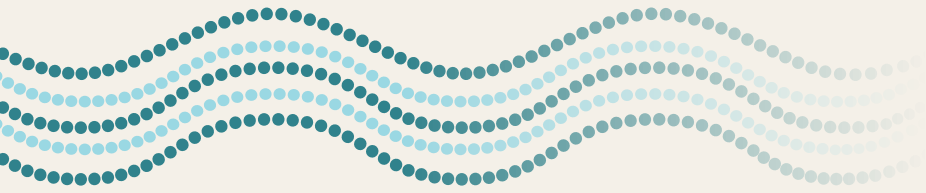


PALM ISLAND WALKING TRAILS

Engagement Outcomes Report
CONSULTATION SUMMARY

The Way Forward

Contents



*Walking country.
Sharing stories.
Building futures.*

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1.

Introduction

“I think Tourism is a great idea. I believe our young generation needs to be included in this project.”

SURVEY, LOCAL RESIDENT

1.1 Background to the Walking Trails Project

The Palm Island Walking Trails Project is a strategic initiative of the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council (the Council), supported by Queensland Government funding administered through the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI). The Project seeks to explore the feasibility, community support, design considerations and long-term sustainability of a walking trail network on Palm Island (Bwgcolman), prior to any engineering design or construction procurement.

The Project builds on earlier technical work, including the *Palm Island Tourism Master Plan* (TRC Tourism, 2023) and the *Palm Island Track Network Report* (Tricky Tracks, 2026). Both documents, along with other Council planning documents were provided as reference material, consistent with the RFQ and Contract. The consultation was based on the Walking trail routes identified in the Tourism Masterplan and Tricky Tracks Trail Network report.

1.2 Project Objectives

As defined in the RFQ Specification (Annexure Part D), the Project aims to:

- Deliver a structured, culturally appropriate and inclusive engagement program that builds trust and social licence.
- Ensure Traditional Owners, Elders and the Palm Island community meaningfully influence the Project's direction.
- Test assumptions from previous studies, including impacts on land, properties, cultural values and sensitive areas.
- Capture stakeholder views on trail design, alignments, features, visitor experience, construction participation, governance, operations and sustainability.
- Understand how walking trails integrate with and support Palm Island's broader tourism ecosystem.
- Provide Council with a robust, defensible evidence base to inform decisions about scope, staging, delivery and long-term management.

These objectives form the foundation for the analysis and findings presented in this Engagement Outcomes Report.

1.3 Dual Lens Approach (Project-Specific + Tourism System)

Consistent with Section 2.8.1 of the Specification, the engagement was undertaken through a dual lens:

Project-specific lens

This lens focuses on the practical, cultural and environmental considerations associated with walking trail design, construction, operations and long-term stewardship. It includes community priorities, cultural authority, land use considerations, safety, accessibility, environmental protection and local workforce participation.

Tourism system lens

This lens positions walking trails as a foundational tourism asset within Palm Island's long-term visitor economy. It considers market readiness, visitor experience design, sequencing with other tourism initiatives, regional tourism organisation (TEL) alignment, and the role of trails in supporting enterprise development, cultural tourism and broader economic participation.

Together, these lenses ensure that the Project is both community-grounded and strategically aligned with Queensland's tourism and ecotourism frameworks.

1.4 SALT Tourism & Leisure and the Griffith Institute for Tourism (GIFT)

SALT Tourism & Leisure was appointed to deliver the stakeholder engagement and consultation services (Contract executed 10 April 2026) to;

- Design and deliver the Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Facilitate all engagement streams
- Ensure cultural safety, confidentiality and adherence to Council protocols
- Analyse and synthesise feedback
- Prepare the Engagement Outcomes Report and Executive Briefing Pack
- Present findings to Elected Council

The SALT Tourism methodology is supported by the Griffith Institute for Tourism (GIFT), who provide research governance, survey design, data analysis and methodological rigour. GIFT's involvement ensures that the engagement findings are evidence-based, defensible and aligned with contemporary tourism research standards.



Know that the community here are good people.

PALM ISLAND COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

1.5 Alignment with Destination 2045 and Queensland Ecotourism Frameworks

The project is to align with the Destination 2045 plan – *Delivering Queensland's Tourism Future*. This is the Queensland Government's long-term strategy to transform the state's visitor economy through sustainable, high-value, community-aligned tourism development. The strategy identifies First Nations tourism, nature-based experiences, and regional community benefit as central pillars of Queensland's tourism future.

Destination 2045 sets out five core objectives. These include:

- Growing demand for Queensland's world-class visitor experiences
- Supporting industry to deliver high-quality, sustainable products
- Empowering First Nations peoples to lead tourism development
- Strengthening regional communities through tourism-driven economic participation
- Protecting and enhancing Queensland's natural and cultural assets

The strategy emphasises that Queensland must “*lead Australia in First Nations tourism*” and that future tourism growth must be “*authentic, sustainable and grounded in community aspirations*.” These principles directly underpin the Palm Island Walking Trails Project.



Alignment of the Palm Island Walking Trails Project with Destination 2045

1. First Nations-led tourism development

The Walking Trails Project ensures Traditional Owners and Elders meaningfully shape trail design, interpretation and governance. Cultural authority, community aspirations and local benefit are central to the project's direction, positioning Palm Island as a flagship First Nations tourism initiative.

2. High-quality, sustainable, nature-based experiences

The Project contributes to Destination 2045's call for “*world-class nature-based and ecotourism experiences that protect and celebrate Queensland's natural assets*.” The proposed walking trails showcase Palm Island's landscapes, biodiversity and cultural sites while embedding stewardship and sustainability principles.

3. Regional community benefit and economic participation

Destination 2045 prioritises tourism as a driver of regional jobs, skills and enterprise. The Walking Trails Project supports this by enabling:

- Local workforce participation
- Ranger involvement
- Micro-enterprise development
- Cultural tourism pathways
- Community pride and wellbeing

4. Foundational tourism infrastructure

Walking trails are a core enabling asset that anchor visitor itineraries, support dispersal, and connect cultural, natural and community experiences. This aligns with Destination 2045's focus on building foundational tourism infrastructure that supports long-term growth.

5. Early demonstration project for the Destination 2045 agenda

As one of the earliest DETSI-funded initiatives under the Destination 2045 implementation period, the Walking Trails Project serves as a high-visibility demonstration project of the strategy's intent. This positions Palm Island as a case study community for how Destination 2045 can be implemented in remote First Nations contexts.



Engagement

“The walking-trail project should reflect community, cultural and environmental values.”

MINGAMINGA RANGERS – MEETING 8

The engagement program was delivered in accordance with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan endorsed by the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council. Through a four-phase process the program ensured a culturally safe, inclusive engagement methodology that met Council's governance requirements and DETSI's expectations for Destination 2045-aligned projects.

This phase focused on establishing governance, confirming cultural protocols, refining stakeholder mapping, and preparing engagement materials. It included the development and Council endorsement of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, ensuring alignment with cultural authority requirements, ILUA considerations, and Council's "no predetermined outcome" commitment.

The engagement delivery phase commenced on 29th March 2026 and was closed 26th May 2026 across multiple streams, including:

- On Country Workshops including interactive communication tools such as worksheets and Magnetic Boards where people could share ideas. A community lunch was hosted as part of these events.
- On-Country walks & discussions

- Stakeholder Interviews (online & face to face) with community members, family groups, key Government agencies and tourism operators – this included the establishment of a Project Management Team, inclusive of Council, DETSI, Townsville Enterprise Ltd, Minggamingga Rangers and the Consultants.
- A Community Survey that was available in hard copy and through a digital QR code
- Digital Communications
- Traditional Owners/Elders, community members, Council Elected Members, government

Feedback from all engagement streams was analysed using a mixed-method approach (qualitative + quantitative), supported by GIFT's research governance. This phase identified areas of alignment, divergence, conditions of support, and implications for trail design, construction, governance, operations, and long-term sustainability.

This phase involved preparing the Engagement Outcomes Report and Executive Briefing Pack, and presenting findings to Council's Elected Members in accordance with mandatory Contract requirements. Feedback from Council was incorporated into the final outputs.

Palm Island Walking Trails

WORKSHEET

The Palm Island Walking Trails Project is a community-led initiative to design culturally grounded walking experiences across Palm Island.

It aims to enhance land and sea country care, community walking trails for residents and visitors to Palm Island and celebrate Gwagwaman and Manbarra cultural heritage.

Please put your thoughts on this map to guide trail alignment and the types of experiences that could be provided along the walking trails. Use the icons that describe the activities or write them on the map.

Tell us about your priorities and preferences and any opportunities for local enterprises you would like to see along the trails?

Key

- Snorkelling
- Eco-tourism Accom
- Eco-camp Accom
- Boating/Fishing
- Yacht Moorings
- Cultural Story Telling
- Rangers Hut
- Education Node
- Toilets/Amenities

— Existing Trails
— Proposed Trails
- - - Additional Trails

In what order should the trails be prepared?
(number in order of preference 1 2 3)

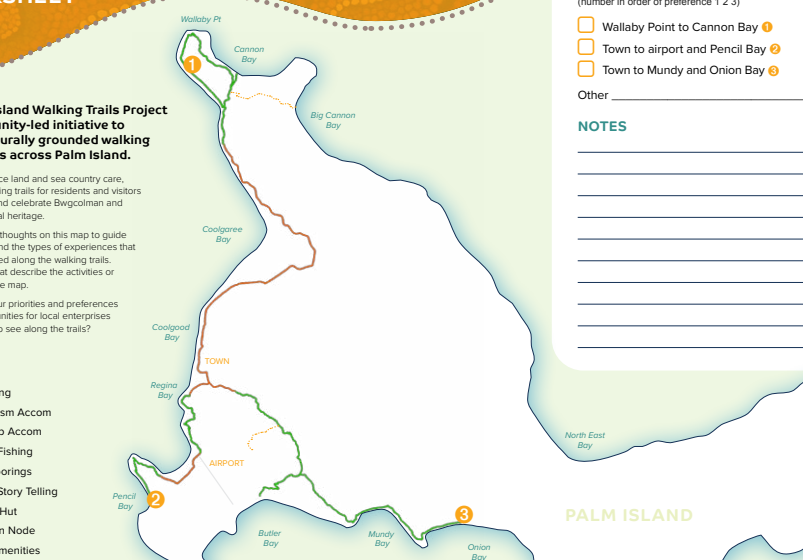
☐ Wallaby Point to Cannon Bay ①

☐ Town to airport and Pencil Bay ②

☐ Town to Mundy and Onion Bay ③

Other _____

NOTES



The map shows the outline of Palm Island with various bays labeled: Wallaby Pt, Cannon Bay, Big Cannon Bay, Coolgarree Bay, Coolgood Bay, Regina Bay, Pencil Bay, Butler Bay, Mundy Bay, and Onion Bay. The TOWN is located in the center, and the AIRPORT is to its south. Three numbered points are marked: 1 at Wallaby Point, 2 at Pencil Bay, and 3 at Onion Bay. A legend on the left explains the symbols for activities (snorkelling, eco-tourism, boating, etc.) and trail types (existing, proposed, additional). A section on the right asks for the preferred order to prepare the trails and provides space for notes.

SALT Tourism produced visual materials, a worksheet, storyboard and workshop banners to help visualise the Palm Island Walking Trails project, to help describe the types of tourism facilities and opportunities that could be developed to support the walking experiences.



SALT Tourism produced a “Magnetic Board” with a range of icons that workshop participants could place around the island to describe the types of tourism facilities and opportunities that exist or could be developed to support the Palm Island Walking Trails.

Palm Island Walking Trails

The **Palm Island Walking Trails** project is supported by the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, with funding from the Queensland Government.

This project focuses on creating sustainable, nature-based ecotourism experiences that celebrate Palm Island's place, culture, and community, while supporting long-term economic, employment, and social outcomes.

Council is inviting input from Elders, Rangers, community groups, businesses, and residents to help shape recommendations around:

- Potential walking trail routes (including Wallaby Point, Airport to Pencil Bay, and Palm Valley Walk)
- The visitor cultural experience
- Construction and delivery (local participation, long-term operations, sustainability).

Complete the **Walking Trails Survey** for your chance to WIN

5.2 Palm Island Walking Trail Survey

Palm Island Walking Trails Community Survey

Have your say on potential trail development on Palm Island.

This survey is voluntary and your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. A de-identified summary report will be provided to the Palm Island Council.

WIN! Enter a prize draw to win one of 5 SeaLink Multi passes at the end of the survey. Good luck!

