

Palm Island Voice



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Spring Festival celebrates pride and community



Pics by Nathan Mulligan



Palm Island came alive last weekend as the 2025 Spring Festival delivered music, culture, sport and celebration.

Minister For Indigenous Australians Senator Malarndirri McCarthy dropped in for her first Spring Festival and said it was wonderful to see.

“I have to say how beautiful it is after all the challenges that the people of Palm Island, with regards to the weather you went through earlier this year in February, and the absolute damage and mayhem it caused,” she said.

“So, it was really nice to actually be on island and have a look at the work that’s happened to bring things back to a place where people can feel happy, feel good.”

From the moment ARIA award-winning headliner Jessica Mauboy took to the stage, crowds were up on their feet, dancing and singing along.

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Jessica was joined by a fantastic line-up that included Zennith, Lil Mase, Bemo Baby, DJ Vybes and the island's own Bwgcolman and Great Northern Dancers.

But the two-day festival was about far more than music.

Families and visitors enjoyed bustling market stalls, delicious food, cultural performances and the excitement of the Palm Island Rugby League grand final, won by new team Bayside Tridents over the Palm Island Skipjacks (*see p4 for more!*).

The weekend finished with a fireworks display that lit up the sky and capped off what many locals dubbed the “best festival yet.”

Mayor Alf Lacey said the event showed the true spirit of Palm Island.

“The Spring Festival is more than just entertainment – it’s about who we are as a people,” he said.

“I couldn’t be prouder of how our community came together to celebrate, share our culture, and welcome visitors.”

Community pride was also praised by the Queensland Police Service, who described the atmosphere as safe, respectful and full of positive energy.

Behind the scenes, Council staff worked tirelessly to deliver the event and are still busy with the clean-up.

Mayor Lacey congratulated the team for their hard work and thanked the community for their support.

“Without the dedication of our staff and volunteers, and the pride of our community, this festival wouldn’t be possible,” he said.

“Palm Island should be very proud.”

The success of the 2025 Spring Festival has not only brought the community closer together but also shone a spotlight on Palm Island as a welcoming destination for culture, music and tourism.





Pics on this page by Nathan Mulligan

Bayside Tridents win over Skipjacks in 2025 comp



by Alf Wilson

At just 33-years-old, William Blackman jnr is the youngest coach in Palm Island's domestic rugby league competition but still managed to mastermind a 14-12 win by his Bayside Tridents over Palm Island Skipjacks in Saturday's 2025 grand final.

A big crowd watched the "big dance" at the local football oval as Tridents held on to hold the trophy aloft.

"It was a nailbiting finish and we celebrated afterwards with a party at my home," William jnr said.

In semi finals Tridents defeated Butler Bay Bulls and Skipjacks rolled Jets.

William jnr said it was a great team effort by new club Tridents which was a team of "mates and relatives".

"I couldn't play because I have been previously injured but the boys like playing with each other," he said.

William jnr nominated the halves combination of veteran Tabuai Oui (aged 39) and Joey Ross as his best.

Second rower Thomas Oui, the outstanding Isiah Blackman, utility Eli Charles, and another forward Costa Sam also went well.

Young fullback Ronald Hero was excellent in the final.

Tridents try scorers were Eli Charles, Joey Ross and John Watson.

Another well known footballer, Caleb Geia, missed the

final but had shone during earlier games.

Skipjacks was coached by Fred Bulsey snr and some of their best players were veteran Joiiji Dabea and Ben Kennedy jnr, along with backs Michael Noble, Mickeal Sibley and Fred Bulsey jnr.

After the final win Tridents held a season presentation at William jnr's home.

Isiah Blackman was player of the year, and best forward and best back went to John Watson and rookie to Ronald Hero.

Palm Island rugby league officials are deserving of high praise for starting up the local comp, the first since 2014.



THE NEXT *Palm Island Voice* DEADLINE*
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