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Bringing you what's new
(and news) from Cape York
Aboriginal communities

— compiled & edited by Christine Howes

This week Pormpuraaw CEO
Edward Natera flags the even-
tual return of the famous croc



L to R: CEO Edward Natera, Mayor Richard Tarpencha, Commercial Mgr Skytrans Roger Young, Airline Agent Anthony Ryan on the day of the first Skytrans flight into Pormpuraaw in February this year.

as he lets us know what's
happening down their way ...

There are five main areas the Pormpuraaw Council wants to see results from before the next Local Government election.

Firstly I think we're the only Council that doesn't have any sealed roads.

So that's really a priority because of the dust and health

issues but we've already started that process with the Department's Director-General, and it's part

of our Local Indigenous Partnership Agreement (LIPA), which every Indigenous Council has with government.

There's the sports field which, with the Department of Education, we're going to upgrade so it will be multi-functional.

The third one is the croc farm, we don't have the financial capacity to inject there so we're looking

at outside interests to buy shares in that.

That's looking good and when that happens we'll be looking at what we can do to bring tourists in, including revamping the Croc Races.

The guest house upgrade is another priority, we currently have two sets of units with nine bedrooms, but we really need something like the donga-type accommodation, so that's going ahead as well.

Then we've got the cattle station which is being refurbished as a well-being house to help members of our community who are struggling with alcohol.

People will be going out there to dry-out and we're hoping we'll be able to put them into meaningful work after that, so they'll become contributing members of Pormpuraaw's community.

There are other issues we need to address in terms of financial sustainability, and the three main areas I think we need to work on are asset management, planning and upskilling.

I've only been here since August last year and it's no secret that for the past six years we've had qualified audits, mainly because our Council hasn't had continuity in senior management.

I was the fourth CEO within an 18 month period when I arrived.

On top of that in the last election, in March 2008, there was only one Councillor returned so we've had to go through all the processes of upskilling and training again.

That's especially important because the Local Government Act, which we're now trying to work with, is so different from the Community Services Act.

In 2002 I worked for Injinoo Council for four years, then I went across to Mt Isa for a year and Woorabinda for two years.

So I've had experience under both Acts and for mainstream as well as Aboriginal communities.

And I've just been confirmed for the next three years here, so at least that will provide some stability for the Council until the end of their current term.

In early 2007 the Department of Local Government brought in a Financial Controller and we're still working through issues with that but we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Edward Natera
Chief Executive Officer
Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council



Cape communities in funding windfall

Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale are among 26 of the nation's largest remote Aboriginal communities earmarked to receive billions of dollars in new federal funding as part of the Government's push to close the gap between indigenous and non indigenous people.

In an unexpected move, these communities have been earmarked to receive almost all of the government funds set aside for new housing and the upgrading of municipal services such as health clinics and schools.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin told *The Australian* the communities had been selected for intensive help because of their potential to be turned into hubs of "economic development".

"We want to intensely focus on 26 communities to really deal with the massive overcrowding

that exists ... with the very poor municipal services (and) the fact that we don't have decent land tenure arrangements that can enable economic development and employment," she told a reporter from the national newspaper.

"We've got to get it right in these 26 and demonstrate that you can close the gap," she added.

Ms Macklin said that Indigenous communities outside those chosen would still receive funds to upgrade existing housing stock.

She added that if the targeted approach showed signs of working, the Government would then roll out proven initiatives to other communities.

The controversial plan follows the Government's decision to appoint a director-general to cut through red tape and get action on the ground in remote areas to close the 17-year gap in life

expectancy.

Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia will each get more than a billion dollars to invest in new housing and housing upgrades under the carve-up.

Ms Macklin said the 26 communities had been selected to receive new housing because they had the best chance of establishing robust economies and achieving land tenure reform.

"We really want to focus on these areas partly because of the enormous need and the population growth, but also because these are places that because of their size have the opportunity for economic development," she said.

"If we can get leases for economic development we can see the shops that exist in a normal town of 2000 or 3000 people in other parts of Australia here too."

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