

Waadanta



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June 2026

*Please note there may be images of
deceased persons within this Newsletter.*



Our footy futures



Pics by Christine Howes



A word from ...**Mayor Wayne Butcher**

For the past six months, our focus has been on rolling out these houses on the new subdivision, Mayor Wayne Butcher writes...

We're going to use the old crawl, walk, run strategies.

We're going to build two out of five houses this time round, we want to continue rolling out five houses a year for the next four or five years and see how we go building our people and our workers' skills up.

We're looking for apprentices in plumbing, carpentry, electrician and painting so we can build those skills into trades, and that should give us enough time to get ready for the next subdivision.

We're planning ahead here. We're looking for trying to find good participants, good young workers, including women in those trades as well.

It means a lot to us to build our own houses.

It means we'll continue building a local economy by capturing investment.

The other thing is we want to build people.

Building people is important because that gives you sustainability over a long time when you have good, strong, skilled working people.

We don't have to rely on outside contractors building houses for us.

We've been teaching people a lot about financial management and small business.

We want to build those businesses and step back and let our children take over.

They could start building

wealth for their families because they've actually got something.

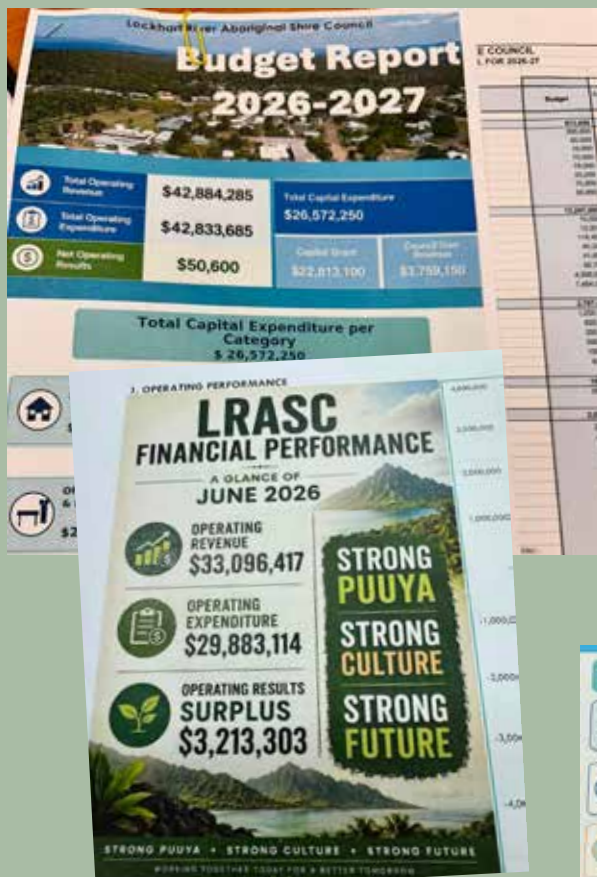
It's up to people to grab opportunities with both hands and run with them – the opportunity is only going to be as good as how much you take advantage of it.

We build and maintain all our roads ourselves now, unless we've got big additional works, as there is at the moment.

Our road crews are flat out, so there are new business opportunities there too.

We're building our preferred suppliers list and there's a lot of small businesses we're working with now, getting them ready.





Lockhart River Shire Council Budget Meeting: Council must adopt and approve our Budget for 2026/2027 Financial Year before 31 August every year as per the Queensland Local Government Act. Having stability in governance with long-term employees and management has helped the Council grow over the long term.

1. Unqualified and unmodified audits for 15 years straight;
2. Employees from 46 to 108 workers;
3. \$7m turnovers/Revenue to \$34 million annually;
4. \$600 k deficit to \$30 million in the bank; and,
5. Civil works from \$250k in 2012 to \$25 million in 2026.



Home ownership on the agenda

There are 18 homeowners in the Lockhart River community through the old Katter leases.

A lot of them are passed on now, so the next generation is reaping the rewards of having land tenure and a house – they don't have to pay rent anymore.

So there is a mindset of moving away from being a tenant and renting houses to home ownership.

But with that has to come an understanding that if you want an electrician or a plumber or a painter, you have to have your own funds there because you don't pay rent anymore.

Paying rent has been

generationally embedded into households for something like as many as five generations having the same house, so it's been a challenge trying to change that mindset.

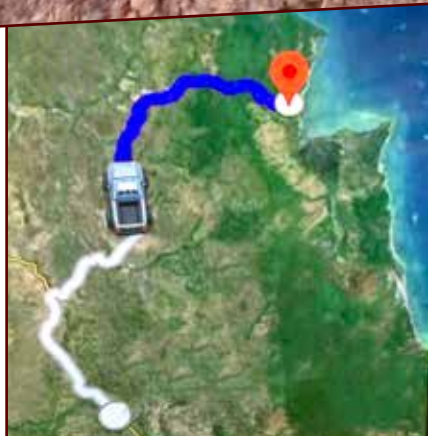
There's lots of things you can spend money on, but home ownership and land is one of the most important, as is reinvesting in your own business.





Pics on this page: Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council Road crew cleaning up the main access road into the Community in late April after Tropical Cyclone Narelle. There was a major landslide between Pascoe and Wenlock River to repair, a lot of water still in the river crossing and a lot of trees down.

For a full round-up of TC Narelle, see pages 12-13...







Council keeping people

By CHRISTINE HOWES



THE far north-eastern Cape York Peninsula town of Lockhart River has gone from no locally-owned businesses to nearly 20 contractors and operators in civil construction and building in less than 15 years.

"Money is staying here," said Wayne Butcher, mayor of the Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council.

"The only way you can do that is to have an opportunity and that's all we've done with council throughout the years, is build opportunities."

"It's up to people to grab it with both hands and run with it and take advantage of those opportunities."

He said the only way to build a local economy was to capture the investment that came into the community and deliver it in a way that was beneficial, not only for the council but for the community.

"That's how you keep the dollars inside a local economy and there's a lot of spin-off from that," he said.

"I think for the first time people will have the opportunity to build wealth and run a proper business, from leasing machinery to purchasing machinery, from hiring workers and building workers on site, too."

"There are people who have come off the couch or off the street in our community, and become roller or loader drivers, grader drivers and dozer drivers."

He said that was one of the most exciting things about the recent completion of a school building project, where the students were trained to build the building.

"Not long ago they were at the same school at primary school," he said.

"They've come out of primary school into secondary education and into the finishing sector, going into working."

"Our old people used to say, having an education is great, but being able to work, that's the other side of the coin."

"You've got to build your work ethic."

Mr Butcher has been mayor for 14 years but has been involved in the council since 1989, when he was 18 years old.

By the mid-1990s he had become deputy CEO under current and then-CEO David Clarke (Clarky).

"I had worked for the council in several roles, from being a post office boy to unloading planes," Mr Butcher said in a previous interview in 2022.

"Back in those days you had to be multi-skilled."

"I trained for four years under Clarky, and then I became the CEO in 2004, when it was changed from community councils, under the Community Services Act, to a local government structure under the Local Government Act."

"I was the first CEO for the Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council."

He said an important part of the council's strategy had always been to create pathways and make sure there were opportunities for the kids coming out of school.

Mr Clarke agreed: "We always have a long-term commitment to getting our young people maximum opportunity for work, particularly in the trade sector because they're transportable skills – they can take them anywhere. It's the important thing for us."

"Our old people used to say, having an education is great, but being able to work, that's the other side of the coin. You've got to build your work ethic."

Wayne Butcher, mayor of the Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council.

"We've got a long history of investment in a lot of those kids."

"We're just about to embark on a new subdivision construction program, which will provide additional opportunities for both entry-level and apprenticeship streams."

"So hopefully by investing in these kids in this program with Deadly Pathways to Construction, that will fast-track some of those kids into those trade streams."

"We've all got a common goal around providing the opportunities for our kids – there's nothing that underpins functionality like a job."

Mr Butcher said the council had held firmly onto a long-term 'crawl, walk, run' strategic build-up of skills in the community, with the result that it now had its own teams of council-employed local painters, plumbers, municipal workers and workshop and road crews.

"Building people is important because that gives you sustainability over a long time when you have good, strong, skilled working people," he said.

"We don't have to rely on outside contractors building houses for us."

"We basically build and maintain all our

roads ourselves now."

"They are the two areas that we've managed to capture investment in and deliver the methodology, that's the Lockhart River way, I guess."

"We've captured the investment for civil construction, which is roadworks, and building construction in terms of housing, from day-to-day maintenance to major upgrades and from major refurbishment of a house to building a new house."

"We've captured that whole area which essentially changed the council structure to make it a business model that is beneficial to the community."

He said in the post-war season they were "flat out" but had a number of new local businesses on their preferred supplier list.

"We're working with them now and getting them ready," he said.

"There's a lot of behind-the-scenes challenges that a community don't see, but we deal with a lot politically at regional, state and federal level as well."

"The politics will continue, but having a strong community gives me the strength then to lobby."

"And when I lobby, I can lobby with substantial evidence – proof of things that we can achieve and deliver, because a lot of people doubt what ability Indigenous communities have."

"So when we say, 'hey, we can build a road from scratch to bitumen, including concrete and curvetting', it changes the whole discussion."

● **Building classrooms and careers: how Lockhart River teens helped transform their school – pages 16-17**

and profits on Country



Former-carpentry apprentice, now Lockhart River deputy mayor Alistair Bowie (second from right) with his own building team in July 2024.

Below: Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council's road crew.



Solomon Hobson, Stephen Giblet, Tristan Elu, Rodney Accoom and Wayne Lavender in 2021.



Road gang supervisor Solomon Hobson with then 18-year-old apprentice Tristan Elu in 2015.

Below: Mulia Sallee, Rodney Accoom, works supervisor Solly Hobson and Alfred Johnson taking a break along Old Site Road in 2016.



A word from ...

CEO David Clarke



Look out, the dry season is well with us again, **CEO David Clarke** writes...

Council has attracted record investment into our road network, which also means we crank up the business opportunities for our people. For the first time this includes funding for the Lockhart Valley road.

We did okay last year working together, but this year promises to provide more opportunities as local business slowly but surely takes control of our economy.

Remember Council is here to help you bring your business dreams alive.

The construction side of housing on the new sub-division is about to start, which will allow Council to have another intake of apprentices.

We are very keen to try some of our young ones over 15.

If you have a family member interested, come and see Noleen in the office and we will have a good yarn about the opportunities coming up.

Festival time!

How good was our Paytham Malkari Festival last year?

It was great to see everyone take such pride in our culture.

This year will be even better as we celebrate our culture together.

There will be many more visitors than last

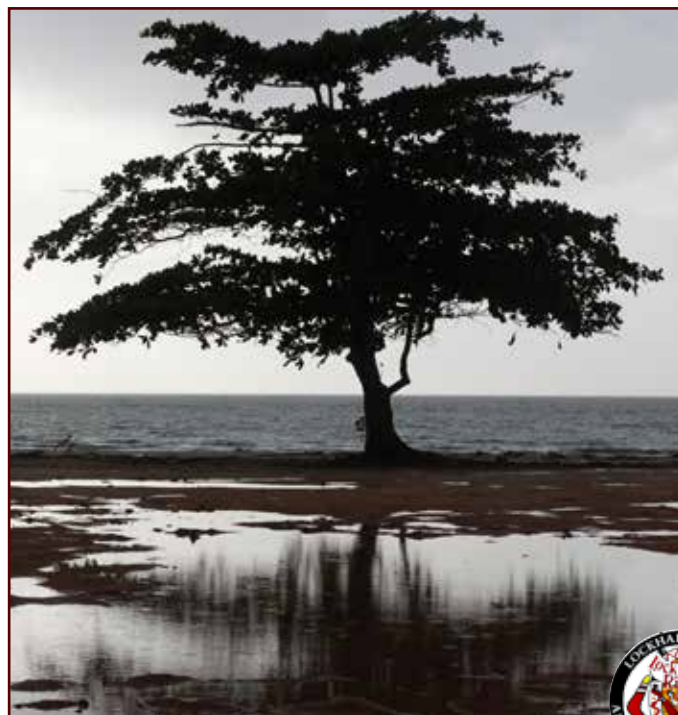
year with the festival happening during the school holiday time on the 2nd and 3rd of October.

This year we have the steering committee drive the event so everyone has the chance to help us make it better than ever.

Remember, there is no Laura festival this year, so there will be more interest.

It will be a great opportunity for us to show off our culture, ngaachi, and art.

If anyone has any business ideas around running tours for visitors to the festival, now is the time to come forward so we can yarn up on how Council can help, so don't be shy.





Service delivery

Council delivers a lot of services to our town.

Some of these services happen on ngaachi, such as roadworks.

Council is proud of the jobs and businesses it has created, but we are also proud of the respectful way we have worked with the traditional owners of our shire.

To many, it is a bit confusing with Mangkuma holding the title, but then there are five Native Title bodies over the same ngaachi.

