

DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL

Operational Plan 2025-2026

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About the Operational Plan

The Operational Plan 2025-2026 is a key plan for Douglas Shire Council. The Operational Plan translates the commitments set out in the Corporate Plan 2025-2030 into annual actions, projects and services that Council will undertake within the current financial year.

The Operational Plan is a key component of the Council's strategic planning framework (see Figure 1) and should be considered in conjunction with other planning documents, including the long-term financial forecast, annual budget, and corporate reporting.

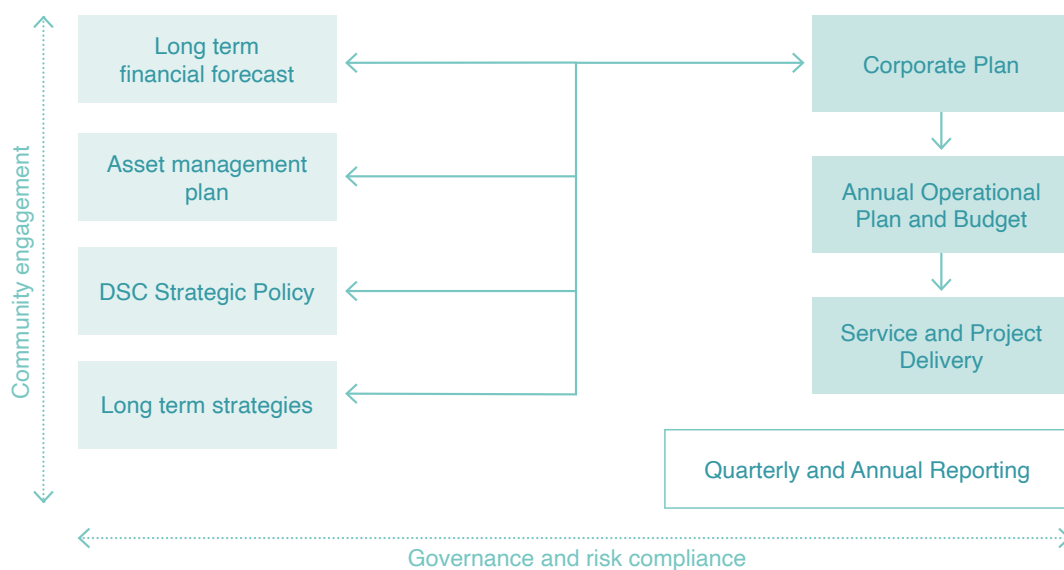


Figure 1

The *Local Government Act 2009* along with the *Local Government Regulation 2012* requires Council to adopt an annual Operational Plan. Council must undertake its responsibilities in a way which is consistent with its annual Operational Plan and may amend the Operational Plan at any time by Council resolution. Council shall monitor progress against the Operational Plan and present updates in Council meetings at least quarterly.

Maintaining Current Services

A large portion of Council's annual budget goes to providing the ongoing services that our community values. Acknowledging this, and the need to continually balance sustainability with the demands of service delivery, Council will continue to prioritise service reviews.

Further actions or projects may be included during the financial year as circumstances arise to progress Council's response to the Corporate Plan Key Priorities.

The Operational Plan for each financial year delivers against the Key Focus Areas of the Corporate Plan which has a life of five years. As such, not all Key Priorities will be specifically addressed by an individual action or project in each annual Operational Plan. Many Key Priorities are addressed through the ongoing delivery of services and 'business as usual' activities undertaken by Council.

Risk Management

Council is committed to implementing a systematic risk management methodology that identifies and addresses areas of potential risk within the Council in a manner that is consistent with Australian Standards. Effective risk management is governed by an Enterprise Risk Management Framework that establishes the relationship between Council's various risk management components and processes.

STRATEGIC THEME 1

Liveability

To deliver community activities to promote safe, healthy, inclusive and socially engaged communities with an environmental conscious.