This survey is being conducted by SALT Tourism & Leisure and Griffith University on behalf of the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council.

Survey closes 15th May.

From what point of view do you answer this survey? Tick one that applies.

- ☐ Local resident
☐ Traditional Owner
☐ Business operator → is your business in the tourism industry? ☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ Government stakeholder
☐ Visitor
☐ Other (please specify) _____

Q2 How long have you lived on Palm Island? Tick one that applies.

- ☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 1-5 years
☐ 5+ years
☐ I do not live on Palm Island / not applicable

Q3 What is your age group? Tick one that applies.

- ☐ Under 18
☐ 18 - 29
☐ 30 - 39
☐ 40 - 49
☐ 50 - 59
☐ 60+
☐ Prefer not to say

June 17 2026

SALT Tourism & Leisure salttourism.com.au

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Q4 What is your gender? Tick one that applies.

- ☐ Woman
☐ Man
☐ Non-binary
☐ Prefer not to say

Q5 What is the postcode for your home address?

Q6 What tracks do you use?

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Wallaby Point	☐	☐	☐
Pencil Point	☐	☐	☐
Palm Valley	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐

Q7 Do you support developing walking trails for residents and visitors to Palm Island?

	Support	Unsure	Do not support
Please indicate	☐	☐	☐

Q8 Do you support tourism on Palm Island?

	Support	Unsure	Do not support
Please indicate	☐	☐	☐

Palm Island Walking Trails Community Survey
 – See full version as Appendix 1

2.2 Engagement Activities

The engagement program used a mixed-method design, consistent with the RFQ requirement for multiple channels and two-way engagement.

Qualitative methods

- On-Country engagement with Councillors, Traditional Owners and Elders
- Community workshops and yarning-style discussions. Each workshop was designed to build on the next, the first workshop designed around developing 'ideas' the second checking in on the ideas and looking at preferences and the final workshop testing priorities.
- Targeted meetings with government, industry, key stakeholders and service providers
- Small-group sessions with school youth, families, and community organisations

These methods enabled deep exploration of cultural values, land considerations, aspirations, concerns, and opportunities.

Digital engagement

A digital post (shown below) released on the first day of the community survey was widely shared in the community.

A community announcement (right), was published in the Palm Island Voice on April 14th. It was also produced as a community flyer and was distributed widely for display on community noticeboards on and off the island (e.g. Hinterland Aviation terminal Townsville).



Palm Island Walking Trails

Help plan **Palm Island's Walking Trails** that celebrate our environment, culture and community.

Take the Survey **Join a Workshop** **Have your Say**

Complete our **Walking Trails Survey** for your chance to WIN

PALM ISLAND
ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL

Quantitative methods (survey)

A structured survey was designed to quantitatively capture community and stakeholder views on:

- Tourism and walking trail sentiment
- Trail alignments and features
- Visitor experience preferences
- Community benefits
- Trail governance and operations

In addition, the survey provided open ended questions to each theme, allowing respondents to express views in their own words and share additional thoughts the tick-box answer options of the survey may not have captured. These short answers provided additional qualitative data on key themes of the engagement process.

The survey, produced in hard copy form and available in digital form through a QR code, provided measurable insights and strengthens the evidence base for Council decision-making. Survey responses were collected from the 15th April to the 15th May. Two community Ambassadors were paid to administer the survey by supporting community members in completing the survey.



Palm Island Walking Trails

Your Input is Invited

Council is inviting input from Elders, Rangers, community groups, businesses, and residents to help shape recommendations around:

- Potential walking trail routes (including Wallaby Point, Airport to Pencil Bay, and Palm Valley Walk)
- The visitor cultural experience
- Construction and delivery (local participation, long-term operations, sustainability)

Community Survey
Open: 15 April – 15 May
Available via Facebook, community workshops, and Council websites.

On Country Conversations
Arrange a one-on-one or small group yarn between 15 April and 15 May

Become a Project Ambassador
Help gather community feedback
Paid Opportunity

Community Workshops

Workshop 1 – Inform Lead and Learn	Workshop 2 – Co-design Prioritise and Equip	Workshop 3 – Validate Transform and Empower
Wednesday 29 April 11:00am – 5:00pm Mingamingga Rangers Headquarters - What is the walking trails project? - Where should trails go? - What facilities do we need? (signage, seating, educational) - Cultural significance and community benefits?	Thursday 30 April 11:00am – 5:00pm Palm Island Community Company - Working together on what this could become - Review preferred trail options - Identify priority tracks and staging - Local employment opportunities (guiding, rangers, cultural delivery) - How can we share Palm Island's stories - What are the opportunities for community-led business and enterprise.	Wednesday 13 May 11:00am – 5:00pm Fred Clay Park Foreshore - Confirm community preferences - Present key ideas - Outline next steps - Training, jobs, future opportunities (Build workforce capabilities and career pathways).

CONTACT
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Paul Victory – 0408 157 154
paul@victoryconsulting.com.au

2.3 Total Engagement

Engagement activities commenced 29th March with a first visit to Palm Island by members of the project team, and included the community survey launched on April 15th, community workshops at Minggamingga Rangers Headquarters and Council Town Square, trail walks, stakeholder meetings, ranger discussions, school engagement sessions, camp-holder engagement, and one-on-one community conversations. The final recorded conversation as part the consultation was May 26th.

Consultation extended beyond formal workshops and frequently occurred through informal conversations in homes, workplaces, ferry discussions, town spaces, and site visits. This approach supported relationship-based engagement and enabled broader participation across different stakeholder and family groups.

The total number of people involved in the engagement was 379.

Note: Not all participants completed workshop questions. Some participated only in workshops, some only through telephone consultations, and others only through surveys.



29
**Government /Key
Stakeholder interviews**

29th March – 26th May 2026



44
**Community
conversations**

29th March – 26th May 2026



140
**Community Survey
responses**

15th April – 15th May 2026



55
**Community Workshop #1
participants**

Minggamingga Rangers – 29 April 2026



27
**Community Workshop #2
participants**

Minggamingga Rangers –30 April 2026



62
**Community Workshop #3
participants**

Council Town Square –13 May 2026



22
**Youth Meeting
students**

St Michael's School –14 May 2026

2.4 Cultural Governance and Protocols

Cultural governance was central to the engagement methodology and aligned with:

- Council's cultural protocols
- The RFQ requirement for culturally appropriate engagement
- Contractual confidentiality obligations (Annexure Part A, Item 22)
- Destination 2045's emphasis on First Nations leadership
- The principle of cultural authority

The cultural engagement activity was designed from a background of working on tourism, sporting, cultural and transport projects on Palm Island and with a key reference to the Palm Island Future Land Practises Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) which would be central to the development of walking trails on Palm Island.

Key elements included early engagement with traditional owners and elders through an initial co-design meeting with the Minggamingga Rangers to confirm protocols. The Minggamingga Rangers are representative of both Manbarra and Bwgcolman communities. At this meeting we were able to talk openly about engaging with Manbarra and Bwgcolman elders. We discussed the respectful sequencing of engagement activities and the use of culturally appropriate facilitation methods (yarning, on-Country sessions).

We discussed cultural authority guided interpretation of cultural sites, stories and sensitivities. This approach ensured the engagement was aligned with the Minggamingga rangers and with First Nations governance expectations.

We formalised the Minggamingga Rangers engagement in the project by seeking their participation in the Project Management Team to ensure the Rangers were involved in all stages of the project planning and in hosting a community workshop for the project.

It was clear early, that the full extent of the trails identified in the Palm Island Tourism Masterplan (2023) and in the Tricky Tracks Report (2026) that reached into the leased area under the ILUA would require extensive negotiation. While we did not discount these projects completely from our general consultation, it was agreed to concentrate on the three trails largely in the Council zone of the ILUA, that being Wallaby Point, Pencil Bay and Palm Valley. The proposed trail to North East Bay and the proposed loop from North East Bay to Cannon Bay would require discussion with traditional owners before these trails went to 'general consultation'.

We also noted Council's plan for a Cultural Walk and Reflection Zone in the Council foreshore park celebrating the story of Manbarra and Bwgcolman. While this project was not yet confirmed, nor funded, the plans for a cultural celebration area were noted in context of the Walking Trails project.



Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council engaged GHD to provide design and documentation for a new cultural installation on Palm Island. Consultation with the Palm Island community was required to confirm the scope of the cultural installation before design work proceeded. This project is still in consideration by Council at May 2026.

2.5 Data Sovereignty and Ethical Considerations

The engagement adhered to indigenous data sovereignty principles and ethical research standards consistent with Griffith Institute for Tourism academic governance.

Key commitments included:

- Data ownership remaining with Council
- Secure storage of all engagement records
- Anonymisation of survey responses and qualitative data – some meeting quotes are utilized in the report only to emphasize outcomes
- Transparent communication about how data is used
- Respect for cultural confidentiality and sensitive information
- Ensuring Traditional Owners and Elders validated cultural interpretations
- Ethical handling of digital engagement feedback
- All engagement was voluntary

These measures ensured the integrity, safety and cultural appropriateness of all data collected.

2.6 Planning, Environmental and Cultural Heritage Consultation

The project required an extensive series of stakeholder meetings to ensure the initiative was grounded in cultural authority process, Council and whole-of-government alignment. These meetings brought together Traditional Owners, Council, Queensland Government agencies, tourism partners, community organisations, and the Project Management Team to build a shared understanding of the project's intent and constraints.

Engaging this breadth of stakeholders reinforced cultural and environmental compliance and aligned the trail network intention with broader regional planning priorities. The meetings also created a structured forum for risk identification, inter-agency coordination, and transparent decision-making, which is critical for a project operating across land tenure, cultural landscapes, and sensitive ecological zones.

The Project Management Team meetings in particular ensured that agencies responsible for land management, tourism development, infrastructure delivery, and funding governance were working from a unified program logic. This strengthened Council's advocacy and reinforced the project accountability.

Collectively, 29 meetings were undertaken including a number with key local stakeholders, that established the relationships, governance foundations, and technical clarity required to progress confidently into design, construction, and tourism activation phases, ensuring the project reflects community aspirations and meets regulatory expectations.

2.7 Consultation Limitations and Constraints

The engagement process was delivered in a remote island context over a specific timeframe set out for the project. The following limitations were managed proactively and transparently.

Environmental and seasonal factors

Weather conditions affected the planning and delivery of the first on country workshop planned for April 15th due to a cyclone warning and while we were able to undertake on-island community discussions on Thursday 16th April, the community workshop was deferred to April 29th and 30th .

Consultation fatigue

Palm Island has experienced multiple consultation processes in recent years. To mitigate fatigue the workshops and on country discussions were often relationship based. Engagement was designed to be respectful, concise and purposeful. Existing knowledge was acknowledged to avoid duplication, and community members were offered multiple ways to participate. Two community ambassadors assisted in data collection of community surveys. Engagement materials were varied, with use of imagery to support written communication provided in plain English.

Logistical constraints

Travel, transport and venue availability required careful planning. Internet was not always accessible and some stakeholders were only available at limited times. Council provided transport on occasions to enable the consultants to make maximum use of time on island.

Scope boundaries

A limited scope of engagement with traditional owners was undertaken for this project. The engagement did not include engineering design or construction planning. The engagement was undertaken for a set period and should be considered only part of the engagement to be undertaken around the Walking Trails project, as some questions raised by stakeholders relate to future phases beyond the scope of this project.

The tourism industry stakeholder consultation is also preliminary; a detailed Expression of Interest is anticipated at a later stage of the project. These considerations were factored into the analysis and interpretation of engagement findings.



3.

Stakeholder Mapping

“Rangers already have a full program, so the walk-trail project needs to be resourced to strengthen capacity and cultural leadership.”

MANBARRA ELDER – MEETING 4

3.1 Engagement Outreach – Lead Up to the Workshops

Community outreach was undertaken prior to the workshops to inform Palm Island community members about the consultation process, share project information, and encourage participation in upcoming workshops and surveys.

Outreach activities included:

- Council Facebook communications
- Palm Island Voice promotion
- Direct phone calls and community contact
- Informal community conversations and referrals

These interactions were primarily informational and introductory in nature and were intended to raise awareness of the project rather than capture formal consultation feedback.

Contacts were identified through:

- Existing project and community networks
- Word-of-mouth referrals
- The Palm Island Shire Council Service Directory

3.2 Participant Profile

Community survey

There was a total of 140 participants in the community consultation survey, including 66 surveys completed online and 74 completed in person. Most of the responses were from local residents (72%) and Traditional Owners (5%). Visitors also contributed to the responses (12%). Government stakeholders (5%) and business owners (2%) also responded to the survey. Figure 1 shows the various respondent types.

