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Demaala stands strong for clean energy

[animal](#), [foundation](#), [photo](#)

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In the face of a proposed development for a coal-fired power-plant in the Municipality of Narra, Palawan, Philippines, on 30th August the Mayoress, Lucena Diaz Demaala, publicly confirmed to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development that the proposal would never get an endorsement from Narra and she advised the proponent, the DMCI Power Corporation to look for another local government unit that could host the project. The power-plant would have been constructed only one kilometre away from the Rasa Island Wildlife Sanctuary, which holds 25% of the world's population of approximately 1,000 birds of the endemic and critically endangered Philippine Cockatoo (*Cacatua haematuropygia*).

Said Mayoress Demaala, "we can't gamble the health of our community over the revenues to be generated from the operation of a DMCI coal-fired power-plant, that this may generate degradation in our coastal areas and greatly affect the wildlife we have been protecting for so many years, especially in the protected wildlife reserve of Rasa Island". The DMCI Power Corporation had been cited for negligence regarding the procedures required for such a development, not even being able to present the Initial Environment Examination Report, nor concrete mitigating measures for environmental and health impacts. In this atmosphere of circumvention, the courageous stand of Mayoress Demaala has given the Philippine cockatoo a reprieve from potential catastrophe.



Born in Luzon, 62 year old Mayoress Demaala became the first mayoress of Narra with a landslide victory in the 1998 election. From 2002 to 2007 she was president of the League of Municipal Mayors of Palawan (LMP), and during her term Narra received regional and national awards and recognitions including the Estrella Falls as "Best Performer Cleanest Inland Body of Water in the Philippines". The institutionalization of the conservation programme for the Philippine Cockatoo and other wildlife at Rasa Island was also under her term. Due to her exemplary performance in governance, the overwhelming result of 2013 mid-term election put Mayoress Lucy in office once again, and once more re-elected as LMP President. Furthermore, following a recently published study of the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) on the costs of renewable energy, the Municipal Council of Narra might in the next months endorse the proposal of a hydro-electric plant in Narra, pending for three years.

Since 1999 the Loro Parque Fundación has, together with Chester Zoo, UK, CEPA (Conservation des Espèces et des Populations Animales) and Asociación Beauval de Conservation et Recherche, France and ZGAP (Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Populations), Germany, supported the Palawan-based Katala Foundation in the conservation and recovery of the Philippine Cockatoo. Due to the project the cockatoo population on Rasa Island has multiplied by more than 12 times, and these 280 birds are spreading to the mainland.

In a recent meeting of the local Protected Area Management Board, the Vice Mayor of Narra also pronounced himself against the coal-fired power-plant proposal, and so a reprieve for the Philippine Cockatoo now has solid support from the "Philippine Cockatoo Capitol of the World".

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