



TSRA COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

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1. Purpose:

The Purpose of this guide is to:

- Explain the TSRA's protocol for interacting with media organisations
- Create and maintain effective working relationships with the media
- Ensure that the TSRA's key messages and official views are effectively communicated
- Describe processes for the development, approval and publication of TSRA communications
- Communicate the TSRA's lead time requirements for media products and events

2. Scope

This guide applies to all TSRA staff and contractors employed by the TSRA both for internal and external communications. The TSRA Native Title Office may vary the 'Style' component of this guide in the performance of their Native Title Representative Body role, this exemption recognises the different formatting and style requirements for legal documents.

3. TSRA media guide objectives:

- Identify key target audiences
- Develop and deliver on time key messages suitable for target audiences
- Determine the right time to communicate with target audiences
- Design appropriate communication methods to reach target audiences
- Identify communication challenges and barriers and strategies to overcome these
- Provide a simple style guide for writing TSRA documents

4. Media protocols:

Media protocols are used by government agencies, corporations, non-government organisations and many community groups to set the rules regarding media contact. The TSRA media protocol is to ensure that:

- A central point of contact is available for all media inquiries
- Media enquiries are processed quickly and efficiently to meet deadlines where possible
- Media organisations receive accurate, consistent and complete information
- The TSRA capitalises on good news stories
- The TSRA's public image and reputation is upheld
- Any communication risks to the TSRA are identified and mitigated where possible

The TSRA's media protocol applies to all TSRA staff and Board Members for interaction with the media.

5. Persons Authorised to speak to the media:

The following appointment holders are authorised to speak to the media:

- The TSRA Chairperson gives direct interviews and provides information to the media and authorises Portfolio and Board Members to speak to the media
- The TSRA Communications Coordinator liaises with journalists, provides approved background notes, organises interview times and approved speaking notes

6. Media:

The media is defined as agencies, organisations, individual journalists or individuals that publish or broadcast content that is accessed by the public through:

- newspapers
- magazines
- newsletters
- television
- radio
- public websites
- e-newsletters
- social network utilities including but not limited to FaceBook, Twitter, You Tube and My Space (For specific guidance refer to Australian Public Service Commission Circular 12-1) which is in TRIM as [DOC12/006633](#).

7. Private use of Social Media:

Private users of social media should also observe the relevant APS Code of Conduct requirements:

- maintain appropriate confidentiality about dealings that the employee has with any Minister or Minister's member of staff;
- disclose, and take reasonable steps to avoid, any conflict of interest (real or apparent) in connection with APS employment;
- use Commonwealth resources in a proper manner;
- not provide false or misleading information in response to a request for information that is made for official purposes in connection with the employee's APS employment;
- not make improper use of:
 - inside information, or
 - the employee's duties, status, power or authority,
 in order to gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for the employee or for any other person;
- at all times behave in a way that upholds the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS

8. Media enquiries:

The media organisation should be referred directly to the TSRA Communications Coordinator who will organise an approved response. If the Communications Coordinator is unavailable, the media organisation should be referred directly to the Program Manager, Governance and Leadership.

9. Approaches by media:

If you are undertaking field work or attending a conference and you are approached by a journalist, they should be referred to the Communications Coordinator. Most journalists are familiar with government media procedures, referral of media inquiries to a communications coordinator or media unit is standard operating practice for government agencies.

10. 'Off the record' comments to the media:

TSRA staff are not permitted to speak to media organisations 'off the record' or 'in confidence'. Information provided 'off the record' could be misinterpreted causing damage to the TSRA's reputation.

11. Screening emails and calls:

Most journalists and media representatives adhere to a high standard of conduct and abide by a professional code of conduct. Media representatives should always identify themselves to you at the outset. Always check the name of the caller or email address and organisational details before giving out

information. If a person is from a media organisation calls or emails the TSRA, refer them to the Communications Coordinator.

