



# JT backs schools



JT is determined to work with Palm Islanders to help make sure kids get off to school this year – the earlier the better, he says.

In a joint effort, the North Queensland Toyota Cowboys' star player and captain Jonathan Thurston has linked with St Michael's and Bwgolman Community Schools to ensure every child was

enrolled and attending school.

"We want to kick the school year off with a real push to get families to enrol their kids in school and once enrolled ensure their kids attend," he said.

"Closing the education gap for Indigenous kids starts at Prep/Grade 1 and establishing good attendance patterns as early as possible is essential."

*SEE PAGES 4-5 FOR MORE!*

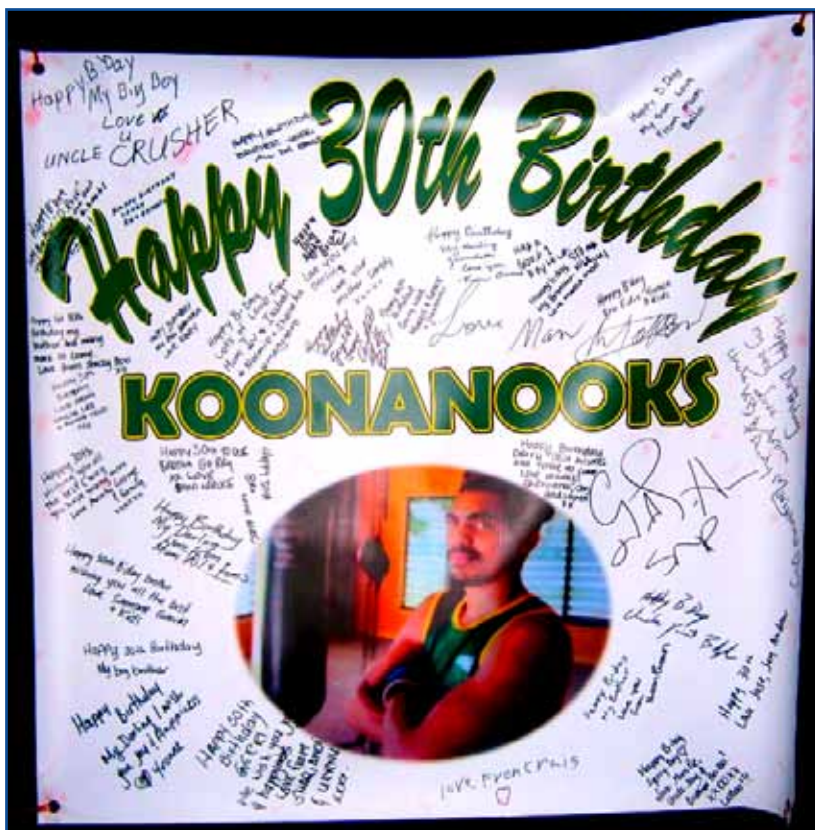
## INSIDE:

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



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A surprise party for Gerald Benjamin Wotton on his 30th birthday was a huge success after careful planning by friends and family.

Proud mother Candice got to work on the event last month with many of her friends, family and well-wishers, all of whom chipped in to help keep the secret so the surprise worked exactly as it was intended to!

The family said many thanks were to go to Lex and Celo for providing a venue for the party, as well as the Music Box for allowing the party to go a bit longer than was intended. Thanks also to those who helped in the stacking up of tables and chairs and to those who helped clean up before leaving.

And once more your Nan Annie says, 'Happy 30th Birthday Gerald'...!



# Eye-deal vehicle to help prevent blindness

Tom Martin (*pictured below*) recently had his eyes checked in an 'IDEAS' van in Townsville and said he was impressed.

The idea of the van is to provide education, equipment, treatment and specialist support to twenty-seven AMS throughout Queensland to assist with early diagnosis of diseases such as diabetes, which can result in blindness.

The Indigenous Diabetes Eyes and Screening (IDEAS) Project is a road show aimed at treating and preventing avoidable blindness.

Mr Martin, 57, was one of the first to be tested.

"This is awesome equipment and one of these costs more than \$40,000," he said.

"This is good for our people." Queensland Aboriginal & Islander Health Council CEO Selwyn Button said he welcomed the launch of the IDEAS roadshow.

"QAIHC is the peak body in Queensland for Community Controlled health services, and we are honoured to be the major partner with Diamond Jubilee Partnership Ltd in

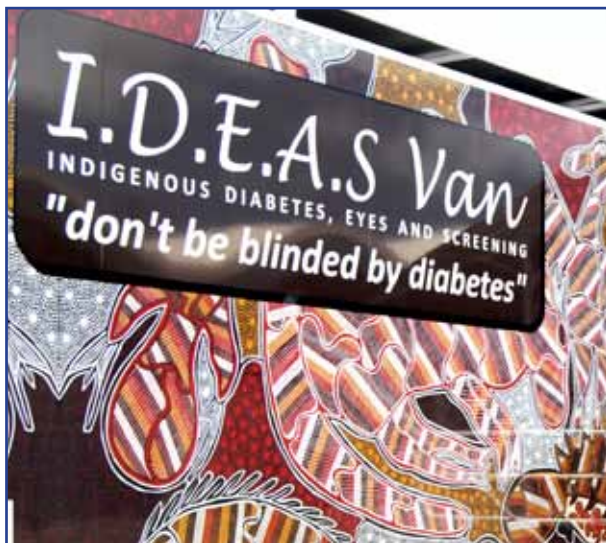
this ground breaking initiative," Mr Button said.

"The IDEAS van

will travel to each of the nine regional hubs around Queensland every four to five weeks, staying for two days, and completing ten visits annually."

Diamond Jubilee Partnership Ltd (DJPL) Executive Director Lyndall De Marco was on hand to see the first patients make use of this state-of-the-art equipment and medical staff.

