

5.2. SUPPORT FOR THE PORT DOUGLAS GRAND FONDO FESTIVAL

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DEPARTMENT	People and Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

The Council resolves to:

- 1. Provide a letter of support to Connect Sport Australia to accompany their funding application for the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival to regional and state tourism bodies.**
- 2. Delegates authority under section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise any minor amendments in relation to the letter of support for the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Connect Sport Australia is a Far North Queensland-based company that runs cycling tours in Australia and Japan. They're also the leading charity cycling event company in Australia, managing charity cycling tours for various charities since 2011.

Connect Sport Australia are proposing a landmark event for the Douglas Shire entitled the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival, with proposed dates of the inaugural event to be 10 – 12 September 2021. These dates will capitalise on a seasonal lull that traditionally occurs in the first two weeks of September before school holidays.

Their vision is to create an iconic, annual event that will become synonymous with Port Douglas, helping to establish the Douglas Shire as the ultimate Australian destination for people looking to combine event participation with an adventure holiday.

The festival format of the Port Douglas Grand Fondo encourages multiple entries into events throughout the weekend and encompasses a viewing experience at all events for spectators and locals. From smaller events through to larger-scale distance rides, the festival takes a 'something for everyone' approach, ensuring a range of events on offer for the wider cycling community to take part in.

Hosting the festival over a weekend encourages overnight visitation in the region, offering a great opportunity to promote other tourism, hospitality and retailers within the Shire as well as natural attractions like the Great Barrier Reef, Wet Tropics Rainforest and the beautiful cycling and walking trails in the region.

Based on economic impact data from a similar event in Victoria, it's estimated that in its first year the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival will deliver a cash injection of over \$3.8M to the Douglas Shire economy, with a 5% growth rate each year thereafter. As the event grows and participation builds there is potential for the event to deliver over \$10M within four years.

Events are a catalyst to stimulate our economy, generating economic development opportunities and activation of our green spaces and public places.

Council's support for the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival would recognise the vital role events in attracting new, high-yield special-interest markets and generating business in both shoulder and low seasons for the entire community. These factors are significant to ensure the long-term sustainability of the region's most significant industry and employer, which has been so detrimentally affected during this COVID era.

Success of the Festival is reliant on a half-day rolling road closure for sections of the Captain Cook Highway on 12 September 2021 between Palm Cove and Wangetti (5:30-11:30am) and Wangetti and Port Douglas (6am – 1:30pm).

A rolling road opening means that as the last competitor comes through the road will be reopened behind the rider with a road traffic safety escort. The road will be reopened to traffic including access to some side roads and sections of the Captain Cook Highway as soon as it is available. The complete end to end opening will be as listed in the road closure time frames. Rolling road closures protect public safety as well as minimising disruption at the event.

It's important to note that Emergency Services will have uninterrupted access to the Captain Cook Highway in the event of an emergency.

BACKGROUND

Connect Sport Australia is a Far North Queensland-based company that runs cycling tours in Australia and Japan. They're also the leading charity cycling event company in Australia, managing charity cycling tours for various charities since 2011.

- Ronald McDonald House
- MS Australia
- Variety, the Children's Charity
- Cancer Council SA (Official event of the Tour Down Under UCI World Tour Event)

With extensive experience in running major mass participation events, Connect Sport are committed to delivering a 'World's Best Practice' cycling event experience for all involved, with safety as an absolute priority.

Connect Sport are proposing a landmark event for the Douglas Shire entitled the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival. Their vision is to create an iconic event that will become synonymous with Port Douglas, helping to establish the Douglas Shire as the ultimate Australian destination for people looking to combine event participation with an adventure holiday.

COMMENT

The Festival will be an action-packed weekend of events and activities to attract people from around Australia and overseas (once international travel recommences) to showcase the entire region.

Following extensive consultation with the tourism industry of the Douglas Shire, the proposed dates of 10 – 12 September 2021 will capitalise on a seasonal lull that traditionally occurs in the first two weeks of September before school holidays. This period has been identified by Tourism Port Douglas Daintree as an ideal time for events in Douglas to stimulate visitation while the weather is mild, and businesses have maximum staff in place.