Key Areas of Focus	Deliverable	Success Measure	Department
1.1 Deliver community initiatives that support healthy, inclusive and socially engaged communities.	1.1.1 Deliver the Port Douglas Splash Park.	Open to the public Q2, 2025/2026.	Infrastructure Planning and Delivery
	1.1.2 Investigate opportunities for increased participation and programs offered at the Mossman Pool based on customer and community feedback.	Increased attendance numbers and number of programs.	Community Services
	1.1.3 Conduct a sport, recreation and leisure needs assessment to identify current and future trends across the Shire.	Needs assessment completed by Q3, 2025/2026.	Community Services
	1.1.4 Undertake Planning Scheme amendments to improve functionality, streamline development assessment and align the Planning Scheme with the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> .	Planning Scheme amendments drafted and adopted by Council. Planning Scheme submitted for State Interest Review by Q4, 2025/2026.	Environment and Planning
1.2 Encourage and grow creative opportunities across the arts.	1.2.1 Develop an Arts & Culture Program for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027.	Art and Culture Program 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 endorsed by Manager Community Services by Q2, 2025/2026.	Community Services
1.3 Be culturally sensitive, inclusive and improve Councils cultural competency.	1.3.1 Continue to develop the Douglas Shire Council Reconciliation Action Plan.	Approved by Council Q4, 2025/2026.	Community Services
	1.3.2 Identify and implement a cultural competency training course for all employees.	Course implemented by Q3, 2025/2026.	People and Culture
1.4 Promote inclusivity, connection and accessibility for individuals/people of all abilities.	1.4.1 Undertake a review of the Learn to Swim Program at Mossman Pool to assess the viability of expanding access to include additional age groups, including seniors, and people with disabilities.	Review opportunities and consult with the community. Report on recommendations to the Senior Leadership Team by Q2, 2025/2026.	Community Services
	1.4.2 Deliver year 2 of the 3-year Port Douglas Principle Cycle Network in accordance with funding allocated.	Additional 700m of Principle Cycle Network upgrades completed along Port Douglas Road.	Maintenance and Operations
	1.4.3 Review the Planning Scheme to ensure it reflects contemporary disability access requirements where applicable for new developments.	Planning Scheme amendments drafted and adopted by Council. Planning Scheme submitted for State Interest Review by Q4, 2025/2026.	Environment and Planning
1.5 Keep the community informed.	1.5.1 Development and delivery of a community resilience education plan for 2025/2026.	Education plan developed and six community resilience activities delivered within the Douglas Shire during 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit
	1.5.2 Review current Shire strategies and plans.	Review to be completed by Q3, 2025/2026 and presented to Council for incorporation into 2026/2027 planning.	Executive Office

1.6 Create and maintain parks and open spaces to preserve, protect and sustain our natural assets.	1.6.1 Enhance the landscaping and aesthetics of the Mossman Caravan Park to improve the customer experience while protecting and capitalising on the surrounding natural environment.	Plan and undertake landscaping improvements during 2025/2026.	Community Services
	1.7.1 Identify tangible solutions for nature-based hazard mitigation projects.	Nature-based hazard mitigation solutions identified, and implementation plan developed by Q3, 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit
1.7 Investigate and promote environmental, green, eco-friendly and nature focused initiatives.	1.7.2 Continue the illegal dumping program through a combination of education, investigation, and enforcement.	Reduce incidents of illegal dumping and littering while meeting the milestones and reporting targets of the State funded Illegal Dumping Partnership Program.	Environment and Planning
	1.7.3 Encourage the diversion of organic waste from landfill. Continue to investigate solutions and long-term opportunities for diversion.	Develop an Organic Diversion Options paper by Q3, 2025/2026. The aim is to improve environmental outcomes and support Queensland's waste reduction and circular economy targets.	Environment and Planning
	1.7.4 1) Participate in the Plastic Free Cairns and Douglas Program, managed by Boomerang Alliance, which assists businesses to reduce or eliminate single-use food ware items from their supply chain. 2) Participate in the "Douglas Chooses to Reuse" Program funded by the State Government.	Support offered to Boomerang Alliance for the implementation of the new pilot program "Douglas Chooses to Reuse".	Environment and Planning
	1.7.5 Deliver initiatives within the Douglas Shire Reef Guardian 4-Year Action Plan.	Initiatives delivered to be reported each quarter through the Operational Plan 2025/2026 reporting process.	Environment and Planning
	1.7.6 Maintain the Douglas Shire Council Destination's Ecotourism Certification.	Initiatives delivered to be reported each quarter through the Operational Plan 2025/2026 reporting process.	Environment and Planning
	1.8.1 Re-design of water supply systems at the Mossman River Intake to deliver improved resilience for longer term water security for the Douglas Shire community.	Contract award and commence construction of the Mossman River Intake Project by Q4, 2025/2026.	Water and Wastewater
1.8 Provide safe, efficient and reliable water and wastewater services.	1.8.2 Undertake a community education program on water sustainability.	Progress Councils water education program through facility based primary school education programs. Increase school site visits from two (2) to three (3) per annum.	Water and Wastewater
	1.8.3 Undertake master planning studies to identify future water and wastewater requirements to support industry, urban and the environmental needs.	Funding application completed for Queensland Reconstruction Authority's Water and Sewerage Infrastructure Program to complete required studies.	Water and Wastewater

