

7.11. DAINTREE RIVER FERRY UPDATE MARCH 2026

REPORT AUTHOR	Contract Manager
MANAGER	Acting Manager Infrastructure Planning and Delivery
DEPARTMENT	Infrastructure
DATE	28 April 2026

RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation for the Ordinary meeting is that Council received and notes the Daintree Ferry financial information and project progress for March 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A monthly report is supplied to provide Councillors with financial details of the existing Daintree River Ferry for the month of March 2026.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS / RESOLUTIONS

At the Ordinary Meeting dated 10 December 2024, it was resolved that Councillors would be provided with monthly financial details relating to the Daintree River Ferry.

REPORT/BACKGROUND

The graphs attached represent the financial performance and operating statistics of the Daintree River Ferry Operations for the current financial year. It should be noted that this is not a comprehensive assessment of the financial performance as Council's corporate and administrative costs that support the ferry operation have not been included. These costs include but are not limited to ticket and ferry card sales administration, contract involving, accounts payable and receivable, budgeting and financial reporting, payroll and human resources, auditing, enquiry and complaints management and administrative costs and overheads.

On the night of 5 March 2026, the ferry sustained damage during the 29U weather event. As a result, it operated for only five days during the month, impacting both revenue and repair-related expenditure. A review of the incident is ongoing.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Reporting on the Daintree River Ferry does not have any material resource impact on the delivery of the service.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Monthly reporting keeps Council informed of the progress in relation to the Daintree River Ferry operation and allows for timely corrective action if required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

NIL

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

NIL

CORPORATE AND OPERATIONAL PLAN

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2025-2030 Initiatives:

Theme 1 - Liveability

To deliver community activities to promote safe, healthy, inclusive and socially engaged communities with an environmental conscious.

1.5 - Keep the community informed.

Theme 2 - Prosperity

Council plans, builds and maintains the infrastructure required to improve our lifestyle and promote economic growth, working actively to support local businesses.

2.1 - Deliver a new Daintree ferry.

Theme 3 - Service Delivery

We deliver Council services effectively and efficiently to meet community expectations, focusing on the wellbeing of both the community and our employees.

3.6 - Deliver Council services to meet community expectations.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 Actions:

2.1.1 - Engage a contractor to own and operate a new Daintree River ferry.

2.1.2 - Upgrade landside infrastructure to meet the requirements of the new ferry and reduce waiting times.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Not applicable

CONSULTATION

Operations and Maintenance Team

CONCLUSION

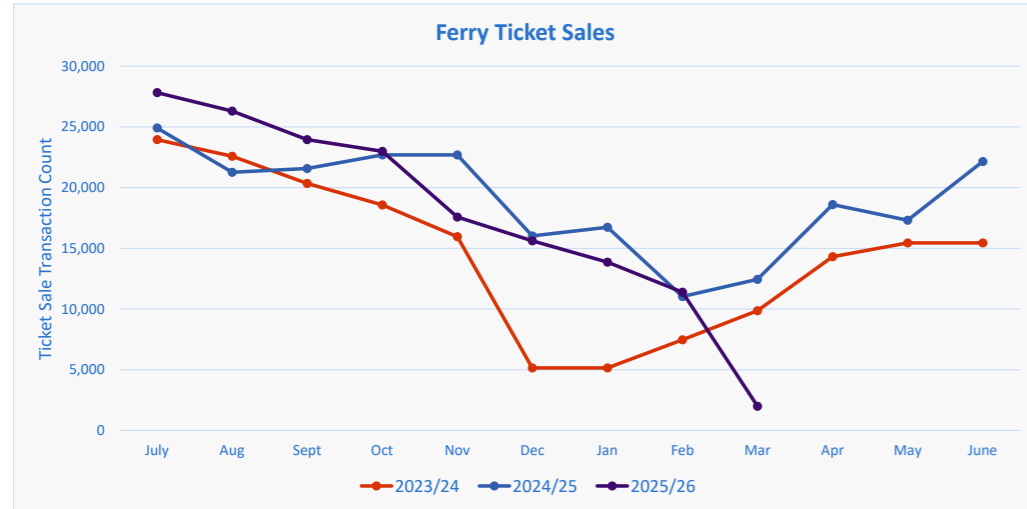
That Council receives and notes the Daintree River Ferry financial information and project progress for March 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Daintree Ferry Monthly Report - Operations Statistics March 2026 [7.11.1 - 2 pages]

