Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Biosecurity Strategy

Biosecurity is the management of risks to the economy, the environment, and the community, created by pests, weeds and diseases entering, emerging, establishing or spreading

This strategy has been developed in recognition of the unique challenges and opportunities in the management of biosecurity risks in Torres Strait and the Northern Peninsula Area of Queensland. Biosecurity risks includes pests, weeds or diseases that affect our health, or the health of our animals and plants, damage our environment, or alter our way of life.

Australian Government

TSRA www.tsra.gov.au

Biosecurity It's everyone's business

Queensland Government

NPARC

Torres Shire Council

Torres Strait Island

Community Leader's Joint Message

For millennia – since bepor taim – Indigenous peoples of the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area have practiced traditional land and sea management in accordance with Ailan Kastom, Aboriginal Lore/Law and native title rights and interests. Because of this continuing stewardship, the region remains one of the richest and most intact environments on earth.

Our region still faces many environmental challenges, including those resulting from invasive animals, plants and diseases that exist here now or have the potential to arrive here from other regions, particularly Papua New Guinea and mainland Australia. This Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Biosecurity Strategy has been developed in recognition of the unique challenges and opportunities in the management of biosecurity risks in Torres Strait and the Northern Peninsula Area of Cape York Queensland.

The Strategy has been developed in close collaboration and with goodwill between all stakeholders who have responsibility for the management of biosecurity in the region. This includes all levels of government, Traditional Owners (through Registered Native Title Bodies Corporates) and island communities who have worked together to determine the key biosecurity issues, threats, strategies and actions required to deal with these biosecurity risks. This strategy will ensure that this unified working relationship promotes a spirit of cooperation between all parties which should continue into the future if our future generations are to enjoy the region's pristine environment that we all have access to now.

On behalf of the Torres Strait Regional Authority, Torres Shire Council, Torres Strait Island Regional Council and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, we acknowledge the significant effort and collective wisdom that has helped develop this Biosecurity Strategy. We are passionate and committed to protecting and maintaining our environment and culture and look forward to working together under this Strategy to achieve our collective vision:

'We will support sustainable communities, protect the unique and pristine environments within our region, and play our part in preventing the movement of damaging pests and diseases, through practical, integrated and culturally appropriate biosecurity risk management.'

Mayor
Fred Gela
Torres Strait Island Regional Council

Chairman
Pedro Stephen
Torres Strait Regional Authority

Mayor
Edward Newman
Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council

Mayor
Vonda Malone
Torres Shire Council

25 September 2018

Artist Acknowledgements

Artist: Freddy David
Date of Birth: 1979
Community: Poruma Island
Language: Torres Strait Creole, Kala Lagaw Ya
Artwork Title: Land, Sea and Water
Medium: Lino print on paper

Land, sea and sky are important resources to the people of the Torres Strait. The use of these resources are vital to our daily activities and for the survival of our people.
Land – weaving, gardening and dancing.
Sea – hunting and gathering.
Sky – navigation and power supply.

Artist: Mersane Nona
Date of Birth: 1978
Community: Badu Island
Language: Torres Strait Creole, Kala Lagaw Ya
Artwork Title: Ingui Kozen Mingu Thonar (Sharing of Food) Medium: Lino print on paper

The sea is our life and is significant in so many ways to me. My artwork is about the days of athe and aka, bipotaim (before time) when the men would gather seafood. The food would be shared amongst the whole village no matter how small the catch.
All the families from each village near or far would still get a share. This was how Gud pasin (Good Way) was shown by the people towards each other. Gud pasin demonstrates how we look after each other, young or old, men or women.
I believe that this custom was significant as it maintained strong bonds of kinship between people and created unity. Depicted in my artwork are garfish, parrot fish, mullet, green sea turtle eggs and dugong. The houses represent the villages joined by a path to signify that food gathered and caught from hunting will be shared, no matter how far the path may be. The powerful image of a man's arm holding a hunting spear symbolises the role played by the men in the Torres Strait as providers of food from the sea.

Artist: Teho Ropeyarn
Title and date: Lukuyn - Apudthama 2017
Medium: two colour ink vinylcut print on 300gsm hahnemühlepaper
Dimension: 124cmx220cm Edition of 5 (State II)
Printer: Theo Tremblay
Photo credit: Michael Marzik 2017

Lukuyn - Apudthama (2017) refers to the blood connection maintained through the Injinoo Ikya Aboriginal Language. The work emphasises the ancestral connection that maintains the strength of the four Injinoo clans who have lived on traditional lands for thousands of years.
The spirit stream depicted contains the four main totems from each clan, and designs representing the environment of Injinoo traditional lands, including its freshwater and saltwater areas. The four main totems are: the Uwinthyn – the freshwater turtle of the Ankgamuthi nation; the Utaga – the dingo of the Atambaya nation; the Ikambala– the crocodile of the Yadhaykana nation; and the Urruvu – the land goanna of the Gudang nation. The designs of the four main totems are featured in the spirit stream as tracks by or patterning on an animal

Our Vision

We will support sustainable communities, protect the unique and pristine environments within our region, and play our part in preventing the movement of damaging pests and diseases, through practical, integrated and culturally appropriate biosecurity risk management.