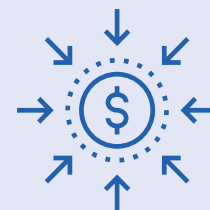
1.9 In accordance with Queensland Disaster Management doctrine, continuously review and enhance Council's disaster management prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in collaboration with community and agencies.	1.9.1 Continue to strengthen the Local Disaster Management Group, Incident Management Team and Recovery groups.	Relevant training to be conducted and reported each quarter through the Operational Plan 2025/2026 reporting process. Disaster exercise to be undertaken with the Incident Management Team and Recovery groups by Q2, 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit
	1.9.2 Establish the Douglas Recovery and Resilience Group. Ensure recovery and resilience efforts are designed for, and maintain a focus on, a community-led and locally managed model.	Douglas Recovery and Resilience Group established by Q1, 2025/2026 and meeting a minimum of three (3) times in 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit
	1.9.3 Review and update the Local Disaster Management sub-plans under the Local Disaster Management Plan. Develop a Disaster Recovery sub-plan.	Review and updates completed for: Disaster Recovery sub-plan, Evacuation sub-plan, Resupply sub-plan, Activation sub-plan, Port Douglas Storm Tide Cyclone Shelter sub-plan, Public Information and Warnings sub-plan and Logistics sub-plan by Q2, 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit
	1.9.4 Develop a Lessons Management framework.	Lessons Management Framework implemented and tested against an agreed incident exercise or event by Q4, 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit



STRATEGIC THEME 2

Prosperity

Council plans, builds and maintains the infrastructure required to improve our lifestyle and promote economic growth, working actively to support local businesses.



Key Areas of Focus	Deliverable	Success Measure	Department
2.1 Deliver a new Daintree Ferry.	2.1.1 Engage a contractor to own and operate a new Daintree River ferry.	Contractor engaged and commencement of design/ construction by Q4, 2025/2026.	Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery
	2.1.2 Upgrade landside infrastructure to meet the requirements of the new ferry and reduce waiting times.	Complete detailed design and commence construction by the end of Financial Year 2025/2026.	Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery
2.2 Support local business through local procurement.	2.2.1 Encourage local business and industry.	Deliver four (4) procurement seminars to the Douglas Shire community during 2025/2026.	Finance and Corporate Services
	2.2.2 Local preference selection criteria to be used in the procurement evaluation processes.	Successful number of local businesses and industry procurement to be reported each quarter through the Operational Plan 2025/2026 reporting process.	Finance and Corporate Services
	2.2.3 Annual review of the Douglas Shire Council Procurement Policy.	Policy to be reviewed and adopted by Council, Q3, 2025/2026.	Finance and Corporate Services
2.3 Advocate for/ promote economic growth opportunities and economic transition.	2.3.1 Commence a review of regional and state economic development strategies to identify gaps in preparation for the development of a new local strategy.	Review complete by Q3, 2025/2026.	Community Services
	2.3.2 Undertake a review of the Community Grants Guidelines with a view to introducing industry and economic development opportunities and an event sponsorship program.	Guidelines updated and endorsed by Council, Q2, 2025/2026.	Community Services
2.4 Assess developments against the planning scheme.	2.4.1 Undertake assessment of development applications in a timely manner.	Complete 80% of development applications within the statutory timeframes. Total number of development applications and the total number of development applications meeting the 80% target to be reported each quarter through the Operational Plan 2025/2026 reporting process.	Environment and Planning
2.5 Pursue opportunities to improve housing outcomes.	2.5.1 Establish a working group and progress the Douglas Shire Council Local Housing Action Plan.	Working group established and reporting cadence established in accordance with the plan by Q1, 2025/2026.	Environment and Planning
	2.5.2 Undertake an internal review of the Local Government Infrastructure Plan.	Scope of work and budget included for consideration in 2026/2027 budget process.	Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery
2.6 Recognise the contribution of established local industries.	2.6.1 Create quarterly podcasts and media content that supports Douglas Shire industry.	Content created and published for four (4) industry streams each quarter and reported through the Operational Plan 2025/2026 reporting process.	Executive Office