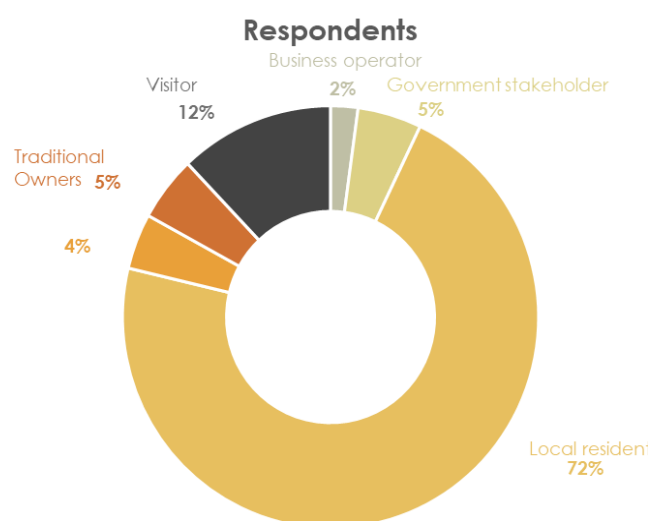


Figure 1. Respondent viewpoint when completing the survey (n = 141)

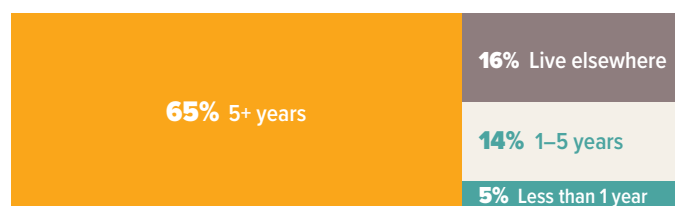


Figure 2. Duration of residency on Palm Island (n = 139)

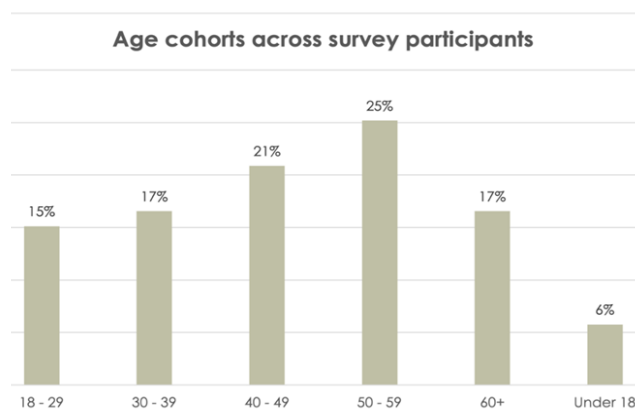


Figure 3. Participation across different age groups (n = 139)



Figure 4. Gender participation across survey respondents (n = 139)

Respondents were mostly long-term residents, with 65% having lived on the island for more than 5 years and 14% for 1-5 years, as shown in Figure 2. Only three respondents of the total 139 indicated they have a business within the tourism industry. Only three respondents reported having a business on the island, and only one was in a tourism business.

Figure 3 shows that there was a good representation of varying age groups in the responses, with 37% under 30 years, 25% aged 50 – 59 years, 21% aged 40 – 49 years and 17% aged 60 years and over. Likewise, there was a gender balance with 49% women and 51% men responding, as shown in Figure 4.

Community workshops

There was a total of 144 participants who visited our community workshops. These were a chance for community to engage 1:1 with workshop leaders and to complete the community survey.

The participation reflected a similar profile to the survey, most of the attendees to the workshops were local residents, there was strong participation in the workshops from Bwgcolman elders, a smaller number of Palm Island workers including teachers, health care and community police members. Traditional owners and business owners also came to the workshops to ask questions of the project. During the workshops the team served more than 150 lunches.

“

QR codes could bring Elder voice and language to life along the trail.

MINGA MINGA RANGERS & ELDERS – MEETING 4

3.3 Project Management Team

A Project Management Team (PMT) was established with a purpose to provide coordinated guidance, and interagency alignment for the planning and delivery of the Palm Island Walking Trails Project. The PMT ensured the project progressed in accordance with Council priorities, Queensland Government requirements, Traditional Owner and Community expectations, and regional tourism objectives. The PMT, through the PIASC, provided guidance on;

- Stakeholder Consultation
- Project planning, design, engagement, timing and delivery phases
- Cultural safety and alignment with Traditional Owner process & protocols
- Interagency coordination and approvals
- Queensland Government funding

The PMT did not replace formal Council decision-making or Traditional Owner cultural authority processes, and its membership included Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council (Chair), Queensland Government (DETSI + other agencies as required), Townsville Enterprise Limited, Palm Island Rangers (environmental and on-Country advice), SALT Tourism & Leisure (Project Manager / Engagement Lead). Fortnightly engagements were scheduled throughout the project.



3.4 Participant & Stakeholder Mapping

Consultation activities engaged a broad cross-section of the Palm Island community through both quantitative and qualitative, formal and informal methods. The following table summarises the stakeholder group, consultation method, key themes of discussions, listing key participants, but not all.

Stakeholder Group	Engagement Method	Key Discussion Themes	Key Participants
Elders & cultural knowledge holders	On-country discussions, yarnning circles, phone consultations, workshops	Cultural protection, sacred sites, storytelling, guided access, preserving knowledge, transferring knowledge	David Bulsey, Ray and Ruby Sibley, Faith and Mervyn Prior, Lawrence Coutts, Noel and Jenny Cannon, Valentine Nona, Tony James
Traditional Owners	On-country discussions, yarnning circles, phone consultations, workshops	Cultural authority, Country, native title considerations	Allan Palm Island, Peggie Palm Island, Richard Cassady, Walter Palm Island, Ursula Kohler (Bear Advisory)
Rangers & environmental stakeholders	Workshops, trail walks, operational discussions	Environmental management, wildlife management, ranger program governance, capability, trail construction and maintenance, visitor management	Natalie Friday, Alan and Reggie Palm Island, Richard Cassady, Dwayne Reuben, Ebanese and Jahvin Oui
Community members	Open workshops, community survey, informal conversations, town engagement	Support for trails, local jobs, community pride, youth opportunity	Josephine Nhallager, Raina Simon, Stirling Aidan, Sandra Casey, Joshua Cannon, David Ryan, (many un-identified)
Camp holders & residential stakeholders	Site-specific meetings and one-on-one discussions	Privacy, camp protection, trail alignment, visitor behaviour	Bennett Blancken, Kerrie and Josephine Nhallager, Zina Prior, Stirling Aidan, Clint Barry, Deniece Geia, David Bulsey, Carrine Nhallager
Youth & students	School engagement and workshop participation	Tourism employment pathways, guiding, culture, outdoor recreation	Named student participant recorded
Council representatives	Project meetings and workshop attendance	Infrastructure, governance, maintenance, project staging	Ebanese Oui, Germaine Bulsey, Emma Bradbury, Marcio Fialho, Dean Griggs, Tania Haines
Tourism, Arts & business stakeholders	One-on-one stakeholder discussions	Marine tourism, construction, guiding opportunities, eco-tourism, local enterprise, entrepreneurs	Lynore Sansbury (Palm Island Motel), Josiah James, Raina Simon, Sue Pryor, Agnes Wotton, Maleeha Geia, Virginia Faye Prior, Brett Mitchell Intrepid, Neil Lynch and Ben Christie Australian Walking Company, World Expeditions, Ngaro Trail, Thorsborne Trail, SeaLink, Townsville Enterprise Ltd
Community organisations & service providers	Workshops and direct consultation	Wellbeing, youth engagement, community development outcomes	Raina Simon, Deniece Geia, Ray Sibley, Roy Prior, Mislam Sam, Eva Haines, David Yasserie
Government & Key Stakeholders	Online Discussions/ business correspondence	Long Term Interests in walking trail development	TMR, Qld Police, DETSI, DNR Lands, DATSIP, TRC, TEL, SeaLink North Qld, Eco Rex, Minggamingga rangers, Palm Island Community Company, Tricky Tracks, Thorsborne Trail (QPWS), Ngaro trail (QPWS), Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, and Multiculturalism
Informal community engagement	Residential visits, workplace meetings	Community sentiment, consultation fatigue, local priorities	Unidentified participation



What We Heard

Community & Stakeholder Insights

“The only negative is people still don’t believe it is going to happen.”

PALM ISLAND ARTIST – MEETING 6

The following insights use the data collected from the 140 respondents to the community survey as the statistical summary and the qualitative data collected through over 200 community interactions on Palm Island, as well as open ended survey responses, to support the statistical summaries.

4.1 Support for Tourism

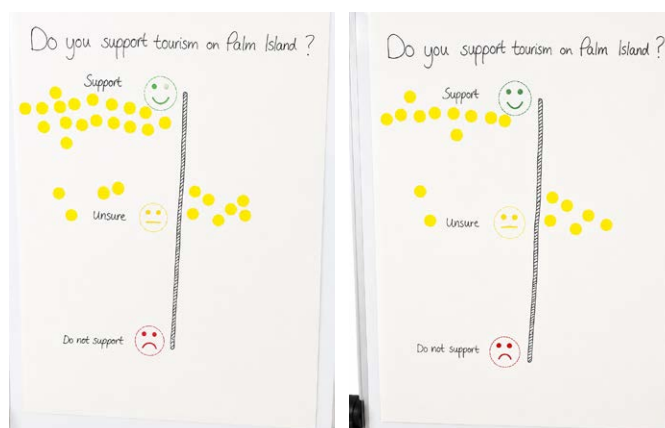


77%

support tourism

The results of the Community Survey show there is strong support for tourism, with 77% of respondents indicating they support tourism on Palm Island. Approximately 21% were unsure, indicating that perhaps more information and clarification about the type and scale of tourism is needed. A small percentage, 2%, are not supportive of tourism development on the island.

There was similar, strong support for tourism at the Community workshops. Approximately 67% of workshop participants expressed support for tourism opportunities, while uncertainty was generally linked to concerns about infrastructure, visitor management, and cultural protection. There was strongest support where participants believed development would remain community-led, culturally grounded, and locally beneficial. Guided cultural walks, marine tourism, reefing experiences, bush tucker education, and arts-based tourism were consistently identified as preferred tourism opportunities that would be needed on Palm.



Community Workshop 1 & Workshop 2 Summaries
– Tourism Sentiment

A recurring theme throughout consultation was the importance of Palm Island “telling its own story”. Participants regularly discussed opportunities to share Palm Island’s mission history, segregation history, prison history linked to Pencil Bay, and broader cultural stories through local voices and guided experiences. Consultation with local community leaders identified the Palm Island Walking Trails Project as having the potential to become a broader “seed project” for the community, similar to the sense of pride, unity, and opportunity generated during the 2018 Palm Island Centenary celebrations.

“The story of both Manbarra and Bwngcolman needs to be told through the trails.”

MINGAMINGA RANGERS & ELDERS – MEETING 4

This perspective was reinforced by tourism and community stakeholders who discussed the project's potential to support broader economic, cultural, and tourism opportunities across the island through carefully managed, community-led development.

The qualitative survey data also indicated that respondents (n = 8) are encouraged about the economic opportunities tourism may provide to Palm Island, particularly highlighting the provision of jobs. For example, some stated that *"our community needs jobs and small business opportunities and tourism can provide this"* (survey, local resident, male).

Additionally, several (6) respondents clarified that they were supportive of guided tourism, specifically. Several others (5) pointed out that they wanted the community to have a say over tourism development, and that Elders needed to be consulted. Specifically, a respondent said: *"I support tourism on Palm Island if it is community-controlled or at least done in consultation with the Traditional Owners and there are economic opportunities and advantages for the Bwgcolman people"* (survey, government stakeholder, male). Three respondents commented on the opportunities this project provides for young people specifically: *"I think Tourism is a great idea. I believe our young generation needs to be included in this project. For example, the Council needs to do an MOU with both schools, including TAFE and any other organisations that support youth, which will include Work Experience"* (survey, local resident, female).

Other opportunities respondents identified included events such as Spring Festival and NAIDOC in July, reefing, offering cultural walks, taking visitors to the dam, lookouts, sharing the story of the island, sharing our culture, history, knowledge of the land, and having people *"know that the community here are good people"* (survey, local resident, male). The opportunity to connect the project to art was also highlighted: *"The project can be the seed of an 'arts centre' visitor precinct for all creative elements on Palm: dressmaking, dot painting, spears, lemonade, etc."* (survey, local resident, female).

