

PALM ISLAND

State Government Election Priorities 2017

5 POINT PLAN



PALM ISLAND

2017 STATE ELECTION 5 POINT PLAN

As a remote Indigenous community comprising people from over 40 different tribes, Palm Island is a legacy of past government policies and campaigns. Since 1984 and the handing over of the island to an autonomous local Council much has been achieved, but, there remains much more to do.

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council seeks to work with a State Government that has the conviction to make change happen, to take into account the conditions that set aside discrete Indigenous communities such as ours and to deliver outcomes that are community driven and meaningful.

We encourage all political parties contesting the state election to commit to the proposals contained in our 5 Point Plan.

Cr Alfred Lacey
Mayor

Cr Roy Prior
Deputy Mayor

Cr Deniece Geia
Councillor

Cr Edward Walsh
Councillor

Cr Robert Castors
Councillor

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PALM ISLAND COUNCIL ...

1. From welfare to work

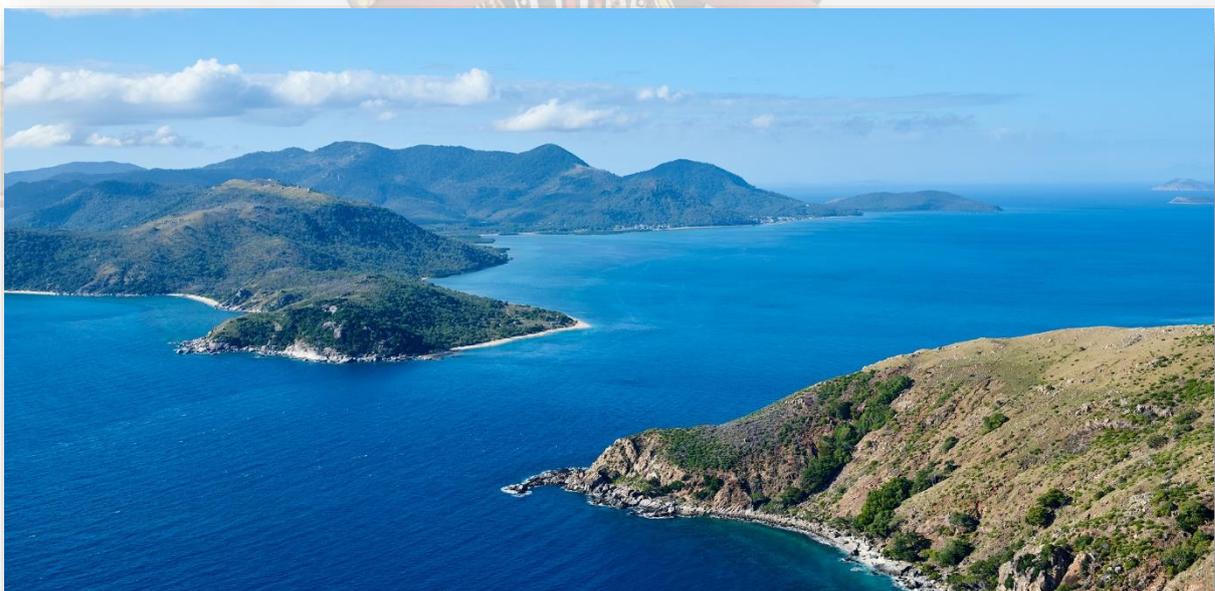
- reiterates the LGAQ recommendations for real funding for local government and real support for Indigenous communities
- reiterates the LGAQ recommendation for \$2.5million in additional funding to support Indigenous Knowledge Centres to support capacity building and digital literacy in discrete Indigenous communities
- seeks ongoing support for locally driven job-readiness and healing programs that empower local people to take up employment and income earning opportunities
- seeks targeted, funded programs to transition school leavers into meaningful employment
- seeks a strategy and funding to upskill local people in higher skilled roles in the community to reduce the high level of fly-in-fly-out workers
- seeks recognition that future income earning opportunities will not only be derived from jobs. Enabled by technology local people can earn income, work for themselves and even export to the world from regional and remote locations. This is particularly important in communities such as ours with limited private sector development and requires, at a minimum
 - o Ongoing support for technology education and training
 - o Support for micro and small business start-ups with a permanent on-island presence
 - o investment in scalable and robust core telecommunications

