



More housing on the way

After more than two years of advocating for funds, a remote Indigenous housing workshop held in Cairns last week has reached agreement on how the Morrison Government's promised \$105 million to address overcrowding issues in remote Queensland communities should be spent.

Mayors from 15 of the 17 discrete Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities across the state, including Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey and CEO Ross Higgins, took most of the day to work on a formula for distribution they could all agree to.



Pic: Christine Howes

PICTURED above: First Nations Housing Advisor Mick Gooda, Deputy DG for Housing, Homelessness & Sport Trish Woolley, Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey, National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) Group Manager Ryan Bulmer & Yarrabah Mayor Ross Andrews.

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Survey to be the basis of new 'community safety' plan

The Palm Island Community Justice Group (CJG), in partnership with DATSIP, is looking for feedback from the community on recent changes to the Island's Alcohol Management Plan (AMP).

CJG Coordinator Deniece Geia said they were hoping for at least 300 people to participate in a survey they had developed on collaboration with DATSIP.

"It doesn't matter who you are - contractors, nurses - we want to try and get a range of different people from different backgrounds, age, gender, etc," she said. "The survey is anonymous, we don't want to know people's names cause we want to respect their privacy and we want to value and appreciate

their input and comments.

"The CJG has already commenced the consultation with the community by attending the Women's Yarning Circle and the Elders' Yarning Circle, we've gone to the Diversionary Centre and we've spoken to people in the town mall.

"No answer is wrong, we just want to know people's thoughts. And as a CJG, our ultimate goal is to try and get people to enjoy drinking in a safe environment, in moderation."

She said the surveys were to be

completed by the end of February and encouraged everyone who was interested to have their say by contacting the CJG through the Palm Island Community Company (PICC).

Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey said it had been a long process to get this far.

"Council is looking forward to seeing the results and encourages the community to have their say," he said.





The North Queensland Seniors Indigenous Games are underway and all elders, including those visiting Townsville from Palm, are invited to participate. The Games are the result of a partnership between Deadly Choices, Northern Regional Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Corporation, Rasmussen PCYC and Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP). Pics by Alf Wilson.



Goldfield Ashes draws more than 200 teams

Bully McKean was amongst several Palm Islanders who travelled to Charters Towers for the famous Goldfield Ashes cricket carnival over the January long weekend.

This year's competition attracted 242 teams across five grades making it Australia's biggest cricket carnival.

A total of 79 fields including parks, school

grounds, the aerodrome reserve, the gun and golf clubs and private properties served as venues for each of the many rounds played to produce a result.

Council worker Bully was on the sideline barracking for the

Black Bream team who played against Brothers.

Dan Rabuka from Palm Island played in the B-2 division for TPFT on an aerodrome field.

The Goldfield Ashes was first played in 1948 with just six teams.



LEFT: Dan Rabuka played for Too P For This XI; RIGHT: at the Brothers versus Black Breams game were Bully McKean, Matt Masso snr and Gordon Santo snr.

Words & Pics Alf Wilson



Survival Day in Townsville



Pics thanks to Alf Wilson



More housing on the way

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Mayor Alf Lacey said while the commitment – which would see Palm Island pick up more than 20 new houses – was welcome, there was more work to be done in for the longer term.

Torres Cape Indigenous Council Alliance (TCICA) Chair and Torres Shire Mayor Vonda Malone said the formula they had agreed on was a result of the discussions.

“With the funds now on the table, Mayors came together to agree on a fair and equitable methodology for the distribution of funds across each of the 17 communities,” she said in a statement.

“The final allocation of funding considered the population of each community, along with overcrowding and homelessness.

“A locality index was



then applied to overcome the inequality created by construction costs as they vary significantly depending on the location of each local government area.

“Councils will now work with the State and Commonwealth over the coming months as they prepare for the construction of new housing in their communities.”

She said the Mayors were very aware the funding would not end the need for

significantly more investment.

“However it will help put roofs over the heads of the families and individuals who need it most,” she said.

She said the Mayors would continue to advocate for a long term commitment from both levels of government, “to ensure that longstanding housing shortages can finally be overcome”.

Cr Lacey said none of the communities missed out with Palm Island and Torres Shire topping the list in terms of need.



TOP: All the Mayors & CEOs; ABOVE: Palm Island Interim CEO Ross Higgins, Yarrabah CEO Leon Yeatman & new Cherbourg CEO Chatur Zala; LEFT: Torres Shire CEO Dalassa Yorkston with Cherbourg Mayor Arnold Murray.



Popular GP Dr Beth said she was sorry to have to leave Palm Island, due to unforeseen circumstances.

“I wanted to let you all know my last day working was 15 January 2020,” she said.

“It has been an absolute pleasure serving the community and I look forward to returning one day.

“I have worked at Joyce Palmer Health Service for two years and have thoroughly enjoyed working with the community.”

She sent her best and kindest regards to all.

Semelia and family celebrate 31st b'day

Palm Island-born Semelia Fraser spends her time living between Palm Island and Townsville and enjoyed celebrating her 31st birthday this month with her Fraser and Barry families.

“We all stick together and look after each other and like to celebrate milestones such as birthdays,” she said.

“I love fishing and crabbing when we go to Palm by ferry, where I also see family who catch lots of seafood.

“Palm family visit me regularly, they



often bring over seafood as the waters around there have lots of fish, crabs and other good eating marine life.

“There is nothing better

than a good feed of Palm Island fish and when I eat some memories come back of my younger days over there.”

Alf Wilson

OUR NEXT DEADLINE (Issue 294) will be Thursday 20 February for publication on Thursday 27 February!

The **Palm Island Voice** is published fortnightly by the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council and edited by Christine Howes. Members of the Palm Island community and local organisations are welcome to submit birthdays, community information, pics, yarns and letters to the Editor. You can follow us on Facebook! We have 2,545 'likes'!

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