

6.8. DAINTREE FERRY LANDSIDE INFRASTRUCTURE

REPORT AUTHOR	Project Manager
MANAGER	Acting Manager Project Office
DEPARTMENT	Project Management Office

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Resolves to award Contract 5014/10 – Daintree Ferry Landside Infrastructure to Durack Civil Pty Ltd for \$8,843,859.54 plus GST and a further \$879,772.14 plus GST in provisional sum items. Budget will be allocated over the 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 financial years.**
2. **Delegates authority under Section 257(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, finalise and execute any and all matters in relation to this contract.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Daintree ferry is located approximately 50 kilometres north of Port Douglas and provides a critical transport asset connecting the southern part of our Shire to the northern part. It provides a critical transport link for approximately 950 residents and hundreds of thousands of annual visitors per annum on whom the businesses north of the river depend.

The tourism season sees a large influx of tourist vehicles to the area. During peak periods, the population swells significantly due to tourism. Over 100 small businesses operate in the region, including 43 active tourism operators, most of which rely on uninterrupted access for guests, deliveries, and staff. In peak times, traffic can extend towards the Mossman Daintree Road (Highway) some two kilometres with wait times up to two hours.

The Daintree River ferry upgrade and associated landside civil works will provide quicker access for locals and tourists across the Daintree River and reduce queueing congestion and potential blockages during peak tourism season.

At a Special Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 9 August 2022, Council resolved to replace the existing Daintree River ferry with a single ferry capable of increased loading capacity and construct associated landside infrastructure upgrades on both riverbanks.

BACKGROUND

The new ferry will have the capacity to transport 30% more vehicles every crossing and also cross more frequently due to the design of dual loading and unloading ferry ramps and onshore concrete ramps. This design initiative requires the landside infrastructure be designed to enable the dual loading and unloading of vehicles through wider landside concrete entry ramps.

The landside infrastructure design will include priority lanes, dual waiting and exit lanes that will reduce queue lengths and wait times for locals.

Council has resolved to seek tenders for the design and construction of the landside infrastructure works aligning with the introduction of a new larger capacity ferry. The request for tender (RFT) closed on 22 February 2025, with three offers received.

COMMENTS

An initial compliance check was conducted on the received submissions to determine non-conforming and any alternative offers from the requirements of the RFT. This also included compliance with the contractual requirements and provision of requested information.

Two of the three submissions received were accepted by the evaluation panel for assessment on the basis that all terms, conditions and mandatory requirements of the RFT had been substantially met. The third submission was for project management services only.

During the evaluation process, submissions were assessed against the evaluation criteria detailed in the RFT documentation.

Table 1 – Evaluation Panel Members

Position	Department
Project Manager	Public Spaces
Manager	Project Management Office
Manager	Infrastructure Services
Team Leader	Asset Management

Specific criteria were weighted according to their importance in delivering the project successfully and providing the best overall value for money solution in accordance with Council's procurement policies.

The weighting attributed to each criterion was:

Table 2 – Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Weighting %
Price	35
Business Profile	20
Technical Capacity	10
Program of Works	15
Works Procedures & Methodology	20

Each tenderer's score and rankings are shown in Table 3. The one non-compliant tenderer was not scored.

Table 3 – Tenderers Ranking and Scoring

Tenderer	Price (35%)	Business Profile (20%)	Technical Capacity (10%)	Program of Works (15%)	Works Procedure & Methodology (20%)	Overall Score	Ranking
Durack Civil Pty Ltd	2.2	1.5	0.8	1.0	1.4	6.9	1
No. 2	1.3	1.6	0.7	0.9	1.7	6.2	2

Both tenderers provided a quality submission, showing experience and capability. However, Durack Civil Pty Ltd provided efficiencies, having internal engineering support, and their price was well below the second tender offer. Council Officers worked with the contractor to remove design and methodology uncertainty, hence removing almost \$900,000 from the lump sum price, with provisional costs only to be realised as required.

