

# ADMINISTRATOR'S NEWSLETTER

INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORIES

EDITION 2: DECEMBER 2010



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

CKI visit 15 – 21 January

Commerce and Migration Workforce Workshops

CI 27 January and CKI 31 January

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## WELCOME

I have enjoyed the privilege of being the Administrator now for just over twelve months and Joan and I have found it a complete pleasure especially at the current time when there are so many celebrations and festivities.

I would like to take the opportunity to let you know that we share with you all in the grief and loss felt during this year by the loss of members of our community and the tragedies that have befallen those seeking asylum in Australia. The moving memorials and ceremonies that have been held to honour their memories and to pay respect to the families and friends show the compassion and the unity that is what makes both Christmas Island (CI) and the Cocos (Keeling) Island (CKI) communities such wonderful people. Our thoughts remain with the survivors, families and friends who grieve for their lost love ones.

I recently opened the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) Economic Development Summit which was held at the CI Resort. In welcoming the participants to the Summit I spoke of the Minister's objective of empowering local communities and the unique opportunities that now exists for the people of the IOT. We need to capitalize on these opportunities by identifying the things we see as our success for Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. This is our challenge.

All communities have inherent strengths, skills and abilities. These are our natural assets. It is important that we as a community identify these assets, including our stories, and invest in their development. I want to encourage all members of the communities of the IOT to participate in the development of ideas for the successful future of the region of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and to give voice to those ideas through your community representatives.

A regional approach to the challenges that confront the communities of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands is the most expedient and sensible way forward for the IOT. The bonds between our two island communities are growing stronger.

Joan and I wish you every happiness and compliments of the season.



*Warmest greetings of the season and every good wishes for the coming year from the Hon. Brian and Mrs. Joan Lacy*



### IOT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

It was my pleasure to have opened the IOT Economic Development Summit held from 23 – 25 November.

Economic Development Australia members Trevor Ayers, Cassandra Stipanicev and Simon Millcock took 30 people from both Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands through a workshop on Local Community Economic Development. The key messages which came from this workshop resonated with me as it picks up on the Commonwealth government's regional policy for the community to exercise more control over the policymaking process.

The feed back from the workshops included:

1. This was unusual in a good way for the IOT to have Community, Government and people from outside talking about these types of issues.
2. Learnt a lot – great enthusiasm.
3. Wonderful to see CI and CKI working together.

Thanks to Christmas Island Phosphates and Serco for their sponsorship.

The summit was a significant event providing important recognition of the desires of the CI and CKI communities in the long term economic sustainability of the IOT. Those desires find voice in the IOT Economic Development Strategic Plan which was formulated by the respective Economic Development Consultative Groups (EDCG) with their communities.

The EDCG have been proactive with several recommendations to the Commonwealth Government. The Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government Territories West provided responses on:

- IOT Regional Development Organisation
- Impact study Immigration Detention Centre
- Recommendations from the Joint Standing Committee
- Government Task Force on the IOT
- Outline Development Plans for the IOT
- Review of IOT Economic Development Fund

I am looking forward to a series of exciting changes in the IOT during 2010. The changes will be consistent with the theme of Minister Crean's public speech at the National Press Club on 29 September 2010, namely:

"The needs and aspirations of our people can best be met by allowing decision making about their economic, social and environmental wellbeing to be made closer to the people most affected by those decisions."



(IOT Economic Development Summit Workshop at the CI Resort photo contributed by Allison Millcock)

During the summit we heard from Simon Millcock, the IOT Economic Development Officer (EDO), of the significant achievements in economic growth over the past 18 months in the IOT. I agree with Simon's comments at the summit that "The IOT is well placed to set its own destiny. The opportunities are now real and are based on the wake of the current economic growth to build a solid base for our islands' future."

I publically acknowledge both Christmas Island Phosphates and the Christmas Island Tourism Association who were 2010 National Winners for Economic Development Excellence.

The summit was the culmination of work by the EDO with the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) in a series of workshops for local businesses and community groups based on capacity building. The result has been an increase by 120 per cent this year in attendance and contacts for the SBDC.



## CI CHARITY BALL

I am extremely disappointed to have missed the Charity Ball held at Tai Jin House in November. I was off island and unable to attend. The theme for the ball was *A night of a thousand stars*. It was attended by about 200 Christmas Island stars and, from all reports, it was a great success with good music, good food and loads of social engagement.



