

Palm Island Voice



FREE!

Issue 450

8 June 2026



ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL

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



Real opportunities coming up with RAES

Last Thursday was an exciting day for Palm Island, with the official start of the Remote Area Employment Service (RAES) works crew and the long-awaited kick-off of the Cemetery Revitalisation Project.

A morning tea in the Council Chambers brought everyone together to mark the moment – Foundation directors, Council representatives, staff and the first group of participants, who will be part of this important new chapter.

The Palm Island Economic Development Foundation is leading the work, as the community's vehicle for growing local jobs, opportunities and economic strength.

Its key focus is the RAES program – designed to support local people into real work, build skills and create pathways into longer-term employment.

“This is about our people, our place, and creating opportunities that last,” Foundation Director Alf Lacey said.

“We’re proud to see it up and running.”

Mayor Lacey, Directors Mersane Oui (Deputy Mayor), Telstan Sibley (Councillor) and Haloti Kailahi were

there while CEO Emma Bradbury and Secretary Marnie Payne joined online.

There was a strong sense on the day that the program was already delivering.

Early works on the cemetery – along with improvements at the foreshore – were making a visible difference.

“The cemetery and even the foreshore are already looking sensationally improved,” Ms Bradbury said.

“You can really see the pride coming through in the work.”

PIASC Manager of Civil and Open Spaces Vaughn Charles and his crew also praised the momentum, recognising the participants and the RAES team for the energy they’ve brought.

“There’s been great activity from day one,” Mr Charles said.

“You can see the effort everyone is putting in, and it’s something the whole community can take pride in.”



Vaughn Charles (third from left) with his PIASC Civil & Open Spaces team members Cassian Tanner, Manny Blackman, Gavin Sibley & Simi Dabea.

Continues...

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Big acknowledgement went to Flo and the RAES staff, who have worked tirelessly to build the program – driving sign-ups, engaging the community and helping get everything ready for launch.

The response so far has been strong, with a growing number of participants stepping forward to be part of the program.

“We’re really encouraged by how many people have signed up,” Mr Sibley said.

“And there are still more to do. “This is about showing pride in

community and building pathways for the future.”

Looking ahead, the team was already focused on what was next.

After the cemetery works, attention would be on longer-term projects, including participation in the retail precinct fit-out, the foreshore arts interpretation walk and the Palm Island Walking Trails – all expected to roll out next year.

The RAES program formally transitioned to local delivery earlier this year, with the Foundation taking over from previous provider Rainbow Gateway.

Since then, there has been a strong push from the Foundation and Council to build something that truly reflected the needs and strengths of Palm Island.

A shared commitment across everyone involved – the Foundation, Council, staff and participants – was set to make RAES something special.

“This is just the beginning,” Mayor Lacey said.

“The goal is to make RAES on Palm Island a leading program for communities right across the region.”



LEFT: Members of the RAES Team in the Council's Chamber Office last week.

BELOW: Some of the immaculate work the team has done in the community for several events over the past few weeks.





Troy Casey
Kamilaroi
Blaklash



Tahlia Steadman
Ngemba
Blaklash



Paul Hotston
Non-Indigenous
Phorm Architecture



Hudson Smith
Kamilaroi
Phorm Architecture

We want to hear more from you about your future homes!

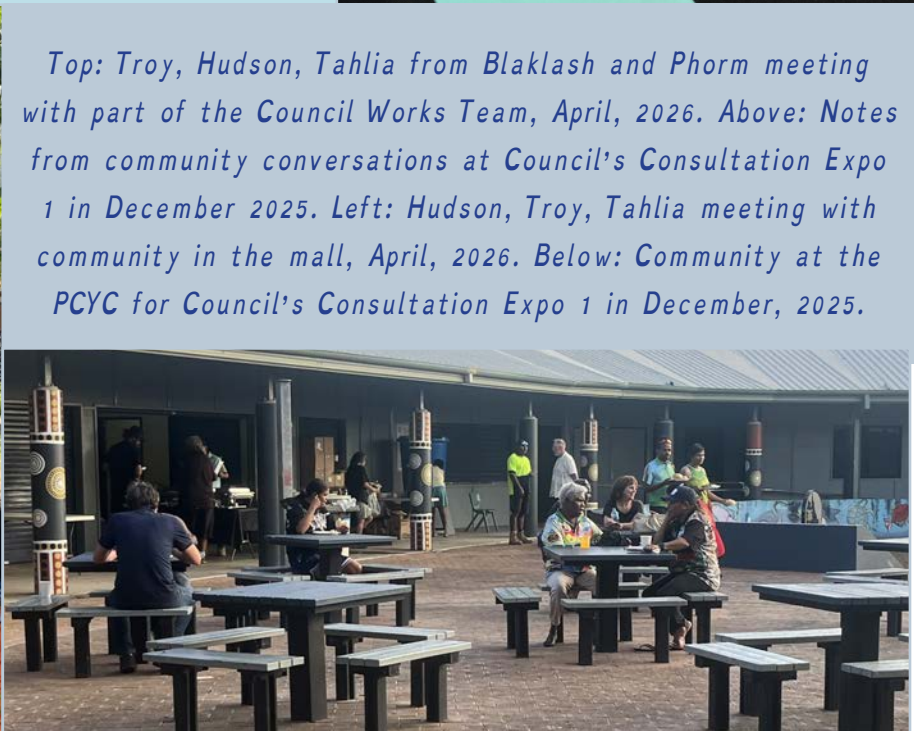
Blaklash & Phorm will be back on the island **Wed 17 June to Fri 19 June** to share more about the Palm Island Design Principles. We will have draft house designs to show you and want to hear what you think.

