

The Torres Strait

The Torres Strait is divided into the Top Western (Boigu, Dauan and Saibai islands), the Western (Badu, Mabuiag and Moa islands), the Central (Iama-Yam, Warraber-Sue, Poruma-Coconut and Masig-Yorke islands), the Eastern (Mer-Murray, Erub-Darnley and Ugar-Stephen islands), and the Muralug Group (Waibene, Ngurupai, Kirriri – Hammond, Muralug, Gealug, Mawai, Palilug islands) which is inclusive of the five aboriginal and islander communities (Bamaga, Seisia, Injino, Alow and New Mapoon), on the NPA of Cape York. Three dialects: Kala Kawa Ya (Top Western and Western), Kala Lagau Ya (Central) and Meriam (Eastern) predominate with the 'Creole' language that emerged after the arrival of the missionaries. The Torres Strait is the body of water between Australia and Papua New Guinea where the Pacific and Indian Oceans meet and where there are 133 islands, sandy cays and rocky outcrops of which 38 are inhabited. The population of the Torres Strait at the last Census totalled 8,679 people. The Torres Strait is culturally unique and whilst it is Australian, it is different from the surrounding areas of Papua New Guinea, Asia and the Pacific. A multicultural society has emerged from the history of beche-de-mer fishing and mother-of-pearl and trochus shell industries with the influx of Asian and Pacific Island traders. The fishery of the Torres Strait with the exception of trochus shell continues today and Waibene exemplifies the multiculturalism of the Torres Strait where people of many races and nationalities live and work harmoniously. As the only part of Australia with an active international border and where the neighbouring country is visible from the shoreline, the Torres Strait has gained a strategic focus from Commonwealth and State governments. The issues of customs, quarantine, immigration and defence are administered daily from Waibene within a treaty that also maintains traditional cultural and trade ties between Papua New Guinea and the people of the Torres Strait.



LOCALITY INDEX

1	Hospital	25	Uniting Church
2	Bowls Club	26	Royal Hotel
3	Torres Str Water Sports Club	27	Col Jones Newsagency
4	Peddells Ferry & Tour Bus	28	Council Office/Library
5	Torres News	29	Port Kennedy Assoc. Hall
6	Australia Post	30	National Australia Bank
7	Customs House	31	Rainbow Motel
8	Commonwealth Centre	32	Child Care Centre
9	Grand Hotel	33	Pharmacy
10	Gab Titui Cultural Centre	34	Defence Facility
11	Torres Strait Travel (Qantas Link)	35	QLD Ambulance Service
12	Pearls Building	36	Kaziw Meta (Cathedral College)
13	Jardine Motel	37	Playgroup
14	T.S.R.A/ I.C.C.	38	Seventh Day Adventist Church
15	Federal Hotel	39	Assembly of God Church
16	Hostels a) Jumula Dubbins	40	Country Women's Assoc. Hall
16	b) Cannon Boggo Pilot	41	QLD Fire & Rescue Authority
16	c) Mura Mudh	42	Telstra
17	Ken Brown Field	43	Full Gospel Church
18	Court House	44	Reef Helicopters (Anglican)
19	QLD Police	45	School Support Centre
20	Lena Passi Women's Shelter	46	Museum/Historical Society
21	Quetta Memorial Church (Anglican)	47	Cemetery
22	Sacred Heart Catholic Church	48	Anzac Memorial Park
23	Sacred Heart Primary School	49	IBIS Supermarket
24	Torres Hotel		

EMERGENCY SERVICES

AMBULANCE	4069 1501
POLICE	4069 1520
FIRE BRIGADE	000
HOSPITAL	4069 1109
ERGON ENERGY	13 22 96
COASTGUARD	4069 2000

LIBRARY SERVICE

The Public Library at the Shire Office in Douglas Street is open during office hours and on Saturdays between 9.30am and 12.30pm. This is a free library service for people living in Torres Shire but special borrowing arrangements can be made for short term visitors.

