



Rain causes havoc on several fronts

Heavy rain has caused havoc on Palm but hopefully recovery will be over within the next month or so, Acting Mayor Roy Prior says.

Cr Prior said it had been a long ten days.

“Palm Island has been inundated, however there has been a constant stream of phone meetings and conversations led by Council and our Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) to the Premier and several Ministers to make sure Palm Island was not only at the table but that our needs were at the forefront of those discussions,” he said.

“Council has led the way in terms of awareness and making sure the community knows what has been happening as it has happened.

“The LDMG has also been instrumental in making sure our recovery kicked off quickly so our services can be restored and our infrastructure clean-up can be done as soon as possible.

“We ask the community to be patient and careful as it may take three to four weeks to repair some of our worst hit roads and bridges.”

The impact of the heavy rain and subsequent flooding has included: parts of the Council and CDP, schools and TAFE, and other businesses were closed for several days; drinking water had – and still has – to be boiled; food



supplies have been under pressure; roads have been damaged; travel to and from the community was interrupted; there are fears of an outbreak of mosquito-borne diseases; and, emergency services have been on full alert.

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LDMG member, Police OIC Snr Sgt Dave Rutherford said for almost two weeks the community experienced heavy rain leading to localised flooding.

“Roads on the island have suffered significant damage particularly along Wallaby Point Road,” he said, after inspecting the community with Deputy Mayor Roy Prior.

“Residents of Kitchener Bligh and Rodeo Grounds Estates



Pics on these pages with thanks to PIASC staff, Councillor Roy Prior and other community members.



found themselves cut off from the rest of community several times when the creek near the sewerage works came across the road.

“While there was damage to public infrastructure fortunately there was no significant damage to houses although many reported leaks.”

He said the Police, Council and other local agencies had been working hard to ensure safety of the community.

“Community members should remember the ‘when its flooded forget it’ message because we don’t want to see anybody hurt,” he said.

“The rain interfered with the ability of planes, ferries and barges to travel to the Island which in turn meant disruption to some services but essential services were still able to be provided.”

Palm Island Ambulance OIC Victor Hewett said people were saying they had never seen so much rain fall.

“During the weather we have averaged six to eight calls out a day,” he said. “Staff would like to encourage people to listen to advice from local authorities – be aware flood waters can carry diseases, so clean and cover any open wounds, and wash thoroughly before eating after being exposed to mud, dirt or animals.”

He said it was important to avoid water activities until Councils could confirm the water quality was safe.

“Please remember to boil drinking water as advised by recent warnings within the community,” he said.

“Wading or playing in floodwater is hazardous due to risk of drowning and potential skin infection through open wounds coming into contact with the floodwater.

“Mosquitoes can breed rapidly and become a nuisance, so cover skin with clothing and use insect repellent.

“Flooding can cause also excessive mould growth, which should be cleaned up.”

The veteran Ambo said parents could help

their children avoid water-caused illnesses.

“Do not allow children to play in flood-water areas,” he said.

“Wash children’s hands frequently and always prior to eating food.”

Despite the adversity residents faced, OIC Hewett said many locals were still smiling.

“It is great to see smiling faces in the community while we are out and about,” he said.

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MEANWHILE in Townsville Mayor Jenny Hill said more than 1,700 homes had been damaged in unprecedented flooding and weather.

She said data was still being analysed but initial figures showed flood levels in the Ross River were greater than a 1 in 500 year event, with some areas in the catchment receiving rainfall totals in excess of a 1 in 2000 year rainfall event.

On Friday last week, she said, 1063 properties were identified with minor damage, 595 with moderate damage and 93 with severe damage.

Cr Hill said the number of damaged properties was still expected to rise.

“Each of these figures involves a resident or a business that have to clean up or start again,” she said.

“These aren’t just numbers, each one is a story.

“It is going to be a long road to recovery, but I believe our community is up to the challenge – the spirit among residents has been incredible.”



