

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS' REGIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL, INC.

ANNUAL REPORT 2012





TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS' REGIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL, INC.

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

About Our Council	4
About Our Services	10
About Our Results	22
About Our Future Plans	28





About our
COUNCIL

Letters of Welcome



Debe gerger wabim, Kapu goeyga nitha mura, TSIREC continues to set the pace as the model community advocate on Prapa Education and Training for Yumi people in the region. It is on this note I present the second Annual Report for members' perusal and the greater public consumption.

Remote as we are, we were not immune to the tough economic squeeze felt by many others across the nation in the last two years. However challenging and restrictive this fiscal environment was, we maintained our focus to ensure key areas within the education and training paradigm were addressed.

The TSIREC and Tagai State College partnership encouraged growth in the Yumi education leadership pool by supporting identified Indigenous teachers to pursue their respective leadership aspirations.

Strait Start services was sustained playing a major role in preparing prospective Tagai Students for school and lama Kaziw Mudh opened its' doors as the first licensed childcare facility offering the unique Montessori pedagogy in the early years on lama.

The inaugural Yumi Education Symposium convened in June 2012 introduced a new approach to how TSIREC conducted its business. This new

format made for robust exchanges of ideas and strategies to address issues. The resolution to support Tagai State College as a nominee school in the Independent Public School initiative rollout highlighted the success of this forum.

The successful submission is now considered a significant way point in the journey of education and training for the region. This was made possible by a membership with clear goals and a sense of purpose to advocate for quality services and better opportunities for Yumi community.

The sustained vigilance and high visibility of members is only matched by a collective conscience to ensure community interest for Yumi peoples are protected. These very same attributes underpin the TSIREC ethos of active involvement and genuine engagement of parents and carers in the school community.

Eso for all your efforts and I sincerely hope you enjoy the report.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large circle followed by stylized initials 'LD'.

Mr. Lui David
TSIREC Chairperson

In 2012 TSIREC provided strong support to our Principal partner - Tagai State College, delivered all planned services in our identified sites and hosted the inaugural YUMI Education Symposium.

2012 was a year of celebration for TSIREC – the time in which our organisation and the Torres Strait Nation could begin to reap the rewards of our dedicated work.

The past four years have been a period of exciting evolution for TSIREC.

Founded on its established role as a community-based advocacy body, TSIREC has emerged as a core education service provider, responding to the needs of the Torres Strait Nation.

From this new position, TSIREC has proven the value of government investment in place-based service delivery. Our model of “YUMI services” – building the capacity of our communities to deliver the services that they need – has been tested and shown to be robust, flexible and productive.

This is evidenced by our performance during the 2012 school year.

Through the expanded YUMI Education Support Service, we provided services to over 2,600 Torres Strait Islanders, in 43 locations across Far North Queensland in 2012.

We also invested heavily in our people – increasing our proportion of full-time employees two fold and continuing our commitment to high quality professional development opportunities.

With a proven record of success and solid financial position, TSIREC is now in the inevitable position from which it can set a new course – one focused again on community-based advocacy and the fulfilment of the Torres Strait’s long-held aspirations.

I would like to thank the dedicated people who have supported TSIREC during 2012 – our staff, our communities and our government and non-government partners. Together with our TSIREC members, their combined efforts have contributed to TSIREC’s wonderful success to date.



Mrs. Katie Denzin
YUMI Education Support Services Manager
TSIREC Business Manager

About TSIREC



TSIREC was founded to promote YUMI EDUCATION - a distinct style of service delivery, that recognises the role of community in determining the strategic direction of education and training in the Torres Strait Nation.

Our Vision:

Leading and Empowering YUMI to achieve Prapa life pathways

Our Mission:

TSIREC advocates for the Torres Strait to have the structure and systems that enable the running of our own affairs in the delivery of education, training and employment services and programs.

The Torres Strait Islander's Regional Education Council (TSIREC) is a unique entity in Australia. It is a community-based peak body, representing the interest of the Torres Strait Nation on the agendas of education, training and employment.

For over 30 years TSIREC has acted as the essential link between community and government, providing advice at both federal and state levels on strategic policy development and reform.

Members of TSIREC seek to promote greater Torres Strait autonomy over education, training and employment by:

1. Acting as a peak advocacy body for the Torres Strait: Elected representatives from every Torres Strait island community make up our membership. The key role played by our members is that of community empowerment and advocacy – both within their community and at a regional level.
2. Facilitating a breadth of locally-managed programs and services: Our service arm – the YUMI Education Support Service – provides direct, place-based services to the Torres Strait. These services include programs spanning from the early years to adulthood.