"This initiative is the first of its kind in the world, and we at DJPL are pleased to be involved with delivering quality eye care to Indigenous Queenslanders with this pilot project," Ms De Marco said.



# Smooth transition from beer to wine and spirits

Midstrength wine and midstrength spirits have been available to Palm Islanders since last month, thanks to approval from the Queensland Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming for changes to Coolgaree Sports Bar & Bistro's licence conditions.

Light and mid-strength beers are also available, as per usual.

Member for Townsville John Hathaway said while the changes allowed residents to enjoy a greater variety of drink over a meal at the bistro, it would not change enforcement

of the AMP which is based on carriage of light and mid-strength beers outside of the bistro.

"It's about catering to people's different tastes without necessarily allowing an open slather on the amount of alcohol

someone can drink," he said.

Changes were supported by the Council, the Palm Island community and Queensland Police.

There have not been any incidents to date as a result of the change.

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1...

As an ambassador for Queensland Reconciliation Awards, Thurston has donated two of his own personally signed playing kits to each school and every child enrolled and attending each day had a ticket in a draw for the prizes.

“It was a huge honour to be nominated again by Premier Newman as an ambassador for the Reconciliation Awards and this is one way in which I can use that role to make a difference” he said.

“Education is the key to the future for all kids and for indigenous kids it’s the key to closing the gap but for that key to work they have to go to school every day.

“As well as encouraging the kids to attend, I want to use projects like this to encourage all families and the broader community to take responsibility for good school attendance.”

Two-time Dally M Medal winner and Palm Island Community Regional Director of Education, Training and Employment Richard English welcomed the move.

“It is very clear that student learning outcomes, particularly NAPLAN results, improve dramatically when students attend school regularly,” he said.

“In order to close the gap for Indigenous students’ results, every day of learning in every classroom is most important.

“Student learning outcomes improve as student attendance rates improve.”

“The great thing about having Johnathan and the Cowboys involved is that they will help to get the school attendance message to whole families and the community more broadly and not just the kids.

“This support from the Cowboys, and particularly Johnathan, will link nicely with the employment of School Attendance Officers as part of the Federal Government’s new Remote School Attendance Strategy program.”

Prize winners were drawn on 21 February. **4**



**ATTENDANCE DRAW WINNERS!**  
**St Michael’s School**  
**Cameron Bulsey Grade 3/4B**  
**La’Tasha Mills Grade 5/6B**  
**Bwngcolman Community School**  
**Lotisha Daphne – Year 7**  
**Rass Robertson – Year 8**



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# Palm Island Voice



## Public & Community Notices



The next RDO is this Friday,  
28 February and RDOs are  
then each fortnight.

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Issue #	DEADLINE Day	Publication Date
149	THURSDAY 6 March	Thursday 13 March
150	THURSDAY 20 March	Thursday 27 March
151	THURSDAY 3 April	Thursday 10 April
152	THURSDAY 17 April	Thursday 24 April
153	THURSDAY 1 May	Thursday 8 May
154	THURSDAY 15 May	Thursday 22 May
155	THURSDAY 22 May	Thursday 29 May
156	THURSDAY 5 June	Thursday 12 June
157	THURSDAY 19 June	Thursday 26 June
158	THURSDAY 3 July	Thursday 10 July
159	THURSDAY 17 July	Thursday 24 July
160	THURSDAY 31 July	Thursday 7 August
161	THURSDAY 14 August	Thursday 21 August
162	THURSDAY 28 August	Thursday 4 September
163	THURSDAY 11 September	Thursday 18 September
164	THURSDAY 25 September	Thursday 2 October
165	THURSDAY 9 October	Thursday 16 October

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# Curtain-raiser confirmed

A Palm Island side is set for a game in Townsville as a curtain-raiser to an NRL round, a Cowboys spokesperson has confirmed.

“It’s definitely happening but still in the planning stages,” the spokesperson said.

“Palm versus a Defence Forces team as a curtain-raiser to Cowboys v Parramatta, kickoff 1.20pm on Saturday 26 April – the day after Anzac Day.”

*Palm Island Voice* will publish more details as they come to hand.

**MEANWHILE** Palm Island Rugby League President Lex Wotton and Mayor Alf Lacey attended a TDRL meeting in Townsville earlier this month in another attempt to have the Barracudas included in the 2014 season.

At its Annual General Meeting on 1st December the TDRL board gave provisional approval for Palm Island and Townsville based Bindal to enter.

That decision was later reversed by the TDRL and that reversal was upheld at the same meeting Cr Lacey and Mr Wotton attended.

However the TDRL spokesperson said the body would do everything in its power to assist the Barracudas to gain entry in the 2015 season.



## Boxers in training for big 2014

The Sunstate Amateur League has nine registered Palm Island boxers who are busy preparing for what looks like being a busy 2014.

Trainer Ray Dennis there were some new faces who have been training at the PCYC Gym in the mix.

The first tournament Palm may compete at is at Home Hill next Saturday.

“I may take Patrick Clarke (*pictured in action above*), Levi Baira and Kathleen Haines down to Home Hill,” Mr Dennis said. “Kevin Castors has kindly agreed to drive us if we go.”

He said Kathleen was ‘training the house down’ at the PCYC Gym.

“She does however find it difficult to get a fight in her own age group up this way,” Mr Dennis said.

With that in mind Mr Dennis also registered five local boxers with a rival Boxing Association which hosts tournaments further south.

“A fellow has been ringing wanting us to go down to Bundaberg in mid-March,” he said.

The veteran trainer also said Reggie Palm Island has been sparring strongly at training.

“Reggie sparred nine rounds one afternoon this week and eight rounds the next day,” he said.

He said there has been good turnouts for training in the afternoons.