“

The project could become a seed project for broader opportunities across Palm Island.

COMMUNITY ELDER

On logistics, it was pointed out that the Council *"need reliable people to make it work."* (survey, local resident, male). Two respondents, both not local residents, expressed negative sentiments, stating: *"Not sure the island is logistically ready for tourists. It reminds me of Tiwi, which leaves visitors underwhelmed"* (survey, government stakeholder, male). Further: *"Palm Island needs to remain for the people of Palm Island, not the tourists. Tourism will ruin Palm Island"* (survey, non-resident, female). As such, it is important that whatever form of tourism development occurs, it needs to be done in consultation with the community and ensuring they have the agency to shape decision-making.

Desired type of visitors to Palm Island

Figure 6 below summarises the survey results for the type of tourism that Palm Island locals would like to see. The survey design allowed individuals to skip some questions or exit the survey, so the sample size per option varies across and is included on the bottom of the graph.

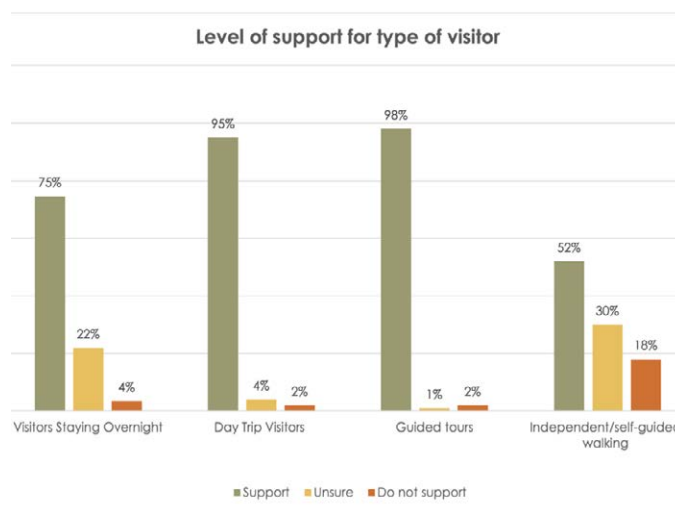


Figure 6. Level of support for different types of visitors on Palm Island

As shown in Figure 6, the strongest support was for guided tours, with 98% of participants (119 responses in total) choosing this option. Unsurprisingly, independent/self-guided walking had the lowest level of support (52%) and the highest level of direct opposition (18%). Day trip visitors are also a popular choice, with 95% of participants (105 responses in total) supportive of this type of tourism. Compared to guided tours and day trip visitors, overnight visitation had a lower level of support; however, still quite high at 75% (85 responses in total). Given that 22% of respondents were unsure about this particular type of tourism, it is important that more information is sought or provided to the community to gauge their specific sentiment for overnight visitation.

4.2 Support for the Walking Trails on Palm Island



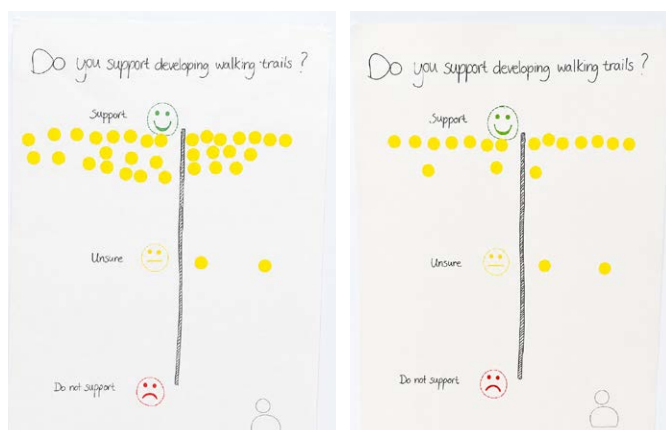
95%
support trails

Support for trail development was significantly high, as shown in Figure 6, 95% of respondents indicating their support. Overall, those who are supportive say that the trails would “*be very good for the community*” (survey, local resident, female). Others highlighted the opportunity for exercise: “*Good exercise, walks, views*” (survey, local resident, female).

One respondent highlighted that signage will be important to notify visitors where to go and where not to go, “*to ensure people don't ruin important areas*” (survey, visitor, female). Another respondent pointed out: “*I would like to see a walking track from the town to the airport first before the other trails*” (survey, local resident, female).

Support for walking trail development was also consistently strong throughout the Community Workshops and stakeholder engagement activities. We found more than 90% overall support for trail development, with very limited opposition expressed. Participants commonly described the project as an opportunity to create local employment, reconnect young people with culture, and strengthen community wellbeing. Trails were frequently discussed not only as tourism infrastructure, but also as community infrastructure that could support recreation, health, and connection to Country for local residents.

In the workshops strong support emerged for locations including Wallaby Point, Palm Valley, Mundy Bay and Pencil Bay. The proposed Wallaby Point to Little Cannon Bay circuit was regularly identified as a potential first-stage opportunity due to its scenic value, accessibility and existing community use. In terms of uncertainty, around 3% of respondents were unsure of their support or opposition to the trails, with only 2% opposing them.



Community Workshop 1 & Community Workshop 2 Summaries

Perceived benefits of the trails

Survey respondents expressed that the trail projects can bring a range of benefits to the community, as follows:

- 89%** **Jobs for the community members:**
113 responses
- 87%** **Pride and sharing Palm Island's strengths:**
110 responses
- 82%** **Health and wellbeing:**
104 responses
- 81%** **Opportunities for cultural tourism & storytelling:**
103 responses
- 77%** **Improving our care of country:**
98 responses

Ranked perceived benefits (n = 127). Note: Percentages do not add to 100% as the question allowed participants to choose multiple responses.

These results highlight that the top three areas to focus on in terms of the benefits derived from the projects should be channelled into local jobs, community pride, and health and well-being. Of the 127 responses received to these questions, only two respondents didn't see any benefits and 16 respondents chose the “Other/Unsure” option, providing further feedback to justify their answer.



Local artists can help tell the story through interpretation and signage along the trails.

PALM ISLAND ARTIST – MEETING 6

When analysing all the qualitative data, several key takeaways emerge:

- **Culture and economy are deeply intertwined**, with nearly 56% of the 16 respondents focusing on either culture (31%) or local jobs (25%). There is an emphasis that employment should go to “community members who actually live on the island & who know and live our Bwgcolman way, every day.” (survey, local resident, female) Hence, economic development is welcome if it respects and sustains local identity.
- There is a desire for **practical, everyday safety**. For example, infrastructure is not viewed simply through a tourism lens, but also through the need for “safe roads for people walking everywhere, especially from the town to airport and bay,” showing that local, day-to-day mobility is a high priority.
- The notion of **history** is quite present, with one respondent noting that “We used to have walking trails and tourists in the 1960s.” (survey, local resident, male). This indicates that eco-tourism or trail-based tourism isn't entirely a new concept to the island, but rather something that has historical roots the community remembers. As such, there is an opportunity here to learn from what worked in the past and help address what did not that may have led to the decline of tourism.
- **Social challenges were identified as a barrier** by one respondent, who noted there is “too much drug and alcohol in the community.” (survey, Traditional Owner, female) Hence, it is important to consider how existing social issues might prevent the local youth from engaging in traditional activities leveraged through tourism. In light of this gap, mixing sport, events and activities for locals on the trails could unlock new value.

Perceived Concerns regarding the trails

A total of 126 individuals answered this survey question (Figure 8). While the previous section reported on perceived benefits, this is not to say that the community does not have concerns in relation to the development of the trails. These concerns are ranked as follows:

- 62% **Environmental impacts, such as rubbish, erosion, wildlife, etc.:** 78 responses
- 55% **Impacts on culturally sensitive places and knowledge:** 110 responses
- 54% **Privacy and visitors near homes or community spaces:** 104 responses

*Ranked concerns from trail development (n = 126).
Note: Percentages do not add to 100% as the question allowed participants to choose multiple responses.*

Of the 126 survey responses, 20 respondents had no concerns and 10 respondents chose “Other/Unsure”. Of these, 9 clarified some of their concerns, which included potential conflict between Manbarra and Bwgcolman people, vandalism, and the need to maintain trails and infrastructure. Others highlighted safety and spending concerns, stating that “a lot of money will be spent for no return.” (survey, government stakeholder, male). Additionally, they also emphasised the need to consider places of passing, and that visitors may not integrate with the community well. One respondent raised the question of where visitors may stay, considering: “Should there be a low-impact, small campground acting as a hub for trails?” (survey, local resident, male).

Following the question regarding concerns, an optional open-ended question was included to allow for further written feedback. A total of 22 individuals left feedback. The thematic analysis for this feedback can be summarised in the following key themes:

- **Guided access only is a strong solution**, with respondents indicating exactly how they would like tourism to function. They generally do not support unguided tourists wandering freely. Having local guides and rangers is seen as the primary solution to mitigate safety concerns, protect sacred sites, and prevent people from stumbling into local camps.
- **Waste/Rubbish is seen as a significant issue**, with respondents not just asking for bins but explicitly calling out behaviour change and Council's accountability. For example, they state that if bins are provided, they need to be emptied regularly.
- **Respect for specific areas and the local environment and wildlife** is also noted. Hence, the placement of the trails is highly sensitive. Respondents explicitly said that some areas need protection, such as the burial site at Onion Bay. Moreover, some also state the need for strictly avoiding some areas, such as Bamboo Creek, local homes, and existing camps. One respondent also pointed out the importance of “checking what visitors are bringing in (so it doesn't impact the wildlife negatively) and what they are taking out”.

“

Wallaby Point to Cannon Bay is a very high-value tourism asset – the views and reef connection are exceptional.

MEETING 9

Family camps at Wallaby Point

Community consultation around the Wallaby Point trail during the workshops and on country discussions highlighted both strong support for improved access and deep sensitivity to the cultural and family connections embedded in the area. One family group with a personal leasehold in the area raised a strong disapproval for trails in the area.

Many residents emphasised however, that Wallaby Point has been used for generations as a place for family camps for many people, for seasonal gathering, and quiet recreation, and that any tourism-related activity must respect these established patterns of use. While most participants recognised the economic and social benefits of a managed trail, they also expressed concern that increased visitor presence could create pressure on these informal camp zones, particularly during peak periods.

The perceived conflict is less about opposition to the trail itself and more about ensuring cultural authority and family rights are not diminished. Residents stressed the need for clear protocols on visitor behaviour, signage that reinforces respect for private family spaces, and a governance model that gives Traditional Owners and affected families a direct role in decision-making. Several community members noted that unmanaged visitation in the past had caused tension, reinforcing the importance of co-design and transparent communication.

Overall, the consultation revealed that a Wallaby Point trail can work only if it enhances community pride and economic opportunity while protecting the integrity of long-standing family camp areas through culturally led planning and management.

Other family camp conversations

Across consultations, community members consistently emphasised that family camp areas are an integral part of Palm Island's cultural landscape. These places – whether at Wallaby Point, Little Cannon Bay, Bamboo Creek, or along other coastal corridors – represent long-standing patterns of use tied to identity, kinship, and seasonal gathering. The concern raised was not opposition to trails, but the risk that increased visitor activity could unintentionally encroach on these established family spaces.

Stakeholders stressed that protecting family camps is essential to maintaining cultural authority and ensuring that affected families retain rights in relation to how these areas are accessed, interpreted, and managed. The community's expectation is clear: trail development must be co-designed, with transparent communication, culturally led governance, and practical measures such as amenities, signage, visitor protocols, and alignment choices that avoid sensitive zones.

The overarching theme is a desire for balanced progress – support for improved access, tourism, and community wellbeing, paired with strong safeguards that uphold the primacy of family camps as living cultural places.



“Family camps around the island need to be considered in the planning.”

PALM ISLAND ARTISTS – MEETING 5

“

This could become one of the best remote cultural experience walks in Australia

MEETING 9



4.3 Trail Preferences & Design

Tracks used by the community

Overall, 121 individuals provided answers to this question via the survey (Figure 7). Currently, the most used trails are the Wallaby Point trail (70% of respondents use this track “often” or “sometimes”) and Palm Valley trail (67%). This was followed by the Pencil Point trail (63%); however, respondents used this trail the most often at 32% (compared to 26% using the Wallaby Point trail often and 30% for the Palm Valley trail).

Of the 121 individuals who answered this survey question, 38 indicated that they use other trails. Of those, 39% and 32% use them “often” or “sometimes”, respectively.