TSIREC Membership

	Name	Position
Executive Members	Mr. Ned David	President
	Mr. John Mosby	Vice President
	Mrs. Margie Cowley	Secretary
	Mrs. Betty David	Treasurer
Community Representatives	Mr. Richard Nona	Badhulgaw
	Mrs. Vera Auda	Malu Kiyay
	Mrs. Jessie Pearson	Dauan
	Mr. Arthur Naawi	Erub
	Mr. Allan Repu	Mabuygiw
	Mrs. Rita Kaitap	Kubin
	Mr. Alo Tapim	Mer
	Mrs. Katy Uta	Kadhego
	Mr. Frank Faid	Poruma
	Ms Iris Billy	Warraber
	Mr. Daniel Bero	Ugar
	Ms. Clara Wapau	St Pauls
	Mrs. Enid Tom	Narupay
	Mr. Dana Ober	Waybeni Buway
Mrs. Jenny Vellis	Sacred Heart	

YUMI Education Inc.

YUMI Education Inc. was founded through TSIREC's executive committee in 2012 as an independent not-for-profit Indigenous organisation based at the YUMI Education Support Service Cairns office.

It was established with the primary purpose of operating complimentary, government funded programs and services to meet the needs of the community and education, training and employment service providers. It was envisaged that the formation of YUMI Education Inc. would, over time, allow TSIREC to concentrate once again on its community-based education advocacy.





About our
SERVICES

About our Services



In 2012, TSIREC expanded the delivery scope of the YUMI Education Support Service (YESS) to better meet the needs of our Torres Strait families.

YESS was created to be an integrated education service provider, accountable for the facilitation of funded programs aligned with COAG's agenda of "Closing the Gap" of Indigenous disadvantage.

Over the past three years, YESS has expanded to meet the needs of the Torres Strait. It is now operated through a formalized partnership between TSIREC, YUMI Education Inc. and the Department of Education, Training and Employment's Indigenous Schooling Support Unit (Far North Queensland).

YUMI's "Prapa Pathway Guarantee":

Every child in the Torres Strait is guaranteed a Prapa Pathway from early education to full quality economic participation.

Through YESS, TSIREC offers a suite of services from the early years to Year 12, aimed at ensuring all young people in the Torres Strait achieve a "Prapa Pathway" - starting with the best early years education, moving seamlessly through school, training and/or university study to secure a quality job. These services include: Prapa Pathway (Primary and Secondary), Strait Start and IslanderMag.

Cairns-based Services

During a community consultation meeting in late 2011, representatives from all Torres Strait communities identified that a key barrier to family engagement with schools is the lack of place-based support in mainland communities. They voiced the need for caregivers to be provided with a neutral service in the major regional centres through which they can liaise directly with schools and service providers.

In January 2012, TSIREC opened a YUMI Education Support Service office in Cairns. Working in partnership with existing Thursday Island staff, this office was designed to act as a service liaison hub for families of school-age students in the Torres Strait, and oversee the administration of the organisation and its projects.

The opening of a Cairns office facilitated the launching of two additional services for Torres Strait families in 2012: Prapa Pathway Primary and Prapa Pathway Secondary.

YESS Services

Delivery Area	YESS Service
Strait START	Strait Start Iama Migi Kaziw Mudh*
Strait SMART	Prapa Pathways Primary Prapa Pathways Secondary
Strait STRONG	Informed Choices IslanderMag

* Services delivered under YUM! Education Inc.

Prapa Pathway: Secondary

The Prapa Pathway: Secondary service was developed to ensure that secondary school-aged students are provided with support they require when relocating from their home communities of the Torres Strait to attend high school outside of the region.

The service focuses on building the capacity of families, communities, boarding colleges and schools to better support the unique transition needs and aspirations of students living away from their home in the Torres Strait to attend secondary school.

The Prapa Pathway: Secondary service aims to deliver quality support services that leads to improved attendance, attainment and retention of students from the Torres Strait.

Through a case management approach, the Prapa Pathway: Secondary service supports families of students in Years 7 - 12 in the region who are boarding to attend secondary school by:

- Facilitating communication and information sharing processes between families, schools and key government agencies to support preparations for school transition
- Directly engaging with students to support their transition from home to living and attending school in new and unfamiliar contexts
- Partnering with families, schools and key government agencies to best address the individual needs and aspirations of students from the Torres Strait



Prapa Pathway: Primary

The Prapa Pathway: Primary service was developed to test a new approach to supporting families of primary school-aged children relocating to or from the Torres Strait region, either on a temporary or permanent basis.

