

Palm Island Voice

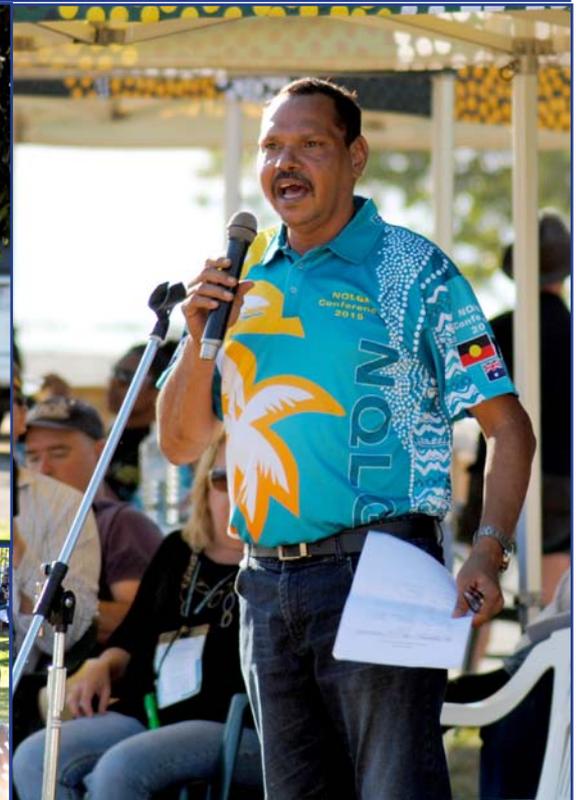
Issue 185: 13 August 2015

FREE

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



Welcome to Palm Island's biggest event in 97 years: the 2015 North Queensland Local Government Association's annual conference





ABOVE: Senator Ian Macdonald;

*MIDDLE: MP Fiona Simpson;
TOP RIGHT: Fred Bulsey
with Douglas Shire Mayor
Julie Leu;*

*BELOW and rest of page:
delegates enjoying the
opening and evening social
events held throughout the
conference Descenda*



Conference wows more than 200 NQ delegates

The North Queensland Local Government Association (NQLGAQ) Annual Conference has been hailed as the biggest and one of the most successful events in Palm Island's 97-year history.

More than 200 delegates including Mayors and CEOs from more than 20 Shires across the north were delighted to visit the Island, many for the first time, and see for themselves some of the local culture and history of our tropical island paradise.

All accommodation was booked out with the motel and Klub Kuda packed, and a tent city was set up on the oval of Bwgcolman State Primary School.

The theme of the conference was 'Moving Forward Together'.

NQLGAQ Chair and Charters Towers Regional Council Mayor Frank Beveridge said the success of the event was due to a team effort from everyone concerned.

"This was an opportunity for the Island to shine, and they did," he said. "This has been

three years in the making.

"The executive committee decided in Townsville in 2012 to not plan a year ahead but three years ahead, giving Cr Lacey and his team the maximum time to plan for the event.

"This has given the island time to build new motel units and improve infrastructure relating to events such as these, in preparation for this week.

"The Island has really delivered with local people involved in every aspect of planning and hosting of the event, from the traditional dancers, school presentations, catering with traditional food, Island tours and markets, as well as the general event coordination.

"There are so many people who helped at all levels and in all areas cumulating in this week's event, needless to say

it was team effort with an large amount of enthusiasm and good will by all involved to make it happen."

Mayor Alf Lacey said they were proud of the progress they had made.

"This is the biggest event ever held on Palm," he told delegates. "Like you, our aim is to grow our economy as we move from mission times to growing into a proud and independent town.

"We welcome new opportunities that lead to prosperity in our Shire and our community. To achieve this we are developing catalyst infrastructure and generating new developments that create long term jobs for our people and our children in the future.

"We are proud of our community and the progress we have made."



Palm Island CEO Ross Norman on stage with Crs Alf Lacey & Frank Beverage



ABOVE: Mother's Dust & members of Descendance BELOW & RIGHT: Bwgcolman school dancers



BELOW: the perfect setting for a sunset dinner



The best of Palm Island on show

There were several social highlights over the three days, particularly the 'Paradise Under the Stars' dinner and party held from 6pm to 10pm at Freedom Park near the beach and a three hour sunset and moonlight cruise around nearby islands during which some saw whales and dolphins.

