

## **PALM ISLAND COMMUNITY COMPANY TRANSITIONS TO COMMUNITY CONTROL**

This week saw a major step towards self-determination for the Palm Island community with the transition of the Palm Island Community Company (PICC) to full community control. The Queensland Government and the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council have now transferred their shareholding in PICC to enable a community-controlled organisation that is fully owned by community members.

PICC has been operating since 2008 and has grown into a large professional organisation delivering a wide range of community services with a workforce of nearly 150 employees, who are overwhelmingly local Palm Islanders. In August, PICC took on responsibility for Palm Island primary health services, amalgamating their existing health centre with the Townsville Hospital and Health Service (THHS) primary health centre to create an integrated community-controlled Aboriginal Medical Service.

The Palm Island Mayor and past chairperson of PICC, Mislam Sam said: “this is a hard-won achievement for the Palm Island community. Our community and our elders and leaders have worked for decades for self-determination, and we are proud to finally have local control over services, especially health, that support our families and employ local people.”

The PICC Chairperson, Luella Bligh is confident the new community-controlled version of PICC will continue the strong and professional governance and service delivery that PICC has achieved over 13 years. “PICC was already operating with a majority local board and up to 90% local workforce and this means we have managed a smooth transition to community control. It was important to have the support of the Queensland Government and the Palm Island Council during our establishment. We have worked closely with them on the transition and look forward to continuing our partnership.”

PICC services include:

- An integrated Aboriginal medical service
- community services, including in the areas of family well-being, early childhood, healing, disability, child protection, domestic violence, men’s groups, children and youth activities
- social enterprises, including a mechanics workshop, fuel supply and a community shop.

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