If are up for a yarn and see us around, please say hi! We will also be at Council's Consultation Expo on **Wednesday 17 June 2026** at the PCYC, so hope to see you there.

For more info or to share your thoughts, call Tahlia on 0481 597 287.



BLAKLASH *phorm*
architecture + design



Top: Troy, Hudson, Tahlia from Blaklash and Phorm meeting with part of the Council Works Team, April, 2026. Above: Notes from community conversations at Council's Consultation Expo 1 in December 2025. Left: Hudson, Troy, Tahlia meeting with community in the mall, April, 2026. Below: Community at the PCYC for Council's Consultation Expo 1 in December, 2025.

Red bench unveiled in strong stand against domestic and family violence



Palm Island came together in record numbers last Tuesday for a powerful and inspiring event to launch a Red Bench and reaffirm their commitment to preventing domestic and family violence (DFV).

Organised by the Palm Island Domestic Violence Network Group, the day was a moving display of unity, strength and hope.

The event began with a march from the Palm Island Women's Service to the Palm Island Mall, with community members, organisations, and students from Bwgcolman Community School walking side by side.

It set the tone for the day, bringing the community together with its theme: "it's up to you, it's up to me, it's up to us".

At the Palm Island Mall, the Red Bench was unveiled by community elders and representatives from the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council.

The bench, a symbol of the community's stand against Domestic and Family Violence, was part of the Red Rose Foundation's statewide initiative to raise awareness and spark conversations about domestic and family violence.



The unveiling ceremony was accompanied by a smoking ceremony officiated by Emcee Archie Fraser and a blessing by Father Manh Lee, grounding the event in cultural and spiritual significance.

A series of heartfelt speeches followed, delivered by guest speakers who included:

- Palm Island Community Justice Group Coordinator and member of the Palm Island DV Network Group, Deniece Geia, spoke passionately about the importance of community-led action.
- Palm Island Community Company Executive Manager Mislam Sam highlighted the strength and resilience of the Palm Island community.
- Red Rose Foundation CEO Lucy Lord commended the community for taking a stand and emphasised the importance of visible reminders like the Red Bench.
- Queensland Police Service Inspector Jason Brosnan reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the community in addressing DFV.
- SNAICC (the national voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children) CEO Catherine Liddle spoke about the importance of protecting families and children.
- Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council Deputy Mayor Mersane Oui praised the community's unity and leadership in tackling DFV.

Activities, including information stalls, a candlelight ceremony and a kup murri, were then held in Fred Clay Park.

The sunset candlelight ceremony was a heartfelt and moving tribute, honouring those affected by DFV and strengthening the community's commitment to building a safer future.

The day was overwhelmingly supported by local organisations, schools and residents, bringing people together in a powerful show of unity and shared purpose.

The presence of students from Bwgcolman Community School was particularly inspiring, as the next generation joined in spreading the message of respect and safety.

“This is a day to remember,” Deniece said.

“The Red Bench is a symbol of our commitment, but it's also a call to action.

“Preventing domestic and family violence is not just the responsibility of one person or one group, it's up to all of us.”



Obe Geia games highlight for Reconciliation Week on Palm



Friendship, teamwork and cultural connection took centre stage at the 2026 Obe Geia Challenge last week, when more than 150 students came together to celebrate the values that have defined the event for more than 15 years.