Entertainment was provided by local band Mother's Dust, Descendance Group and talented singer Maggie Walsh.

Joint MC's for the party were Maggie Walsh and former national new television reader Heather Foord.

The Opening Ceremony

included dancing by world renowned Descendance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dance Theatre.

On day two visitors were treated to some excellent dancing by the Junior Bwgcolman Group at the State Primary School.

Many of the visitors also took the opportunity to walk to the park next to the Coolgaree Bar and Grill to check out local culture or buy food or artifacts, or even take a 90-minute history walk from a market similar to those held on Palm Island's Open Days.



It was a privilege this week to be part of the first North Queensland Local Government Association meeting held in an Indigenous community – Palm Island – LGAQ CEO Greg Hallam (above) writes...

What a place.

Palm Island is all but unrecognisable from the struggling community I first visited back in 1989 when I was working for the Townsville City Council.

This was my fourth visit since then and ‘Palm’, under some inspired civic leadership, has gone ahead in leaps and bounds.

The community’s appearance, sense of pride and impressive list of recent achievements are both exemplary and a beacon for other Indigenous communities to follow.

Great credit must go to Mayor Alf Lacey and his council team for that progress.

Note that Alf is the only two-term mayor in that community’s history.

But in many ways the bigger yarn is the mainstreaming of Indigenous communities into the broader world of local government.

They are no longer set apart and seen as a different system.



ABOVE Carpentaria Mayor Fred Pascoe with Cr Alf Lacey

About 150 local government representatives joined the Palm Island Council to celebrate that fact.

The 17 Indigenous Councils in Queensland are well and truly fully-fledged and mature civic organisations.

It’s palpable everywhere.

Almost all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils send delegates to the LGAQ annual conference.

There are also Indigenous representatives on the LGAQ

Policy Executive, as well as one representative on the four person LGAQ Board.

That representative, Carpentaria Mayor Fred Pascoe, was the first Indigenous person to chair a session of an LGAQ annual conference in Mackay last year.

The march of progress will continue and there will be setbacks but let’s celebrate this great achievement.

Source: Council Courier e-newsletter, Friday 7 August 2015

What the delegates said...

Speakers to the conference, after a welcome from Allan Palm Island, included NQLGAQ Chairman and Charters Towers Regional Council Mayor Frank Beveridge, NQLGA CEO Greg Hallam, MP Fiona Simpson, Cr Mislam Sam and Cathy Freeman Foundation's Jamie Howden.

Keynote Speaker on the final day was Chair of the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council Warren Mundine who spoke to the day's theme – Moving Forward – Innovation

and Infrastructure.

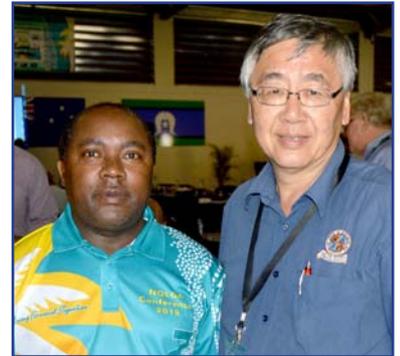
Other speakers included Senator Ian Macdonald, who spoke about the Northern Australian Whitepaper and the development of Northern

Australia, and MPs' Rob Katter, Fiona Simpson and Jason Costigan.

Here are some thoughts on the event from some of those who attended.



LEFT: Organiser Murielle Morgan with speaker Warren Mundine; ABOVE: MP Rob Katter with Cr Frank Conway; RIGHT: Napranum CEO Amos Njaramba with Aurukun's Graham Poon



Chairman Frank Beveridge:

“This week marked an historic event in Palm Island.

“To see the pride on the faces of the young traditional dancers was very uplifting.

“As local government members, presenters and sponsors, we all felt as though we were part of something bigger.

“This was the biggest three day event the island has held and it will be the stepping stone to greater events.

“It is part of a journey to self-reliance that all Indigenous communities are making.

“It is not an easy task, but with strong leadership, this is an excellent example of what can be achieved in a relatively short time.”

Aurukun Aboriginal Shire Council was represented by Business Development and Grants Officer for the Council, Graham Poon:

“Aurukun Shire Council was very pleased to participate in the recent North Queensland Local Government Association conference.