It would be great if all the PBCs got together with the land trust to work out who Council should pay money to for sand and gravel, and who should make decisions on cultural monitoring, new roads and gravel pits.

Let's hope this can happen some time soon. In the meantime, Council will continue to be respectful of those that own the land in our shire.

On a positive note, Council has finally got

a little bit of money to start our Ranger Service up again.

Only a small start with a Coordinator and two Rangers just over Council DOGIT and Line Hill, but we will need guidance from the land owners on how to run this service.

We need a Steering Committee to guide Bianca and the team and are working with Traditional Owners on what this looks like.

A big shout out to our Corporate Services team for another year of outstanding work delivering our 15th Unmodified (good) Audit in a row.

This cements our reputation for managing money and delivering projects for our people.

Let's get prepared for another big dry season loaded with opportunities – I urge everyone to try to take advantage of them.

If you have an idea and you're not sure how to make it work, we have several in-house services here to help you, from training through to small business set-up.

Enjoy it all, stay safe, and look after one another.

Dave



Left to Right: Accounts Payable Officer Rhonda Soerge, Projects Officer Joan Kithinji and Procurement Officer Paul Snow in our Cairns office.





Census Engagement team members **Nerelle Nicol** and **Aaron Anau** travelled to Lockhart River to promote the importance of Census to community last month. The Census date will be **Tuesday 11 August** – by law, every person in Australia must be included on a Census form. Nerelle and Aaron attended various support groups throughout the Lockhart River community and were invited to attend an Elders lunch to talk about the questions on the Census form and how to access any assistance that might be needed.



Business Hub support expands

New investment in the Ngaachi Nyi'ilama Business Hub is creating more opportunities for local people, businesses and community organisations across Lockhart River, Business Development and Support Officer Jermaine Thomas says.

"It's fantastic to see funding being directed towards economic development in remote communities," he said.

"This support is helping us strengthen the services available through the Ngaachi Nyi'ilama Business Hub and provide practical assistance to community members, local businesses and organisations."

A key initiative, that has always been delivered through the Hub, was free community Wi-Fi, which was helping to improve digital access and create new opportunities for people across Lockhart River.

"Reliable internet access is no longer a special item – it's an essential service that connects people to education, employment, health services and family," Mr Thomas said.

"The free community Wi-Fi initiative is helping to remove barriers and ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate in an increasingly digital world."

Mr Thomas said the service was already delivering practical benefits for residents who may not otherwise have access.

"People can now search for jobs, undertake online training, access telehealth services, complete government forms, pay bills and stay connected with

family and friends without the cost of expensive data," he said.

"Better connectivity supports better outcomes in health, education, employment and business development.

"It also strengthens community connections and helps preserve culture by allowing people to share stories, language and knowledge with future generations."

Mr Thomas said the Business Hub had become a trusted community space where people could access one-on-one support in a welcoming environment.

"We can help people with their Income Tax, MyGov, the Australian Taxation Office, tax invoices, emails,



Jermaine Thomas

scanning, printing and a range of everyday administrative tasks," he said.

"These services are helping local people take care of important business, improve their digital skills and gain confidence using technology.

"This is about empowering people to help themselves, and supporting their health, wellbeing, learning and economic participation."

The Hub also provided practical support to local contractors, Corporations, PBCs, sole traders and emerging business owners.

"One of our main priorities is supporting local subcontractors and small business operators to build strong and sustainable businesses," Mr Thomas said.

"We can assist with tax invoices, bookkeeping, BAS preparation, GST calculations, record keeping, general business administration and connect people with specialist support services such as Many Rivers."

Drawing on the Hub's popular





Monday morning drop-in sessions and ongoing business mentoring, Mr Thomas said the focus was on making business support shame-free.

“Many people already have the skills, motivation and work ethic to succeed,” he said. “Sometimes they just need support with paperwork, compliance requirements or understanding the business side of things. “We help people work through those challenges before they become bigger problems.”

With support from the National Indigenous Australians Agency’s Remote Jobs and Economic Development (RJED) program and Cape York Employment, the Hub had also secured

additional administrative support to help meet increasing demand for services.

“That additional support is invaluable because it allows the Business Hub to expand its services and provide more assistance to local businesses, organisations and community members,” Mr Thomas said.

The Hub has worked closely with local entrepreneurs, Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs), community organisations, the Social Club and anyone interested in starting or growing a business.

“We work with people right from the idea stage through to operating and growing a

business,” he said.

“Our goal is to help local people succeed in business, create employment opportunities and build the confidence needed to manage their operations effectively.”

Mr Thomas said the combination of digital access, practical support, mentoring and community partnerships was helping to build stronger economic outcomes for Lockhart River.

“We want people to know there is support available,” he said. “Whether you are starting a business, already running one, seeking employment or wanting to develop new skills, the Business Hub is here to help.”

Everyone welcome at the Arts Centre

Artist Dottie Hobson is pleased to be able to help with opening the Art Centre from 10am to 3pm every day while a new coordinator is put into place.

“We’ve been very busy,” she said.

“We need more people to come to the centre because

it is for everybody.

“There’s some talent there, we’ve got artists and we’ve had a couple of young ones start with us.

“We can teach them.”

Artist and weaver Irene Namok said she was keen to encourage young ones to come.

“I tell them to keep coming and do painting, if they sell it they get money,” she said. “We can teach them how to do weaving too.”





The chaos
that was ...

Tropical Cyclone Narelle

The joint Commonwealth–state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) were opened for Lockhart River residents to access after Tropical Cyclone Narelle cut a narrow but damaging path across the Cape in March.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the Commonwealth stood ready to provide whatever assistance was needed.

Council, staff and community worked hard to secure the town in the lead-up to the storm, CEO David Clarke said.

“All of our fail-safe systems have been integrity checked, the water supply and sewerage have backup generators on everything, as does the retail store, council chambers, the home community care centre, and all the other vital council assets basically have a fail-safe system.

“We’re making all arrangements necessary to move those in vulnerable houses to houses with better structural integrity to sustain themselves and keep everybody safe.”

Mr Clarke said the community was “sterling” in the aftermath of Cyclone Trevor in 2019.

“They worked for three weeks straight to reestablish normality, and at record pace,” he said.

“As they say, we are preparing for the worst and hoping for the best.”



ABOVE: cleaning up around the town; BELOW: Chuulangun & Pascoe Farm – clean-up efforts are ongoing. p 13 Portland Road.



Mayor Wayne Butcher said they were, and had proved to be, “resilient”.

“We don’t take these things lightly, but we know how to prepare and we know how to recover,” he said.

Power was lost to more than 2000 Ergon customers at the peak of the event, which caused damage to the power network.

