

Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday 6 October 2026

Time: 10:30am – 11:30am

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

1. Attendees

Abi Ralph
Deb Henderson-Ruddock
Denis Verri
Erin Simpson
Finn Blayney
Hari Boppudi
Jackie Kiernan
Jason Heffernan
Jeremy Blockey
John Gray
Liza Dowling
Marcus Wilson
Maura Mancini
Nicola Learmond
Peter Tonkes
Rob Latham
Rhys Hughes
Steve Sponberg

Apologies

Ashley Holliday
Andy Heweston
Bell Faber
Chris Jones
Cole Claxton
Deb Ruddell
Emily Baltrunas
Emma Tunnock
Gabriel Nucifora
Merren Blockey
Michael Hohoi-Graham
Owen Sellwood
Paul Hoyer

2. Welcome and Introductions

3. Daintree Ferry Replacement Project Update

a. Project Update

- Construction of the new Daintree River ferry is progressing well and remains on schedule for delivery at the end of 2027.
- Updates on the build progress can be followed on Birdon's website: [Daintree River Ferry | Design, Build and Operate | Birdon](#)
- Birdon has appointed a new local manager, who recently commenced in the role.
- A member asked whether a marine engineer was involved in the ferry project. It was confirmed that a marine engineer has been working with Council for approximately two to two-and-a-half years and provided advice during the early planning stages, including on the ferry's requirements. Their services will continue until the project is completed.
- A member asked whether the ticket booths are in their final location and voiced concerns that some of the local's boats won't fit between them. Nicola advised the ticket booths are in their final location. Question about road width at the ticket booths taken on notice.

4. Daintree Ferry Landside Infrastructure Project

a. Completed last swing

- Northern excavation, Culvert 3A and headwall placement is completed.
- Reseal on the southern side was completed on 16 September.
- The ticket booth digital sign has been relocated and is operational.
- South side electrical conduits and road crossings have been completed.
- Switchboard completed, awaiting Ergon advice before activation.

b. Underway and planned for this current swing

- Northern rock and geogrid placement has been completed with approx. 17,000 tonnes of rock imported.
- Import and place northern subbase gravel commenced and will continue for the next week.
- Undertake in-situ stabilisation on 1–2 October – weather permitting.
- Finish the northern carpark and pedestrian pathways to tour operator bus parking spaces.
- Commence kerb works, scheduled from 29 September.
- Commence northern footpath excavation and preparation.
- Remove rubber kerbs and commence installing all new rubber kerbing.
- Commence northern electrical trenching.

c. Revegetation and Landscaping:

- Turf laying commences on the southern side on 16 October – around 4 days of works.
- DSC Public Spaces are then commencing the installation of ground covers, shrubs and trees at the end of October and will take approximately 1 month to complete – weather permitting.

d. Member questions and feedback:

- A member asked whether construction was running behind schedule due to the rain. It was confirmed that the project is currently approximately three days behind. Durack was commended for keeping the works progressing, with the minor delay considered a positive outcome given the significant rainfall experienced.
- It was noted that the northern side will be busy this week while pathways and bus parking areas are constructed. A member raised concerns about pedestrians entering the construction area and suggested that crocodile tour passengers be dropped off on the southern side while works are underway. Rob advised that he would monitor the situation and that tour bus operators would be contacted with further information.
- A member suggested that additional signage may be required near the Forest Creek Road turn-off, noting that some tourist vehicles approach the corner at speed. Rob advised that the new lanes and signage are expected to address the issue but will review the location again.
- A member noted growing concern and possible misunderstanding about the operation of the ferry priority lane. It was suggested that this may have been

heightened by roadworks traffic management, increased demand during the school holidays and recent staffing changes under the new Birdon contract. The member recommended open discussion through the Community Reference Group to clarify the arrangements, address concerns and identify practical solutions before tensions escalate.

- Birdon advised that it has been undertaking risk assessments and reviewing operational and logistical arrangements. Some changes will be introduced to improve safety and efficiency, with the community to be advised before they are implemented.
- It was also acknowledged that some ferry staff, who are members of the local community, have been treated disrespectfully by members of the public. While staff are expected to maintain professional standards, disrespectful or abusive behaviour towards them is unacceptable.

