



Budget cuts for Councils will hurt across the board – LGAQ

The Federal Budget will bring a good deal of pain to many Australian communities at every level, including Palm Island, Mayor Alf Lacey says.

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) agrees.

They say local communities across the state were set to miss out on hundreds of millions of dollars in funding over the next four years after the Federal Government announced a freeze on Financial Assistance Grants

(FAGs) to councils in the Budget. They also said the three year freeze is likely to hit rural, remote and indigenous communities hardest as those councils rely on such grants for much of their income.

Local Government Association of Queensland chief executive Greg Hallam said the decision to freeze FAGs meant smaller

councils would not escape bearing some of the pain from the Budget.

“Local councils have done as much as they can to become more efficient so this decision is likely to hit jobs and community projects,” he said.

“On top of the increased transport and building costs to councils, as a result of the indexation of fuel excise, this Budget is going to be felt by local councils in Queensland and the communities they serve for years to come.

“Rural, remote and indigenous councils get the double whammy – a freeze on grants at a time when petrol and diesel costs will rise.”

He said all councils used FAGs to build and maintain community assets such as local roads, swimming pools, libraries and community halls as well provide services to the young, the elderly and community groups.

INSIDE:



Townsville rep teams play-off success— see p 10 for more!

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

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Services will suffer - LGAQ

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“Each local council decides how these funds are used but when you have got a freeze on funding for the next three years some services will suffer,” LGAQ CEO Greg Hallam said.

Cr Lacey said Aboriginal Councils were the hardest hit.

“As the Mayor of the Council, it’s really disappointing because the freeze on our \$1.1 million – which allows us to run our normal operations for the Shire – for the next three years is going to have a big impact on us. Given we have no rate base, at the community level Council now has to rethink our next budget in terms of how we now plan for the future for the community. That puts Council in a very painful situation. We hope there are no surprises for us in the state budget.”

He said it wasn’t only cuts to Council funding which would hurt the community.

“Any rise in the cost of living is going to greatly impact on us,” he said. “The \$7 co-payment for each GP visit and changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme where the cost of medicines will go up are going to have a big impact on Palm, as well as changes to Centrelink payments.

“The majority of our people are generally Centrelink customers, so it’s certainly going to have a big impact on the cost of living for those individual families in our community. And essentially, I suppose very frightening in terms of how do we plan the future, particularly for our communities. It’s going to apply more pressure back on families and particularly on mothers and fathers and grandmothers, grandfathers, who were generally the primary carer or primary people that a lot of their Indigenous young people fall back to for support. It is going to get harder. It is going to cause a lot of pressure, a lot of pressure on our families and our community.

Deputy Mayor Cr Eddie Walsh said the community should be aware of the new government policy and understand Council was doing it’s best.

“We’re going to have to say no to some of our people around here; that’s going to be the really hard part,” he said.

“People out here are jumping up and down; we meet them everyday; they meet us on the streets everyday, so when something like this happens we try and tell them it’s not us, it’s the budget’s cut.”

Cr Roy Prior said every Indigenous Council would feel the effects.

“We anticipated we would be affected to some point, but the three-year freeze on Councils assistance grants will really hit us hard,” he said.

“Organisation and projects will have to be strategically planned for them to survive. And unfortunately, with cuts in family benefits and the increase in fuel tax levy, a lot of community members are going to feel this pain, including your Shire Council.

“It’s vitally important, particularly given many of our established community organisations receive government grants, that we all really work with Council to make sure vital jobs and our youth are well and truly cared for and the effects of loss of employment is minimalised.”

Cr Mislam Sam said developing our own economic initiatives would be the key.

“This will have a significant impact on our bottom line and the costs associated with these drastic setbacks will linger in our community in the years to come,” he said.

“However, we will focus all energy towards our economic corporation and hopefully the Federal and State government will compensate in the form of supporting our economic initiatives.”

Everyone in the community is being asked to wear red on Thursday 29 May to support Kidney Week. Many people on Palm Island suffer from kidney disease with many living in Townsville because they can't get treatment here. That's about to change a little with current hospital upgrades which will see an extra bed and dialysis seat, and possibly nurse as well, which will mean more people will be able to stay. Wearing red on Thursday 29 May will signify your support for those suffering from kidney disease and raise awareness of its dangers.



MAYORS & CEOs MET LAST WEEK FOR THE LGAQ'S ANNUAL CIVIC LEADERS FORUM...

Most of the Indigenous Mayors and CEOs from throughout Queensland attended, Lockhart River Mayor Wayne Butcher said. "They had a Finance Summit for one day and that was government talking about shared services, so it was about where they can cut costs," he said.

"Asset management was a big part of that and the Audit Office has been talking to all Shires generally about weighing up needs against wants. And it was also about looking at the whole cost, over its life, of running assets. The capital to build something might be only

25 per cent of the actual cost up front. On day two we talked about using different types of media tools such as Facebook, newsletters, and other things we can use to get to our target audience. "They were the key messages and it was a useful summit."