12. Written materials and emails:

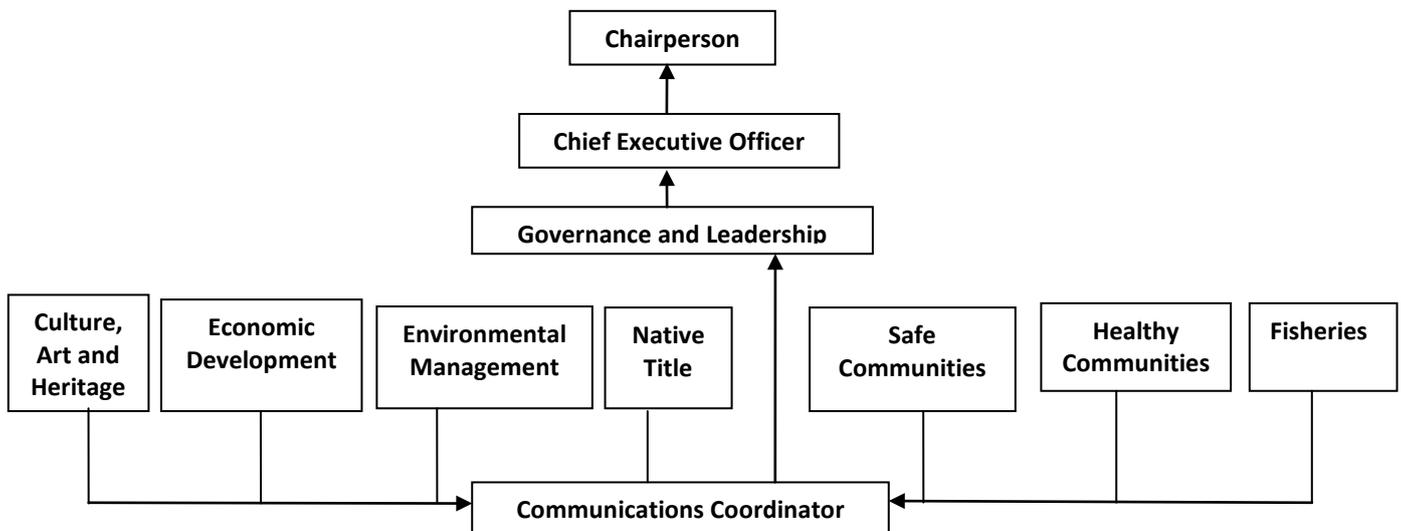
Written materials and emails are not to be provided to media organisations without approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

13. Media Releases:

Newspapers, magazines and the electronic media have varying styles and needs. A newspaper events guide might need to get your information a couple of weeks in advance while the deadline for monthly publication will have an even greater lead time.

14. Approval process for media releases:

- The Program Manager writes the first draft of the media release and sends it to the Communications Coordinator.
- The Communications Coordinator will register the release, amend the draft and provide the draft release back to the Program Manager to clear any amendments if required.
- The Communication Coordinator then arranges for the draft to be cleared by the Chief Executive Officer and the Chairperson
- The Communications Coordinator forwards the cleared media release to the appropriate media organisations at the release date agreed by the Program Manger and the Chairperson. Media release can be issued 'under embargo' until a specific date or time.



Approval process for all TSRA media material

Media releases are to be prepared using the TSRA Media Release Template, located in TRIM as DOC11/204711. Media releases are to be saved in TRIM using the naming convention:

- Media Release 000 'Subject' 'Short Month' 'Year'
- Eg Media Release 425 Tropical Rock Lobster Buy Out May 2012
Where '000' is the serial number obtained from the Media Release Register [DOC11/204535](#)

15. Media release distribution:

The Communications Coordinator is responsible for the day to day management of media distribution lists. Approved media releases will be distributed to media outlets most likely to use the material. All

media releases are sent to the Torres News and to other outlets on a case by case basis. Because of high media staff turnover, the preference is to use organisation rather than individual email distribution. All media releases, and other published information should be sent by a separate distribution list to TSRA Board Members and to the IT Helpdesk for web publishing. This needs to happen in a timely manner with distribution to Board Members synchronised with the issue of the Media release.

16. Media release register:

The Register of Media releases [DOC11/204535](#) is a spreadsheet which records all releases dating back to 2002. The spreadsheet provides TRIM links to all releases.

17. Talking Points:

Talking Points may be required for urgent or routine media releases, media interviews or formal speeches. TSRA Staff as subject matter experts will be required to develop talking points. Talking Points should be cleared by the relevant Program Manager before being sent to the Communications Coordinator. Remember in most instances only key points will be required. Each dot point must be confined to one issue. The layout for talking points is shown below.

