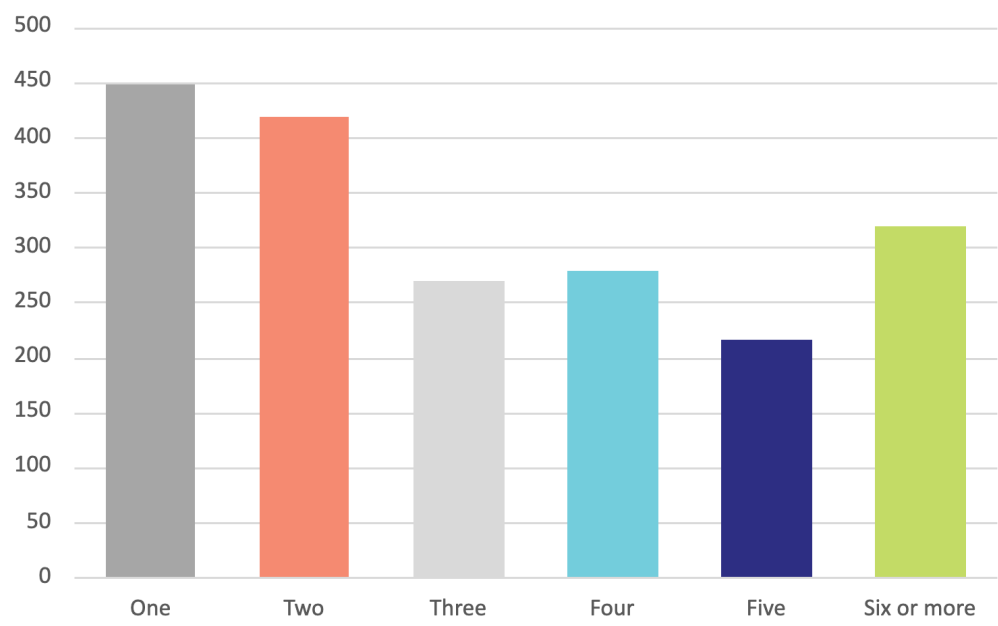
## Income



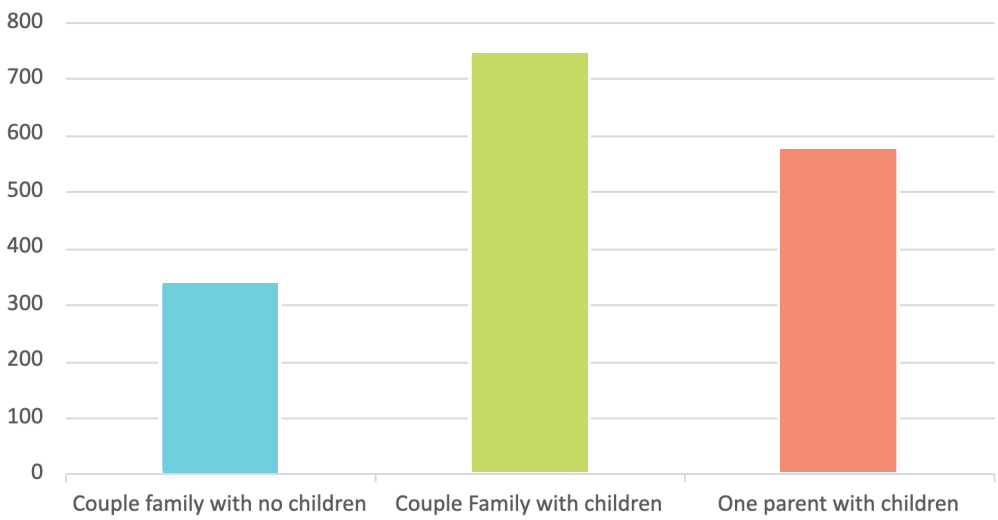


# Our communities

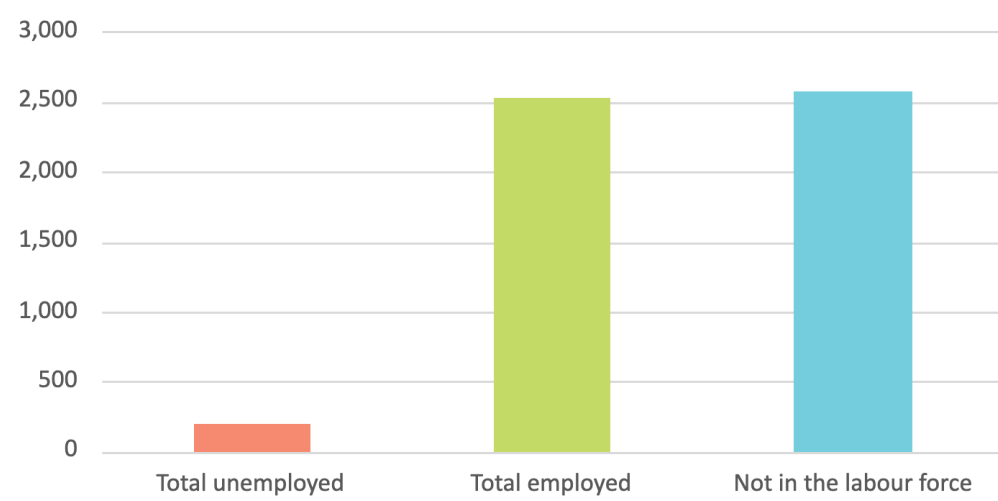
## Household composition



## Family composition



## Employment status





# Our customs and culture

For Torres Strait Islander people, housing is more than just a place to live - it is the heart of community life, cultural continuity and social well-being. Homes are where traditions are passed down, families gather and connections to land and sea are maintained.

Housing reflects the values of kinship, respect for Elders and the collective spirit that defines the Torres Strait Islander way of life. It provides the foundation for strong, resilient communities, supporting not only physical shelter but cultural identity, social unity and a deep connection to the natural environment.





# our housing need

Housing Need Data held by Council -  
TSIRC Housing Department categories  
the Housing Need through the islands  
in 3 main categories:

## **PRIORITY ONE**

**VERY HIGH NEED: Homeless, Child Safety, Health,  
Disability and Domestic Violence**

## **PRIORITY TWO**

**HIGH NEED: Overcrowding**

## **PRIORITY THREE**

**MODERATE/LOWER NEED: Return to Community**

The vast majority of housing in the Torres Strait Island LGA is social housing supplied and managed by the Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC) - with 2021 ABS Census data showing that 89.4% of dwellings are rented and 6.2% fully owned and 0.3% being purchased.

The rate of homelessness is 300 per 10,000 persons compared with 43.2 per 10,000 for Queensland. The capacity to move to private ownership is minimal, with 100% of the population in the most disadvantaged quintile of the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA).







# our cohorts and their needs

## FAMILIES - LARGE FAMILIES WITH MULTI-GENERATIONAL LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

This cohort consists of families that have multiple generations living together under one roof. These households may include grandparents, parents, children and sometimes even extended relatives such as uncles, aunts and cousins. These living arrangements are common in our Communities and can arise due to several factors such as:

**Cultural traditions:** In our culture, it is common for several generations to live together, where the elders are cared for by the younger generations and family bonds are deeply valued.

**Economic necessity:** High housing costs or economic hardship can make multi-generational living a practical solution for sharing expenses, including housing, utilities and caregiving responsibilities.

**Caregiving needs:** In some cases, elderly family members may require care, or young parents may need help with childcare. Multi-generational homes provide a support system where caregiving is shared across generations.

The housing needs for this cohort are often different from those of nuclear families. They typically require larger living spaces with multiple bedrooms, flexible living areas and facilities that cater to both older adults and young children. Homes with accessible features for the elderly, such as ramps or single-level layouts, may also be necessary.





# Our cohorts and their Needs

## FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

This cohort comprises individuals or families, often women and children, who are escaping or have experienced family and domestic violence. They face unique and urgent housing needs, as their primary concern is often immediate safety and security. Survivors of domestic violence often require:

**Safe and secure accommodation:** Short-term crisis accommodation such as women's shelters or refuges, where they can safely escape their abuser and receive support.

**Longer - term housing solutions:** Once they have moved out of immediate danger, these individuals and families need stable, long-term housing options. Affordable housing in safe neighbourhoods is essential and sometimes survivors need support transitioning into independent living.