Trees down were the biggest issue following the event, as was a large landslide mid-way between the Pascoe and the Wenlock.

In the wake of two serious and several other cyclones, as well as an earthquake over the past six years, the Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council has started working towards finding funds for a ‘resilient’ disaster coordination centre.

Mr Butcher said it was time. “Whenever there’s an event, especially a cyclone, we’re operating in silos,” he said.

“The Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) is forced to work in a situation where some people have phone reception, some have wifi, some have two-way.

“So we need a resilient or robust coordination centre that will withstand up to a Category 5 cyclone to work from before, during and after events.

“It would have backup power and all the latest technology



that can assist us in managing the community and keeping people’s lives at a lower risk during events or disasters.”

He said people were safer in their own residences if they had low-set block homes, rather than moving into a shelter.

“Block homes are the best, because they’re a lot stronger,” he said. “They’re low to the ground and they can withstand strong winds.

“Instead of having a big mob of people under one shelter, we would be better off with fewer people to manage during the event.

“But a coordination centre would mean we can keep up with state and regional disaster management discussions.

“It needs to be in the community where the event is actually happening and we don’t have anything like that.”





Engineering Services

Council Roads Supervisor John Mansbridges says his team have more work than enough work to keep them busy until next year.



"There's six betterment projects, which is to deal with culverts, floodways and black spot areas," he said.

"There is the Town Street's stabilisation, which is out to tender at the moment, which will be for an external contractor."

His team was also going to be concreting over potholes rather than just filling in the same potholes every year.

"The stabilising is still a maintenance or a remedial," he said.

"It's not a total fix for it, but it is a better result than digging out holes and backfill."

He said the team was busy with a variety of jobs, especially around the time the new school buildings came in.

"The boys took a whole day out just to make sure these trucks and crane got through," he said.

"There's also the possibility of the softball starting this year, so hopefully they will have a chance to get something happening there for the softball field."

books and four more in-waiting.

"Manpower wise, we won't be able to complete them all, which is a good thing because we can have some ready for next year to start off without waiting around for documentation," he said.

"It's always a bit of a wait at the beginning of the year trying to start things while you're waiting for documentation.

"From Wachee to Nunda, the boys had to spend nearly three or four days cutting down trees that were down in the rainforest just to be able to get through to the job site to have a look.



Gravel Roads Supervisor Anthony Calesso said he had three jobs on his





“There’s also Nunda to Old Site, which we haven’t been down yet because it’s still way too wet.

“There’s rumours of trees down everywhere that way.

“So, it’ll be another crew having to spend at least a week cutting trees down and moving them out of the way so we’ve got access to the job site.

“All the contractors are local and they’re going to be working on Lockhart Valley Road, which is really, really good because the

further we can do more and expand the road network, the further we can go with providing more work for the locals and keep it all in house.

“The main thing, though, is bringing on new people to learn the procedures, learn the scopes, learn the business model, and also learn the construction methodology and model.

“Then they can go further, if they want to push that way, they can go into private enterprise, so that’s all the scope.



The Workshop Team





Civil works commenced on site mid June 26 after a wild wet season, with Cyclone Narelle activated on 13 March 2026.

Once vegetation and earth slips were cleared from the roads, it became clear that the Community roads had held up well with minimal additional pavement damage. This was due to the ongoing upgrade and restoration works undertaken by Council in the previous years.

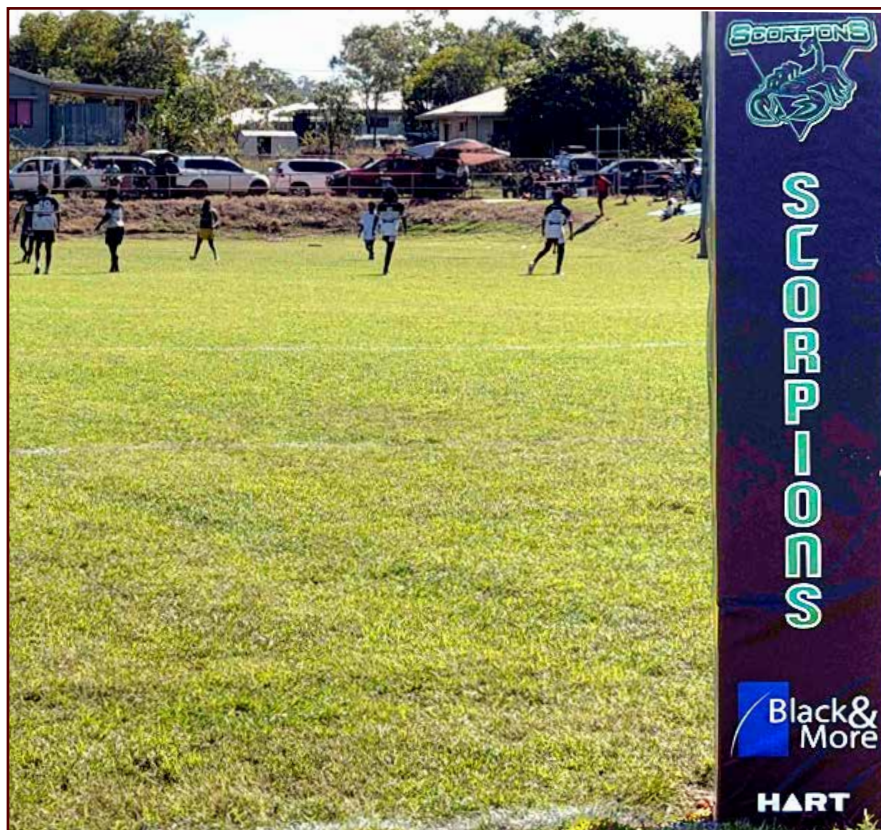
Council have completed the emergent works and roads have been made safe and are now open.

The 2026 works program is underway.

There is a considerable amount of work being undertaken on Portland Road this year, so please drive with care and consideration of the works, work crews, and road conditions.

The 2026 Civil Works program has been confirmed and includes:

- Restoration works to Portland Road South
- Betterment works at Rhyolite Hill, Yam, Garraway's and Browns Creek, and Falls Creek.
- Completion of the PRd North Sealed restoration works undertaken in 2025
- Pavement



shaping and sealing (approx. 1.2km) works to Pascoe Farms Road, from the North, Portland Road.

A Contract has been called for restoration works for the Town Streets (Sealed section). Works are expected to commence on the Town Streets (Sealed restoration) in early August.

These works will restrict access to areas of the Community during construction.

Details of the program of works will be posted and advised when finalised, as will the details of restricted access.

