



# Palm Island Voice

**FREE!**

## Issue 298

Thursday 23 April 2020

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



# OUR NEW COUNCIL!



Councillors Derek Haines, Deniece Geia; Mislam Sam; Andrea Kyle-Sailor & Andrew Castors (as pictured above) have made their declarations and are officially on board, led by Mayor Mislam Sam. Deputy Mayor Deniece Geia will hold her position for one year before Cr Andy Kyle-Sailor takes up the reins in 2021, followed by Cr Derek Haines in 2022 and Cr Andrew Castors in 2023 in the lead up to the 2024 election.

## Coronavirus (Covid-19) takes first priority on new Council agenda - more inside!

*“I know people want to get out there and enjoy their freedoms, but this virus has taken away our freedom and we’ve just got to take a page out of our old people’s book. They suffered lifetimes – we are only one month into it. It could be another couple of months, it could be a year, we do not know, but we must remember how strong our old people’s perseverance was, and that this is nothing compared to what they endured. We must just take a page out of their book – we can get through this.”*

**Mayor Mislam Sam, 22 April 2020**



# Harry's dream another step closer...

Bachelor of Social Science (Human Services) student and Singapore Alumni Scholarship recipient, Harry Reuben is one semester away from completing his degree and one step closer to returning home to Palm Island with his new knowledge and skills.

Harry has just completed a work placement with Regional Support Services in Gosford, gaining valuable case work experience with the Indigenous Youth Justice Program.

As one of seven Singapore Alumni Scholarship recipients awarded in 2019, Harry has used the support from his scholarship to meet his financial commitments like paying rent and travelling to work placements without the need to juggle work and study commitments during his degree.

"It's hard not having the direct support of family around you and financially it's very difficult, I've been very lucky in securing some support through the Singapore Alumni Scholarship," he said.

"I have overcome barriers and hardships by thinking about

how I can possibly contribute to the improvement of Palm by completing a degree.

"Reflecting on how far I've come, how hard I've worked and how much I have sacrificed – it would be easy to quit, but it's rewarding to know I'm smashing barriers and shattering stereotypes."

He said once he had completed this degree he intended to apply for medicine.

"I aspire to become an Indigenous Doctor with the aim to work within rural and remote Indigenous Communities across Australia, in particular my home Palm Island," he said.

"My aim is to empower my community to grow, inspire other Indigenous men, women and children and provide quality health care and essential

support and services that are culturally safe, to the needs of my community and all Indigenous communities across Australia.

"Ultimately my aspiration is to unconsciously influence and inspire others in my community to attend school and university, and empower them to shine and pursue their ambitions and dreams and make them a reality.

"I'm living proof you can go from being vulnerable and disadvantaged to smashing barriers and breaking stereotypes – it's my time to make a difference.

"The social determinants of health and disadvantage stops with me."

*With thanks to the University of Newcastle: <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/newsroom/community-and-alumni/chasing-his-dream-to-serve-others>*



# We need to stand firm – Mayor Sam

"We are living in unprecedented times," newly elected Mayor Mislam Sam has told the *Palm Island Voice*, just minutes after finishing yet another a Local Disaster Management Group meeting yesterday.



"We are all a bit overloaded at the moment, I'm feeling everyone's concerns," he said.

"This is uncharted territory for all of us and I know the emotional toll it's having on every individual in our community.

"We need to stand firm." He said the COVID-19 virus had huge implications for the Palm Island community.

"If it was to ever get here, we don't know where we'll be," he said.

"We must make sure we do the right thing because these are critical times."

He said he was aware the new boating and fishing rules were particularly difficult.

"These times are hard, there is no fishing from boats," he said.

"But it's got to be said – those who are doing the wrong thing are jeopardising our community.

"That's the reason those laws are in place, we need to have a real hard look at ourselves because if this virus gets here we are going to be in a very serious situation.

"Those laws stopping us from going out have been put in place by national and state governments and yes, this Council will take a strong line on all of it.

"I know we can't get in to fish, I know the emotional toll, I know the health and diet implications, especially with the high cost of living here, but if we remain vigilant we'll see this through and we'll be out there in the water again as soon as we can be.

"It's also worth remembering there may be more fish stocks in the sea as a result of this break, if we can just hold off for a little longer."

He said he and his colleagues,

some of them Councillors for the first time, had taken on a baptism of fire.

"We just need to just follow the advice from our National and State governments and Medical Officers, and if we do the right thing we will hopefully come through this thing untouched," he said.

"Just do the right thing.

"Let's just take the advice given to us, we might suffer now but it means living the rest of our lives free and healthy if we just do the right things now."

He said he was looking forward getting beyond the current crisis and getting back to business as usual.

"If we do get out of this and we can function with some kind of normality in place, we'll be back to trying to grow our local economy, but that's all I can really say on that matter for now," he said.





# COMMUNITY NOTICES

## PALM ISLAND EVENTS 2020

Due to the on-going impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Government requirements for social distancing across the whole of Australia, it has been decided that the following events will be cancelled for 2020.

- ANZAC day – 25 April 2020
- Strike 57 Commemoration Day – 29 May 2020
- Bwgcolman Day – 5 June 2020
- NAIDOC week celebrations – 6 – 10 July 2020

It is regretted that this action has had to be introduced however these decisions have been applied in the interest of the ongoing health, wellbeing and Safety of our residents.



ARE Schools ~~will be~~ OPEN FOR LEARNING

from Week 1 of Term 2

(commencing Monday 20 April)

All students are expected to come to school

Buses will operate as usual from 7:30am each morning

Reminder - strong biosecurity measures are in place to protect the health and safety of the Palm Island Community. Our schools are committed to meeting all requirements and ensuring the ongoing wellbeing of staff, students and their families.

Please contact Paula McMahon (4770 0333) or Tess Fong (4770 1147) if you have any questions.



## If you are stranded in Townsville...

If you are a Palm Island resident and wish to return to Palm Island you need to undertake a 14-day self-quarantine/isolation before you are allowed to come back.

Council and the LDMG have been working with the Queensland Government to identify a monitored process and location for this to happen.

To ensure we are aware of the number of people who are impacted by this situation, and to assist in identifying

a satisfactory location, it is requested that you register through the Department of Housing and Public Works by calling one of the following:

- **DHPW office direct**  
4724 8541 (9am-5pm only)
- **Hotline**  
1800 474 753 (24-hours)

You will need to advise the names of people in your family wishing to return, a phone number and the address of where you are currently located.

Once the Council has this information, and a decision is made, you will be contacted with further advice.

The Palm Island Council thanks you for your patience.

**OUR NEXT DEADLINE (Issue 299) will be  
Thursday 30 April  
for publication on Thursday 7 May!**

The **Palm Island Voice** is published fortnightly by the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council and edited by Christine Howes. Members of the Palm Island community and local organisations are welcome to submit birthdays, community information, pics, yarns and letters to the Editor. You can follow us on Facebook! We have 2,575 'likes'!

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The **Palm Island Voice** is free and online at <http://www.chowes.com.au>

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

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

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council has 3,684 'likes' on Facebook!!!



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