



BCS positive example in Closing the Gap

Prime Minister Tony Abbott has made special mention of Palm Island's Bwgcolman Community School as a positive example of progress in the midst of what he described a "profoundly disappointing" seventh Closing the Gap Report.

"Despite the concerted efforts of successive governments since the first report, we are not on track to achieve most of the targets," he said.

"There are some improvements in education and health outcomes."

He said while they were "on track" to halving the gap for Year 12 attainment rates, other targets were not.

"...The other targets – to close the gap in life expectancy within a generation; to ensure access to early childhood education for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander four year olds in remote areas; to halve the gap in reading and numeracy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and to halve the gaps in employment outcomes – have either not been met or are not on track to be met," he said.

"This is not because of any lack of goodwill or effort by successive governments."

He said there had been many steps forward, including Bwgcolman School.

"There are backward steps in this

year's report – too many of them – but there have also been many steps forward and I'd like to go through some of them," he said.

"At Bwgcolman Community School on Palm Island, success is ensuring that when students graduate, they not only have a Queensland Certificate of Education, but they also have a boat license, a first aid certificate, a learner driver's permit and industry-specific qualifications."

He acknowledged while every community was different the foundations for success were the same – education, jobs and a safer living environment, underpinned by better health.

"These foundations are self-evident and these success stories, and others like them, suggest that it's the practical delivery of programs and policies that is the key," he said.

The mention was met with some scepticism on Facebook earlier this month.

Source: <http://www.indigenous.gov.au/news-and-media/announcements/prime-minister-abbott-statement-house-representatives-closing-gap-2015>

Comments from several different Facebook pages included:

- *Palm Island is just a Political Football.*
- *And where are the jobs for them...when they graduate?*
- *I think it could be a start for voicing our issues on Closing the Gap and offering local solutions for community to think about and talk about and maybe even share with the Prime Minister & Cabinet mob when they come over.*
- *The Cathy Freeman Foundation got the Bwgcolman Community School numbers up...not any Government.*
- *Well I hope he makes his daughters get a boat licence, first aid certificate, learner driver's licence and industry specific qualifications when they finish uni! How patronising!*
- *What about simply allowing our mob to do what THEY want to do.*
- *We did it in the 70s...now we're back to the 70s!*
- *We'd like to think our staff & the community might be doing something right. Our staff have worked extremely hard to make BCS somewhere the kids would like to be.*

In this Issue...

- **Bonus Community Events Calendar !!!**



Friday the 13th saw the Queensland Government Air (QGOV Air) Helicopter come to Palm Island for all the right reasons. The Palm Island Emergency Service Cadets were being introduced to yet another arm of the Queensland Emergency Services. The helicopter complete with a full crew came to the Island as part of the ES Cadet program. The air crew were very helpful and answered all of the Cadets' questions and provided a run down on the roles and tasks of the helicopter and its crew, which includes a 24 hour-a-day response for aeromedical retrievals and transfers, search and rescue activities,

counter disaster activities, emergency Police operations and firefighting support.

The Cadets got to explore all over the aircraft and check out the specialist lifesaving equipment on board. "The Cadets had a fantastic time," Bwgcolman Senior School Head Murray Griffin said. "They were very impressed by the small space the paramedics had to work in, one of our Cadets told me they wanted to become a paramedic, which is what this program is all about." The visit was a great success and the Cadets personally thanked each of the visiting QGOV Air crew.

New state MPs expected to deliver

*Curtis Pitt, Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
Former Shadow Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Trade, Employment, Energy and Water Supply,
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.*

Prior to the March 2012 election, Curtis was Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

Born in Cairns Base Hospital and raised in Gordonvale, Curtis Pitt continues his family's long history of service to the Far North.

Having attended Gordonvale Primary School, Gordonvale High School, St Mary's College Woree, he has a Bachelor of Arts (Politics) from James Cook University in Cairns.

Curtis and his wife Kerry have had four children – Isabel (deceased), five year-old Tristan, three year-old Layla, and two year-old Kobi.

Tarnya Smith, Shadow Minister for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander & Multicultural Affairs

State Member for Mount Ommaney and former Assistant Minister for Child Safety.

Tarnya was born in New South Wales, and later moved to Queensland to study Human Resources and Industrial Relations at Griffith University.

She lives in Westlakes, Brisbane with her husband Steve and their children, and is an active community member.

**Don't forget...BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES AND
OTHER PUBLIC/COMMUNITY MESSAGES ARE FREE
IN YOUR PALM ISLAND VOICE (subject to space)!**
For more information see page 6!

Tourism yarns coming up with positive results

“Overwhelmingly positive” support for controlled tourism is the result of recent ‘Talkin’ Tourism’ community discussions across Palm Island by consultants Allison Rossetto and Tony O’Connor.

