SEISIA
NEW MAPOON
BAMAGA
UMAGICO
INJINOO
NPARC
NORTHERN PENINSULA AREA REGIONAL COUNCIL
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NPA Regional Council News LETTER

Issue 18
Sep/Oct 2010

Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council News Letter

In this Issue: **Indigenous Policy, Regatta, Road works, Crab Island, CIAF, White Balloons, Ropeyarn Cup,…**

They have survived for millions of years. Their eggs are a touch bigger than golf balls. Their young are the largest hatchlings of any turtle. They carry shields that grant no defense against the barrage of predators they're facing in the first few minutes of life. Feral pigs on the mainland ensure they don't ever get to see the ocean.

…it's almost 100% predation

Waru, why you?

…because!

2010 inaugural NPA Pirates Regatta

'Black Pearl' underway.

…more on page 7

…more on Pages 4 to 6.

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NPARC Chief Executive Officer
Mr Stuart Duncan

INDIGENOUS POLICY "~~CLOSING~~ WIDENING THE GAP"

At its September ordinary meeting of Council for the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council in Bamaga, council was informed that due to State and Commonwealth policy changes, the council has been short-changed in excess of $4.5 million in the 2009 / 2010 fiscal year. The 2010 National Award winning Council (for small councils under 15,000 rates payers in the category for asset and financial management) is in critical financial stress.

Mayor Elu commented, "I can no longer withhold my anger at the total lack of commitment by the State and Commonwealth governments to fully fund their respective policy decisions. The forced amalgamation has cost council around $2.9M and the State provided $1M. We are a Grants Dependant council. Where did they think the short-fall would be funded from? and now the State Minister for Local Government has turned her back on us," Mayor Elu said.

"In June 2009, the Commonwealth Government reformed the NPA CDEP program and is providing some financial assistance, but did not bother to fully audit how the Commonwealth 'approved' the existing program, being run for the past 9 years as a wage subsidy, and fully fund a transition away from the previously 'approved' program," said Mayor Elu.

The opportunity for the legacy councils to utilize the old CDEP program as a wage subsidy allowed these councils to employ far more people than was really required and to subsidize full-time council employee wages, and why not, unemployment was high and jobs very few.

The State Government's Code of Practice locked the excessive employee establishment in for three years from the date of amalgamation, and changes to the Commonwealth program in June 2009 reduced the cash flowing into the NPA Regional Council by $3.2million.

"In March 2011, the State Government 3 year Code of Practice (employment guarantee) ends… and so does the Commonwealth's assistance to my council for wage 'top-up' funding. The transition to sustainability begins in March 2011 not March 2008, or do we just sack all non-essential employees and create a social nightmare?" asks Mayor Elu.
"What I see happening to my communities as a result of poor government policy leaves me and my Councillors bewildered and angry," Mayor Elu said.

"The newly formed regional council amalgamated 5 councils and completed a restructure to comply with the *Local Government Act*. We went unqualified in our inaugural audit, negotiated a Certified Agreement, and won the National Award, for Asset and Finance Management for councils below 15,000 rate payers."

"Council provides the CDEP National Job Creation Program services in the NPA, and has moved 130 participants off welfare. It has built and divested a range of viable enterprises that now employ a combined 130 locals that are no longer dependant on welfare, and these enterprises will grow and create a true and sustainable private sector," said Mr. Elu.

"We have a plan for recovery, but with my council having to fund the State and Commonwealth changes, we will be closing the doors and sending our workforce to the side-walk. I will make it my mission to regularly inform the community about the real reasons for our financial difficulty," Mayor Elu said.

Press Release, 10. Sep 2010

Bamaga sewage sprinklers in action… Seisia coming on-line

This is only the second time that Bamaga sewage sprinklers are in use. The new installation operates from underground supply lines which feed several rotating sprinklers from fixed positions. The earlier system was a complicated rotating arm arrangement which revolved around a centre pivot (some of the arms seen in the image). That system was plagued by exorbitant maintenance costs. The rotating arms had computer controlled motors to drive the arms around the pivot and were prone to regular breakdowns.

"Look at it, isn't it just beautiful? Nothing can go wrong," says Mr Nick Curnow. The old centre pivot system is up for auction. Bamaga sewage works has five settling tanks. The last tank automatically triggers the sprinkler pump once the water level reaches a certain height (similar to a toilet cistern). Seisia houses are currently in the process of being connected to the newly constructed pipeline, which discharges into Bamaga sewage works. Each day more houses come on-line. The sprinkler system can be extended in the future when the need arises.

NPA Art Students in Cairns for CIAF and Energy Exhibition

By Briana Siebel

Year 11 art students travelled down to Cairns to be a part of The Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (late Aug). The Art fair showcased some of our communities' finest artists and performers, as well as other artists from around Queensland. The atmosphere in Cairns was amazing with visual art, music and dance right around the city.

We spent the days looking through the art galleries, Tanks, and we were even lucky enough to work with an artist – Adrian Wolf for a day and see the opening of Joel Sam's exhibition at Kickarts. Students also attended the launch of 'black and write' this included having breakfast with author Borri Pryer and Ernie Dingo.

Student Dora Eseli stated that she enjoyed the trip, because she got to see so many artists and that Tanks Arts was amazing.

The trip allowed students to become more familiar with the Arts industries and possible employment opportunities associated with the arts.

We have now sent some of our students work down to Cairns to be a part of the Ergon Energy 'Energy' Art exhibition at Tanks, which showcases year 10, 11, and 12 art students from Far North Queensland. The exhibition is on for the next two weeks and awards are to be announced on Friday 3rd September. We wish Jawena Jacob, Te-Elah Bryden, Rowena Tabuai, Joya Woosup and Guyanna Gebadi all the best with the awards. (Images courtesy Ms Siebel)

CDEP workers completed fencing work

around Injinoo and Umagico cemetery is complete, while fence around Bamaga Pool is nearing completion.

The '*Ball Court*' in Bamaga has become a **'Basket Ball Court'**, following the arrival of four baskets.

Umagico sports oval

Horses tend the fence around Umagico sports ground from both sides. Whenever possible they try to fertilise the turf as well. One of them must have a key ☺

Injinoo road drainage

The road surface just south of Injinoo was opened up to place gravel wrapped in geo plastic beneath the surface, allowing for better drainage around the area.

