



Issue 46 – 14 December 2023

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### Welcome Message

With the end of year and the holiday season just around the corner, I would like to welcome you all to my final newsletter of 2023.

It is impossible, as we look ahead to the new year with hope and anticipation, to not also reflect on the year past which has been a time of significant transition for us all.

For myself, the past year has been one of the most exciting and rewarding of my professional life — and I wear the mantle of our first local Administrator with great pride and responsibility.

Representing the Australian Government on island – and our shared interests and priorities on the national stage – is a huge honour. I am grateful for your engagement and support as I established myself in the role and I look forward to next year and all we can achieve together.

Already, I am so excited to see a significant level of trust in me from the community. So many of you have already engaged directly with me and my office about the issues that matter most to you and how we can build an even stronger and more sustainable community together.

Moving into 2024, I will continue to hold an open-door policy and encourage all of you to talk with myself and my staff about issues that concern you and community-driven solutions to our challenges.

I would also like to thank the Shires for their support over these past months, as well as the key agencies, volunteers and community groups on island. Since I have taken on the role as Administrator we have made good inroads into strengthening our relationships, and working together for the betterment of the IOT communities and our shared future.

This year, we have already seen some significant progress made on a number of key milestones for the region, not the least has been the success of the Innovative Agricultural Grants program which supported the commercial launch last week of the Green Space Tech Urban Farm Initiative.

I was delighted to cut the ribbon on what is a terrific example of how we need to look to future sustainability and new commercial opportunities. I encourage all of you to support such an innovative, local agri-business and continue to seek out new pathways to diversify and develop our economy.

While a significant focus of mine since becoming Administrator has been on future opportunities for our region, I have also been prioritising the safety and security of

our islands.

We are immensely lucky to live in one of the most scenic regions in the world, surrounded as we are by an abundance of natural beauty both on land and at sea. But alongside that beauty is the unpredictability and danger of nature, which is why supporting robust emergency management arrangements is so critical to ensuring we can continue to experience the best of our home in peace and comfort. You can read more about the steps we can all take to protect ourselves and our loved ones this wet season in this edition of the newsletter.

Like many of you, as we approach the end of the year, I am looking forward to taking a break after working hard to lay the foundations for what I hope to be the next phase in prosperity for our region.

From 5 January to 13 February I will be on leave to reconnect with my family and friends and ensure that when I return in 2024 I will hit the ground running. Sarah Vandenbroek will be Deputy Administrator during this period.

Once again, I would like to wish all who celebrate a very happy holiday season – and to all of you, I would like to express my gratitude for your support over the past months and my hope that 2024 will bring happiness and joy for you and your families.

If you would like to find out more about anything in the newsletter or you would like a hardcopy, please contact my office. Let us know if you want us to include your upcoming community event or activity in the newsletter. Stories (including photos) about recent IOT community events are very welcome and can be emailed to [IOTAdministrator@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:IOTAdministrator@infrastructure.gov.au).

**Farzian Zainal**

*Administrator of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands*

## Latest News

### Be prepared for extreme weather events!



This time of year, weather in the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) can be extreme – from dry, hot days to heavy rainfall, high winds and cyclonic and seismic activity. It is vital that we are prepared, no matter the conditions, in the event of serious weather events.

Prolonged heat and dry periods can mean vegetation becomes very dry, which not only means an increased fire risk but also that fires which do start may spread rapidly and quickly get out of control.

Help prevent this by not leaving fires unattended, extinguishing camp and cooking fires, carefully disposing of cigarette butts, clearing vegetation from around your property and making sure you have firefighting equipment and water available. In the event of a fire, contact 000 immediately and get yourself and anyone else in the family to safety.

December to March also brings the wet season, which means preparing for rockfalls and landslides on Christmas Island.

It is important that Christmas Island residents and visitors understand the risk of slippage and rockfall.

In the event of high rainfall, or after a rockfall or landslide, warning signals might be activated. You need to be ready to respond and evacuate the area if alarms are sounded or if asked to so.

If evacuations are required, the AFP or an Australian Government official will contact affected residents and building occupants.

If you see any rockfalls or landslides on CI, report them immediately to the on-call Australian Federal Police on 9164 8444.

