

## Housing summit demands results over 'argy bargy'

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and his Government's decision to cease the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) was the focus of a meeting between Queensland Mayors, local government leaders and housing experts in Cairns earlier this month.



*Palm Island Housing Services Manager Brett Collinson, CEO Ross Norman, Mayor Alf Lacey & Deputy Mayor Roy Prior at the LGAQ Housing Summit in Cairns last month.*

The meeting was attended by mayors and representatives from Palm Island, Torres Strait Island Regional Council, Wujal Wujal, Napranum, Yarrabah, Pormpuraaw, Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, Hopevale, Woorabinda, Mapoon, Kowanyama, Torres Shire and Cook Shire, and hosted by Cairns Regional Council.

They have vowed to increase pressure to stop the government from walking away from the issue.

A joint-statement from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mayors said anything less than the existing program, due to finish at the end of this financial year, would reverse gains made in Closing the Gap targets in health, justice, education and community well-being.

"The meeting also resolved to push to end the exclusion of the communities of Yarrabah, Cherbourg and Torres Shire from national indigenous housing program funding," the statement said.

Wujal Wujal Mayor Desmond Tayley said the meeting served as a follow-up to a similar meeting in Canberra last month.

"The State Government were committing beyond the 30 June but the Federal Government is playing the argy bargy," he said.

*Continued page 4...*

## Testing the waters



*Pic thanks to Mersane Oui Jnr*

*Palm Island has experienced the frontline of this year's monsoon season, as Thaddaeus Sam (above) can attest. You know what not to do if it's flooded, right?! More pics p 2.*



## Water water everywhere!

March was a big month for rain in our community as creeks became rivers and roads became creeks, as these pics show.

And this month is shaping up to be more of the same with some long-range forecasters predicting a soggy end to match the soggy start to April this year.

Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey said the community should report any problems with roads or water to the Council.

“And we’ll do our best to get our hard-working crews out to them as soon as we can,” he said.

“In the meantime I want to say to everyone to take care, be sensible about your movements and the obvious one is if it’s flooded forget it.”

*Pics on this page thanks to Mersane Oui Jnr, Andrea Kyle-Sailor and Merlene Robertson.*



# International Women's Day 2018

The women of Palm Island were celebrated late last month at a delayed International Women's Day event in the Palm Island Mall.

The event was hosted by the Palm Island Community Company and the Diversionary Centre, and supported by Campbell Page.

The day included speakers and music with performers Mother's Dust, Walter Foster and Rosie Thimble.

George Friday dedicated one of his songs to all the women on Palm.

"Today was a deadly day celebrating women on our community," one of many of those who enjoyed the day said on Facebook.

"Such sadness but also so much inspiration. Thanks to everyone, and especially the men, for their support - from this we might be able to change the mind-set in our community and learn from our elders!"

Deadly signs, painted in a marathon session by Campbell Page's CDP artist Ian Palmer, were on hand to remind everyone of women's best qualities and an overnight screen printing run provided more than 40 t-shirts to mark the event.



Pics thanks to Campbell Page & Andrea Kyle-Sailor



“They [State Government] want the Federal Government to negotiate with them, but they haven’t done it,” Wujal Wujal Mayor Desmond Tayley said (from page 1).

“The Federal Government hasn’t shifted, that funding will finish at the end of June and that’s it, then it’s a State Government responsibility.”

Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey also used the words “argy bargy”.

“I think it’s really important that we don’t want to buy into the argy bargy between State and Federal,” he said.

“We’re only interested in seeing houses being delivered on the ground for our people.

“Another round of investment from state and the federal governments is really important for our community when we look at the numbers of housing needed in our community.

“There is a lot of to-ing and fro-ing and a lot of politics in between but at the end of the day our role on the ground, and particularly as a local government who deliver all of these services, is about ensuring our people are getting the same access as any other Australians and that’s what this is about.”

Yarrabah Mayor Ross Andrews said they didn’t want to compete with other communities.

“We want to encourage the Government to continue funding housing stock for all our communities,” he said.

“All the social determinants are affected by this issue.”

*Words with thanks to Koori Mail.*



*Above: Standing: Yarrabah CEO Janelle Menzies, Yarrabah Mayor Ross Andrews, Kowanyama Cr Wendy Wust and Wujal Wujal Cr Bradley Creek; Seated Yarrabah Crs Michael Sands, Ian Patterson and Colin Cedric with Woorabinda Executive Assistant Leslie Purcell and CEO Emil Moul; Kowanyama CEO Fabian Williams with Palm Island CEO Ross Norman; Mapoon Mayor Aileen Addo & CEO Naseem Chetty with Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey; and Wujal Wujal Cr Bradley Creek with Mayor Desmond Tayley*

## MEANWHILE Local MP Cathy O'Toole has backed the Councils' call. Here's what she had to say in Parliament last week... (with thanks to Hansard)

If this government were serious about closing the gap, it certainly would not be cutting \$245 million of funding over two years to a program in Queensland that is a huge success.

In Queensland alone, the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Housing includes the delivery of approximately 1,150 homes, approximately 1,500 refurbishments, as well as maintenance for almost 4,300 houses over a 10-year period.

This partnership has created a large number of local jobs, particularly in Queensland, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

...over the last 10 years, the total number of employment opportunities funded through the NPARH has been 2,640.

That's concreter's, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, roofers, labourers, painters, tilers and cabinet-makers.

Today, the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Housing supports the ongoing employment of over 850 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, apprentices and trainees, and seven of those apprentices live in my electorate of Herbert, on Palm Island.