“Cr Alf Lacey kindly arranged meetings for myself with his Council staff and fellow Councillors.

“Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council has implemented exciting initiatives in economic development to benefit their community and they were very willing to share their valuable information.

“Some key lessons were learned from the visit and they will assist our Council in setting certain strategies for the future. We are very thankful to Mayor Lacey and his colleagues. Aurukun Shire Council has sent their congratulations to Mayor Lacey on a very well organised and run event.

“Delegates and officials from all around North Qld were universal in their praise for the conference which was attended by about 200 people.”



Burdekin Shire Councillors Lyndy McCathie and Pierina Dalle Cort with Ray Dennis

Douglas Shire Council Mayor Julia Leu:

“It was an absolute pleasure to visit the beautiful islandparadise of Palm Island and enjoy the hospitality of the Manbarra and Bwgcolman people, who are so warm and welcoming.

“The opening welcome ceremony was a real highlight, as was the welcome the next morning by the school children.

“It was a real delight and privilege to experience and celebrate the cultural traditions and enjoy the beauty and marvellous Palm Island landscape.

“The conference dinner and music was superb and the conference program was excellent and beautifully pitched.

“We had a wonderful time and went to the community markets, the history walk and the historical exhibition which was very moving.

“We are extremely impressed with the achievements and development and tourism aspirations of the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council.

“On behalf of Douglas Shire Council, I want to congratulate Mayor Alf Lacey, Councillors, staff and the community together with NQLGAQ President, Mayor Frank Beveridge and the NQLGAQ executive for hosting such a significant and important conference.”

Burdekin Shire Councillors Lyndy McCathie and Pierina Dalle Cort:

“When we arrived by Sealink Ferry at Reel Women’s Jetty, everything went into action as if an event of this size had been held there before.

“History was in the making of having the first Indigenous community to hold such a conference and we were very honoured to be a part of it.

“The Welcome ceremony with all delegates and the People of Palm Island was a great start to our conference before boarding the Sealink Queensland Sunset Cruise where we had the good fortune to see a whale.

“Our first day began with a beautiful warm welcome by the children of Bwgcolman Community School and St Michael’s Catholic School. We then continued onto our day of sessions with many interesting speakers which included knowing more about the Cathy Freeman Foundation.

“The second day we heard from our politicians who had come from far and wide. This was a great way to network and to know first hand information to help all concerned.

“Importantly, the conference was for all attendees to benefit and learn from one another and to better represent our communities.

“We enjoyed engaging with the people in the community and loved our tour around the island. ‘Paradise under the Stars’, hosted by Hutchinson Builders, was something out of this world. Food, entertainment and surroundings were absolutely spectacular.

“As women in local government we encourage other women to put themselves forward in the next Local Government elections in March 2016.

“Palm Island, what a paradise and a community with so much to look forward and we thank you all.”

Torres Strait Island Regional Council Performance and Advocacy Manager Katherine Wiggins:

The Torres Strait representatives acknowledge the great work of Mayor Alf Lacey and team in the organisation of the conference and acknowledged the Traditional Owners for welcoming them onto their land.

They said they were delighted to attend the first ever NQLGAQ conference held in an Indigenous community and were very impressed by how well the conference was organised including the dedicated involvement by the whole community, from the young people to the elders.

They also said the conference had showcased the strength and natural beauty of Palm Island as well as the importance of culture to establishing a strong economic base through tourism opportunities.

“It was great to reconnect with family members from Palm Island,” they said.

Ms Wiggins said it had been beneficial to meet with Local and State elected members and Senior Government Officials from across North Queensland to learn about each other’s challenges and to discuss ways the Councils could collaborate together for the benefit of the region and people in the future.

All the Torres Strait delegates said they looked forward to attending future events and forums in North Queensland to continue these vital discussions.



Cook Shire Deputy Mayor Penny Johnson:

One of the highlights for me was meeting many locals and sharing stories – their pride in their island home is obvious, and they have some big plans for the future. There were opportunities for raising topics particularly relevant to our Shire. Cr Wilson and myself had many a conversation discussing challenges shared by all local governments around adequate funding, working with governments, fiscal management, economic development, community expectations and maintaining sight of a positive future in times of drought within a tight financial environment and changing global influences. As Palm Island Mayor Cr Alf Lacey so clearly articulated, Local Government is a family, we discuss issues, share ideas and all strive for a better future for the shires of North Queensland that we live, love and work in. “Moving forward together” will help us collectively reach those goals.

