7.17. RADF ARTS ACTION PLAN 2026-2028

REPORT AUTHOR Community Development Officer

EXECUTIVE General Manager Corporate and Communities

DEPARTMENT Corporate and Communities

TEAM Community Services

DATE 27 October 2026

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Approve the 2026-2028 Arts Action Plan;**
2. **Approve the five (5) Council-initiated projects recommended by the RADF Advisory Committee for funding, totalling $39,535 as detailed in Attachment 1; and**
3. **Approve the sixth project identified as provisional and eligible for funding if one (1) of the five (5) recommended projects does not proceed or is delivered under budget.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Douglas Shire Council 2026–2028 Arts Action Plan was developed to identify arts and cultural priorities and opportunities for the Douglas Shire and provide a framework for Council-initiated arts and cultural activities.

The Arts Action Plan provides a basis for identifying projects that can be progressed through the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) Council-initiated project allocation.

A process was undertaken to identify potential Council-initiated projects for consideration under the Arts Action Plan. The RADF Advisory Committee considered the identified projects and recommends five (5) projects for funding, totalling $39,535. A sixth project has been identified as provisional and may be funded if funding becomes available.

The proposed expenditure is within the approved RADF Council-initiated project allocation.

The 2026–2028 Arts Action Plan will be styled according to Douglas Shire Council publication standards prior to final presentation at the Ordinary Council Meeting.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS / RESOLUTIONS

At the Ordinary Meeting held 16 June 2026, item 7.7, Council resolved to engage a consultant to develop the Douglas Shire Council 2026–2028 Arts Action Plan.

REPORT/BACKGROUND

The Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) is a partnership between the Queensland Government and local governments to support arts and cultural development in regional Queensland.

The Douglas Shire Council 2026–2028 Arts Action Plan was developed to identify local arts and cultural priorities and provide a framework for Council's involvement in arts and cultural activities. The development of the Arts Action Plan supports the 2025/26 Operational Plan initiative 1.2 – Encourage and grow creative opportunities across the arts.

The Arts Action Plan identified a range of opportunities for Council-initiated projects delivered by 30 June 2028 that support local creativity, participation, and engagement.

The consultant undertook a process to identify potential projects for delivery through the RADF Council-initiated allocation. The process and projects recommended for funding are outlined in Attachment 1.

Council-initiated RADF projects provide an opportunity to progress priorities identified through the Arts Action Plan and support projects that provide a broader community benefit.

The proposed projects, outlined in detail in Attachment 1, include a Daintree event, Cooya Beach public artwork, a historical publication by the Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre, Mosaic Butterfly Trail public art in Mossman, a Mossman historical publication and a visual arts workshop.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The 2026–2028 RADF Program has a total funding pool of $110,000, comprising $60,000 from Arts Queensland, allocated as $30,000 in 2026/27 and $30,000 in 2027/28, and a $50,000 contribution from Douglas Shire Council, allocated as $25,000 in 2026/27 and $25,000 in 2027/28.

The total proposed expenditure in this report is $39,535 for five (5) Council-initiated projects, within the RADF Advisory Committee-approved allocation of $40,000. All five (5) projects are expected to be delivered by 30 June 2028.

Any funding that becomes available if a recommended project does not proceed or is delivered under budget may be redirected to the sixth provisional project.

Program administration and reporting is provided in-kind by Council. The Community Development Officer administers the program and coordinates reporting, while the RADF Advisory Committee assesses projects and makes funding recommendations to Council.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The risks in relation to allocating public money through the RADF program are:

Failure to Acquit Funds

Risk Management procedures in relation to outstanding RADF Outcome Reports will consist of the following:

- Requests for extension of project timelines and/or Outcome Report deadlines are to be submitted in writing to the Council officer administering the RADF program.
- In consultation with the RADF Committee, Council may grant extensions to project timelines and/or Outcome Report due dates on a case-by-case basis when requests are deemed justified.
- Council Officer contacts grantees who have obtained extensions on projects on a regular basis to monitor progress.

At times grantees may face circumstances beyond their control which impact project timelines, so Council officers will try to support artists and organisations in such situations to achieve the original outcomes of the awarded projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Arts funding helps celebrate local stories, culture, history and creativity, contributing to a stronger sense of place and community identity. It can showcase the unique character of a region and foster civic pride.

Council-initiated projects identified through the Arts Action Plan provide opportunities for broader community participation and engagement in arts and cultural activities across the Douglas Shire.