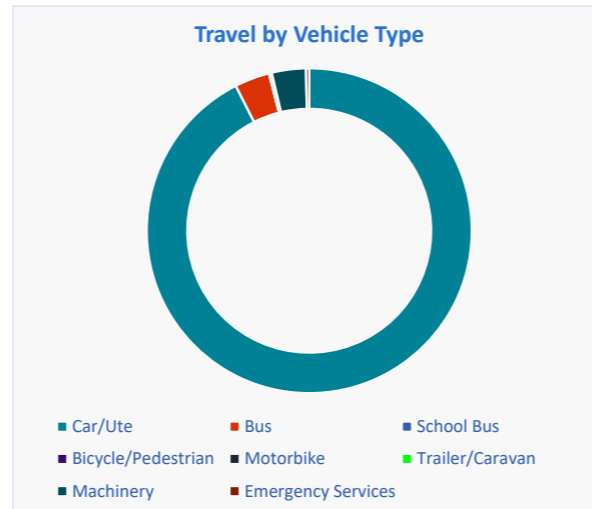
Daintree Ferry Monthly Report
March 2026

OPERATING STATISTICS



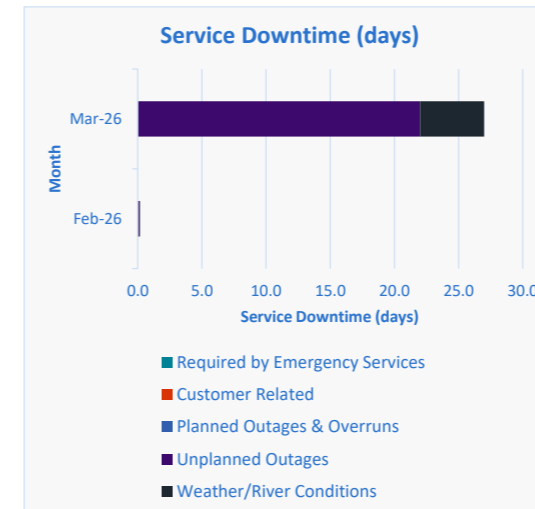
The line chart shows the number of ferry ticket sales purchased in a given month compared over the last three (3) financial years. It includes actual travel and pre-purchase tickets for future months. As expected, there are less ticket sales during the wet season, particularly between December and March. Ticket sale numbers were notably significantly lower in March 2026 due to the ferry only trading for five (5) days due to damage sustained from the 29U weather event.

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
2023/24	23,949	22,586	20,341	18,566	15,959	5,146	5,146	7,465	9,862	14,312	15,440	15,440
2024/25	24,915	21,267	21,572	22,698	22,698	16,021	16,737	11,030	12,436	18,602	17,307	22,148
2025/26	27,824	26,298	23,957	22,987	17,584	15,619	13,862	11,380	1,995			



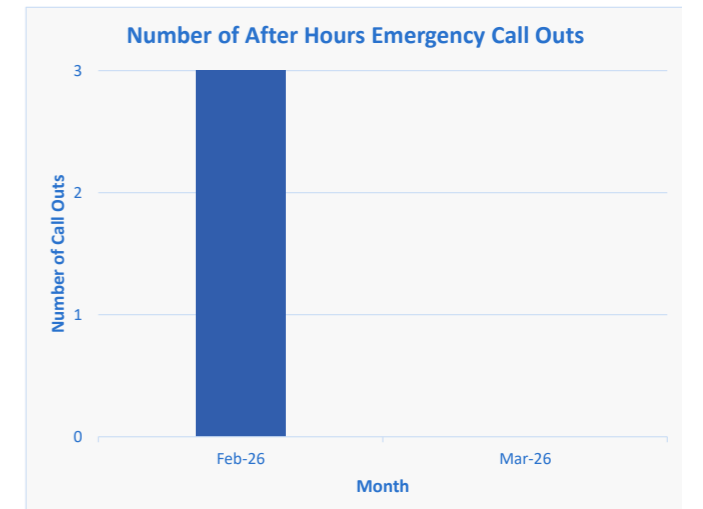
The pie chart shows the breakdown of vehicle types which used the Daintree Ferry in March 2026. Car and ute travel makes up the majority of travel (92.5%), followed by buses (3.5%) and machinery (3.4%).

