

## COUNCIL REFORMS UNDERWAY - FULL STORY PAGES 3-5!



# New local roles a Queensland first

The inaugural intake of six local recruits as Protective Services Officers at a special ceremony last week is a Queensland first, Palm Island Mayor Mislam Sam says.

Palm Island Mayor Mislam Sam said he welcomed the long-desired achievement at a ceremony held last week.

Protective Services Officers are sworn staff members of the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

They have legislative powers to provide security to State Government buildings and can work closely with Police Officers in the detention of persons found committing offences in these buildings.

Protective Services Officers have all the powers of a Police Officer, excluding the power of arrest, within a Government building/precinct.

Mayor Sam said support for the new recruits was part of a new approach to tackling issues in

community safety, through offering opportunities for locals to stand up and work together as a community.

“We know we need to work as one to return to a respectful, peaceful and healthy community,” he said.

“Our elders who came through the toughest of times didn’t make excuses and the community functioned well – that’s what we need to get back to.”

Mayor Sam said they had taken the position these jobs should be held by locals.

“The economic opportunities that come with a skilled, well paid professional life is something Palm Islanders should have access to,” he said. “Until now these jobs and salaries left the Island.

“That has stopped with this

commitment from QPS and is to be applauded.

“It’s a Queensland first and I’m sure others will follow.”

He said it was a first step to the major changes on the Island he wanted to see.

“We need an integrated community response to safety and law and order – not just more policing, more of the same won’t get us there,” he said.

“Businesses and the community suffer far too much expense and heartbreak from needless vandalism, we have to turn this around together.

“Our six new local Protective Services Officers are the next step in our new way of doing things and I’m backing this program one hundred per cent.”

Several Palm Island's service providers, including the PCYC and PICC, will unite on Wednesday to present information, stalls and activities around National Child Protection Week.

The event, which will go ahead under a strict Covid-19 safety plan, will run from 10am-3pm at Fred Clay Park.

National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) CEO Richard Cooke said children needed everyone to play their part.

"The added stress on families due to the coronavirus pandemic means National Child Protection Week is more important than ever," Mr Cooke said.

"Australia's children need all of us to be playing our part in keeping them safe and well.

"As many people as possible – not just 'experts' – need to be part of important conversations about putting children first."

PCYC Youth Worker Harry Reuben said he would be at the event sharing a coffee and a yarn about child protection from an Islander's perspective of family life on Palm Island.

"I will be talking about the impact and effects of trauma on children," he said.

"It's about raising awareness of the impact of trauma on kids and the impact it can have later in life – we often don't realise a small action can have huge ramifications."

The day's event will include free coffee and sandwiches from PCYC, a free BBQ hosted by PICC, music, raffles, prizes and a radio broadcast.



# PROTECTING CHILDREN IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS



**NEIGHBOUR**

**Talk to your neighbours & take the time to build relationships with families in your street, apartment, building or community.**



**TEACHER**

**Engage students & families in school activities to create a shared space where children can learn & grow.**



**POLICE**

**Be approachable & involve yourself in community events to build trusting relationships with families, children & young people.**



**AUNT/UNCLE**

**Spend time with the children in your life. Make your influence positive.**



**DOCTOR/NURSE**

**Check in with parents & families on how things are going & link them to local services.**

**PLAY YOUR PART  
START A CONVERSATION TODAY**



**TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR ROLE  
VISIT [NAPCAN.ORG.AU](http://NAPCAN.ORG.AU)**

Supported By: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

# Council reforms underway

The true state of Palm Island Council's books has been spelled out for the first time – Council is facing a \$7 million deficit this year with less than zero unconstrained cash – Mayor Mislam Sam says.

“We've inherited this mess, we can't do anything about what we've got from the past,” he said.

“But we are committed to turning this around for the community.

“Our new CEO, Adele Young, specialises in turning organisations around and that has already started.

“We simply can't go on the way we have been.

“The budget shows Council earns around \$17 million per year and spends about \$24 million.

“And every cent of savings and reserves are gone – spent in previous years including on operational expenses.

“On top of that we owe millions back to the State Government for projects we were paid for but not done – yet the money is gone.

“It's time for tough decisions.

“It's time to focus on the basics residents expect and to do that well.”

He said Ms Young has proposed a two-part plan to be implemented over two years.

“The situation is so dire – Council doesn't have enough funds to pay it's bills to the end of the year,” Ms Young said.

“We must act fast and stop the rot.

“Changes have to be made to cut costs, grow revenue and sell any assets that are non-productive.

“Reducing administrative costs and increase productivity is simply a must do.

“The option of doing nothing is just not possible.

“This situation hasn't happened overnight and previous administrators have done a poor job of managing Council affairs.

“It's much more than the charges currently before the courts – bad administration and mismanagement has cost the Council large sums of money over the years.

“We are focused on turning this around now.”

She said the first step in changing Council's future was to be honest about the situation.

“There is no point sugar-coating it,” she said.

“We've already started cutting

management costs but there is so much more to do.

“The repair plan and details of the changes will be publicly available on the Council website.

“Not only do we need to turn Council around – we need to share that journey with our staff, stakeholders and the community.

“A new era of transparency, accountability and performance is required and that's what we will do.”

A 13-page summary of the budget is on the Council's website via: <http://bit.ly/PIASC2020BudgetSummary>

Budget Summary Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council	
	2020-21 Budget
<b>OPERATING BUDGET</b>	
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	
Internal Charges Revenue	
Fees & Charges	675,511
Sale of Services	1,148,496
Grants and Other Contributions	454,896
Sale of goods	11,412,502
Sundry Revenue	1,361,160
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>1,407,719</b>
<b>Operating Expense</b>	
Employee Costs	
Supplies & Services	9,726,707
Vehicle/Equipment/ Plant Hire	9,209,631
Other Expenses	5,856
Depreciation	104,004
Finance Costs	4,036,759
Internal Charges Expense	4,632
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>373,078</b>
<b>Operating Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>23,460,667</b>
	7,000,383

ABOVE: the bottom line

MORE NEXT PAGE...

# Two-year plan to kick off Council transformation

Palm Island Council CEO Adele Young has outlined a two-year plan to turn Council around from its current unsustainable position to the 'best in class' within that time frame.

Unanimously endorsed by Council at the August meeting, the CEO's plan, which includes a dramatic cut to senior level positions, has already begun. Quite simply, part of the problem is we are overstaffed compared to other indigenous council," Ms Young said. "The repair and reform package I have proposed must be implemented quickly— we can't pay our bills if we keep spending more than we earn." She said other aspects of the turn-around, such as growing a skilled workforce and building revenue, would take up to two years. "Until we are back on our feet we need a streamlined and lean leadership structure," she said. "To that end I have removed the three Directors from our organisational structure. "This cut to management roles will save significant money and allows for fast and efficient decision-making as well as close access from all areas of the workforce to

myself and the deputy CEO. "In time, a CEO and two directors will be put in place, but not until this part of our re-building process is at an end – this is an interim structure while the repair is underway. "To enable me to be close to the coal face, my office will be shared between the administration building and the works depot, where I moved last week. "My working from the works depot enables staff to access me much more easily and helps me understand exactly what our staff have had to endure with the previously poorly run and disconnected management. "Those days are over. "80 % of what Council does is operations and that's where I'll be spending as much time as possible. "The Townsville office will be sold or leased and smaller cheaper accommodation found. She said a voluntary redundancy process was in place.



CEO Adele Young briefing Operations & Works Department staff about the two-year plan

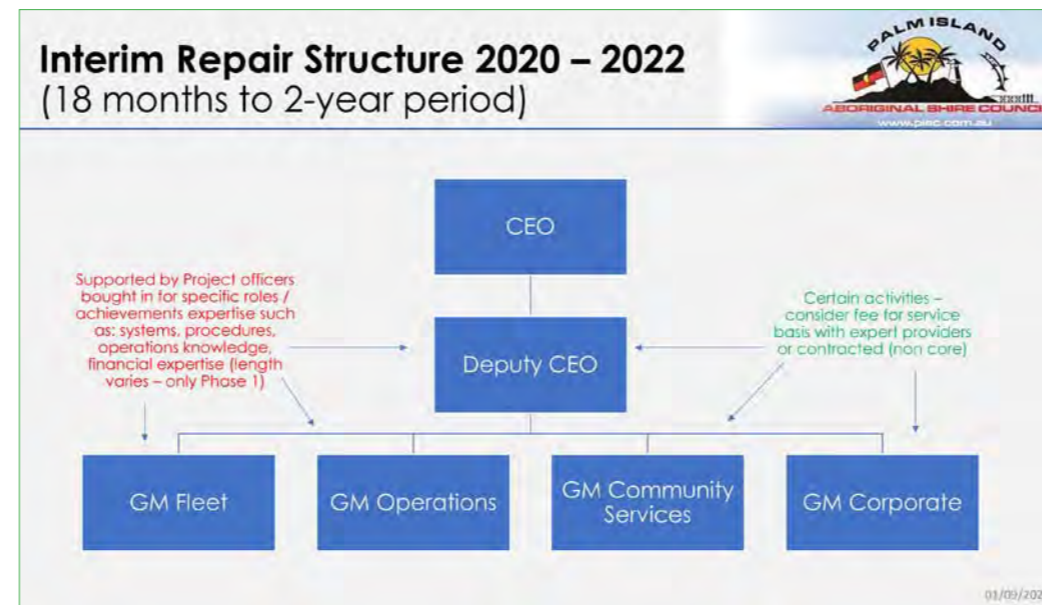
"Staff will have two weeks to consider applying," she said. "Details will be shared with all of the workforce as soon as possible. "Reducing casualisation to give better job security and updating our Enterprise Bargaining (EB) agreements – which expired eight years ago – will go a long way towards implementing new accountability and performance measures, which are now our key priorities.

