Palm Island Voice

FREE! Issue 462

THURSDAY 26 November 2026

PALM ISLAND ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL

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

Human rights visit not wasted

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council was proud to meet with United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Dr Albert K. Barume and members of the United Nations delegation at the Council's Townsville office earlier this month.

Dr Barume was in Australia from 2 to 13 November to hear directly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and examine progress, challenges and good practice in recognising and protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

His work considered issues such as self-determination and participation in decision-making, land and cultural heritage, housing, health and education, justice and incarceration, child welfare and the importance of community-led solutions.

For Palm Island, the meeting was an opportunity for the Mayor and CEO to speak directly with an independent United Nations human rights expert and ensure that the experiences, priorities and perspectives of the community formed part of his understanding of the issues facing First Nations peoples in Australia.

The Townsville component of the visit took place in unusual circumstances.

A planned visit by the Special Rapporteur to Cleveland Youth Detention Centre did not proceed after the Queensland Government declined to engage with Dr Barume and his delegation.

The cancellation attracted national attention, particularly given concerns surrounding the over-representation of First Nations children in youth detention.

Against that backdrop, Council welcomed the opportunity for respectful, face-to-face dialogue to ensure a strong Palm Island voice was heard.

The Special Rapporteur's visit to Australia will inform his final report, including findings and recommendations, to be presented to the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2027.



Mayor Alf Lacey with United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Dr Albert K. Barume and Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner for the Australian Human Rights Commission,Katie Kiss.

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council is proud to have participated in this important international engagement and to continue advocating for the rights, wellbeing and future of our community.

A proud handover as Council looks to its next chapter

After a period of significant change and progress, Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council Chief Executive Officer Emma Bradbury says it's time to hand over to new leadership, bringing fresh energy to maintain the momentum Council and its staff have built.



She said she had nothing but praise for the pride, capability and confidence of council staff, and the leadership of Mayor Lacey and the elected members.

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Emma's tenure with the Palm Council will end on 9 January next year, after a busy and productive 18 months.



She said she would work with the council to find its next chief executive and ensure an orderly handover as it prepared for a major program of works in 2027.

Mayor Alf Lacey thanked Emma for her service with council.

"Emma has worked tremendously hard supporting council in terms of realigning the council's priorities," he said.

"And council is in good stead into our next journey.

"As mayor, it's been a pleasure working alongside Emma with the councillors.



"She has certainly demonstrated the leadership and the change that we needed within the council's administration and we'd like to wish her well in her future endeavours and all the best from myself as the mayor, our councillors and the community of Palm Island."

Deputy Mayor Mersane Oui said they were grateful for Emma's work.

"We're very grateful for the work we've all done together," she said.

"As a Council and community, we feel well prepared to navigate the changes ahead and keep building a strong future, and we thank Emma for the part she has played in that."

Emma said she was most proud of the dedication and commitment of staff in delivering services, progressing infrastructure projects and improving council operations.

"I see our staff wearing Council's corporate uniform with pride," she said. "I see teams taking ownership of their responsibilities and supporting one another.

"Most importantly, I see an organisation that is increasingly confident in what it can achieve together."

She said the culture at council was grounded in service, professionalism, accountability and pride in Palm Island.

"Staff have the skills and confidence to manage changes to systems and staffing while keeping community services a priority," she said.

"It remains an absolute privilege to lead this staff."

She also said one of her proudest achievements was seeing more Palm Island people secure council jobs through competitive recruitment.

Apprenticeships, traineeships and professional development will, she said, continue to build and retain skills on the island and give local staff opportunities to move into leadership roles.

"There is exceptional talent within this community, and one of Council's most important responsibilities is to recognise it, create pathways for it and allow that capability to grow," she said.

New housing, a cyclone shelter and walking trails were among the projects in the council's forward works program.

Ms Bradbury said these investments could create jobs, training and opportunities for local businesses, with more worker accommodation needed to bring in contractors and specialists.

"Worker and employee accommodation remains a significant constraint on the scale and pace at which capital investment can be delivered on Palm Island," she said.