2.7 Build strong local, State and Federal relations.	2.7.1 Partner with Federal, State and local agencies to showcase the region.	Maintain relationships and engagement.	Executive Office and all Departments
	2.7.2 Support Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils through on-going membership.	Maintain membership and engagement.	Executive Office
	2.7.3 Maintain regular contact with Federal and State parliamentarians.	Number of meetings. Reported at each Ordinary Council Meeting through the Mayor's and Chief Executive Officer's diaries.	Executive Office and all Departments
	2.7.4 Continued membership of the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ).	Maintain membership and engagement.	Executive Office



STRATEGIC 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.



Key Areas of Focus	Deliverable	Success Measure	Department
3.1 Deliver the Corporate Plan, Operational Plan and Budget.	3.1.1 Corporate Plan reviewed annually.	Report to Council.	Governance
	3.1.2 Develop, coordinate, and publish Council's Annual Report on organisational activities and compliance with legislation.	Council approval of annual report and publishing within prescribed timeframe.	Governance
	3.1.3 Present Operational Plan Quarterly Progress Report to Council (and publish on Council's website).	Report to council.	Governance
3.2 Focus on customer service.	3.2.1 Implementation of multiple finance related system changes as part of the System and Process Improvement Program.	Implementation of systems for Contract Management, Purchasing, Accounts Payable, Generation of Contract Register.	Finance and Corporate Services
	3.2.2 Build the People Safety and Culture brand through actively promoting its function within the organisation.	People Safety and Culture brand is well recognised and understood across the organisation. Success measured through a staff pulse survey in Q3, 2025/2026. Findings reported to the Senior Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team in Q4, 2025/2026.	People Safety and Culture
	3.2.3 Continue implementation of Human Resource Information (HRIS) system.	Roll out and implementation of the onboarding and learning management system including training for staff by Q3, 2025/2026.	People Safety and Culture
	3.2.4 Assess the needs of each business unit and align support to meet their needs.	Implementation of Business Partner model. Business Partner support aligned to the needs of business units by Q1, 2025/2026.	People Safety and Culture
	3.2.5 Identify the skills and competencies required to deliver appropriate People Safety and Culture support. Fill all vacancies.	Fully resourced People Safety and Culture unit with required skills and capabilities. Training gaps and vacancy rate reported each quarter through the Operational Plan 2025/2026 reporting process.	People Safety and Culture
	3.2.6 Review the Douglas Shire Council website and explore opportunities for enhancements and improved functionality.	Review undertaken and presented to the Executive Leadership Team by Q3, 2025/2026.	Executive Office
	3.2.7 Undertake a review and update the Douglas Shire Council Corporate Style Guide.	Douglas Shire Council Corporate Style Guide approved by Council by Q2, 2025/2026.	Executive Office
	3.2.8 Review Council website to ensure all governance documents are included.	Review undertaken quarterly and recorded.	Governance