**Specialised support services:** This group often benefits from integrated support services, such as counselling, legal assistance and access to employment opportunities. The impact of domestic violence on mental health, economic independence and social well-being often requires holistic support systems.

The needs of this cohort extend beyond just housing; a trauma-informed approach that ensures emotional and physical safety is essential in meeting their overall well-being. This cohort's housing needs vary from short term crisis accommodation to long term settlement in a dwelling suitable for the family size and composition.







# Our cohorts and their needs

## SENIORS - INDEPENDENT LIVING

This cohort includes older adults, typically 65 and over, who are still relatively independent but may have some physical limitations or health conditions. These seniors would prefer to live autonomously rather than with family members. The main features of housing suitable for this group include:

**Age-friendly designs:** Homes designed to be age-friendly, with features such as no-step entries, single-level living, wide doorways, grab bars in bathrooms and good lighting.

**Proximity to family:** While seniors may not wish to live directly with their family members, they often prefer to reside nearby. This allows them to maintain a connection with the family unit, while still preserving their own independent and secure living space.

**Community engagement:** Social isolation can be a concern for seniors, so housing solutions MUST include access to community and cultural activities.

**Safety and security:** Homes that are safe and secure are critical for seniors who may be more vulnerable to outside intrusions.

Independent living seniors often seek to age in place, meaning they prefer homes that will accommodate their changing mobility and health needs over time without requiring them to relocate. The housing needs for this cohort are generally single level, smaller and more compact in nature.



# Our cohorts and their Needs

## SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES

This cohort comprises single parents, typically mothers, raising one or more children on their own. Single-parent families often face specific challenges in balancing work, childcare and household responsibilities. Their housing needs include:

**Suitable family housing:** Single-parent families are usually dependant on Government welfare payments, making social housing critical. They need housing that is safe and provides sufficient space for children, including multiple bedrooms.

**Safety and stability:** Many single-parent families have experienced instability, whether through divorce, the death of a partner, or other life changes. Therefore, stable housing is essential for providing a secure environment where the parent and children can thrive.

**Community support services:** Single parents will need access to social services, such as financial assistance, parenting resources and childcare. In addition, housing that offers community connections can help single parents build a support network.

Single-parent households, especially those headed by women, are a key group for housing programs aimed at creating equitable opportunities. The housing needs for this cohort vary and they require a dwelling suitable for the family size and composition.







# Our cohorts and their needs

## SINGLE ADULT MEN

This cohort includes single men, often of working age, who live independently and are typically without dependents. This group can encompass a wide range of individuals, from young men to middle-aged or elderly men who may be facing health issues, or homelessness. Their housing needs may include:

**Single housing units:** Single adult males often need access to social housing options such as single-room occupancy (SRO) units, shared accommodations, or small studio apartments.

**Community proximity:** Single men will require housing that allows them to maintain community connections and cultural customs and traditions.

**Temporary or transitional housing:** Some men may be experiencing temporary homelessness and require transitional housing that provides them with shelter while they wait for a social housing opportunity to arise.

**Health and wellness support:** Mental health, substance abuse, or medical challenges may affect this group disproportionately, meaning they may require housing that includes access to support services such as counselling or healthcare.

The housing needs for this cohort are generally more compact in nature with single bedroom accommodation considered a suitable option. Single adult males often fall through the cracks of social safety nets, making tailored housing solutions important for improving their stability and quality of life.





## *closing the gap*

Providing a safe and secure home for First Nations people is a crucial foundation for enabling individuals and communities to thrive. Safe, secure and culturally appropriate housing not only meets basic needs but also serves as a platform for improving health, education, employment and social and emotional wellbeing.

### **Target 4: Children thrive in the early years**

Culturally appropriate housing that is designed and informed by community members ensures that homes align with the cultural values, practices and child-rearing traditions of the Torres Strait Islander community. This can contribute to creating stable, supportive environments that allow children to grow and thrive. Adequate, stable housing is a key factor in early childhood development. Homes that are not overcrowded and that provide a safe space are essential for the wellbeing of children. Community-Led Place-Based Design ensures that housing design supports extended family structures, which are significant in the Torres Strait Islander culture. This allows children to be raised in environments where they can receive support from a broader kinship network, contributing to their emotional and developmental wellbeing.