After evaluation of the offer provided by Durack Civil Pty Ltd including reference check, Council Officers are confident that they can execute the project well.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed that Council adopts to accept the evaluation panels award recommendations.

1. Resolves to award Contract 5014/10 – Daintree Ferry Landside Infrastructure to Durack Civil Pty Ltd for \$8,843,859.54 contract sum and a further \$879,772.14 in provisional sum items. Budget will be allocated over the 2024/25, 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 financial years.
2. Delegates authority under Section 257(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, finalise and execute any and all matters in relation to this contract.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Council budget commitment requirements for this project are:

Table 4 – Budget Commitment Requirements

Financial Year	Phase	Amount (exc GST)
24/25 (already committed)	Design	\$385,000
25/26	Planning/North and South civils	\$2,000,000
26/27	North and South civils	\$3,766,750
27/28	Ferry ramps, AMSA winch points dredge bund, provisional sums	\$3,571,881

This project is required to be completed over the above listed financial years, in line with the provision of the new ferry in November 2027. Council Officers are actively seeking funding from State and Federal Governments to assist with costs.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The main risk item for this project is not having received all Government Agency permits. Timing of this project is critical to the arrival of the existing ferry being replaced in November/December 2027.

Council Officers have worked closely with the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA) since November 2021 and are confident that all permits will be available prior to civil works commencing on site in March/April 2026. SARA have been provided with:

- Concept Design drawings,
- Cultural Heritage Study,

- Daintree Ferry Operating Model,
- Ecological Assessment,
- Hydrographic Survey,
- Plant Survey, and
- Geotechnical Survey.

The recommended Contractor, Durack Civil Pty Ltd, bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to this project having previously worked in the Shire as well as completed large civil roadworks for Transport and Main Roads (TMR) in numerous locations around Queensland. They have successfully completed road projects for neighbouring Councils, Mareeba Shire Council, Cassowary Coast Regional Council and Tablelands Regional Council. Durack has a proven track record in delivering high-quality civil works projects.

Durack Civil Pty Ltd understand the critical aspect of the project (removing the existing concrete river ramps and installing prefabricated concrete ramps) in as short a timeframe as possible, due to the closure of the ferry service over this period. This closure will have a significant impact on the region for locals, businesses and visiting tourists. Council have requested a comprehensive methodology to ensure they understand the complexity and criticality of this scope item.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic:

The ferry landside infrastructure will boost the economy for the Daintree area. Over 100 small businesses operate in the region, including 43 active tourism operators, most of which rely on uninterrupted access for guests, deliveries, and staff. Improved infrastructure can only strengthen the current economic situation in line with a new ferry in November 2027.

Environmental:

The infrastructure being built has been discussed with all relevant Government Agencies, Marine Safety Queensland, Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Wet Tropics Management Authority and Councils consultants have undertaken extensive environmental studies and Cultural Heritage reports.

Social:

The landside infrastructure design will include priority lanes for locals, dual tourist waiting lanes as well as dual exit lanes that will reduce queue lengths and wait times for locals and quicken unloading times. In summary, the increased infrastructure will ensure locals do not lose critical travel time in long queues. This will also ensure a more pleasant experience for tourists entering the Daintree.

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 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.

Operational Plan 2024-2025 Actions:

Daintree Ferry – Replacement - Progress the design and approvals for a new Daintree Ferry.

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
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program. Council will manage its assets with appropriate frameworks and deliver its projects through robust project management.

CONSULTATION

Internal: Council Officers, Department Managers, Chief Engineer, Chief Executive Officer, Councillors.

External: Design consultants, State Assessment and Referral Agency, various QLD Government Agencies, Australian Maritime and Safety Authority, Marine Safety Queensland, Wet Tropics Management Authority, Environmental consultants as well as experience Cultural & Heritage Officers.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community has been engaged over many years in relation to both ferry service contracts, road infrastructure upgrades to reduce queue lengths and waiting times in peak tourism seasons.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil