

Palm Island Voice



FREE!

Issue 445
30 March 2026



ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL

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



LEFT: Great to catch up with Queensland Minister for Education and the Arts John-Paul Langbroek with our fellow NQROC Mayors and Townsville Enterprise to talk through our early childhood education and childcare needs. Thanks also to Adam Baillie MP, Member for Townsville and everyone continuing to back this work.

Childcare crisis tops the agenda at Parliament House visit

Palm Island's childcare crisis was a major focus of Mayor Alf Lacey's meetings at Parliament House last week.

Mayor Lacey took every opportunity to push for urgent action to restore early childhood services following the disaster related closure of the Mary MacKillop Child Care Centre.

In discussions with the Education Minister John Paul Langbroek, the Mayor outlined the severity of the situation – including the flooding event that caused an “inundation” of raw sewerage through the Mary MacKillop Early Learning / Child Care Centre for the second time in as many years.

With the service provider withdrawing shortly after, Palm Island has been left without any formal childcare services, a situation

described as having “immediate and significant” impacts on families, workforce participation and community wellbeing.

The Mayor was able to present a clear two part solution:

- Immediate interim arrangements to get children back into safe care quickly; and,
- A long term rebuild.

He said Council's position was that Palm Island needed “a new, modern, fit for purpose early learning facility with sufficient capacity to meet current and future community needs”.

Minister Langbroek gave the Mayor a positive and respectful hearing, acknowledging the seriousness of the crisis and the need for

coordinated action.

The Mayor also briefed departmental staff on the interim work already underway – including discussions with the Palm Island Community Company, engagement with local schools and exploring Council owned infrastructure as temporary options.

“This is about our kids, our families and our future,” Mayor Lacey said. “We need a solution that gets services back quickly while we build something strong and lasting.”

He said Council would continue working closely with the Queensland Government as options progressed in the coming weeks.

Foundation gains momentum at Brisbane meetings

Alongside urgent childcare advocacy, Mayor Alf Lacey used his time in Brisbane to advance another major priority for Palm Island: strengthening the Palm Island Community Economic Development Foundation.

The Foundation was established in 2025 to drive enterprise, investment and wealth retention and was already delivering outcomes, which included the Palm Island Remote Area Employment Service.

The Foundation was created to pursue economic activity that sat outside Council’s core role, enabling it to mature into “a community-controlled, independent economic institution” aligned with the Corporate Plan 2026–2031.

During meetings with several Ministers and MPs, the Mayor outlined how the Foundation supported ‘Closing the Gap’ with its focus on economic enablement rather than short-term programs.

“Closing the Gap is strengthened when everyday spending stays on Palm Island and when jobs and enterprise are driven by a real local economy, not short-term programs,” Mayor Lacey said, quoting from his brief.

Ministers responded positively to the Foundation’s vision and the request for targeted, time-limited support to fund a Foundation Director and put together an Economic Development Plan – the next steps needed to transition commercial assets from Council and accelerate local enterprise.

“Closing the Gap doesn’t start with programs – it starts with an economy,” Mayor Lacey said.

“The Foundation is a vehicle to create a vibrant local economy – and a model for Aboriginal communities across Australia.”

Council will continue working with governments and partners to progress this important work.



A productive ministerial meeting with Minister for Natural Resources and Mines Dale Last focused on land matters and the Palm Island Foundation.

Middle: Meetings on meetings at Parliament House last week. Below: a quick moment shared while passing in the halls of power between Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey and Cherbourg Mayor Bruce Simpson.



Tourism plan

Council also strengthened its partnership with Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL) during the week in Brisbane, with Palm Island set to play an active role in TEL’s Indigenous Tourism Strategy.

The work will help shape new opportunities for cultural tourism, local jobs and community led experiences, ensuring Palm Island’s stories and strengths were represented in regional planning.

Foundation staff lift skills



Career advisors from the Palm Island Economic Development Foundation recently completed specialised training delivered by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), strengthening their ability to support community members into employment and training opportunities.