"All areas of the business are being examined. "Every decision and project needs to be looked at again. "It's time to have a strategic plan that focuses on delivering the basic infrastructure the Island has been without for far too long. "A new attitude of doing things 'once and well' needs to be implemented. "It's time for residents to get the same standard of service as the rest of Queensland and for our

staff to perform at the level of their peers in other councils. "This also means many of our suppliers will have to pull their socks up too – no more Palm Island short cuts or expensive prices that can't be justified. "And collecting revenue owed to Council is a top priority. "Subject matter experts will be brought in to examine, reform and implement new practices, policies and systems.

"We need to have the best expertise around to work with all our staff. "And we have to move fast. "They will be for short term projects and only for as long as we need them. "Some tasks can be better performed by others with more expertise and other non-core tasks maybe outsourced. "Every element of everything we do will be considered over coming weeks." Ms Young said she would keep staff and the community

up-to-date with regular communications. "I am available to all staff at any time to answer any questions about the repair plan and process and my mobile number has been given to everyone," she said. "We are in this together – we have to make it work. "While change can be difficult the Council will, after this process, be a better, safer, more professional place to work in, and we know everyone wants that."





Pics on these pages by Darren Burns



# Patrick 'did well' - Matt Rose



Promoter Matt Rose and his cousin Nev Simpson ringside in Townsville (pic supplied)

In an exclusive wrap-up of Patrick Clarke's great big fight night, boxing promoter Matt Rose told the *Palm Island Voice* the young Palm Islander performed 'very very well' and 'really dug deep'.

Mr Rose said as an Indigenous man himself, from Walgett in New South Wales, he was keen to make sure a talented Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander should be showcased in the Tszyu/Horn event.

"As part of promoting Tszyu, we had an opportunity to put fighters on the undercard," he said.

"I had a number of fighters who couldn't get up because of the shutdown of the borders.

"Then I heard about Patrick and thought it would be



a great opportunity for him to jump on.

“Unfortunately he didn’t get a win, but his performance was definitely there and hopefully he’ll keep chasing his dream of boxing.”

He said he was happy to have been able to offer Patrick the experience.

“I sat pretty close to his corner and was willing him on, because being in a stadium like that for your professional debut is pretty special,” he said.

“He could probably fight anywhere now, and not be phased at all, people can go their whole careers and never fight in a stadium.”

He said part of the show was definitely giving back to the community.

“We wanted to give back to community and we thought we’ll give some tickets to the people of

Palm Island to come and support Patrick,” he said.

“And you know it was wonderful to hear the crowd was well and truly behind him.

“I’m so glad everyone enjoyed the experience, hopefully we’ll be back up there again to do something similar.”

### Vote of thanks

Mayor Mislam Sam said the Council and community was grateful for the opportunity.

“It really made a difference for people who otherwise might not have gone to be able to be there,” he said.

“We’d like to extend a huge vote of thanks to Matty for helping us to make that happen and for them to be able to share that experience with young Patrick.”

# Residents risk fines for 30+ parties

The Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) reminds Palm Island residents that current COVID directions ban gatherings in private places – such as homes – of more than 30 people.

Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire has had their limit reduced to 10 people, as tighter restrictions have been extended due to the outbreak down south.

Despite lots of public notice and several warnings over the past ten days, parties exceeding 30 people have again been held on the island.

This means any house or private gathering which has more than 30 people together (including residents) commits an offence, with a maximum penalty of up to six months in jail and/or fines of up to \$13,300 (or 100 penalty units).

It doesn't matter if residents have been off the Island or not.

Now people are moving around Queensland without restrictions, any one of us could easily pick up the virus from someone we don't know – just by standing close to them.

The LDMG has asked Queensland Police to enforce the new rules and that if people refuse to listen fines should be given.

We can see these parties every weekend on FB live – these parties do NOT comply.

Enough is enough.

The virus is still out there.

Don't be selfish – reduce the risk – or cop the fine, the LDMG said.

## New video relays important new health messages



"Testing is easy...we have to try to keep ourselves good and try and carry on so we can make sure our children know what's going on and they do the same," Pauline Shortjoe

The Joyce Palmer Health Service, with the Townsville Hospital & Health Service, has made a video with some very important health messages for the Palm Island community.

You can be tested for Covid-19 at the Palm Island Primary Health Care Centre. You can watch the video on the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council Facebook page or on our website at [palmcouncil.qld.gov.au/health-says-get-ready](http://palmcouncil.qld.gov.au/health-says-get-ready)

***Covid-19 testing is available at the Palm Island Primary Health Care Centre***

SEE THE PALM ISLAND ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL FACEBOOK OR WEB PAGE FOR THE FULL VIDEO!

## We're going weekly (for a bit)! OUR NEXT DEADLINE (Issue 308.1) will be this Thursday 10 September for publication on Monday 14 September!

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 2,630 'likes'!

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**Operating Hours for Palm Island 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 3,971 'likes' on Facebook!!!**