

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 592**  
**Asked on 29 April 2008**

MRS PRATT asked the Premier (MS BLIGH) -

**QUESTION:**

As the all-party Palm Island Select Committee reported in August 2005 with 65 unanimous recommendations to address critical issues on Palm Island, which from 2006 statistics is Australia's fourth most disadvantaged community, and as the Government expressly supported most of these recommendations in its Progress Report in December 2006—

Will the Premier advise how many of the select committee's 65 recommendations are yet to be implemented?

**ANSWER:**

As the Honourable Member would be aware, the Queensland Government supported 64 of the Palm Island Select Committee's 65 recommendations. In November 2006, a 12 month update on the Palm Island Select Committee Report was tabled, as required, in the Parliament.

I am pleased to report that all recommendations accepted by the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council and the Queensland Government are either completed or have commenced.

Fifty recommendations have been completed, or are completed but of an ongoing nature, including:

- the establishment of the Palm Island Community Company to improve the delivery of human services on Palm Island by supporting existing non-government organisations and delivering services directly where appropriate.
- Provision of ongoing support to the Council to manage their housing program through the Palm Island Housing Improvement Plan. As a result of enhancements in the management of community housing, improvements to the maintenance program and housing upgrades, the Council is receiving increased tenancy revenue.
- Introduction of a Senior Phase of Learning program, focusing on literacy, numeracy and vocational training. The program attracted 43 enrolments at inception with 72 students enrolled as of 2008.
- Establishment of a Sport and Recreation Committee.
- Staging of an annual Careers Expo on Palm Island.
- Provision of apprenticeships and traineeships for the community by government agencies, particularly the Department of Public Works.
- Establishment of a Cell Visitors' Program in cooperation with the Queensland Police Service to support detainees in the Palm Island Watch House.

- Signing of two Memoranda of Understanding between the Council and the Manbarra Traditional Owners, resulting in improved understanding and communication between the groups regarding land and cultural heritage issues on Palm Island.
- Signing of a number of key leases with the Council to allow for essential infrastructure by the Government, including a government office hub.

Eleven recommendations are currently progressing well, including:

- Improved ferry services for the community through additional return services at significantly reduced prices for passengers. An upgrade to the jetty and a ferry terminal is also underway.
- Enactment of legislation for long-term leases to enable the development of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement and to progress home ownership opportunities.

Responses to three recommendations commenced but have not progressed to finalisation due to either the emergence of other priorities for the Council or the availability of facilities or land. These include: the establishment of a Youth Council; development of an Indigenous Knowledge Centre; and new Council Chambers and offices. The Youth Council is a stated priority for the newly elected Council and the Government is happy to work with the Council on this issue. The latter two are dependent on the availability of land and facilities. The State Government is continuing to work with the Council to progress land and leasing issues and Land Use Planning but Council ultimately leads on these projects.

In the three years since the Select Committee visited Palm Island there have been a number of positive changes in the community, both as a result of the Select Committee's recommendations and through the Queensland Government's and Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council's own initiatives. These changes have also resulted in a re-prioritisation of some of the recommendations.

Given this changing environment, emerging priorities will continue to be progressed through the Local Indigenous Partnership Agreement for the Palm Island Community. This agreement will serve as the key planning and reporting document for Palm Island related activities.