The training brought together Foundation staff Ikanau Conway, Loretta Baira and Florence Morton, who took part in sessions designed to build practical skills and knowledge to better support people as they work towards their employment goals.

The team is pictured with Daniel Williams from NIAA and proudly flying the Palm Island flag while wearing their temporary Foundation shirts.

Staff also shared their excitement about the Foundation's ongoing logo design

competition and said they were looking forward to seeing entries from talented Palm Island artists.

The training comes at an important time, following the transition from the former Community Development Program (CDP) to the new Remote Australia Employment Service (RAES).

RAES has been introduced to support people into meaningful work within their own community, with a stronger focus on local opportunities and individual support.

Through the new program,

community members may be able to take part in locally based activities, including projects such as the renovation and beautification of the cemetery – an important cultural initiative for Palm Island.

Community are encouraged to contact the Palm Island Economic Development Foundation to confirm they are registered with the new RAES program, or to find out more about available opportunities. Those who are not registered may experience impacts on their Centrelink payments.

If you are having difficulty attending appointments or need support, please contact the Foundation's RAES support team on 0409 016 804, or call into their office across from the Council precinct.

Saving cans and bottles from landfill – one bag at a time!



Palm Island's Containers for Change depot has recycled more than 200,000 cans over the past six weeks.

Worker Derek Baker said the cans – all from the local community – had been saved from landfill. “One hundred green bags have been recycled this month alone,” he said.

“This is quite an achievement. “The community is dedicated to recycling – well, done community!” Derek and his co-worker Yelgen Blair, who has been there since 2024,

are also available to collect the green bags from your school or organisation. You can contact them through the council reception: 07 47 700 200.

Watch this space for information about an Information Day to help set up accounts.

Vision screening on the way for preppies

Good vision is important for a child's educational, physical and social development, so vision screening checks for common eye conditions are very important. Any problems, emerging or otherwise, may impact your child's ability to see and, therefore, impact their learning and development.

A Registered Nurse will be visiting the two Palm Island schools on Wednesday, 6 May, to conduct vision screening for children in their prep year.

Parents do not need to be present for screening, but if you would like to be, please contact the school to arrange this.

If you have concerns about your child's eyes at any time, please take your child to see an eye health professional (the optometrist or ophthalmologist) at Bwgcorman Health.



Pic supplied.

If you wish to have your prep child participate in this FREE vision screening program, please complete a consent form. For more information, please follow the link to visit the Program website or contact the Primary School Nurse Health Readiness Program on 1800 687 372.

<https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/our-work/prep-vision-screening>

Housing milestones on par for Palm families

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council is pleased to share that seven new homes have been finished this month, an important milestone after a long journey of planning, coordination and construction.



Two new homes and five new two-bedroom plug-in dwellings have had their keys handed over for immediate occupancy.

The new homes provide safe, modern and comfortable living environments.

“These additional living spaces play an important role in supporting extended families by reducing overcrowding and providing more room, privacy and comfort for household members,” Mayor Alf

Lacey said.

“The extra space contributes directly to improved well-being, better day-to-day living conditions and a stronger sense of home.

“For the families moving into both the new homes and plug-ins, this moment represents much more than the completion of buildings.

“It is the beginning of a new chapter – a place where their families can grow and gather, and

daily life can be enjoyed with dignity, stability and pride.

“They are a positive step forward for Palm Island and reflect an ongoing commitment to improving housing conditions and supporting the well-being of our community.”

CEO Emma Bradbury thanked those who contributed – the project teams, contractors and partners who worked together – and the families involved for their patience.

Deadly & dedicated – celebrating the next generation of our Aboriginal health workforce

Palm Island Community Company (PICC) continues to invest in local workforce development in community-controlled healthcare.

For the past 18 months, Rachele Ambrym, Neyonte Geia and Shona Friday (*pictured*) have been employed at the Bwgcolman Healing Service while working to complete their Certificate III in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health.