CORPORATE AND OPERATIONAL PLAN

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2025-2030 Initiatives:

Theme 1 - Liveability
To deliver community activities to promote safe, healthy, inclusive and socially engaged communities with an environmental conscious.
1.1 - *Deliver community initiatives that support healthy, inclusive and socially engaged communities.*
1.2 - *Encourage and grow creative opportunities across the arts.*
1.3 - *Be culturally sensitive, inclusive and improve Council's cultural competency.*
1.4 - *Promote inclusivity, connection and accessibility for individuals/people of all abilities.*

Operational Plan 2026-2027 Actions:

New project arisen during the financial year.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- Arts General Policy

CONSULTATION

Internal Consultation:

- RADF Committee

External Consultation:

- Consultant undertook community consultation for potential Council-initiated RADF projects.

CONCLUSION

The Douglas Shire Council 2026–2028 Arts Action Plan provides a framework for Council's involvement in arts and cultural development and identifies opportunities for Council-initiated projects.

The RADF Advisory Committee recommends five (5) projects for funding, totalling $39,535 with a sixth project identified as provisional should funding become available.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Douglas Shire Council Arts Action Plan 2026-2028 [**7.17.1** - 21 pages]



Douglas Shire Council
Arts Action Plan 2026 - 2028

DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL

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Purpose

The purpose of this Arts Action Plan is to identify practical and achievable arts projects, initiated and led by the community, with funding under the Douglas Shire Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) Council Initiated Projects program and in-kind support provided by Douglas Shire Council.

This does not prevent projects which attract additional funding and/or in-kind support from other sources being delivered.

The Douglas Shire RADF program is delivered through two streams:

1. RADF Community Grants Program supports:
    - Artists or arts and cultural workers for professional development activities, new works or projects
    - Professional organisations and community groups for arts and cultural activities, projects or events
    - Arts projects that align with Council's identified local priorities

2. RADF Council Initiated Projects supports:
    - Public Art & Placemaking – supporting the strategic development and delivery of public art and place making to the Douglas Shire
    - Incubator programs for artists and creatives who are also young people, First Nation people, People with disability
    - Cross-regional and multi-Shire arts projects supported by the Regional Arts Services Network (RASN)
    - RADF committee training and professional development
    - Arts projects that align with Council's identified local priorities

Projects recommended under the Action Plan fall under the RADF Council Initiated Projects stream.

Objectives

Douglas Shire Council has stipulated the projects identified in the Arts Action Plan must support:

- Placemaking and public art
- First Nations cultural expression and leadership
- Capacity building and upskilling of local artists
- Activation of local arts organisations and networks
- Project delivery by 30 June 2028
- Alignment with the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) guidelines.

Engagement Activities

Community engagement included multiple community conversations with people over the telephone, face to face on their verandas, in community spaces across the shire and via a survey available online and in hard copy. Engagement opportunities were promoted via email distribution to Council's creatives database, published on Douglas Shire Council's website and Facebook page, with posts shared on local community Facebook noticeboards. There was also direct contact with people in the creative sector.

Findings

There were 22 survey responses and conversations with 29 people. The survey responses and conversations provided valuable direction on local priorities, project concepts, barriers to participation and potential delivery partnerships.

The priority ranking demonstrates a strong preference for an Arts Action Plan that supports both creative participation and public presentation. Respondents were not only seeking more classes and workshops; they also wanted more opportunities for artists to show work, perform, sell work, contribute to local places and connect with audiences.

Full report is shown in Appendix One.

Art Projects

A total of 13 projects emerged from the community engagement.

- Six have been endorsed by the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) committee for delivery under the Arts Action Plan
- One of these is provisional, dependent on budget
- Five have been redirected for applications to be made to the Douglas Shire RADF Community Grants program; and
- Two were not the right fit in format presented.

	Project	Proponent	Genre
1	Dragonfly Dreaming	Dragonfly Cape Tribulation	Two-day art exhibition at DragonFly
2	Kuyu Kuyu Bama History	Kubirriwarra Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation	Public Art – Free standing art piece
3	Our History	Port Douglas Community Service Network	Digitisation of historical records
4	Mossman Butterflies	DAB	Public Art - Mosaics
5	Mill Street and Front Street: Then and Now	Douglas Shire Historical Society	Photography and publishing
6	*DIWAN Winter 2027 (Provisional)*	*North of the Daintree River Art Society Inc.*	*Visual Art - workshops*

Directed to Douglas Shire RADF Community Grants program:

1. Daintree River 3D Landscape
2. Quilting Workshops
3. Roundabout Sculptures
4. Theatre Stage Lighting Masterclass
5. Two Grounds

Dragonfly Dreaming – Annual Creatives Weekend

Proponent: Dragonfly Cape Tribulation ABN 89 301 434 175

Collaborators: Cape Tribulation Horse rides; PKs; NORDAS.