Please all review your storm preparedness safety plans, to best ensure you and your family's safety.

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### Satellite tracking facility on Cocos (Keeling) Islands rocketing ahead

The establishment of a temporary ground satellite tracking facility on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands (CKI), to support an international space mission, has made progress this year, with the visit of representatives from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to Cocos.

Officers from ISRO travelled to CKI in July to select a suitable location to host the temporary tracking facility and supporting equipment on island. The site visit confirmed CKI as an ideal location to assist with India's space exploration, with the islands' unique position on the Gaganyaan mission's flightpath.

The Gaganyaan – a manned spacecraft intended to be the primary spacecraft of the Indian Human Spaceflight Program – represents a new phase in Australian and Indian space cooperation, fostering closer collaboration on space research, exploration and development.

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the department) is now working to finalise a formal agreement with ISRO to use the site, located at the former Quarantine Station on West Island. The department is also working with the Australian Space Agency and other Government departments on a range of approvals necessary for the proposed facility to be stationed on CKI.



As well as supporting a world-first for Indian space exploration, the temporary tracking facility on CKI has the potential to provide economic and employment opportunities for the community, including across the accommodation and hospitality sectors.

As part of the project, CKI will play host to a small team of ISRO staff for approximately six weeks to support each of the three proposed launches of the Gaganyaan space flight mission commencing in 2024.

We will continue to keep the community informed throughout the process, by sharing the most up-to-date information on the local elements of the mission, as momentum builds to the launch of this exciting project.

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### Celebrating school milestones with the Cocos students



I was fortunate to have my recent visit to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands align with end of year celebrations for local students.

An afternoon tea which I hosted at the Pondok Indah with Year 10 graduates, teachers, parents and Shire councillors became a forum for discussing the importance of community and staying engaged and active in local government for the next generation of islanders, who are about to embark on the next stage of their education journey.

As the first local Administrator, I brought my unique perspective, and was able to draw on my own experiences of leaving the Indian Ocean Territories to complete my education on the mainland, before returning home to use my skills and experience back on island.

For the students, hearing first-hand about the opportunities open to them from key members of the community, is hugely important, as they too look to the future. Just as important are the reminders of keeping community ties and connections as they race towards adulthood and a world beyond the walls of their school.

The creativity of the students was then put on display the next day at the end of year concert held in the packed-out cyclone shelter on Home Island.

Students and families from West Island made the trip over to participate in the class performances and book awards which showcased the immense talent of our students.

Congratulations to all the students, teachers and parents for another successful year!

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### Football, basketball and gymnastics leave their mark in

## the IOT



Young and older residents on Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands recently had the opportunity to participate in sporting activities facilitated by the WA Football Commission (WAFC), Gymnastics WA and Basketball WA.

During October 2023, Summer Mollross from WAFC shared her AFL skills with young and teenage children, taking them through the two main marking techniques (chest mark and overhead), handballing with both hands and kicking with either foot. Once the kids felt comfortable with their new skills and abilities, they were keen to play some games.

On CKI West Island, a Morays versus Mantas footy match was played with the kids and some mums. It went for six quarters... with Morays winning by five points. Students became "Gym Warriors" when Gymnastics WA coach Tarryn Isard visited in October and November 2023. The Gym Warriors program covers confidence-building activities and fundamental gymnastics movement skills. Children enjoyed having a go on an obstacle course designed to provide elements of artistic gymnastics, parkour, free running and Ninja-style activities.

Female students also participated in TeamGym, a more dancing gymnastics style of sport, with gymnastics skills put into a short routine.

Basketball WA made a significant visit to the Territories in mid-November 2023, to boost youth recreational activities and promote basketball. Coach Anita Reca led initiatives to improve basketball skills within schools, support local senior activity sessions, and upskill volunteers.

The focus of this visit was to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to play small-sided games, commonly known as 3x3 games. The school and community sessions were popular with participants eager to learn new skills and put them into practice in a game.

The Seniors at the CI Stay on your Feet weekly program also got in on the action and enjoyed participating in walking basketball with modified on-ground hoops.