"There is a lot of work to do," she said. "But there is also much to celebrate.

"I've been genuinely humbled by the response from Council staff and the community.

"I feel incredibly connected to Palm Island and grateful for the opportunity to have been part of this community."



The Palm Island Voice is published by the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council and is free and online @ www.chowes.com.au









Remembrance Day is observed at 11am on 11 November every year to honour armed forces members who have died or suffered in the line of duty. The timing marks when the World War I armistice took effect on the Western Front in 1918. Palm Island is always proud to hold these commemorations.

Christmas Cup outgrows Palm facilities





Christmas Cup contenders: Gold Tier teams may include rep and/or non-Indigenous players; Silver Tier teams are strictly grassroots/community teams.



With 34 team nominations, the Christmas Cup footy carnival will be held in Townsville this year, organiser Cr Telstan Sibley says.

"We couldn't grow the carnival on Palm due to only having one field and limited accommodation," he said.

He said they had 22 men's teams, six women's teams and seven under-18 teams.

"That's a big growth from just four teams in 2019 to 13 teams last year," he said.

"This year it is off the island, but it is still a Palm Island carnival, run by Palm Island people.

"We have several local stallholders who it was important to us to bring on our journey.

"But we need to get it back to Palm next year, so we're working with the federal and state governments to try and get some funding for Council to upgrade our field and extend the motel.

"Mayor Alf Lacey is spearheading the push for our second field and accommodation add-on from the state and federal governments."

He said ongoing work to expand their capacity reflected the importance of football to the community.

"Next year we'll kick-start our local competition up again with the four local clubs," he said.

"We had 137 men's players registered in 2025.

"Rugby league is our tool used to help our young men stay healthy and be community members.

"We definitely need new facilities.

He said they had their sights set on returning to the Townsville rugby league comp in 2028.

"I think that we need to lobby for this money to try and get some backing so we can grow and expand locally," he said.



Caring for our community during Sorry Business

Council's Funerals and Cemeteries teams have an important role in supporting Palm Island families during Sorry Business.

We know that organising the funeral and burial of a loved one can be one of the most difficult times a family will face, and our staff carry out this work with care, compassion and respect.

Council's role is to help coordinate funeral bookings and confirmed dates, prepare graves and cemetery sites, support funeral logistics and maintain cemetery records and facilities.

We work with families, cultural leaders, churches and service providers to help arrangements proceed respectfully and safely.

Families must resolve decisions and disagreements about funeral arrangements within the family.

Council staff cannot decide family disputes or take sides. Once the appropriate family representative has provided clear instructions, our team can focus on the practical arrangements that are Council's responsibility.

The Mayor and CEO recently met with the Funerals and Cemeteries teams to thank them for the important work they do for our community.

We ask everyone to treat these staff with the same dignity, care and respect that we all want shown to our loved ones during Sorry Business.

In times of loss, kindness matters. By working together respectfully, families, community and Council can help ensure every person is laid to rest with dignity and that those who support this important work are also cared for.

POSITIONS VACANT

- **Gym Officer – VOLUNTEER:** Ongoing applications
- **Service Station Attendant – Casual:** Closes on Saturday 5 December
- **Casual Cleaners – Multiple Positions:** Closes on Saturday 5 December
- **Projects Coordinator (Infrastructure & Community):** Closes on Monday 7 December
- **Projects Administrator:** Closes on Monday 7 December
- **Manager – Water, Sewerage & Waste Services:** Closes on Thursday 10 December
- **Rent to Buy Engagement Officer:** Closes on Saturday 19 December

Follow the QR code left or go to https://www.palmcouncil.qld.gov.au/My-Council/Jobs-vacancies

Open forTender: Butler Bay Sewage & Rising Main Replacement – Design & Construct closing at 2pm on Friday 4 December.
Submission details are available on the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council website at https://www.palmcouncil.qld.gov.au/My-Council/TendersProcurement/Open-Tenders

THE NEXT Palm Island Voice DEADLINE*

(Issue 463*) will be Monday 7 December for publication by Thursday 10 December

PALM ISLAND ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL

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.

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