

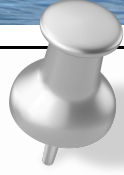
# Torres Shire Council

To lead, provide & facilitate a sustainable, safe and culturally vibrant community

PO Box 171  
THURSDAY ISLAND 4875  
Telephone: (07) 4069 1336  
Facsimile: (07) 40691 845

# THE Year IN REVIEW

## Mayoral Message



Torres Shire Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of Kaiwalagal, the Kaurareg traditional owners, and the traditional owners of Zenadth Kes, including elders past, present, and emerging.

The Mayoral Column serves as an excellent platform to update our constituents on community progress and the strategic direction of the Council. This column has consistently provided a means of communication, alongside discussions on TSIMA Radio.

As we approach the end of 2024 and the festive season, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the significant achievements of the Council as we strive to enhance the quality of life within our communities. Torres Shire boasts a proud and diverse community, rich in multicultural traditions that celebrate both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The Council has actively represented our community at essential forums and meetings with various State and Federal government departments, advocating strongly for improved services for the residents of Prince of Wales Island, Horn Island, and Thursday Island.

The Council has been incredibly productive in 2024, delivering several key projects. On behalf of the Torres Shire Councillors, Executive Management, and Staff, I wish our residents and local business owners a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year. The Council looks forward to continuing our service to our people and communities in the upcoming year.

I would also like to extend our gratitude and best wishes to our neighbouring Councils – Torres Strait Island Regional Council and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council – as well as key partners, particularly the Torres Strait Regional Authority, for their constructive engagement, support, and collaboration throughout the year. Wishing everyone a safe and joyous Christmas as we look forward to further collaborations in 2025. This has been a remarkable and busy year—one to remember.

For more information on any of the topics mentioned above, please reach out to the Chief Executive Officer, Dalassa Yorkston, at Ph (07) 40691336 or via email at [dalassa.yorkston@torres.qld.gov.au](mailto:dalassa.yorkston@torres.qld.gov.au)



Mayor Cr. Elsie Seriat OAM  
Torres Shire Council

## ADVOCACY WITH NEW INDIGENOUS MINISTER SENATOR MALARNDIRRI MCCARTHY

Great to host Senator Malarndirri McCarthy - Northern Territory in our Council Chambers. Mayor Elsie Seriat OAM, Deputy Mayor Nakata, Cr. Bani, Cr. Fujii and CEO raised important issues with the Senator particularly as they relate to her portfolios. Council advocated for the following with Senator McCarty; Torres Strait & NPA Cost of Living Summit – Freight, Transport and Storage, Employment – CDP, Horn Island Airport Funding and the Housing Crisis in the Region.



## WELCOMING NEW AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS

During our Ordinary Council Meeting Mayor Elsie Seriat OAM welcomed Miss Pimapat Buakthaisong and Mrs Surattana Szabo as Australian Citizens. The ceremony recognises Pimapat and Surattana about to undertake a new commitment and responsibility and making the pledge is the final step in becoming an Australian citizen. Congratulations Pimapat and Surattana.

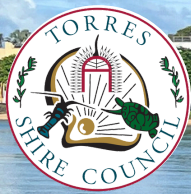
## ENGAGEMENT WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Torres Shire Council hosted the inaugural meeting with the RNTBC Chair and Board Members here on Waibene. As a newly elected Council, we are eager to establish regular meetings with the Kaurareg Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (KNTAC). On October 9, 2000, an ILUA (Indigenous Land Use Agreement) was signed and executed by TSC, the Kaurareg People, and the State of Queensland. This agreement was one of the first ILUAs following the MABO High Court ruling on June 3, 1992, and the Native Title Act of 1993. KNTAC Representatives - Chairperson Eliziah Wasaga, Deputy Chair Saliman BinJuda, and Board Members Ms. Enid Tom and Ms. Tess Wasaga.

## FROG GULLY COMMUNITY GARDENS

Community members joined Council for the Blessing of the Frog Gully Community Gardens. The project commenced through a partnership with the RACQ Foundation volunteers (The Blue Army) cleaning and repairing the existing infrastructure to prepare it for community use. Council is so excited to officially bless and reopen the facility. The community garden plots offers space for growing fruits and vegetables. Additionally, the Queensland Government has provided three years of funding through Health and Wellbeing Queensland to support local food production initiatives.





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## TORRES STRAIT NAIDOC AWARDS 'KEEP THE FIRE BURNING!'

On July 10, 2024, Torres Shire Council hosted the Torres Strait NAIDOC Awards Evening at Thursday Island Sports Stadium, themed "Keep the Fire Burning, Blak, Loud and Proud."

Attendees enjoyed performances by the Bamaga Dancers and the Night Shift Band, while the event celebrated outstanding contributions in the community.

The evening concluded with thanks to sponsors and a reminder to "Keep the Fire Burning."

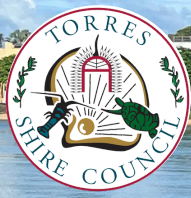
### NAIDOC Award Recipients:

- Samuel Sagigi and Gavin Bin Juda: Special Recognition Award for bravery after a helicopter crash.
- Marsat Ketchell: Excellence in community and health services.
- Solema Luffman: Community advocacy for preserving traditional languages.

- Betty Tekahika: Excellence in cultural services.
- Robert Sagigi: Elder of the Year for promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Dyrall Lui: Youth of the Year
- Joanna Mari: Trainee of the Year
- Samson Zitha: Sports Person of the Year
- Alick Tipoti: Artist of the Year
- David and Melanie Nona: Business of the Year
- Emily Beckley: Excellence in promoting Women
- Harold Matthew: Sports and Fitness Contribution
- Custodians of Life: Event of the Year
- Mayor Phillemon Mosby: Torres Strait NAIDOC Person of the Year For his leadership and commitment to cultural repatriation.



# KEEP THE FIRE BURNING BLAK, LOUD & PROUD!



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## ADVOCACY - CLOSING THE GAP DATA

Torres Shire Council has released its first Report Card on socio-economic data for the Torres region, coinciding with the anniversary of the MASIG STATEMENT and the First Island Councillor Conference.

Mayor Seriat emphasised the goal of reducing gaps between the region and Queensland in various socioeconomic targets by 2031, including improvements in health, education, employment, housing, and justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was extremely vital. While some targets cannot be measured, the Council seeks ongoing dialogue with the Queensland Government Statistician's Office to enhance future reports. The initiative honours the efforts of past Councillors and advocates for self-determination alongside Closing the Gap.



## REGIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

### Torres Shire Council and Torres Strait Regional Authority MOU

Council signed a 4-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Torres Shire Council and the Torres Strait Regional Authority ensuring ongoing collaboration.

### Torres Strait and NPA Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC)

Worked continued with the establishment of the Regional Organisation of Councils (TS&NPAROC) including a \$300,000 QLD Government funding to assist with the ROC set up. A game changer that may now streamline service delivery, remove duplications in service delivery, advocate for self-determination in the region; and pursue regional solutions to housing, employment, infrastructure, waste, water security and can be an economic engine room for the region. In addition, climate resilience is a focus of regional collaboration.

### TSRA Board Meeting No. 147

Torres Shire Council accepted an invitation to present at the TSRA Board Meeting No. 147, emphasising the need for regional renewal.



## ENGAGEMENT WITH CEQ/IBIS BOARD

Great opportunity to engage and meet with the CEQ/IBIS Chair Ms Joann Schmider and Board Members. Council acknowledges the long history and wide commercial footprint CEQ/IBIS have in our Shire: Main IBIS Store - Rosehill IBIS Store - Tamwoy IBIS Store - Horn Island IBIS Store - Col Jones - Mona's - TI Hardware & Thursday Island Service Station.

Council expressed thanks to the CEQ/IBIS Board for making the time to come into our Council Chambers to discuss matters of concern to Council and our Community. Council looks forward to continuing the important relationship with CEQ.