The service partners with five key primary schools: Tagai State College, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Cairns West State School, Parramatta Park State School and Balaclava State School.

Through a case management approach, the Prapa Pathway: Primary service is aimed at combating the negative impacts commonly associated with enrolment mobility, by:

- Facilitating communication and information sharing processes between schools
- Directly engaging with families to ensure seamless enrolment (and attendance) directly before and after relocation
- Promoting parent and community awareness of the impact of mobility
- Promoting school staff awareness of the impact of mobility

About Strait Start



Since 2009, TSIREC has delivered quality early years education services to families of children aged from birth to four years in communities across the communities of the Torres Strait.

Initiated as a trial on Thursday Island and Badu, the program quickly expanded to include five additional communities in 2010: Poruma, Iama, Kubin, Malu Kiyai and Erub.

Branded as “Strait Start”, these services are unique to the Torres Strait. They are characterised

by a Montessori approach to early years education - based on an understanding of the ways children develop and recognition of the fundamental role that families and communities play as the first teachers of young children

As a direct result of the success of the Strait Start project over the past four years, Commonwealth funding was extended for an additional 12 month period, until the end of 2013. In addition, the Torres Strait Regional Authority also announced in late 2012 that it would support the expansion of the program to at least four more communities in 2013.

Evidence of Success

Early conclusions drawn from the developing research base tracking the impact of Strait Start Services all indicate the significant benefits of the program.

In 2012, school-readiness testing of pre-prep students on Thursday Island demonstrated that students that had attended Strait Start in the year prior to starting school (2011) achieved higher scores across almost all learning domains, compared with their peers. Indeed, the average scores for these students were over four aggregate points higher than those that didn't attend Strait Start.

Measured through the self-reporting of parents, the research has found:

- An observable increase in young children's independence and skills
- Young children enjoy the program - demonstrating a love of learning and eagerness to be attend each morning
- A transfer of parents' knowledge and skills from the program to home
- Positive changes in parents' interactions and behaviours with their children



Holistic Learning Curriculum

Strait Start was designed with a wider focus for services than developing “school readiness” skills and knowledge in young children. TSIREC’s program provides learning activities focused on all key developmental domains - including language, physical health, cultural and social development. They are also delivered in a manner that reflects contemporary island cultural protocols and priorities.

During 2012, TSIREC invested in the formalization of the Strait Start curriculum. The resulting Developmental Guide and professional support materials were developed in consultation with expert child development practitioners, service providers and local community representatives and reflects both national learning frameworks and the unique languages and culture of the Torres Strait

Culturally appropriate resources

During 2012, the Strait Start program released a range of culturally relevant print resources for primary caregivers on early years development. Covering topics such as eating, independence, setting limited and language development, these resources have also been adopted by the region’s Queensland Health maternal and child health specialists.

A complimentary DVD resource was also developed during 2012 – aimed at capturing in visual and audio mediums key principles of early years development. This DVD is due for release in mid 2013.



Graduate Success

In March 2012, five Torres Strait Islanders graduated from the AMI Diploma of Montessori Education Assistants to Infancy.

Strait Start Coordinators Wariba Seriat (Badu), Simah Banu (TI), Annie Baragud (Iama) & Fiona Elisala (Kubin) celebrated with fellow student Chloe Bon (TI) in the Sydney ceremony.

The graduation marked the end of an intense 12 month course for the students, which included:

- 18 weeks block course work
- 250hrs of child observations

These graduates are now internationally recognised as Montessori practitioners.



Employment & development of local Coordinators



The employment and professional development of a local early years workforce continues to underpin the design and delivery of Strait Start. Over the past four years, nine local Torres Strait Islanders have been engaged as Service Coordinators and provided access to an extensive professional development program, including:

- Regular site visits by expert mentors of Montessori Education
- Induction training (Montessori Assistant Course)
- An online learning platform
- Annual collective peer workshops (Strait Start Coordinators Conferences)
- Annual national professional conferences (Montessori Refresher & Conference)
- Nationally-accredited training (Certificate III of Children Services)
- Internationally-accredited training (AMI Diploma of Montessori Education Assistants to Infancy)

TSIREC's ongoing commitment to developing the local early years workforce in the Torres Strait has not only increased the economic engagement of Torres Strait Islanders in the region, but improved the quality of the services being provided. Locally employed staff bring to the role their expertise of the local community – its culture, language and family structures.