Short Description: Dragonfly Dreaming is a weekend event hosted at Dragonfly Cape Tribulation. A similar event was held in December 2022. The proposed timing is over Easter, March 2027.

Long Description: Starting each day at 10am until 8pm, Saturday and Sunday. A call out to local creatives to be involved. It is anticipated it will include:

- Art exhibition with work from NORDAS members and other local artists
- Kuku Yalanji language workshops
- Performances by local musicians
- Welcome to Country
- Basket weaving for beginners
- Free entry; $20/person for workshops.

Timeline

Activity	Date
Funding approved in Arts Action Plan	1 Nov 2026
Call out to creatives - EOIs	December 2026
Assess EOIs and confirm arrangements	30 January 2027
Lock in the program and launch	February 2027
Promotion	February – March 2027
Bump In	21-26 March 2027
Event	**27-28 March 2027**

Cost: $5,070

Activity	Cost
Live music – two days	$2,500
Travel expenses for TO	$300
Event coordination	$750
Venue hire - waived	nil
Contribution towards workshop facilitator fees	$2,400
Equipment hire	$400
Two staff– bump in/clean up. 6 hours @ $35/hour x 2	$420
Cash contribution from operators	-$1,700
Total	**$5,070**

Kuyu Kuyu (Cooya Beach) Bama History

Proponent: Kubirriwarra Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation ABN 93 457 893 388
Collaborators: Traditional Owners and Elders
Short Description: Cultural public art project at Kuyu Kuyu depicting Bama history displayed on free standing artwork.

Long Description: Permanent story artwork sharing approved Bama/Kuku Yalanji history of the area. Content of the story will be developed through a culturally led process involving Traditional Owners (TO's) and Elders, facilitated by Paperbark Consultancy.

A collaborative story and design workshop will identify appropriate stories, themes and visual elements for the artwork. TO's will retain control over what cultural and historical content is suitable for public sharing, and all final concepts will be approved by Kubirriwarra Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC) before production. Douglas Shire Council and the relevant site owner will also approve the physical scope, siting and installation where required.

Proposed location is at the intersection of Palm Street and Bougainvillea Street, Cooya Beach.

Lead will ensure all TO's and Elders across the Shire are invited to participate in the project.

Process:

- Project awarded and budget confirmed in the Arts Action Plan.
- KYAC confirm the overall project brief and commission with Paperbark Consultancy.
- Confirm location for Bama history artwork location and format.
- Paperbark Consultancy to facilitate a collaborative story and design workshop with TO's and Elders covering the Bama history artwork.
- Paperbark Consultancy to prepare concept designs and story/artwork layouts informed by the workshop.
- KYAC TO's approve cultural content and final concepts; Douglas Shire Council and owner approves relevant installation details.
- Complete final site measurements, confirm materials and installation methods, and obtain written contractor/supplier quotes.
- Create the Bama history artwork and installation.
- Complete final inspection, community unveiling and project close-out.

Timeline

Date	Activity
30 October 2026	Project and budget confirmed in Arts Action Plan
November 2026 – January 2027	Confirm overall brief, Council/site approvals and preferred Bama history display location/format
January 2027	KYAC confirm commission and project brief with Paperbark Consultancy
February 2027	Collaborative story and design workshop with TO's and Elders
March - Apr 2027	Prepare Bama history story/artwork layout
May 2027	KYAC Traditional Owner approval of cultural content and concepts; relevant Council/site approvals in principle
Jun - Jul 2027	Final site measures; confirm structure of the Bama history artwork; confirm quotes for fabrication.
Feb - Apr 2028	Final production planning, materials procurement and fabrication/preparation work
May - Jun 2028	Install artwork
30 Jun 2028	Community unveiling and project completion

Bama History: Freestanding Story Board

Activity	Cost
Return airfare BNE/CNS	$600
Collaborative story/design workshop facilitation	$700
Traditional Owner/Elder participation and cultural advisory fees	$650
Professional artist fee - concept design and painted story panel	$2,800
Exterior-grade story panel materials, sealing and protective coating	$1,800
Custom freestanding frame, fabrication,	$3,600
Concrete footings and installation allowance	In-kind
Administration fee - project coordination, liaison and reporting – KYAC	$800
Cash Total	**$10,950**



Example above.

Our History - Port Douglas Community Service Network Inc.

Proponent: Port Douglas Community Service Network Inc. ABN: 92 081 511 979
Collaborators: Douglas Shire Historical Society
Short Description: Preserving history and Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre's story through a publication.

