



# Mayors attend in record numbers

A record number of Indigenous mayors attended the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly where public housing, health and mobile black spots were all up for debate.

Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey said the Indigenous delegation to the ALGA general assembly pushed hard for a replacement NPARIH (National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing) arrangement to factor in growing populations.

“Queensland has been a shining light for delivering the NPARIH program and I welcome further investment,” Cr Lacey said.

“Another round of investment after 2018 would go a long way to providing families and communities certainty and move beyond simply playing catch-up to provide affordable

public housing for growing communities.

“The growth of our Indigenous shires need to be factored into a new round of investment.

“Most importantly, the program brings a windfall in terms of money hitting the ground, which means local employment outcomes, apprenticeship and training outcomes.

“The fact that the program is delivered by councils is key.”

Yarrabah Mayor Ross Andrews said the meeting was encouraging.

“NPARIH funding was discussed with Minister Scullion and delegates also met with the Opposition Leader Bill Shorten and Senator Pat Dodson on a dialogue framework to place important issues at the table as part of the political process,” he said.

*Continued on page 2*





*From page 1*

“We were all encouraged by the deputations and look forward in progressing our issues to government in terms of the Indigenous struggles.”

LGAQ workforce strategy executive Tony Goode said the unprecedented representation of Indigenous councils meant issues pertinent to Indigenous communities, particularly public housing, could be fully explored.

“The federal housing program – NPARIH, is due to expire in 2018 and communities are waiting for an announcement at a federal level for a replacement program,” Mr Goode said.

Delegates at the General Assembly had the opportunity to engage with several other key Members of Parliament including Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Minister for Regional Development and Local Government Fiona Nash.

The meeting also passed a resolution calling on Assembly members to encourage Australian councils to consider efforts they could take to lobby the Federal Government

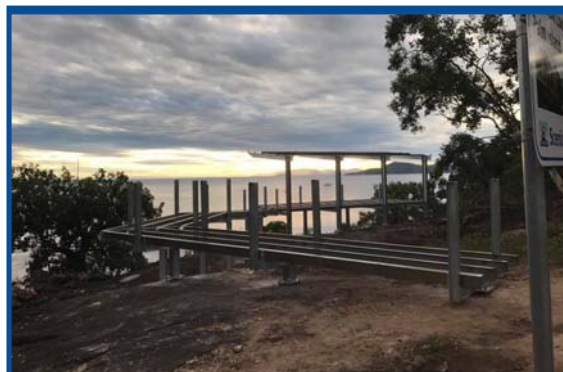


to change the date of recognition of Australia Day.

The Board of ALGA will meet in July to consider this and other Assembly resolutions and determine what action the

Board will take.

*Words with thanks to Cr Ross Andrews, Cr Alf Lacey and the LGAQ, pics with thanks to LGAQ, Cr Wayne Butcher and Suzanne Andrews.*



*Progress at Casement Lookout, pics thanks to Merlene Robertson*





# The 1957 strike - bravery and unity in the face of injustice 60 years on

RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION - QLD BRANCH · FRIDAY, 16 JUNE 2017

Queensland unions and the people of Palm Island – and Indigenous people throughout Queensland – share valuable and long-standing connections.

Events such as this commemoration of the 1957 Strike serve to highlight what brings us together to stand up for one another, and to look out for those that need help, and then offer a hand.

The story and bravery of the 1957 strike deserves to be told in the great halls of the world, before hushed crowds, silent in their admiration of the courage of those who stood up against injustice.

It is a story which shows the power of unity, and how solidarity and commitment can make inroads into the harshest regime.

Going back in time, the bonds between Palm Island and the Queensland union movement were



solid and supportive even back in the 1950s.

The Townsville Branch of the Trades and Labour Council, concerned about reports of brutality and mismanagement on Palm Island, had tried to visit in the months before the 1957 strike. Things were not right on Palm, but their requests to monitor conditions and wages were refused. The authorities fobbed them off, saying their own inspections had deemed that all was well.

But unions were onto the widespread injustice occurring on Palm Island, and it was no surprise that the workers and community threw off their shackles the following year.

*Continued next page...*







*From page 3*

In that year, 1957, seven Palm Island men led a strike protesting discriminatory treatment against indigenous peoples on the island.

They acted after the superintendent ignored a petition demanding improved wages, health, housing and working conditions.

Poor conditions were a major cause of the strike but the trigger was the superintendent's decision to

deport local Albie Geia, who had allegedly disobeyed an overseer. Geia refused to leave the island, united the community, and declared the strike on 10 June 1957.

It was the first community-wide strike on an Indigenous settlement in Queensland.

Five days later the strike was broken following dawn raids on the homes of the seven strike leaders.

As punishment, the men and their families were banished

from the Island, although their actions signified an important change. These men stood up for the rights of Indigenous people and consequently more people chose to follow in their footsteps and fight for Indigenous rights.

Those seven men are vitally important to the history of Palm Island, and showed the way for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to stand up for their community and their rights at work.



*ABOVE: Palm Island 1957. Rations of sugar, tea, bread, syrup and meat offal were staples provided on Reserves by the government.*





# ...the legacy of the strikers continues to inspire...

Author Joanne Watson says this struggle for social justice awoke a realization among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that the role of the state and its allies was not always to be trusted, and that there were allies in trade unions and the progressive movement that could also provide support for their community, already capable of enormous solidarity.