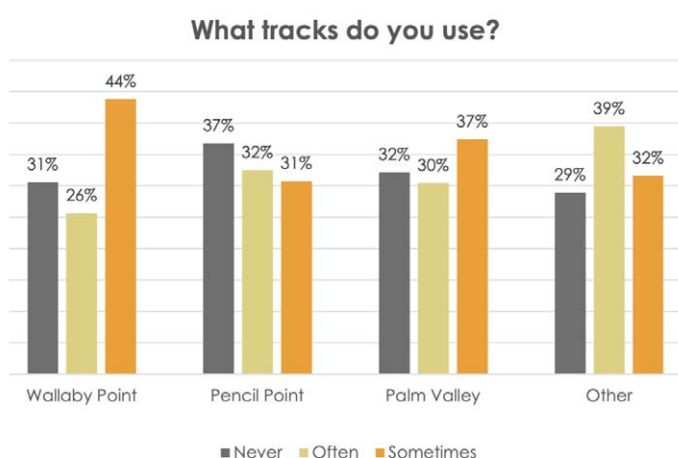


Figure 7. Level of use per trail by the community (n = 121). Note: Percentages do not add to 100% as the question allowed participants to choose multiple responses.

Other popular areas along the trails identified via the survey included:

- Mundy Bay: 11 mentions
- Bamboo Creek & Mt. Bentley: 6 mentions
- Cannon Bay / Big & Little Cannon: 6 mentions
- Butler Bay: 4 mentions
- Town, Mission & Airport Roads: 3 mentions
- Lookouts and North-East Bay: 3 mentions
- Beaches and other coastal trails: 2 mentions

Support for the proposed trail options

A total of 109 individuals answered the survey question that asked about the routes they support or not (Figure 8). The trail from Town to Airport and Pencil Bay had the highest level of support, at 89% (98 responses in total). Wallaby Point to Cannon Bay closely followed, with 85% of support. Town to Mundy and Onion Bay had the lowest level of support compared to the other two options; however, still quite high at 83%. Importantly, opposition to the proposed trails is very low, with less than 5% of participants opposing any of the trails.

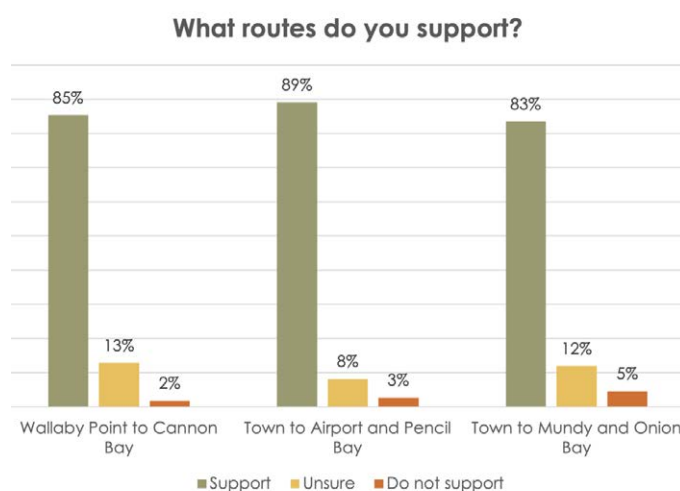


Figure 8. Support for trail development per individual route (n = 109). Note: Percentages do not add to 100% as the question allowed participants to choose multiple responses.

Similarly, the three trails were strongly supported in the Community Workshops, however the Wallaby Point trail consistently emerged as the most strongly supported trail. Participants identified the area as visually significant, historically important, and well suited to guided walking experiences. Pencil Bay was repeatedly discussed as an important link through to the airport, a historical location due to its prison history, mission history, and arrival history. Mango Avenue was also referenced as an important corridor linked to Palm Island’s segregation history. At the same time, several stakeholders reinforced the importance of careful trail alignment around camps and culturally sensitive areas, particularly near Onion Bay, Bamboo Creek and Wallaby Point camps.

“

The Palm Islands have amazing potential for paddling trails. Paddle-in only camps by the coast would be amazing, along with opportunities to visit the town for water and food resupply. The ocean side of greater Palm has amazing reef as well.

SURVEY, VISITOR

Important trail features to include

109 individuals answered the survey question regarding features to include throughout the trails. The most important feature, at 94%, was to include signs and wayfinding. Toilets closely followed at 86%, followed by seats and rest points (83%), access from town (66%), lighting (65%), and avoiding passing near homes (63%).

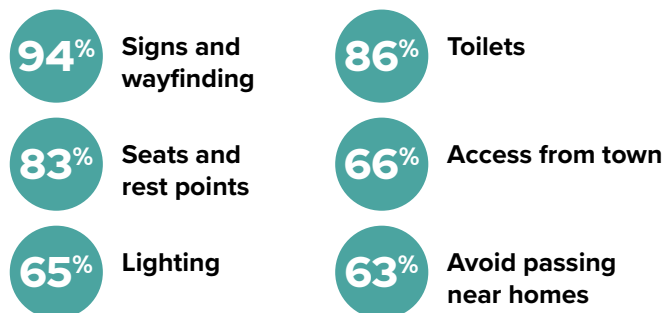


Figure 9. Important features to include, ranked in the order of responses (n = 109). Note: Percentages do not add to 100% as the question allowed participants to choose multiple responses.

Managing trails near homes and community spaces

A total of 110 survey respondents provided answers to the question regarding what to do if trails pass close to resident homes and community spaces (Figure 13). Once again, the community's preference for guided access is highlighted, with 59% of respondents indicating that trails should be developed with guided access only; perhaps reflecting a sentiment of the need to respect residents and community spaces.



Figure 10. Preferred options for trail development when it passes near homes (n = 110). Note: Percentages do not add to 100% as the question allowed participants to choose multiple responses.



The use of interactive Magnetic Boards in the Community Workshops helped people identify where facilities such as ranger huts, toilets, boat moorings, accommodation and information points should be located.

Importantly, 52% of the data (i.e., more than half) also indicated their preference for avoiding those areas completely. As such, revising the path of the proposed trails is important to manage the visitor experience and their interactions with locals. Using buffers, screens, and signage was preferred by 43% of participants, while 9% indicated other preferred options. Similarly in the Community Workshops, participants identified the importance of managing trails respectfully near homes, camps, and community spaces. Camp holders consistently reinforced the need for guided access and no direct intrusion into family camp areas.

The open-ended question that collected feedback in relation to these other preferred options highlighted the following dominant themes:

- There is an **emphasis on managing access respectfully, limiting the space, use, and timing for when the trails are used by visitors**. Doing so will allow local families to use the land and the trails for their own recreation. There are suggestions to introduce “times to walk or not to walk”. As such, planning of trails should ensure that either the trails are directed away from local spaces or manage their use in collaboration with the community.
- **Permits and local rules** are also highlighted, reflected in the data's strong desire to encourage a culture of respect and communication between both visitors and residents. There are comments that state “*always stay on the trail*” (survey, local resident, male), “ask before passing” (survey, local resident, male), and consult families at existing camps, ensuring visitors understand the boundaries rather than assuming they have free rein.
- **Clear communication and zoning** were also reflected in the qualitative data, with participants indicating the need to “inform residents and inform the visitors of where to go” (survey, local resident, male) so that both locals and tourists are aligned on boundaries, preventing accidental trespassing or cultural blunders.
- Finally, **infrastructure that contributes to safety and accountability** was also mentioned to manage human presence on the trails. For example, some respondents suggested “*improved lighting and CCTV*” (survey, non-resident, male). This indicates a desire for structural oversight to prevent anti-social behaviour or safety issues on the tracks.

Factors to support trail construction

In total, 109 participants answered the survey question on factors they consider important during construction of the trails (Figure 14). All factors were strongly supported, with support ranging between 80 – 90%. Local jobs were the most prominent (89%), followed by respect for cultural protocols (84%), regular updates (82%), and community involvement in decision-making (82%). A small percentage of respondents (5%) also indicated other factors.

The open-ended responses for those covered the following themes:

- Looking out for one another
- Ensuring fairness amongst community representation, particularly in relation to Traditional Owners who have either never been to Palm Island or do not reside there
- Communicating updates through social media
- Once again, local employment was highlighted, with one respondent stating: *“locals jobs are important.”* (survey, local resident, female).

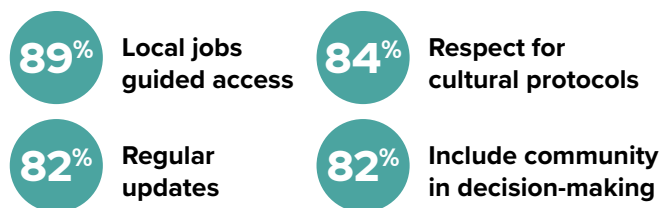


Figure 11. Preferred outcomes the community would like to see during trail construction (n = 109). Note: Percentages do not add to 100% as the question allowed participants to choose multiple responses.

Comments on the trail route and design

Detailed discussions on trail route and design were experienced in the Community Workshops particularly from many of the elders who have walked the trails for many years. Participants provided detailed feedback on trail opportunities, preferred routes, and design considerations throughout workshops and stakeholder discussions. Wallaby Point was frequently identified as a priority location, although participants reinforced the importance of ongoing consultation with camp holders and family groups in the area.

Palm Valley and Mundy Bay also received strong support due to their scenic value, cultural importance, and suitability for guided experiences. Specific locations repeatedly identified for careful management included Onion Bay burial sites, Bamboo Creek, Tambo grave, Wallaby Point camps and ridge-line cultural areas.

Overall, the workshop consultation findings identified strong support for carefully managed trail development that remains community-led, culturally respectful and environmentally responsible.

When asked in the survey to “comment on the trail route and design”, 34 survey participants left feedback. Respondents commented on the trail options, including that *“Mundy Bay really needs the trail”* (survey, local resident, female). Several others (3) identified Mount Bentley and Bamboo Creek trail. Some respondents commented on Wallaby Point, with one identifying it as the priority trail, and another noting: *“Careful on Wallaby Point, can be done but family group consult”* (survey, local resident, female) and *“All along the beaches at Wallaby point; not welcome”* (survey, Traditional Owner, female). Tourism development should not cross into Native Title land: *“Development should stop with Native Title line”* (survey, Traditional Owner, male). Overall, these responses highlight the need for the project to operate with extreme care, while also being inclusive of the wider community.

Another respondent suggested paddling trails: *“A niche activity, but the palm islands also has amazing potential for paddling trails. Paddle-in only camps by the coast would be amazing, along with opportunities to visit the town for water and food resupply. The ocean side of greater Palm has amazing reef as well”* (survey, visitor, male). Two other respondents suggested installing voice recordings along the trail, to facilitate authentic cultural interpretation: *“Start voice recording our last living elders today because elders still have the knowledge/history about Palm Island. Put voice recording on walking trails wherever it develops”* (survey, local resident, male).

Importantly, respondents agreed that trails should avoid camp sites, ancestral sites and local residential areas: *“Be mindful of people’s space, peace and be respectful. Stay away from cultural spaces and PI’s lifestyle”* (survey, local resident, male). Including bush tucker was seen as an important opportunity. Several respondents pointed out that guided walks were okay.

Two respondents suggested a staged approach, starting modestly, and then expanding based on community input and feedback. Specifically, they said: *“The initial first stages should be fine; if it is successful then we can discuss further with community members about expanding the tracks. Palm needs to do business differently now and into the future for our next generation coming through”* (survey, local resident, male). This sentiment indicates that there is strong community backing to keep development contained to a designated zone first, evaluate it, learn what worked and what did not, and only scale up if the initial phase is successful.

Importantly, respondents highlighted that community members need to be involved. Respondents would like this project to create *“local jobs for local people”* (survey, local resident, female), which they felt may also bring the family members of those directly involved along, highlighted the need to maintain transparency and point out that the community needs to be kept updated and have opportunities to provide input.

4.4 Future Community Consultation

Preferred future consultation method

A total of 106 participants answered the survey question related to their preferred consultation method (Figure 15). Community forums and workshops were the dominant preferred method, with 74% of participants preferring this method. Other popular methods include yarning circles (57%), and social media updates (54%). Online surveys and small group discussions were also moderately supported, at 48% and 47%, respectively. Drop-in sessions were the least popular, at 36%. However, from the qualitative data and conversations with the community, there is an expectation that Council and the project team will come to Elders, rather than having Elders come to the team.

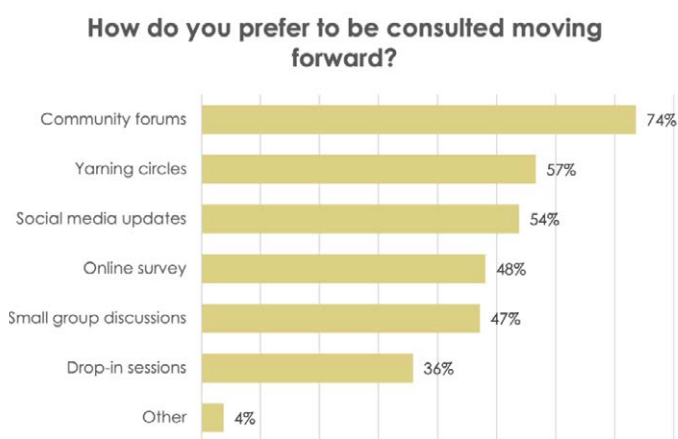


Figure 12. Preferred consultation method for future project development (n = 106). Note: Percentages do not add to 100% as the question allowed participants to choose multiple responses.

Community feedback for Council

Overall, a total of 30 individuals left an answer to the last survey question, which asked: “What else do you want the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council to know before moving forward?”

Based on the feedback provided, the responses centre around four main themes:

1. Cultural preservation
2. Local empowerment
3. Infrastructure management
4. Genuine community engagement

“The walks will be used by me and my family.”

COUNCILLOR – MEETING 8

4.5 Young Peoples Workshop

On 14th May, a Walking Trails workshop was hosted at St Michael's School, engaging 22 students in a 45-minute, hands-on session exploring tourism, jobs, and the proposed Palm Island Walking Trails. Using interactive stations, students expressed their views on tourism, identified potential employment pathways, and mapped activities across the island's trail network.

St Michaels School workshop May 14th 2026

Overall, students showed broad support or curiosity toward tourism, with nine supportive, nine unsure, and only one opposed. Their responses revealed a strong sense of cultural pride and enthusiasm for showcasing Palm Island's natural beauty, reefs, fishing spots, bush foods, sunsets, and cultural traditions. Students saw tourism as a way to share their culture, create jobs, improve transport, and “make new friends.”

At the same time, students expressed clear concerns about protecting Country, culture, and community wellbeing. They worried about tourists damaging cultural sites (“touching ancient things”), polluting beaches and swimming holes, overfishing, harming coral reefs, and introducing “viruses and drugs.” These concerns highlight the importance of guided tourism, strong biosecurity, and waste management systems – consistent with adult community feedback.

Students demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of tourism job pathways, identifying roles in cultural guiding, marine tourism, hospitality, food service, transport, and arts. They also recognised the skills required, including boat licences, fishing knowledge, cooking, customer service, cultural knowledge, and language skills. Their insights align closely with potential VET, TAFE, and school-to-work programs.

Through the magnetic mapping boards, students placed activities across the proposed trails, reinforcing community preferences for snorkelling, cultural storytelling, ranger huts, eco-camp nodes, toilets, and moorings at key locations such as Wallaby Point, Cannon Bay, Regina Bay, Pencil Bay, Mundy Bay, and Onion Bay.

Overall, the youth workshop shows that young people are open to tourism, provided it is managed, respectful, environmentally responsible, and culturally led. Their ideas reinforce the need for guided experiences, strong environmental protections, and local training pathways that prepare Palm Island youth for future tourism opportunities. The key findings are included in the table below.

Tourism Sector	Specific Jobs Identified	Required Skills and knowledge identified by students
Ecotourism and marine tourism	• Fishing trip guides • Boat tour operators	• Boat license • Fishing skills • In-depth understanding of local waterways
Cultural Tourism	• Cultural activity facilitators • Language and food educators • Artisan producers	• Traditional dot painting • Teaching local language names for foods • Knowledge of bushfoods • Brewing local beverages & bush lemonade
Food and beverage service	• Restaurant Cooks • Servers / Front of House	• Cooking local seafood • Menu knowledge • Communication & customer service • Cleaning, hygiene, and food safety
Hospitality and transportation	• Hotel Staff • Tour drivers / transport operators	• Greeting, welcoming, and communication • Cleaning and housekeeping • Navigating/transporting tourists around the island



Students demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of tourism job pathways, identifying roles in cultural guiding, marine tourism, hospitality, food service, transport and the arts.



4.6 Key Stakeholder Consultation

The key stakeholder engagement process generated a detailed understanding of the planning, cultural and environment approvals required for the walking trails development. Meetings were held with the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office (Meeting 7), an environmental assessment Consultant (Meeting 12), Lands Office (Meeting 25) DETSI (Meeting 11) and QPWS (Meeting 28) responsible for the Thorsborne Trail and Ngaro Trail projects. Project Management team meetings were established for cross agency discussions and a range of stakeholder meetings were undertaken with tourism operators.

It became evident that any walking trail development on Palm Island outside of set aside 'road reserve' will trigger approvals through the Palm Island Future Land Practises Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) consistent with Council's governance obligations. (Meeting 7) Key requirements included:

- Identifying areas where proposed trail alignments intersect with ILUA trigger zones
- Noting Cultural heritage identified zones
- Ensuring Traditional Owners were engaged early and separately as a distinct stream
- Providing clear information about potential land impacts, access, and cultural sensitivities and ensuring any recommendations relating to land use, access or cultural sites were validated by cultural authority
- Documenting where further ILUA processes may be required during future design or construction phases

The Remote Indigenous Infrastructure and Land Program office provided the clearest articulation of proposed works in the identified Buffer Zone and Lease areas in the ILUA framework:

"Projects in the prescribed Buffer Zone will require prescribed notice as proposed in Clause 8 of the ILUA. Projects in the 'lease area' the 2270 hectares including North East Bay and all of coastline is held by elders and will require negotiation and follow prescribed ILUA process."

Implications:

- Trails that follow Road Reserve = simplest pathway (Council endorsement only).
- Common Area (off road reserve) = notification to Native Title claimants/Elders.
- Buffer Zone = formal Prescribed Action Notice (PAN) process.
- Lease Area = full ILUA negotiation with prescribed Elders.

Family camps are a formal consideration

The ILUA also noted that 'family camps' on Palm Island are also considered in Schedule 8. This means trail alignments must avoid or sensitively manage proximity to family camps and consultation with relevant families is a statutory requirement, not optional.



Palm Island Map showing the ILUA zones in yellow, the Council jurisdiction zone, identified Buffer Zone and Leased area to Native Title holders and the Family Camp areas identified in Pink.

Heritage register constraints

Noted in the ILUA also is the Palm Island Heritage Register, which lists Casement Bay, Butler Bay, Wallaby Point and Palm Valley all considered part of the Walking Trails project again highlighting the need for a Prescribed Notice under the ILUA outlining, trail alignment, infrastructure and its placement.

Environmental planning & approvals – what agencies require

Meeting 12 confirmed that environmental approval timeframes remain the principal risk particularly any referrals that trigger the State Assessment and Referral Agency(SARA).

Key insights:

- A desktop due-diligence assessment can begin early
- Field surveys (flora, fauna, coastal, erosion) are likely to take 1–2 weeks depending on trail length and scope
- Approvals remain the longest critical path item

Desktop checks can precede or run alongside detailed design and cultural heritage work. This is a major advantage to compress the timeline by running approvals and design concurrently.

Cultural heritage assessment – co-design

In discussions with DETSI and QPWS staff during the Thorsborne and Ngaro Trail planning sessions – and reaffirmed through advice from environmental consultants (Meeting 12) – it is evident that any trail infrastructure or campground development will likely trigger both environmental and cultural heritage assessments. As a result, a co-design process with Elders and cultural knowledge holders is the preferred and culturally appropriate approach for determining the final trail alignments. Further, Meeting 4 and Meeting 29 confirmed that the Rangers can support the cultural heritage assessment process in partnership with Manbarra Traditional Owners, ensuring that cultural values and on-Country knowledge guide project decisions.

Development applications (DA) required for structures

Identified in discussions with the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office any proposed accommodation, huts or ranger facilities are likely to require the normal Council DA process. This would include toilets, ranger huts, campsites, and eco-tourism accommodation and lookouts.

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Palm Island needs to do business differently now and into the future for our next generation coming through

SURVEY, LOCAL RESIDENT



4.7 Commercial Tourism Partner Consultation

Across multiple tourism operator consultations, stakeholders consistently recognised that Palm Island will require a commercial tourism partner to successfully activate the Walking Trails Project and build a sustainable visitor economy. Meeting 15, 16, 17, 26 and 27 with tourism stakeholders, reinforced that Palm Island will need a commercial partner to assist market access, operational expertise, investment leverage, and structured capability building, while ensuring cultural authority remains with the community.

DETSI reinforced this point, noting that while community capability is growing, a professional partner is essential to bridge the gap between product development, market access, and operational readiness. Stakeholders acknowledged that Palm Island currently lacks the sales channels, marketing systems, and national/international reach needed to attract consistent visitation. A partner with established distribution networks was seen as critical.

We heard that Palm Island can attract a high-quality tourism partner but only if the product is staged, culturally led, experience-first, and supported by clear governance, long-term tenure, and early operator involvement. The strongest opportunity lies in premium, small-group, guided cultural walking experiences, not mass tourism or unguided walking. To attract a tourism partner, Palm Island must demonstrate what operators need to see:

1. A clear, staged product plan
2. Cultural authority and community alignment
3. Governance certainty (Council + TOs + Rangers)
4. A viable accommodation model
5. A compelling point of difference (culture + sea country + island story)
6. A pathway to long-term tenure (especially for premium operators)

Operators warned against overbuilding early, leading with infrastructure instead of experience, creating a “me-too” walking product and rushing to market before community readiness.

“Skipping basic ‘me-too’ walking products... move earlier toward a higher-value, more comfortable eco-experience.” (Tourism Operator, Meeting 15)

What commercial operators consistently said they need

A clearly defined product vision. All operators stressed that Palm Island must decide early whether it is building:

- A short, culturally led day/overnight experience, or
- A multi-day, premium guided walk with accommodation nodes.

“Multi-day experiences are critical for commercial viability.” (Tourism Operator, Meeting 17)

A staged development pathway

Every operator recommended a phased rollout:

1. Short, guided, cultural experiences (low risk, high control)
2. Premium overnight experiences (eco-tents, seasonal structures)
3. Longer-term multi-day walk (if demand and governance align)

“Success depends on defining a clear, long-term vision early... high-end walking experiences require certainty and long timeframes.” Tourism Operator, Meeting 27

What they said about commercial viability

Walking alone will not sell enough product, it has to be an integrated culturally led experience. Intrepid and World Expeditions were explicit:

- The East Coast walking market is not made up of serious walkers.
- Cultural storytelling, ranger-led experiences, and community connection are the core value proposition.

“Typical East Coast travellers are not serious walkers – long hikes limit the market significantly. Short, accessible experiences integrated into existing East Coast itineraries can work.” Tourism operator, Meeting 15.

“the walking market is shifting toward comfort... rustic/swags-only experiences are declining in appeal.”
Tourism operator, Meeting 16

“we will invest in and build our own infrastructure if there is a long-term tenure and vision (30–45 years).”
Tourism operator, Meeting 17

What they said about cultural leadership

Culture must lead the product, the opportunity to integrate the Rangers is critical. All operators agreed Palm Island’s competitive advantage is authentic Indigenous cultural experience, not the walking trails themselves.

All tourism operator discussions agreed “Lead with cultural, community-led experiences... build toward higher-value, differentiated tourism over time.”

What they said about infrastructure and investment

All three walking company operators agreed that Palm Island currently has an accommodation restraint as the accommodation capacity is limited to one motel.

“Accommodation strategy is key... likely need more comfort-oriented options.” Tourism operator, Meeting 16

“We prefer off-grid, multi-day walks... supported by their own infrastructure.” Tourism Operator Meeting 15

Rangers are central to delivery

Operators consistently saw the Minggamingga Rangers as:

- Guides
- Cultural hosts
- Environmental managers
- Future operational leaders

This aligns with TRC's Tourism Masterplan (2023) view that *"Capacity building alongside any development is critical... using rangers and cultural storytelling as early-stage product."*

Operators need certainty before investing preferring

- a long-term plan and tenure (10- 30 years)
- exclusive or semi-exclusive product zones
- investment only when governance is stable

"High-end walking experiences require certainty, long timeframes, and a compelling point of difference."

Tourism Operator, Meeting 27

What was said about sales, marketing and distribution

Palm Island cannot do this alone. All operators agreed:

- Palm Island will need a commercial partner for distribution, marketing, and product packaging.
- Community-led delivery is essential, but commercial expertise is required to reach national and international markets.