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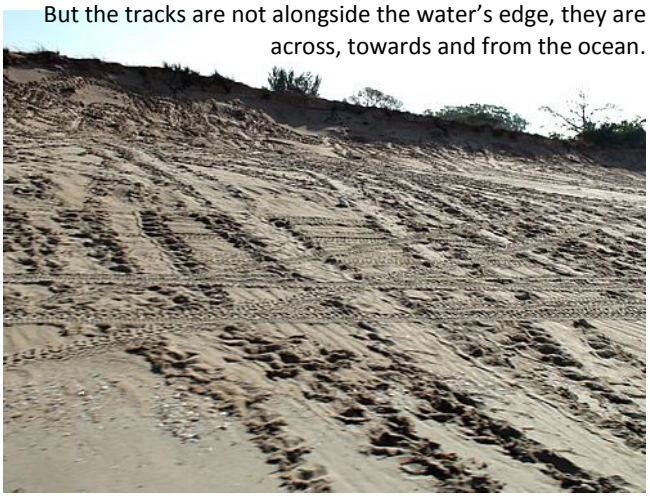
But the tracks are not alongside the water's edge, they are across, towards and from the ocean.



Crab Island

is an idyllic place. Sunset comes and life begins. In the morning the place looks as if the Australian Tractor Race Championship had been held on its beaches, with hundreds of tracks churned up.

It's breeding time for the flatback turtles, and Crab Island is the largest nesting site in the world for them. They first arrive late afternoon, bobbing their heads out of the water, eyeing up a suitable patch. They then drag their heavy bodies out of the ocean, head up high on the beach and start digging.

The front flippers dig a 'body pit', before the rear flippers dig an egg chamber, about 0.5m deep. Her flippers are much like hands, having similar control to scoop up a handful of sand and bring it to the surface.

While one flipper reaches deep, the other flicks the previous load away. And so she builds her nest with efficient and coordinated movements, without wasting any time. She deposits about 50 eggs (other species lay at least 100), and covers the nest. The turtle is in a trance-like state when laying her eggs. Once done, she covers her eggs and heads back to the ocean.

The flatback sea turtle is endangered with extinction. They are unique amongst the world's 7 sea turtle species: They are known as 'Australia's Sea Turtles,' because they nest only on the nation's far northern beaches – the most restricted distribution of any turtle. They lay fewer, but larger eggs. They have a skin like shell with upturned edges. And they lack an oceanic phase, staying close to the coast as youngsters, unlike other sea turtle hatchlings that can travel across large oceans. They are rare and little studied. Currently on the island are sea turtle researchers Mr Brett Leis, Dr Ian Bell and Dr Barry Krueger. Their aim is to collect nesting biology data, describe nesting patterns, and examine 10 of the turtles each night to find out if they are first time breeders by way of laparoscopy.

The flat on its back is clearly visible here.

Mr Brett Leis and NPARC Ranger Co-Ordinator, Mr Warren Strevens (image above left), collect a turtle. in a tip trailer for examination.

Mr Leis has been researching the Crab Island flatback turtle rookery for several years and currently manages the Cape York Sea Turtle Project (working for Cape York Sustainable Futures). Both Dr Ian Bell and Dr Barry Krueger are world renowned sea turtle experts. Dr Bell works as a Senior Conservation Officer for Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service specializing in sea turtles, whilst Dr Krueger is a sea turtle biologist who has worked all over the world, more recently on flatback turtles in the Pilbara region of WA and previously managed the Barbados hawksbill turtle project in the Caribbean for many years.

Inside the turtle, Mr Ian Bell is looking for ovarian scars, the telltale signs left from previously delivered eggs.

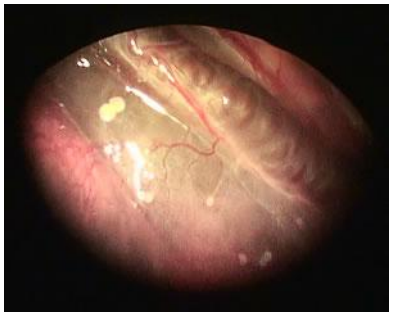


Image shows future eggs that will be laid in another season (the white/ yellow round dots). In the top right (diagonal) is a large blood vessel.

Following the examination the cut is stitched shut.

The tag is visible on her left front flipper. Also visible in this image are at least two crocodiles, the white dots, top left.

It is about midnight on Crab Island and life is in full swing, and so is death.

While the female flatbacks deposit their eggs, hatchlings emerge by the hundreds, perhaps thousands, all heading to the water.

The shell is soft but firm. The hatchlings will be lucky to survive the first few minutes. Laying in wait are the Ghost Crabs that carry them off. If they don't get them then the Rufus Night Herrons will, or the Beach Stone Curlews, the Jabirus and Pelicans. If any of them should miss some, then large numbers of crocs scoop them up with their heads turned sideways. "Only **one in a 1000 will survive** into adulthood," says Mr Leis.

Crab Island is lucky not to have the introduced wild pigs, which devastate the breeding grounds on the mainland.

At least 10 crocs are waiting in the shallows. The ones with their eyes below the surface are not visible.

Another six in this one…

…and another 9 here (above).

The spotlight reveals the eyes of most crocs, as they feast on the hatchlings on the sand. As soon as the quad bike gets nearer, they run to the water, some more reluctant than others. Whilst driving along the beach, Mr Leis marks the GPS positions of turtles, for later analysis.

Mr Leis estimates that about 500 flatback turtles came to nest this night. The sex of newborn hatchlings is determined by the temperature of the sand. Cooler sand will produce male offspring. The mainland may be warmer, producing female offspring. Mr Leis, "The mainland nesting population is critical for this fact, however feral pigs are wiping out most nests and this has the potential to cause regional extinction of turtles in the area, including Crab Island, because the population relies on these females."

The turtle's length is recorded (image left) and she is tagged before being released.