## KEY TO THE CITY HONOUR MR NAPAU PEDRO STEPHEN AM

The presentation evening was held on Thursday, 21 November 2024 in honour of the retirement of Mr Napau Pedro Stephen AM, outgoing Chair of the Torres Strait Regional Authority and previously the longest serving Mayor of Torres Shire Council.

### Mayoral presentation:

This gift Council presented was the highest honour to be bestowed upon an individual and it is in recognition of the recipient's great service to the communities of the Region.

On Tuesday, 19 November 2024 during our Ordinary Council Meeting, Council unanimously supported and endorsed, the first Key to the City honour for Torres Shire Council since its inception.

### Mayoral Key to the City presentation:

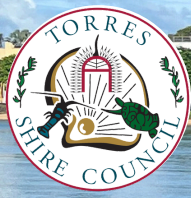
**'It is my greatest honour as the Mayor of Torres Shire Council to give Mr Napau Pedro Stephen AM the KEY TO THE CITY',**

**Cultural Gift:** Facilitated by Cr Gabriel Bani - "This next gift comes to us tonight through the corridors of time, carrying the values of many generations of a unique nation of people.

From the very beginning of his leadership journey Uncle Pedro was introduced to and given the mantle of 'Igilyawa' - Protector of Life 'Igilil' - Life, Alive, tree that is green. 'Yawa' refers to caring for, taking care and looking after, protecting. This person is called Yawaw Garka - custodian life/village last line of defence last man standing the one who stays behind.

With Honour and Respect for your journey and in acknowledgement and representation of the Clan & Tribal people, we presented Mr Napau Pedro Stephen AM with:

**Goebagab - Fighting club - Battle item  
Symbol of authority reminding us of our obligation  
To the people we serve**



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## TORRES STRAIT AND NPA LEADERS FORUM 4TH & 5TH NOVEMBER 2024

We were honoured to be part of the Torres Strait & NPA Leaders Forum on Gimuywalubarra Yidi Country, Cairns. For the first time since our Local Government Elections in March 2024, Torres Shire Council, Torres Strait Island Regional Council and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council came together over two days to progress our ROC.

Council joined in on some powerful conversations and were able to engage first hand with various state and federal government agencies operating in our Shire and Region during the Forum.



## NEW QANTAS LINK Q400 AIRCRAFT TO BE NAMED 'HORN ISLAND NGURUPAI'

For a number of years, Torres Shire Council has been making representation to Qantas to consider naming one of their Q400 Dash 8 Aircraft after **Horn Island Ngurupai**. I am thrilled to advise our community that Qantaslink have approved the request and have advised Council that the newly named aircraft will make its inaugural flight to Horn Island around April 2025. Council will keep our community updated on this great initiative in recognition of the Horn Island Airport, our shire and the region.



## PARLIAMENTARY DEPUTATIONS AND SUBMISSIONS

Torres Shire Council lodged a Submission to 2024 Regional Telecommunication Review and appeared before the Telecommunications Committee.

Supermarket Pricing Select Committee Submission - Council appeared before the Parliamentary Committee and gave evidence.

Council lodged a written submission to the Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability and appeared before the Parliamentary Committee in Cairns.

Council welcomed the Health Service Investigation recommendations whilst advocating for a Commission of Inquiry into the Preventable Deaths in our region.

Council attended Parliamentary Deputations at both Canberra Parliament House and Brisbane Parliament House on behalf of our Shire and Region.

In preparation for the State Government Elections 2024, Council developed and presented our 10-Point Plan.

## INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

Torres Shire Council is pleased to announce The **Napau Pedro Stephen Indigenous Scholarship for Leadership and Service Excellence** applies to eligible indigenous applicants living or having been brought up in the Shire or region or who have attended school in the Shire or region.

The scholarship may cover projects and/or research in the fields of governance, politics, community development, conservation and science, health and the economy and may be undertaken as part of a tertiary or post-secondary program or as a stand-alone project. The program or project must enhance the applicant's leadership skills and must be then applied in supporting self-determination in the region in the spirit of the Masig Statement. For more information, contact Torres Shire Council.

