



FREE!

Issue 407

19 August 2024



PLEASE note there may be some images of deceased persons within this publication.

Home ownership [back] on the agenda

A proposed Palm Island Home Ownership Scheme has been developed by the Council, in collaboration with the Queensland Government, to take Palm Island residents closer again to owning their own home.

Up to 300 homes, owned by Council, could be made available for residents to buy over the next ten years through a 99-year home ownership lease under the scheme.

The government said they would work in partnership with the community and council on the scheme, identifying legislative barriers, and options to address them, and ensuring that the scheme would be sustainable.

Local MP Scott Stewart said he was excited.

“I have spoken extensively with Palm Island Aboriginal Shire

Council about this plan for a number of years and advocated extensively, so I’m extremely excited to see it happening,” he said.

“This is an important first step which will give people on Palm Island a chance to have their own home.

“We will continue to work directly with the council and the broader community on making this happen.

“Home ownership gives people pride of place in where they live which is why this work is so important.”

CONTINUES...



Home ownership [back] on the agenda

In 2014 Mayor Alf Lacey told the ABC his parents and grandparents had lived in rental accommodation most of their lives.

“I think it gives local families security, and I think that’s what the important thing is about it, that you’re not relying on a rental system for the rest of your life, that you have the opportunity to say who comes onto your property and who doesn’t come onto your property, like any other homeowners in the state or if not in the

country,” he said at the time.

Council CEO Michael Bissell said they had worked very hard for many years advocating for a community-led proposal.

“While it won’t be for everyone, through our long and deep community engagement, we know there is very high demand for private home ownership on Palm

Island,” he said.

“We are cautiously optimistic that the Government will deliver this time, there have been many false dawns in the past.

“While Minister Stewart came across to make the announcement with the Mayor, we have not been given any details of what was approved by Cabinet.

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ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL Thursday 4 October 2012 \$1.25 Issue 114

Katter visit puts home ownership back on agenda



Late last month a community forum to discuss self determination, economic development, the right to title deeds and the ability to build and own family homes was hosted by the Palm Island Council along with Hon Bob Katter MP and Father Frank Brennan SJ.

At the forum Mr Katter paid tribute to the Palm Island community which he said had led the good fight in securing self-management and ownership of the land for the people of Palm Island and all of the First Australian people of Queensland.

He said his Australian Party continued to fight for private ownership for First Australian people.

“Without home ownership, indigenous economic development is at a standstill,” he said.

“Only this will achieve self-management and indigenous economic development.”

Mr Katter also said while victories would be challenged by many changes and setbacks, it was important to remember the heroes “who sat down, designed, fought for and implemented the legislation”, and to “commemorate these people and the hundreds who stood in the historical battle in which this was a major milestone”.

“Governments are still saying to indigenous people: ‘We will manage your money for you; we will build your houses for you; we will control and own your water for you; we will decide what is best for you,’” he said.

Mr Katter and Fr Brennan also joined Mayor Alf Lacey, CEO Ross Norman, Palm Island Crs Frank Conway and Mislam Sam and Yarrabah Cr Bevan Walsh on a tour of the new housing estates. Cr Lacey said he welcomed Mr Katter and Fr Brennan’s visit.

SOME HISTORY: As the Bjelke-Petersen Government’s Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Bob Katter enshrined in legislation the self-management rights of Aboriginal community lands through elected councils; and introduced laws granting inalienable freehold title of the former mission reserves (held in trust by the elected councils), including a regulatory mechanism to enable private ownership of lands (through perpetual leases for home ownership by families, as well as term leases for enterprise development). He said his policy was to enable individual families to obtain private land titles within communally held lands, moving to home ownership and economic development. Even before these laws were passed in the Qld Parliament in 1985, he had encouraged councils to invite families to apply for private leases for home ownership and enterprises. Unfortunately, with the change of government after 1989, hundreds of private ownership and home ownerships were left in limbo – where they shamefully remain a quarter-century later because the ascendant Goss Government legislated to stop the so-called “Katter leases” being approved under landholding laws.

“First Australians should have the same rights enjoyed by the rest of the world and every other Australian – the right to secure a title deed on that 25% of Australia which is ‘supposedly’ owned by them. They will be given an inalienable title deed on DOGIT areas to their home, business, farm and land so that they can say like every other Australian, “this is my land”. This will provide, facilitate and enable economic development – impossible without a title deed.”

Bob Katter MP



4 For some comment from Fr Frank Brennan see <http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aid=33477>

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Government’s freehold op The Queensland Government has released a c community land to freehold tenure in a move reality for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander

Palm Island is one of 34 communities invited to comment on the paper. Natural Resources and Mines Minister Andrew Cripps said the Government recognised Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people wanted to own their own homes in their own communities.