The proposed festival includes the following event format:

- **Friday, 10 September 2021**
 - 4pm – 7pm - Sponsor Expo and event registration at Port Douglas Sports Complex
- **Saturday, 11 September 2021**
 - 9am – 6pm - Sponsor Expo and event registration at Port Douglas Sports Complex
 - 2pm – 4pm - Criterium cycling race around a closed 2.2km street circuit in front of the Crystalbrook Superyacht Marina.
 - Graded races for cyclists
 - 4pm – 6pm – Criterium circuit open to families
 - Local and visiting families with young kids will be able to ride on the same course as the races.
 - 6pm – Official launch at Hemingway’s Brewery
 - Mayor invited to officially open the event.
 - Sponsors, officials, participants, visitors & locals invited.
 - 7pm – 9pm – 250mtr Cycling Sprint Race on Wharf Street
 - 2 cyclists at a time will race along the 250mtr straight road before crossing the finish line in front of Hemingway’s Brewery.
 - Races will continue until we reach the finals to find our fastest man and woman. Prize money will be on offer to entice as many people as possible to enter.
 - Held under lights to create a fantastic spectator experience.
 - Local bands invited to play.
 - MC to help inject excitement into the racing.
 - Promoted to the community and visitors as a fantastic spectacle to entice a large crowd of spectators.
- **Sunday, 12 September, 2021 (main event day)**
 - Road cycling event offering three different distance options. These are not races, but participation events open to anyone who likes riding their bike:
 - 100km (Port Douglas to Palm Cove via Great Barrier Reef Drive and return back to Port Douglas)
 - Will be the most popular choice among the cycling community
 - Participants need to be fit but not out of reach for many who love riding their bikes
 - 162km (Port Douglas to Palm Cove, up Quaid Road [Southedge – Wangetti Road], across to the Mulligan Highway, through Mt Molloy and Julatten before returning back to Port Douglas)
 - Will appeal to the hard-core cyclists who love a challenge
 - 46km (Palm Cove to Port Douglas)
 - This event will attract many people who would enjoy riding on Great Barrier Reef Drive but are too scared given the traffic
 - A great goal for those new to cycling or those who don’t have time to do a lot of riding
 - Art Exhibition located near the Port Douglas Markets

Connect Sport have identified a strategy for growth within the event program to further benefit the community.

Some of the events currently being considered for future years, include:

- Gravel Fondo – Saturday morning
 - Start in Wangetti and finish on Four Mile Beach
 - Using the new Wangetti Trail
 - Launch 2022
- Mini Gravel Fondo – Saturday morning
 - Start in Palm Cove and finish in Wangetti
 - Using the new Wangetti Trail
 - Launch 2023
- Criterium Professional Race
 - Professional race to attract more spectators on the Saturday afternoon
 - Launch 2023
- Gravel Fondo 2nd Stage – Sunday morning
 - Start and finish in Cape Tribulation
 - Attract the mountain bike community to spend more time in the region
 - Fill accommodation venues in the Daintree
 - Launch 2024

Economic Impact & Community Benefit

Based on economic impact data from the 2016 Amy's Great Ocean Road Gran Fondo in Victoria, it's estimated that in its first year, the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival will deliver a cash injection of over \$3.8M to the Douglas Shire economy, with a 5% growth rate each year thereafter.

As the event grows and participation builds there is potential for the event to deliver over \$10M within four years. Connect Sport Australia is a local events business and will aim to spend the majority of operational costs locally, further delivering positive results for the local economy.

The below figures have been modelled off the 2016 Amy's Great Ocean Road Gran Fondo in Victoria and industry experts suggest that Port Douglas offers a much more appealing proposition to participants and their friends and family. The Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival is expected to attract a longer stay and higher spend per person than similar event in other parts of regional Australia because of its natural appeal and extensive tourism product and experience offering.

Based on this belief, Connect Sport Australia believe the below projections are conservative:

Table 1.

Port Douglas Gran Fondo	2021 Total Budget \$	2022 Total Budget \$	2023 Total Budget \$	2024 Total Budget \$
Economic Impact (per person) 5% increase each year	849	891	936	983
Economic Impact (Total)	3,183,750	6,017,288	7,956,191	9,828,236
Local Economic Impact Connect Sport	669,900	751,600	858,900	940,500
Total Economic Impact	3,853,650	6,768,888	8,815,091	10,768,736

Table 2.

Event Options	2021	2022	2023	2024
162K Riders	500	800	1,000	1,200
100K Riders	700	1,200	1,400	1,600
46K Riders	300	500	600	700
Gravel Fondo	0	200	400	500
Total	1,500	2,700	3,400	4,000
Total Visitors (1.5 people travel with participant)	3,750	6,750	8,500	10,000

Table 3.

Average entry Fee	2021 \$	2022 \$	2023 \$	2024 \$
162k Riders	275.00	275.00	275.00	285.00
100k Riders	225.00	225.00	225.00	235.00
46k Riders	125.00	125.00	125.00	130.00
Gravel Fondo	-	85.00	85.00	90.00

Connect Sport Australia hope to deliver the event in partnership with the Douglas Shire community and instill a sense of pride in hosting this world-class event, while working with Council to deliver the desired outcomes.

The event is based in Port Douglas; therefore, the majority of participants and their family and friends will stay in Port Douglas, however event marketing will also focus on encouraging people to extend their stay and explore the region.