5. DRFA Road Network Update

1. Road Updates

- Alexandra Range
 - Geotechnical investigations are planned at two Alexandra Range landslip sites from 19–21 October 2026, involving three boreholes to assess ground conditions below the surface. Crews will be on site for approximately 10 hours daily. Traffic management will be in place during this period, and a notice will be sent next week to the community.
 - A member reported a missing section of Armco barrier and will provide the location and photos, if safe to do so.
- Noah Land Slip
 - Landslip works cannot resume until the shared piling equipment has finished its work on the Noah Creek Bridge project and is available to relocate. Possibly in the third week of October.
 - Overall completion remains targeted for June 2027.
- Spurwood Road
 - Works progressing well and the project should be completed by 7 October 2026 – weather permitting.
- Degarra Roads, Zig Zag Road, China Camp Road, Ten Mile Road
 - Works progressing well, estimated completion is March 2027.
 - Work on ZigZag, Ten Mile, China Camp, Idress, Evergreen and Banilla will be commencing once QRA approvals have been granted – gravel and grading and minor drainage work. Couple of slips on Zig Zag including concrete pavement.

6. Noah Creek Bridge & Causeway

- a. Project Update
 - Heavy equipment transport was completed on Sunday 27 September, and the crane has been assembled on site.

- Equipment movements proceeded without hard road closures, with some traffic impacts.
- Heavy rain on Thursday 24 September caused Noah Creek to flow over the bypass, requiring a temporary safety closure.
- Rock material above the pipes in the piling pad was temporarily removed to help water levels fall. The piling pad has since been rebuilt.
- Installation of pile liners was scheduled to begin on Wednesday 30 September, subject to weather, and is expected to take six to eight days.
- The bridge remains targeted to open to vehicles in December 2026, with full project completion, including bypass removal and site restoration, expected by June 2027.

7. Other DRFA Projects

- a. Lees Bridge
 - Lees Bridge is complete.
- b. Taylor's Bridge
 - Due for completion in March 2027

8. Disaster Management & Recovery Update

- a. Get Ready Week
 - It is Get Ready Week and time to start preparing for the storm and storm and cyclone season.
 - Members are encouraged to share this reminder with their communities and consider anyone who may need help preparing.
 - Links to the Get Ready resources will be shared next week in the newsletter update following this meeting.
- b. Environmental & Clean-Up Works
 - River and flood debris cleanups across the shire are scheduled for the following days:
 - 7th October – Magazine Island
 - 8th October – Daintree River
 - 9th October – Bloomfield River
 - 10th/11th October – Degarra Land based cleanup
 - Vegetation debris in Harlow's swimming area carpark scheduled for removal on the 7th October.
- c. Cow Bay (Diwan) Community Recovery and Resilience Facility
 - Council approved the retrofit of the former Cow Bay Health Clinic, Diwan, into a multipurpose Community Recovery and Resilience Facility.
 - The facility will be repurposed into a compact community resilience hub providing residents with a dedicated indoor space for disaster preparedness, recovery operations and year-round community activities.

- Retrofit planning is progressing, including removal of redundant medical infrastructure and required building upgrades.
- Additional resilience works have been identified, with QRA eligibility confirmation to be sought before proceeding.

d. Degarra Meeting Hub

- Community consultation was held in Ayton with 14 people in attendance. The Banabilla Road site and concept design were presented.
- Considering community feedback, Council has progressed to RFQ to engage a contractor to design and construct the facility.
- Next steps: Assess quotes, confirm scope and budget, appoint a contractor and commence construction.

9. Other Business

a. Douglas 150

- Planning for Douglas 150 is underway, with community meetings identifying potential activities and people or organisations to lead them. At least one resident north of the Daintree River has expressed interest in participating.
- What are this group's views on how communities north of the river could be involved, including local stories, activities or events, and residents or organisations we could approach.

10. Next Meeting

Thursday 29 October 2026 at 10:30am (tentative).