PALM ISLAND COUNCIL ...	
2. Driving economic opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seeks financial support for Council to engage a dedicated economic development officer to drive industry development outcomes - seeks investment of \$10m (50%) in Stage 3 of the retail and business precinct to match the Australian government's contribution - seeks advocacy and technical support to enable a public-private partnership and attract private investment - seeks a commitment to allow for freehold title to be granted over land in the community where the land is specifically designated as part of a business precinct in council's planning scheme - seeks a financial contribution of \$5m (NQ region) to support the development of the southern hemisphere's first Museum of Underwater Art off the coast of Townsville and Palm Island. Arts and culture - seeks funding for a master plan, feasibility and site design to preserve and interpret the WWII US Navy Base at Wallaby - seeks financial support for Council to contract a part-time arts and culture industry development officer for a period of 3 years to drive industry development outcomes
3. Improving liveability & upgrading infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seeks investment in infrastructure that is attractive to youth to reduce idleness (e.g. suburban half-court basketball courts and playgrounds, a water park, an outdoor cinema) - seeks investment in a community driven community safety program and actions to prevent crime - seeks financial support for Council to contract a youth development officer for a period of 3 years to drive youth programs - seeks re-instatement of roads funding - seeks continuation of the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) including annual indexation and a revised contribution for remote councils - seeks financial support (est. \$5m) to upgrade the Palm Island airport terminal to cater for the island's growth
4. Caring for country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reiterates the LGAQ recommendations for real support for the environment as a driver of the economy - seeks the removal of waste freight costs from the current cost base and funding through a block mechanism - seeks funding support for the sustainable management of wild pigs, dogs and horses - Advocacy support for the re-introduction of land and sea rangers
5. Strategic funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reiterates the LGAQ recommendations for real funding reform for local government - seeks support for strategic project planning including establishment of a dynamic project pipeline register and asset management planning - seeks close consideration of the exceptional financial situation of Indigenous councils when committing grant funding including, but not limited to, the need for co-contributions and payments in arrears

Our local context

		Year	Palm Island	Australia	
	Population & People	Persons (no.)	2016	2446	
		Registrations at Joyce Palmer Health Service	2017	Approx. 6000	
		Median age (years)	2015	27.2	37.4
		Businesses (no.)	2015	11	
		Main employing industries (%)	2011		
	Economy & Industry	- Public administration & safety		23.8	
		- Health care & social assistance		22.7	
		- Other services		19.3	
		- Education & training		15.0	
		- Construction		4.7	
		- Administrative & support services		3.6	
		- Retail trade		2.3	
		- Arts & recreation services		1.8	
		- Accommodation & food services		1.3	
			Income	Median total income (excl. government pensions & allowances) (\$)	2013
Unemployment rate (%)	2016			30	5.9
	Employment	Employment participation rate (%)	2016	50.8	77.1
		Overcrowding in households	2016	41.6	2.7
	Family and community				

(Sources: ABS, 2017, Joyce Palmer Health Service)



1. From welfare to work

The future of our community relies on a sustainable shift from a dependence on welfare to people having meaningful jobs and income earning opportunities.

Palm Island Council

- Reiterates the LGAQ recommendations for real funding for local government and real support for Indigenous communities
- Reiterates the LGAQ recommendation for \$2.5million in additional funding to support Indigenous Knowledge Centres to support capacity building and digital literacy in discrete Indigenous communities

In addition, Palm Island Council seeks

- ongoing support for locally driven job-readiness and healing programs that empower local people to take up employment and income earning opportunities
- targeted, funded programs to transition school leavers into meaningful employment
- a strategy and funding to upskill local people in higher skilled roles in the community to reduce the high level of fly-in-fly-out workers
- recognition that future income earning opportunities will not only be derived from jobs. Enabled by technology local people can earn income, work for themselves and even export to the world from regional and remote locations. This is particularly important in communities such as ours with limited private sector development and requires, at a minimum
 - o Ongoing support for technology education and training
 - o Support for micro and small business start-ups with a permanent on-island presence
 - o investment in scalable and robust core telecommunications

2. Driving economic opportunities

There remains limited economic development on Palm Island largely as a legacy of historical events further compounded by isolation from other communities and regional centres. Unemployment is at unacceptable rates and 100% of the population is classified as being in the highest level of socio-economic disadvantage. As a result, health and social issues are prevalent in the community.