Bettina Marpoondin at Gleeson's Weir on Ross River



PIASC Receptionist Ngaire Pearson was one of the first back to work after the rain

Holiday program huge success for young people

A full program of a wide range of activities from beachcombing to movie nights to cultural and sports days were enjoyed by more than 100 under-18s over the Christmas and New Year holidays, hosted by Ferdy's Haven and funded by the Department of Child Safety, Youth & Women.

Manager Carcia Nallajar said she was grateful for the support they had received.

“We thank our elders and other community members for the valuable feedback received during this period,” she said.

“We had our Activities Coordinator, Community Wellbeing Coordinator and one of our Caseworkers on board with supporting our four Youth Workers over the holidays.

“Our main base was at Ferdy's Haven but most of the activities were held outdoors at several locations around the community.

“Our Youth Workers drove around offering to pickup and invite youth to come along to the program, and even though we didn't have as much luck with 14-18-year-olds, our 12-year-olds and younger were happy to come on board.”

She said highlights of the program included several ‘Cultural Days’.

“Our Activities Coordinator in partnership with the youth program team provided cultural knowledge activities for the youth in various ways, including inviting our elders down to speak to program participants, history talks, fishing, making coconut oil and arts & crafts,” she said.





“BBQ, fresh sandwiches, fruit and water are provided for lunch and light snacks, with thanks to the parents who assisted with catering.”

Also on the program was an introduction to the Indigenous Knowledge Centre’s ‘Deadly Digital Communities’, which teaches digital literacy and technology training.

“Our facilitators spoke about what we can teach them over the coming weeks such as commencing family history research and developing their family tree,” Ms Nallajar said.

“Later in January, we had a great day of activities at the PCYC arena.

“The Manager, Frank, was very helpful and we had all age groups enjoy a range of activities including a sack race, egg and spoon race, wheelbarrow race, face painting, bubble making and bead making.

“There were lots of smiles and laughter and enjoyment while the activities were being held.

“Once again we had parents and volunteers assist with the face painting and other activities.

“And our biggest day was our Family Fun day, held on the 12th of January in partnership with the Cathy Freeman Foundation.

“We set up at Fred Clay park and actually had quite a few 14–18–year–olds who had activities to chose from such as sports, board games, face painting, bubbles and balloons.

“The teens were happy to engage with the younger kids playing the board games and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

“Even the parents, who again helped with the catering, said it was great fun and great to see Ferdy’s Staff out in Fred Clay Park working with the community.”

MORE PICS NEXT PAGE!





Ferdy's Haven staff, family and friends would like to wish Aunty Erica Fulford a belated

Happy 80th Birthday



for 5th February. We hope she enjoyed her day with family. Aunty Erica comes to Ferdy's Haven Women's Group almost every Wednesday to enjoy her arts and crafts.

Palm Island Voice



Public &
Community Notices



The next DEADLINE for
the PALM ISLAND VOICE
(270) will be

**Thursday
21 FEBRUARY**

FOR PUBLICATION

**Thursday
28 February**

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Community Recovery Means Tested Grants

Financial assistance is now available for residents
affected by Far North Queensland flood waters in
the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council.

The Department of Communities, Disability
Services and Seniors works closely with a range
of organisations to provide Community Recovery
services during a declared disaster.

Depending on the extent of the disaster, this may
include referral to support services and provision of
financial assistance to residents.

The following grants have been activated:

- Emergency Hardship Assistance Grant*
- Essential Household Contents Grant**

*not means tested **eligibility criteria applies

Pop-up Hub: Palm Island PCYC

You can apply by visiting the pop-up hub location
(*time and date TBC*) or phoning the Community
Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349.

You can also apply online via the Community
Recovery Portal at <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/community-recovery-means-tested-grants>



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



Palm Island
Aboriginal
Shire Council
has 3,039 'likes' on
Facebook!!!

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



The Amount Of Palm Islanders Coming & Sticking Together 🦊 Is the Best Feeling You Can Have Especially When There's So Much **#HATRED** & **#RACISM** Going On. 100 🦊💙💛



The Island Of Many Tribes, I Am A Proud Bwngcolman 🌴🌅

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