



Our first fishing weekend in 50+ days!



TOP: Malcolm Larry with his catch of the day; INSET: New CEO Adele Young weighing in on the judging.

Last weekend nearly 30 boats and their families enjoyed their first weekend of fishing after more than 50 days of lock down under Covid-19 restrictions.

The community's first Virus Proof Fishing Plan was approved for the weekend by Human Biosecurity Officer Dr Steven Donohue at the Local Disaster Management Group's request – and it's expected there will be more.

Palm Island's new CEO Adele Young said despite the weather being less than perfect, with rainy and cold 25 knot winds, the weekend was a great success.

"Residents did a great job making sure all their paperwork was in by Friday," she said.

"At this stage everyone who wants to fish from their boat must register with the Council by 5pm on Fridays for every time they launch, and they must stay within the designated area.

"Most importantly, everyone needs to make sure their boats are safe and have all their life jackets and other safety gear on board – and don't

forget the kids' life jackets too!"

Mayor Mislam Sam said he wanted to thank everyone for following the rules.

"It means there will be more to come," he said.

"The weather hasn't been kind for fishing but here's to better days on the water ahead."

He said the biggest trout fishing competition was won by Malcolm Larry with his 3.2kg Coral Trout.

"Many thanks to our sponsors local MP Phillip Thompson, the Palm Island Community Company and Queensland Police Service," he said.

"Johnny Sibley has suggested we hold a separate women's comp for this coming weekend and we're happy to do that.

"The only other thing is for everyone to make sure their flares are up to date, and all their safety gear is in good condition.

"Well done everyone."

Working to keep us safe and healthy

The Townsville Hospital and Health Service continues to work closely with the Palm Island community to protect the community from Covid-19.

Palm Island Primary Health Care Centre Community Liaison Officer Jennifer Ketchell said a huge amount of work had been done to support the Palm Island community, particularly the most vulnerable.

“On Palm Island, the team have put in place number of steps to support the community most at risk,” she said.

“This has included encouraging people come in to the see their doctor, putting up household signs so people know if there are elders or others living there, and to be careful about visiting family or making sure we are social distancing.

“We are also working closely with our community partners and other government agencies in Townsville to prepare and plan for any Covid-19 cases amongst the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.”

Joyce Palmer Health Service medical director Dr Bryce Nicol said First Nations people were at risk of getting very sick from Covid-19.

“Even if you are feeling well it is important to take steps to prevent the virus from spreading,” he said.

“Good hygiene and social distancing (also called physical distancing), are the best defences against Covid-19.



Dr Emily Walpole putting up a Covid-19 info sign for Theresa Creed

“It is also important that you talk to your doctor about getting a flu jab which you can get at the primary healthcare centre.”

Dr Nicol said health service delivery was largely business as usual on Palm Island with clinics, outreach programs for midwives and child health continuing to operate.

“Some of our staff will continue to travel over to Palm Island from Townsville to make sure we can keep giving the community the care they need,” he said.

“These staff members only travel if they are healthy, have not had any contact with people with symptoms of Covid-19 or other sickness, and practise social distancing and good hygiene while on the island.”

Thanks to Ross + welcome to new CEO Adele



Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council’s new CEO Adele Young says she is delighted to be here and would like to thank everyone for the warm welcome she has received so far.

Ms Young was welcomed by a full Council and outgoing interim CEO Ross Higgins.

Mayor Mislam Sam said they were grateful for Mr

Higgins’ work over the past few months.

He said Ms Young was the first female CEO appointed to the Council since becoming a Shire in 2008.

Ms Young said she was looking forward to settling in and getting on with business.

“I chose Palm Island as the place I wanted to be,” she said.

“There’s so much to do here with a new Mayor, a new Council and a fresh start.”

She said her focus would be on a ‘back to the

basics’ approach.

“I want to restore the Council’s good name by making sure our business is properly run,” she said.

“We’re here to deliver services to local residents – that’s the basics of what we should be doing – and with improved services to residents we can and should be the best Council around.

“That’s what my team and I will be working hard every day to achieve.”

She said road upgrades were on the top of her list, followed by vegetation clean ups,

which have already started.

“Keeping people safe from Covid-19 takes up hours of our work time every day,” she said.

“But it’s necessary to keep us safe – now and into the future which as far as this virus goes, looks to be for quite a while.

“I expect it will take some time to get the organisation ‘ship shape’ but many good people have been working hard to do just that in recent months and that work will be ongoing.”

Q&A - CEO Adele Young Where did you grow up?

I grew up following my dad around for work in outback and regional Queensland – I’ve been everywhere but always in the north from Pilbara to the Territory to here – I hate the cold!

Favourite Team:
Cowboys!

Favourite Food:
Anything anyone else cooks

Favourite Music:
Country and Western – Johnny Cash

Road upgrades good to go - weather permitting!

New works on Wallaby Point Road got underway this week with a major new upgrade to Beach Road due to start tomorrow (weather permitting), CEO Adele Young says.

She said while the works were underway drivers would be diverted around the work zones onto a two lane side track.

“The upgrades, which could take as many as

three months to finish, will involve construction of a concrete roadway and installation of large upgraded culverts,” she said. “These vital upgrades will be of great benefit in building a



sustainable Palm Island community. Your patience and cooperation for the duration of the works is greatly appreciated.”

For more information contact the Council Works Dept on 4770 0281.

PICTURED LEFT: Works & Services Director John Carleton with the Council & CEO

Dear Editor,

With respect, if Palm or our other communities weren't shutdown when Coronavirus started everyone would have said, “they don't care about us”.

We all know that we as Indigenous people have the lowest life expectancy rate.

We all know that majority in our communities sit in the high risk category when it comes to contracting Coronavirus.

Our people have suffered massacres and diseases that almost wiped out our existence.

So: would we rather take the extra precautions now in minimising the risk of this coming into our communities?

Or would we allow it to wipe out our most vulnerable, many of those being the few elders we have remaining?

My family lives on Palm Island and we haven't seen them since the lock down, but the thought of this virus reaching there and killing the only grandparent I have left breaks my heart.

I understand people want to shop and whatever else, but think of those who are scared and worried for their lives.

This is affecting everyone, because I would love to come home and get away from it all.

We have faced the fear of getting it daily in here. We've still had to go to work, go to the shops and hope for the best.

I understand there are no cases - yet - but people are still travelling around the state and people may not even know they have it.

Maybe they should open it up and go back to normal, but don't go pointing fingers if it does get into the community and one of your family members become a statistic of Coronavirus.

Be grateful for the changes that are being made, the Council fought hard for that to happen.

Things will get better and they will ease off soon enough.

Lynore Sansbury

OUR NEXT DEADLINE (Issue 301) will be Thursday 28 May for publication on Thursday 4 June!

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 2,595 'likes'!

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