TOP: Cr Willie Wigness, Katherine Wiggins, Cr Horace Baira and Cr Frazer Nai; ABOVE LEFT: Allison Rossetto & Serina James; ABOVE RIGHT: Allan Palm Island welcoming visitors; BELOW: Jamie Howden from CFF



Jason Costigan MP: Media Release

The State Opposition has praised Palm Island's hosting of the North Queensland Local Government Association's annual conference.

Making his first trip to Palm Island, Whitsunday MP and Shadow Assistant Minister to the Opposition Leader for North Queensland, Jason Costigan, said he was thrilled to be part of the historic occasion.

"From my observations, with so many northern and far northern councils represented and speakers the calibre of Warren Mundine, himself with a background in local government, it was an incredibly successful conference on what was a first for the Palm Island community and indigenous communities in general," he said.

"The NQLGAQ, under the chairmanship of Cr Frank Beveridge, should be applauded for their vision."



TOP: Cr Mislam Sam; ABOVE: TSIRC Cr Horace Baira from Badu Island, Warren Mundine and Sealink worker Kevin Barry; BELOW: QPS @ work



POLICE were also well-praised for their efforts during the NQLGAQ conference on Palm earlier this month.

With so many visitors to the Island, six police from Townsville were on hand to complement 16 local officers.

A Community Liquor Permit was provided to serve alcohol at the Paradise Under the Stars Party at Freedom Park, which allowed midstrength beer and wine to be served under the same rules as at the Coolgaree Bar and Grill

and according to the Island's Alcohol Management Plan.

During the party two youths rode horses at full gallop along a path near the sea wall in close proximity to the back of the main entertainment stage.

Three police officers immediately jumped in to patrol the area to ensure the safety of everybody.

Officers also offered 'free' 9

breathalysers to those who volunteered so patrons could gauge whether they were 'over the limit'.

Police were keeping a close eye on the Bwgcolman State School tent city during the conference as well.

Attendees were glowing in their praise of police, who for their part reported no major incidences.



Oil spill safety



Public health officials have advised the Palm Island community to steer clear of oil patches around the Island and to cooperate with Queensland Department of Transport officials who are coordinating the clean-up response.

Townsville Hospital and Health Service director of public health Dr Steven Donohue said it was important to avoid any remaining oil found along the beach or while out boating. While the oil spill isn't large the composition is not fully known at this point so the best advice we can give is to avoid any stray oil completely," Dr Donohue said.

"This means do not touch or play with any oil, don't swim where oil is in the water and don't eat any animal or seafood that has been obviously contaminated by oil.

"If you come into contact with oil, wash it off immediately with water and detergent."

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As part of Road Safety Week Palm Island Police will be enforcing the fatal five:

1. Speeding;
2. Drink and Drug Driving;
3. Failure to Wear a Seat Belt;
4. Driving while Fatigued; and,
5. Distraction and Inattention.

Part of the QPS mission is to make the community safer by reducing road trauma.

The environment on Palm Island is different to other locations as a large percentage of the population walk to their destinations. Children are likely to cross the road without looking. Horses and dogs walk out in front of you.

This puts added pressure on drivers.

Interesting facts about the Fatal Five:

- Faster speeds increase the stopping distance when an unforeseen event occurs and increases the chances of a crash occurring.
- Seat belts are an effective way of reducing the road toll when crashes occur. The driver is responsible for all person in their vehicle and may be issued with an infringement notice for every person not wearing a seat belt, fine of \$353.00, loss of 3 points.
- Driver distraction has been identified as a cause in approximately one quarter of crashes. Drivers spend about four times as long looking away from the road when texting which reduces the ability to identify dangerous situations.
- Fatigue is more likely to be a problem when driving in normal sleep times. Take regular breaks and consider changing driving patterns. This is most relevant when you travel on the mainland.
- Alcohol and drugs can slow reaction times which can be crucial in an emergency situation. Both can also change perceptions which impair the drivers' ability to identify potential dangers and take remedial action.

Please don't drink, take drugs and drive, wear a seat belt and do not be distracted by your mobile phone.