“This desire for greater security of land tenure is behind the discussion paper, Providing freehold title in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, which is available for public comment until 29 March 2013,” Mr Cripps said.

Copies of the discussion paper *Providing freehold title in Ab* are available online at www.

Mr Cripps said the paper outlined a proposed model and a process of consultation that could be adopted. Aboriginal & Torres Strait Affairs Minister Glen Elms said the Government saw home ownership as an important step towards Indigenous disadvantage. “We want to work with communities to identify what’s best for one and to what extent land can be made private for a community,” Mr Elms said.

“If, for example, they have approved our proposal in full then we can make this happen quickly for community, but if they’re saying they’re going to work with us to make it happen and focus on legislative changes, then it is not the outcome we’d hoped for.

“We’ve designed a rent-to-buy scheme, as exists on the mainland, because the legislation says you need a ‘lump sum, up front payment’, to purchase an existing home on a lot under a 99-year lease – the same type as exists

in the ACT.

“People can’t comply with the law as no bank or lender will make the funding available, as there isn’t a housing market, like there is everywhere else, to recover costs if there is a default.

“The rent-to-buy scheme fixes this, but it is considered a ‘loan’, and any Council in Queensland requires the approval of the Treasurer to make a loan.

“To make private home ownership possible on Palm Island, we need the Treasurer to approve our

proposal, ie the ability for Council to make a loan, in full or on a case by case basis.

“The legislative barriers have been there for some time, and should be amended in future to make it clearer and easier for anyone living in a remote Indigenous community in Queensland, but for now it wasn’t critical to progressing the Palm Island proposal.”

Mr Stewart visited the island last week and said he would work on those barriers with the government and Council. **MORE PICS NEXT PAGE**

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 28 November 2012 **\$1.25** Issue 118

Palm Island Voice
 Issue 155: 5 June 2014
 still only \$1.25


2014
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It's almost a Palm Island Summer
 More pics on pages 4-5!



Discussion up for discussion
Discussion paper around transferring land towards making home ownership a reality for communities, it says.

A discussion paper around transferring land towards making home ownership a reality for communities, it says. Assistant Minister for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Affairs David Kempton said the community would be well informed about the Government’s freehold title proposal. “The Government recognises the importance of getting this proposal right,” Mr Kempton said. “Over the coming months I will work with Government departments to conduct a series of meetings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land trusts, native title bodies, Aboriginal Shire councils and Indigenous Regional councils.”
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
 dnmrm.qld.gov.au

Freehold ownership one step closer

Natural Resources and Mines Minister Andrew Powell has tabled the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land (Providing Freehold) and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014* in Queensland parliament, which may take Palm Island residents a step closer towards owning their own home on the Island.

The new legislation, tabled last month provides ordinary freehold land ownership opportunities.

Member for Townsville, John Hathaway said the Bill would give Palm Island residents the same property rights to the land enjoyed by other freehold property holders.

“Palm Island residents should have the same rights as those on the main land and that is to own their own home,” Mr Hathaway said. “This initiative is about removing the barriers for home ownership in indigenous communities and allowing residents to determine their own destiny.

“This freehold model takes into account the unique features of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It will be the choice of the Palm Island community whether they accept the freehold model within their town area.”

Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs David Kempton

said the Bill was “ground breaking.”

“For the first time in the history of Queensland there will be an opportunity for Indigenous Queenslanders to own their own homes in their communities in unconditional freehold,” he said. “When passed through Parliament later this year the bill will give the trustee the ability to provide freehold to local indigenous people.”

Mr Kempton said the legislation was a significant opportunity for all indigenous Queenslanders that came with a lot of responsibility.

“The initial grant of freehold will be to an Indigenous

person with interest in the land however there will be no impediment to a subsequent transfer to a non-indigenous person,” he said. “There may be some risk of subsequent sale to non-community members however this is far outweighed by the huge boost normalisation will bring to economic development and community growth. It is time we treated all Australians equally and today marks a major step in that direction.”

Mr Kempton said the legislation would not create freehold but rather provide a mechanism for the community to do adopt it when the timing was right. **SEE P7 FOR MORE...**

INSIDE:

- Wages lost to Elders’, families and communities in Court ... p 3
- Bwngcolman radio ready for re-launch ... p 3
- Teams celebrate netball wins ... pp 4-5

Stolen WAGES Built this STATE 

WARNING! Some images in this Issue may contain deceased persons which may cause distress to some people.



THE NEXT *Palm Island Voice* DEADLINE*

(Issue 408*) will be **Thursday 29 August**
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