Cr Walsh new Deputy Mayor

Cr Walsh has now assumed the role of Deputy Mayor, Mayor Alf Lacey says.

"As most would be aware the Council has adopted a rolling process for the position of Deputy Mayor to give each member an opportunity to take on the role," he said.

"I would like to thank both Cr Sam and Cr Prior for their outstanding leadership whilst in the role and the good work that they have both done for the Council to date.

"Cr Conway will assume the role next year."

Cr Walsh assumed all duties and responsibilities for the Deputy Mayor position as of the 14 May 2014 and will hold them until 13 May 2015.

He was born and raised on Palm Island and is a proud Bwngcolman.



Cr Walsh's Grandmother was of the Birri people from Collinsville area and his grandfather from the Yalanji people from Cooktown Hopevale area.

He has been married for 37 years to his beautiful wife Colyning and together they have eight children and more than 20 grandchildren, all of whom are Bwngcolman. **3**

He spent many years working for Council building roads and housing and has also worked on the Gold Mines in Charters Towers.

He played rugby league for the local Palm Island team the Barracudas and his interests include all traditional hunting, diving and fishing.

"As you might already know I am a local Palm Islander, I was born here so I know the struggles everyone goes through," he said.

"I take my position at Council seriously, although I'm a bit of a joker, I do listen to people.

"You voted for me, I cannot work miracles, but I will endeavour to assist you and help you the best way I can."

Travelling to a theme of 'Good Fortune, Prosperity and Longevity' to explore investment and business opportunities on Palm Island, six high profile Chinese business leaders were impressed with what they saw during their visit to Palm Island late last month. Here are some more pics from their visit!





Chinese delegation visit a success







2014 Bill Coolburra Memorial Shield



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GARAGE SALE Weather permitting!

Kyle's Place Butler Bay

Saturday and Sundays: Baby girls clothes, bric a brac, teenage girl clothes, boys toys, caramel and pineapple tarts, chutney and more!

ALL CHEAP!!!



The next RDO is Friday **23 May**
RDOs are every Friday fortnight.

For out-of-hours emergencies
please call 0458 789 011.

For more information contact
Council on 4770 1177



Palm Island Aboriginal
Shire Council has 325
'likes' on Facebook!!!



POSITION AVAILABLE

The following position is currently open for application

1 x F/T Transport Officer

Applications close Friday 30th May 2014

To be considered for this position, please submit to
mmccann@picc.com.au:

1. A completed employment application form;
2. Written response to the key selection criteria (refer to selection criteria contained in the position description);
3. A copy of your resume.

Please contact Mark McCann on 07 4421 4300, or email
mmccann@picc.com.au, for a copy of the Employment
Application Form and Position Description/Selection
Criteria.

Advice on the application process is available on request.

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THE NEXT *PALM ISLAND VOICE*
DEADLINE (for Issue 155) will
be **THURSDAY 29 May** for
publication on Thursday 6 June

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TO SUPPORT YOU!!!**

Dear Editor

The Palm Island Council building has an Aboriginal flag and a Barracudas flag – but no Torres Strait Island flag...

Do you think that there should be a Torres Strait Islander flag on the Council building?

Many years ago I was looking through exemption papers of all people who came here from all other communities when they got into trouble.

They sent a lot of Torres Strait Islander people sent here.

Basically Torres Strait Islanders are Melanesian, like the Kanakas.

For years – I think until 2007 – there was an Torres Strait Islander flag here.

Here we have many tribes, not only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, we've got Islanders and Kiwis...but mostly Torres Strait Islanders and people with family who come from that way.

That's what I'm looking at.

We're all one, we should fly the flag as one.

We should have that Torres Strait Islander flag flying with the Aboriginal flag.

Concerned Palm Island Resident (Torres Strait Islander, Polynesian & Kiwi)

In Reply:

The presence of the Aboriginal flag on the Council building acknowledges that we're on Aboriginal land regardless of where we may have come from.

Back in 2000 the community agreed that to attempt to fly all the flags of all our people here on our Island home would be impossible.

The Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council acknowledges everyone living in our community and there are several monuments and plaques around our town area – and more in planning – which recognise our history and historical connections to other places.

We represent everybody as best we can.

Boxers do well in Rockhampton



Three out of five Palm Island boxers who made the long 700km road trip to Rockhampton for a Global Tournament won their bouts earlier this month.

Germaine Bulsey won in the 48kg division when having his first bout and Brayden Nallajar also won on points in the 35kg class.

Levi Baira continued on his winning way winning by first round knockout in the 48kg category.

Their trainer Ray Dennis was impressed.

“Germaine looked very good and Brayden also performed strongly. Levi knocked out a good experienced fighter,” Mr Dennis said.