Biosecurity in the region

Good biosecurity benefits our local communities as well as the Australian mainland. We can be affected by the damage pests, weeds or diseases cause to our food crops, our natural environment and our lifestyle (including our health). A strong biosecurity focus for many years, particularly limiting the movement of pests and diseases from our near northern neighbours, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Indonesia, has minimised these impacts and helped to maintain our unique lifestyle.

There are a number of natural ways in which pests, weeds and diseases can move from these countries into the region, such as the traditional movements of people under treaty arrangements, wind and air currents, migratory animals, traditional vessel movements and unauthorised foreign fishing. We control these where possible and monitor for new incursions when controls are not possible. Our efforts have minimised these serious biosecurity risks, not only to the region, but also to mainland Australia.

Unfortunately, biosecurity risks to the region are on the rise for many reasons, including: more movement of people and goods; easier access through sealing of the Peninsula Development Road; climate change; and changing land use. Movements from mainland Australia also concern us, with the majority of new weeds arriving from the mainland rather than from our northern neighbours. This strategy outlines how we will work together to address these challenges.

Our Guiding Principles

Collaboration and working in partnership will be the key to our success. This recognises that no single organisation can effectively manage biosecurity risks alone. We are committed to:

- Addressing threats moving into, within and out of the region
- Using local expertise and knowledge and building local capability and capacity
- Ensuring our way of operating is consistent with local communities
- Using a consistent approach in dealing with all biosecurity risks
- Improving effectiveness through being timelier and responsive and being adaptable to different biosecurity issues
- Ensuring we consider all ways of dealing with each threat, including prevention, preparedness, response and ongoing management
- Seamless service delivery across government agencies
- Striking a balanced approach that considers the impact on our environment, culture, health and economy
- Sharing intelligence around biosecurity risks to help us make better decisions regarding how to tackle them

Our Objectives

We are committed to achieving better biosecurity outcomes in the region by:

- Preventing the introduction of new pests, weeds and diseases into the region, including those that present a risk to human health
- More effective management of existing pests, weeds and diseases.
- Being more timely and effective when we respond to a new pest, weed or disease
- Prompt reporting of new pests, weeds or diseases and being prepared when we find them

We are committed to building local biosecurity management capability by:

- Developing a culture of cooperation and respect
- Practising collaborative decision-making
- Developing better local intelligence for managing biosecurity threats and early reporting
- Ensuring better access to, and coordination of, resources and training
- Promoting better understanding and awareness of biosecurity.

We are committed to promoting the biosecurity priorities for the region by:

- Improving management of these priorities
- Improving and building relationships across all stakeholders
- Increasing awareness of the importance of the region to Australia's biosecurity

Our Priorities

A holistic approach to biosecurity management with better engagement of local communities and seamless service delivery across government agencies will help us achieve better on the ground biosecurity outcomes. To achieve this partnership approach, we will focus our efforts on six priority areas.

Collaborative governance and decision-making

Effective biosecurity management requires a collaborative partnership between all levels of government, the community and industry.

Better strategies and decisions come when people are directly involved in the strategy design and decision-making discussions.

We will focus on

- encouraging effective community participation relevant to each community
- more effective regional coordination of biosecurity management
- tapping into the knowledge and strengths of local communities.

Understanding priority threats and pathways

Limited resources need to be targeted to where we can get our best return on investment. We also need to know which biosecurity risks should receive priority attention, including those exotic to the region and those already present.

A key is to prevent movement of pests, weeds and diseases into, within and out of the region.

We will focus on

- assessment of priority pests, weeds and diseases and their entry pathways
- better intelligence systems
- enhancing early reporting
- more effective management of risks

Making biosecurity more meaningful to communities

Biosecurity needs to balance all stakeholder needs, both external to the region and local communities. Local communities need to see tangible benefits from biosecurity and need to be engaged in designing local solutions to biosecurity problems.

We will focus on

- preventing biosecurity risks coming from the mainland, as well as from the north
- more flexible ways of managing biosecurity within the quarantine zones, particularly mechanisms to allow movement of produce
- assisting communities to deal with local priority pest, weeds and diseases

Assessing information and building awareness

Ongoing communication and awareness raising with local communities and other people working or visiting the region is essential so that people understand the importance of biosecurity, their own obligations and to encourage maximum cooperation.

We will focus on

- an enhanced education and awareness program that uses a multi-channel approach, including biosecurity ambassadors
- updating biosecurity education, awareness and signage materials used in the region
- improved effectiveness of the Cape York Biosecurity Centre

Improved responsiveness

A key to effective biosecurity management is early detection of new incursions and prompt response actions. To be more responsive, we need to tap into local expertise and resources, conduct better planning appropriate to the region and get better understanding at state and national decision-making levels of the issues facing us in the region.