3.3 Focus on safety and wellbeing—of the community and employees.	3.3.1 Continue to implement the Douglas Shire Council Work Health and Safety Plan 2025/2028.	New safety plan implemented. Key performance indicators measured monthly and reported to the Senior Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team.	People Safety and Culture
	3.3.2 Develop a Workplace Wellbeing Strategy.	Wellbeing Strategy 2026-2028 developed by Q3, 2025/2026 and approved by the Executive Leadership Team.	People Safety and Culture
	3.3.3 Talent development – provide development programs to assist staff achieve their goals and improve the knowledge base of the Douglas Shire Council.	Training and development opportunities for staff. Leadership training for staff. Training report detailing training programs, numbers of participants and outcomes to be presented to the Senior Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team each quarter.	People Safety and Culture
	3.3.4 Implement inspection program for regulated dogs declared under the <i>Animal Management Act 2008</i> .	Completion of the inspection program with full compliance achieved.	Environment and Planning
	3.3.5 Promote responsible dog ownership.	Social media campaign completed Q1 and Q3, 2025/2026.	Environment and Planning
	3.3.6 Complete the review of the Douglas Shire Council Local Laws.	Review completed and adoption with Gazettal and notification to the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers by Q3, 2025/2026.	Environment and Planning
	3.3.7 Undertake a gap analysis on Work Health and Safety practices within the Maintenance and Operations Team.	Report prepared with mitigations identified for risk areas and priorities identified. Complete by Q2, 2025/2026.	Construction and Commercial
	3.3.8 Commence implementation of endorsed recommendation's detailed in the Douglas Shire Council Occupational Violence Working Group Report.	Progress report provided to the Senior Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team each quarter.	All Departments
3.4 Ensure capital and maintenance programs for infrastructure/open spaces are prioritised and delivered.	3.4.1 Deliver asset renewal programs through focus on asset renewal works.	Asset renewal program is 100 per cent expended by end of Q4, 2025/2026.	Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery
3.5 Employ a proactive and preventative approach to asset management.	3.5.1 Implement the Assetic Asset Management System.	Develop a three (3) year plan for the establishment, data verification, database maintenance and updating and enhanced utilisation of Councils asset management system.	Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery
	3.5.2 Review Douglas Shire Council Asset Management Plans.	The development of a three (3) year plan to improve asset management practices by the end of Q3, 2025/2026.	Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery
	3.5.3 Conduct a complete condition assessment on Douglas Shire Council's community buildings.	Condition assessment complete and incorporated into Councils asset management system by Q4, 2025/2026.	Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery
	3.5.4 Conduct a complete condition assessment on Douglas Shire Council's buildings.	Asset Management Plan to address defects on council buildings through the Capital Works and operational works programs.	Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery

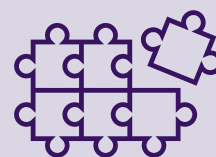
3.6 Deliver Council services to meet community expectations.	3.6.1 Procure and stock portable disaster resilience caches with supplies to support communities during a disaster event.	Disaster resilience caches stocked and ready for deployment by Q1, 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit
	3.6.2 Explore retro-fitting a Community Resilience Hub, north of the Daintree River.	Complete community and stakeholder consultation on the requirements and potential location of the Community Resilience Hub by Q3, 2025/26.	Disaster Management Unit
	3.6.3 Promote the Douglas Shire Council as a workplace of choice.	Employee value proposition created by Q2, 2025/2026.	People Safety and Culture
	3.6.4 Provide restoration of essential public assets during natural disaster events.	Complete all restoration of essential public assets by Q4, 2025/2026.	Construction and Commercial
	3.6.5 Deliver library services north of the Daintree River.	Delivery of program identified and commenced by Q1, 2025/2026.	Community Services
3.7 Identify and manage risk.	3.7.1 Undertake a review of corporate risks.	Risk register reviewed and updated by Q2, 2025/2026 and submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee.	Governance
3.8 Deliver safe and reliable drinking water.	3.8.1 Install community water filling stations to provide safe and easy access to water for both commercial and residential customers without a permanent connection.	Prepare a shovel ready design for water filling stations across the Port Douglas and Mossman areas by Q3, 2025/2026.	Water and Wastewater
3.9 Preserve, protect and improve our unique environment.	3.9.1 Deliver the Reef Guardian Council funded erosion and sediment control programme to staff and industry.	Achieve an improvement in compliance with the implementation of erosion and sediment control measures from the pre-programme inspection audit compared to the post-program inspection audit. Report measurable improvements reported each quarter through the Operational Plan 2025/2026 reporting process.	Environment and Planning
	3.9.2 Develop and implement a waste education and behavioural change plan targeting waste reduction, recycling and organic diversion from landfill.	Complete all actions and success measures by Q4, 2025/2026.	Environment and Planning
	3.9.3 Long term strategy developed for end of useful life of the oil palms at the entrance to Port Douglas.	Strategy developed and adopted by Council by the end of Q4, 2025/2026.	Maintenance and Operations
	3.9.4 Update Douglas Shire Council's Biosecurity Plan.	Review and update of the Biosecurity Plan completed by Q4, 2025/2026.	Maintenance and Operations
	3.9.5 Develop a Port Douglas Streetscape Management Plan.	Improve our tourist experience in Port Douglas. Streetscape Management Plan to be developed by Q3 2025/2026.	Infrastructure, Planning and Delivery
	3.9.6 Review the Douglas Shire Council Foreshore Management Plan.	Update the Foreshore Management Plan providing recommendations by Q4, 2025/2026.	Maintenance and Operations
	3.9.7 Develop and publish a Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan 2025-2030.	Plan published Q2, 2025/2026.	Environment and Planning



