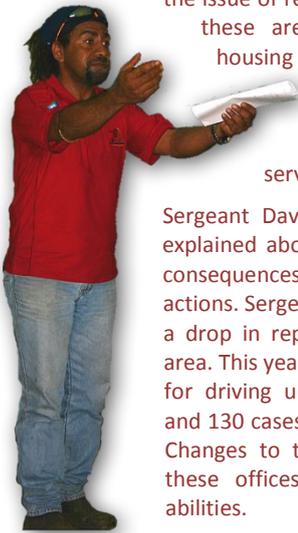


Injinoo public meeting covers a lot of ground

A public meeting, chaired by Councillor Gina Nona and Injinoo Community Forum members, brought representatives of Health, Education, Police, Family Support, Animal Management, Housing and Enterprise together, explaining the current situation and proposed changes in each of the areas. A lot of ground was covered in the well attended, long meeting, which came to a close at 3:30pm at Injinoo Youth Centre.

School attendance at Injinoo P-6 campus was explained by Mrs Trish Blackman (NPASC). The addition of a new school building will enable year 7 to remain at Injinoo next year, when it becomes P-7 campus. NPA College Principal, Mr Ken MacLean informed the community of the poor school attendance, just 60%. Students attend 3 out of 5 days, which translates to 4 out of 12 months, miss 6 years of schooling. As a result, they will graduate at year 7 level instead of year 12. The implementation of an 'Attendance Policy' will see the employment of Family Support Officers for each of the communities, to try to achieve better outcomes. The issue of transportation of students to Bamaga State College was raised. A new library is approved for Injinoo, as well as a new playground.

NPARC Housing Manager, Mr Thomas Rueben explained that the issue of rent arrears needs addressing, as these are monies needed to provide housing services. He informed that homes need to be registered at Injinoo Council building to be part of regular pest control services.



Sergeant David Rutherford, Bamaga Police, explained about choices, challenges and the consequences that could follow one's actions. Sergeant Rutherford also informed of a drop in reported violence for the Injinoo area. This year over 60 people were pulled up for driving under the influence of alcohol, and 130 cases of unlicensed driving offences. Changes to the community police will see these offices with increased powers and abilities.

Elder Mr Richard Tamwoy invited the men of the community to come together through 'Mensheds', an Australian organisation specialising in the needs of men, their health and well being. The organisation promotes outings, trips for fishing, hunting, boating, or just to sit down and have a yarn. "There are many support groups for women, why not for men?" says Mr Tamwoy.

Mr Billy Daniel (Environmental Health) showed that out of approximately 65 dogs, less than 3 are registered. Mr Daniels explained about the dog tag system coming into force. Mongrel dogs are the cause of health issues, skin and bite infections, as well as of hygienic concern.

Pilot whale beached at Injinoo



A sad sight, at beautiful Injinoo Beach reveals the stranded carcass of a lone pilot whale. It worked its way to the high water mark. Injinoo elder, Mr Meun Lifu, uncovered the rare find. The whale was identified by Mr Paul Hodda, Environmental Manager of QFleet, in

Brisbane. Shortly after its discovery the whale was buried.

Short-finned pilot whales (*globicephala macrorhynchus*), generally travel in large pods and are seen as far south as Antarctic. "These are very cohesive aggregations and there is a complex social structure within. When one finds itself in trouble, the others tend to stay with it, which sometimes leads to the demise of many or the entire pod," says Mr Hodda. Luckily, this was not the case at Injinoo. Known distribution of the short-finned pilot whale is from Cape York along the east coast of Australia, right around the continent, all the way up to Darwin. It is not known in the area of the West Cape, Gulf of Carpentaria, between Cape York across to Arnhem Land. Locals advise that 6 years ago another of this species was found in Cowal Creek and Crab Island (SW of Injinoo). Injinoo is located at Cowal Creek, Far North Queensland, in the Northern Peninsula Area at the West Cape, Australia.