We will focus on

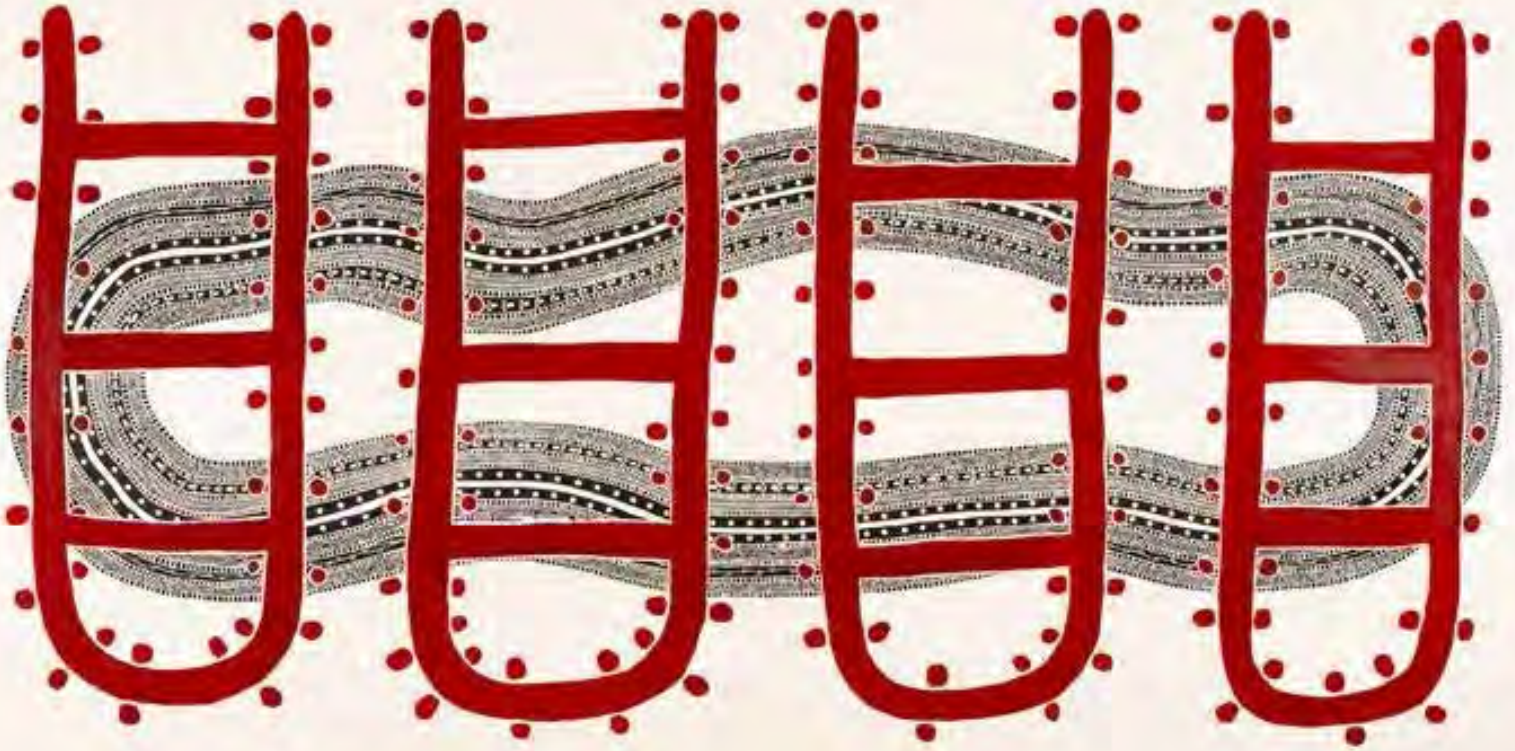
- partnering with local communities and tapping into local expertise
- response strategies tailored for priority pests and diseases relevant to the region and utilising the natural advantages presented by local communities and geography
- taking a more flexible, innovative and responsive approach when considering responses

Improved capability and capacity

Better harnessing of resources in the region, both human and physical, is required to enable more effective biosecurity management and response activities. People also require better technical information on pests and diseases, identification and management to provide communities with the tools to manage risks.

We will focus on

- arrangements with the ranger groups, as well as local government officers, to work in biosecurity operations
- preparing for priority biosecurity risks through training and contingency planning
- pre-arranged agreements with other service providers.



Biosecurity - it's everyone's business

We all have a role to play in managing biosecurity in our region – individuals, communities, businesses and all levels of government – and everyone needs to play their part in keeping our communities safe. If you don't know, ask before you move goods and vessels that could spread pests, weeds and diseases through our region.

Photography credits

Kerry Trapnell
Matthew Dunn
Tom Hern