

Mayors call for change on Cape

HOUSING shortages, land trusteeship and the controversial Alcohol Management Plan are among the top issues Cape York's mayors want the State Government to address as a matter of urgency.

The newly-elected mayors implored the State Government at a meeting with Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Glen Elmes, on Saturday not to use the lives of indigenous people as a "political football".

Instead, they want the Campbell Newman-led government to work with them to bring about change on the Cape after what they believe has been a decade of unsuccessful programs and millions of dollars in wasted funding.



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to review the situation during the election campaign.

Many communities reported housing shortages in their areas and have asked for more funding to remedy it.

Wujal Wujal chief executive Kevin Wormald said his council had 38 names on a waiting list for new houses, but under the current program, only 19 new houses were to be built over the next eight years.

"This will not satisfy demand, and the project will get further behind," he wrote in a list of issues handed to Mr Elmes.

In the same document, Mapoon Shire Council chief executive Leon Yeatman said additional housing was needed in his area as well.

"We have a housing need which is integral to any economic development within the shire," he said.

Many of the councils were concerned they did not have access to maintain council property on plots of land that indigenous groups had been granted trusteeship over.

Mr Yeatman said his council was unable to meet the community's needs in areas of the shire under trusteeship, and there had been a "serious issue about the current trustees working for the community interest".

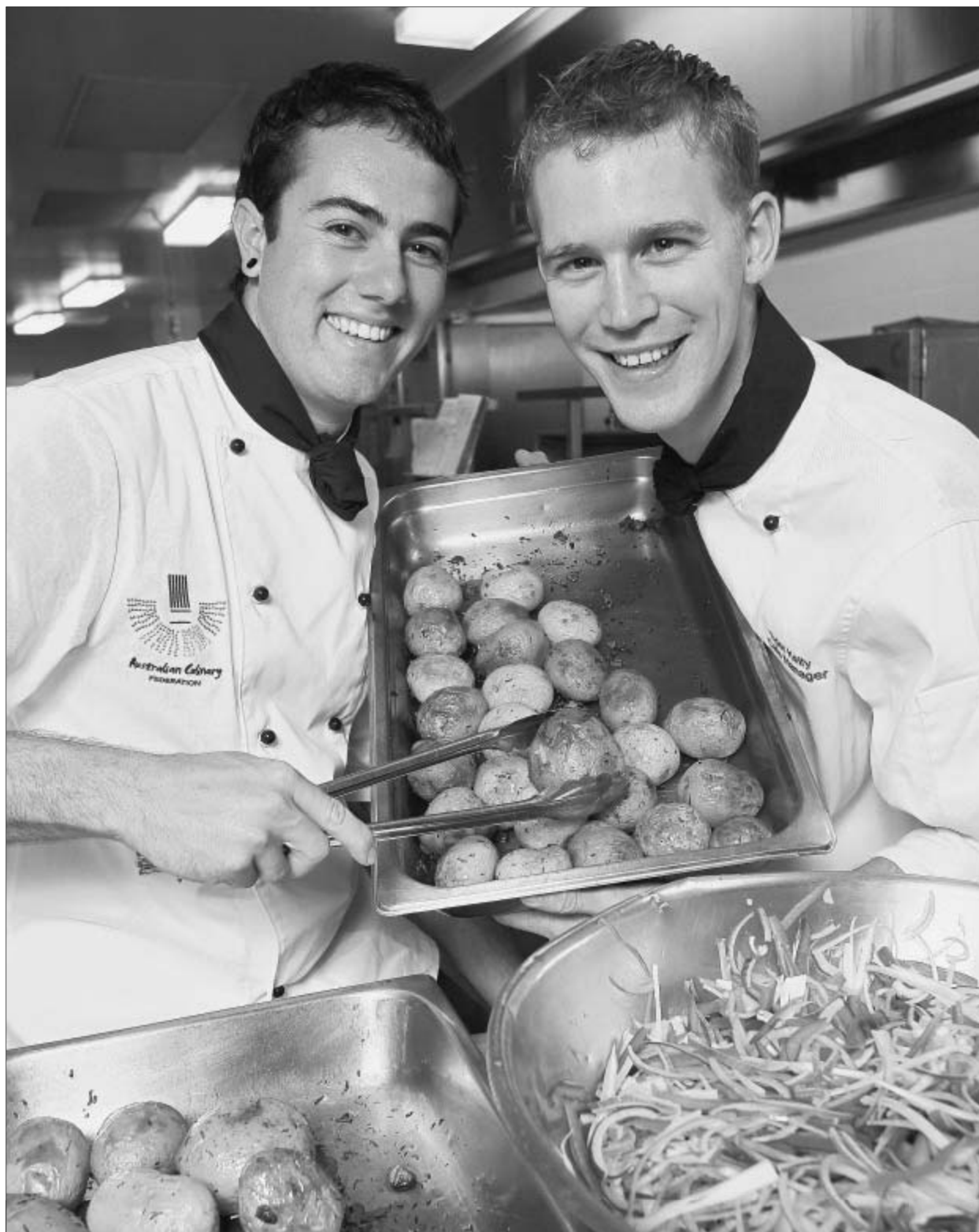
▶ See *The Weekend Post* on Saturday for a special report on the major issues facing Cape York's shire councils.



Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs Glen Elmes

As reported in *The Cairns Post* yesterday, top of the list was for the mayors to be involved in funding talks, but a raft of other issues were also canvassed, including scrapping the controversial Alcohol Management Plan.

Mr Elmes has asked for the mayors to get back to him with new plans to manage alcohol in their communities after Premier Newman promised



Contest heat proves no sweat

CAIRNS kitchen kings Daniel Peters and Tyler Kelly have the medals to prove they know how to handle the heat.

The local chefs have just made successful returns from the high-calibre Tasting Australia competition, which puts chefs from across the country to the test in a timed, high-pressure cooking challenge.

Left to handle an oyster blade of beef, known in culinary circles

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as one of the toughest cuts to deal with, Casino commis chef Mr Peters returned with a silver medal in the restaurant and fine dining category, while TAFE coffee shop chef Mr Kelly earned bronze in the bistro category.

"A silver medal, you've got to be happy with that in a national competition," Mr Peters said.

"We (both) had a master plan and practised it. I felt pretty comfortable with the dish I was producing.

"Once I got out there I was feeling fine (although) I knew I was up against some good competition."

The duo prepared for the competition under the watchful eye of North Queensland Australian Culinary Federation president Brian Down.

Top chefs return: Daniel Peters nabbed a silver medal and Tyler Kelly scored bronze at the Tasting Australia national competition.

Picture: TOM LEE

Dredge the inlet – spin-off could be city beach

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Dredge spoil is dumped into a lagoon in the ocean about 14km north of Cairns but the basin is running out of space.

Mr Senior said he intended to discuss it with mayor-elect Bob Manning but admitted he had no idea of its cost.

"There would have to be a business case prepared," he said.

"It seems to me that the best and lowest cost location for dredgings from the channel, as well as creating an Esplanade beach, would be a plateau at the northern end of the Esplanade.

"All the dredgings could be pumped there behind a rock wall. This plateau

could also serve as the much-mooted CBD caravan park."

Mr Senior said the proposal would not please environmentalists.

"Returning the mudflats by the Esplanade to pristine beach would be at least as beneficial to the tourist industry as well to other CBD businesses and residents," he said.

"Mud has gradually encroached on the original beach over many years.

"The huge benefits to Cairns from more cruise ships, a pristine beach, central caravan park and beach cafes beg for concerted action by local business organisations, councillors and politicians."

Ports North chairman Dr Ken Chapman said he could not comment without the proposal being analysed by the harbour authority.

Divisional councillor-elect Richie Bates said he had some discussion with experts in the field, and their feedback on the idea was not positive.

"They tell me this would be a very difficult proposition, fraught with difficulty," he said.

The Cairns and Far North Environment Centre said the plan was a "fascinating concept" but would await further plans and environmental impact studies before being convinced of its merit.



Beach plan: This digitally enhanced image by Csaba Sreder displays the Esplanade beach proposal, using inlet dredging spoils.