These cuts will result in these seven apprentices losing their jobs, as well as thousands of jobs in regional Queensland, not to mention the impact on small business.

...In my electorate of Herbert on Palm Island, there are people living in self-constructed accommodation with no electricity, no plumbing and no running water.

...This funding is vital for Palm Island.

...More homes are desperately needed.

The Remote Housing Review identifies the need for 1,100 additional homes in remote Queensland communities over the next 10 years.

...Time and time again our First Nations people have called on the Turnbull Government to give them the respect and recognition they deserve.

And time and time again, their calls are ignored.

These cuts are simply wrong.

I will fight against these cuts and I will continue to fight until the Turnbull Government fund the National Partnership on Remote Housing!

## Come celebrate your new health plan

**A community celebration will be held on Palm Island on 20 April to launch the Palm Island Health Action Plan 2018 – 2028, Townsville Hospital and Health Service Board Chair Tony Mooney AM writes...**

Mayor Alf Lacey and I are delighted to invite the Palm Island community along to enjoy the festivities.

There will be a free, healthy lunch catered by two local businesses, a basketball clinic with Townsville Fire star and championship winner Micaela Cocks and interactive health stalls.

We also have a surprise or two in our back pocket for the day.

The Palm Island Health Action Plan 2018 – 2028 is a historic document. Over the past 18 months we've sat down with the community and you've shared your stories and given your ideas about how you want to be cared for.

The message was loud and clear. You want greater involvement and influence in your health care.

On the day we will have six of the core agencies responsible for the delivery of health services and meeting the 'Closing the Gap' agenda sign a Statement of Intent supporting the actions in this Plan.

This plan is already delivering on your vision with construction on the \$16.5 million Palm Island Primary Care Centre already underway.

I hope you will join us for this important celebration and I look forward to seeing you there.

# Palm Island Voice



Public &  
Community Notices



Don't forget!!!  
The next DEADLINE  
for the  
PALM ISLAND VOICE  
(250!!!) is

**Thursday  
12 April**  
FOR PUBLICATION  
**Thursday  
19 April**

Check out our  
Facebook page!

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**ATTENTION PALM ISLAND RESIDENTS**  
**DEADLY DIDGE n DANCE FESTIVAL**  
**20 - 22 April 2018**

If you plan to travel to or from Palm Island on  
**Friday 20 April, Saturday 21 April or Sunday 22 April**  
you will need to show proof of residency on Palm Island to avoid  
paying for a ticket to the Deadly Didge n Dance Festival (cost \$125)

If you do not have evidence that you reside on Palm Island please  
obtain a letter of residency from Council and carry it with you when  
you travel on these days.

These letters will need to be collected by Thursday 19 April 2018.



**Operating Hours for  
Council are Monday –  
Friday 8am – 5pm**

If you have any  
questions please  
contact Reception  
on 4770 1177 or  
4770 0200



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Shire Council  
has 2,259  
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Facebook!!!

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**0458 789 566**



Townsville  
Hospital  
and Health  
Service



The Palm Island community is invited to a  
community celebration for the launch of the  
*Palm Island Health Action Plan 2018-2028*

**What:** A free healthy lunch, basketball clinic with Townsville  
Fire star Micaela Cocks and health stalls

**Where:** PCYC, Mango Avenue

**When:** Friday, 20 April 2018, 11.30am - 1.30pm



# Queensland's biggest Allblacks headed for Townsville in October this year

## LATE NEWS

### Boxing tournament postponed

AN invasion of boxers and officials from as far away as Kingscliffe, just over the border in New South Wales, Rockhampton, Mareeba and Cairns, as well as a little closer to home from Home Hill and Townsville were due to converge on Palm Island on Saturday for our first boxing tournament in three years but the event has been postponed due to the weather. *Palm Island Voice* will keep you posted, so watch this space for a new date!

It is expected Palm Island's best men's and women's rugby league teams will take the chance to play on a national stage when the 2018 Arthur Beetson Foundation (ABF) Deadly Choices Murri Knockout carnival is held in Townsville this year.

Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey has already been approached to be a guest speaker at the official opening.

In what is bombshell news, *Palm Island Voice* can report that Townsville's Bindal Sharks was invited in March to partner with the ABF to present the carnival at the Townsville Sports Reserve where at least 24 men's teams will battle it out from October 5 to 7.

Bindal Sharks supremo Jenny Pryor has run North Queensland's biggest Allblacks carnival in Townsville for the past 31 years.

"My management team is over the moon we have been offered the opportunity to have the carnival here," she said.

Since the ABF carnival started in 2011 no Palm Island team has been able to afford to compete at the prestigious event.

Costs for airfares, accommodation and other outlays were too much

for many potentials north of Rockhampton to consider it.

The Townsville Murri Knockout will be held instead of Bindal Sharks normal carnival.

Teams and players from around the State will battle it out and already one from Western Australia has asked for a nomination form.

ABF hold the rights to the Murri Carnival from the QRL.

The QRL, Deadly Choices and the ABF have been looking for an opportunity to bring the carnival to North Queensland and how to deal with logistics of that.

The carnival is QRL sanctioned and all competing players must have health checks before games.

ABF officials will discuss matters with the QRL and obtain their blessing to the relocation of the carnival for 2018 which is expected to be a formality.



FLASHBACK! The Palm Island Barracudas in the 1980s  
Pic thanks to Ricky Morgan, Cherbourg