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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT KEY TO GAB TITUI CENTRE REOPENING SUCCESS

Activities held at the reopening of the Gab Titui Cultural Centre have showcased the work of the region's performers, artists and service providers, according to Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Chairman, Joseph Elu.

"The community's involvement in the reopening has been integral to its success," Mr Elu said.

"From catering and performances to artworks entered in record numbers in the Art Award, this event has been a demonstration of communities and government working together to produce impressive outcomes."

77 artists from 18 communities throughout the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area submitted works in the 2013 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award, including 19 student entries – the largest number ever received in this category.

"I'm pleased to see artists of all ages supporting this initiative," Mr Elu said.

"It is particularly encouraging to see such interest from our young, emerging talent".

Both primary and secondary school students from Thursday Island campuses of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School and Tagai State College also took advantage of the knowledge and skills being shared through workshops held at the Centre over two days of the reopening celebrations.

Over 80 students participated in the workshops, learning traditional methods of weaving, carving and craft from community tutors from throughout the region, including Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award winner, Tom Stephen, Betty Tekahika, Gertie Bigie, Lavinia Uta, Robert Meddy Kaigey, Maryann Ngaibu-Muri and Yessie and Michael Mosby.

Mr Elu said these workshops were not only a display of the region's unique talent but represented a strategic approach to revitalising and maintaining traditional cultural skills.

"These workshops are part of an ongoing program of skills development throughout the region, supported by the TSRA's Arts Development Officer in conjunction with the Gab Titui Cultural Centre," Mr Elu said.

More local talent was on show during the reopening event's film and music nights, including short films produced by students from Tagai State College, Harry Lui and full length documentary, *Ailan Kastom*, as well as performances by Joey Tapau, MauPower and Bob Kaige that had the audience off their seats.

Another very special performance came from Uncle Seaman Dan at the launch of his new book, *Steady Steady*, during Gab Titui's final day of celebrations.

"It was an honour for Gab Titui to host this launch and a fitting way to end our celebrations", Mr Elu said.

Copies of *Steady Steady – the Life and Times of Henry Gibson Dan, Ailan Kastom* and the 2013 Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award catalogue are available for purchase through the Gab Titui Gallery Shop.

The Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award is on display in the Wabunaw Geth Gallery until October 2013. Community members are invited to vote for their favourite work and help to decide the 2013 People's Choice Award. Nominations are open until August 31.



Gertie Bigie and Lavinia Uta (Dauan Island) share weaving skills with students from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School.



Maryann Ngaibu-Muri conducts a jewellery making workshop during the reopening celebrations



Yessie and Michael Mosby teach comb making skills to visitors, Oliver and Charlie



Seaman Dan performing at the launch of his new book *'Steady Steady – the Life and Music of Seaman Dan'*



Bob Kaige at Gab Titui in his first live performance



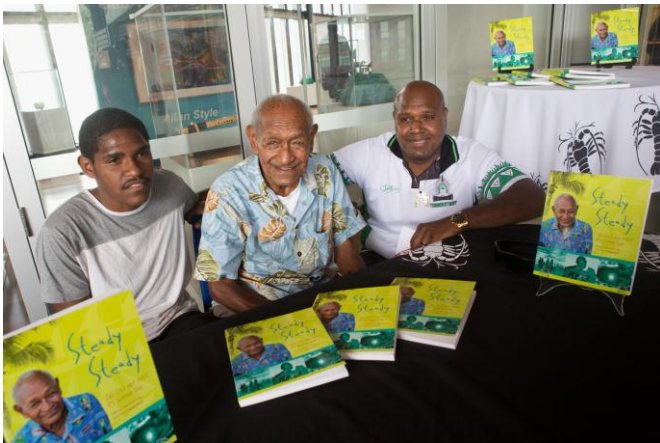
Pat Mau (MauPower) and Bob Kaige have the audience on their feet during performances in Gab Titui's new stage area.



The Kaurareg Wabunaw Geth Dance Team performs for guests at the reopening



Gab Titui Indigenous Art Award winner, Tom Stephen, accepting his award from TSRA Chairman, Joseph Elu



Seaman Dan with grandsons Taiegato and Patrick Mau



Visitors arrive at the refurbished Gab Titui Cultural Centre



Gebbie Bon and son admire Daina Wosomo's Art Award entry, *My Basket of Knowledge*



Joey Tapau in Gab Titui's new performance area

Photos: George Serras, National Museum of Australia.

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