

Palm Island Voice



FREE!

Issue 440
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PLEASE note there may be images of deceased persons within this publication.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

As we welcome 2026, I want to extend warm New Year greetings to all Bwgcolman and Manbarra families, residents and friends of Palm Island, Mayor Alf Lacey writes...

On behalf of my fellow Councillors, CEO and staff, I wish everyone a year filled with opportunity, wellbeing and community pride.

2025 was an outstanding year for Palm Island, a year where our community spirit shone brightly and where we delivered real progress together.

We celebrated our biggest Spring

Festival ever, which included Jess Mauboy along with a proud showcase of culture, music and unity.

Our Christmas Cup once again brought families, kids and sports teams together for a fun, energetic community celebration.

Across the island, events and activities have grown stronger, more inclusive and full of Bwgcolman

pride.

A highlight was the community preview of our refurbished John Watson Memorial Airport Terminal, a modern, welcoming gateway that reflects who we are as a community.

We also commenced construction on the Walking Trails Project, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to support tourism, health, local



employment and cultural storytelling.

Throughout 2025, we saw a strong response to the Corporate Plan community consultations, ensuring the voices of our people guide Palm Island's direction to 2031.

Council continued to invest in community infrastructure upgrades, improved service delivery and real local job creation, working alongside partners to build long-term stability and opportunity for our community.

Council also progressed important work on delivering more and improved housing for Palm Island families.

Safe, healthy homes are vital for wellbeing, culture and opportunity, and we remain committed to advocating, planning and partnering to meet the island's growing housing needs.

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Council workers Vaughn, Manny & Gavin



Looking ahead, 2026 is shaping up to be a transformative year.



Council is ready to work tirelessly to deliver for our community, strengthen local services, expand employment pathways and continue shaping Palm Island into a prosperous and liveable community, a community that stands proud of its people and culture.

As we move through the wet and cyclone season, please ensure your homes are prepared.

Secure loose items, stay up-to-date with weather warnings, and check on Elders, neighbours and vulnerable families.

A safe community is a strong community.

Finally, on behalf of Council, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council staff.

Your dedication, professionalism and commitment to serving our community, including those who work through holiday periods, are deeply appreciated.

A special acknowledgement goes to our CEO, Emma Bradbury, whose tireless leadership continues to drive Palm Island toward our ambitious goals.

Her commitment to our people and her determination to deliver meaningful change have been pivotal in shaping the strong foundations we now build upon.

From all Councillors, we wish every Palm Island family a safe, happy and successful New Year.

Together, let's make 2026 a year of strength, pride and progress for Palm Island.



WELCOME TO PALM ISLAND



Pics by Townsville MP Adam Baillie

New airport takes off with 'first look' for community

Palm Island residents turned out in strong numbers in December to take a 'first look' at the upgraded Palm Island John Watson Memorial Airport Terminal.

The sneak-peek tour and morning tea brought together Elders, families, young people, service providers and visitors for a proud moment in the island's history.

The upgraded terminal provided a welcoming, functional and culturally

respectful space for travellers as the first point of contact for visitors arriving on Palm Island and the first "welcome home" for those returning to Country.

Townsville MP Adam Baillie congratulated the Council on the completion of the facility.

"I enjoyed having the opportunity to tour the upgraded terminal and see the improvements firsthand and share in the community's pride for this important milestone," he said.

Mayor Alf Lacey said the turnout on the day demonstrated how deeply the community valued the airport. "It was wonderful to see so many people come through the doors," Mayor Lacey said.

"This upgrade is something our whole community can be

proud of."

Elders expressed their pride in seeing the space transformed and families welcomed improved comfort, safety and accessibility.

Mayor Lacey said the upgrade was part of the Council's broader commitment to improved services, economic opportunities and community pride.

"This isn't just a building upgrade," he said.

"It's an investment in how we present ourselves to the world and how we welcome our own people home."

The formal opening of the John Watson Memorial Airport Terminal was scheduled for later this year, once the final external works were completed.

Council thanked everyone who attended and helped make the first-look event a success.



Last week for Corporate Plan input

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council is reminding residents that community consultations for the 2026–2031 Corporate Plan will close this week.



Strong community participation has already helped to shape the island's future direction with many community members taking the time to share their feedback, ideas and priorities through surveys, discussions and community engagement activities held throughout late 2025 and early 2026.

Former-Councillor Ruth Gorrige said it was a great initiative that would help a lot of people.

“It will help a lot of people if they want to run a business or if they think that there needs to be more job opportunities here, not only for themselves, but for our young generation coming through as well,” she said.

Cr Germaine Bulsey said it was important, especially for young people.

“Community feedback is very important for the community from Council,” he said.

“My vision for Council is to help the youth, we'd like to see more school-based apprenticeships, better trades, and just a better future for them.”

Mayor Alf Lacey said the Corporate Plan was one of Council's most important guiding documents, setting out the priorities, services and projects that would shape Palm Island



over the next five years.

“This plan is about listening to our community and turning your ideas into action,” Mayor Lacey said.

“The feedback we've received

so far has been thoughtful, constructive and grounded in a strong desire to see Palm Island continue to grow as a safe, prosperous and proud community.”



The Corporate Plan guided decision-making across infrastructure, housing, employment, community wellbeing, culture, governance and service delivery. It also helped Council advocate for

funding, partnerships and investment that aligned with community priorities.

Council encouraged anyone who has not yet participated to have their say before the consultation period closed.

Community members can provide feedback by visiting Council's website or contacting Council directly for support or a hard-copy submission.

Shalom dancers big success at Stable event



Eleven talented young dancers from Palm Island were members of the Shalom Dance Group, who had the honour of performing the lead entertainment act for three nights during the popular Stable at Cluden Christmas event in Townsville.

They were: Aleesha Griffiths-Thaiday, Ellan and Eva Bramwell, Reggie James, Barry Doyle, Kyah Daisy, Maleah Daisy, Darlene Moffat, Arthur Kennedy, Vera and Gennifa Griffiths.

Others dancers from various

remote communities were Mescha Dugong, Alex Lorraine (Mornington Island), Andrew Sailor (Atherton), Christopher Stephens (NSW), Elijah Wilmot, Darlene Moffat, Aurora Wilmot and Navanka Nuggins.

Organisers of the dancers

were Pastor Andy Bollom and Taneisha Daisy who have strong Palm family connections.

“Our Shalom First Nations Dancers drew big crowds for their fourth time at Stable and on this occasion were in front of the main stage opening up for three of the five nights,” Pastor Bollom said.

“These fine young people are from local school Carinity Education Shalom and community church, Shalom Family.

“After touring across 20 performances for community events, schools, NAIDOC days, elders, and more, Stable NQ was our final event for the year.

“They are now preparing for a tour to New Zealand land visiting the NRL All Stars Camp in February 2026 for their International debut.”

In its 27th year, this unique Christmas event was held for the first time at Cluden Racecourse grounds from December 18 to 22.

Words & Pics by Alf Wilson





Repair work underway



PMG Contractors have started repair works on the Reel Women Jetty which are expected to take about a week. The jetty and barge landing will be closed to the public during this time. Ferry and barge services will continue as normal. The repairs follow damage from the recent weather event and include routine maintenance. They are essential for community safety and the continuity of transport and services. Please keep clear of the area – especially children. You may need to use other spots for swimming or launching boats during the closure. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Pics by Emma Bradshaw.

THE NEXT *Palm Island Voice* DEADLINE*

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Christine Howes, on 0419 656 277 or at howeschowes@gmail.com Members of the Palm Island community and local organisations are welcome to submit birthdays, community information, pics, yarns and

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