Their final TAFE block is set to end on Friday 15 May 2026.

As a first step towards a rewarding and fulfilling profession in the field of health services, these outstanding young women will then undertake a Cert IV qualification towards becoming AHPRA-registered Aboriginal Health Practitioners.

PICC congratulates our young achievers and recognises these roles as critical to influencing better health outcomes for the mob on Palm.



If you're considering a career in primary healthcare or community services, please reach out to PICC, we would like to hear from you. Telephone: 07 4421 4300 or drop in to Bwgcolman Healing Service at 4 Main Street, Palm Island.

Club & Culture Program

PCYC Palm Island

6th April 2026 - 17th April 2026 Easter School holidays | Week 1

	6 April 2026	7 April 2026	8 April 2026	9 April 2026	10 April 2026
Kids 5-16	Public Holiday Easter monday	Cultural Activities (Painting, Dry Clay, Easter Bags Painting Beach Touch Football) Fusion Dance	Cultural Activities (Painting, Dry Clay Beach Volleyball) Easter Egg Hunt Fred Clay Park	Cultural Activities (Painting, Dry Clay, Fishing Jetty) Fusion Dance	Cultural Activities (Painting, Dry Clay, Indoor Touch Football)
Youth 12-16	Public Holiday Easter Monday	6pm - 8pm After Dark Basketball Night	5pm - 8pm After Dark Easter Movie Night	5pm - 8pm After Dark Volleyball Night	5pm - 8pm After Dark Rounders Night

6th April 2026 - 17th April 2026 Easter School holidays | Week 2

	Monday 13 April 2024	Tuesday 14 April 2024	Wednesday 15 April 2024	Thursday 16 April 2024	Friday 17 April 2024
Kids 5-16	9am to 3pm SheHoops Indigenous Leadership Program	11am to 5pm Youth Week Colour Run Fred Clay Park Fusion Dance	11am - 5pm Normey Jay Workshop	11am - 5pm Normey Jay Workshop	11am - 5pm Normey Jay Workshop
Youth 12-16	5pm - 8pm After Dark Basketball 3 v3 Comp	5.30pm - 8pm After Dark Indoor Touch	6pm - 8pm After Dark Volleyball Night	5pm to 6pm Fusion Dance 6pm - 8pm After Dark Indoor Netball	6pm - 8.30pm Disco and Performance



PCYC Palm Island is obtaining feedback from the community and stakeholders on PCYC Club and Culture/After Dark programs on Palm Island. This will also assist the club in determining who, how, what, and when we provide programs to the young people on Palm Island. Follow the QR code (left) for more!

PCYC Palm Island
P 0427 597 444
E palmisland@pcyc.org.au

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INDIGENOUS
PROGRAMS

*Programs & activities are subject to change without notice, to meet the needs of participants.



Building safer, healthier communities through youth development

pcyc.org.au

Under 8s Day is back again TOMORROW!

While it will be held at St Michael's School, it is a community event, and we warmly welcome all families with young children from any school or preschool to come and join in the fun.

We would also be delighted to have Elders join us and be part of the day.

It is all about fun and getting the community together.

The AEC can enrol or update your address on the electoral roll based on information from other government agencies.

All Australian citizens 18 years and older must enrol to vote in elections and referendums.

You need to let us know every time you change your address or your name.

Federal, state and local government elections occur at different times.

Access to enrolment information

To maintain the electoral roll, we can collect and verify your personal information. This is in line

with the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (CEA).

If you believe having your address shown on the electoral roll will put you or your family at risk, please call 13 23 26 to discuss the options available.

Special enrolment options

There are options for people with special needs or with specific circumstances that may affect their enrolment.

Visit www.aec.gov.au or www.ecq.qld.gov.au for more information and enrolment forms.



Key information for enrolling and voting

Opportunities for local businesses

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council is encouraging locally-owned businesses to register with Council, with a Local Business Registration Day to be held in the mall next month.