STRATEGIC THEME 4

Recovery and Resilience

To partner with the community to build resilience against natural disasters creating a strong sense of social capital.



Key Areas of Focus	Deliverable	Success Measure	Department
4.1 Support our community's journey of recovery and rebuilding after natural disasters.	4.1.1 Investigate establishing a community resilience hub for Degarra residents.	Complete community consultation and requirements for a resilience hub, including identification of a potential site and concept plan by Q4, 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit
	4.1.2 Maintain effective communication relating to Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement projects.	Community Reference group effectiveness review to be undertaken in Q1, 2025/2026 with recommendations for adjustments to be presented to the Chief Engineer by the end of Q2, 2025/2026.	Infrastructure and Recovery
	4.1.3 Establish long term coastal erosion mitigation measures for Port Douglas and Newell Beach.	Progress the development of the Shoreline Erosion Management Plan. Report progress each quarter through the Operational Plan 2025/2026 reporting process.	Environment and Planning
4.2 Deliver infrastructure asset restoration and betterment.	4.2.1 Marris Creek flood levee bank.	Marris Creek flood levee bank completed by Q4, 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit
	4.2.2 Audit early warning flood infrastructure and identify high risk locations.	Early warning flood infrastructure and high-risk locations identified, and planning commenced for upgrades and new infrastructure by Q3, 2025/2026.	Constuction and Commercial
4.3 Foster collaboration, sustainability, and a strong sense of belonging.	4.3.1 Improve Community Resilience.	Resilience Strategy developed and Community Resilience Score Cards updated by Q3, 2025/26.	Disaster Management unit
4.4 Implement the local recovery and resilience action plan.	4.4.1 Undertake an all-hazard disaster study of the Douglas Shire.	Complete all-hazard disaster study by Q4, 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit
	4.4.2 Scope and prepare works under the North Queensland Resilience program funding for year one.	Incorporate progress within the quarterly Disaster Management Unit Reporting to Council.	Disaster Management Unit
	4.4.3 Develop a Bloomfield River catchment flood risk management plan in collaboration with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, Cook Shire and Wujal Wujal Councils.	Participate through the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and attend scheduled meetings. Report progress each quarter through the Operational Plan 2025/2026 reporting process and quarterly Disaster Management Unit reporting to Council.	Disaster Management Unit
4.5 Undertake effective disaster management (prevention, preparedness, response, recovery).	4.5.1 Undertake a disaster preparedness audit of all Council buildings used for disaster management purposes.	Complete a risk and suitability audit of Council controlled buildings used for disaster management activities including places of refuge, evacuation facilities and disaster operations. Provide a risk and suitability report with recommendations to Council by Q2, 2025/2026.	Disaster Management Unit
	4.5.2 Investigate new re-supply access to communities north of the Daintree River.	Completion of recommendations for re-supply points through environmental mapping and key access routes.	Disaster Management Unit