Delivered by the Cowboys Community Foundation, the annual carnival welcomed 11 school teams of students aged 10–12 years for a day focused on teamwork, inclusion and positive participation on and off the field.

Established in 2009 and named after former Cowboys player and Palm Island local Obe Geia Jnr, the Obe Geia Challenge was created to promote inclusion through grassroots rugby league.

At the conclusion of the day's friendly competition, Rasmussen State School was crowned 2026 Obe Geia Challenge champions.

Beyond the on-field action, the day also provided students with the opportunity to experience Palm Island's culture, community and natural beauty, with teams travelling together aboard SeaLink ferries before making the traditional walk along the Palm Island coastline to the rugby league fields.

A warm welcome was extended by the Palm Island community, with local families, supporters and community members coming together to share in the day's celebrations.

Cowboys Community Foundation CEO Fiona Pelling said the Challenge continued to demonstrate the positive impact sport could have in bringing communities together and creating meaningful experiences for young people.

"The Obe Geia Challenge is about much more than rugby league – it's about connection, belonging, culture and giving young people the opportunity to create positive memories together," Ms Pelling said.

"For many students, this is a day they look forward to all year and the experience of travelling to Palm Island, meeting new people and representing their school builds confidence, friendships and pride.

"We're incredibly grateful to the Palm Island community, participating schools and our partners who continue to support this event and help make it possible for every student to take part."



DATE	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
29 May 2026-8 June 2026		Photo Exhibitions, School Libraries, Elders visit with Classroom	Bwngolman Primary & High School
7 June 2026	3.45pm	Welcome to Country	St Michaels Primary School
	4.00pm	Screening of "Protected"	Event Cinemas, Cinema 1-10
	5pm	Light Refreshments	Fletcher Street Townsville
8 June 2026		Day of Reflection-Strike Families	Schools, Community
	10am	Welcome to Event Traditional Owners acknowledgement the past, present & future Minute Silence	MC: Delphine Geia & Caroline Doyle, PIASC
9 June 2026		Opening Prayers to the Event Reflections on the Remembrance of Strike 57-acknowledging 69 years	PCYC Arena, Palm Island
		Mayors Address	
		Cultural Dancing	
		Reflections from Strike 57 Families	
	12pm-1pm	Lunch-Kup Murri Lunch	
		Reflections from Strike Families to continue	
		Story-Telling: Open to Community Members	
4pm		Special Guest Performance: Sevese Isaro	
		Dance Performance: Special Guests:	
		Walter Foster & Band	
	6-7pm	Screening of "Protected"	
FERRY DEPARTS TSV AT 8.00AM, ARRIVE PALM AT 4.15PM-WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2026			
10 JUNE 2026	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
9am		Assemble at the Strike 57 Monument & Stone Jetty Ramp	MC for the Day: Milton Thaiday
			Beach Road
9.45am		March from Memorial Plaque to Fred Clay Park, Foreshore	
10.40am		Official Opening	PIASC Mayor & Councillors
-		Welcome to Country	Uncle Allan Palm Island
-		Opening Prayer	
10.45am		Commemoration Service	Strike Families
11.20am		Cultural Dancing Performances	Fred Clay Park
1-2pm		Story telling session told by the Children of the Seven Leaders	Family of Strikers Geia, Congoo, Lymburner, Sibley, Tapau, Thaiday Watson
		OPEN MIC-Story Telling Band Performance	Apologies-Aunty Dulcie Isaro & Dallas Thaiday Other Community Members Mothers Dust
2.00pm		Community BBQ	Fred Clay Park
3.00pm		Special Guest Performance: Sevese Isaro	Fred Clay Park
4.00pm		Performances	
FERRY DEPARTS PALM AT 4.15PM, ARRIVE TSV AT 6.00PM			

Market Stalls

STALL HOLDERS WANTED!

TUESDAY 9 JUNE 2026
📍 PALM ISLAND PCYC
FROM 10AM - 6PM

WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2026
📍 FRED CLAY PARK
9AM - 5PM

📞 PLEASE GIVE RECEPTION A CALL TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION



Food Stalls



Arts & Crafts



Sponsored by:







PUBLIC NOTICE

PALM ISLAND ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL WILL BE CLOSED

Wednesday 10th June 2026

DUE TO THE PUBLIC HOLIDAY FOR THE STRIKE 57

The office will re-open and resume normal operations on
Thursday 11th June 2026

THE NEXT *Palm Island Voice* DEADLINE*

(Issue 451*) will be Thursday 18 June

for publication on Tuesday 22 June

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!!!