Mayor Alf Lacey said supporting local businesses was an ongoing priority for Council.

“Local businesses are the backbone of our community,” Mayor Lacey said. “When we support local, we strengthen our local economy and create opportunities right here on Palm.”

Council Chief Executive Officer Emma Bradbury said registering

with Council was the first step for businesses wanting to work with Council and access future opportunities.

“Registering your business with Council helps us understand what services are available locally,” Ms Bradbury said.

“It also allows Council to support businesses through pre-qualification pathways, including access to the

Local Government Association of Queensland’s *Local Buy* network.”

Local Buy is a Queensland-wide system used by councils to engage pre-qualified suppliers for a wide range of goods and services.

“Registering locally is the starting point,” Ms Bradbury said.

“It puts local businesses in a stronger position to be considered for Council work.”

Council will host a Local Business Registration Day in the mall on Wednesday, 22 April, from 11am to 2pm, where staff will be available to help business owners register and answer questions. More information to come in our next issue.



NOTICE OF COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING

In accordance with Section 254(B) of the Local Government Regulation 2012, notice is hereby given that the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council will hold its Ordinary Meeting as follows:

Date: Tuesday, 31st March 2026

Time: 10:00am

Location: PIASC Boardroom, Palm Island

COMMUNITY NOTICE

PALM ISLAND ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL

WILL BE CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:

FRIDAY, 3 APRIL 2026

DUE TO THE PUBLIC HOLIDAY FOR

GOOD FRIDAY

MONDAY, 6 APRIL 2026

DUE TO THE PUBLIC HOLIDAY FOR

EASTER MONDAY

THE OFFICE WILL RE-OPEN AND RESUME NORMAL OPERATIONS ON

TUESDAY, 7 APRIL 2026

THANKS & REGARDS
COUNCIL ADMIN

AIRPORT CAFE: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

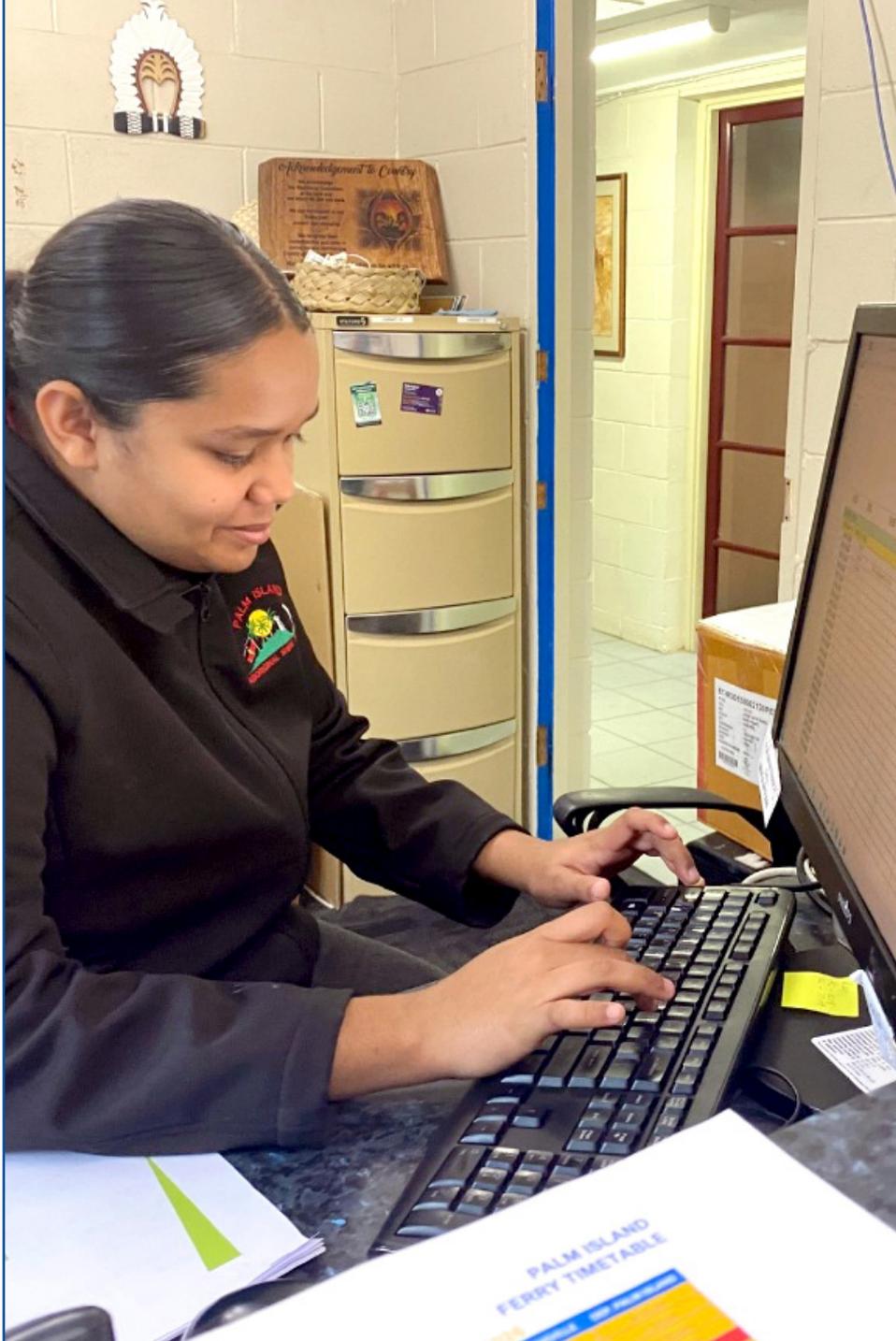
Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from suitably experienced individuals, businesses and community enterprises to establish and operate a café at Palm Island Airport.