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In 50 years time the newborn will return here, to lay their eggs in the sand, continuing a cycle that started millions of years ago. The researchers have been tracking turtles by satellite, which has shown that flatback turtles can migrate as far away as 3000km to nest here. "We are in day four now," says Dr Ian Bell, when asked how many first-time breeders were found. "It seems to fluctuate each day. We had 17 last night, and fifteen were experienced breeders with two new recruits to the population. It's a very small sample size, but we need to finish off the study to see what the whole 50 look like." This night the researchers have found 'fibropapilloma' on 2 of the turtles. The disease is a herpes virus afflicting some of the turtles, with 'cauliflower' like tumors externally, but can have internal growth as well. The disease was found in Green Turtles as early as 1980s. It now affects all sea turtle species, but has been rarely seen on flatback turtles. "Fibropapilloma could be a result of stress from pollution or poor water quality," says Mr Leis. "Down in Moreton Bay (near Brisbane), a lot of green turtles have fibropapilloma that may be a result of living close to an urban area. Turtles travel far. These flatbacks could have been coming from areas such as Indonesia or New Guinea. It would be interesting to find out where they are picking it up from."

Some of the flatbacks on Crab Island had part of their flippers and shell bitten off. "You see a lot of turtles have missing flippers and parts of shell; sharks tend to take a nice clean bite, whilst crocodile bites tend to be a bit more crunched," explains Mr Leis.

Turtles can cut off their blood supply when losing a flipper. They do have a nervous system and are able to feel pain. "You see some pulling themselves out of the water with only one flipper, so they're resilient tough girls," says Mr Leis. "You have to admire their determination and effort to lay their eggs and the foundation for the next generation. I just wish us, as humans, we're just as determined to ensure that sea turtles do not become extinct. But they face an uphill battle." Crab Island is the largest nesting rookery for flatback turtles in the world. Mr Brett Leis has been studying the rookery for 3 years and has been collecting valuable information to aid in the conservation of one of the world's rarest and least studied species of sea turtle.

The research team has a lot on its plate: Operating from two camps, south of Jardine on the mainland and Crab Island, conducting simultaneous surveys to allow comparative analysis. Rangers in training: The team works closely with the Apudthama Land and Sea Rangers to provide training and to increase understanding in monitoring and research methods. Together with the Apudthama Land Trust and NPARC, they have been working to monitor turtles and protect turtle nests from feral pigs on the mainland beaches, particularly the beaches south of the Jardine River.

"The big focus for the Jardine beaches and Seven Rivers area is the fact that the mainland populations are really being impacted by feral pigs. **It's almost 100% predation**, so every egg that's laid on the mainland is dug up by feral pigs," says Mr Leis. "It is the same story along much of the Cape York coast. Feral pigs are eating just about every egg laid by turtles on the mainland. This is a major issue. We have recorded some of the highest rates of predation of turtle nests in the NPA, which is a real concern, because of the significance of the turtle nesting population. Feral pigs are an introduced pest. They do not belong here. They wreak havoc across the landscape, destroying wetlands, competing and predating on native wildlife. We simply need to control pigs, especially in those priority areas in the NPA. The NPA region is pretty special in that it contains some of the world's most important sea turtle populations, but the fact is there are still a lot of pigs and we need to control those pigs. Whether through aerial culls, through baiting, through trapping, we need to make sure that the pig numbers are down, especially during the turtle nesting season, just to give those eggs a chance to incubate and hatch, and for the hatchlings to make it to the water. At the current rates of predation **there will be no more turtles nesting on the west coast in 20 years time**. Those eggs won't incubate, those hatchlings won't grow old, they won't be returning. It's pretty critical."

An email received with the heading 'World shame coast in Costa Rica' shows whole communities plundering eggs from nests whilst the turtles are still on the beach. They are carried off by the bags full to be sold. Images cannot be shown for copyright reasons. Mr Leis identified them as olive ridley turtles, "They nest in a phenomenon called 'Arribada', in which all the turtles emerge over 1 or 2 nights in the season to nest. Unfortunately, it means they are easily exploited. Ironically, this is the same thing happening in the NPA, however it is feral pigs destroying every nest day after day. This sort of thing is happening all over the world, which saddens me. The once large nesting populations of olive ridleys that occurred in Peninsula Malaysia and Thailand are a classic example of over exploitation of sea turtle stocks. Long term, over-harvest of their eggs saw the population collapse and lead to their eventual decimation. They went from hundreds of thousands of nesting turtles a year to zero… in a matter of decades. Same story, if there are no eggs to hatch, then there are no turtles to come back in the future. This is why both, indiscriminate egg collecting and hunting of adults in the Torres Strait and NPA will have dire consequences: no adult females laying and no hatchlings returning as adults = no more turtles!!"

Special thanks for help with this article to Mr Brett Leis.

NPARC Mayor, Mr Elu, triggers the starting blast for the 2.2nm raft race from Umagico campgrounds to Seisia Fishing Club. Race officials, Ms Kym Kocsis and Mr Arthur Wong, keep a watchful eye on the contenders. Even though some drifted off towards Bam Island all arrived safely at Seisia Fishing Club in various states of seaworthiness. The event was enjoyed all and marks another success in Seisia Fishing Club's colourful history.

The support crews both onshore and offshore need to be especially acknowledged. Mina Big Esso to all of those pirates and hope to see you in the race next year.

Mina Big Esso to all who supported the first ever Peninsula Pirates Regatta. A great time afterwards at Seisia Fishing Club.

Images and content courtesy Seisia Fishing Club.

Mrs Cheryl Sanders, Leoni Lippitt, Jacqui Broderick on craft '*Cape Cougar.' The team also made '*Best dressed crew.'

2010 inaugural NPA Pirates Regatta

Skipper, Mr Edmond Aniba's 'Ba Ba Blacksheep' is crewed by Ms Donna Saunders and Mr Nigel Preddy. It reached Seisia shores in 2hr 30min as 3rd place getter. Kaziw Gul and Ba Ba Black Sheep.

Mr Willie Fulton and Silver shake hands with competitors.

1st Place getters 'Burum Eye Baidam,' Mr Greg Bethune and Mr Olle Ohulin made it in 31 minutes.

Mr Brett Taylor and Mr Manu Isua with craft '*Water Spyder*' .

Mr Matt Dawson, Julian Harrold and Eddie Newman on craft '*Rachal*' were2nd placegetters.