Cyclists are traditionally higher net worth individuals who travel to events with family and friends and enjoy exploring the unique tourism offerings available within the event destination. They are a more conscious traveller, valuing sustainable experiences and considering the wider social and economic impact of their travels, aligning perfectly with the Douglas Shire's ideal target markets.

Marketing efforts will target event participants and their friends and family prior to the event, promoting the region and the product and experiences available through high-quality videos and content. Via a fortnightly eNewsletter, Connect Sport Australia also have the ability to market directly to a captured audience of participants and their family and friends; offering another great opportunity to promote other tourism, hospitality and retailers within the Shire.

Example itineraries will be promoted to participants:

- Family and friends itineraries for during the event – Eg; Enjoy breakfast at one of the many cafes in Port Douglas, visit the Port Douglas Markets, explore the Arts Exhibition, explore the Wildlife Habitat etc.
- Pre and post event day itineraries – Eg; Visit Mossman Gorge, explore the Daintree River on a crocodile spotting tour, jump on Quicksilver and visit the Great Barrier Reef, interact with Australian wildlife at Hartley's Crocodile Adventure, spend a few nights in Cape Tribulation etc.

- Cycling on safe-riding routes in the Douglas Shire to encourage more cycling in the community, improvement of cycling infrastructure and an increase in the region's offering to potential visitors.

Substantial marketing budget will also be allocated to communication with residents about the event, the benefits for the community and the impacts on traffic flow.

Connect Sport Australia have committed to providing regular updates about participant numbers, festival activities, opportunities for residents to get involved and up to date traffic flow updates.

Road Closures

Success of the Festival is reliant on a half-day rolling road closure for sections of the Captain Cook Highway between Palm Cove and Wangetti (5:30-11:30am) and Wangetti and Port Douglas (6am – 1:30pm).

A rolling road opening means that as the last competitor comes through the road will be reopened behind the rider with a road traffic safety escort.

The road will be reopened to traffic including access to some side roads and sections of the Captain Cook Highway as soon as it is available. The complete end to end opening will be as listed in the road closure time frames.

Rolling road closures protect public safety as well as minimising disruption at the event.

Summary of road closures / rolling road closures:

- Saturday 11 September, 2021 – Criterium course will allow access to all businesses and residents
- Sunday, 12 September, 2021 – Port Douglas
 - Wharf Street – Warner Street to Port Douglas Sports Complex
 - 12.00am – 7.00am
 - Wharf Street – Grant Street to Port Douglas Sports Complex
 - 12.00am – 9.00am
 - Wharf Street – Port Douglas Sports Complex to Davidson Street
 - 6.00am – 7.00am
 - Port Douglas Road (Outbound)
 - 6.00am – 7.00am
 - Captain Cook Highway
 - Palm Cove to Wangetti - 5.30am to 11.30am
 - Wangetti to Port Douglas (Teamsters Park) - 6am to 1.30pm
 - Emergency vehicles will still have access
 - Southedge – Wangetti Road – Great Barrier Reef Drive to Mulligan Highway
 - 7.00am – 2.30pm
 - All other roads will remain open, some with traffic control and traffic cones to separate the cyclists from traffic.

It's important to note that Emergency Services will have uninterrupted access to the Captain Cook Highway in the event of an emergency.

Cairns Hinterland Health Services via the Mossman Hospital has been consulted about the event and don't foresee any issues, especially given that emergency vehicles will still have access to the Captain Cook Highway for the duration of the event.

Travel to Port Douglas for Market Stallholders based in Cairns will be uninterrupted as most commence travel before the road closure of the Captain Cook Highway commences and roads will be reopened at the conclusion of the Markets.

Port Douglas based transport companies have confirmed that visitors departing Port Douglas on early morning flights will have generally commenced travel before the road closure of the Captain Cook Highway commences. Those arriving on mid-morning flights will have minimal disruption of their journey, with a recommended short wait in Cairns upon arrival before access to the road is permitted.

Consultation with Douglas Shire business community

Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) and Tourism Port Douglas Daintree (TPDD) have both been consulted about the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival and are very excited about the potential of seeing another major event come to the region.

Connect Sport Australia has met with numerous Tourism, Hospitality and Retail operators in the Douglas Shire to discuss the event and vision.

Seven business owners / leaders have provided letters of support and an additional 41 (forty-one) have signed a support register to encourage Council, TPDD, TTNQ and TEQ to support this event at a time when the industry so desperately needs it. Consistent visitation and demand will allow tourism businesses to plan better, contributing to a more stable environment for the workforce.

Risk Management

- A comprehensive Risk Management Plan will be delivered in consultation with Queensland Police, Queensland Ambulance, Mossman Hospital, Cairns Base Hospital, professional event medical support company and Douglas Shire Council.
- Queensland Police have been consulted and have no objection to the event plan and have provide a cost estimate for the resources required to safely deliver the event from their prospective.
- Queensland Ambulance have been consulted and have provided an estimate on resources required and costs to safely manage their requirements at the event.
- Cairns Hinterland Health Services via the Mossman Hospital has been consulted about the event and doesn't foresee any issues, especially given that emergency vehicles will still have access to the Captain Cook Highway for the duration of the event.
- Professional event medical support company has been approached and provided cost estimate for support required.
- COVID-19 Safety Plan will be delivered as part of the Risk Management Plan.
- Connect Sport Australia can provide a \$20M Public Liability Insurance with interested parties listed.

Events allow us to create a sense of place and celebrate what is unique to the Douglas Shire, helping us understand our history, culture and their significance where everybody can participate.

Events are a way to connect the community and develop our identity helping us to create resilience to endure challenging times and respect the past.

Events are a catalyst to stimulate our economy, generating economic development opportunities and activation of our green spaces and public places.

Events give people a reason to visit and an opportunity for us to introduce the natural and cultural significance of Port Douglas Daintree to new and repeat visitors.

Attracting and growing iconic events that are distinct to the region will increase overnight visitor expenditure to the Douglas Shire that will generate economic, community, cultural and environmental outcomes.

Council's support for the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival would recognise the vital role events play from encouraging visitors to "book now", to attracting new, high-yield special-interest markets and generating business in both shoulder and low seasons for the entire community.

These factors are significant to ensure the long-term sustainability of the region's most significant industry and employer, which has been so detrimentally affected during this COVID era.

Long-term, iconic events will continue to build the brand of Port Douglas Daintree and influence new investment and potential new residents to the region. Creating an iconic event that leverages the State's investment in the Wangetti Trail, cements Douglas Shire's ownership of the trail and promotes Port Douglas as the launchpad to experiences within it.

The dates for the event have been strategically chosen to capitalise on a seasonal lull that traditionally occurs in the first two weeks of September before school holidays.

Launching the event in 2021, offers a further opportunity with Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria school holidays all commencing at the same time.

PROPOSAL

That Council:

- Provides a letter of support to Connect Sport Australia to accompany their funding application for the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival to regional and state tourism bodies.
- Delegates authority under section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise any minor amendments in relation to the letter of support for the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Nil

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A comprehensive Risk Management Plan will be delivered in consultation with Queensland Police, Queensland Ambulance, Mossman Hospital, Cairns Base Hospital, professional event medical support company and Douglas Shire Council.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: It's estimated that in its first year, the Port Douglas Grand Fondo Festival will attract up to 1,500 people and deliver a cash injection of over \$3.8M to the Douglas Shire economy, with a 5% growth rate each year thereafter. As the event grows and participation builds there is potential for the event to deliver over \$10M within four years.

Environmental: Nil

Social: The Port Douglas Grand Fondo encourages cycling on safe-riding routes in the Douglas Shire, contributing to the health and well being of the community.

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CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Initiatives:

Theme 1 - Celebrating Our Communities

Douglas Shire Council embraces the diversity of our communities and values the contribution that all people make to the Shire. We recognise that it is a core strength of the region.

We acknowledge our past so that it may guide us in the future. We recognise the wrongs done to our Indigenous community and we actively seek to reconcile so that we may all benefit from and enjoy our Shire. We acknowledge early European settlers who forged an agricultural base for our economy and we welcome all new arrivals as part of our broader community.

Goal 4 - We will promote arts and cultural programs and events that bring vibrancy to the community and compliment the tourist experience.

Theme 2 - Fostering Sustainable Economic Growth

A robust economy is at the heart of a thriving community and enables investment in environmental protection. While our remoteness is a key attribute, it also presents challenges for attracting new business and investment. We must also meet the challenges of fierce competition in the tourism sector. Council will partner with industry to build, diversify and promote the Douglas economy. Council will design and deliver infrastructure, strategies and services that support the local economy and businesses.

Goal 2 - We will work with partners to promote the Shire as the World's leading sustainable tropical destination and encourage business investment.

Goal 3 - We will develop strategies that seek to diversify the Shire's economic base.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

Advocate	Council makes representation on behalf of the community on important issues, funding opportunities, projects and programs. Council will use its influence to seek the best outcomes for the community.
Information Provider	Council provides the community with important information on services, events, policies, rules, strategies, and any other relevant data that helps the community to stay informed. In performing this role, Council seeks to be open and transparent.

CONSULTATION

Internal: Council's Community and Economic Development Officers representing portfolios of Events, Sports and Recreation, Tourism and Economic Development, and Community Development have been working with Connect Sport Australia on this landmark event.

External: Connect Sport Australia has conducted extensive consultation as described in the body of this report with the tourism industry and business representatives to determine optimal route, time and economic impact of this event.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In depth community engagement and consultation will be conducted by Connect Sport Australia in the lead-up to this event to ensure broad support continues and the economic benefits are maximised across the shire.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil