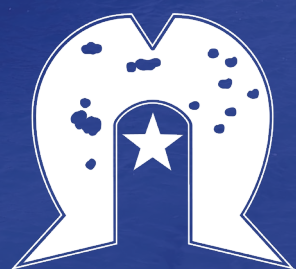


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Torres Strait Island  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

NAYGAY 2025

## Climate justice fight to continue

After almost four years in the Federal Court, Gudaw Mululgal nation elders Pabai Pabai and Paul Kabai have lost their climate case against the Commonwealth of Australia.

'The loss in the Federal Court of Australia in the Pabai Pabai and Paul Kabai climate justice case should not deter us,' TSIRC Mayor Phillemon Mosby said.

'This decision by the Federal Court on 15 July is disappointing. But in a legal sense, we expected something like this.'

The case's argument before the Federal Court was that the Australian Government's failure to cut emissions will lead to Torres Strait Islanders becoming climate refugees.

However, the court's Justice Michael Wigney found that Australian Government (emissions reducing) policy cannot be the legal basis for deciding whether the government was negligent.

Mayor Mosby said that Torres Strait Islanders still hold a moral position regarding the impacts of climate change. He remarked that the Torres Strait is walking alongside its Melanesian brothers and sisters across this region of the Pacific.

'We've seen Vanuatu go to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and

have the ICJ hand down a non-binding opinion that countries must do more.'

In July this year, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found that nation states failing to act on climate change may be a wrongful act that could leave them open to reparations. The ICJ findings, however, are non-binding - meaning nation states do not have to abide by the court's opinion.

In the Federal Court, Justice Wigney pointed out that setting targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions was a matter of policy making and political decisions by politicians. His judgment also stated that setting emissions targets also involved economic, social and political considerations.

Mayor Mosby said the real issue was that Torres Strait Islanders were at risk of losing their homelands and becoming climate refugees. 'We're suffering the effects of climate change right now. Our homes, our customs, and the marine environment and ecosystems are at risk,' Mayor Mosby said.

'While this is a setback for us, Council will continue to fight for a sustainable future for our people. These are the only homelands I, and other Torres Strait Islanders, know.'



## Art with a Voice – stories Take centre stage at CIAF 2025

The Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF), held from 10–13 July in Cairns, was a bold celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, tradition, and art. This year's theme, 'Pay Attention!', urged us to stay vigilant about the social, political and cultural issues that affect us as First Nations – and to use art as both a voice and a vessel for keeping our culture alive.

Throughout the weekend, the Cairns Tanks Arts Centre came alive with traditional dance, fashion performances, and captivating art showcases.



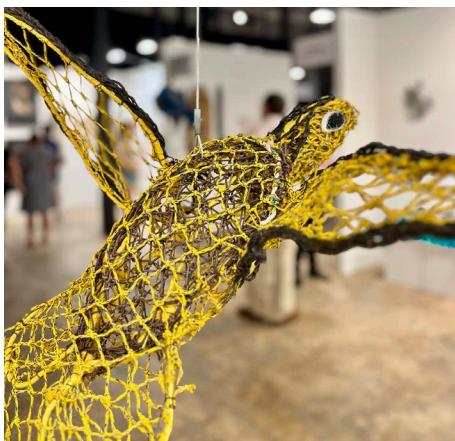
resilience, tradition, and the enduring spirit of First Nations people.

Art centres such as Moa Arts and Erub Arts showcased their works as part of the Art Fair Showcase, highlighting the diversity and depth of talent across our regions.



The Dhamuw Koedal Dance Team, led by Badu artist Alick Tipoti, performed at the Opening Ceremony and throughout the festival. Dhamuw Koedal's performance was inspired by the connection to totems, spirits and stars. Elders' stories were woven together through chants, dancing, traditional attire, Dharis, and file ray and crocodile headpieces.

Two fashion shows, 'Look' and 'Listen' featured Torres Strait designers, including Robert Pau and Lisa Lui. The shows lit up the runway with an electric celebration of culture and creativity. The designs were inspired by stories of



More than just an art fair, CIAF stands as a platform—a mouthpiece—for artists to express contemporary concerns, while continuing to honour and pass down cultural knowledge, stories, and traditions to future generations.



## United Nations conference



### United Nations Conference offers way forward in global fight against climate impacts.

At this year's United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC), I was offered a close look inside global efforts to conserve the ocean and use its resources more sustainably.

