COCOS ISLANDS SHIRE PRESIDENT AINDIL MINKOM INVITES:

The Honorable Kristy McBain Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories

MP Marion Scrymgour – Member for Lingari

To the Indian Ocean Territories - Cocos (Keeling) Islands to meet with Council and community

The week of 7th to 11th November 2022

rsvp by 12.08.2022 to council Chief Executive Officer frank mills at frank.mills@cocos.wa.gov.au



FUNDING FOR ADDITIONAL HOUSING ON HOME ISLAND

Home Island

Construction of houses is solely dependent on Government funding

Two houses are currently being constructed and prior to this there were no new houses built for about 10 years

There are 105 houses that form the Kampong (traditional village) on Home Island.

Council manages 100 of these houses under the provisions of the 1979 Cocos (Keeling) Islands Deed,

28 are rental houses by tenancy agreement and 72 are lease houses by way of the Kampong lease.

The Housing Wait list has 8 Home Island families on the list with the longest period on the list currently over 20 years.

There are an unknown number of Cocos Malay people living on the mainland who would return home if housing was available.

There are 5 serviced lots available for immediate construction if funding is made available.

West Island

Council owns no houses on West Island and currently rents 4 from the Commonwealth for staff housing.

Council has no land on West Island available for the construction of housing without significant infrastructure costs prior to being shovel ready.



There are currently 100 Shire houses which consists of 72 lease properties and 28 rental houses.

4 houses currently with 10 tenants Consist of 1 or 2 couples with young family.

1 house currently with 9 tenants Consist of couples with young children.

9 houses currently with 8 tenants All consist of couple with young children.





HISTORY OF COCOS MALAYS

In 1826, an English merchant, Alexander Hare, brought a group of people from Malaysia and Indonesia as well as South Africa and New Guinea to an atoll northwest of mainland Australia in the Indian Ocean. Hare took them to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands as indentured workers, slaves and/or convicts. A year later, a Scottish rival, Clunies Ross, took over.

His subjects became known as "Cocos Malays". During the 150year rule of the Clunies Ross dynasty, the Cocos Malays developed a unique culture and dialect. They adopted Scottish jigs and music in their performance repertoire. Still living on their island home, the Cocos Malays are now Australian citizens. Some seek recognition from the Australian government as "Indigenous".

The Clunies Ross dynasty created its own currency and paid Cocos Malays for harvesting coconuts and performing other labour. This currency could be redeemed at the company store for rice, flour and sugar to supplement a diet of seafood, poultry and other birds. They left matters of religion to the Cocos Malays, who maintained an Islamic Malay culture. This makes them Australia's oldest Muslim community.

From the mid-1900s, Cocos Malay culture and language spread from its atoll home. A large 1940s emigration created a Cocos Malay community in Sabah, Malaysia, where the government recognises them as one of Malaysia's ethnic groups. The Cocos Malays have also emigrated to Christmas Island, Singapore and to several locations in Western Australia.

On the Cocos (Keeling) Islands themselves, increased international attention to the plight of the Cocos Malays led to allegations of slavery and a United Nations investigation.

In 1955, the British transferred sovereignty over the islands to Australia, ratified by the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Act. The Australian government increasingly scrutinised the "kingdom", purchasing most of the atoll from the dynasty in 1978. In a UN-supervised Act of Self-Determination in 1984, the residents of the islands voted overwhelmingly for integration with Australia. This act symbolised the beginnings of Cocos Malay involvement with the Australian state on their own terms, which has recently seen some Cocos Malays claim to be indigenous to the islands.

The Cocos claims

Cocos Malay people can strengthen their claim as Indigenous Australians by pointing to several facts. The islands were uninhabited when the Cocos Malays and their European ruler first settled there. Further, they maintain a long historical tradition; they are sometimes said to have been colonised; and they feel overlooked by the Australian nation-state.

Other groups in our region have successfully appealed to these principles – namely, first people, colonisation, continued tradition, and marginalisation – to be recognised as Indigenous.

If the Cocos Malays are unsuccessful in the short term, they can try other forms of recourse. For instance, the 1955 Transfer of Sovereignty contained a crucial clause:

"The institutions, customs and usages of the Malay residents of the Territory shall, subject to any law in force in the Territory from time to time, be permitted to continue in existence".

One thing is certain, the Cocos Malay residents value and continue to maintain and adapt their "customs and usages". Being accorded Indigenous status would help gain official recognition for that continuing practice.

Source: Community members and publication - The Conversation "A group of Southeast Asian descendants wants to be recognised as Indigenous Australians" Published: June 25, 2018

AIR SERVICES & FREIGHT SERVICES – PASSENGER FLIGHTS AND AIR & SEA FREIGHT

PASSENGER FLIGHTS

Virgin Australia operates two services per week to the Cocos Keeling Islands, one on Tuesday which transits to Christmas Island if it departs from Perth International Airport (Terminal 1) but is a direct flight to Perth when departing from Cocos Keeling Islands. Friday departing from Perth is a direct flight to Cocos Keeling Islands, but transits to Christmas Island when departing from Cocos Keeling Islands.

The flight duration from Cocos Keeling Islands to Perth is approximately 4 hours 25 minutes.

Flight price ranges from \$500 - \$1000 one-way plus additional cost of extra baggage.

AIR FREIGHT

Freightshop are the Cocos Keeling Islands and Christmas Island airfreight specialists. They can book a courier service pickup from businesses or private residence.

Virgin Australia Regional Airlines (VARA) A320 Passenger and Fortnightly Freighter Service:

General Cargo: \$8.10/Kg Priority Cargo: \$9.30/Kg

Cost per kilo calculated on actual weight or cubic equivalence of 167Kg per cubic metre.

Selecting priority will place cargo ahead of General Cargo on all flights. If a flight becomes full, Priority Cargo will be lodged before General Cargo. General Cargo will be subject to first offload in this event.

Documentation/Handling Fee per consignment is \$75.00 and to update consignments freight, paperwork and manifests to upgrade to Priority service is \$30.00.

SEA FREIGHT SERVICE

There is only one option for sea freight to Cocos Keeling Islands (Zentner's out of Fremantle WA).

The cost of sea freight is extremely high (as much as \$1000.00 per cubic metre) and can double the cost of items of freight.

This has a major impact on individuals ability to afford or brining goods to the island.

For capital works projects sea freight results overall cost of project compared to the mainland well over a 100% increase. More often, the result is reduced scope or inability to complete projects.

The reliability of sea freight is probable due to climatic conditions and a period of 4 months was recently experienced without freight.

WASTE MANAGEMENT – GHD/COMMONWEALTH WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

DITRDCA engaged GHD Pty Ltd (GHD) to develop a Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy (the Strategy) for the IOT and outlines a realistic pathway for improving waste management through the development of better practice goals.

There is a strong community sentiment towards improved waste management practices in the IOT. The Strategy's overriding objective is to provide consistency with broader Australian Government objectives; specifically, the National Waste Policy Action Plan 2019, and alignment with local aspirations for the waste and resource recovery sector. The Strategy has also been developed towards:

-Supporting waste management activities with practical, effective and enforceable solutions.

-Improved waste management control, infrastructure supporting sustainable operation and maintenance.

-Making waste management systems and programmes financially self-sustaining.

-Delineating and improving understanding of waste management responsibilities.

-Developing skilled and trained people within the IOT to effectively manage waste.

-Reducing the amount of waste generated at source and residual waste landfilled.

-Introducing and enhancing community participation in more sustainable waste management.

Transfer Station Opening Hours - Home Island and West Island

Monday and Thursday1pm - 3pmTuesday, Wednesday and Friday7am -9amSunday3pm - 5pm

General Waste Collection Days - Home Island and West Island

Monday and Thursday Weekly Recycling - Home Island and West Island Wednesday Fortnightly



COASTAL EROSION INCLUDING - LAND MANAGEMENT ORDERS

Coastal erosion is an enormous issue for all of the islands in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands atoll.

Coastal erosion is an enormous problem for the Cocos Keeling Islands and the Commonwealth has begun a study to determine the vulnerability of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands to coastal hazards, including erosion and storm surge inundation.

1996 the Minister vested a number of reserves (mostly coastal) to the Shire for recreation, recreation and foreshore management and pedestrian pathways.

8 pieces of land on West Island and 2 on Home Island were vested.

The cost to maintain the land significant.

There is no specific funding from Commonwealth to manage land.

There is significant risk to Shire associated with coastal erosion.

The Shire does not have the funding, resources or expertise to adequately manage the risk associated with the land within the Management Order.

Solution = funding from the Commonwealth to provide the expertise and manage these lands or Council return them to the Commonwealth?

EROSION ON WEST ISLAND



Q STATION, BOAT RAMP ON WEST ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY & SUPPORT

<u>Q Station</u>

Council has leased a small section of the "Q" Station (former quarantine station) on Sydney Highway, from the Commonwealth on an annual "peanut" lease for many years.

The area leased by Council is used as a deport for our Council's Civil Construction team as the **is** no other option on West Island.

Council has continually raised the issue of a long term lease with the Commonwealth for the area currently occupied to no avail.

With a long term lease and Commonwealth approval

- appropriate infrastructure for staff to have a "crib room" change and shower area would be possible
- Council could forward plan with certainty of tenure for the future
- The proposed airport runway redevelopment would not be hindered in anyway

West Island boat ramp

The west island boat ramp is vital for not only recreational fishers and tourists but also people wanting to travel to and from West and Home Island.

The west island boat ramp is continually inundated with sand due to poor design and location.

The cost to Council to maintain the ramp (the majority of which is on Commonwealth land) is \$1,000.00 per day twice a week at a minimum.

The Commonwealth acknowledges the problem with the ramp but refuse to fund the on going maintenance or development of a new ramp elsewhere.

The situation has now reached a stalemate until funding for a new ramp or continual cleaning of the current ramp is sourced.