Long Description: Port Douglas Community Service Network Inc. was formed in 1988 and exists to foster a socially connected community, empower and support people to develop skills and resilience and it is an important advocate for the most vulnerable in our community.

Housed in a corner of the building is a collection of historical documents, stored in boxes. This project is about sorting through this historical material, curating it, and capturing key moments in the organisation's history. The aim is to collate and publish a book which can be published online, or if funding can be found, a print edition produced.

Outcomes:

- History of Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre compiled & published online, (and in print if other grant funding found), adding to 150-year anniversary celebrations.
- Preservation of the social and community history of the Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre through professional archival digitisation.

Process:

- Sort historical material into chronological order
- Digitisation of usable material
- Curate material for hard cover book; determine pages and quantity.
- Seek quotes, source grant funding for printing
- Publish and distribute books or if unable to get grant funding, publish on PDNC website.

Timeline

Date	Activity
February – April 2027	Sort historical documents, journals, newspaper articles, photographs which are suitable for digitisation, into chronological order, and discard unwanted items.
May 2027	Confirm quantity and type of documents for digitalisation.
June 2027	Select material from digitised artwork to be contained in a hard cover book.
June 2027	Ascertain number of pages, decide on quantity; seek quotes.
July – August 2027	Secure sponsorship or grant funding to cover printing costs.
September 2027	Accept quote; proofread; send to printers.
October 2027	Accept delivery, if unable to secure funds for printing, upload to website.
November 2027	Book launch – in association with relevant 150 anniversary event and/or official opening of public art.

Budget

Activity	
Sort historical documents, journals, newspaper articles, photographs which are suitable for digitisation, into chronological order, and discard unwanted items. Ten hours @ $50/hour = 500 X 65%	$325
Confirm quantity and type of documents for digitalisation.	$5,200
Select material from digitised artwork to be contained in a hard cover book. Six hours @ $50/hour = 300 X 65%	$195
Ascertain number of pages, decide on quantity; seek quotes.	nil
Secure sponsorship or grant funding to cover printing costs.	nil
Accept quote; proofread; send to printers - PDNC staff – 10%.	nil
Printing costs – grant sought from other sources.	nil
Total	**$5,720**

Mossman Butterflies

Proponent: Douglas Arts Studio Gallery Inc. ABN 60 230 947 753
Collaborators: Douglas Art Mosaic Group
Short Description: Artist will run 26 workshops over a year, where workshop participants come to DAB and make butterflies. The workshops will be free for participants.

Long Description: Making butterflies is a good starting point for those new to the craft.
Some people make numerous butterflies and others may take two months to complete one butterfly.

As the butterflies are completed, they will be laid on the pavement in Front Street, Mossman.

This program is flexible – catering for those who are very productive, as well as those with less time available. If people can't make it to DAB, the artist can drop off materials to people's homes.

Outcomes:

- Community connection – participants are from Wonga Beach to Port Douglas and it's an opportunity to meet new people.
- Participants are given a sense of purpose.
- Coloured butterflies to beautify Mossman streetscape and inspire public art.
- The discovery of the colourful butterflies will slow people down on the street.

Process & Timeline:

Approval for funding in Arts Action Plan – 1 November 2026
First workshop to start March 2027
Workshops to continue until the 26 workshops have been completed, estimated to be completed by October 2027.
Tiles will be laid as they are completed.

Cost: $14,355

Materials and Outlays for 26 workshops		Cost
Glue for Tiles	2 kg	$160
Glue for Mesh	15 tubes	$225
Grout	3 x 20 kg bags	$240
Tiles		$1,000
Clay		$250
Firing		$50
Paint		$300
Paint Pens		$150
Mesh		$150
Venue - DAB	$50/person	$1300
Incidentals		$130
Tutor Fees	4 hours set up; one hour pack down.	$10,400
Installation	Artist's time	nil
Total		**$14,355**

Mill Street and Front Street Mossman: Then and Now

Proponent: Douglas Shire Historical Society North Queensland Inc. (DSHS)
ABN 85 200 939 892

Collaborators: Long time residents of Mossman; members of DSHS

Description: Researching, compiling and presenting a history of buildings in Mill Street and Front Street Mossman into two different books, one for Front Street and another for Mill Street.