About Informed Choices



The Commonwealth funded “Supporting Informed Choices” project was designed to increase the knowledge-base of parents, families and Torres Strait communities regarding school-based education and training service options available to secondary school-aged young people.

With 2012 being the final year of this three-year project, TSIREC’s activities focused on developing sustainable resources for families through three key mediums – people, print and place.

PEOPLE: The project funded the establishment of the Prapa Pathway: Secondary service in Cairns with YUMI Education Support Service. During 2012, this role provided a link for families of secondary school aged young people attending school in Cairns with schools and support services.

PRINT: The project facilitated the development of culturally relevant guidebooks and other print resources for families on secondary education programs, services and related support programs. Covering topics such as enrolment, suspension, identification and transition to high school, these

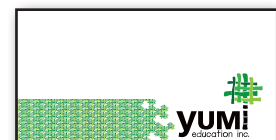
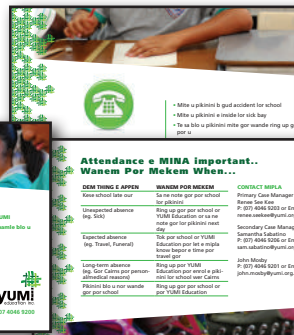
resources were published and distributed by TSIREC members and staff across the Torres Strait and Cairns Region.

Additional resources were also drafted during 2012, including guides to the senior phase of learning and school selection, and plan to be distributed in 2013.

PLACE: Core to the Supporting Informed Choices project was the provision of annual Education Information Sessions in every Torres Strait outer island community. These sessions were aimed at providing parents and families the opportunity to directly connect service and support program providers.

Over the three years of the project, TSIREC hosted over 36 individual community-based forums. These events, which ranged from general information sessions to University Aspirations Expos, included representatives from Centrelink, Indigenous Schooling Support Unit, Tagai State College, Canon Boggo Pilot Hostel, Kaziw Meta College, YUMI Education Support Service, Tagai State College and Djarragun College.

Printed Flyers & Guide Books

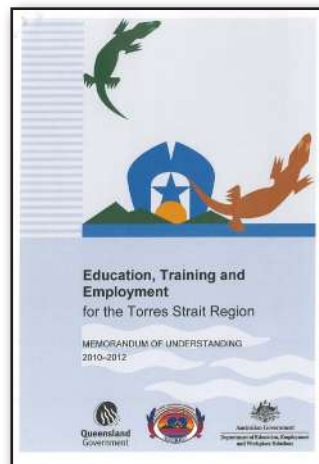


About our Other Activities



For over a decade, TSIREC has been recognised by Government as the peak regional representative body on strategic education policy development.

Since 2006, the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments have been signatories to consecutive Memorandum of Understandings. These agreements were established to formalise arrangements for the engagement of community in the design of government education policy. In practice, they have enabled Governments to develop local solutions that align with the aspirations of the Torres Strait communities and better reflect the unique geographical and cultural context of the Torres Strait.



2012 marked the conclusion of the current “Education, Training and Employment for the Torres Strait Region – Memorandum of Understanding 2010-2012”. Over the past three years, this agreement facilitated the establishment of numerous productive partnerships between signatories and other key stakeholders, resulting in significant progress being made in achieving the Government’s priorities and the aspirations of the Torres Strait.

Aspirations of Torres Strait Communities

In order to achieve its vision of a Prapa Pathway for all young people of the Torres Strait, communities have articulated a united set of objectives related to education, training and employment.

These objectives fall under five broad areas:

1. Early years education programs
2. Supportive schooling services
3. Training & employment pathways
4. Cultural recognition
5. Torres Strait governance and educational leadership

It is only by coordinated efforts between communities, government and independent service providers that TSIREC’s vision for its people can be realised - and our children are provided with a Strait START, to get Strait SMART, to be Strait STRONG.

YUMI Symposium

In June 2012 TSIREC held the first “YUMI Symposium”. Conceived as an alternative format for the organisation’s biannual Regional Education and Training Roundtable, it was designed to introduce independent, evidenced-based discussions to TSIREC’s negotiations with Government on the education and training priorities of the Torres Strait.

Bringing together leaders, celebrated academics and practitioners with key State and Federal government representatives, the symposium provided a forum to challenge current practice, explore evidence-based approaches and identify short and long term strategies for direct action.

Through the forum, TSIREC members sought informed discussion on five fundamental areas of education and training policy:



Speaker		Key Note Address
Schooling Governance	Prof. Mark Rose Deakin University	“The role of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people and communities must play in shaping education policy and practice”
Quality support for secondary schooling	Richie Ahmat Cape York Partnerships	“The Cape York agenda in achieving independent governance over state-based education services”
Teacher Workforce	Prof. Peter Buckskin University of South Australia	“The contemporary, core issues that face Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students and the schools that service them”
Early years education	Prof. Oberklaid AOM, MD, FRACP University of Melbourne	“The opportunities that a focus on quality early years development may provide Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities”
Recognition of traditional culture	Stacey Campton Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport	“An overview of the national traditional language & culture agenda”

Independent School Governance

In 2012, TSIREC supported Tagai State College’s successful application to become one of Queensland’s first Independent Public Schools. This achievement is considered TSIREC as a positive step towards achieving the Torres Strait Nation’s long-held aspiration for self-management of education and training services.

Under the Queensland State Government’s Independent Public Schools, from 2013 Tagai State College will operate on the advice of a school council. The Tagai State College Executive Principal will also assume a greater level of autonomy, with a direct line of communication and accountability to the Director-General – bypassing the Far North Queensland regional structure.

With the support of Pacific Plus Consulting and Allens Consulting, TSIREC will continue to advocate for a model of governance that affords full autonomy from existing systems in the operation of schooling while maintaining accountability to the funding body for the delivery of agreed outcomes. During 2013, TSIREC will release its position on the region’s preferred model of governance to the State and Commonwealth Governments.

islander



MAGAZINE

In 2011, TSIREC launched IslanderMag, the Torres Strait's first ever lifestyle magazine.

This bi-monthly publication aims to celebrate what it means to be connected to the Torres Strait in 21st Century. It is a down-to-earth, how-to lifestyle magazine for the Torres Strait, appealing to an Islanders' unique sense of connectiveness to the region – its people, place and culture - regardless of where they live.

Throughout 2012, IslanderMag continued to put an Islander spin on all the elements of a well-lived life, from language, culture, land & sea to food, health, education, sport, work and finance. It used the Islander identity to communicate positive messages – using local images, people and places.

Highlights from 2012 publications included the celebration of the publication's first birthday and a commemoration of the 20 years anniversary of the Mabo Native Title High Court decision.

IslanderMag works to inspire its readers to make a positive change for themselves, their family, their home and their culture.







About our
RESULTS

About our Results



Strategic Plan Score Card

In 2010, TSIREC released a three-year strategic plan. Entitled “By 2013”, this plan established TSIREC’s vision for the Torres Strait Nation to achieve increased independence in the management of education and services in the region.

By 2013...the Torres Strait will have a structure and system that enables the running of our affairs in the delivery of education and training services

The plan also identified three areas of focused action and established performance targets for TSIREC members and services.

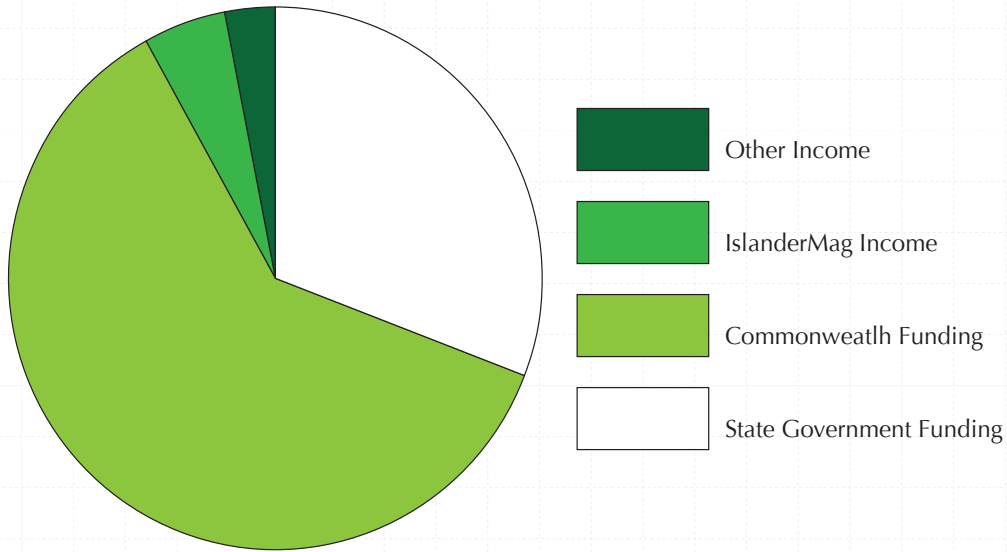
The following table provides a score-card of TSIREC’s progress at achieving these targets by 2013:



