7.20. DAINTREE FERRY UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2026

REPORT AUTHOR	Contract Manager
EXECUTIVE	General Manager Infrastructure
DEPARTMENT	Infrastructure
TEAM	Infrastructure Planning and Delivery
DATE	27 October 2026

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the Daintree Ferry operational report for September 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides Council with a monthly update on the Daintree River Ferry operation for September 2026, including progress on key ferry-related projects, financial and operational reporting, and relevant governance considerations.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS / RESOLUTIONS

At the Ordinary Meeting held on 10 December 2024, Council resolved that Councillors would receive monthly financial details relating to the Daintree River Ferry.

REPORT/BACKGROUND

Project progress:

1. **Landside Infrastructure**
   Landside civil works are progressing well and remain on schedule for completion during the 2026 construction year. Approximately 14,915 tonnes of rock has been imported to support these works. The ticket booths have been relocated to their new positions, which required significant communication and configuration work for the ticketing systems. Contractors are currently focused on the northern road works.

2. **New Ferry**
   Construction of the new Daintree Ferry is progressing well and remains on schedule for delivery at the end of 2027. The first construction block has been transferred into the paint shed at Birdon's Port Macquarie shipyard, marking the next stage in the vessel's build.

The graphs attached represent the financial performance and operating statistics of the Daintree Ferry operations for the current financial year. It should be noted that this is not a comprehensive assessment of the financial performance as Council's corporate and administrative costs that support the ferry operation have not been included. These costs

include but are not limited to ticketing and ferry card sales administration, accounts payable and receivable, budgeting and financial reporting, payroll and human resources, auditing, enquiry and complaint management and administrative costs and overheads.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The preparation of monthly reporting for the Daintree Ferry does not create a material resource impact on service delivery.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Monthly reporting keeps Council informed about the Daintree River Ferry operation and supports timely corrective action if required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

NIL

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.
1.5 - *Keep the community informed.*

Theme 3 - Service Delivery
We deliver Council services effectively and efficiently to meet community expectations, focusing on the wellbeing of both the community and our employees.
3.6 - *Deliver Council services to meet community expectations.*

Operational Plan 2026-2027 Actions:

2.1.1 - 100% design of new Daintree Ferry including AMSA approvals.
2.1.2 - Commence construction of the new Daintree Ferry.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Not applicable

CONSULTATION

Operations and Maintenance Team; Financial Services Team; Council Workshop 19/10/2026.

CONCLUSION

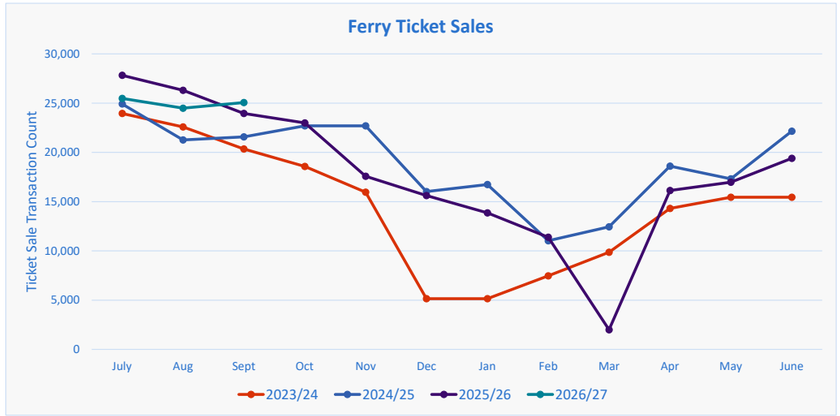
Council notes the Daintree Ferry operational report for September 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Daintree Ferry Monthly Report - Operations Statistics Sept 2026 [**7.20.1** - 2 pages]

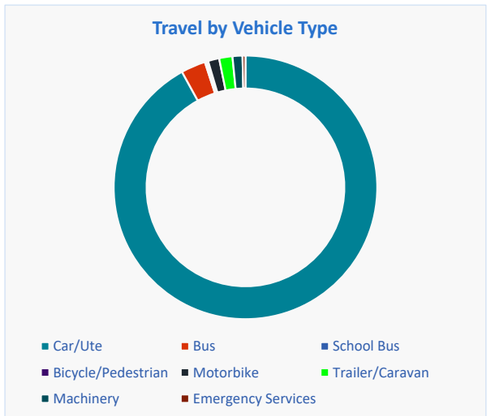
Daintree Ferry Monthly Report
September 2026

OPERATING STATISTICS



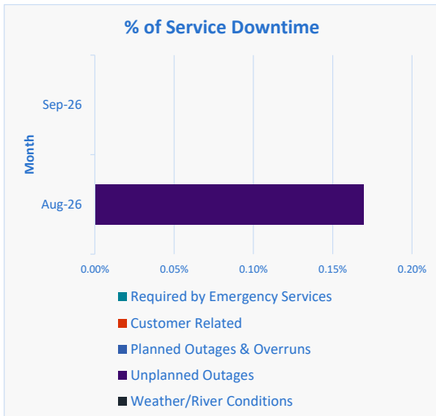
The line chart shows the number of ferry ticket sales purchased each month over the last three (3) financial years. It includes both actual travel and pre-purchased tickets for future travel months. As expected, ticket sales are lower during the wet season, particularly between December and March. In September 2026, ticket sales exceeded September levels in each of the previous four years, reflecting strong performance alongside the expected seasonal uplift during the peak tourism season.

