

7.12. RETROFIT COMMUNITY RESILIENCE HUB, NORTH OF THE DAINTREE

REPORT AUTHOR	Disaster Resilience Officer
EXECUTIVE	General Manager Corporate and Communities
DEPARTMENT	Corporate and Communities
TEAM	Disaster Management Unit
DATE	29 September 2026

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approves the retrofit of a Council owned facility, located Cow Bay (Diwan) to develop a multipurpose community recovery and resilience facility.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The retrofitting of a Community Recovery and Resilience Hub, North of the Daintree project is funded under the North Queensland Resilience Program (NQRP). The NQRP is jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) and delivered by Council.

The intent of the project was to explore options for a community recovery and resilience hub, undertake community and stakeholder consultation, and retrofit an existing structure to suit the needs of a multipurpose community recovery and resilience facility.

Following the opening of the region's new \$14.8 million health facility in August 2025, the Council-owned former Cow Bay Health Clinic became available and was subsequently identified as the most suitable facility to retrofit. The facility, Cow Bay Resilience Hub (Diwan) 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.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS / RESOLUTIONS

N/A

REPORT/BACKGROUND

Following a site visit of the new Cow Bay Health Clinic, in September 2025, it was evident that any visiting Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) officers in an event of a declared disaster would be accommodated at the new health facility. The new facility has accommodation options, modern meeting spaces, communications, and all requirements of a central location in responding to a disaster. It is anticipated that ongoing conversations will occur with

Queensland Health in relation to any additional use, or requirements of other facilities in the Diwan/Cow Bay precinct, including the Resilience Hub during an event.

As a priority, the Cow Bay (Diwan) Resilience Hub development is designed as an accessible, safe, central location for pre- and post-disaster events to assist with preparation, recovery and resilience activities for Council, community and visiting services. The concept is to retrofit the current facility to enable it to become a multi-purpose facility that aims to improve social cohesion and long-term resilience.

Refurbished items to include:

- Kitchenettes and a small fridge.
- Washing machine and dryer for maintaining hygiene and operational readiness.
- Furniture for community meetings, recovery hubs, resilience sessions, Get Ready activities, and volunteer training.
- Improved flooring.
- Establish a dedicated administration space for visiting recovery/resilience services and support.
- Appropriate level of storage for emergency preparedness, recovery, and resilience activities.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- The project is funded under the NQRP with \$250,000 allocated (inclusive of Project Management fees).
- The ongoing maintenance budget for the facility is currently included in Council's budget and is anticipated to be maintained under Building Facilities.
- Facility bookings will be managed by Corporate and Communities through Council's current booking system, with fees applied in accordance with Council's current Fees and Charges Policy.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Risk identified:	Risks mitigation:
• Meeting Community expectations	• Review undertaken of community identified needs and considered in the retrofit proposal. • Scheduled Media Release for Community following Ordinary Council Meeting, 29 September.

• Maximising facility for pre and post disaster activities	• Internal review/consultation undertaken, to ensure intent of the facility is clear and operationalised following completed works.
• Timely delivery of the works before the 2026 Wet season	• Tender awarded end of October 2026 • Works to be completed by late November 2026, pending weather, and available/suitable contractors.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

In keeping with Douglas Shire Council's environmental priorities, projects funded under NQRP are expected to minimise negative environmental impacts and where possible contribute to positive environmental outcomes.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Resilience Hub will provide a fully equipped northern response hub contributing to a coordinated response pre and post disaster phase, reducing recovery time and community isolation.

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 environmental conscious.

1.1 - Deliver community initiatives that support healthy, inclusive and socially engaged communities.

1.9 - In accordance with Queensland Disaster Management doctrine, continuously review and enhance Council's disaster management prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in collaboration with community and agencies.

Theme 4 - Recovery and Resilience

To partner with community to build resilience against natural disasters creating a strong sense of social capital.

4.1 - Support our community's journey of recovery and rebuilding after natural disasters.

Operational Plan 2026-2027 Actions:

1.5.2 - Deliver community resilience activities to support community to plan, prepare and recover from disasters.

4.5.1 - Strengthen disaster preparedness and resilience of buildings used as places of refuge and resilience facilities.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *QLD Disaster Management Act 2003*
- *Disaster Management Regulation 2014*
- *Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011*
- Council's Procurement Policy

CONSULTATION

Internal Consultation:

- Community Services
- Building Maintenance and Operations
- Media and Communications
- Infrastructure Planning and Delivery
- Civil Operations

External Consultation:

- Review of previous correspondence received by community
- Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre
- Mossman Support Services
- SES Alexandra Bay
- Cow Bay Health Clinic
- Queensland Ambulance Service
- Queensland Police

CONCLUSION

The retrofit project provides a dedicated Resilience Hub for communities north of the Daintree, providing a space for disaster response and recovery activities, creating more timely and accessible supports at a local level.

The facility will provide an opportunity for Council and community to facilitate a range of pre and post recovery and resilience activities, strengthening community resilience while giving a cherished local building a new purpose.

Evidence tells us, resilience building initiatives provide an essential tool that helps communities be prepared for disasters and supports them to respond and recover better when they occur.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil