

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1793

asked on Tuesday, 25 November 2008

MR O'BRIEN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER AND MINISTER ASSISTING THE PREMIER IN NORTH QUEENSLAND (MR WALLACE)—

QUESTION:

Will he advise the importance of the first two formally registered Torres Strait cultural heritage bodies, the Masigalgaw and Duanalgaw Corporations, and what role these bodies will have in the future of the Torres Strait?

ANSWER:

The *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003* encourages traditional owners to seek recognition for a corporation to become a registered cultural heritage body for an area. This process is designed to assist with the protection and management of Indigenous cultural heritage.

On 30 June 2008, two corporations from Dauan Island, Masig Island and surrounding Islands, were formally registered as cultural heritage bodies by the Department of Natural Resources and Water.

These two bodies represent the first cultural heritage bodies registered in the Torres Strait Region. This is an important step in ensuring that Indigenous people play a leading role in the protection and management of their own cultural heritage.

The role of these registered cultural heritage bodies is to serve as the first point of contact for anyone seeking assistance with any cultural heritage matters in the registered area. The registered bodies also provide assistance to ensure that the correct people, who can speak for their land and sea country, are contacted to assist with any enquiries.

The registered cultural heritage bodies deal with a range of cultural heritage activities such as site surveys, monitoring, the development of cultural heritage plans, cultural heritage studies, and the recording of cultural heritage sites.

There are numerous advantages for registered cultural heritage bodies, including access to funding under the Cultural Heritage Grants Program. Under this program, registered bodies can apply for up to \$10 000 to purchase equipment to help them address cultural heritage issues. The funding can be used for mapping programs, GPS and/or computers, or other items required to assist with the assessment and management of cultural heritage.

Currently there are 23 registered cultural heritage bodies throughout Queensland. It is hoped that the registration of these two cultural heritage bodies in the Torres Strait will encourage other Indigenous groups to seek registration through my Department, to assist with the important task of protecting and managing Indigenous cultural heritage for all Queenslanders.