Natalie David and Marcus Ketchup lost their bouts but were both tenacious.

“Natalie fought a much bigger girl in the 71kg division and Marcus went down in the 51kg against an opponent who had 16 fights,” Mr Dennis said.

Mr Dennis wanted to thank Kevin Castors who drove the hire bus on the marathon return journey and also the Palm Island Community Company which paid for the trip.

In Rockhampton they stayed at the Neville Bonner Hostel.

The boxers came to Townsville by ferry on 9th May and returned on the Sunday catamaran two days later.

Palm may host top game next season

PALM Island looks certain to host a prestigious representative rugby league game next season under the QRL's promise to bring top football to remote communities.

That follows talks between Mayor Alf Lacey and QRL Northern Division Manager Scott Nosworthy during the Skipjacks versus Army game in Townsville.

It will be the annual Northern United versus Queensland Outback rugby league game.

Northern United is picked after the Remote Area Regional League (RARL) Challenge which is held usually in Cairns.

Palm Island Barracudas compete against Bowen, Kaiwalagal Rugby League (Torres Strait), Northern Cape, Southern Cape and possibly Three Rivers (Hope Vale, Wujal Wujal, Cooktown).

Negotiations took place between Cr Lacey and Mr Nosworthy as they sat watching the Skipjacks versus Australian Army Thunder side at 1300Smiles Stadium last month.

"We spoke about having next year's game on Palm Island and it looks like it will happen," Cr Lacey said.

Mr Nosworthy said Palm Island was on the radar to host the prestigious match in 2015.

"We have a commitment to bring these games to remote areas and Palm Island is a league stronghold," Mr Nosworthy said. He said discussion about the venues had taken place at a QRL meeting in Brisbane late last month. At that meeting it was decided the 2013 Northern United versus Outback game would be played on Thursday Island on either 12th or 19th July.

Mr Nosworthy said the QRL had a three year commitment to have important games such as this played at remote communities which are rugby league strongholds.

"Other venues which were considered for the Outback versus United match were Rockhampton and Mackay. But TI is the place it will be held. Over the next three years places like Palm Island will be considered," he said.

The 2013 RARL Challenge will be held in Cairns on 28th and 29th June and Palm Island will be favoured to avenge last year's grand final defeat by Bowen.

Palm Island can be expected to have good numbers selected for the Northern United side to travel to TI. Last year Outback defeated NQ United 60-22 as a curtain raiser to an Intrust Super Cup match in Cairns.

2015 is shaping up as a big football season for Palm Island with the Barracudas being promised entry into the Townsville and District Rugby League competition.



CEO Ross Norman & Cr Mislam Sam took time out to visit Canberra Raiders headquarters earlier this month, meeting coach Ricky Stewart and assistant coach (also for the Blues!) Matt Parrish.

Palm Islanders make Townsville rep teams

Several Palm Island students participated in the 2014 Suzette Harnden Challenge/Trial held earlier this month at the Townsville & District Junior Rugby League (TDJRL).

The girls didn't have much time to prepare, only a week, but they remained after school for 1-2 hours a day leading up to the selection trial for the Townsville rep team.

They practiced hard in correct tackle techniques, ball

security, line speed in defence, running line patterns and kicking options.

Racine James-Baira and Kathleen Haines were able to attend every training session with Miss Lynette.

The girls were also reminded that when attending a selection trial, they needed to outperform their opposition player and dominate in defence.

Kirwan SHS, St. Pats and Shalom College played against each other to display their skill level

in front of the selectors.

The Palm girls played in the Shalom College team.

Kathleen, who had learned to tackle a week before the trial, showed great focus on the field and tackled girls, twice her size. Racine put up a 'chip and chase' and scored a try, as well as showing that she was a tackling machine (three tackles in a row, at one stage). The whole community is proud of their selection in the Townsville team. The Townsville Team will play at the NQ Trials on 7th & 8th of June, at the TDJRL fields.





The District Cross-Country was a huge success with all students having a great time and giving it their best shot. We have a very talented bunch who performed at a very high level, the results were:

1st- Levi Biara

1st- Mericka Friday

2nd- Jeanie Sibley

3rd- Elijah Miller

Age Champions for Cross Country 2014

(pictured above):

U9 Ingai Geia Lendell Sibley

U10 Jarrias Coolwell Juanita Fraser

U11 Daniel Namoa Jeanie Sibley

U12 Eliajah Miller Sarita Geia

U13 Levi Baira Merika Friday

U14 Derek Creed-Haines Dianne Fulford

U15 Jaysen Johnson Moira Murray

Open: Neil Baira & Shirl Curl-Barry

Congratulations to the winners and to those selected for the comp in town!!

With our thanks to Joe Istria, David O'Shea and PE teacher Mr Chris for these pics & results.

