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# Cairns Post

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## FRAUDSTER STAYS FREE



## TRAIL OF DELAYS: P3

### NATIONAL AWARD

## Playground designer's huge nod

A Cairns-based architect has won a prestigious award for his design for a local school playground after building five other playgrounds in the Far North. Landplan Landscape Architecture senior architect Simon Mahar designed Cairns Distance School of Education playground in only a 100sq m area, harnessing the slopes of the ground instead of building against them. Mr Mahar has previously designed for schools across the region.

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### HEALTH CONCERNS

## Hospital CEO resigns

The head of the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service has quit for "personal reasons" amid community concerns over the provision of health services after the sudden death of a two-year-old girl. The girl, whose name cannot be released for cultural reasons, died on June 15.

Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council Mayor Patricia Yusia has called for a coronial inquest into the death of the girl, saying it was due to systemic TCHHS failures.

Chief executive Beverley Hamerton's resignation was announced on Thursday.

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### TORRES STRAIT

## Children at risk after tragedy

Support workers and teachers on the outer islands of the Torres Strait fear for the wellbeing of the region's children after the death of a disability support worker.

Speech pathologist Wendy Richardson intended to travel from Badu to Mabuiag Island on June 8 to visit children she had started therapy with but was lost at sea.

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## MAJOR WIN

## 'Final piece' secured after \$30m announced for marine precinct

The final piece of the puzzle in a mammoth \$360m marine precinct project has landed, bringing with it the promise of thousands of jobs and a huge boost to Cairns' maritime industry. At the Tropical Reef Shipyard on Thursday morning, Treasurer and Trade and Investment Minister Cameron Dick and Cairns MP Michael Healy (pictured) announced an extra \$30m in funding for the Cairns Marine Precinct's common user facility.

KRISTINA PULJAK REPORTS, PAGE 6-7



Landplan Landscape Architecture director and senior landscape architect Simon Mahar has been awarded the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects 2023 Queensland Award of Excellence for Small Projects for his design of a small play area at the Cairns School of Distance Education. Picture: Brendan Radke

# Con job: Dutton's claim on Voice

Courtney Gould

Peter Dutton has renewed his call for the Voice to Parliament referendum to be called off, claiming the proposed advisory body could grind government to a halt.

The government has been under pressure from the Opposition Leader to explain the extent of influence the Voice will have should Australians agree to establish the body at the upcoming referendum, due to be held between October and December.



Peter Dutton

Speaking with Sydney's 2GB Radio, Mr Dutton said the "unintended consequences" could be significant and its reach could extend to tax policy, the budget or the chief of the defence force.

"It goes into every area of government responsibility. It'll grind the whole system of government to a halt and the impact will be felt by everyday Australians, whether they live in an Indigenous community, out in the suburbs, or an regional town or in a capital city."

The opposition has spent much of the parliamentary week questioning Indigenous Australians Minister Linda Burney about the Voice's remit and whether that could extend to Australia Day.

Ms Burney said she would not be "bothered by culture wars" and told MPs she's more focused on closing the gap.

Mr Dutton on Thursday accused her of not having a clue.

"I've never seen anything like it in the last couple of decades I've been involved in politics. The con job that's going on here is unbelievable," he said.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said: "It will be a consultative body. It won't have a right of veto over the parliament, it doesn't change any ways in which our laws are made," he told WSFM radio on Thursday morning. "It simply will have the opportunity to have a voice on those matters that directly affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

Mr Dutton said the vote should be called off, especially if opinion polls show the "yes" vote continued to soften.

# Work and play come together in award win

Kristina Puljak

A Cairns-based architect has won a prestigious award for his design of a local school playground after building five other playgrounds in the Far North.

Landplan Landscape Architecture senior architect Simon Mahar designed the Cairns Distance School of Education playground in only a 100sq m space, harnessing the slopes of the ground instead of building against them.

Mr Mahar has previously designed for Whitfield State School, St Therese's School, Freshwater Christian School, Freshwater State School and Trinity Beach State School, as well as being the award-winning designer for Centenary Lakes Nature Play, which made his name in the world of play spaces.

Mr Mahar won the Australian



Children play in the play space at the Cairns School of Distance Education; and (far left) the lush view from above. Pictures: Supplied

Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) award of excellence in the small projects category.

"The space was only 100m squared, so I had to work with the constraints of the space and turn them into opportunities," Mr Mahar said.

"I used the wall from the existing building to create a climbing wall, and I wanted to make sure the space was ac-

cessible for wheelchair access."

Mr Mahar said the key to a successful play space was the client and their willingness to work with you.

"It all depends on the client and whether the two visions can see eye-to-eye" Mr Mahar said.

"Cairns School of Distance Education have been brilliant and we've been able to work

together to achieve the space.

"We built between two existing buildings so the constraints were hard to work with."

Cairns School of Distance Education principal Chris Rigden said the small play space was the first stage in a larger vision to create a positive outdoor learning precinct for the students from prep to year 12.

## Ablett auctions jersey

The 2009 premiership jersey belonging to one of the AFL's greatest players is up for auction.

Gary Ablett Jr's Geelong jersey has not been washed since game day, and the jumper holds additional significance as Ablett won his first Brownlow Medal in 2009, joining an elite group of players to win a Brownlow Medal in a premiership-winning year.

"This is arguably the most

prized premiership-winning jumper ever to be put up for auction and we expect the phones to be ringing off the hook from footy fans right around the country regardless of the club they follow," Lloyds Auctions chief operations officer Lee Hames said.

Ablett is raising money for Compassion Australia as part of its mums and babies appeal.

The jersey will go under the hammer on Sunday, July 9.



Geelong Cats legend Gary Ablett Junior is auctioning his jersey.

## Elderly need support for pets

There is an urgent need to support pet ownership for older Australians who choose to live independently, a new research project suggests.

The Companion Animal Network Australia survey shows 61 per cent of older adults surveyed lived alone, and 74 per cent of older respondents with pets said their animals provided companionship and helped to reduce feelings of loneliness.



Elderly on homecare received no support to help care for pets.

But of older adults who live at home, 91 per cent of those

with pets who received a government-funded homecare package reported not receiving support to help to care for their companion animal.

While 40 per cent of older adults who received a homecare package had pets, only 9 per cent of those pet owners received pet care support, such as help walking their dog (64 per cent need help) and taking their pet to the vet (62 per cent need help).