TRC's Tourism Masterplan (2023) indicates "A commercial partner is likely necessary to drive marketing, build visitor demand, and provide logistics and distribution capability."

Meeting 13 reinforced the need for reliable transport, predictable group sizes and market testing opportunity in the set up of trails.

What will attract the strongest partners

The operators most aligned with this opportunity are:

- **Intrepid Travel** – responsible tourism priorities, cultural experiences, short-to-medium products likely to engage with local community projects, strong local supply chains, global markets and interests in socially developing communities.
- **Australian Walking Company** – willing to invest with a strong product vision, with a strong Governance model and TO collaboration, premium multi-day, long-term investment with incredible STO and Tourism Australia alignment and marketing connections.
- **World Expeditions** – experts in guided multi-day, mid-to-premium market but have two other regional products – could make a 'three capes' approach but have they market capability to attract enough customers for their Queensland products.

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We want visitors to walk with respect, listen to our stories, and understand our connection to country

MINGGAMINGGA RANGER



4.8 Themes and a Community Framework from the Consultation

Overall, the themes identified during stakeholder engagement intersect across the following key priorities:

Local jobs, training, and economic growth

There is a strong demand for economic benefits to stay within the community, with respondents pointing out that local projects should directly translate into jobs for local residents, even if it requires upskilling. This sentiment is reflected in quotes such as “Local people, local jobs” (survey, local resident, female), “Give our locals jobs; they will need training, but there would be respect for the community” (survey, local resident, male).

Some link employment opportunities to diversifying the tourism offering, proposing ideas like an art centre.

Cultural preservation and respect for Elders

The data highlights a deep need to respect the island’s cultural heritage, in particular as it relates to elders and traditional owners. Responses reflect a sense of urgency for capturing the knowledge of Elders, and Traditional and Historical Custodians. For some, Council is quite young, and because of this, they encourage Council to collaborate with Elders and be guided by them. Some key quotes that reflect this sentiment include:

- *“Start voice recording our last living elders today because elders still have the knowledge/history...”* (survey, local resident, male).
- *“Our campus, our healing place, our cultural grounds, our hunting grounds”* (survey, Traditional Owner, female).
- *“Young Council, need elders to guide the way”* (survey, local resident, male).
- *“Must be designed in consultation with Manbarra elders. Bwgcolman may not be aware of story places”* (survey, non-resident, male).

“

Start voice recording our last living elders today because elders still have the knowledge/history...

SURVEY, LOCAL RESIDENT

Community consultation, ownership, and transparency

A prominent theme is the desire for the community to be genuinely heard, kept informed, and given veto power or strong input into what happens on their land. There is explicit resistance to top-down implementation without consent. This sentiment is reflected by quotes such as:

“To always keep community members updated and allowing them to have their say” (survey, local resident, female).

“Please allow community to have more input...” (survey, local resident, male).

Importantly, one specific response opposes all kinds of tourism and trail development on Palm Island, specifically saying: “Don’t want this, never did, never will. Not interested” (survey, Traditional Owner, female).

Infrastructure maintenance and environmental/safety concerns

Respondents are also focused on the practicalities of maintaining the island to ensure whatever tourism or trail development occurs is successful in the long-term. This includes safety on trails, basic infrastructure upgrades, upgrading and building roads, improving housing infrastructure, and managing environmental impacts like waste and animals. Some key quotes are reflected as follows:

“Council needs to make sure that the walking tracks are maintained” (survey, government stakeholder, male).

“They need to get the pigs under control if looking at tourism with walks” (survey, local resident, male).

“Just concerned about rubbish” (survey, local resident, female).

Desire for tangible action

While some are hesitant, other segments of the community are eager to see things move past the planning stage, provided it is done efficiently. This sentiment is reflected by the following quotes:

- *“Just putting it into action”* (survey, local resident, male).
- *“More action, less red tape slowing down progress”* (survey, local resident, male).
- *“When can you start?”* (survey, local resident, male).

Indirectly, the survey results offer a community framework that could maximise the project’s chances of success. Figure XX summarises these in a matrix.

WHO DOES THE WORK?

Local people only, paired with local training and capability-building. Risks to watch out for include shared benefits between and across communities, areas, and Manbarra and Bwgcolman Peoples.

WHO GIVES PERMISSION?

Elders must guide the cultural stories and sacred map spaces, while local families must have agency over trails near their active camps and residential spaces.

HOW DOES TOURISM FUNCTION?

Preference for a highly managed, community-led approach to tourism: one that is low-impact, localised, and directly beneficial for the community. The ideal model is guided-only access with visitor caps to prevent overtourism. Regenerative tourism principles may be beneficial to guide the project forward.

WHAT ARE THE NON-NEGOTIABLES?

Elders must guide the cultural stories and sacred map spaces, while local families must have agency over trails near their active camps and residential spaces.

Figure XX. Community framework matrix for critical areas to consider to move forward.

“Local artists can help tell the story through interpretation and signage along the trails

PALM ISLAND ARTIST – MEETING 6



4.9 Integrated Findings & Traceability Table

Based on our analysis of the engagement data, Table 1 summarises the main themes, along with their relevant community sentiment, risk and opportunity, and proposed recommendation. The table also serves as a traceability tool to link the recommendations and findings to the direct engagement method.

Core Sentiment Summary	Risk or Opportunity		Recommendation
THEME: Support for tourism development			Method: Survey
Strong support for tourism on Palm Island (77% on the survey and 22 individuals in the workshops), as long as it is community-led and aligned with local culture.	Risk: Excluding the community from tourism development.	Opportunity: Maximising inclusion and community-led decisions, including, for example, integrating regenerative tourism principles, which advocate for putting the community first.	Whatever form of tourism development occurs, it needs to be done in consultation with the community and ensure they have the agency to shape decision-making.
THEME: Support for trail development and route design			Method: Survey and workshops
Almost unanimous support for developing the trails (95% in the survey and 42 individuals in the workshops), with the caveat that they are well managed to minimise potential impacts on the community.	Risk: Developing the trails without adequate infrastructure or management to support and maintain them.	Opportunity: Upfront planning for what the trails require, including infrastructure, features, etc. Maintenance activities create jobs, educational opportunities and can be tied in with ranger care for country. Infrastructure can serve visitors and locals, e.g. yarnning circles can be used by tour guides and school classes.	Proceed with the development of the trails, prioritising an initial trail and taking a staged approach – Wallaby Point and the Town to Airport and Pencil Bay – as a pilot to identify challenges and opportunities, as well as integrate adequate management strategies. The most important features to include are signs and wayfinding, toilets, seats and rest points. Evaluate the pilot's success and community impact before scaling up or expanding.
THEME: Trail benefits			Method: Survey
The top three benefits the community would like to see from the development of the trails are (1) jobs, (2) sharing Palm's strengths, and (3) health and well-being.	Risk: Prioritising other benefits that do not include the top three. Channelling benefits to one specific stakeholder group.	Opportunity: A strong combination of culture, economy, sports, and infrastructure would maximise the project's impact.	Ensure that the development of the trails and the project's supply chain directly ties into employment for locals. Consider a co-op sharing model that ensures benefits are shared equally across community groups who have a direct connection to specific areas through which the trail passes through.
THEME: Community concerns in relation to trail development			Method: Survey and workshops
The top three concerns are environmental impacts (rubbish, wildlife impacts, etc.), impacts on the privacy of residential homes and community spaces, and impacts on culturally sensitive places. The community explicitly stated that independent, unguided tourists are a threat to privacy, safety, and sacred sites	Risk: Overlooking environmental impacts or developing the project in ways that impact residential homes and culturally sensitive areas.	Opportunity: Bringing the community into the decision-making process and allowing them to influence the outcomes and share the benefits equally, regardless of if they are Manbarra or Bwgcolman.	Consider trail placement to, first, ensure that environmental impacts are reduce, and second, to avoid the trails from passing near residential homes or community spaces and/or places of cultural significance. Implement strict "Times to walk / Not to walk" zoning to protect local family privacy , and implement CCTV and solar lighting at key trailheads for community accountability. Ensure local rules are highlighted throughout the trails, and using local guides only. Do not allow independent/self-guided walking, fishing, or free camping.
THEME: Jobs for locals			Method: Survey
Non-negotiable focus on hiring and training locals first.	Risk: Outsourcing jobs to people not from the community.	Opportunity: Economic development with jobs as the priority.	Conduct an economic assessment to identify opportunities and gaps in relation to jobs and the capacity-building required to support those.
THEME: Protecting local culture			Method: Survey
Elders must guide the process; history must be preserved.	Risk: Alienating the community if sacred grounds or cultural history are ignored.	Opportunity: Using local culture makes the trails more place-based and unique – unable to be replicated anywhere else.	Integrate cultural heritage process into the trail development, ensuring both Manbarra and Bwgcolman are highlighted equally. Adequately manage potential friction between and across stakeholder groups and ensure stories from both Manbarra and Bwgcolman Elders are represented.

Core sentiment Summary	Risk or Opportunity		Recommendation
THEME: Ensuring transparent and regular communications			Method: Survey
Demand for total transparency and continuous updates.	Risk: Trust will erode rapidly if decisions are made behind closed doors.	Opportunity: Build trust, buy-in and a strong social license with the community.	Create a communications and engagement plan to build a roadmap for how the community will be engaged. Ensure that the preferred consultation methods are integrated, including community forums, yarning circles, and social media updates. Create a Community-Led Advisory Council made up of community champions, elders, young leaders to guide project development.
THEME: Prioritising environmental protection and visitor/resident safety			Method: Survey
Wild pigs, roaming animals, and trail maintenance must be managed. Residents explicitly noted that the Council has a bad track record with waste management ("rangers just set traps and leave") and that locals litter even near bins.	Risk: Safety issues can impact the visitor experience and the local support for the trails.	Opportunity: Well-maintained trails could reduce "us and them" perceptions for adventurous, culturally sensitive visitors.	Feral pigs and horses need to be removed through an eradication program or at the very least, heavily managed to ensure resident and visitor safety. Trail clearing needs is a must to lower snake strike risks. Clear signage and localized first-aid stations (stocked with vinegar) for stinging tree burns and seasonal jellyfish should also be incorporated. Waste management cannot just be "putting out bins". It must include a behavior change/education program for locals, and a mandatory daily/weekly rubbish collection route serviced by local rangers in 4WDs.
THEME: Infrastructure development			Method: Workshops
There are significant infrastructure gaps that may jeopardise project success	Risk: The visitor experience is negatively impacted, resulting in decreased visitation	Opportunity: Infrastructure planning and implementation contributes to community amenity and improved visitor experience.	Trail development must go hand in hand with built form and adequate infrastructure, including: Arrival precinct welcome facilities • Moorings • Accommodations/eco-lodges/glamping • Rangers hut • Expansion to other islands if demand allows • Amenities (toilets, accessibility) • Seats and resting spots • Lookouts • Interpretive signage • Arts and cultural centre • CCTV • Lighting
THEME: Complementary activities			Method: Workshops
Trails can support or enhance alternative activities besides walking.	Risk: Focusing on the walking trails only without considering the broader tourism and interrelationships with other activities minimises economic opportunities.	Opportunity: Diversifying the tourism product offering to attract various visitor profiles (adventure tourists, conscious travellers, heritage tourism, etc.)	Map out what other activities the trails can support and/or how they can, in turn, enhance the visitor experience and create more local jobs. Examples include: - Cultural walks and storytelling: Art, mural, traditional craftsmanship, art trails, workshops, cultural, dances and performances. - Nature-based tourism: Hiking, swimming, snorkelling, diving, citizen science, boating. - Intergenerational healing and belonging: Capturing and sharing Elder’s knowledge, transferring knowledge from Elders to youth, voice recording the last living Elders and place these recordings via QR codes/audio posts on the walking trails as interpretative visitor signage. - Regenerative agriculture: Self-sufficient farming, veggie gardens.
THEME: Attracting a Tourism Partner			Method: Tourism Stakeholder Meetings
We heard that Palm Island can attract a high-quality tourism partner but only if the product is staged, culturally led, experience-first, and supported by clear governance, long-term tenure, and early operator involvement.	Risk: Third party not interested in partnering Palm Islan. Community don’t approve bringing in a third party in a tourism development.	Opportunity: A national tourism partner will be considerable product credibility, could attract investment and provides the opportunity for community to learn from an experienced company, building tourism readiness and knowledge.	Undertake an Expression of Interest process around the project, its vision and the opportunity in te first stage of proposed works to give a potential partner early accessibility into the project plan.