TALKING POINTS - TEMPLATE

Talking Point	Detail
Eg 1. Fifteen Torres Strait communities are involved in dugong and turtle management planning supported by TSRA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven community-based management plans developed first endorsed for Badu, Boigu, Iama, Mabuiag, Mer, Erub, and Moa St Pauls (Moa) Islands. • Implementation of these plans started in June 2008. • Plans for the remaining seven communities of Saibai, Dauan, Kubin (Moa), Warraber, Poruma, Masig and Ugar have been endorsed by traditional owners. • Implementation of these plans commenced in June 2010. • Planning in the Kaiwalagal region is on-going.

18. Media monitoring:

The TSRA has a contract with the media monitoring service ‘Meltwater’. This provides a daily news summary which is distributed to the Chief Executive Officer, Program Managers and the Communications Coordinator. The free Internet service ‘Google Alerts’ can be used by all TSRA staff to provide daily alerts for topics based on a key word search.

19. Communications plans:

All TSRA projects targeting external audiences require a communication plan. The communications plan is an integral part of the project documentation and is not optional.

- The communication plan is developed by the project manager as part of the project plan
- The communication plan ensures that TSRA public relations is consistent and to schedule
- The communication plan outlines key messages, target audiences, material to be developed, deadlines and responsibilities

20. Coordination and approval for Communication plans:

Communication plans are required for all TSRA projects and major events. Project related Communication Plans are to be prepared with the Project Plan and presented to the Program Steering Committee for endorsement. The process is:

- Program Managers develop a communication plan for each project or event.
- The Communication plan is submitted to the Communications Coordinator for advice
- The project plan and the communication plan are submitted by the Program Manager to the Chief Executive Officer for approval, through the Project Steering Committee.
- Program Managers advise the Communications Coordinator when the Communication Plan has been approved.
- The Program Manager oversees the implementation of the Communication Plan with assistance from the Communications Coordinator.

The Communications Plan Template is located in TRIM as [DOC12/000108](#)

The Communications Plan is to be saved into TRIM using the standard naming convention. The communications plan should be 'related' in TRIM to the other project documents including the Project Brief, Project Plan, Project Costing Tool and Project Risks and Issues Register. The naming convention to be used is:

- 'Communication Plan' <Project Number> 'Subject' 'Short Month' 'Year'
- Eg 'Communication Plan G&L 2011-455-1 TSRA Governance Structures Review Nov 2010'

21. Communications material:

Communications material is the means by which the TSRA's messages are delivered to target audiences. It can include newsletters, posters, post cards, advertisements, flyers, brochures, signage, banners, fact sheets, web pages, e-newsletters, promotional products or merchandise bearing the TSRA logo. These guidelines ensure that all TSRA communications:

- Maintains the integrity of the TSRA brand
- Reaches target audiences in the most appropriate ways
- Clearly communicates key messages to target audiences

22. Design, development and approval of communications material:

The Program Manager sends a request for material to the Communications Coordinator using the TSRA Request for Communications Material Template which is located in TRIM as [DOC12/005230](#).

- The Program Manager forwards a completed Request for Communications Material to the Communications Coordinator
- The Communications Coordinator provides a cost estimate for product development to Program Manager
- When approved, Program Manager provides text or other content to Communications Coordinator
- Communications Coordinator will provide the draft back to the Program Manager for review and approval.
- The Communication Coordinator gains approval from the Chief Executive Officer for the material
- The Communication Coordinator orders delivery of material according to Program Manager's instruction.

The Communications Request is to be saved in TRIM using the naming convention:

- Communications Request 'Subject' 'Short month' 'Year'
- Eg 'Communications Request Turtle and Dugong Management Plans Brochure Aug 2012'

23. Promotional products and merchandise:

Promotional products advance the TSRA brand and provide key TSRA messages to internal and external audiences. The best promotional products are ones that are used every day.

Requests for the development of promotional products eg, TSRA branded pens, mugs, bags, lanyards, mouse pads, water bottles, caps, USB devices, stress balls, key rings, are to be prepared in Memo format, endorsed by the Program Manager and forwarded through the Communications Coordinator to the TSRA Chief Executive Officer for approval.