Coach up-skilling occurred at every session, where Anita provided valuable tips, ideas and resources to school and recreation centre staff, local coordinators and volunteers, to encourage basketball to continue after the visit. A variety of equipment was sent to the Islands, including basketballs, shirts and hoops, all of which remained for future use.

These visits were provided by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries in partnership with the Australian Government's funding support. The success of these sporting visits is also attributed to on-island stakeholders and volunteers including Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands District High Schools, Shire of CI and CKI, sporting clubs, and CASA Leisure - CI Recreation Centre.

The coach visits are a great opportunity to try a new sport and improve your existing skills. Sporting coach visits and sessions in 2024 will be promoted through local forums and I encourage you to take advantage of any activity offered.



## Community Bulletins



Number: D16/23

### Christmas Island school bus service

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts advises the Christmas Island school community that school bus services for 2024 are currently being negotiated and it is likely there will be changes from the current arrangements.

The school bus service is run by the department through contract arrangements. It is not run by the school.

The contract with the current school bus service provider concludes at the end of this school year.

We are working as a priority to have new arrangements in place for the 2024 school year. We are also in discussions with the Christmas Island District High School about any potential impacts of service changes.

The department acknowledges and understands the importance of the school bus service to parents and carers, students, the school and the broader community. The school community will be provided an update on bus services before the commencement of the new school year.

Any enquiries relating to the school bus service should be directed to IOT Administration on 9164 7901 or [office-IOTA@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:office-IOTA@infrastructure.gov.au)

Ms Beth Duncan, Acting Assistant Secretary, Indian Ocean Territories Branch

## Community Activities

### Hijinks highlight men's health

A Sunday evening in November saw some 70 Christmas Island men of diverse ages, experiences and backgrounds gather at the CLA restaurant for a night of fun, frivolity, food for the stomach and food for thought.

The aim of the inaugural IOTHS Men's Health Night was to raise awareness of the three equally important aspects of men's health – physical health, mental health and social connection.

After a quick welcome and ice-breaker, all participants were divided into four groups, where they participated in interactive games and informal information sessions.

Hitting the nail on the head, target shooting and casting a lure into a bucket were some of the challenges faced. 'Walking the line' with impairment goggles that imitate different levels of intoxication also proved to be more difficult than one might have thought!

Well done to Team 2, led by Tim Briggs, who were the overall winners. Christmas Island Phosphates sponsored a delicious dinner cooked by the CLA chef, followed by a sweet treat courtesy of the Shire of Christmas Island.

Dr Patrick Jordan delivered a presentation on alcohol and informed participants on the importance of reducing the risk of harm from alcohol-related disease and/or injury. Dr Frieda Lehmann-Waldua, our visiting psychiatrist, promoted the importance of mental health followed by psychologist Brett Kipling, who ran a very interactive presentation on men's health statistics.

The Indian Ocean Territories Health Service would like to extend a big thank you to CIP for sponsoring the dinner, the Shire of Christmas Island for sponsoring drinks and dessert (and a big shout-out to Oli Lines for his assistance on the day), CLA for hosting the event and CI Charities and CASA leisure for your contribution towards prizes. Thanks also to our guest speakers and IOTHS staff who assisted to make this event one to remember.

Let's all support the men in our community to make healthy lifestyle and wellbeing choices.





## Public Announcements



### "CAUTION DIVER BELOW!"

This notice is issued in the interests of public safety. There have been a number of close quarter incidences recently where the safety of divers has been jeopardised by skippers encroaching within the recommended exclusion zones without good reason. There are regulations and recommended practices in place to ensure the safety of divers. The Western Australian Department of Transport (DoT) recommends divers and skippers be extra cautious and adopt these practices to further enhance safety and preserve lives on the water. The following information is provided to help divers and skippers share the water safely.



### Diving flag

A boat with divers working from it must carry the appropriate day or night signals. The daytime signal for divers is an International Code Flag "A" (Flag Alpha). The flag must be at least 750mm long and 600mm wide. Divers operating without a vessel, for example from a jetty, must also display the Flag Alpha of the same minimum size. You can choose to show this flag from a buoy, in which case the minimum size must be 300mm in length and 200mm in width. The flag must be clearly visible to all vessels operating in the vicinity. As a dive flag is only a visual indication to other vessels and will not automatically prevent them from venturing into a dive area, it's recommended divers always listen out for other craft before surfacing, and surface as near to their vessel as possible. While it is not law, it is highly recommended that snorkelers display a dive flag particularly when snorkeling offshore or in areas of high boating traffic.