Strategies to attract sustainable industry have been pursued by successive councils, with various investigative reports recommending development of retail, creative arts, horticulture and agriculture, aquaculture and tourism and events industries. Opportunities in such industries are real but progress has been limited, in part due to an inability to harness stakeholder energies toward a common goal. Government and private sector investment is required to strengthen existing or develop new industry sectors and address high level unemployment

Palm Island Council seeks

- financial support for Council to engage a dedicated economic development officer to drive industry development outcomes

2.1 Retail

Development of a robust retail sector will increase local employment during construction and operation, provide opportunities for local people to invest in business or franchise opportunities, build skills and increase engagement in work and study, make available products and services standard in mainstream societies and reduce the cost of living for residents.

Bwgcolman Retail and Business Precinct

The Australian Government recently committed \$9.94m to construct stage two of the four stage development of the Bwgcolman Retail and Business Precinct. The stage two development includes 679m² of new specialty retail outlets and 673m² of new commercial tenancies and is expected to be completed by the end of 2019.

While stage two is under construction Council aims to source funding for the third stage of the precinct comprising a purpose built supermarket space and commercial tenancies (est. cost \$20m).

Palm Island Council seeks

- a commitment to allow for freehold title to be granted over land in the community where the land is specifically designated as part of a business precinct in council's planning scheme
- investment of \$10m (50%) in Stage 3 of the retail and business precinct to match the Australian government's contribution
- advocacy and technical support to enable a public-private partnership and attract private investment



Picture: Bwgcolman Retail and Business Precinct masterplan

1.2 Tourism

Palm Island Council and community have demonstrated their intent to grow tourism as an economic driver. Since 2014 regular 'Come Over' days have brought more than 3000 visitors to the island and the more recent introduction of an Island Highlights Tour by Sealink Qld demonstrates the demand for experiences in or around the

residential Great Palm Island and the broader Palm Island Group. Business travel is regular although with limited activities available on the island visitors only stay for the main purpose of their trip. Growing tourist visitation has spawned the development of new tourism product including history tours, painting and weaving classes, market stalls ranging from art and craft to food and beverages, fishing tours and an emerging home stays.

But, when visitors reach the island there is a sense that they want 'more' from their experience – more activities, more shade and seating, more market stalls and to see more of the island (PI Open Day 2014 Final Report)

Museum of Underwater Art (MOUA)

Palm Island Council is a founding partner in the move to establish the first Museum of Underwater Art in the southern hemisphere off the coast of Townsville and Palm Island. The vision is to create reconciliation and environmentally themed sculptural installations including one off the coast of Palm Island that is reflective of its 100 year anniversary commemorations. This project is expected to drive significant job growth for Palm Island locals and is considered catalytic for the development of tourism on the island.

Palm Island Council seeks

- A financial contribution of \$5m (NQ region) to support the development of the southern hemisphere's first Museum of Underwater Art off the coast of Townsville and Palm Island. Arts and culture



Picture: Underwater art installation in the northern hemisphere

Catalina Flying Boat and US Navy Base preservation and presentation

During World War II a US naval air station was built at Wallaby Point on Palm Island. Built in July 1943, the base was designed for the operation and maintenance of Catalina flying boats and patrol boats. At its peak it housed a 1000-man camp, a large tarmac with parking for up to 12 flying boats, moorings for 18 flying boats and tanks which could hold 60,000 barrels of aviation fuel.

In line with its tourism development objectives Council, in consultation with the local community, aims to explore development of the site. This includes, at a minimum, preservation of Catalina wreckages and site interpretation and education materials for the local community and visitors.