Mr Rob, Jayden and Sam Carmody on '*Alau Express.*'

Mr Edmond Ober, Leighann Ober and Dick Townson - craft '*Black Pearl*'. It became a semi-submersible in Seisia (img left).

Seisia Fishing Club organised the event, which was supported by SeaSwift, Skytrans, Mitre 10 Cairns, Reliance Petroleum + Ted Hobson.

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The **Dan Ropeyarn Cup** organising committee meeting in Bamaga, preparing for the 1oth cup. From left: Ms Estelle Gebadi, Ms Harriet Phineasa, Ms Karyn Sam, and Mrs Patty Nona. …more on page 16.

CDEP Mentors: Four people will start as CDEP mentors. They are Ms Joyce Soki, Mrs Elaine Wade, Mr Bernard Charlie and Mr Dennis Getawan.

Roadwork between Jardine and north of Rocky Creek (end of August) brings some welcome relief from dust and corrugations with a newly constructed 7km stretch of bitumen.

The same section of road last year gave one a sense of achievement, getting through the mud when wet.

Overall, road conditions between Weipa and Jardine are good (end of August). A few sections have corrugations and lose gravel to be aware of. The road between Bamaga and the Tip is good. The section between Pajinka/Somerset Junction to Somerset is given cars and occupants a thorough massage. Beware of wildlife (this one near Somerset).

Specialists coming to NPA, T.I. and outer Islands
Sep / Oct / Nov
Bamaga Hospital and Community PHCC

1 Sep	General Physician / Paediatric / OT, Dr Heazlewood,Dr Marshall & Team, BamHosp OPD
2 - 3 Sep	Dr Heazlewood, Dr Marshall & Team, T.I. Hosp
6 – 8 Sep	Orthopaedic, Surgeon tba, T.I. Hosp 6th , & OT 7th – 8th
7 Sep	Endocrine Clinic, Dr Ashim Sinha, T.I. Hosp
9 Sep	Dermatology Clinic, Dr Rob Miller, T.I. Hosp
10 Sep	Dermatology Clinic, Dr Rob Miller, Murray PHC
28-29 Sep	Renal Clinic, Dr Tim Fulong, Outer Islands
30 Sep	Renal Clinic, Dr Tim Fulong, T.I. Hosp OPD
1 Oct	Renal Clinic, Dr Tim Fulong, Bamaga Hosp
5 - 8 Oct	Women's clinic, Dr Jane Barry: 5th Bamaga, 6th New Mapoon (morning), 6th Seisia (afternoon), 7th Umagico, 8th Injinoo.
11 Oct	Dermatology Clinic, Dr Rob Miller, Bamaga Hospital
12 Oct	Dermatology Clinic, Dr Rob Miller, Saibai
13 Oct	Dermatology Clinic, Dr Rob Miller, Badu
11 - 15 Oct	EYES, Dr Gary Brian, T.I. H OPD & OT 11-15th
13 Oct	General Physician/ Paediatric / OT, Dr Heazlewood, Dr Marshall & Team, Bamaga Hospital
14 - 15 Oct	General Physician/ Paediatric / OT, Dr Heazlewood, Dr Marshall & Team, T.I. Hosp – OPD 14- 15th
12 Oct	Chest Clinic, Thoracic Team, CBH, Bamaga Hospital
13 Oct	Chest Clinic, Thoracic Team, CBH, Saibai
14 Oct	Chest Clinic, Thoracic Team, CBH, Boigu
18 - 19 Oct	Endocrine Clinic, Dr Ashim Sinha, Horn PHC 18th, Bamaga Hosp 19th
18 - 21 Oct	Paediatric Respiratory, Dr Masters & Dr Chang & Team, T.I. PHCC 18-21st
18 - 21 Oct	Deadly Ears ENT Clininc, ENT Team, Brisbane, Bamaga Hosp
19 - 21 Oct	Gynaecology Clinic, Dr Paul Howatt & Team, T.I. H OPD 19-21st, Theatre 20th
21 - 22 Oct	Paediatric Surgery, Dr Harry Stalewski & Registrar, T.I. OPD 21st, Theatre 22nd (T.I.)
2 Nov	Endocrine Clinic, Dr Ashim Sinha, T.I.H OPD
3 – 5 Nov	Orthopaedic, Surgeon TBA, T.I.H. OPD 3rd, OT 4-5th
9 – 5 Nov	Scopes, Dr John Ombiga & team, T.I. H. OPD & OT
11 Nov	Liver, Dr John Ombiga & team, T.I. H. OP
16 -19 Nov	CBH to confirm surgeons, T.I.H. OPD 16th, Theatre 17-19th
22 -26 Nov	ENT Clinic, Dr Howson & team, T.I. H. & OT
24 Nov	General Physician/Paediatric/OT, Dr Heazelwood, Dr Marshall & Team, Bamaga Hospital
25 -26 Nov	General Physician/Paediatric/OT, Dr Heazelwood, Dr Marshall & Team, T.I.H. OPD
29 Nov – 2 Dec	EYES, Dr Gary Brian, T.I.H. OPD & OT 29th Nov – 2nd Dec
30 Nov	Endocrine Clinic, Dr Ashim Sinha, Bamaga Hospital

OT = Operating Theatre,
PHC = Primary Health Centre
OPD = Out-Patients Department

"A-B-C, 1,2,3… come to school to learn,"

the call heard from Mosby Creek to Bamaga Nursery, as students of NPA Campus staged a short march at Bamaga (3 Sep.), bringing awareness to the importance of regular school attendance. Students in this group did not miss a single day, congratulations. Family, educators and members of the community joined the walk with siren-blasting Police escort up front.

The road of education is as long as life. The more knowledge and understanding we can absorb during regular school attendance, the more we are prepared to face life with all its challenges. Education relates directly to health, wellbeing, and socio-economic issues.

The Bamaga march was organized by NPA Ngurpai Ikamalkya Council (NPA Education Council), with meetings set during early Sept to endorse the NPA Education Strategy. Mr Jeffrey Aniba (Cr for Seisia) is the chairperson of NPA NIIC.

White balloon day

Ms Eren Hiesley (white top) works with the Child Wellbeing Unit of NPA Family and Community Services. "We are doing events throughout the entire week as part of National Child Protection week, and White Balloon Day is a national event as well."