The pair reported many interesting conversations about ideas from the local community.

“We found close to 90% of people surveyed were supportive of tourism contributing to the local community,” Ms Rossetto said.

“Many people identified tourism as a way to generate jobs and income for residents and as a way to change the image of Palm Island.

“In the words of one local, tourism provided an opportunity

to ‘share our stories around the world so Palm Island can be heard and have more tourism coming. It would be nice!’

“Another shared this positive view saying, ‘I think tourism would be great for Palm Island.

“It is a beautiful place and it would show the young that there’s more to life on Palm than getting in trouble’.”

She said some concerns were also raised.

“Some people thought that tourism would transform the island to another Hamilton Island but once a range of alternative activities were discussed those people engaged about potential opportunities,” she said.

“Some expressed concerns that the Island might not be ready to accept visitors.

Locals were asked through the “Talkin’ Tourism” community discussions whether tourism could help support each of the community’s top five priorities, identified in the Community Action Plan developed following extensive consultations by Palm Island Community and Employment Services last year.



“The community’s response was amazing” said Mr O’Connor. “Everyone we spoke to recognised the potential for tourism to contribute to employment and small business development.

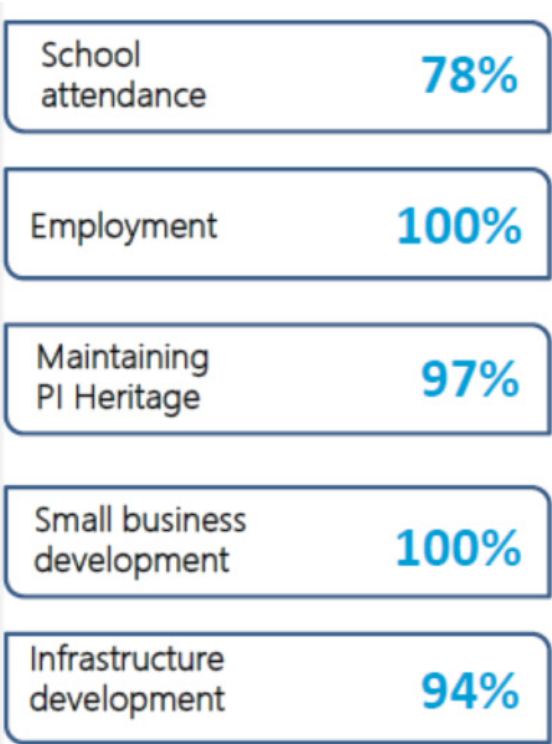
“But people also recognised the potential for tourism to contribute to the maintenance of culture and heritage and to the development of infrastructure.

“Perhaps most surprising for us, people said that tourism would help increase the school attendance rates. “People thought that the connection with visitors would help youth to be prepared for boarding school and to consider their behaviour when on the island”.

“Really it was a very positive response.”

Tony and Allison are inviting community members to a “Talkin’ Tourism” community forum to be held at the Palm Island PCYC on Thursday 12th March at 9.00am to supply feedback from the discussions and further engage with the Island’s residents.

Could tourism contribute to community priorities?



Progressing Our Community

"Bugcolman Moving Forward"



Palm Island

2015 Community Events Calendar

Ordinary Meetings

Land Trust Meetings

Community Engagements

January

February

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2015 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND EVENTS

THURSDAY 1ST JAN 2015

NEW YEARS DAY

MONDAY 26TH JAN 2015

AUSTRALIA DAY

FRIDAY 3RD APRIL 2015

April

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December

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EASTER

MONDAY 6TH APRIL 2015
EASTER MONDAY

SATURDAY 25TH APRIL 2015
ANZAC DAY

FRIDAY 5TH JUNE 2015
STRIKE 57'

MONDAY 8TH JUNE 2015
QUEENS' BIRTHDAY

FRIDAY 12TH JUNE
BWGCOLMAN DAY

MONDAY 6TH JULY 2015
TSV ANNUAL SHOW DAY

FRIDAY 17TH JULY 2015
NAIDOC DAY

FRIDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER 2015
SPRING FESTIVAL

MONDAY 5TH OCTOBER 2015
LABOUR DAY

FRIDAY 25TH DECEMBER 2015
CHRISTMAS DAY

SATURDAY 26TH DECEMBER 2015 BOXING DAY
MONDAY 28TH DECEMBER 2015



Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council
1 Main Street, PALM ISLAND Q 4816