A related species is the long-finned pilot whale, which is more likely to turn up in Far North Queensland waters. The fin referred to in both whale species is the pectoral fin (the flipper), which in the long-finned pilot whale would extend to be in line with the dorsal fin. Mr Simon Towle (Principal Project Officer of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Services, Cairns) advised, "The corpse is a serious health risk; whales carry diseases, including skin diseases, that can be transmitted to humans and which are notoriously difficult to treat."

Smoke inhalation increases Hospital admissions

Admissions and reviews are increasing at Bamaga Hospital. The extra load is due to swine flu influenza and as the result of smoke inhalation from recent fires in the areas. "Respiratory problems from smoke inhalation



affect mainly young children and the elderly. This puts a big strain on the Bamaga hospital," says Dr Shahla Rafiei, Medical Superintendent at Bamaga Hospital. "The number of asthma attacks and cases of shortness of breath has increased markedly."

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Agriculture Open Day at High School Farm, Bamaga



Mr Harrison Atu is Farm Manager at the Bamaga High School Farm, which had an Open Day for all the communities in August. "We are getting the kids and the communities to come and have a look, to see how the farm is set up and what the kids participate in doing with their programs on the farm," says Mr Atu. The crops we want the sell to the community are all freshly grown here. In this day and age, you want to encourage people, the communities and kids to try to grow their own produce."

"This is the cheapest and freshest way to grow your own. In our soil, I can recommend orchards, a range of lemons, paw paws, bananas, mangoes and different citrus varieties. Other than that, we can grow small rotational crops, greens, herbs, lettuce, egg plants, corn and watermelon."

"We prepare the ground, put fertiliser into the soil, to level the pH balance out, to get the soil right for the seeds to grow in. We balance alkaline or acidic soil. People should test their soil before planting. Most soil in this area has not been touched for a while. The best way to start is to put organic material back into the soil. You can plant legumes; it puts lots of nutrients back into the soil. That's a healthier way to start the seeds off. Horse manure, grass clippings, waste from the kitchen, mix it together, all that deteriorates and can be put back into the garden," says Mr Attrison Atu.

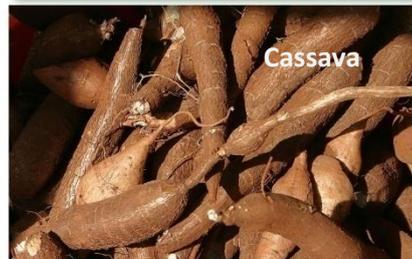
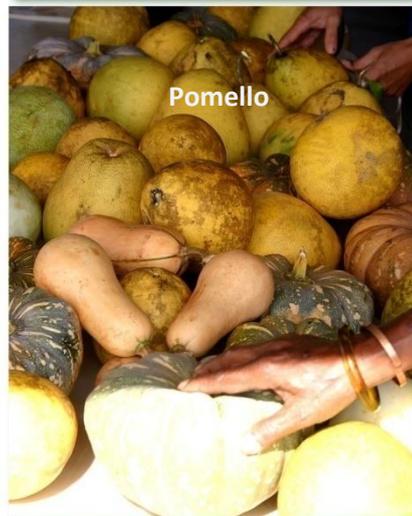
"Our parents used to plant straight into the soil. Nowadays people recommend raised beds. One could cover a raised bed with plastics, to kill the micro organism. Leave that for weeks, before you plant. Your greens will come out better than planting into the (unprepared) soil."

"It all depends on how you irrigate your plants too," informs Mr Atu, "Town water has chlorine in it, it acts like acid. The development of the crop comes out different when using town water, or creek and rain water. Farm crops look totally different than crops grown in a backyard."

"When I was a kid, people used to carry water from the creek to wet their gardens. We didn't have taps in those days. Some of the crops they planted then were low maintenance, like cassava, sweet potatoes. We didn't have to put a lot of water on them. This farm has been worked for 30 years now. The soil is not as good as before, because it has been overworked. To get the soil back into the rhythm of planting again, we have to feed the soil. Leave it for a year, plant cover crops and put the goodness back. When the produce is ready we sell it, but it's not a commercial farm. The farm is to teach kids how to plant, as well as marketing and sales."

Mr Harrison Atu has been working at the farm for 12 years and hopes to get another piece of land for animal husbandry, a good nursery and a hydroponic system. "We want to get up to a more modern level, high technology. We want to put in an irrigation drip system, water straight through the crop, instead of applying fertiliser on top," says Mr Atu. "The kids do 50% of the work and I do the rest. The farm site is 3.6 acres. We have another piece of land right at the school, there is a poultry shed as well. This is for all the schools. We're trying to introduce the younger kids to this. When they come to high school, we expect them to learn at this level."

Pomello (*Citrus maxima*) is a citrus fruit, sweet and pink inside. The fruit is high in vitamin C and low in calories. The French call it 'pamplemousse', in Thailand 'som-o', the Japanese know it as 'zabon' or 'butan'. "We have pumpkin, lady finger, sugar and Cavendish bananas, sweet corn, lettuce and cucumbers, and so much more. Cassava is a root crop; many of the islanders make damper out of that," adds Mr Atu.



Teacher, Mr Zac Walker, takes a group of grade 4, 5 and 6 children around the farm, explaining as they go along: "This is a male flower (paw paw); the yellow dust is the pollen. That has to get to a female flower. The bees collect the pollen to carry it across to the female flowers. If they only get a little bit of pollen, the fruit will end up misshapen. Two weeks ago, we got a bee hive to help with pollination. Only the female paw paw trees can have fruits," explains Mr Walker.

"Tomatoes are also very hard to grow in the NPA. They get lots of diseases and many things are trying to eat them, including a fungus. All the plants here are watered from the creek. Capsicum like really hot weather, they start to get better when it heats up. Lettuce is very hard to grow. When it's hot and dry the lettuce want to go to seed. The tall lettuces are already flowering. They are too late to eat, they go bitter," highlights Mr Walker, as the kids try the locally grown cherry tomatoes.



Billy is holding a berry.

Tomato is a fruit developed from the ovary of the plant. It is a berry because it is grown from a single ovary.

It is not that long ago, when the NPA had only one shipment of food per month, with no electricity to keep perishables from turning bad, no shops to rely on to keep up supplies. Much of the monthly supplies became quickly unfit for human consumption, due to pest infestations and spoilage. People had to grow their own crops. Growing crops requires work, physical activity, in today's language 'exercise'. Getting a turtle took strength to row the boat, no outboards then. From the moment of harvest, fruits and vegetables start to deteriorate. Ideal maturity of produce is when it has fully developed for consumption on the plant. Take into consideration the time it takes for anything to reach the NPA and it is easy to see that only a backyard plot or a local producer (who gets it to the market fast) can provide produce that could be classified as 'fresh'.

"When I lived in Bamaga, I had beans growing out of my ears, and broccoli," says Mr Arthur Wong, "I worked the ground. It wasn't just putting seeds in the ground and then expect them to grow. Seisia is a bit hard, it's all mainly sand, and here we have scrub turkeys, when the produce comes up, they eat it."

"When the supermarkets came along they made it easier to buy a pumpkin, but still you could grow your own, maybe not throughout the whole year. A lot of people have their cassava in their backyard, but it's not enough. I used to dig a hole, smash up sardines and bury them in my garden. They eventually break down and improve the soil. I had chooks and beans, giving them away. It can be done. Some of the older ladies still do it. In the back of Seisia, we had a ground up there, put a fence around it and we grew things. Often when it was ready to harvest, the bandicoots came, before we did. There was no water up there; I used to carry the water. The Mayor had a garden next to me. In the old days they still had their problems, but they used to put in some iron (sheets), to stop the bandicoots. In those days it was, either you prevent it, or you don't eat. The Torres Strait people had gardens; they had to have it, that's where they lived. Some of the Aboriginals also had gardens, down in the Lockhardt region," says Mr Wong.