White balloons are released to bring awareness to sexual assaults on children and child protection issues. "We are releasing white balloons, and we are asking children to make a commitment, if they know of any other child, cousin, friend that is being hurt, that they tell someone, that they tell their parent, their teacher."

"We also have screen-printing workshops at New Mapoon Arts Centre, and at Injinoo Healing Centre. We'll have an Information stall at Seisia supermarket, and on Friday a march from Anzac Park to Bamaga Oval, where we'll have a BBQ. We are hoping to get many adults to come along, to get their support in community protection."

"Funding for the organisation comes from different government departments, both Federal and State, but for the events this week, we also got support from Bamaga Enterprises Ltd. The schools are getting behind us and NPARC also is getting behind us for the events."

Wheels on wheels

Wheels Magazine editor, Mr Ged Bulmer (left), and photographer Mr Thomas Wielecki (right, early Sept), made their way to Cape York in this Mazda MX5, including back-up crew. Most likely their story will be covered in Wheels November Issue.

Children have human rights. These are set out in 54 articles and two Optional Protocols in the 'Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC)' which was signed by nearly all countries on earth.

Some of these rights are: The right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. The Convention protects children's rights by setting standards in health care; education; and legal, civil and social services. (Source: UNICEF) *Unfortunately no laws in place can guarantee that no harm will come to children.*

Universal Children's Day, 24 October, focused on the rights of children around the world. In Bamaga a march was held on the day between Yusia Ginau Memorial Oval and the ANZAC memorial.

Around 11 million children die each year from largely preventable diseases caused by lack of clean water and inadequate health care. More than 110 million primary school age children worldwide are not enrolled in school. Most of these are girls, but overall, millions more children are enrolled in schools now than at any time in history. An estimated 250 million children aged from five to 14 are working around the world. Close to 2 million children have been killed in armed conflicts in the past decade. (Source: Global Education)

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Seisia Styles, opened late September, run by Ms Niki Wojtula, who is a Hairdresser & Beauty Therapist.

Who: Seisia Styles
Where: Seisia Camp Ground (next to Reception)
When: Monday – Friday, 12 to 5pm
What: Males, females, children, cuts, colours, foils, pedicures, and facial waxing.

Ms Shaie Jay gets what looks to the untrained eye like a colouring job.

For an appointment, please call: **0428 660 694**, or email: nikismith_222@hotmail.com

Seisia Styles is believed to be the first Hairdresser in the NPA. Congratulations!

Mr **Teho Ropeyarn** opens his first **solo art show** 8th Oct, 6pm at Umi Arts Gallery Space, 335 Sheridan St, North Cairns.

Funding boost for justice groups

Mr Jason O'Brien, MP Cook, announced in a late August Press Release that local Indigenous justice groups get a funding boost of almost $1.3mill from the Bligh Government. Thursday Island Justice Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Corporation has a $104,000 allocation, while Northern Peninsula Justice Services Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation (for the justice groups in Bamaga, Injinoo, New Mapoon, Seisia and Umagico), has $165,000 allocated. The announcement came from Attorney-General Mr Cameron Dick in Parliament (late August).

Now put your arm over my shoulder, just as I did.

I tell you it's not going to work!

Artist: Mr Levi Tom

Not many people got to see the first work by Mr Levi Tom of Bamaga, who had some art lessons recently. The work is technically outstanding, especially for a first. Croc details below. The work sold quickly.

Life is

...from charred trunks to glowing glory
in a couple of days.

Growing greens

In Seisia: Mrs Gebadi tending her vegetable garden earlier in the season. Although the soil is sandy in Seisia, she yields a good crop, bringing freshly grown vegetables to the table.

In Bamaga: The Marinki family is harvesting the fruits of their labour

… thanks mum.

Warning: The next pages deal with the subject of 'death' and how the various cultures in the NPA deal with the loss of a loved one. Please do not turn the page if you think this could be upsetting.

At journey's end

Life is a journey, culminating in death for each individual, but despite that ongoing, as part of us lives on in following generations. In this article we look at death and how some of the various cultures living in the NPA deal with those times. Each article is the view of an individual. There are likely to be wide ranging differences between each of the tribes, tribal groups or clans.

Torres Strait Islander, Saibai Culture: NPARC Mayor, Mr Joseph Elu, "In each family, in the Island system, I'm talking about Saibai Island system… each clan group has a hierarchy. There are elders, there are community leaders. If one clan group relates to another clan group by marriage, and the man dies, the woman's clan group makes the arrangements for the funeral. If the woman dies, than the man's family looks after that, a bit like the in-laws. There used to be Head people of the clan groups. They became what we call 'Mari Gedth.' Literally it means ghost chair. 'Mari' is the soul, the spirit, and 'Gedth' is the hand. A funeral is a sad time. The tombstone opening is a celebration of the life of that person."

"Some people cry there too, but there is more joy. In our custom (Saibai) we didn't bury people. We put them up on a stack. We left them there, in the environment. Indians did it. Some Aboriginals in Northern Territory did it. When the body decomposed, we brought the bones back. The head we put in the house, and the skeleton… there was a place where people kept bones. A big heap. Not only human bones, dugong bones, turtle bones… we call it 'Sibui'. That is where everything went. The priests stopped it (missionaries). That was a celebration when the body decomposed, a year… 18 months, and we put the bones there. When the priests came, they said, 'No, no, no, that's not right. The soul goes to heaven, the body you must bury.' Tombstone, putting the stone, and unveiling, they bring from the Pacific, Samoans used to do. The Fijians do it too."

Often very elaborate and costly tombstones are used. "It's more of a status of a person. How much you're respected. Like if it's a father or mother with 10 kids. So you got to say, well, they spent a lot of money and time looking after you 10 kids, you got to pay that back. Not the same amount of money of course, but big family, big celebration. Italians do it."

Maori Culture: Mr Jo Ransfield is nurse at Bamaga Hospital: "If someone dies in the family, the word goes out. If they die in hospital, and they need an autopsy, the family will all go to the hospital and stay there until the autopsy is finished, be that 1 day, 3 days, four days. They got facilities (in hospitals) once they got used to how we do things, for the family to stay. We won't leave our one that has passed away by themselves. (There are) lots of reasons why. One reason is, in the old days, if my mother passed away, and she comes from a different tribe, and if nobody is with her body, and her family shows up, they will take to body back to their people. It is disrespect to their family and their tribe. The other reason why we don't leave them alone is, we don't want them cold by themselves. With us being there keeps it warm. As soon as procedures are finished, we're there right on the spot to grab them and bring them home. None of this 1 week, 2 weeks, 3 weeks business. The whole tribe will get upset." "From there we'll take our one back to our marae, our tribal home, our meeting house. Marae is our ancestral house. If anything goes wrong, or there are talks to be talked about in our own tribes, everybody gets called back to there. It is named after one of our ancestors, each tribe got them. Our world revolves around this place. We don't care what happens in the outside world, maybe a bad thing, but everything is focused and geared towards the marae. It is the last place we go when we pass away. That's where we all get taken. The ones who run the funeral are the immediate family, so they organize to get back to the marae. When we get back to the marae, all our aunties have gathered all our families together. We cook and cater for people. It usually lasts three days. Tupapaku (the body) is taken inside and the coffin is opened, and all the families stay inside there. We stay with the body for three days. We have a dining room next to our meeting house."

"The rest of the family and tribes work in the dining halls, work in the cook houses in the back. Over the three days, and all the tribes that are related to us, or to that person and family, they come over three days to pay their respects. Some groups that come might be twenty; some may be over 150 at one time. Every time someone comes, we have to feed them, the whole tribe puts in, meats, sea food. When they are visiting, the tribe lays on what they call a koha. In the old days that could be anything, meat, food, whatever. We tend to use money now. They all come and put money together and present it as koha to us, and it helps with a lot of things. Over the three days you can get hundreds of people coming."

"On the last day funeral services are arranged. It's usually our own ministers that will run the show. We take our loved one and we bury them. It's a sad time. When that comes, we've got families there that are grave diggers. On that day, they'll go down in the morning, dig the graves (grave), and that's it for those men. They don't touch food for the rest of the day, they don't have to work. Once their job is done, they don't come and help us cook. They come back and sit with us, be with us. After the burial, we have a big feast where speeches are done. Over the three days of the funeral, each tribe comes with their own orators. They speak on behalf of their tribe. A group may have five speakers, and we have a paipai, all the elders, we reply to them. The speeches are all about the person who died. Whichever tribe comes they all know the deceased, so they all got different stories to tell. Some are funny, others aren't so funny, some we never even heard of. The close family members they wash the body, re clothe them, and put them in the casket, ready to come home, special prayers. When the body comes to the marae, we'll do a Hakka to welcome them, and with the whole tribe doing it, it's awesome. It's very special to us. We welcome them home and usually it's with a big Hakka. On the last day of the funeral, they carry them from the wharenui (can be called a whare tupuna, it's our ancestral home) out the front, (we) walk the casket to the cemetery."

"My father's family live on State Highway 1, and we'll stop the traffic. It's the main highway in New Zealand. We'll ring up the Police and they'll come stop the traffic, we'll just clog up the roads, because there are heaps of us. We walk them down, some use their own vehicles, some use a hearse. We might do another Hakka when they putting them down. There is no right time to do it, you just know."

"The wharenui (or whare tupuna) is carved on the outside. Inside it's got carvings. The building is shaped like… he has its arms, he has a spine that runs along the top of the roof inside. Down on the rafters, they're all carved and painted and represent his ribs. So when you go into a wharenui, it may be freezing cold outside, but when the family goes into a wharenui, it's a warm feeling."

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NPARC Chief Executive Officer
Mr Stuart Duncan

"We go inside our ancestor, protects us, and he keeps us warm. As far as tombstones go, we have not. We have unveilings, but they are not big. Some families do it themselves, say a prayer, some have big ones. We care for the grave, our families and our extended families. It's a good place to run away from the police and hide. We're not scared of our ancestors. When we were naughty when we were young, we hide away in the cemetery from the police. We have family plots (at the cemetery). The eldest in the family will decide who goes where. The wife or husband does not decide. It will be the oldest in the family that comes from that tribe (where the body is to be buried)."

"When the tribes come, these big political issues, 'marae politics' we call it, where there are big speeches and they give their reasons why they want to take the body with them. Generally our elders can stop them. Once it's been spoken, the other side will respect it, the home people's wishes. Maoris in general believe if one passes on, the spirit travels the land and makes its way up to north, where we have a place named Cape Reinga. That place is the last place the person will see before he dives into the ocean, the underworld, whatever happens, spiritually speaking. The spirit when they pass on leaves the body, travels around our country and then will make its way up north, right to the tip of the north island. It's a beautiful place. They will turn and look behind them, and they will know it's the last time they're gonna see this home, and then dive off the cliff into the ocean. It's a special place that all the tribes around the country respect. It's a place where two oceans meet. You can see the dividing line, the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean. It's where they meet around our country, right on the tip. That's basically what believe happens to our spirits."

Mr Jo Ransfield comes from Ngati Tukorehe (father's tribe), and Nagti Porou (mother's tribe). "We are proud to be called Maoris. We were brought up as Tukorehe. What am I? I believe I'm Ngati Tukorehe, that's my tribe, then I'm Maori, and thirdly I'm a New Zealander, or Kiwi. I don't like on my passport having stamped 'New Zealander', but I'm not going to get anywhere. You have to reform like everyone else."

About the welcoming Hakka, when the body arrives: "Each tribe in New Zealand has a National Anthem, that's what we say. Ours is this Hakka called 'Kamate,' which the All Blacks perform as well. Kamate Kamate, it's only a portion of the Hakka, for our tribe. It comes from one of our ancestors. The story behind that one is: He was being chased by another tribe, and they wanted to kill him. He found refuge in another tribe, told them what was happening. The chief of that area put him in a basket, in a kumera pit (sweet potato pit), told him to hide in there, and sat his wife over the entrance to the pit… (thinking)… I'll leave that part out. When the warriors that were chasing him came into the camp, (asking) 'Where is he? We know he came in here!' they said they had no idea where he was. In his mind he spoke these words, 'Kamate, Kamate (I will die, I will die).' He could hear the warriors looking all around, but they never actually asked the woman (the sitting wife) to stand up. He was sitting underneath. Then the noise stopped. To do with the Hakka, Kamate, Kamate, they are looking for him, ready to kill him, then he went 'Kaoda, Kaoda,' when all went quite (No, I will live, I will live). From this basically he composed this Hakka at the time. We don't even perform the whole Hakka. It is long, but we've broken it down over the years, condensed it. The Hakka's name is Kikiki, of which Kamate is a part of, the end part of that. No matter where we go and if we say this (the Hakka), and other Maori people are there, they will know those fellows come from Rokowa or Natitu."