24. DVDs, CDs and videos:

Proposals for DVDs, CDs, Videos or other media products are to be prepared in Memo format, endorsed by the Program Manager and forwarded through the Communications Coordinator to the Chief Executive Officer for approval.

25. Web content:

The TSRA is reviewing its web content policies and a new web content management system (WCMS) is planned for introduction in financial year 2012 – 2013.

In the interim, web content is to be prepared by the Program Manager, reviewed by the Communications Coordinator and approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Until the WCMS is introduced the publishing of web content will be managed by the IT section.

26. Business cards:

TSRA Corporate Services manage requests for business cards. Requests for cards must be approved by the Program Manager and forwarded to Corporate Service Administration Team in Memo format. The template for the TSRA card is managed by the Communications Coordinator.

27. Corporate Uniforms:

Corporate Services coordinate the purchase and distribution of corporate uniforms. All staff members may be provided with two corporate shirts and a cap on joining the TSRA at no cost. Additional and replacement items can be purchased through Corporate Services Finance Team. Contact extension 703 for details.

28. Events and Launches:

At least 90 days prior to the event or launch, the Program Manager is to send a Memo to the Chief Executive Office describing the event and seeking approval. Program Managers ensure a communication plan is developed within three weeks of the Chief Executive Officer's approval to conduct the event. The communication plan must include:

- Event summary
- Proposed date event is to be held
- Location of event and site description
- Invitation and RSVP management
- Event partners and their roles
- List of any high profile individuals attending
- Event program
- Event run sheet
- Event marketing initiatives
- Media releases

- Event advertising
- Required TSRA branded communication collateral
- Speaking notes/speeches
- Media kits
- Photography and consent forms
- Total event budget if hosted by TSRA
- Catering menu if provided by TSRA
- Event Security arrangements
- Post event debrief and lessons learned

The communication plan is submitted to the Communications Coordinator for advice.

The Communication Coordinator submits the communication plan to the Chief Executive Officer for sign off. The Program Manager oversees task allocation and implementation of the communication plan.

29. Photographs:

A TSRA photo library is to be developed as part of the current TSRA web upgrade. The Communications guide will be updated to include requirements as part of this ongoing process. Photos are to be relevant to the content and preferably show movement, activity or a subject of interest. Some good hints and tips on photography can be found at http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/apictureofbritain/how_to/

- Photographs are to be emailed as separate files to the Communications Coordinator with a full description of the photo in the email.
- The TSRA Photo Consent Form is to be submitted (in TRIM) with all photographs depicting persons.
- Photos must be supported by a caption (Eg TSRA Project Officer, Economic Development, Mr Joe Cents talks with Torres Strait artist, Mr John Doe at the Art and Artisans workshop, coordinated by Arts Queensland)
- Provide high resolution photographs where possible in JPEG, EPS or TIF format.
- Ensure all photographs are culturally appropriate and in keeping with Torres Strait Islander cultural traditions and beliefs

30. Photo Consent forms:

When taking photos, the general consent form [DOC12/005231](#) is to be used to gain approval for image use and will also greatly assist with the drafting of picture captions. The child consent form [DOC12/005232](#) requiring the approving signature of a Parent, Guardian or Teacher is to be used when photographs are taken of people aged 16 or under. The group / meeting registration and photo consent form [DOC12/006663](#) is to be used for photographs taken during meetings or community consultations. A register of Photo Consent Forms is located in TRIM as [DOC12/006643](#). The serial number for the Photo Consent Form is obtained from this register.

The following TRIM naming conventions apply to consent forms and photographs:

- Consent Form 'serial number' 'name of person', 'description of activity', 'location', 'short month', 'year'
- Photo 'description of scene', 'location', 'short month', 'year'
- Eg 'Photo Consent Form 02234 Joe Citizen Turtle Tagging Boigu May 2012'
- Eg 'Photo Consent Form 02235 Group Meeting Turtle Management Plan Boigu May 2012'
- Eg 'Photo Dugong and Seagrass Meadow Boigu May 2012'

A consent form is only required when people are depicted in the photograph. A consent form is not required for any TSRA staff or Board member.

31. TSRA Brand and Style guide:

The TSRA's brand style guide, (also known as a corporate style manual or corporate style guide) is a graphic-focused document with predefined design and graphic standards for general use by TSRA staff and consultants.