	Key Actions	Destination Targets	Score Card
Self Governance	TSIREC will advocate for the Torres Strait to have structures and systems that enables the running of our own affairs in the delivery of education and training services and programs	By 2013... the Torres Strait will have a structure and system that enables the running of our own affairs in the delivery of education and training services and programs	IN PROGRESS: Independent Public School status for Tagai State College. Position Paper for government under development
Financial Independence	TSIREC will develop a business model that increases its independence from recurrent government funding.	By 2013...the TSIREC council will have the capacity to operate independently from recurrent government funding	ACHIEVED: Investments maintained to ensure medium-term viability, independent of government funding.
YUMI Services	Through the Yumi Education Support Service, TSIREC will provide a suite of services from the early years to post-school to ensure families and young people of the Torres Strait are empowered to achieve Prapa life pathways	By 2013... the Torres Strait will be delivering a suite of high-quality education services from the early years to post-school to ensure all young people	ACHIEVED: Through YESS, TSIREC provides place-based services for families of children from birth through to Year 12.

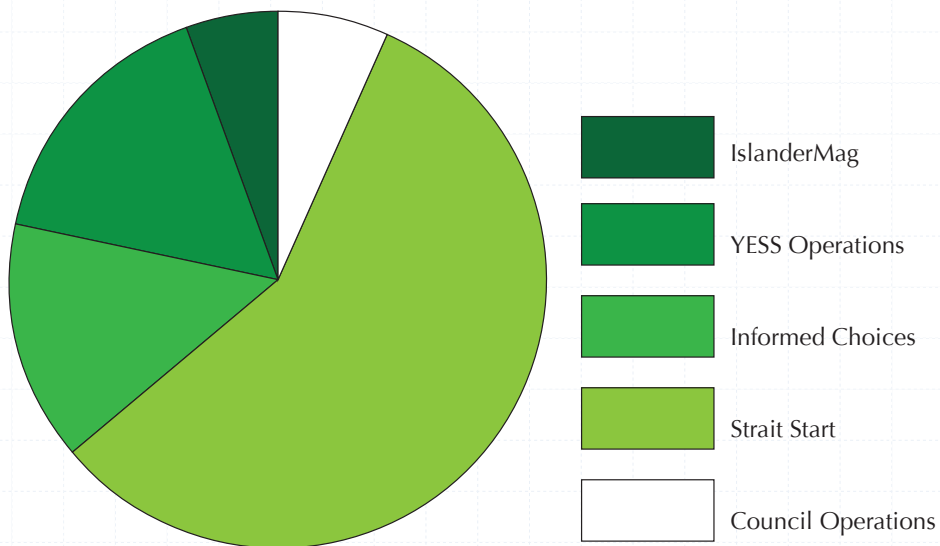
Income Sources

In 2012, 8% of TSIREC income was generated through independent sources. The majority of revenue was received from project-specific Commonwealth Grants.



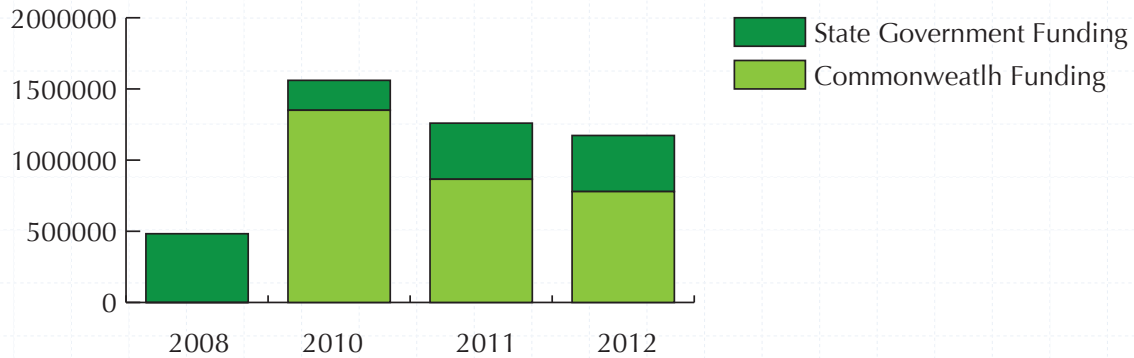
Expenditure

In line with grant service agreements, the majority of TSIREC expenditure was tied to the delivery of projects - including Strait Start & Informed Choices.