"My mother's tribe's Hakka is Mua Muku. Mua Muku is one of our Gods. He's the unborn child of Rangi Nui (the Sky Father) and Papa Tuanuku (the Earth Mother). He never ever was born. He stayed inside his mother's womb. He is the God of volcanoes. He can split the ground with earthquakes, because he's a bit of a wild child… when he gets angry. They had a lot of children, but he is the only one that stayed inside, unborn. When we have earthquakes back home or volcanoes erupt, wherever they are, the tribes say, 'That fellow's not happy.' And that's what we believe."

"If your father and mother come from a different area: We buried my father at home. What we'll do is, right after the funeral, we'll go back to my mother's people. Those from our tribe that can travel will travel up to where my mother comes from, and her family and her tribe, and then we'll have a get-together with them for a couple of days. That's for those who could not travel down to the funeral. We take his spirit up there, to their people, to pay respects, and then we come home. That finishes the funeral."

"In the whare tupuna, which is our ancestral house, whoever passes away, I don't know when it started… what year, we got photos way back, when they had it… When something happens, it doesn't have to be a funeral, a gathering and you stay overnight, everybody guns for their ancestors. You got my great-great grandfather, right down to my son was the last one, and my niece was the last one in our family. The walls are all getting clogged up (with pictures of family members). Everybody from your family will run to sleep under there. It just keeps you warm. Your own people, your ancestors are looking over you, while you are sleeping."

"The thing is, when somebody dies, let's say in a hospital, we won't leave the body by itself. We will camp outside; we'll be a nuisance more than anything, and we'll have Karakia every night (prayers)."

Aboriginal Culture: Although Mrs Agnes Mark can't remember much of how things were done way back then, but in Aboriginal culture the deceased were buried without a coffin (Mpakwithi people from Western Cape). The body used to be buried straight away, or the next day. "They used to be buried in the bush, nowadays it's in the cemetery," says Mrs Mark. "Our people used to mark the grave with a stone or a tree or something. But now it's different." The immediate family looks after the deceased, the partner or the children of the deceased. "We don't have like the in-laws or Mari Gedth, we don't have that."

"We respect the person who died, and the partner that's left behind. We respect them, and the children." "We don't expect them to do anything, but follow the instructions leading up to the burial. Maybe other tribes do it differently. I don't know about them."

"But the decision comes from the partners. Whatever the partner says, the brothers and sisters work on that. The spirit is there. If one dies it's there with them, maybe around where that person lives. Then after three days they start looking, where they are. They come out and they look, they look for families. Sometimes you can feel their presence. You can feel their presence coming around, not to everyone, but to the immediate family first. When the person dies you collect all their belongings, pack them up and put them away in the room and close the door. A year or so later elderly men smoke the house or room with Iron Wood leaves. Usually we don't want to look at the pictures (of the person who died), not for a long time."

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"Sometimes people take years before they can." The name of the deceased is not mentioned, "No, not for a long time until after the ceremony, the smoking ceremony, to let the spirit go, before we can use the name." In Aboriginal culture the ceremony of tombstone opening did not exist. "Now, this generation they put a tombstone there, to mark the burial site of the deceased."

Papua New Guinea: Mr Thomas Serubi reflects of NPA culture: "When there is a death, say at the hospital," explains Mr Serubi, "those in the hospital would contact the in-laws, to let them know who has passed away. The in-laws would then have to arrange transportation for all the families of the one who died, to bring them to the hospital, or even to bring them to a house, which is going to be the mourning house. The head Mari Gedth… the 'captain' of the in-laws, he then breaks the news to the people. This is in NPA culture. It's joined together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait, and I believe this is more Torres Strait version that has been brought in. So they break the news and everybody cries. Each day people gather at the place of mourning. You have groups of people, those who go out hunting, those who cook, that sort of things. In the evenings they all sit together and have a little talk, arranging for the funeral. This is where the families chip in, to pay for the coffin and everything. This will go on until the time of the funeral day."

"On the funeral day, all that time is governed by the in-laws, who run the funeral. They arrange the time to go to church etc. Those Mari Gedth can hold back that time. They won't go according to what has been put out, the program. They can go past that time. It can be for an hour, it can be for two hours. I took notice of that at one time, when there was a grandson who was stuck at T.I. they had to send a dinghy to pick him up, to bring him in. The Mari Gedth had to wait for the grandson to come. This is where I'm talking about the difference, where when a white fellow walks past and they tell him, 'Your uncle has just passed away.' He says, 'OK,' and continues. With the black fellow here it's different. Family ties are so strong here. They could not bury the old fellow. They had to wait for the grandson. That grandson had to be here, to see him, to see the coffin. After the burial ceremony at the cemetery, the head Mari Gedth extend the invitation to family and friends. There will be a wakening feast."

"In the white fellow's world, there is only a gathering when they hear the news, and after that they split up, and nobody comes. They don't seem to come together to mourn the dead. They don't come together to chip in, to help to pay for the funeral cost for the dead. None of this is done. It's very hard to understand."

In New Guinea: "Back in my time, as far as I can remember, when there was a death… say it was my aunty that passed away, it is similar to here, where my uncles brothers and his family, they would be the ones to stand up and run the funeral. They took care of the family by feeding them, and the mourning period would last for two to three weeks. After that would be the burial. Especially on the woman's side, when the husband passed away, she would cover herself in charcoal, paint herself in charcoal, the widow. She'll stay like that for six months, maybe a year, to show her mourning."