Palm Island Council seeks

- Funding for a master plan, feasibility and site design to preserve and interpret the WWII US Navy Base at Wallaby Point



Picture: WWII Catalina flying boat wreckages on beach at Wallaby Point, Palm Island

1.3 Arts and culture

The arts community on Palm Island (PI) has real potential to contribute to the social and economic fabric of the community. The characteristics of the arts industry differentiates it from other productive industries as it is relatively labour intensive, contributes significantly to youth employment and careers, favours the participation of women and builds on existing cultural assets. Beyond that, the arts and creative industries build on cultural assets that the community has, creates

symbolic value, can revitalize and generate pride in cultures and contributes to social cohesion in the community.

Already a few acclaimed artists have emerged from Palm Island and are achieving success nationally and across the globe. Behind the scenes there is a lively nascent arts scene however it is uncoordinated, has limited skills and capacity to drive growth and is generally facilitated on a volunteer basis. As a result the industry potential is unrealised.

Palm Island Council seeks

- financial support for Council to contract a part-time arts and culture industry development officer for a period of 3 years to drive industry development outcomes

3. Improving liveability and upgrading infrastructure

Reducing crime

Palm Island has an average crime rate of three offences a day. The Queensland Police Service online crime site reveals 1213 offences – or close to one for every two residents in 2016, down from a peak of 1428 offences in 2014. Data for 2017 show a further decline in the number of offences to date, but, there is much more to do to improve the safety and liveability of the island.

Change is complex and multi-faceted and requires an inter-agency response. Dealing with past traumas and neglect, creating positivity in the lives of children and reducing idleness can make positive changes. Because there is so little to do, especially for young people, they become bored and commit crimes.

Palm Island Council seeks

- investment in infrastructure that is attractive to youth to reduce idleness (e.g. suburban half-court basketball courts and playgrounds, a water park, an outdoor cinema)
- investment in a community driven community safety program and actions to prevent crime

- seeks financial support for Council to contract a youth development officer for a period of 3 years to drive youth programs

Upgrading roads

Council maintains approximately 45 kilometre of roads across the shire to ensure they are safe for motorists. Over the past four to five years roads funding has decreased significantly while at the same time roads have deteriorated as a result of weather conditions, increased transport movements particularly from large vehicles and limited funding to maintain them properly.

Palm Island Council seeks

- Re-instatement of roads funding
- Continuation of the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) including annual indexation and a revised contribution for remote councils

Palm Island Aerodrome Terminal Upgrade

Palm Island airport is a key gateway and a major economic enabler for the island. The airport terminal requires a substantial upgrade to cater for the island's growth and improve first impressions.

Upgrade of the terminal is aimed at the sustainability of operations ensuring that the airport infrastructure meets airline partners' and customers' current and future needs. The terminal upgrade will deliver an airport that the community can be proud of and one that reflects our unique destination and character

Palm Island Council seeks

- Financial support (est. \$5m) to upgrade the Palm Island airport terminal to cater for the island's growth



Picture: Palm Island airport terminal

4. Caring for country

As an island community located in the Great Barrier Reef protecting our land and sea country is important; as an Indigenous community, it underpins our very existence. Council and community work hard to protect our environment, however, as a non-rateable community the costs to Council of providing environmental management services such as the removal of waste and the management of wild animals can exceed revenue sources.

Palm Island Council

- Reiterates the LGAQ recommendations for real support for the environment as a driver of the economy

In addition, Palm Island Council seeks

- The removal of waste freight costs from the current cost base and funding through a block mechanism
- Funding support for the sustainable management of wild pigs, dogs and horses
- Advocacy support for the re-introduction of land and sea rangers

5. Strategic funding

As a non-rateable Shire, Council is heavily dependent on grant funding to deliver infrastructure and other projects that meet the needs of our community

Palm Island Council

- reiterates the LGAQ recommendations for real funding reform for local government

Palm Island Council seeks

- support for strategic project planning including establishment of a dynamic project pipeline register and asset management planning
- close consideration of the exceptional financial situation of Indigenous councils when committing grant funding including, but not limited to, the need for co-contributions and payments in arrears