When on the mainland take breaks when driving.

Road safety is everyone's business.

Palm Island Barge Company would like to congratulate the Palm Island Council and Community for hosting such a successful NQLGAQ Conference last week.



It was a credit to all involved and an honour to be associated with the event.

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*Happy Birthday to
15-year-old Jada
Kyle-Sailor for the
8th August Love
Mum & Dad*

2015 Rates & Dates

Issue No. Deadline / Publication

186 Thursday 20 August / 27 August
187 Thursday 3 September / 10 September
188 Thursday 17 September / 24 September
189 Thursday 1 October / 8 October

190 Thursday 15 October / 22 October
191 Thursday 29 October / 5 November
192 Thursday 12 November / 19 November
193 Thursday 26 November / 3 December
194 Thursday 10 December / 17 December

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To book an ad or inquire about subscriptions please contact the Editor,

Christine Howes, on 0419 656 277 or via chowes@westnet.com.au

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PLEASE SUPPORT US SO WE CAN CONTINUE TO SUPPORT YOU!

Sharon Finnan Development Cup Netball Carnival, Cairns 2015



Cairns netball pics by Christine Howes – more next issue!!!



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Monday – Friday
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If you have any questions please contact
Reception on [4770 1177](tel:47701177) or [4770 0200](tel:47700200)



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

Rasharna Prior-Bounghi went to the Gold Coast again last month to represent the Australian Indigenous Under 18's team in the Indigenous School Girls National Titles – well done Rasharna!



Fond memories for footy legends at conference

There was no shortage of rugby league flavour at the NQLGAQ annual conference on Palm Island with several political figures with a background in the game turning up to the historic event.

They included Townsville City Councillor Pat Ernst, a former Queensland Country and Foley Shield representative, Dalrymple MP Shane Knuth, a former North Queensland Marlins representative and Whitsunday MP Jason Costigan, who spent 10 years calling the NRL on TV with Fox Sports before entering parliament.

All three caught up with Palm Island legend Josh Geia, whom Mr Costigan remembers playing for the Marlins in Mackay alongside Mr Knuth more than 30 years ago.

“It was a massive game – North Queensland in the old Winfield State League up against Wynnum-Manly, then boasting a galaxy of stars including internationals like Wally Lewis, Gene Miles, Greg Dowling, Bob Lindner and Colin Scott,” Mr Costigan said.

“After the game, I just couldn’t help myself – I went chasing autographs and I still have those autographs somewhere to this day.

“Josh was one of the superstars of North Queensland rugby league back then in the old Foley Shield and on that day, in 1985, I happened to be one of the ballboys at the Mackay Showgrounds.

“I remember asking the late Barry Gomersall, who was the referee, if I could come into the dressing sheds after the game and get some signatures from the players and he said ‘of course’ and so I did.”

Mr Costigan became great mates with ‘The Grasshopper’, who later penned a reference for him which helped secure a job as a cadet journalist with News Ltd in Bowen.

“While on Palm Island, I actually saw a Facebook posting from Barry’s daughter who remembers living here in the 1970s,” he said.

“I know Barry used to rave about his time on Palm Island and his contribution to rugby league here is remembered by many long-time residents and their relatives and that includes the Geia and Daisy

families whom I also caught up with.

“In fact, meeting up with Josh, I also got to meet his wife, whose maiden name is Durante and I know that family too, back in my hometown of Mackay, through rugby league of course. In fact, her brother Paul played five-eighth for my club Magpies.”

Mr Costigan said he also enjoyed seeing Cr Ernst whom he has known for at least 25 years – again through ‘the greatest game of all.’

“I can remember Pat playing front-row for Queensland Country against France up in Cairns in 1990 – the year I came to Townsville to write for the paper about rugby league,” he said. “Pat was always very obliging for a quote for a story back in those days but I was never too sure to call him by his nickname, ‘Boxhead’. Hey, I can laugh about it now!

“Seriously, though, it’s wonderful seeing him serving his community in local government and I’m sure he also enjoyed coming over, catching



The Northern United team which played on Thursday Island last month. Four Palm players made the team, they were Fred Bulsey, Mickeal Sibley, Clinton Pearson and Clifford Beetham.