Process:

- Gather quality images of commercial buildings in Front Street and Mill Street Mossman as far back as possible.
- Proponent has many photographs and will aim to gather more when undertaking research.
- Interview long term residents to gather information about the buildings, when they were built, what their purpose was, who the tenants were and any interesting anecdotes.
- Verify information where possible.
- In 2027, take new photographs of all the buildings in Front Street and Mill Street Mossman.
- Purchase CANVA.
- Finalise page layout of photographs and copy.
- Prepare print ready art.
- Send to printers – 100-200 copies of each book.
- Distribution of copies.

Timeline:

- Photography of buildings January-February 2027
- Interviews with long term residents March-April 2027
- Verification and collation of information May 2027
- Learn CANVA – complete page layouts June-July 2027
- Proof reading - prepare print ready art August 2027
- Send to printers – 200 copies September 2027
- Distribution of copies October 2027

Costs

Activity	Grant
Photography and interviews – Artist's time 80 hours @ $45/hour = $3,600 @ 65%	$2,340
Verification and collation of information	In Kind
Printing costs $5,500 per book (10% only, $550 X 2)	$1,100
Total	**$3,440**

DIWAN Winter 2027 - Artist Workshops (Provisional)

RADF committee has given this project provisional endorsement, depending on available funding.

Proponent: North of the River Daintree Art Society (NORDAS) ABN 19 488 144 283

Short Description: Visual Art Workshops

Long Description: NORDAS invited quotes from four artists interested in coming to the Daintree Rainforest to teach art to members.

NORDAS will deliver DIWAN Winter 2027, a flexible program of 1–5 days of visual art workshops. The program will offer a range of standalone full- and half-day workshops exploring drawing, watercolour, painting, field-based art and artist bookmaking, with activities tailored to participants' interests and abilities.

The workshops will provide opportunities for NORDAS members and the wider Douglas Shire community to develop creative skills, engage with the Daintree environment and connect with other local artists. The program will also include opportunities for informal discussion and social connection, such as an artist Q&A and shared gathering.

Outcome: Upskilling of local artists.
Strengthening community connections.

Timeline: Mid 2027

Cost: Three-day workshop = $5,000
Four Day workshop $6,000

- Arts Action Plan $5,000
- Participants* $1,008

*participants pay $36 / person to be involved across the four days.

Estimated Costs

Project	High
Dragonfly Dreaming - Annual creatives weekend	$5,070
Kuyu Kuyu Bama History - Freestanding Art Piece	$10,950
Our History - Port Douglas Community Service Network	$5,720
Mossman Butterflies - DAB	$14,355
Mill Street and Front Street - Then and Now	$3,440
Total	**$39,535**
Provisional - DIWAN Winter 2027	$5,000
Total	**$44,535**

Alignment with Douglas Shire Council Objectives

How do the proposed projects align with Douglas Shire Council's four objectives

- Placemaking and public art
  - Kuyu Kuyu Bama History
  - Mossman Butterflies
- First Nations cultural expression
  - Kuyu Kuyu Bama History
  - Dragonfly Dreaming
- Capacity building and upskilling of local artists
  - DIWAN Winter 2027
  - Mill Street and Front Street Mossman: Then and Now
- Activation of local arts organisations and venues
  - DIWAN Winter 2027 – NORDAS
  - Mossman Butterflies – DAB
  - Dragonfly Dreaming - Café Cape Tribulation

Key Observations from Engagement

Maintenance and replacement

Public art requires ongoing maintenance and occasional replacement. This was a recurring concern in individual conversations.

The Douglas Shire Historical Society has asked for the Shire's 46 photo posts to be placed on a regular cleaning schedule, with damaged posts and signs repaired or replaced. Currently, 13 photo posts require repair or replacement.

Restoration is also important. A 20-year-old artwork in Mowbray Street, completed in 2002, is now overgrown and requires an estimated $10,500 to restore.

Making funding easier to access

Simplifying access to funding alone will not necessarily lead to more projects. Although some people find RADF applications lengthy, the greater barrier is finding people with the time, capacity and willingness to lead and manage projects.

Respondents noted that responsibility often falls to a small number of volunteers, who may be unable to progress projects even when funding is available. Communities may also need support to develop ideas into clear, deliverable proposals. For example, a suggestion for a "public participatory art project" is promising, but requires further detail, leadership and project planning before it can proceed.

Appendix One - Report on Engagement Findings

Report on Community Engagement Findings

Purpose

The engagement was to assist Council in identifying priorities for the Arts Action Plan over the next two years and to gather ideas for arts projects that could be funded and delivered by 30 June 2028. It sought feedback on:

- Preferred arts priorities for Council.
- Proposed arts projects and activities.
- Willingness of respondents to be involved in project delivery.
- Potential project partners and collaborating organisations.
- Additional matters for consideration in the Arts Action Plan.
- Interest in receiving future consultation or project-delivery information.