Since then unions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have made great strides together in advancing working conditions, education, fair pay and rights at work.

Like those seven men on Palm Island in 1957, we were not prepared to walk away from the injustice of the Stolen Wages.

Tireless efforts of the Stolen Wages Working Group, Elders from across Queensland, community members and



unions forced the government to properly address this embarrassing blemish on Queensland's past where workers were not paid their wages, paid more tax than other Queenslanders and were denied the right to use their savings as they saw fit.

It shows that unions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can achieve great things together, and overcome injustices and unfairness.

That's what unions are about, and why we campaign against unfairness and injustice.

So on this day we bow our heads and remember the times

of last century when brave Palm Islanders stood up to say "that's enough", and we lift our heads in pride at their bravery and commitment to working together to make things better for their community.

*Leslie Raymond Moffitt, President of the Townsville Branch of the Queensland Council of Unions, was honoured to be invited to take part in Strike 57 celebrations this week on Palm Island. The above is taken from a speech written by Les for the occasion*  
*References: Joanne Watson, "We Couldn't Tolerate Any More": the Palm Island Strike of 1957" Ann McGrath & Kay Saunders with Jackie Huggins, "Aboriginal Workers, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History", Sydney, 1995, p. 165.*





# Palm Island Voice



Public &  
Community Notices



Don't forget!!!  
The DEADLINE for the  
NEXT  
PALM ISLAND VOICE  
(231) is

**Thursday  
6 July**

FOR PUBLICATION

**Thursday  
13 July**

Check out our  
Facebook page!

## ADVERTISE!

Page Sponsorship: (1cm or 18pt high banner  
across nominated page): \$120

Quarter A4 Page: \$250 + GST

Half A4 Page: \$350 + GST

Full A4 Page: \$550 + GST

Ads are to be booked by no later than 5pm  
on deadline day (see above) and all material  
submitted no later than COB the next day.

Print approval required by Monday COB.

To book an ad, make a contribution or  
inquire about subscriptions please contact  
the Editor, Christine Howes,

on 0419 656 277 or

[palmislandvoice@chowes.com.au](mailto:palmislandvoice@chowes.com.au)



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

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



Palm Island  
Aboriginal  
Shire Council  
has 1,533  
'likes' on  
Facebook!!!

At the time of printing NAIDOC plans  
were being drafted and organised by  
Council and their team. *Palm Island  
Voice* will have pics and the full story,  
but in the mean time keep an eye on  
the notice boards for details.



**Happy Birthday**

to the twins of Palm Island,  
Leonie Hopkins and Luella Bligh





## Barracudas play gooooooooood football!

*From page 8...*

“I appreciate QRL officials showing faith in me and more so my appointment as coach, I’m very much look forward to the challenge.

“I was pretty stoked to hear my name was being thrown around a few times for the position. I’ve been very fortunate to have coached some great players and to be a part of their development over the years. It’s very pleasing to see them turn into real leaders of our local rep team.

“Even now with our juniors, I look around at training and I’m coaching some of my previous player’s kids so it’s been great.

“I believe if you’re passionate about something and you put everything into it then eventually good things will come.”

Cr Prior said he was looking forward to getting to the team camp and working with some

real good coaches and players.

Northern Division Manager Scott Nosworthy said he was excited about the prospects of Northern United, and particularly the appointment of Roy Prior from Palm Island as the coach.

“Roy did his level two at the QRL Summer Camp a number of years ago and I personally know that Roy brings with him

a wealth of experience to the coaching role,” he said.

“I know he will acquit himself extremely well.

“During the trials for the NQ United Roy provided an independent approach to selection of the team and I think that resulted in a very balanced team that is ready to take on the Queensland Outback team next weekend.”





# Four Barracuda players join Northern United

Palm Island Barracudas finished a great second at the Skytrans Remote Area Rugby League Far North Queensland Challenge in Cairns, which resulted in four Palm Island Barracudas players named in the Northern United representative side.

Raoul Miller, Darryl Pearson, Joiji Dabea and Genami Geia jnr have been chosen to meet Queensland Outback at Barlow Park in Cairns on July 16, a curtain raiser to the Cowboys versus South Sydney Rabbitohs NRL clash.

Palm Island's Roy Prior has been named United coach and the assistant coach is Robert Yorkston from Bamaga.

Palm island Mayor Alf Lacey the appointment of Roy Prior as Northern United coach was something to be particularly proud of.

"It shows the calibre of Roy and he has leadership and organisation skills as well as the football side of it," he said.

"He is passionate about Palm Island football and will do a very good job as coach."

The Barracudas finished



second at the tournament, under NPA but over Torres Strait Stingers, Northern and Southern Cape.

Cr Prior told the Palm Island Voice the Palm boys did really well considering most of the players only turned up a week out to do some training before leaving for Cairns.

"The senior player again led the way I thought Raoul Miller was outstanding, Joiji Dabea played really well as did

Daryl Pearson, overall players contributed to the team but the three I mentioned really put their hands up and stood out for the team," he said.

"I'm very honoured to have been selected as the coach for the Northern United team, I've been around for some time in the coaching circles and this would be my biggest, highest appointment in terms of a coaching position.

*Continued page 7*