### **Target 9: People can secure appropriate, affordable housing**

Culturally appropriate housing, guided by Community-Led Place-Based Design, helps address the specific housing needs of Torres Strait Islander people. For instance, designing homes that accommodate multi-generational living or seasonal migration patterns can better align with their cultural practices and improve their overall living conditions. Community involvement ensures that housing solutions are contextually appropriate, thus reducing the likelihood of overcrowding, as homes are designed with the right size and facilities for the intended family structures and fosters local ownership and pride in the housing projects.

### **Target 13: Families and households are safe**

A community-led approach ensures that housing design incorporates safety features and mechanisms that are in line with cultural norms while addressing concerns about family violence. Appropriately designed housing can also offer spaces that support family privacy and wellbeing, which are critical in reducing tension and conflict within households. Community-led initiatives foster collective responsibility, allowing the community to create housing solutions that support family safety, with the potential to provide culturally safe environments for women and children.

### **Target 14: People enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing**

Housing designed through a Community-Led Place-Based process is likely to incorporate cultural symbols, community gathering spaces and designs that reflect the traditional lifestyle of Torres Strait Islanders. This reinforces cultural identity and pride, directly contributing to social and emotional wellbeing. Having a secure and appropriate place to live is a fundamental determinant of health and wellbeing. Culturally appropriate housing fosters a sense of belonging, which enhances social cohesion and contributes positively to mental health outcomes. The design process itself can empower communities, giving them a voice in shaping their living environments. This empowerment and involvement promote a sense of control over their circumstances, further supporting emotional wellbeing.



# our housing design

The Torres Strait Island Regional Council (TSIRC) has partnered with Qbuild and Office of the Queensland Government Architect to develop a housing design that considers the climatic, cultural and lifestyle needs of the Torres Strait Island people. TSIRC is working closely with QQGA to adapt and modify the design to meet various accommodation needs, including those listed below:

Housing requirement	Design and construction delivery process
Modular House - Lowset	Modern Methods of Construction QQGA open plan island design delivered in a volumetric modular capacity
Modular House - Highset	Modern Methods of Construction QQGA open plan island design delivered in a volumetric modular capacity
Traditional Build - Lowset	QQGA open plan island design delivered in a flatpack kit of parts capacity with onsite assembly
Traditional Build - Highset	QQGA open plan island design delivered in a flatpack kit of parts capacity with onsite assembly
Detached Extension - Lowset	QQGA open plan island design modified for extension arrangements. These designs will be delivered either as MMC volumetric modular units or as flatpack kits, allowing for onsite assembly
Detached Extension - Highset	QQGA open plan island design modified for extension arrangements. These designs will be delivered either as MMC volumetric modular units or as flatpack kits, allowing for onsite assembly
Underbuild/Attached extension	Bespoke designs will be developed based on existing dwellings, utilising durable materials specified for offshore marine conditions, with construction taking place onsite
Duplex/Triplex	QQGA open plan island design will be modified based on land availability and conditions, utilising durable materials specified for offshore marine conditions, with construction taking place onsite.
Low-rise Units	A range of designs will be developed based on land availability and conditions, utilising durable materials specified for offshore marine conditions, with construction taking place onsite





# Land availability and development

Community	Need	Township Lots	Subdivision Required	Subdivision Lots	Cost	Action
Badu	39	32	5-10 Years	30	\$36,780,930	Review and update Masterplan
Boigu	15	4	1-5 Years	37	\$45,363,147	Review and update Masterplan, develop expansion zone concept and undertake community consultation
Dauan	21	3	1-5 Years	26	\$31,876,806	Review and update Masterplan, develop expansion zone concept and undertake community consultation
Erub	7	5	1-5 Years	22	\$26,972,682	Review and update Masterplan, develop expansion zone concept and undertake community consultation
Hammond	20	1	1-5 Years	23	\$28,198,713	Review and update Masterplan, develop expansion zone concept and undertake community consultation
Iama	28	11	5-10 Years	28	\$34,328,868	Review and update Masterplan
Kubin	TBA	19	TBA	14	\$17,164,434	Review and update Masterplan
Mabuiag	3	8	10 Years +	26	\$31,876,806	Review and update Masterplan
Masig	8	15	10 years +	21	\$25,746,651	Review and update Masterplan
Mer	14	12	10 Years +	22	\$26,972,682	Review and update Masterplan
Poruma	7	2	1-5 Years	4	\$4,904,124	Review and update Masterplan, develop expansion zone concept and undertake community consultation
Saibai	16	4	1-5 Years	27	\$33,102,837	Review and update Masterplan, develop expansion zone concept and undertake community consultation
St Pauls	20	23	10 Years +	30	\$36,780,930	Review and update Masterplan
Ugar	2	9	10 Years +	16	\$19,616,496	Review and update Masterplan
Warraber	7	4	5-10 Years	29	\$35,554,899	Seek funding for development of subdivision