It is important that access to construction areas is totally controlled and instructions complied with to ensure the safety of all during construction.

Access restrictions will

be advised and are to be followed.

Council will undertake the restoration of the Town Streets (Unsealed section)

Considerable restoration works will also be undertaken on Old Mission Road

- Restoration and Construction of 2 Causeways. Ch 2380 and Ch 8759
- Wachee – Nunda restoration
- Nunda – Old Site restoration and
- Lockhart Valley Road restoration

Submissions are also being prepared for restoration of damage from Cyclone Narelle.

All in all, an exciting and very busy construction year. Please drive in accordance with all project traffic control requirements to ensure your safety in and around work areas.



Community Development



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I came to Lockhart in May 2023 as coordinator of the Wulpumu Community Justice Group, Community Services director Doug Williams writes...



In December, 2024, the then-Director of Community Services, the Men's Program Coordinator and the HACC Coordinator all resigned, so I took over these positions as well as the Justice Coordinator.

Thankfully, we recently started a new Men's Program coordinator, Floyd Harris, however we are still looking for new HACC and Justice Coordinators.

Our Sport and Recreation Officer position is also still vacant, as are our two Social and Wellbeing Officer positions and two Justice Support Officer positions.

We are also looking for a Men's Support Worker, a Women's Shelter Support Worker, and we need another HACC Support Worker.

Many hands make light work – if you think you might want to be in one of these positions, come and see me and we can talk about what you can do.

Continues...



At the moment, I look after the following:

- Indigenous Primary Health Care Services
- IKC Community Library
- Community Broadcasting Program (Radio)
- DFV Enhancements
- Justice Group Operations
- Men's Healing Place
- Community Toolbox Project
- Sly Grog prevention
- Outside School Hours Care
- Youth Support
- Sport and Recreation
- Women's Shelter
- Suicide Prevention Programme
- NJCP National Job Creation Package
- NDIS National Disability Insurance Scheme
- QCSS Disability Care
- HACC Home and Community Care, Aged Care
- Guesthouse
- Emergency Relief
- Festivals
- SES State Emergency Service
- RFS Rural Fire Service





Our HACC Centre provides our clients – more than 30 of them at the moment – with a cooked meal five days a week, as well as assisting them with laundry, house cleaning, transport and other support. They also have organised Bingo sessions and other outings.

Our Men's Group have held several working bees to clean up the cemetery as well as generally helping out some of our elderly and disabled clients, and some of our women and youth with various projects.

Our Women's Group organised the Christmas Tree for the children and our Youth Centre and OSHC programs run after-school and school vacation programs which include discos, movie nights, arts and crafts and sporting sessions to keep our children and young people entertained.

The Library is open for residents to borrow books and DVDs as well as use the computers when visiting the library, where we also have a radio operator delivering local news.

The Justice Group continues to support DFV victims and assist clients required to appear in Court.



Don't forget, if you're interested in work come and find me, or email your resume to communityservices@lockhart.qld.gov.au

Doug









Plenty of fun for young people

Having pamper nights is just one of the new activities Youth Services have brought to Lockhart River, Youth Coordinator Elaine Williams says.

“I’ve added the pamper nights in because it also teaches the older ones the importance of personal hygiene,” Elaine said.

“We also talk about career education and build them up so we can see what their goals are and what opportunities are out there, such as scholarships and further planning and applying for apprenticeships to support their goals along the way.

“We just want to let them know that whatever they want to do, we’re here to support them with their goals and their needs, and helping them to keep moving forward in a positive way for themselves.”

A variety of programs and support aimed at young people to enhance their development, wellbeing, and social inclusion were available.

Services included youth counselling, educational support, recreational activities, mentoring and employment assistance.

“The kids come in the afternoons and if they’ve had a big day and they’re exhausted, or some of them don’t want to do a lot of physical stuff, we’ll do wind-down activities,” Elaine said.

“If some have too much energy, then we’ll do an outdoor activity such as ball games outside.

“We’re looking at ages between 10 and 21 – the older ones come when the kids are at school for support. They might need help

with a birth certificate, Centrelink, youth allowance, things like that. If they want to study and they need help with laptops, I can get in

contact with some non-profit organisations who help with laptops, and things like that.”

The school holidays will bring some more new activities for the kids.

“Cape Kicks is a rugby league football program run through the Queensland Ambulance,” Elaine said.

“They do a lot of football twraining and showing the kids the different training drills.

“The kids learn and absorb a lot more when it’s about their favourite sport.”

The youth will also disco during the school break, and Elaine was hoping to organise a walk from Lockhart River to Claudie River, along Quintell Beach. “This will be about giving the kids a view for the kids of what their Elders did before them,” she said. “They didn’t have cars, they walked, and while we’re doing that we hope to create a lot of yarns about any pressures they might be going through.

“It’s about de-stressing and being on country for a full day, hopefully with some input from the Elders as well. We will also have a fire down there and cook up any fish they catch.”





Floyd committed to helping

New Men's Health Coordinator and Justice Group Support Worker, Floyd Harris (right), hopes the experience he has gained by working many different jobs across the country might benefit the Lockhart River community in some ways.

Floyd grew up in Yarrabah and Cairns, where he went to Balaclava State School before finishing grade 10 in high school.

"After that I went back to do a tertiary bridging course, because I didn't finish Year 11 or 12," he said.

"From there I got into short courses such as machinery and construction, and I have a white card through TAFE."

In his vast work history, he was seven years at Cairns Hardware in a range of positions, from trade assistant to supervisor, to being

"But I hope, given where I came from and being a community-based man myself, there are some similarities with what's going on. Every community has different dynamics on how they handle each situation.

"It's a smaller group of people here and that makes it easier – everyone knows everyone.

"If you're dedicated and you're committed to the people, for the people, it's then a matter of building relationships and understanding that respect is earned, it's not given.

"So far the guys here are recognising that, and they know me from the engagement I had with them when I was with RAATSIC.

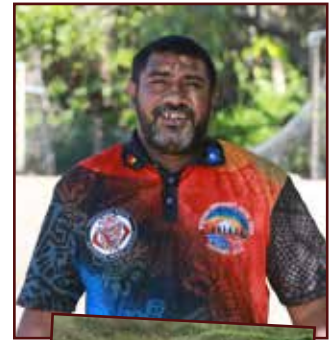
"Now I'm here on the ground, on country, full-on."

Floyd hoped he would stay on in the role for at least a couple of years and said he was doing his best to help everyone.

He said he felt he was off to a good start.

"This is just the start of my role here and the men have been very, very, very good," he said. "They've been open with their opinions and that makes it a whole lot easier.