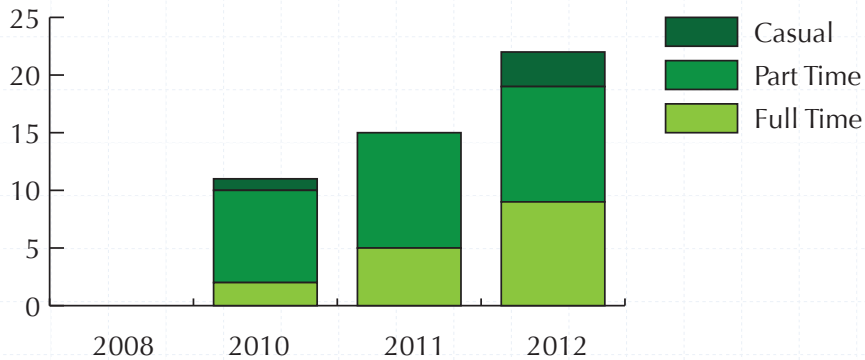
Grant Revenue

Grant Revenue in 2012 remained consistent with 2011 figures. While total is less than the amount received in 2010, it continues at a rate significantly higher than pre-2009 figures.



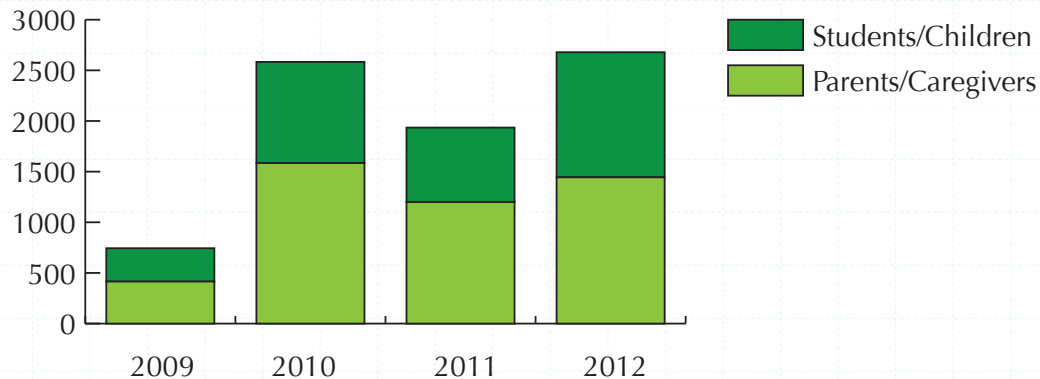
Employment

The TSIREC workforce grew dramatically in 2012 as a result of the opening of the Cairns YUMI Education Support Service office. This provided TSIREC the opportunity to engage more full-time employees while maintaining the part-time Strait Start workforce.



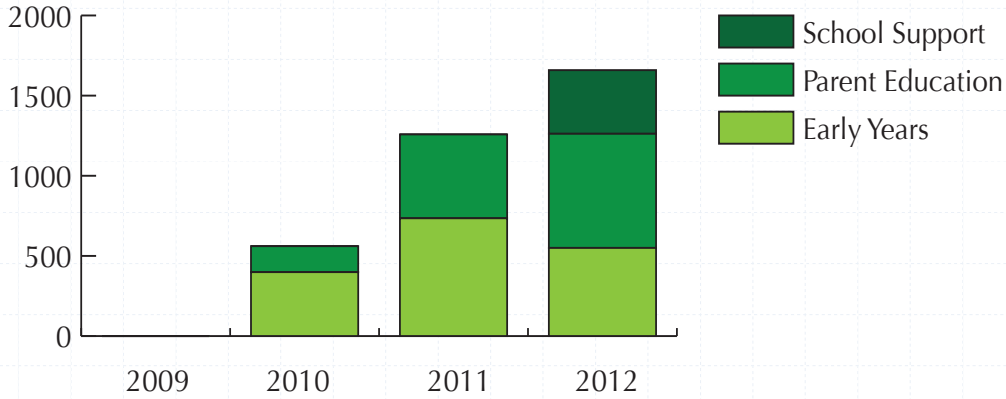
Service Delivery

During 2012, TSIREC delivered more services than ever before. As opposed to 2010 figures - which included Cairns and Cape early years services, all services in 2012 were provided to families from the Torres Strait.