(Certificate of appreciation to Ray Willey from Serco as a major sponsor photo contributed by Allison Millcock)

Vicki Ford Chairperson and the organising committee along with the entire sponsors need to be congratulated. The generosity from many locals and visitors working together created a spectacular evening. Vicki said "It was marvelous to see so many different groups from within the community mingling freely together". A cheque of \$7,000 was presented to CI Charities.



(Island Sounds photo contributed by Eric Pitman)

## COMMUNITY SERVICES RECEPTIONS

I relish the role I play as Administrator of the Indian Ocean Territories, including the challenges it has posed over the course of the past year. Recently I had the honour of presenting certificates of appreciation to members of the Cocos Island fire and emergency services who had been called to action to fight the power station fire earlier this year. In the course of acknowledging their efforts I said, "My challenges pale into insignificance compared with those that the police and fire and emergency services usually face in the course of their day to day duties."

I will continue to hold receptions to acknowledge the service to the community of the many community groups such as the Fire and Emergency Services on CKI so as to show my appreciation for your dedication and commitment.

## CI and CKI SCHOOLS

It has been my pleasure during the year to host also receptions for both of the schools that we have in the IOT. We have great schools with very competent teaching staff under excellent leadership. This is a fact that has been recognised by the schools achieving recognition at State and National levels during the year.

I am working with the EDCG to look at how we can continue to strengthen education as an economic driver for the IOT and it is pleasing to see the results of the students as they progress into further education, training and employment.

It was an honour for Joan and me to be part of the celebration for the Year 10 Community Service Students awards at the Administrator's residence. In congratulating the students I observed how fortunate we are to have a quality secondary school that provides for our students right through to year 12. I went on to say:



"The schools here provide you with great opportunities. At times you may find your studies a bit of a struggle. But you should never give up. As Walt Disney said "All our dreams can come true – if we have the courage to pursue them." You have capacities beyond your own imagination. I wish all students success in your academic pursuits and in your pursuit of excellence."

### ART

I acknowledged at the launch of the CI Art Exhibitions that public art offers social and physical benefits and it can provide a talking point about the history and culture of a place. Importantly, public art is a sign of maturation and identity of a community. I thank the Arts and Culture Teams on CI and CKI for their commitment and their endeavours in the promotion of art and art work in the IOT.

### COMMUNITY CAPACITY AUDIT

Early in 2011 an audit of the IOT Community Capacity will be undertaken. The project is being funded by the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government through the IOT Economic Development Budget.

The CI and CKI EDCG have supported the appointment of Rural Solutions SA to undertake its tried and tested Community Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT). This is an electronic tool which is used to undertake a detailed assessment of the 'capacity' of a given community. Capacity in this context is a combination of the infrastructure – both the physical and the social – of a community, and the ability of the community to use that infrastructure effectively.

The collected data gives a clear insight into the strengths and weaknesses of a community, and provides a baseline which is useful for supporting community development and any planning processes that may be undertaken.

### NEW INITIATIVES

The CI and CKI EDCG are working on a number of projects for 2011 including:

**IOT Marketing Plan** which will be designed to focus on the attraction of:

- Industry growth aligned with the IOT Economic Development Strategy
- New business development and investment
- Increased employees and residents and associated housing and land development

**IOT accommodation needs** assessment will ensure information is available by:

- identifying needs and accommodation types in the short term (1-2 years), medium term (3-5years) and longer term (5-15 years)

A series of **Workshops** will include Event Management, Corporate Governance, Grant Writing and Exporting and a Commerce and Migration Workforce Workshop.

The Small Business Development Corporation will be developing the inaugural **IOT Awards program** and I am working on an **IOT Leadership program**.

If you would like to know more about what is happening with economic development and what areas of support are available including the IOT Economic Development Fund I would encourage you to contact Simon Millcock the IOT Economic Development Officer on 08 9164 7959 email [simon.millcock@ag.gov.au](mailto:simon.millcock@ag.gov.au)

### STOP PRESS

I will issue a Special Newsletter in early 2011 dealing with the tragic events of this past week and Christmas Island emergency management.

**FEEDBACK** I welcome your feed back on the newsletter at anytime.