Engagement

Conversations

Multiple community conversations with people over the telephone, face to face on their verandas and in community spaces across the shire. In some cases, there were additional meetings. The 29 people engaged is shown at the end of this report – Attachment One.

Survey

The survey was available online between 13 July and 25 July 2026, with hard copies available at Council's libraries and distributed at the markets. A copy of the survey is shown in Attachment Two.

The survey included a multiple-choice priority question, with respondents able to select more than one priority, and several open-ended questions. There were 22 survey responses.

Promotion of Engagement Activities

Engagement opportunities were promoted via email distribution to Douglas Shire Council's creatives database, while doing a walk-through Port Douglas and Mossman markets, published on Douglas Shire Council's website and Facebook page, with posts shared on local community Facebook noticeboards.

Engagement Findings

Question One - Which Art Priorities would like Council to focus on over the next two years?

Respondents were able to select from seven priorities and suggest others. The table below shows the frequency with which each priority appeared in the survey responses.

Priority	Number
More opportunities for artists to perform or exhibit	13
Skills development and mentoring	12
Public art	10
Improving existing venues and spaces	9
More youth arts opportunities	8
More arts promotion	7
More support for First Nations cultural expression	5
Other	5

The priority ranking demonstrates a strong preference for an Arts Action Plan that supports both creative participation and public presentation. Respondents were seeking more classes, workshops and mentoring and they wanted more opportunities for artists to show work, perform, sell work, contribute to local places and connect with audiences.

The five "Other" suggestions were:

1. More arts opportunities for young children, including nature-based and early-childhood programs.
2. Low-cost or free casual creative opportunities for adults outside business hours.
3. Arts recovery projects for remote communities, particularly Degarra.
4. Greater inclusion of older people in arts activity.
5. An art-and-history trail.

Question Two – Describe an Arts Project you would like to see delivered

There were 20 projects proposed by respondents.

Some were not specific enough and would require more work to determine viability, and costs, as well as who would be the proponent. Several ideas were already happening, such as pottery, painting and drawing classes and older persons workshops and open age arts classes which are being delivered by DAB and/or U3A Douglas Shire.

- A total of 13 projects were developed and considered by the RADF committee.
- Five projects were endorsed for delivery under the Arts Action Plan
- A sixth project was given provisional endorsement under the Art Action Plan if the budget is available. If not, this project will be redirected for an application to be made to the Douglas Shire Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) Community Grants program.
- Five have been redirected for consideration and delivery under the RADF program
- Two weren't the right fit in the format presented.

Themes

Public art and place-making

Public art was a highly consistent theme, with submissions calling for artworks that contribute to local character, civic pride, visitor appeal and stronger connections to the Shire's natural and cultural environment. Suggested initiatives included:

- A participatory community artwork created outdoors and installed permanently in an indoor public venue.
- Ongoing mosaic, mural and small-scale public-art installations in Mossman town centre, including murals on shop roller doors.
- An art trail through Mossman and/or Port Douglas, potentially linked with walking paths, fitness infrastructure and temporary or rotating "art stations".
- Permanent, highly visible public artworks in Port Douglas reflecting the Reef and rainforest, designed to be distinctive and photographable for visitors.
- Interactive installations and public-art trails intended to attract visitors and encourage exploration.
- A program of artist-designed, culturally appropriate seating, fire-pit and foreshore infrastructure at Kuyu Kuyu/Cooya Beach.

Several proposals framed public art not simply as decoration, but as an investment in place-making, tourism, environmental stewardship and community identity. Mossman was specifically identified as a location where regular, evolving installations could help revitalise the town centre and encourage local business and property owners to contribute to precinct presentation.

First Nations cultural expression

There was clear support for stronger investment in First Nations-led cultural expression and interpretation.

One detailed proposal focused on a project at Cooya Beach, to be developed and delivered by Eastern Kuku Yalanji Traditional Owners in collaboration with organisations and cultural-tourism operators including Gooboodi Bamanga, Jabalbina, Walkabout Cultural Adventures and Culture Connect.

The project was passed onto Traditional Owners for consideration. Their preference is for a project at the northern end of Cooya Beach where their vision is to create two complementary public artworks.

Other ideas included:

- A North of the River Artists Trail along Cape Tribulation Road.
- Indigenous art gallery and workshop space at the Kuku Yalanji Dubudgi Cultural Hub.
- Greater inclusion of First Nations groups in an art and history trail.
- Collaboration with local Indigenous artists, cultural groups and organisations in public-art projects.