Council will provide a dedicated space within the airport terminal, and is seeking innovative and practical proposals that enhance the passenger experience and contribute to the amenity and activation of the airport precinct.

Find the documents at the following link or come into Council reception to get a copy:

<https://www.vendorpanel.com.au/PublicTenderAccess.aspx?id=681968cb987946c28456888b59f039c2s502731>

**Expressions of Interest close on
Friday 17 April at 2pm.**



Year 10 student, Lauren Gorringer, joined the Palm Island Council for some work experience earlier this month.

Lauren is a boarder at Concordia Lutheran College in Toowoomba.

Her experience gave her exposure to admin work and event organising.

Working in reception, her duties included customer service, telephone handling and learning about the various areas of responsibility within Council that support the community.

She also helped with event planning tasks, including the preparation of a calendar of significant community events, helping her to gain an understanding of the stages involved in delivering an event.

Staff commended Lauren's performance and said they would love to have her back.

"We hope Lauren has picked up a wealth of knowledge during her time working at the Council," CEO Emma Bradbury said.

"And we hope she might consider joining us after she completes her schooling.

"We'd love to have her back, a career in local government is a wonderful pathway to all sorts of opportunities.

"Well done, Lauren, for stepping up and being a role model for the community and younger students here on Palm."

THE NEXT *Palm Island Voice* DEADLINE*

(Issue 446*) will be Thursday 9 April

for publication on Tuesday 14 April



The *Palm Island Voice* is published FORTNIGHTLY (*unless we have paid advertising) by the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council. Members of the Palm Island community and local organisations are welcome to submit birthdays, community information, pics, yarns and letters to the Editor.

For advertising rates and/or more information contact the Editor, Christine Howes, on 0419 656 277 or at howeschowes@gmail.com You can also follow us on Facebook, we have more than 3,400 followers! The *Palm Island Voice* is also available online at <http://www.chowes.com.au>

Operating Hours for Palm Island Council are 8am–5pm Monday–Friday

If you have any questions please contact Reception on 4770 1177 or 4770 0200

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council has 7,300 'followers' on Facebook!!!