

Meeting Notes

Date: Thursday 30 July 2026

Time: 10:00am – 11:00am

Location: Microsoft Teams and Mackay Room (Council Administrative Offices)

1. Attendees

Ashley Holliday
Deb Ruddell
Denis Verri
Erin Simpson
Hari Boppudi
Jackie Kiernan
Jason Heffernan
Jeremy Blockey
Liza Dowling
Marcus Wilson
Michael Hohoi-Graham
Paula Clancy
Peter Tonkes
Rhys Hughes
Rob Lathan

Apologies

Abi Ralph
Andy Heweston
Bell Faber
Chris Jones
Cole Claxton
Deb Henderson-Ruddock
Emily Baltrunas
Emma Tunnock
Gabriel Nucifora
Merren Blockey
Owen Sellwood
Steve Sponberg

2. Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome and apologies
 - An invitation was sent to Degarra residents to gauge interest in filling the vacancy left with Robyn Guedes' resignation. Two residents responded. Welcome Bell Faber and Ashley Holliday.
 - Lawrence Mason has resigned. The group thanked Lawrence for his valuable contribution over many years to the Road Reference Group and, more recently, to the newly merged group.

3. DRFA Road Network Update

2. Road Updates

- Alexandra Range
 - The works on the two remaining landslip sites are anticipated to be completed by June 2027. Tenders to be released in September as we are still waiting on survey and geotechnical testing.
- Noah Land Slip
 - Overall progress is going well.
 - The preliminary design for additional stabilisation works after discovering the crack is complete; weather permitting, the specialised equipment will be mobilised, and works are scheduled to commence in late August.
 - Revised completion is intended for June 2027.

- Cape Tribulation Road & Cape Trib Bloomfield Road
 - Tenders for Woobadda Bridge repairs are expected to be released in August 2026.
 - Repairs to roadway and guardrail on Rykers Bridge have been included in the repair design and tender.
- Spurwood Road
 - Preliminary works at Spurwood Road will commence over the next few days, with major construction and traffic management starting on Monday 10 August.
 - The affected section of Spurwood Road will be closed for up to eight weeks, with signed detour routes in place.
 - Residents will receive a letter drop with further information about the works, road closure and detour arrangements.
- Degarra Roads
 - Submissions are being finalised, for the additional damage to roads incurred from 2026 activation, before forwarding to QRA for assessment.
- China Camp Road
 - Works commenced in July 2026, ETA for completion is March 2027.
- Zig Zag
 - Contract has been awarded. Wet weather has held up works.
- CREB Track Update
 - CREB track was opened last week.
- Graded Roads
 - Members raised concerns about recently graded roads becoming soft and slippery. Council advised that the roads are being monitored. The road base material complies with specifications and was sourced from a registered Mossman quarry, with grading undertaken in accordance with Council standards. Ongoing wet weather and shaded sections are preventing the material from drying and curing as intended.
- Follow-up (Taken on Notice)
 - It was reported that there are dangerous pot holes on the roads and they need urgent attention.

3. Noah Creek Bridge & Causeway

○ Project Update

- Public access to the construction site remains closed for safety during bridge construction.
- The temporary bypass is now 95% complete and is expected to be operational by mid-August 2026.
- The new bridge components have been successfully assembled in Mossman and will be transported to site for installation at the appropriate stage of the project.
- Bridge opening for vehicles is planned for December 2026.
- The project is expected to be completed before June 2027, including removal of the bypass and restoration of the area.
- Plans are in progress for contingency arrangements should the bypass become impassable during flooding.

4. Daintree Ferry Replacement Project Update

○ Project Update

- Birdon assumed responsibility for ferry operations on 1 July.
- The ferry build is on track.
- Council is looking at all options for the existing ferry once the new vessel is commissioned.
- Members asked about the root causes of the ferry being dislodged during the TL29U event. It was advised that the incident occurred during flooding of the Daintree River, with potential contributing factors including debris impacts, collisions from pontoons and vessels, and significant debris build-up on the ferry cables. Birdon has reviewed the incident and has implemented, or is implementing, improvements including updates to the Safety Management System, clearer communication protocols with Council and reliance on Bureau of Meteorology warnings, and clarification of responsibilities and accountability for the safe operation of the ferry.

5. Daintree Ferry Landside Infrastructure Project

○ Project Update

- Vegetation removal has been completed.
- Temporary single-lane traffic management will continue as required.
- Excavation works are nearing completion, with rock placement underway on the northern side.
- Culvert replacement works are continuing, with wet weather delaying completion.
- Rock and fill placement are finished on the south side and will continue on the north side for the next 4 weeks.
- The southern priority lane remains temporarily closed for trench works.
- Lights on the new ferry tie-up pylons will be considered.
- Interpretive signage will be installed on both sides of the river this week, and the project webpage has been updated to be more visitor-friendly.
- The project remains on track for completion by the end of October.

- Follow-up (Taken on Notice)
 - Members raised concerns that current traffic management arrangements is not prioritising public access and requested a review of the ticketing process to improve traffic flow.
 - Concerns were raised about inappropriate behaviour towards traffic management and ticketing staff. Council will issue a community reminder to treat staff respectfully.

6. Disaster Management & Recovery Update

- Crucial Links
 - Bathymetry survey: contractor has been engaged and work has commenced to assess potential sea resupply access points north of the Daintree River.
- Environmental & Clean-Up Works
 - Bloomfield River and Daintree River rubbish survey completed.
 - River rubbish removal works in the Daintree River: large items removal (boats, pontoons, tanks etc) has commenced. RFQ for other items out this week
 - Dead tree removal in Degarra scheduled for August – RFQ closes 30 July.
 - Ground-based rubbish removal works in Degarra planned to commence in September/October.
- Emergency Boat Ramp at Daintree River Northern Bank
 - New gravel drop off area established as part of landside works.
- Cow Bay Boat Launch Access
 - A pandanus tree was removed to improve boat launching access.
 - Natural sand build-up has restored easy 4WD access to the site.
 - Long-term access improvements may be considered through the Crucial Access Links project.
- Degarra Meeting Hub
 - Project progressing despite weather-related delays earlier this year.
 - A potential site has been identified on the Banabilla Road road reserve following community feedback.
 - Community meeting to be scheduled to present the proposed site and concept design, answer questions and seek ideas for local creative elements and activities.

7. Other Business

- Douglas Shire will commemorate 150 years since Port Douglas was established as a port in 1877—a significant period that also saw the Bump Track open, some of the earliest farms established in Mossman and early settlement and exploration around the Daintree and Bailey Creek areas.
- A new Douglas 150 website has been launched with more information.

- We encourage communities north of the Daintree River to start thinking about local stories, events and activities that could be included in the commemorations.
- More information about how to get involved will be shared soon.

8. Next Meeting

Thursday 27 August 2026 at 10:00am (tentative).