- Lots in existing township zone with services in place and minimal development works required - costs nominated in 10 Year Construction Plan
- Subdivision lots achievable as per nominated residential land use category in current Masterplans
- Cost based on *average* per lot *infrastructure costing only* for the Warraber Expansion Zone - 2024 - \$1,226,031 GST inclusive - note this cost is indicative only, no escalation has been considered, and cost will vary per island



## consolidated construction plan

Community	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	Total	Budget
Badu	2	2	2	4	4	3	5	6	6	5	39	\$113,509,838
Boigu	2		2	2		2		3	2	2	15	\$42,987,621
Dauan	1	1		3	2	3	2	4	2	4	22	\$63,035,025
Erub		3	2		2	1	1				9	\$20,710,050
Hammond	2		3		4	2	4		4	1	20	\$56,750,322
Iama	2	4		4	2	4	3	4	2	3	28	\$79,680,438
Mabuiag			3								3	\$7,712,820
Masig		2			3		2	1			8	\$22,184,061
Mer	2		3	2	3		2		2	2	16	\$41,733,264
Poruma		2		2		1				2	7	\$19,682,200
Saibai	2		4		2	2	2		2	2	16	\$45,055,780
St Pauls		3		2	4	4	2	4	1		20	\$56,466,503
Ugar	1								1		2	\$5,560,342
Warraber	2		2	1		4					9	\$24,204,123
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>\$599,272,390</b>



## construction delivery timeline – p1

Community	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	Total	Budget
Badu	2			2	2	2	2	2	2	1	15	\$42,929,854
Boigu	2										2	\$4,800,000
Dauan		1		2							3	\$7,805,846
Erub			2		2						4	\$10,649,990
Hammond	2		1		2						5	\$12,879,050
Iama		2		2		2	1				7	\$18,940,953
Mabuiag			2								2	\$5,141,880
Masig		2									2	\$4,968,000
Mer			1								1	\$2,570,940
Poruma											0	
Saibai			2			2					4	\$10,842,774
St Pauls		1			2						3	\$7,992,110
Ugar											0	
Warraber				1							1	\$2,660,923
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>\$132,182,321</b>



## construction delivery timeline – p2

Community	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	Total	Budget
Badu		2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	17	\$48,660,240
Boigu			2	2		2		2	2	2	12	\$35,134,151
Dauan	1			1		2		2		2	8	\$22,000,665
Erub		3				1	1				5	\$10,060,060
Hammond			2		2		2		2	1	9	\$26,142,053
Iama	2	2		2		2	2	2	2	2	16	\$45,660,697
Mabuiag			1								1	\$2,570,940
Masig					2		2	1			5	\$14,462,006
Mer	2		2	2	2		2		2	2	14	\$36,408,269
Poruma		2		2							4	\$10,289,846
Saibai	2		2		2						6	\$15,449,990
St Pauls		2		2		2		2	1		9	\$25,258,022
Ugar	1										1	\$2,400,000
Warraber	2		2			2					6	\$15,842,306
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>\$310,339,245</b>



## construction delivery timeline – p3

Community	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	Total	Budget
Badu							1	2	2	2	7	\$21,919,744
Boigu								1			1	\$3,053,470
Dauan					2	1	2	2	2	2	11	\$33,228,514
Erub												
Hammond						2	2		2		6	\$17,729,219
Iama					2			2		1	5	\$15,078,788
Mabuiag												
Masig					1						1	\$2,754,055
Mer					1						1	\$2,754,055
Poruma						1				2	3	\$9,392,354
Saibai							2		2	2	6	\$18,763,016
St Pauls					2	2	2	2			8	\$23,216,371
Ugar									1		1	\$3,160,342
Warraber						2					2	\$5,700,894
<b>Total</b>					<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>\$156,750,824</b>



# Delivery model and future housing construction programs

When the Council manage construction programs, as principal, principal contractor and program manager through funding agreements, the Council ensures that culturally appropriate practices and local knowledge are incorporated into the planning and delivery of social housing programs. The unique cultural context of the Torres Strait Islanders can be better respected and preserved when the Council controls the process.