Mon. to Fri.	9.00am - 4.00pm
Saturday	9.30am - 12.30pm

TORRES SHIRE SPORTS COMPLEX

FOR POOL TIMES AND POOL OR STADIUM BOOKINGS
PHONE 4069 1336

FESTIVALS & HOLIDAYS

TORRES STRAIT CULTURAL FESTIVAL • MABO DAY
COMING OF THE LIGHT • NAIDOC CELEBRATIONS
TORRES STRAIT MUSIC FESTIVAL

History

Waibene, under the jurisdiction of Torres Shire Council, is also the administrative and commercial centre for the Torres Strait. Louis Van Torres was the first non-indigenous sailor to navigate the Torres Strait followed by Captain James Cook who made claim of the area on behalf of the British Crown on what is now known as Bedanug – Possession Island.



By the 1870s, Waibene had become a port that served the fishery of beche-de-mer, mother-of-pearl and trochus shells, the Pacific traders and the Christian missionaries throughout the Torres Strait. The administration of the Torres Strait was moved from Somerset to Waibene in 1877 with the centre of administration in far-away Brisbane.

In 1903 the Torres Shire Council was formed to provide a more direct and effective local government administration over the Torres Strait area. In the last twenty years, Island and Aboriginal Community Councils have been granted jurisdiction over their own communities.

Now the Torres Shire Council administers only those areas not controlled by Community Councils, which is mainly Waibene, Ngurupai, Muralug and a small part of the NPA.

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY

GOLD SPONSOR

PORTS CORPORATION OF QUEENSLAND

Ports Corporation of Queensland is the port authority for several ports within the state which handle the supply of cargo and fuel to the remote area of Torres Strait. Business contact on Thursday Island is :
Tel: 07 4069 1405

Fax: 07 4069 1768

Internet site: www.pcq.com.au



SPONSOR



Torres Strait Pearl Merchants & Art Gallery

SARANEALIS HOUSE Est. 1946

Pearl Merchants & Art Gallery

Pearl jewelry Manufacturers

Tel: 07 4069 2401

Fax: 07 4069 2406

Email: rustypearl@optusnet.com.au

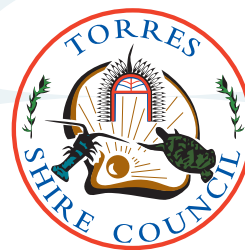
*Welcome to
Thursday Island...*



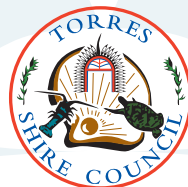
The Council

The Torres Shire Council administers the Muralug - TI Group of Islands (Waibene – Thursday Island, Ngurupai – Horn, Gealug – Friday, Mawai – Wednesday, Muralug – Prince of Wales and Palilug – Goods islands) as well as areas of the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) of Cape York. The population of the Torres Shire totals approximately 4,600 people. A large population of temporary residents for educational, medical, recreational, travel and administrative needs are always present on Waibene and Ngurupai.

TORRES STRAIT QUEENSLAND



An initiative of:



TORRES SHIRE COUNCIL SHIRE OFFICE

68 Douglas Street, Thursday Island, Queensland
PO Box 171, Thursday Island Q 4875
Tel: 07 4069 1336
Fax: 07 4069 1845

Email: admin@torres.qld.gov.au

With the growth of population and the administrative centre on Waibene & Ngurupai, the provision of services and facilities has developed dramatically. Recent developments of the new sewerage plant and upgraded water supply have eased some of these pressures. Torres Shire is a shire literally on the sea. The main form of transport within the shire is by boat: commercial ferries, barge transport and private vessels. Vehicular transport is limited to the main islands and the NPA. Aerial transport offers rapid connections and transfers within the Torres Strait and to/from the Mainland. The Torres Shire Council has a major role in the promotion of the cultural heritage of the Torres Strait and therefore proudly sponsors the Torres Strait Cultural Festival which is organised by a community committee. A number of the 24,000 mainland Torres Strait islanders along with many outer island residents and visitors converge on Waibene for the biennial event.