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
2023/24	23,949	22,586	20,341	18,566	15,959	5,146	5,146	7,465	9,862	14,312	15,440	15,440
2024/25	24,915	21,267	21,572	22,698	22,698	16,021	16,737	11,030	12,436	18,602	17,307	22,148
2025/26	27,824	26,298	23,957	22,987	17,584	15,619	13,862	11,380	1,995	16,135	16,973	19,397
2026/27	25,482	24,491	25,062									



The pie chart shows the breakdown of vehicle types which used the Daintree Ferry in September 2026. Car and ute travel makes up the majority of travel (92%), followed by buses (3%) and trailer/caravan (1.6%).

Travel by Vehicle Type	Sep-26
Car/Ute	92.0%
Bus	3.0%
School Bus	0.2%
Bicycle/Pedestrian	0.2%
Motorbike	1.4%
Trailer/Caravan	1.6%
Machinery	1.2%
Emergency Services	0.4%
	100.0%



The Daintree Ferry's operational hours are 19 hours per day, 365 days a year. In August 2026, there was one unplanned outage related to a hydraulic issue. In September 2026, there were no reported unplanned outages.

% Service Downtime	Aug-26	Sep-26
Required by Emergency Services	0.00%	0.00%
Customer Related	0.00%	0.00%
Planned Outages & Overruns	0.00%	0.00%
Unplanned Outages	0.17%	0.00%
Weather/River Conditions	0.00%	0.00%
	0.00	**0.0000**

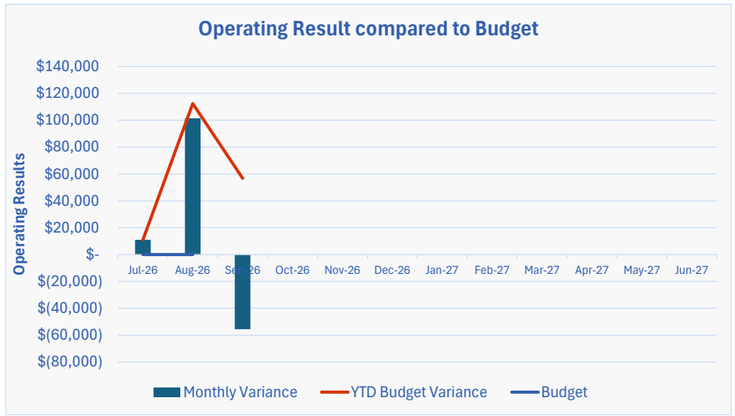


In addition to operating 19 hours per day, the Daintree Ferry operates an on-call service for emergency services between midnight and 5am. There was no reported emergency call outs in August or September 2026.

Number of After Hours Emergency Call Outs	Aug-26	Sep-26
After Hours Emergency Call Outs	0	0

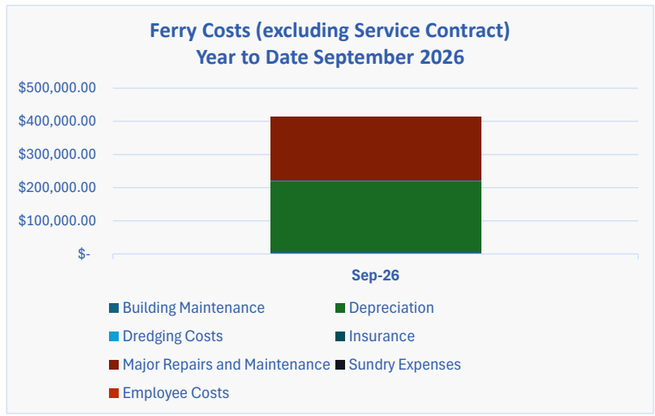
Daintree Ferry Monthly Report
September 2026

OPERATING STATISTICS - PART B



The variances for September 2026 remain broadly consistent with those reported in the previous month. Fee and income after contractor costs continue to be behind budget, primarily due to higher contract labour costs. Major repair works are now over budget following work undertaken by the new contractor. Dredging costs are also behind budget, with the next dredging campaign scheduled for late 2026.

Overall, the key variances continue to be driven by contract labour and major repair costs, while dredging expenditure remains below budget due to the timing of the next scheduled works.



The stacked bar chart shows the operational spend by type, excluding the service contract. In September 2026, depreciation and major repairs and maintenance made up the largest proportion.