- The guide encourages consistency in visual branding across the organisation
- It plays a key role in ensuring a uniform brand message is delivered to our audiences
- The Brand and style guide are used in the development of TSRA communications material
- The Communications Coordinator provides copies of these documents to external designers and agencies to ensure consistency of the TSRA's brand and style
- The Style Guide is located in TRIM [DOC11/188992](#)

32. TSRA Logos:

The TSRA logo forms part of the TSRA's brand and style guide. Release of the TSRA logo for use in design, artwork and documents is to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Requests are to be submitted in Memo format through the Communications Coordinator.

33. TSRA stationery:

TSRA stationery has been developed to be consistent with the TSRA's brand and style. Artwork, logos, fonts and page layout cannot be altered. The following stationery templates are available in TRIM:

- Letterhead template single [DOC11/186846\[v1\]](#)
- Media Release template [DOC11/204711](#)
- Fax template [DOC11/190534](#)
- Internal Memo template [DOC11/186844](#)
- Power Point presentation template [DOC11/188615](#)

34. Media awareness:

All TSRA staff have a role to play in helping to identify issues and potential crisis situations.

- TSRA's effective response to risks and issues depends on how quickly the facts of the situation are established and how rapidly information is communicated to the necessary audiences
- If you become aware of events or circumstances that you believe could attract negative publicity for the TSRA, please advise one of the Program Managers, the Chief Executive Officer or the Communications Coordinator as soon as possible.

35. Media contingency:

Major stories and national media focus on the Torres Strait and community representatives can occur at short notice. In the absence of the Communications Coordinator an Acting Communications Coordinator will be appointed by the Chief Executive Officer as the first point of contact for all media inquiry.

- The Acting Communications Coordinator will usually be a subject matter expert appointed from the relevant program area
- Temporarily relocate to the Communications Coordinator office to be able to deal directly with all media inquiries and liaise with section heads and CEO
- Prepare basic talking point briefs for the Chairperson which can be updated subject to developments

- Be accessible – provide the media with an out of work hours point of contact such as a mobile telephone and be prepared to respond to inquiry at any reasonable time of day or night
- The Acting Communications Coordinator should be mindful of the need to share information and liaise closely with the TSRA staff member tasked to prepare Australian Government Ministerial briefs on the event or issue

36. Advertising Design, booking and accounts:

Advertisements are drafted by the Programs, cleared by the Program Manager and sent to the Communications Coordinator for clearance. The Communications Coordinator arranges clearance through the Governance and Leadership Program Manager, the Chief Executive Officer and the where required, the Chairperson.

Public notices and local advertising are generally set by Torres News (ads@torresnews.com.au). All other advertising including placement in the Cairns post are to be managed through AdCorp (AnnabelKulich@adcorp.com.au telephone 02 6203 4500. Feature advertisements are designed by the TSRA's design agency which is currently R& B Creative (rachaell@randb.com.au).

- An estimate is required for all advertising
- When the estimate is received the Program area is to raise a purchase order
- Email the purchase order to Torres News
- AdCorp handles all mainland advertising (Cairns Post)
- An invoice will be sent to the Ordering Officer when the advertisement has appeared.
- The Program area is responsible for the payment of the Invoice
- Copies of estimates, purchase orders and invoices should be saved in TRIM

37. Style:

The *TSRA Brand and Style Guide* provides information on the layout of corporate documents. Adherence to the TSRA templates and writing style will help writers to produce professional documents with a consistent look and feel. This section of the Communications Guide covers some of the common style elements that all writers of TSRA documents should adhere to.

Write in the 'active voice' rather than the 'passive voice'. Active voice is generally less ambiguous and by putting the subject at the beginning of the sentence, is easier to read. Active voice sentences are also able to communicate using fewer words. For example:

- Passive: The turtle and dugong management plans were written by the TSRA.
- Active: The TSRA wrote the turtle and dugong management plans.

Numbers from one to ten are to be spelled out in full, eg 'two' not '2'. Numbers 11 and above use numerals eg '1,234'; noting the use of commas to separate three digit groups greater than 999.

Decimal numbers always include one real number, eg '0.4' rather than '.4'.