"They also know of the family connections, in northern Queensland, you will find that everyone has connections to someone in every community, and that helps a lot."



a Family Wellbeing Case Management worker for RAATSIC, and many things in between, including as an apprentice 'sparky' (electrician).

He also studied alcohol and drug counselling in Darwin, academic literature in creative writing and worked at a shipyard.

"Hopefully, some of what I've done can benefit some of the guys here," he said.

"But in saying that, we are still in a relationship-building period and learning to understand each other. It's a challenging job that not many fellows are built for.



Quinton Butcher, Phillip Jurd,
Nikki & Delo Butcher



Cape Kicks 26



Cape Kicks 26 was brought to Lockhart River by Mark and Emma from Queensland Ambulance with support from Apunipima Cape York Health Council and Com Dev team members Doug and Elaine. The day was a great success, with as many as 60 young people on board and having great fun.







HACC hosted an Elders luncheon on Wednesday 10 June, and it was all hands on deck. Big thanks to Floyd for helping out and the Census mob for dropping in too. As well as deliveries every day (below) HACC has a busy timetable and often has visitors (other than guests!) such as Apunipima's Glen Wanganeen (bottom) with agency coordinator Monika Singh and Aged Care worker Bella Hobson.





Municipal Services

From cleaning up after Cyclone Narelle to working with the Environmental Protection Agency or just keeping our parks and gardens in good condition, the team has been busy, Municipal Services director Eddie Bobongie writes...

There was a lot of clean-up after Cyclone Narelle.

We worked all weekend with the road gang, just cleaned it up after the sucker on the rail.

There wasn't much damage – just a few trees down, but we got it all cleaned up and ready for the next one.

We also cleaned up after the football and the visiting teams from other communities.

And we have been working



with the Environment Protection Agency, who visited Lockhart for a few

days this month.

They came in to have a look at the dump and the





sewer ponds, and to do some training around dump management and testing the ponds.

They were only in for three days, but we got a plan together.

The animal management team work closely with the vet when they come to Lockhart every quarter.

We just got our new vet containers, and they also have holding pens for dogs in there within the container, for animal management.

They also mean when the vet comes, we can do surgery, which is a big boost for us because it means we can manage the animals a bit better.

The team is constantly working to benefit the community even if we're short-staffed on some days.

Some workers are away, so we just have to make do what we've got and do our best.

Eddie

Taking it one step at a time





Building Services

The end of the financial year means closing a lot of work, invoicing and assessing what we have achieved over the year, Building Services director Regis Edmond writes...

Our Building Services team has completed much QBuild work over the past year, mainly in renovations and maintenance work.

We have also completed some council work, which were the staff residences that Laurie and Jermaine have already moved into.

They were the duplexes and people are yet to move into the four-bedroom house.

Building Services is also about to start on the new houses at the sub-division, the building plans are nearly ready to start construction.

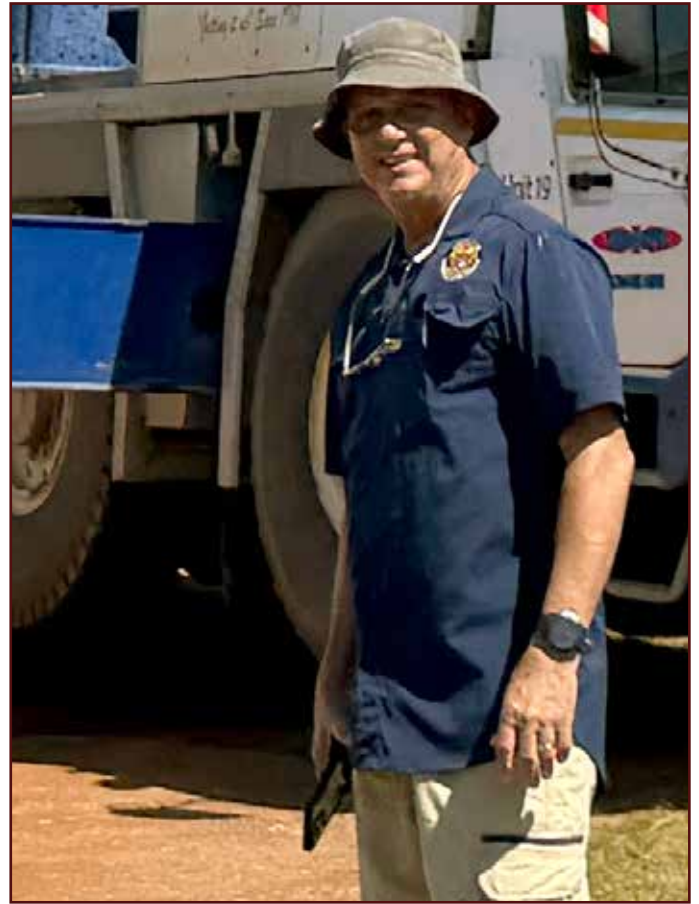
We are to build two-bedroom houses x 2 and three-bedroom house x 2 as well as a set of quadruplex.

Once we get started construction will keep on going until all completed and it will be an ongoing program, 25 houses will be built in the next few years.

We hope to start breaking ground in the coming weeks and that will support the young ones for employment and training.

Initially we might use some outside contractors, but as we get more apprentices on board, we'll be building them ourselves as we go.

We still want to encourage tenants to



Regis Edmond

report their maintenance work, so we can work out our schedules for the new financial year.

They should use the blue phone outside of the Business Hub and then that work order comes back to us and we get it done.

Regis



Lockhart River's painters and plumbers



A busy
barge
b4
sunrise





Umpila Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) dedication secures land and sea country



Umpila People celebrated the formal dedication of a new Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) on Thursday 2 July 2026 at Lockhart River's dance grounds adjacent to Quintell Beach.

The landmark agreement ensured the protection of the rich biodiversity and cultural values for Umpila People into the future.

The Umpila IPA spans 42 hectares of coastal marine lands stretching across coastal plains adjacent to the McIlwraith Ranges, from the Massey River to Cape Sidmouth.

Umpila Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (Registered Native Title Body Corporate) chair Patrick Butcher said the dedication was a momentous day for the community.

"This IPA dedication is the result of many years of hard work, commitment and dedication by our Elders to achieve the vision," he said. "By formalising the Umpila IPA, we are ensuring that our traditional practices and knowledge continue to protect our biodiversity, while creating real jobs and training opportunities for our Rangers on Country."

Management of the IPA was to be led by the Umpila ranger program with a focus on combating invasive species, mitigating wildfire and delivering two-way science programs to engage younger generations.