Community Engagement is essential and the Council can ensure meaningful engagement with the community at every stage of the project, ensuring residents' voices are heard and their needs and aspirations are met. This includes ensuring traditional protocols are followed during construction, from land use agreements to engaging with elders and community leaders.

Housing can be built to accommodate extended family living and other cultural requirements with Custom Design features preferable and can be as simple as incorporating designs that reflect the local culture, climate and way of life. When community members are actively involved in the design and delivery of social housing, they take more pride in the results, which leads to greater care and long-term sustainability of the housing stock.

Given the logistical challenges of working in remote locations like the Torres Strait Islands, the Council can ensure that housing projects are specifically designed and managed to suit the unique geographical and environmental challenges of the region. The Custom Design must ensure that housing is sustainable and resilient and built to withstand local climate conditions, such as high humidity, extreme weather events and saltwater corrosion.

When the Council is directly responsible for managing housing programs, there is likely to be greater trust and confidence in the process among residents as the community feels more connected to the outcomes.

By managing construction programs internally, the Council can ensure that the social housing outcomes are aligned with broader strategic goals for the Torres Strait Island region. This includes improved Housing Standards that meet the long-term needs of residents, particularly in terms of space and accessibility. Driving community cohesion, promoting social well-being and encouraging community engagement and providing a holistic approach to community development.







# Impacts and challenges

## NATIVE TITLE

### Challenges:

**Legal complexities:** Social housing projects on Indigenous lands must navigate Native Title legislation, requiring consent from Traditional Owners before development can proceed.

**Time-intensive negotiations:** Achieving agreements with Traditional Owners, such as Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs), can be a slow process, delaying project timelines.

**Cultural sensitivity:** Housing projects must respect local customs, cultural protocols and traditional land uses, which may require additional community consultation and adjustments to housing plans.

### Impacts:

**Delayed project start:** Native Title negotiations can significantly extend the time required to secure land for social housing, delaying the commencement of construction.

**Higher costs:** The legal fees and time involved in navigating Native Title processes can increase the overall cost of delivering housing as well as the required payable compensation.

**Community relations:** Fostering strong, respectful relationships with Traditional Owners is critical but time-consuming, impacting both project timelines and outcomes.



# Impacts and challenges

## AVAILABILITY OF LAND

### Challenges:

**Limited suitable land:** The Torres Strait Islands have limited land suitable for development due to natural constraints, traditional land ownership and environmental concerns.

**Competing land uses:** Land for social housing competes with other uses, such as community spaces, environmental conservation and private land, making it harder to allocate space for new developments.

### Impacts:

**Difficulty securing land:** Finding available and appropriate land for social housing is a challenge, leading to delays in addressing housing needs.

**Overcrowding:** With limited land, social housing developments may face issues of overcrowding, leading to inadequate living conditions for families in need.

**Higher land acquisition and development costs:** The scarcity of land suitable for development can inflate land prices, putting pressure on government budgets for social housing.







# Impacts and challenges

## COST TO DEVELOP SUBDIVISIONS

### Challenges:

**Infrastructure Deficits:** Many of the Torres Strait Islands lack the essential infrastructure needed for subdivisions (e.g. roads, water, electricity and sewage), requiring significant upfront investment.

**High Transportation Costs:** The remote location of the islands drives up costs for transporting materials, equipment and labour necessary to develop subdivisions.

**Environmental and Topographical Challenges:** The unique geography and environmental regulations of the islands require tailored planning, which increases both complexity and cost.

### Impacts:

**Increased Project Costs:** Developing the infrastructure necessary for social housing subdivisions is expensive, significantly raising the total cost of housing programs.

**Lengthy Development Process:** The need to build or upgrade infrastructure often leads to longer project timelines, delaying the availability of housing.

**Budget Constraints:** The higher costs of subdivision development may strain government housing budgets, limiting the number of homes that can be constructed and potentially reducing the scope of housing programs.



# Impacts and challenges

## INCREASED COST TO DELIVER SUITABLE HOMES IN THE TORRES STRAIT

### Challenges:

**Logistics and supply chain issues:** Transporting building materials and supplies from mainland Australia to the Torres Strait is a complex and complicated task, particularly for remote islands that are difficult to access.

**Specialised housing needs:** Social housing must be tailored to withstand harsh tropical conditions, such as strong winds, high humidity and saltwater corrosion, requiring more durable materials and construction techniques.

**Inflated construction costs:** The cost of labour, materials and transportation is significantly higher than on the mainland, making housing more expensive to deliver.

### Impacts:

**Reduced housing capacity:** The high cost of delivering homes in the Torres Strait may limit the number of homes that can be built under social housing funding programs, exacerbating housing shortages.

**Increased government expenditure:** The higher costs of construction and logistics put additional pressure on government budgets, potentially leading to fewer resources available for other essential services.

**Extended timeframes:** The logistical and climatic challenges involved in building suitable homes can lead to longer construction periods, delaying the delivery of housing to vulnerable populations.







# Impacts and challenges

## AVAILABILITY OF CONTRACTORS TO DELIVER CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM IN THE TORRES STRAIT

### Challenges:

**Labor shortages:** The remoteness of the Torres Strait Islands makes it difficult to attract and retain qualified contractors and skilled workers, as many prefer to work in less isolated areas.

**Limited local workforce:** There is a lack of locally available skilled tradespeople, which means contractors may need to be sourced from mainland Australia, further driving up costs and creating logistical challenges.

**Seasonal constraints:** The tropical climate, including wet seasons and cyclones, can restrict the window of opportunity for construction, limiting the availability of contractors during key periods.

### Impacts:

**Project delays:** A limited pool of contractors and skilled workers can lead to delays in social housing construction, lengthening the time it takes to complete projects and address housing needs.

**Higher labour costs:** The scarcity of contractors in the region drives up labour costs, which can strain government funding for housing programs and reduce the overall number of homes delivered.

**Dependency on external workers:** Heavy reliance on contractors from outside the region may create logistical challenges, such as higher costs for travel and accommodation, and potential delays in project delivery due to contractor availability.

**Extended timeframes:** The logistical and climatic challenges involved in building suitable homes can lead to longer construction periods, delaying the delivery of housing to vulnerable populations.



# our housing future

	Action	Timeframe
1	Purchase and implementation of a Housing Management System to streamline the housing application and assessment process, ensuring the Housing Needs Register remains accurate. This system will also improve data accuracy and facilitate easy retrieval, supporting more informed decision-making.	Short - 6-12 months
2	Review developed land holdings to identify lots that would be suitable for social housing development	Short - 6-12 months
3	Commence development of ILUAs for identified social housing lots to ensure Native Title is addressed prior to being selected for development	Short - 12-18 months
4	Review current condemned social housing dwellings and seek funding for remediation and redevelopment	Short - 6-12 months
5	Undertake a review and update current Masterplans for each island in preparation for any new Council Planning Scheme	Short - 12-24 months
6	Develop a suite of housing design solutions relevant for each cohort to ensure the all members of the community are considered	Short - 6-12 months
7	Foster partnerships with not-for-profit social housing providers to deliver short term outcomes for specific cohorts while longer term solutions are being developed	Med - 24-36 months
8	Commence planning for expansion zones on three islands with identified land shortages and highest social housing need, including seeking funding to develop subdivisions where further lots are required	Med - 24-36 months
9	Undertake Native Title process for expansion zones to ensure timely delivery of funding expectations for subdivision projects	Med - 24-36 months
10	Council, State and Federal Government adopt an integrated planning approach and co-ordinate funding opportunities in the areas of housing, economic development, infrastructure and environmental management	Med - 24-36 months
11	Deliver subdivision developments and social housing outcomes for three identified islands of greatest need	Long - 36 months +
12	Commence planning for expansion zones on further islands with identified land shortages and social housing need, including seeking funding to develop subdivisions where further lots are required	Long - 36 months +