Percentages are written in narrative using the word 'percent' not the symbol '%', eg '23.4 percent' not '23.4%'. In tables the shorter '%' form is preferred.

Avoid starting a sentence with a number if possible, if unavoidable write the number in full, eg 'Fifty five tonnes of fin fish were caught last year' although this is better expressed as 'Last year 55 tonnes of fin fish were caught.'; or in the active voice as 'Local fishers caught 55 tonnes of fin fish last year'.

When referring to money use the following conventions:

- \$20,000 not \$20k
- \$2.5 million not \$2.5m
- 0.025 million not .025 million
- Do not show cents unless it is essential to the subject matter

In narrative, months and years are to use the long date form, eg '31 October 2012'. In tables use the short date form, eg '31 Oct 12'. The financial and reporting year is always written in full, eg '2012 – 2013', do not use 12-13 or 12/13.

Abbreviations should not be used, use the whole word. Exceptions are common Latin abbreviations such as 'ie' (that is / in other words) or 'eg' (for example). Note that abbreviations are not punctuated: 'ie' not 'i.e.'; 'eg' not 'e.g.' Avoid the use of 'etc' (etcetera) in formal writing as it is an ambiguous term.

Avoid the use of ampersands '&' unless in common usage, eg G&L or ED&F. An ampersand should never be used in place of the word 'and' in a sentence.

Acronyms should not be used unless the whole title has been used previously in the document eg Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA). Note the addition of the acronym in brackets is only required if the acronym is to be used later in the document.

Refer to TSRA as 'the TSRA' or in full as 'the Torres Strait Regional Authority', not as 'the authority'. The word 'the' is required before 'TSRA' in all cases other than adjectival use, eg 'The TSRA employs 40 Rangers' and 'There is no record of TSRA Rangers attending that forum'.

Spelling must comply with the English (Australia – United Kingdom) conventions, eg 'behaviour' not 'behavior' and 'organisation' not 'organization'.

Sentences should contain only one idea. Critically examine any sentence with more than 20-25 words to see if it should be split.

38. Communication product development lead times:

Please check with the Communications Coordinator to verify timings for Media releases and special products such as promotional items.

Item	Approval	Clearance
Communications Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two working days for review • Five working days for the Chief Executive Officer to review and approve the project plan 	7 days
DL 3 fold brochure, full colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two working days for review and editing • Five working days for approval by CEO • Five working days for design • Five working days for amendments • 15 working days for printing and freight 	32 days
4 page A4 newsletter, full colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five working days for review of text • Five working days for approval by CEO • 10 working days for design • 10 working days for amendments • 10 working days for printing and freight 	40 days
A3 Poster, full colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two working days for review of text • Five working days for approval by CEO • Three working days for design 	25 days

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five working days for amends • 10 working days for printing and freight 	
A4 double sided flyer/fact sheet, full colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two working days for review of text • Five working days for approval by CEO • Five working days for design • Five working days for amendments • 10 working days for printing and freight 	27 days
Media release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two working days for the Communications Coordinator to draft a non-urgent release • Five working days for the CEO to review and approve the media release 	7 days
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five working days for the CEO to review the approval memo • The memo must be submitted at least 90 days prior to the event. 	90 days
Web content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two working days for the Communications review • Five working days for CEO to review and approve • Two working days for the material to be posted 	9 days

39. Island naming:

Torres Strait Islands have both traditional names and Anglicised names. The island names to be used in all TSRA writing are indicated in bold text and with an asterisk in the table below.

Traditional Name	Anglicised Name
GudaMaluilgal – Top Western Islands	
*Boigu	Talbot Is
*Dauan	Mt Cornwallis Is
*Saibai	Saibai Is
Kemer Kemer – Eastern Islands	
*Ugar	Stephen Is
*Erub	Darnley Is
*Mer	Murray Is
Kulkulgal – Central Islands	
*Iama	Yam Is
*Warraber	Sue Is
*Poruma	Coconut Is
*Masig	Yorke Is
Kaiwalagal – Inner Islands	
Kiriri	*Hammond Is
Waibene	*Thursday Is
Nurupai	*Horn Is
Muralag	*Prince of Wales Is
Maluilgal – Near Western Islands	
*Moa	Banks Is (Kubin and St Pauls)
*Badu	Mulgrave Is
*Mabuiag	Jervis Is