Palm Island Voice



**Public &
Community Notices**



**Operating Hours for
Council are
Monday – Friday
8:00am – 5:00pm**

If you have any questions please
contact Reception on 4770 1177



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

2015 Rates & Dates

Issue No. Deadline / Publication

174	Thursday 5 March / 12 March
175	Thursday 19 March / 26 March
176	Thursday 2 April / 9 April
177	Thursday 16 April / 23 April
178	Thursday 30 April / 7 May
179	Thursday 14 May / 21 May
180	Thursday 28 May / 4 June

Issue No. Deadline / Publication

181	Thursday 11 June / 18 June
182	Thursday 25 June / 2 July
183	Thursday 9 July / 16 July
184	Thursday 23 July / 30 July
185	Thursday 6 August / 13 August
186	Thursday 20 August / 27 August
187	Thursday 3 September / 10 September

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MESSAGES ARE FREE** *(subject to space!)*

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BOXING NEWS

Former North Queensland Cowboys footballer Obe Geia jnr has been training hard with the Palm Island Boxing Club.

Trainer Ray Dennis said he was not sure if Geia jnr would fight in the ring but added he shows great talent.

“He wants to get really fit and has been working hard in the gym,” Mr Dennis said.

Geia jnr is the only Palm Islander to have played A grade for the Cowboys with two NRL matches.

He is one of the most talented rugby league players around and is highly sought after by clubs and at Allblacks carnivals.

Former-star boxer Dennis Haines jnr has been also training well as he prepares for a comeback.

Last week Mr Dennis travelled to Townsville to register boxers with the Sunstate Amateur Boxing League.

NEW BOXERS

There will be some new faces joining current members at the boxing club.

Brayden Nallajar, Fred Ross, Darryl Richardson, Arona Miller, Leelan Sibley, Leroy Baira and Marcus Ketchup along with females Natalie David, Kathleen Haines and Josie Nallajar form the nucleus of a strong club.

Mr Dennis is looking at tournaments in Home Hill on 7th March and in Mackay two weeks later for the boxers to show their skills

AFL's Gold Coast Suns to visit PI schools

PLAYERS from the rising AFL Club the Gold Coast Suns will visit Palm Island on 2nd March to conduct coaching clinics.

From 10:30 to 12:40pm they will visit St Michael's school for a kick on the oval at 10:30–11am) followed by a structured visit from 11–12:40pm for grades three to six.

After that they will go to Bwgcorman School for a kick with the students.

Cricketer maintains above average performance

PALM Island-born Bernie Lamont is the runaway leader of all-time run scorers at the Imparja Cup Cricket Carnival held in Alice Springs every year.

Now living at Latrobe in Tasmania, the 42-year-old Lamont played for the Apple Isle at the 2015 carnival.

Lamont also enjoyed being one of the several cricketers to lead a skills clinic to almost 100 Clontarf Academy students at Yirara College.

Lamont played the Imparja Cup from 2003 to 2011 and is the highest aggregate run scorer with more than 1850 runs.

His 66 innings included three not outs, eight 50's and three centuries with a top score of 120 not out.

His average is 29.33.

Second on the list is Queenslander Brad Stout with 1080 runs.

Lamont can be described as a genuine all-rounder having taken 15 catches and being third on the leading bowling list with 64 wickets at 17.92.



*Bernie Lamont
Pic courtesy Alf Wilson*

Call for junior support

Former Barracudas footballer David Baira, now 60, says he hopes a junior rugby league competition can be formed on Palm Island this season.

Mr Baira (*pictured right with his family*) said he sees many youths kicking footballs around locally and wants them to have their own competition.

"This would help with boredom which many feel at their ages," he said.

The enthusiastic Mr Baira said there was many ex-footballers willing to help set up a competition.

He also said it would be great if adults and locals youths could play sports like cricket in



the summer months.

"A lot of the adults have played soccer and cricket when they went to boarding schools and some even if they were in prison," he said. "I think it is a good idea."

QRL visit on the cards for AGM

QRL Northern Division boss Scott Nosworthy and TDRL official Kerri Ritchie will be coming to Palm Island soon.

They may be involved in assisting with the Palm Island Rugby League AGM.

In other news Palm Islanders Fred Bulsey, Raoul Miller, Clinton and Darryl Pearson look set to be stars for Norths Club in the TDRL competition of 2015.

They all shone when Norths beat Cairns Club Edmonton Storm in A Grade and reserve grade on 15th February in Townsville.

It has been confirmed that Palm Island will host the annual Bill Coolburra Memorial Shield game against the Australian Army on Anzac Day.

The Palm Island Voice also has heard the 2016 Bill Coolburra Memorial Shield game may be played as a curtain-raiser to the NRL clash between Sydney Roosters and Dragons in the NSW capital.



...Out & About...
...in Townsville...



Top: Leonard Yoren, Yolanda Kerr, Christine Cannon and Sandra Kerr; Below: Cheryl Pryor, left, and Rachel Fraser