Project summary
This project will conduct a biodiversity assessment of coral communities on Torres Strait reefs to establish a baseline of coral condition and start a longer-term monitoring program of corals in the region. This monitoring will look for changes in the condition of coral reefs in the Torres Strait. As part of this project, an early warning system will be established for coral bleaching. This will give the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), Torres Strait communities, industry and other stakeholders, the ability to predict, prepare for and respond to coral bleaching.

Why this research is needed
The reefs of Torres Strait are a key component of the lives and livelihoods of local communities. These reefs are threatened by a variety of local and global factors: notably coral bleaching, crown-of-thorns starfish, shipping and increasing levels of coral diseases. Compared to the Great Barrier Reef, little is known about the biodiversity or condition of reefs in the Torres Strait. Improved knowledge of Torres Strait coral reefs and monitoring their status and health will help identify problems and enable the TSRA to respond where necessary.

Research-user focus
The project will contribute knowledge for the conservation and management of regional biodiversity by the Torres Strait Regional Authority. Regular updates on environmental conditions, including real-time weather and oceanographic data, not only keeps stakeholders in touch with developments but provides a vehicle for stakeholder engagement, education and information sharing. The e-atlas will archive and display data collected as part of this project and enable integration with data from other research projects (past and present) in the Torres Strait.

Project Partners:

Find this project at www.nertropical.edu.au
Theme 1: Assessing ecosystem condition and trend
Program 2: Natural resources of the Torres Strait land and sea
Project: 2.3

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