



first impressions

Inspired by *Gubbal*, the Carpet Snake that is known as the creator and protector of the Palm Islands, the newly revitalised Palm Island foreshore is impressive to say the least. We spoke to landscape architect Hywel Jones of Place Design Group about the project's design and what it means to the community.

In February of this year, the Palm Island community welcomed the completion of its foreshore redevelopment. The \$2.6m project, funded by Australian and Queensland Governments under the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Fund and Works for Queensland programs.

"The outlook from the foreshore is truly wonderful," says Hywel Jones, Design Lead at Place Design Group who was engaged by landscape contractor Naturform to add some design flair to the project. Naturform had won the contract to complete some landscape beautification works along the foreshore, and had a history working with Place Design Group in Townsville.

"After going over to the island and meeting with Council officers, I saw that this project had a great potential for delivering something unique and wonderful for the island that locals could be proud of," shares Hywel, who had never been to Palm Island before exploring this project.

Palm Island Council also recommended Hywel speak to an aboriginal artist Billy Doolan about artistic intentions for the project. "Billy inspired me to create something really special for the design," says Hywel. "He talked to me about the story of 'Gubbal' who in aboriginal mythology is the Carpet Snake who created the Palm Islands.

Gubbal is known as the creator and protector of Palm Island. This inspired the design of the promenade pathway; the path was designed to reflect the carpet snake and features a stage area at the head of the snake."

The design also features a 'Yarning Circle' or Meeting Place where stories and knowledge can be shared amongst locals and visitors to the island, and a number of seating areas for visitors and locals to enjoy the outlook across Coolgaree Bay and the surrounding islands.

"...the path was designed to reflect the carpet snake and features a stage area at the head of the snake." – HYWEL JONES

Palm Island Shire Council Mayor, Councillor Alf Lacey and Minister for Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs, Hon Stirling Hinchliffe opened the newly revitalised foreshore to the community on February 7.

Palm Island Council Mayor Alf Lacey said the Council was thrilled with the overall design vision for the project. "The revitalisation of the foreshore is definitely a catalyst to help improve tourism and visitation to the Island. This project has transformed the site into a more functional and attractive destination with key design aspects showcasing the island's history, so it's a space the community can connect with and be proud of," Cr Lacey says.

Deputy Mayor, Cr Roy Prior said Place Design Group's expertise and input proved invaluable in delivery of a quality project finalised in time for the Centenary Events on Palm Island across 2018. "Place Design Group saw the potential of this space and understood what it meant to the Palm Island community which is reflected in the foreshore design's connection to the island's history," Cr Prior says.

With teams across Australia and China, Place Design Group is an award-winning leader in planning and design with a reputation for creative and commercial solutions. Hywel has been a landscape architect in Townsville for 30 years. He merged his business Hywel Jones Landscape Architects with Place Design Group in 2017, working alongside nationally award-winning landscape architect Wal Smith who is the Design Principal for the Townsville office.

Place Design Group is well versed in foreshore revitalisation projects, having been the lead designers responsible for the renowned and much-loved Townsville Strand and Jezzine Parkland in Townsville, the Horseshoe Bay foreshore on Magnetic Island, and the Airlie Beach Lagoon in the Whitsundays.

"Palm Island is a beautiful island with so much potential," adds Hywel. "I understand the community are really happy with the foreshore redevelopment, and we are very proud of the overall design outcome and the work undertaken by Naturform to deliver the vision."



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