Umpila People have already begun planning for the second stage of their IPA – to secure over 400ha of Sea Country – as well as their third and final stage, to secure the remainder of their lands.

The Umpila IPA was supported by the Australian Government, which have also helped them to manage their lands and seas as part of Australia's National Reserve System.

Pics by James Spearshot.







Child centre to open soon

After three years of planning, learning and preparation, Puuya Foundation is pleased to share that the Kuunchi Kakana After Kindy Care Service is getting closer to opening.

This will be Lockhart River's first licensed child care service, and our application is now under assessment.

Becoming an approved provider and service has been a big journey.

Because this is a first for both Puuya and the Lockhart River community, we have needed to build strong systems, policies and practices that meet the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.

Most importantly, we have been working to make sure the service is safe, nurturing and culturally respectful for

children and families.

We are proud to now have home-grown qualified Early Childhood Educators,

supported by ongoing staff development and training.

Improvements have also been made at the Kuunchi Kakana Centre, including a new shade structure over the sandpit, a new toilet block under the centre for outdoor access and a new shower and storage in the upstairs children's bathroom.

Our policies and procedures

have been updated to support children's safety, health and wellbeing, strengthen professional practice, and improve communication with families.

Puuya Board members have also completed the required Persons with Management Control training modules as part of the approval process.





Once approved, the Kuunchi Kakana After Kindy Care Service will support children who attend Lockhart State School Kindergarten.

Registered children will be collected from Kindy at 12:30 pm, when Kindy finishes, and walked to the Kuunchi Kakana Centre where they will be cared for by our qualified staff until 5pm.

During the afternoon, children will have time to rest, enjoy healthy mayi, play, learn and take part in safe, supervised activities.

Families who would like to use the service will need

to enrol and register for the Child Care Subsidy through Centrelink so that the correct fees can be calculated.

Puuya staff will be available to help families understand the enrolment process, complete forms and prepare before the service opens.

Enrolling will be simple and welcoming.

Families can visit the Kuunchi Kakana Centre, speak with staff, or contact us by phone to express interest.

This year, our focus will remain on building staff capability, strengthening workforce capacity and

designing an interactive, culturally focused outdoor learning environment.

We believe the Kuunchi Kakana After Kindy Care Service will make a real difference for Lockhart River.

Puuya is also working towards the establishment of a new early learning centre on the former “feeding shed” site. This development has been endorsed by community members, Council and families.

The new centre will provide a dedicated space for babies and toddlers aged 6 months to 3½ years, supporting families where parents are working and/or studying.



Some of the improvements include a new toilet block, new shower and a new shade structure over the sand pit.





Josh says 'thank you Lockhart'!

After nine years working and loving living in Lockhart River, Josh Stafford, Director of Nursing for Lockhart River and Coen, is leaving Lockhart and embarking on a new venture.



"I came up to Aurukun on the Queen's birthday in 2007 for a six-week contract and I'm still here in the Cape," Josh said. "I spent 10 years in Aurukun, and nine years in Lockhart River, and I've decided it's probably time for me to move on."

John said it was hard to leave.

"I've had some of the most amazing opportunities and experiences and made some real, real lasting friendships and memories," he said. "And Lockhart has probably done more for me than I've done for it, I think."

"I've been so blessed up here, all the team here have been here for such a long time and we're so close."

"The biggest support I've had over the past nine years has been Karen, who has stood beside me and helped me through the lowest of lows and the highest of highs."

"The absolute respect and thankfulness I have for having her here is phenomenal."

"We've done big things like COVID – I remember standing next to Karen talking to people about

the Pfizer vaccine and getting that program in."

"And then, when COVID actually came here, standing side by side with her and navigating that whole quarantine and those tough times. It was awful, we just didn't know what was going to happen."

Josh said he was proud of how well the clinic and community members worked together.

"Every staff member who comes through here always comments on the way we run the clinic with the community," he said.

"I'm so fiercely proud that the community can walk in and out of here, there are no barriers, and people feel comfortable walking into mine and Karen's office."

Josh has been busy too, studying for his Nurse Practitioner degree.

"A Nurse Practitioner is specialised in the field and has endorsement from the government to prescribe medications, do x-rays and basically be an independent practitioner," he said.

He said his plan was "to get my endorsement for that and then find some other opportunities, whether it be up here in the Cape or somewhere or in Cairns".

But the first thing he planned to do was relax in comfort on an overseas holiday.

"First of all, I'm going to have six months' long-service leave because I've worked for the government for so long," he said. "My plan is to take my dog down to my parents and then I'm going to live in Bali for six months."

"I will just myself there, not have the phone, not have to study, not have to worry about filling shifts when people go to the State of Origin and don't come in the next day."

"I'm going to scuba dive."

"I'm going to relax."

While Josh said he was looking forward to this next venture, he also said he would be back.

"I'm really excited about the next chapter, but having been in the Cape for so long, it's in my blood," he said.

"I'll be back in some way."



People in Lockhart River

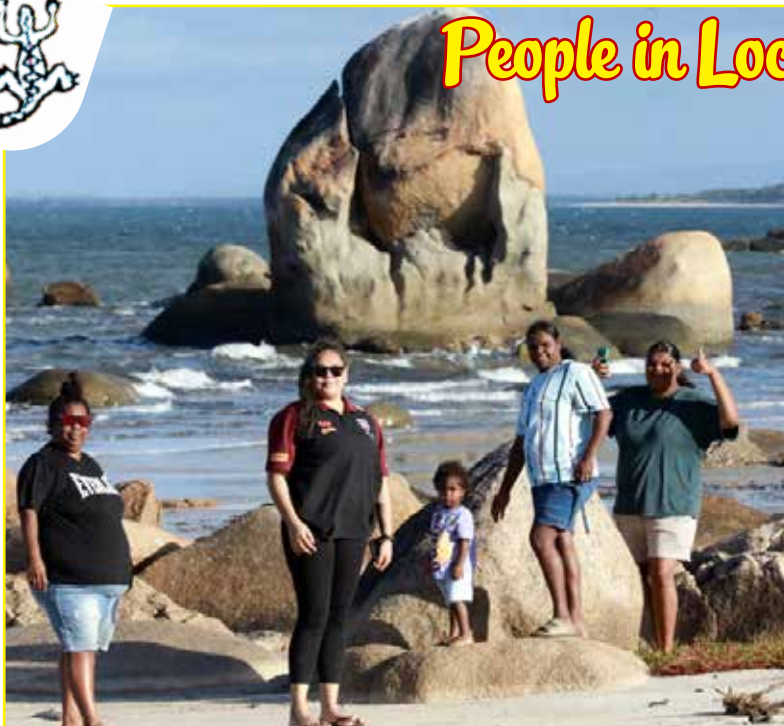


The Orange Sky laundry is open from 8:30am - 1pm every weekday. The service is available to all members of community who may need assistance with their washing and drying. Residents can come down and do their own washing with the support of our friendly staff, Patrick and Michelle, who can make you a cuppa and love a good chat.