I attended the third ocean conference (UNOC3) in Nice, France from 9-13 June. I learnt what's being done to counter rising sea levels and make coastal communities more resilient.

This is valuable for us as Torres Strait Islanders because it can help us create our own blueprint for a sustainable future on our islands. For example, the Ocean Rise and Coastal Resilience Coalition's work can guide how we use capacity building, along with financial and scientific support, to make long-term island life possible.

The coalition aims to empower coastal communities to establish sustainable, resilient coastlines. Their work, along with attending two World Island Forum sessions, gave me other ideas about what our initial blueprint for climate resilience can look like.

The World Island Forum sessions – one on connectivity and air transport, and the other on pollution – relate directly to challenges our councillors and community members face every day.

Here in the Torres Strait, TSIRC is taking action through our \$3.5 million Climate Resilience Program, boosting engagement and forming a task force with key stakeholders to deliver coordinated, science-based solutions.

The first step is to partner with those who have proven knowledge and expertise, such as the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Next is to engage with our neighbours in the Western South Pacific about working together to strengthen our communities.

We should also connect with the rest of Melanesia to address climate change while generating innovative pathways for economic growth and sustainable development. This is urgent work, for us and future generations of Torres Strait Islanders.

Please join me on this journey.

Koeyma Eso,  
Mayor Mosby

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## Driving Community Owned Economic Futures



We have nearly completed Phase 1 of the Economic Development Community Engagement. This is an important first step towards a long-term strategy for job creation, business growth, and sustainability throughout the TSIRC region. This project was funded by the TSRA and delivered with Emver Partners.

Council would like to thank you and your community's input from our community engagement sessions across the 15

TSIRC divisions. We have gathered the information from the 'community unpack' activity to develop an Economic Development dashboard, tailored for each island. This marks an important milestone in the region's Economic Development Strategy. It reflects the collective insights gathered through close collaboration with your community.

We thank you and your community for your strong response in TSIRC's Economic Development Survey. The survey received 327 completed responses, representing 7.9% of the region's population. These results highlight cultural identity as non-negotiable and the importance of locally based industries such as fishing, construction and land management. We also saw evidence that there's a desire for local support, ownership and sustainability, rather than external control. These insights will provide a foundation with a strong cultural base and help us with future planning and investment decisions.

The final Report for this Phase 1 Economic Development Community Engagement project is expected to be released by the end of August 2025. We will make it available on TSIRC's

website. Depending on further funding, this project is expected to shape Phase 2 of TSIRC's first-of-its kind Ailan-based community-led Economic Strategic Action Plan. This is an empowerment strategy to turn local visions into actions that create economic futures that are community owned.

### Budget highlights 2025

This year's budget for TSIRC again prioritises capital works. Council will spend almost \$60 million this year on building repairs and maintenance, road upgrades, seawalls and other forms of coastal defence and flood prevention.

Council has a 2025-2026 operating deficit of \$2.6 million. However, there are plans to improve procurement processes and establish partnerships for future housing construction projects. These projects will support the organisation becoming more financially sustainable.

'This will help us partner with stakeholders to attract funding. Our goal is to design and build more appropriate and sustainable housing in the Torres Strait,' Mayor Phillemon Mosby said.



## Ilun Tok

with *er* Ranetta Wosomo

Division 5 - Badu



**Deputy Mayor Ranetta Wosomo is part of a new wave of female political and business leaders in the Torres Strait.**

She's the first female deputy mayor of Council, being elected to office in 2024. The Badu local is also a small business owner. She runs a business in her spare time, which includes selling fabrics and accessories through Mepla Style. She's proud of the progress she and other Torres Strait women are making.

*I became a TSIRC councillor through an expression of interest from the Australian Electoral Commission. The opportunity came up after previous Councillor Uncle Laurie Nona stepped down in 2023. This was a great opportunity for me as it gave me an insight to the councillors role and how I was able to contribute towards my division.*

*Women have more choices now. That includes how they make a*

*living. When I was young, there were limited options in employment: it was either working at the school, health centre or in Council. My career in council operations has given me the experience to navigate my present role as deputy mayor. I rely on my administration skills learned on Badu, and also from my time working at council offices on Dauan and Boigu.*