"Probably after a year the in-laws are coming, bringing foods and clothing, artefacts and things, they put together, and then they split them up. They split them up for the dead person's relatives." (*It is not the belongings of the deceased, but food that has been brought in*) "This food is to help the relatives, the relatives of the deceased. They have been in mourning for the beloved one that's passed away. The others have been doing the work for them. When it comes to the time of… they call it 'sagali', they're bringing food. The food is split up for each family. She might have two brothers, two sisters, they will split the food up like this. After that there will be food for the rest of the family. The head in-law would give a speech and call the person's name to come up and take their food. The head in-law has a title, but I've been too young at the time."

"The body is laid there. After mourning for about two days roughly, sometimes even a day, the body is wrapped, taken away and buried in the ground. When it is buried in the ground, stones are put over. The body is wrapped up in bark and leaves (no coffin), and they bury it and put stones over it to stop the dogs and pigs. There was no cemetery as far as I know, growing up. We had a First Aid centre. Beside the First Aid centre there were graves. When the white person then came into the black person's life, started to show them that they had to bury the bodies in one particular place. That is for the sake of health and hygiene, which the black fellow at that time knew nothing about. When the time came for them to bury a person, they just buried the person (*meaning in the past*)."

"There is no head-stone, nothing. No flowers, nothing. It is marked in the mind (*the grave site*). It's passed on. The relatives know where their forefathers are. When they go to that certain area they say, 'Ah, this is my area. This is where my grandfather has been buried.' There is now a big dramatic change, totally different to what was done before. These times you have cemeteries, that sort of things. It's now more to the westernised ways, where money is being used, instead of the traditional food, the banana, the yam, taro and that."

"Now they are using flour bags, sugar, tea, that sort of things, plus money is then put on top. That part compares with Torres Strait people, when they have a tombstone opening."

"When the person dies, in the Trobriand Islands (off PNG), we believe the spirits travel across to an island, called 'Toma'. That is sort of like a paradise land. It's a happy place. It's a real island. People don't go there. People respect that island because their loved ones when they passed away they all pass over to that island, and live on that island."

"When the person dies, I'm not sure when the spirit goes there, but I know that after the funeral, when they are talking with sadness in their heart, they're still grieving. When they are talking, others will mention that person is now at Toma, in the living paradise, in peace."

"We don't have tombstone openings. We have the feast, sagali. Sagali is where everybody brings in their food, and then they heap it up. They call the families to come in and take all these things. Their names are called out. All the food is piled up in little groups and people are called. 'This is all yours,' then the next person is called and given the food that is rightfully given to us as ours. It (sagali) takes place after a year. The property of the deceased is given to the children of the deceased, husband, wife, the immediate family. If there is no immediate family then it's probably given to the wife's children, the children of the wife's sister, or brother's children. The first priority goes to the immediate family."

Where: **Yusia Ginau Memorial Oval, Bamaga** When: **4th – 6th November 2010**

Total Prize Money**:**
$40,000 and other prizes

It's on: the 10th anniversary Dan Ropeyarn Cup

Thursday, 4th Nov 2010
Gates open: 9am
Official opening: 7pm

Friday, 5th Nov 2010
NPARL qualifying matches
Contemporary Dance Group Comp. (Open to age 13yrs and over)

Saturday, 6th Nov 2010
Remainder of qualifying matches.
Grand Finale 4:00pm (Women's)
Grand Finale 5:30pm (Men's)
Contemporary Dance Finalists Performance,
Prize Presentation and Closing Ceremonies.

Mens NPARL:
$20,000 first prize
$10,000 runner up

Womens NPARL:
$6,000 first prize
$2,000 runner up

Contemporary Dance Competition:
$1,000 first prize

Register quickly:
max of 10 Men's teams, max of 4 Women's teams.
Registration Deadline: **22 Oct 2010**

Registration Fee:
$2,000 per men's team (NPARL);
$1,000 per women's team (NPARL);
$100 per dance group.

Contact Persons: Ms Estelle Gebadi, mob. 0429 895 666, or 07-4069 3657,
email: estelle.gebadi@nparc.qld.gov.au
Ms Karyn Sam, tel. 07-4069 3271, email: karyn_sam@health.qld.gov.au

Be a part of the crowning matches

Care for country
care for children
care for yumi

Jason O'Brien, MP for Cook, will be part of the referees' team for the carnival. QRL Referees will ref all of the games. The Dan Ropeyarn Cup organising committee will like to thank the hundreds of players who took part in the games over the years. We would like to thank the public for the massive support in this unique NPA competition, the Dan Ropeyarn Cup. The team that earns the glory will write their names in history. Be there, be part of it, and thanks for your participation. Our appreciation goes to our major sponsors over the last 10 years. In 2010 we thank Torres Strait Youth & Recreation Sporting Association, NPA Regional Council, Bamaga Enterprises Ltd, and Skytrans.

Image courtesy Mr Roger Bartlett

Late News: **Papua New Guinea Wantoks/Poroman & Friends,** Saturday 9th October, at Seisia Fishing Club, Dress: Lap Lap /Meri Dress, bring PNG style plate of food. No dress up/no food, please drop $5 towards next year's event at the gate.

Chris Johnson Cup, 13th October, at Andrew Archie Memorial Football and Sports Ground, New Mapoon. Mr Rick Hanlon from AFL Cape York will be there.

Free introduction to Mosaic Art : All Artists & anyone interested, at NPA Art Centre, New Mapoon, 11-15 Oct. Day & Evening Workshops with Dominic Johns. Call Agnes Mark or Susan Kennedy on 40830 271 or Marj on 40693 277.

Coming Together art Exhibition, Opening Night, Tuesday 19th October, 6:30pm, NPA Art Centre, New Mapoon. The exhibition is showcasing NPA State College students' works (from Prep to year 12), as well as local talented artists. This exhibition is part of Yumpla Cultural Festival.

Yumpla Cultural Festival, 19th - 21st October. Tuesday to Wednesday: Student Workshops a Bamaga Senior Campus, as well as the 'Coming Together art Exhibition' (at New Mapoon Art Centre). Thursday, 21st Oct at Ginau Yusia Memorial Oval: Performance Night. See detailed programs available throughout communities.

Torres Strait NAIDOC Awards, 2010, 22nd October, PKA Hall, Thursday Island. Unsung heroes closing the gap by leading the way.

Dan Ropeyarn Cup, 4th – 6th November 2010, see info above.