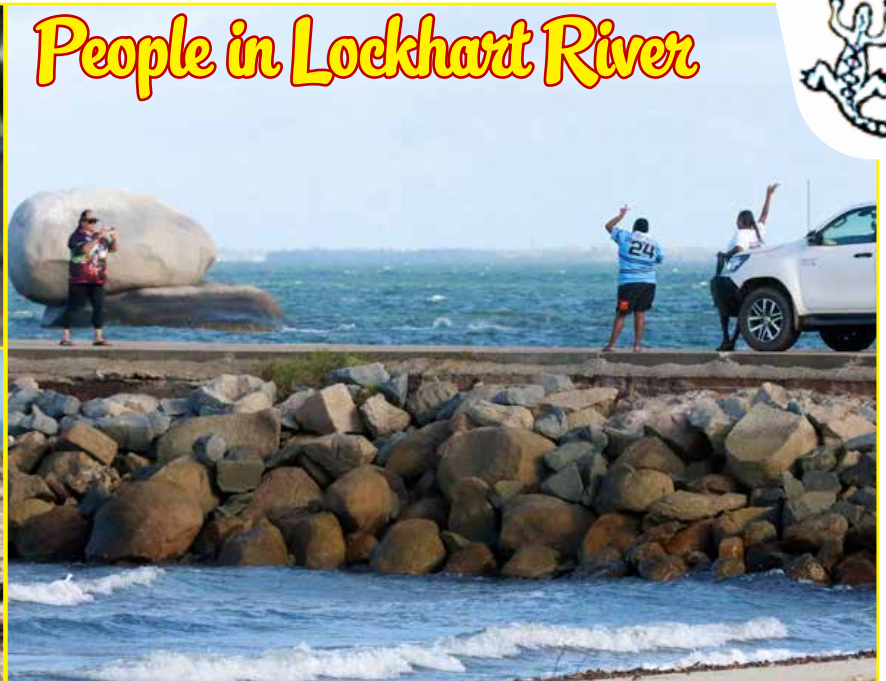




People in Lockhart River



People in Lockhart River





State
of
Origin 2026





Round 1 – Lakeland Downs





Lockhart River!

SOUTHERN CAPE CLUSTER ROUND 2			REFeree
10:00am	Parramatta Crocs	Wujal Wujal Yindilli	JOHN WILLIAMS
10:45am	Lockhart River Scorpions	Coen Coits	JOHN WILLIAMS
11:30am	Hope Vale Warriors	Parramatta Crocs	JOHN WILLIAMS
12:15pm	Cooktown Crocs	Wandil	JOHN WILLIAMS
1:00pm	Hope Vale Warriors	Coen Coits	JOHN WILLIAMS
1:45pm	Wandil	Wujal Wujal Yindilli	JOHN WILLIAMS
2:30pm	Cooktown Crocs	Lockhart River Scorpions	JOHN WILLIAMS
ENTRY FEE			CASH \$10
INDIVIDUAL ENTRY - GOLD COIN			(ALL PROCEEDS WILL SUPPORT TEAM TRAVEL)
THIS IS A DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE EVENT			







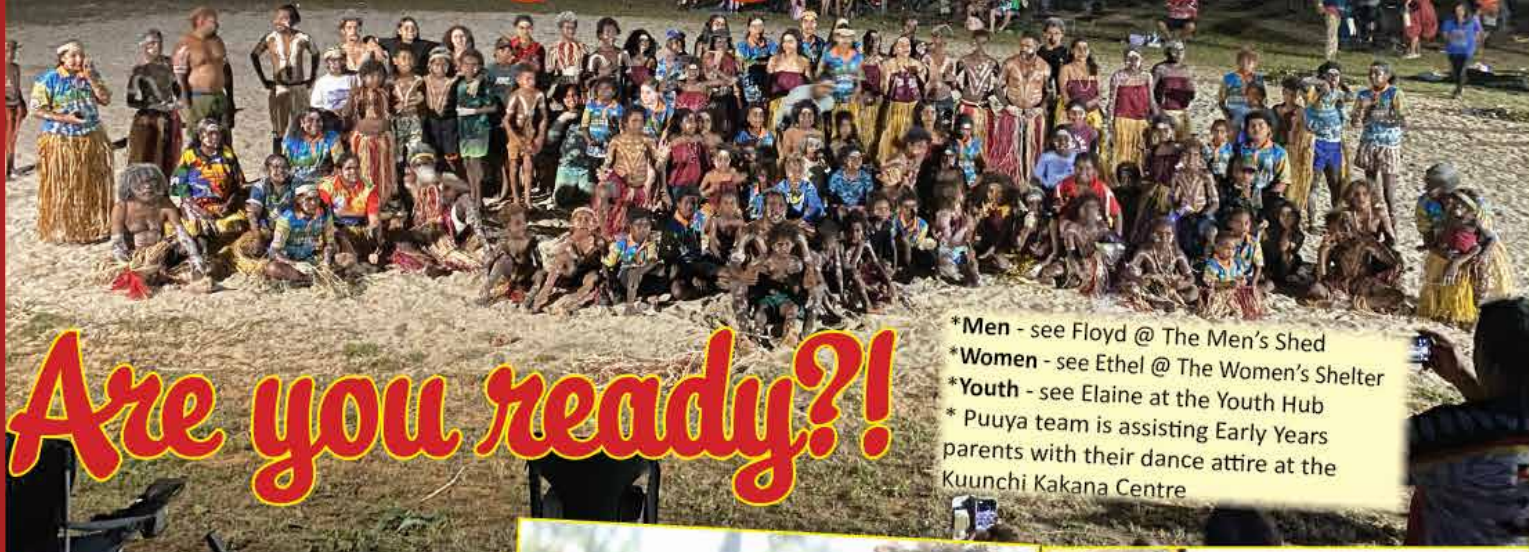


Paytham Malkari

Lockhart River Dance Festival

2-3 October 2026

Coming together!



Are you ready?!

- *Men - see Floyd @ The Men's Shed
- *Women - see Ethel @ The Women's Shelter
- *Youth - see Elaine at the Youth Hub
- *Puuya team is assisting Early Years parents with their dance attire at the Kuunchi Kakana Centre