ABOVE: Jason Costigan caught up with three former NQ rugby league reps on Palm Island while attending the NQLGA's annual conference... Cr Pat Ernst, representing the Townsville City Council, local legend Josh Geia (with wife Paulette, originally from Mackay) & Dalrymple MP Shane Knuth. There is no doubt that rugby league is the sport of the people in NQ & nowhere is that more evident than Palm Island which used to play in the TDRL when I first came to Townsville and a community that is nowadays well supported by the Cowboys and the QRL. Thanks to everyone on Palm Island for being such wonderful hosts including Mayor Cr Alf Lacey & his fellow councillors, council staff, the NQLGA, all the volunteers who chipped in for this historic occasion and of course, the wider Palm Island community.

up with the now-legendary figure that is Josh Geia.

“That’s the special thing about rugby league. It brings people together – regardless of the colour of their skin, what they do for a living or where they’re from.

“I was so pleased to catch up with Josh, all these years later, because it seems so long ago that here I was, this skinny 13-year-old kid in Mackay, blown away by all these footballing stars. In his day, Josh was up there with the best of them.”

At the conference Mr Costigan called on the State Government to expand the ‘Get in the Game’ program so Palm Island could return to the Townsville Rugby League competition.

He said the Labor Government needed to build on the efforts of the previous LNP government in delivering additional ferry services to and from the Island.

“If they do, it will not only boost tourism but also open up the opportunity to bring the Palm Island Barracudas back into the Townsville competition,” he said.

“As I said at the conference, rugby league is the sport of the people in North Queensland and nowhere is that more evident than Palm Island.

“I fondly remember the Barracudas playing at the Sports Reserve when I was a young rugby league writer and the brand of footy they played was incredible. More importantly, though, it gave the people of Palm Island the opportunity to proudly represent their community on a regular basis.

“If we’re fair dinkum about social inclusion, fair dinkum about giving indigenous people a fair go, then we need to see some government funding to make this happen again.”

IN LOCAL FOOTBALL THIS WEEK JETS have advanced to the Palm Island Community Rugby League grand final.

The high rolling Jets qualified for the decider in a fortnight by beating arch rivals Skipjacks 40-34 in last Saturday’s qualifying semi final at the local football oval.

In the elimination semi final reigning premiers Butler Bay Bulls defeated Bwgcolman Brothers 76-22.

Brothers players will now hang their boots up until next season.

Skipjacks and Butler Bay Bulls will meet in this weekend’s preliminary final before what is expected to be a large crowd.

The winner will play Jets in the climax to the season for premiership honours.

Boxing tournament finale to Spring Fair!

PALM Island's next big event will be the Spring Fair, the finale of which will be a Sunstate Amateur Boxing League tournament at the local PCYC on 5th September with hundreds of locals and visitors expected to be there.

Our local boxers will face visitors from clubs around North Queensland including several from Townsville (Hawks and Art of Strength), Babinda, Charters Towers, Burdekin, Ingham and Rockhampton.

Trainer Ray Dennis has been busy posting flyers to let people know around the Island

and said he was currently looking for sponsors.

"I reckon we will have hundreds there cheering on the local boys and we will do very well," he said.

"We had one here several years ago and people came from everywhere.

"This will be even more popular."



Boxers do well in Babinda bouts

Three out of five Palm boxers who travelled to Babinda last week for a Sunstate Amateur Boxing League tournament won their bouts.

Leelan Sibley (*pictured right*), Edgar Rosser and Darryl Richardson were impressive winning their fights by points decision on the nine card tournament.

Barry Rosser and Tiquiri Pryor could not be matched as opponents could not be found for them. Leelan Sibley beat Raymond Haines from Mareeba in

the 51kg division.

Edgar Rosser defeated Damon Wessels from Mareeba in the 63.5kg class and Darryl Richardson won against Clem Knox from Yungaburra in 71kg.

Palm Island Community Company sponsored the trip paying for the hire bus driven by Kevin Castors and accommodation at Babinda.



The team will travel to Moranbah this weekend and the following week will compete in a tournament at Townsville's Centenary Hotel.

Congratulations!

Reggie Palm Island (*right*) has been selected in the Australian Team to contest the Oceania titles in Canberra from the 26th of August to the 2nd of September. Reggie is the first boxer fighting out of a community to have been selected to represent Australia for over 50 years.