These responses reinforce the importance of ensuring that First Nations projects are Indigenous-led, appropriately resourced, based on genuine partnerships and supported by cultural authority.

Youth, children and creative development

Youth opportunities were the most consistently raised participation priority. Respondents sought more activities for children and young people, particularly accessible programs that build confidence, skills and pathways into creative practice. Suggestions included:

- Drawing, painting and pottery classes.
- Music composition and production workshops for teenagers using both digital and acoustic formats.
- An annual youth music-creation and performance event, similar to "NextGen Noise".
- Early-childhood, nature-based arts programs that prioritise creative process, exploration and wellbeing rather than finished products alone.
- School-based arts programs strengthened through community partnerships.
- Arts mentoring and local creative-industry connections for young people.

The consultation also highlighted the importance of accessible entry points. One respondent noted that many people may be interested in creativity but lack the confidence, equipment, financial capacity or commitment to join a formal class. This suggests a role for low-cost, casual and welcoming creative activities, particularly outside standard business hours.

Spaces, venues and access

Improving arts venues and spaces was a major concern. Respondents identified the need for suitable, affordable and flexible places to create, rehearse, perform, exhibit and gather.
Key matters raised were:

- Upgrades to Mossman Shire Hall, including air-conditioning and refurbishment, to improve its use as a performance venue.
- Demand for an indoor theatre and cinema facility, particularly because outdoor performance spaces can be affected by weather.
- A permanent arts space north of the Daintree River to support the active creative community in the area.
- Accessible exhibition and performance opportunities across the Shire.
- More low-cost or free casual creative activities outside normal business hours.
- A community creative hub with shared tools, equipment and materials.
- Opportunities for older people, including open-age arts classes and workshops.

The feedback supports an approach that makes better use of existing community facilities while also investigating gaps in provision, especially in Mossman, remote communities and north of the Daintree River.

Creative wellbeing and inclusion

A number of submissions connected arts participation with wellbeing, mental health, recovery and social connection. Respondents described art as a means of building confidence, reducing isolation, encouraging community connection and supporting emotional recovery. Examples included:

- Low-pressure, casual creative sessions such as paint-and-sip-style activities with non-alcoholic options.
- A reuse and recycle creative hub where donated or discarded materials can be repurposed into art.
- Shared access to tools and equipment for people unable or unwilling to purchase their own supplies.
- Programs for older residents.
- Creative opportunities for people who are not confident in formal art classes.
- Recovery-focused arts projects for Degarra and other remote communities affected by Tropical Cyclone Jasper flooding.

Implementing the Engagement Findings

Public Art.

Visibility

There is strong support for more public art and has been for many years. Five public art projects have been identified in the Arts Action Plan, however, just one is in a high visibility location, the roundabout at Captain Cook Highway & Port Douglas Road.

Three are located in low traffic areas, namely Daintree Village, northern end of Cooya Beach and Mowbray Street.

The fourth—Mossman Butterflies, while in the main street of Mossman—comprises subtle art pieces visible to walkers rather than passing traffic.

The biggest hurdle Council faces in delivering public art in a high traffic area will be the cost. With total of $40,000 for several projects over 18 months, there simply isn't the budget.

Maintenance and Replacement

Consideration also needs to be given to maintenance and replacement. Public art needs to be maintained and examples of this not occurring were raised during one-on-one conversations.

There are 46 photo posts around the Shire. The Douglas Shire Historical Society would like to know the posts are on a regular cleaning schedule, and that posts and/or the signs are replaced when damaged. At present, 13 need to be replaced and/or repaired.

One of the projects being proposed is the restoration of a twenty-year-old art piece in Mudlow Street. When it was completed in 2002 it looked fabulous and now, 20 years down the track, it is completely overgrown and will cost an estimated $10,500 to restore.

Embed First Nations leadership.

Ensure First Nations cultural projects are initiated, governed and delivered with Traditional Owners and relevant cultural organisations, with adequate resources for engagement, design, delivery and ongoing maintenance.

With the project proposed, two are indigenous led and five have the opportunity for indigenous artists to be involved.

Improve access across the Shire.

Projects proposed are widely spread across the shire:

- Port Douglas (4)
- Mossman (4)
- Cooya Beach (1)
- North of Daintree River (3)
- Daintree Village (2)

We don't as yet have a project for Degarra, as was mentioned earlier, or Wonga Beach which is the third largest in community in the Shire. There's no proponent, and no specific art proposition for either location.

Make funding easier to access.

Making funding easier to access will not necessarily create more art projects. While people lament about lengthy RADF applications, it is not the main hurdle.

The main one is identifying people willing to run and manage projects. Survey respondents talked the burden always landing on the shoulders of a few, and that those few lack the time and/or capacity to run with projects – even when funded.

Another is people need help to clarify a project. A suggestion put forward for a "public participatory art project, something we all build together" is great, but nothing will happen until there are more details around it.

Promote existing opportunities.

Several ideas identified in submissions overlap with projects already funded or are available through existing providers. These include pottery, painting and drawing classes; youth music projects; art trails; local-art outlets; casual creative activities; and older-persons workshops. This does not diminish the community interest in these activities; rather, it indicates a need to improve promotion, accessibility, geographic reach and coordination of existing opportunities. What can be done now at little or no cost is:

- Douglas Arts and Culture Map – Pursue Cairns Regional Council to fix back end to enable this platform to be updated and kept up to date by a volunteer within the creative community.
- Douglas Shire Council has an Events Page on its website on the Home page. At the time of writing this report, there were no events were listed and this is a missed opportunity.

DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL

Arts Action Plan – Questionnaire

This survey is designed to generate ideas for potential art projects. It is an opportunity to make your art project a reality, and, if you wish, be involved in making it a reality. The survey may be done online by scannng the QR code, or by completing this questionnaire and returning to Douglas Shire Council. Survey closes 27 July 2026.

Q1 Which art priorities would you like council to focus on over the next two years?

Tick all that apply

- ☐ Public art
- ☐ More opportunities for artists to exhibit or perform
- ☐ Support for First Nations cultural expression
- ☐ More youth arts opportunities
- ☐ Improvement of existing venues and art spaces
- ☐ More arts promotion
- ☐ Skills development and mentoring
- ☐ Other – please specify _____

Q2 Describe an arts project you would like to see funded and delivered by 30 June 2028?

_____

_____

Q3 Would you like to be involved in the delivery of the arts project you have suggested?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Maybe

Q4 Who or what organisations could collaborate in delivering the project you described?

_____

Q5. Thank you for your input. Is there anything else we need to consider in the Arts Action Plan?

_____

If you like to be involved in future arts consultation or project delivery, please provide:

Name _____

Contact email or mobile _____

Privacy Statement: Your name and contact details are being collected for the purpose of administering and analysing this survey. This information will be stored securely, used only by Douglas Shire Council for this project, and not shared except where required by law. By completing the survey, you consent to this use of your information.

Please return completed questionnaires to Douglas Shire Council

Administration Building, 64 – 66 Front Street Mossman or Mossman Library, Port Douglas Library

Enquiries: Gaye Scott, 0418 793 009 or email gaye@gaye-scott.com

Issued 9 July 2026

Appendix Two – Art Organisations

Douglas Shire Historical Society

☎ 0418 960 888
✉ info@douglashistory.org.au
🌐 Douglas Shire Historical Society

What It Does:

- Meets monthly on a Tuesday
- Operates the Port Douglas Court House Museum
- Promotes signposted historic walks in Port Douglas, Mossman and Daintree in partnership with Douglas Shire Council.
- Collects local history papers, historic photographs and oral histories.
- Researches and publishes local history books and bulletins
- Conducts occasional guided walks for groups along the Heritage Trails and through Port Douglas and Mossman cemeteries.
- Maintains databases for Port Douglas cemetery, old farm machinery in our area, and our collection of historical items.

The Clink Theatre

☎ 4015 3216
✉ info@clinktheatre.com.au
🌐 clinktheatre.com.au

120-seat cabaret and production venue in Port Douglas, run by the Douglas Theatre Arts Group. It's housed in historic former police lock-up and hosts local, national, and international live performances.

Douglas Arts Base

☎ 4098 3337
✉ info@dabmossman.com
🌐 http://www.dabmossman.com

Runs art classes throughout the year covering drawing, painting, pottery, glasswork, mixed media and mosaics.

North of the Daintree River Arts Society

Facebook - North of the Daintree River Art Society Inc.
Has 28 members who meet weekly at the Alexandra Sports Club in Diwan. They run one exhibition each year and have a storage space behind the sound shell at the sports ground.

University of the Third Age Douglas Shire

✉ president.u3adouglas@gmail.com; secretary.u3adouglas@gmail.com;
🌐 www.https//www.douglasshire.u3anet.org.au

U3A Douglas Shire is part of the worldwide network of Third Age "universities" and incorporates people who are retired or semi-retired, and typically over the age of 50. It does various activities. At the moment there are no "arts" activities however in the past they have run Ukulele classes; they have had a writing for pleasure group, and line dancing.