### Diving lights

By night the diver's vessel, as well as appropriate lights such as an anchor light, must show three all-round lights in a vertical line: the top and bottom lights red and the middle light white. People engaged in night diving without a vessel must display a yellow-orange flashing light that can be seen from a minimum distance of 200m.

### Vessels to keep clear

All vessels must keep at least 50m clear of boats, buoys or areas showing diving signals. Where it is not possible to keep 50m clear or when in the vicinity of a diving signal, all vessels must proceed at safe speed and with due caution until well clear and keep a good look-out for persons in the water. If you have no valid reason to be within 50m of a dive flag then do not be. Please use common sense and courtesy. All vessels must navigate so as to avoid injury to the diver or interference with the vessel or floating object. DoT recommends, where possible, skippers maintain a distance of more than 100m from a vessel or buoy displaying a dive flag.

In the restricted confines of Flying Fish Cove (FFC) obviously this may not be practicable sometimes. For their own safety divers should keep well clear of the jetty fairways into the low-level landings and the channel into the boat ramp at all times when private recreational vessels are about. Further, divers should expect private

recreational vessel movements at any time in the cove and should therefore maintain a constant watch, where possible, and be prepared to move out of the way at short notice. Divers must also be aware that the deployment of a dive flag does not invoke a mandatory exclusion zone of 50m around the flag; and this must be considered when choosing the dive location.

### Please consider

Skippers – please consider observing the jetty and surrounds when you are entering or leaving FFC for the displayed flag Alpha on the jetty or on a float on the water and slow down to a safe speed (regardless of the designated 8-knot limit) and keep a keen lookout for the presence of divers. When outside of FFC please consider passing to seaward of the vessel displaying the Flag Alpha.

Divers - please consider deploying both the large Flag Alpha on the jetty and also a small float mounted Flag Alpha when diving in FFC. These are both provided free-in-aid on the jetty. When outside of FFC please consider the deployment of a small float mounted flag Alpha or have the dive vessel stay within the recommended distances that are to be observed. Additional float mounted Flag Alphas are available free-in-aid on the front wall of the Marine Building adjacent to the stevedore's office.

Stay safe!

**David Robertson**  
Harbour Master  
11th December 2023

## Christmas Island Outdoor Cinema



Late changes will be posted on the Roundabout Blackboard and [Facebook](#).

Adults \$ 5.00  
School aged children 3 to 17 years old \$2.00

### Come along and enjoy our last movie under the stars for 2023



#### The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes (M)

SATURDAY - 16 December, 7.30pm

Return to the world of Panem, in this fifth instalment of the Hunger Games, which is actually a prequel. Set 64 years before the events of the first film, its plot follows the events that lead a young Coriolanus Snow on the path to becoming the tyrannical leader of Panem, including his relationship with the Hunger Games District 12 tribute Lucy Gray Baird during the 10th Hunger Games.

### Want to sponsor an upcoming movie?

You will receive 2 free passes, special seating, food platter with your favourite nibbles, drinks of your choice and a public announcement on the evening of the movie. We will advertise your company or individual message in the Islander, Facebook Page, on the world's most remote roundabout and one of the last remaining outdoor Cinema screens. (Your choice of movie and date will be dependent upon availability.)

Volunteers needed for projection, bucket collection and to assist on the Executive Committee.

To become part of this exciting club or enquire about sponsorship, please Email: [cindoorcinema@gmail.com](mailto:cindoorcinema@gmail.com) or [accounts@cinema.org.cx](mailto:accounts@cinema.org.cx)

Rating information provided by <http://www.classification.gov.au>.

The Christmas Island Cinema Club is proudly supported by: CIFI, Freightshop, Shire of Christmas Island, Metro Solar and many local sponsors and volunteers.

\* THE CHRISTMAS ISLAND CINEMA IS A SMOKE FREE AREA \*

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