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*Success depends
on defining a clear,
long-term vision
early... high-end
walking experiences
require certainty and
long timeframes*

TOURISM OPERATOR – MEETING 27



Project Team – Palm Island Walking Trails Project

5.1 SALT Tourism & Leisure Project Team



Paul Victory

SALT Tourism & Leisure, led by Paul Victory, is a specialist advisory practice with deep expertise in tourism development, marine transport, and community-aligned regional growth. With more than 35 years of executive leadership across Australia, including

collaborating with government, national operators, and regional Australia, Paul brings a proven ability to design, fund, and deliver projects from concept to delivery, that create lasting economic and social outcomes. Paul will lead the Palm Island project and lead the Government agency consultation. Paul's wife, Lissa Victory, an experienced financial services advisor, and also a Director at SALT, will support the project with Contract Administration.



Katie Lord

Recognising the deep community engagement required for this project Paul has invited the experienced and recognised community advocate Katie Lord to lead the community consultation requirements. Katie Lord brings

more than 15 years of direct engagement with the Palm Island community, formally recognised through a NAIDOC Award presented by Mayor Alf Lacey in 2025 for sustained service and partnership.

Katie Lord is an experienced tourism and stakeholder engagement professional, with strong capability across regional development, industry coordination, and project delivery. Katie brings a calm, organised, and solutions-focused approach to complex initiatives, ensuring clear communication, effective collaboration, and consistent follow-through. Katie has been recognised for her extensive work with the Palm Island community.

Collaboration for this project

Griffith Institute for Tourism (GIFT)

Dr. Sarah Gardiner a Director at GIFT will lead the Community Survey methodology and provide key analysis of the consultation with her experienced research team. Sarah is a leading expert in tourism, holds a PhD in Marketing, and is a Professor of Tourism. She is Director of the Griffith Institute for Tourism – Australia's largest and best-performing tourism research institute, with over 120 academic and HDR members. Griffith is ranked #1 in Australia and in the Top 10 worldwide in tourism and hospitality. She brings extensive experience across the private and public sectors of the Australian tourism industry. Her research, featured in top tourism journals and explores travel consumer behaviour. Sarah is a sought-after speaker, consultant, and trainer, frequently engaging with government and industry to share her expertise. Her research interests focus on youth tourism and emerging travel trends, reflecting her passion for shaping the industry's future. In addition to her academic and professional roles, Sarah is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She serves as a Non-executive Director for Australian Regional Tourism and Basketball Australia, demonstrating her commitment to effective governance and strategic oversight.



Dr Johanna Loehr from GIFT will support Sarah and will be involved on Palm Island in Survey, Workshop and Research roles. Johanna is a Lecturer in Tourism whose work focuses on sustainable tourism, climate change, system change and policy making. Her aim is to find ways for tourism to drive more holistic outcomes for host communities and the environment. Much of Johanna's work has focused on the destination scale, with a particular focus on small islands across the Pacific and Queensland.

Dr Vanessa Taveras-Dalmau will provide Survey, Workshop and Research Analyst assistance. Vanessa is an environmental-social scientist, researcher, and educator with over 15 years' experience in studying, designing, and delivering interventions in sustainability, regenerative development, and climate resilience. Vanessa combines academic rigour with practical delivery experience to develop evidence-driven and place-based solutions that translate sustainability science into real-world action.

SALT Tourism & Leisure hold \$20m Public Liability with Allianz, Policy number 109XN69922COM and \$5m Professional Indemnity Insurance held with Chubb, Policy number CP10004887.

5.2 Palm Island Walking Trail Survey

This structured survey was designed to quantitatively capture community and stakeholder views on:

- Tourism and walking trail sentiment
- Trail alignments and features
- Visitor experience preferences
- Community benefits
- Trail governance and operations

5.2 Palm Island Walking Trail Survey

Palm Island Walking Trails Community Survey

Have your say on potential trail development on Palm Island.

This survey is voluntary and your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. A de-identified summary report will be provided to the Palm Island Council.

WIN! Enter a prize draw to win one of 5 SeaLink Multi passes at the end of the survey. Good luck!

This survey is being conducted by SALT Tourism & Leisure and Griffith University on behalf of the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council.

Survey closes 15th May.

From what point of view do you answer this survey? Tick one that applies.

☐ Local resident

☐ Traditional Owner

☐ Business operator → is your business in the tourism industry? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Government stakeholder

☐ Visitor

☐ Other (please specify) _____

Q2 How long have you lived on Palm Island? Tick one that applies.

☐ Less than 1 year

☐ 1-5 years

☐ 5+ years

☐ I do not live on Palm Island / not applicable

Q3 What is your age group? Tick one that applies.

☐ Under 18

☐ 18 - 29

☐ 30 - 39

☐ 40 - 49

☐ 50 - 59

☐ 60+

☐ Prefer not to say

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Q4 What is your gender? Tick one that applies.

☐ Woman

☐ Man

☐ Non-binary

☐ Prefer not to say

Q5 What is the postcode for your home address?

Q6 What tracks do you use?

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Wallaby Point	☐	☐	☐
Pencil Point	☐	☐	☐
Palm Valley	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)	☐	☐	☐

Q7 Do you support developing walking trails for residents and visitors to Palm Island?

	Support	Unsure	Do not support
Please indicate	☐	☐	☐

Q8 Do you support tourism on Palm Island?

	Support	Unsure	Do not support
Please indicate	☐	☐	☐

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Q9 Please comment (optional).

Q10 Thinking about the proposed walking trails... What benefits could they bring? Tick all that apply.

☐ Jobs for community members

☐ Opportunities for cultural tourism / storytelling (where appropriate)

☐ Pride and sharing Palm Island's strengths

☐ Health and wellbeing (for locals too)

☐ Improving our care of country

☐ I don't see any benefits

☐ Other (please specify) / Not sure _____

Q11 What concerns do you have? Tick all that apply.

☐ Impacts on culturally sensitive places/knowledge

☐ Privacy / visitors near homes or community spaces

☐ Environmental impacts (rubbish, erosion, wildlife)

☐ I have no concerns

☐ Other (please specify) / Not sure _____

Q12 Please comment (optional).

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Q13 What tourism activities should occur on Palm Island?

	Support	Unsure	Do not support
Visitors staying overnight	☐	☐	☐
Visitor coming for the day only	☐	☐	☐
Guided tours	☐	☐	☐
Independent/self-guided walking	☐	☐	☐

Q14 This is a map of potential trail route options on Palm Island.

Palm Island Walking Trails

Walking Trails

Wallaby Point to Cannon Bay

Town to airport and Pencil Bay

Town to Mundy and Onion Bay

Existing

Proposed

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Q15 Looking at the map with potential options, what routes do you support?

	Support	Unsure	Do not support
Wallaby Point to Cannon Bay track	☐	☐	☐
Town to Airport and Pencil Bay track	☐	☐	☐
Town to Mundy and Onion Bay track	☐	☐	☐

Q16 What features are important? Tick all that apply.

☐ Signs and wayfinding

☐ Seats and rest points

☐ Access from the town

☐ Toilets

☐ Lighting

☐ Avoid passing near resident homes

Q17 If a trail passes near homes and community spaces, what should happen? Tick all that apply.

☐ Avoid those areas completely

☐ Use buffers, screens and signage

☐ Allow only guided access

☐ Other (please specify) _____

Q18 What would you like to see to support construction of the trails? Tick all that apply.

☐ Regular updates

☐ Community involvement in decision-making

☐ Local jobs and contracts

☐ Respect for cultural protocols

☐ Other (please specify) _____

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Q19 Please comment on the trail route and design (optional). Suggest alternative routes and options and any areas that should be avoided or restricted for visitors.

Q20 How do you prefer to be consulted moving forward? Tick all that apply.

☐ Community forums

☐ Small group discussions

☐ Yarning circles

☐ Online survey

☐ Drop-in sessions

☐ Social media updates

☐ Other (please specify) _____

Q21 What else do you want the Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council to know before moving forward? (optional)

Q22 PRIZE Would you like to enter the prize draw?

☐ Yes → please enter your contact details in the [separate contact list](#).

☐ No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

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5.3 List of Government and Key Stakeholder Meetings and Community Member Consultations

Meeting 1 – 24 March – Marcio Fialho, Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council (PIASC)

Meeting 2 – 24 March – Dean Griggs, PIASC

Meeting 3 – 24 March – Tanya Haines, PIASC

Meeting 4 – 25 March – Minggamingga Rangers (Natalie Friday, Richard Cassady, Alan Palm Island, Reggie Palm Island, Jarwin Oui, Matt Bogart – DETSI)

Meeting 5 – 25 March-(Fred Clay Reserve) & 13 May (Town Square) – Sue Prior, Palm Island Artists

Meeting 6 – 26 March – Raina Simon, Palm Island Artist

Meeting 7 – 27 March – Remote Indigenous Land & Infrastructure Program Office (Gerhard Visser)

Meeting 8 – 30 March – Minggamingga Rangers (Natalie Friday, Richard Cassady, Ebenezer Oui)

Meeting 9 – 31 March – Beth Campbell from Tricky Tracks

Meeting 10 – 31 March – Palm Island Community Company (Mislam Sam & Roy Prior)

Meeting 11 – 15 April – DETSI (Andy Causebrooke, Thorsborne Trail OIC)

Meeting 12 – 17 April – ECOREX Environmental Consultants (Johan Hunter)

Meeting 13 – 22 April – SeaLink North Queensland (Darren Spearman)

Meeting 14 – 23 April – Project Management Team, Emma Bradbury (CEO, PIASC), Marcio Fialho PIASC, Peter Evans DETSI, Lisa Woolfe TEL, Natalie Friday Minggamingga Rangers

Meeting 15 – 5th May – Intrepid Travel, Brett Mitchell (CEO), Simon Mendelawitz Australian Operations Manager, Rachelle Uhlmann Australian Product Manager

Meeting 16 – 5th May – Michael Buggy (Director) World Expeditions

Meeting 17 – 6th May – Neil Lynch (CEO) Keith (National Ops) Australian Walking Company

Meeting 18 – 6th May – Maggie Blackley, Resident

Meeting 19 – 5th May – Deniece Geia, Resident

Meeting 20 – 8th May – Zina Pryor, Resident

Meeting 21 – 7th May – Project Management Team, Emma Bradbury, Marcio Fialho PIASC, Peter Evans DETSI, Lisa Woolfe TEL, Natalie Friday Minggamingga Rangers

Meeting 22 – 7th May – Chelea Murr (Capital Assets & Facilities Group) Qld Police

Meeting 23 – 14th May – Clint Barry, Resident

Meeting 24 – 14th May – Robert Castors, Resident

Meeting 25 – 14th May – Amy Rosanowski, Deputy Director General, Office of the Deputy Director-General

Meeting 26 – 18th May – Janet McKay and Chris Halstead (TRC Consultants)

Meeting 27 – 21st May – Ben Christie-Johnson, AWC Walking Consultant

Meeting 28 – 21st May – Nah Turnbull QPWS Ngaro Walking Trail (Whitsunday Island)

Meeting 29 – 21st May – Mary Zou, Principal Advisor Passenger Transport, TMR

Meeting 30 – 26th May – Ursula Kohler, Bear Advisory – Manbarra Elders Council

Consultation summary – community info

Individual contact was undertaken with a broad cross-section of Palm Island community members to inform individuals of the consultation and engagement process, share project information, and invite participation in workshops and surveys. These conversations were primarily informational, introductory or exploratory of a particular issue in nature.

Individuals contacted included:

- William Blackman (Pencil Bay Camp Owner)
- Eva Haines (PICC)
- Janelle Daisy (Palm Island Bistro)
- Lynore Sansbury (Palm Island Motel)
- Raina Simon (PLO) - Community Ambassador
- Jacinta Geia (PICC Events)
- Shane (PI Gym)
- Paul Foster (Manager, Police Citizens Youth Clubs)
- Agnes Wotton (Palm Island Arts)
- Virginia Faye Pryor (community elder)
- Lilian Lamptom (community elder)
- Winnie Obah (Bwgcorman Elder)
- Daphne Cummins (Bwgcorman Elder)
- Zina Pryor (Mill Area Camp Owner)
- Deneice Geia (Back to Bush)
- Ida Richardson (Bwgcorman Dancers)
- Regina James (Indigenous Knowledge Centre)
- Valentine Nona
- Charmaine Koro
- Seth Clay (Murrup)
- Jennifer Ketchel (Palm Island Knowledge Centre)
- Sue Pryor (Palm Island Arts, family camps)
- Dean Vincent (Hinterland Aviation)

Engagement Outcomes Report

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

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