Travel by Vehicle Type	Mar-26
Car/Ute	92.5%
Bus	3.5%
School Bus	0.0%
Bicycle/Pedestrian	0.1%
Motorbike	0.0%
Trailer/Caravan	0.2%
Machinery	3.4%
Emergency Services	0.3%
Total	100.0%



The Daintree Ferry's operational hours are 19 hours per day, 365 days a year. In February 2026, the ferry was out of service four (4) times for a total of 252 minutes. In March 2026, the ferry was out of service for 27 days due to damage sustained from the 29U weather event and two (2) further flooding events.

Service Downtime (days)	Feb-26	Mar-26
Required by Emergency Services		0
Customer Related		0
Planned Outages & Overruns		0
Unplanned Outages	0.14	22
Weather/River Conditions	0.04	5
Total	0.18	27

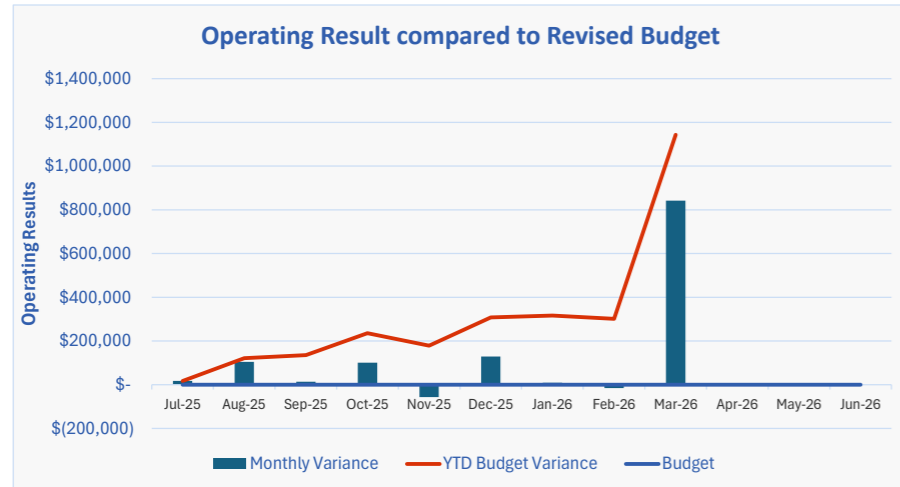


In addition to operating 19 hours per day, the Daintree Ferry operates an on-call service for emergency services between midnight and 5am. In March 2026, there were no emergency service vehicles taken across the river during out-of-hours.

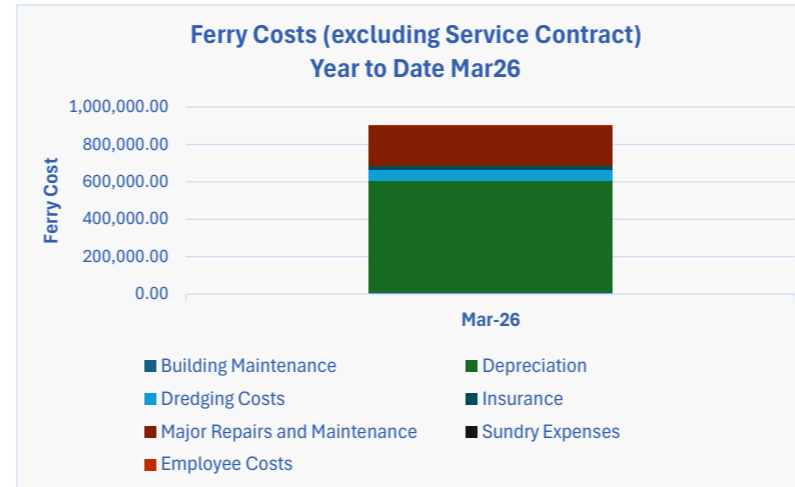
Number of After Hours Emergency Call Outs	Feb-26	Mar-26
After Hours Emergency Call Outs	4	0

**Daintree Ferry Monthly Report
March 2026**

OPERATING STATISTICS - PART B



The chart shows an operating surplus from July to March 2026 compared to budget. The 29U weather event has reduced revenue and increased costs by \$792,000 for FY25–26, with most impacts expected in March. However, many of these costs are committed but not yet paid, making the March result appear favourable due to timing rather than real savings.



The stacked bar chart shows the operational spend by type, excluding the service contract. In March 2026, depreciation made up the largest proportion, followed by major repairs/maintenance and dredging expenditure.