*As the elected Deputy Mayor, I hope to further inspire other young women throughout our region to explore leadership in any profession that they aspire to be in. We have had great role models in leadership in our region, and I hope to continue the work. We have achieved a lot, but there is more work that needs to be done.*

*When you look at the Malungu Yangu Wakay Mirkak, it talks about the struggles of our people. In 1936 there was the maritime strike, in 1937 there was the first Councillors meeting on Masig. All of this occurred because of the policies that oppressed our people. Today, we are dealing with a deficit budget, aging infrastructure, legacy issues while trying to provide state and federal obligations without any funding commitment. Our communities need government investment for TSIRC to provide essential life services; it is our human right.*

*There is plenty of work to do. I am committed to work with Mayor Mosby, our Councillors, and leaders throughout Zenadth Kes to provide better living standards for our people.*

Deputy Mayor Ranetta Wosomo



# yumi ilun Business

## YUMI ILUN YARN



### Alup Healing gives visitors a slice of life on Badu Island.

The baler shell, known as the alup on Badu Island, is the symbol of a four-year-old ecotourism venture on the island.

Alup Healing is Nancy Nona's brainchild. Nancy grew up on Badu before moving to Toowoomba for competitive athletics, and later, university.

Her business is designed to offer people a taste of what it's like to live in one of the most remote parts of Australia and experience a little-known culture.

'Here we teach weaving to our guests and cook traditional kai kai for them as well.'

The name 'Alup' is a Torres Strait word for the baler shell. Nancy explains that at low tide, at the back of Badu, people can see these shells. The meat from the shell is known for its delicate flavour and it's a fitting name for a business that was created in part to remember Nancy's daughter.

The site of the business at the back of Badu Island is also the memorial site for Nancy's daughter.

Since the launch of Alup Healing, Nancy and her business have been profiled by SBS Television and Forbes magazine from the United States.

Nancy is keen to keep the business exclusive so only accepts about three to four bookings a year. Many guests arrive via private plane. 'They fly in for a night or two, then fly out again.'

Family and family memories, ultimately, are the reasons for Alup Healing's existence. 'I built this for my son, so he has a home to come to. But it's also his sister's resting place.'



### Trustee Policy

Council, as Trustee for the DOGIT communities, approved its new Trustee Policy on 22 July 2025. Council staff will be working to progress applications for home ownership and commercial leases that community members have applied for. There will be meetings over the coming months to explain the process.

### What is a home ownership lease?

A home ownership lease is optional for anyone who wants to own their own home in community. To apply, you must be a Torres Strait Islander or Aboriginal person or the wife/husband of a Torres Strait Islander or Aboriginal person. You can apply for a home ownership lease on vacant land or land that has a social house. A home ownership lease is for 99 years and you can pass it on to your children or other family members. If Council approves a home ownership lease, it can only occur with Native Title consent from the PBC.

### useful Facts

MORE INFORMATION



# Kai Kai CORNER



## COCONUT CURRY CHICKEN RECIPE

by Katherine Epseg

### Ingredients:

- 500g chicken (thighs, nibbles or breast)
- Kosher salt or sea salt, to taste
- Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- Bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (or to taste)
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce (or to taste)
- Zest of 2 limes
- 400ml coconut milk
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 cup cilantro, minced
- Vegetables of your choice, (e.g., potatoes, carrots)

### Instructions:

1. Season both sides of the chicken with salt and pepper.
2. In a large frying pan or saucepan, melt the butter on medium high heat. Sear the chicken until crispy brown, about 2-3 minutes. Flip the chicken and crisp the other side for about 2 minutes. Remove the chicken from the pan and set aside.
3. In the same pan, reduce heat to medium. Add the minced garlic and cook until fragrant, (about 1 minute). Stir in the bay leaves, curry powder, cumin, cayenne pepper and lime zest.
4. Then pour in coconut milk, fish sauce, and chicken broth. Stir until combined.
5. Add the vegetables of your choice and bring the mixture to a low simmer.
6. Place the seared chicken back into the pan. Simmer for about 15 minutes, or until fully cooked.
7. Serve over rice and garnish with minced cilantro.



## COMMUNITY GRANTS Available

Applications  
must be submitted before the  
last Friday of each month to be  
presented at the following  
month's Council Meeting.

For further information please visit your nearest divisional office, or contact Community Grants team E: [community.grants@tsirc.qld.gov.au](mailto:community.grants@tsirc.qld.gov.au)

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