

# ***Summary of discussion and key outcomes***

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## **Torres Strait Cross Border Health Issues Committee meeting 29 April 2015 in Cairns, Australia**

The Torres Strait Cross Border Health Issues Committee (HIC) met in Cairns, Australia, on Wednesday 29 April 2015. The HIC is a biannual forum to identify health issues arising in the Torres Strait Protected Zone and South Fly coast of Papua New Guinea (PNG), and members work collaboratively to identify appropriate strategies and resources to address these concerns.

Members welcomed a number of new member agencies from PNG. Members noted the minutes of the meeting of 30 October 2014 and progress on actions arising from previous meetings.

The PNG National Department of Health (PNG NDoH) provided an update on the tuberculosis (TB) Emergency Response to control the spread of multi-drug resistant (MDR) and extensively-drug resistant (XDR) TB in PNG; and implementation of PNG elements of the *Joint Australia-PNG Package of Measures to address Cross-Border Health Concerns*. PNG NDoH also provided information on the progress of the upgrade the Bula, Buzi and Sigabadaru Aid Posts to Community Health Posts as well as an update from Daru Provincial Hospital.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provided an update on Australia's ongoing support for TB management in Western Province, as well as progress on the new Mabaduan Health Centre.

Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service provided an update on the TB awareness and education activities it is undertaking in the Torres Strait Protected Zone and PNG Treaty Villages using Commonwealth funding.

The DoH provided advice to the HIC on plans to purchase and install high frequency radios in Treaty Villages along PNG's South Fly coast and provide training on their use for health care workers and community leaders. This project will seek to improve communications between Treaty villages, Daru Provincial Hospital and Queensland to support health care.

The HIC's Clinical Collaboration Group requested advice from HIC members on options for facilitating cross border medical evacuations. HIC agreed to explore this issue further, with relevant member agencies to provide advice following a more detailed proposal being developed by the Clinical Collaboration Group.

The HIC noted reports from its Clinical Collaboration Group; the Torres Strait Communications Officer; Queensland Department of Health, on tuberculosis notifications and communicable disease surveillance; the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, on numbers of cross border movements; and PNG's Provincial Health Office, on health activities in the South Fly District of Western Province.

HIC members noted the recent passing of Dr Joseph Bana'koi, Deputy Chief Physician (TB) at Port Moresby General Hospital, and acknowledged his valuable contributions to the management and control of TB in PNG over many years.

The next HIC meeting is tentatively scheduled for 8 October 2015 in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.