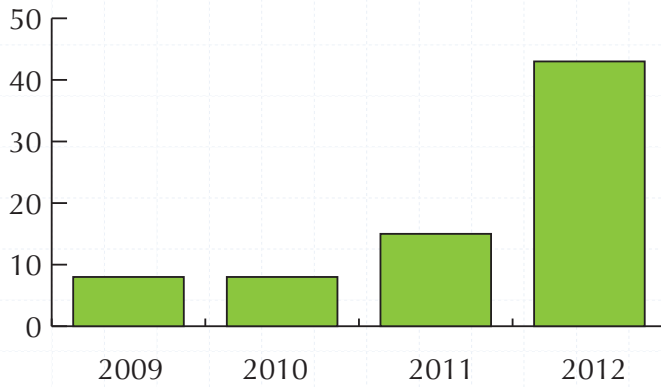
Service Delivery by Delivery Area

The opening of the Cairns YUMI Education Support Service office provided TSIREC the opportunity to broaden the scope of services provided to families from the Torres Strait Islands.



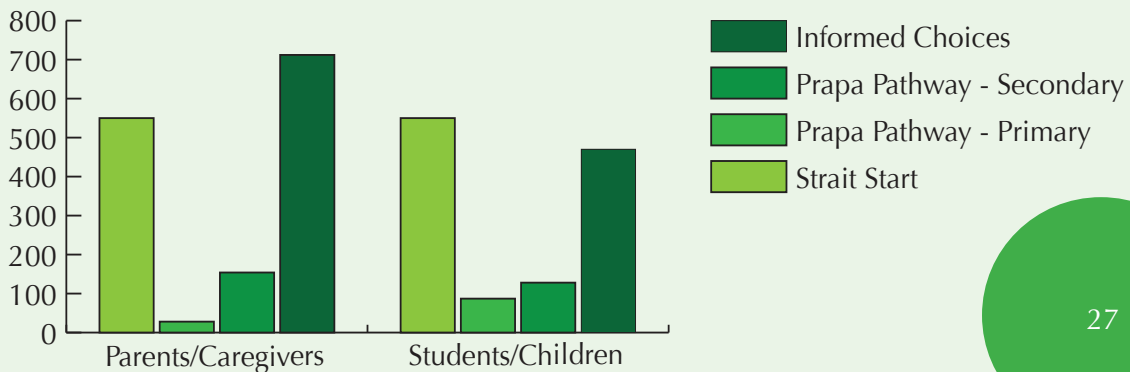
Service Delivery by Locations

In addition to broadening the scope of services, TSIREC also dramatically increased the number of locations from which families from the Torres Strait Islands could access support.



Service Delivery by Service Type

All services delivered by TSIREC in 2012 directly engaged with families and/or children from the Torres Strait. In total, almost 1,700 individuals were provided with direct support from our staff.





A tropical road lined with palm trees and a white concrete curb, leading towards the ocean. The scene is bright and sunny, with shadows cast by the trees onto the road. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

About our
FUTURE PLANS

Looking Forward 2013 - 2015



2013 marks a new era for the Torres Strait Islanders' Regional Education Council, with the release of a new mission statement and strategic plan.

While TSIREC will continue to support the provision of services through YUMI Education Support Service, members look forward with a renewed focus on core advocacy responsibilities.

TSIREC's Aspirations for 2015

TSIREC members have clearly articulated their collective objectives for education training and employment services in the region:

In 2015...

1. Primary schools and communities in the region are satisfied with the government's response following the move of Year 7 to secondary school
2. A government funded transition services school is in place to adequately support secondary school aged students moving away from the region
3. Student residential facilities on Thursday Island are managed by Tagai State College
4. Increased student residential facilities will be available on Thursday Island
5. Increased early years education services will be offered in Torres Strait communities, through a partnership between Tagai State College and TSIREC

To realise these their aspirations by 2015, TSIREC members will work across all levels – from individual community engagement to national policy negotiations – to advocate for:

1. Improved education, training and employment service delivery
2. Improved education, training and employment service outcome
3. Improved education, training and employment service governance
4. Broadening of TSIREC's capacity

The background of the slide is a photograph of a coastal scene. In the foreground, there are dark, jagged rocks with some reddish-brown patches, possibly from rust or mineral deposits. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, and the sky is a clear blue with scattered white clouds. The overall atmosphere is bright and natural.

TSIREC's Mission for 2015

TSIREC leads the Torres Strait Nation towards providing a YUMI Education - a distinct style of service delivery, which is accountable for delivering national standard learning outcomes, and recognises the role of community in determining the strategic direction of education & training.

**TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS' REGIONAL
EDUCATION COUNCIL, INC**

Cairns Office
247 McLeod Street
PO Box 1014
Cairns North, Queensland, 4870

Thursday Island Office
31 Hargraves Street
PO Box 546
Thursday Island, Queensland, 4870

www.tsirec.com.au