

6.7. DAINTREE FERRY INFRASTRUCTURE QUARTERLY REPORT ENDING JUNE 2023

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives the Daintree Ferry Infrastructure Project quarterly report for the period April to June 2023.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consultant's outputs have been received during the reporting period allowing for project progression.

Civil engineering concepts have allowed for the overall design approach to be finalised. While geotechnical investigations have not indicated any unexpected issues. The environmental investigations report is currently being assessed.

A review of the delivery timetable for the vessel replacement and landside infrastructure upgrades was undertaken in the reporting period resulting an expected completion in 2027 for both project components.

BACKGROUND

At a Special Council Meeting held Tuesday 9 August 2022, it was resolved that a quarterly report would be made available to the Councillors at Ordinary Council Meetings concerning all matters associated with the Daintree Ferry Project, including financials.

This project is to address the following objectives as discussed by Councillors at Council Workshops on 24 May 2022 and 12 July 2022:

- Priority lane improvements, additional lane northside and realignment of lanes on the southside
- Improved tourist experience
- Reduced queuing times

COMMENTS

The project is in the Planning Phase, whereby a comprehensive plan on how to successfully deliver the project is being generated.

The project has the following parts:

- Vessel replacement
- Landside infrastructure upgrades

The vessel replacement and landside infrastructure upgrades will need to be coordinated together, as a decision or delay in one area, may require changes to the other, i.e., both project aspects need to run in parallel. The project is expected to take several years to complete.

The existing vessel must be taken from the water and transported to a Cairns slipway for its next major Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) inspection prior to 11 March 2028, thus providing a strict deadline for a replacement ferry vessel to be operational by.

Landside infrastructure augmentation (in relation to the roads/lanes), will look to improve traffic congestion and queuing issues, by undertaking alterations to the existing road infrastructure configurations.

Progress for this quarter includes:

GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTANCY

- Investigations and geotechnical engineering recommendations report received.
- No major constraints were identified to the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY

- Draft environmental issues and investigations report received.
- Undergoing review by Douglas Shire Council

CIVIL ENGINEERING CONSULTANCY

- North and south bank landside concepts received and reviewed

COMMUNICATION

- Councillor workshop on 30 May 2023 held to discuss landside concept options

PROGRAM TIMELINE

- A review of the delivery timetable for the vessel replacement and landside infrastructure upgrades was undertaken in the reporting period with the following changes:
- ***Ownership and Operational Model***
New milestone
Commence July 2023
Expected completion date: September 2023
Status: Yet to commence
- ***Landside Infrastructure***
Commenced September 2022
Previous expected completion date: November 2024
Revised expected completion date: April 2027
Status: Commenced – on track with revised timeline.
- ***Replacement Vessel***
Revised commencement date: October 2023
Previous expected completion date: August 2025
Revised expected completion date: July 2027
Status: Yet to commence

The revised timelines will have operational impacts such as service, maintenance, compliance and renewal implications for the existing vessel.

PROPOSAL

That Council receives the Daintree Ferry Infrastructure Project quarterly report for the period April to June 2023.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Budget allocation for the 2022-2023 financial year has been allocated for landside infrastructure and commencement of geotechnical investigations, environmental, cultural heritage studies and civil designs (both landside and ferry landing infrastructure).

Total project budget – (eg: life to date, 2020-2021 FY through to 2022-2023 FY) is \$764,000

Project expenditure life to date consists of:

- FY 2020/21 \$67,688
- FY 2021/22 \$77,675
- FY to date 2022-2023 \$131,949
- **Total to date** **\$277,312**

Funding requirements for future years will be required for landside infrastructure upgrades and replacement vessel. These are expected to be significant. The project manager assigned to this project has relocated to another department. Recruitment is underway to replace this resource.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The project is highly complex in nature and a comprehensive risk register is to be generated. The following major risks have been identified and it is expected will be further expanded on.

Table 1.

Project Risks	Risk Category	Sub Category
	Technical	Objectives Scope definition Estimate, assumptions & constraints Technical processes Technology Technical interface Performance Testing
	Management	Project governance Project management Resourcing Communication Interdependencies Schedule
	Organisational	Governance Business processes Strategic management Support Operations management

	Commercial	Contract terms and conditions Financing Procurement Vendor/Suppliers Legal
	External	Legislative Regulatory Political Community Environmental/Weather Industrial relations

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The success of the project is critical to the operation and sustainability of businesses on the northern side of the Daintree River.

Environmental: The Daintree World Heritage area is of outstanding scientific importance and natural beauty. It was included on the world heritage list in 1988.

Social: The community north of the Daintree River and trade/service workers are reliant on the ferry service daily.

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 2 - We will deliver programs and services that protect and enhance the liveability of our beautiful Shire.

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 1 - *We will build appropriate infrastructure and deliver services that connect and support businesses.*

Theme 3 - Leading Environmental Stewardship

Our visitors and residents deeply value the unparalleled environment in which we live. We recognise our responsibility in protecting and preserving our natural world for generations to come. We understand the strong link between the environment and the economy: they are interdependent.

Douglas Shire will be at the forefront of environmental protection by developing strategies, setting policies, and working with all stakeholders to become the envy of and to inspire locations across Australia and the World.

Goal 1 - *We will protect our sensitive environment and plan for the impact of climate change.*

Theme 4 - Inclusive Engagement, Planning and Partnerships

In delivering for our communities, economy and environment, Douglas Shire will ensure open and transparent engagement and communication. We will develop robust strategic plans and we will partner with our community and key stakeholders.

Goal 1 - *We will implement transparent decision making through inclusive community engagement and communication.*

Theme 5 - Robust Governance and Efficient Service Delivery

Strong governance and financial management are the foundations of the way in which Council will conduct its business and implement the initiatives of the Corporate Plan.

Goal 2 - *We will put the customer at the centre of our service delivery and process improvement as we deliver efficient and appropriate services based on community expectations.*

Goal 3 - *We will make sound financial decisions by ensuring robust strategic planning, financial management and reporting.*

Operational Plan 2022-2023 Actions:

Infrastructure Improvements - *Determine options for an enhanced service and commence design if necessary.*

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:

Builder/Owner Council makes a significant investment every year in the infrastructure that underpins the Shire through its capital works program. Council will manage its assets with appropriate frameworks and deliver its projects through robust project management.

CONSULTATION

Internal: Internal consultation has been undertaken at various internal workshops with Council staff, management team and Councillors.

External: This report provides the public with updates on the project progress

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Future community engagement will be determined via a communications plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil