

7.13. DAINTREE FERRY UPDATE AUGUST 2026

REPORT AUTHOR	Contract Manager
EXECUTIVE	General Manager Infrastructure
DEPARTMENT	Infrastructure Planning and Delivery
TEAM	Infrastructure Planning and Delivery
DATE	29 September 2026

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the Daintree Ferry operational report for August 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A monthly report is supplied to provide Councillors with operational details of the existing Daintree Ferry for the month of August 2026.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS / RESOLUTIONS

At the Ordinary Meeting held 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 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 ticketing and ferry card sales administration, accounts payable and receivable, budgeting and financial reporting, payroll and human resources, auditing, enquiry and complaint management and administrative costs and overheads.

On 1 July 2026, Australian engineering company, Birdon Pty Ltd took over the operating contract for the Daintree Ferry. This includes a 20-year contract with Council to design, construct, operate and maintain a new four-lane ferry for the Daintree River crossing. The new ferry is due to be delivered in late 2027 and until then, Birdon will operate the existing Council owned ferry.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Reporting on the Daintree 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 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 2026-2027 Actions:

2.1.1 - 100% design of new Daintree Ferry including AMSA approvals.

2.1.2 - Commence construction of the new Daintree Ferry.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Not applicable

CONSULTATION

- Operations and Maintenance Team
- Financial Services Team.

CONCLUSION

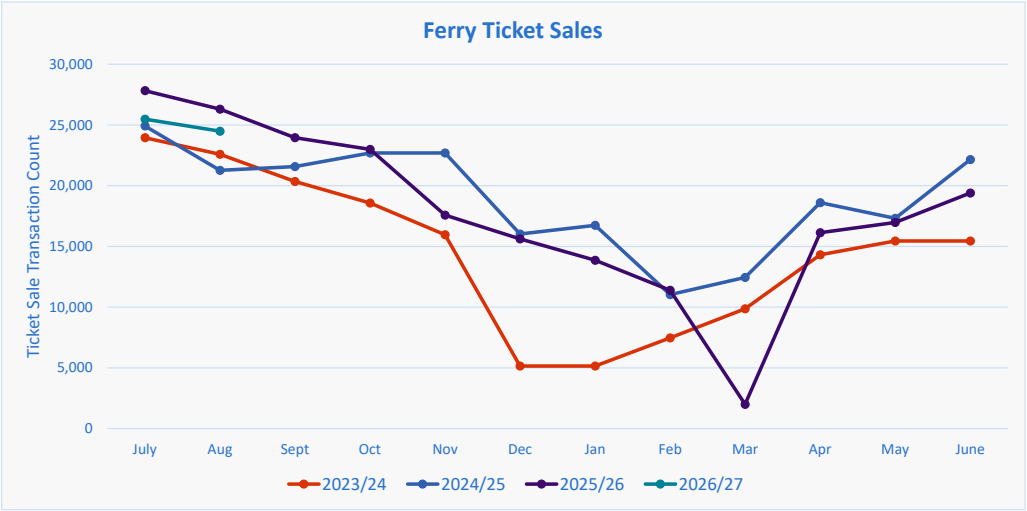
Council notes the Daintree Ferry operational report for August 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Daintree Ferry Monthly Report - Operations Statistics Aug 2026 [**7.13.1** - 2 pages]

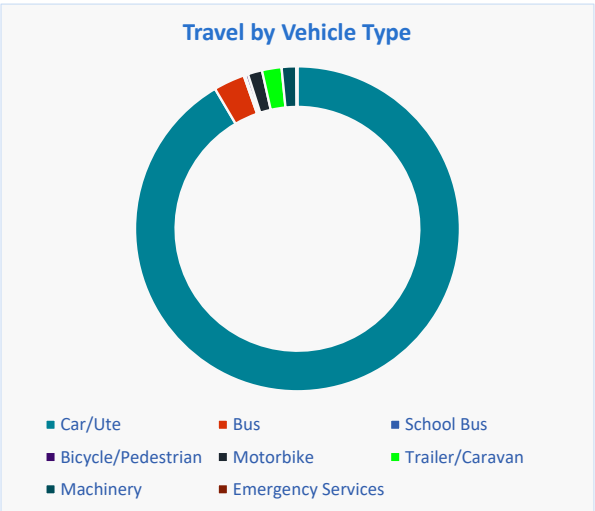
Daintree Ferry Monthly Report
August 2026

OPERATING STATISTICS



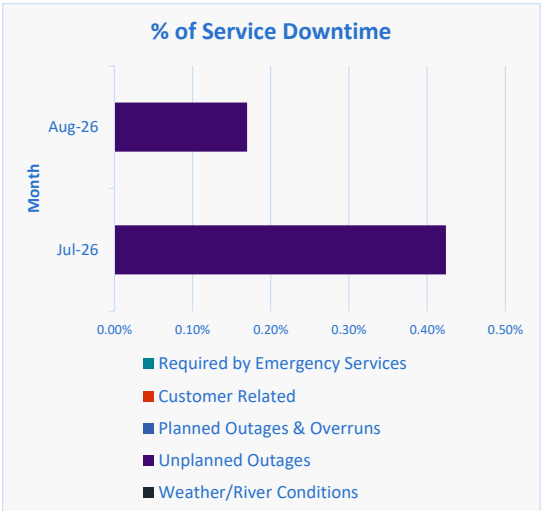
The line chart shows the number of ferry ticket sales purchased each month over the last three (3) financial years. It includes both actual travel and pre-purchased tickets for future travel months. As expected, ticket sales are lower during the wet season, particularly between December and March. In August 2026, ticket sales increased in line with previous years, consistent with the expected seasonal uplift during the high tourism season.

	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	16,135	16,973	19,397
2026/27	25,482	24,491										



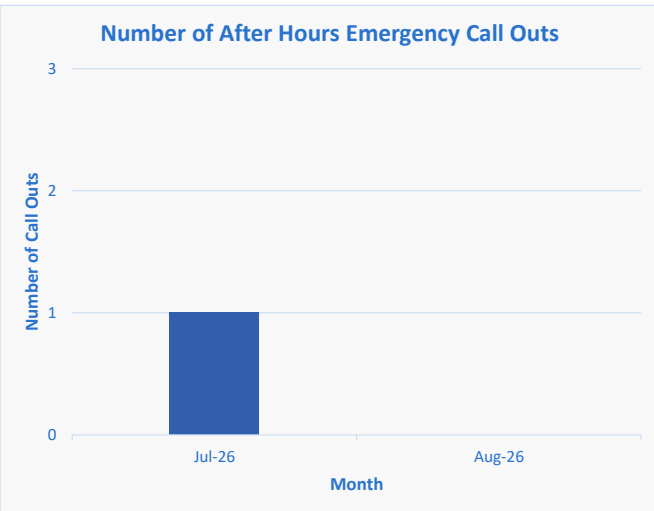
The pie chart shows the breakdown of vehicle types which used the Daintree Ferry in August 2026. Car and ute travel makes up the majority of travel (91.5%), followed by buses (3.1%) and trailer/caravan (1.9%).

Travel by Vehicle Type	Aug-26
Car/Ute	91.5%
Bus	3.1%
School Bus	0.2%
Bicycle/Pedestrian	0.3%
Motorbike	1.4%
Trailer/Caravan	1.9%
Machinery	1.5%
Emergency Services	0.1%
	100.0%



The Daintree Ferry's operational hours are 19 hours per day, 365 days a year. In July 2026 there were two unplanned outage related to an engine issue and operator error. In August 2026, there was one unplanned outage related to a hydraulic issue.

% Service Downtime	Jul-26	Aug-26
Required by Emergency Services	0.00%	0.00%
Customer Related	0.00%	0.00%
Planned Outages & Overruns	0.00%	0.00%
Unplanned Outages	0.42%	0.17%
Weather/River Conditions	0.00%	0.00%
	0.00	0.0017

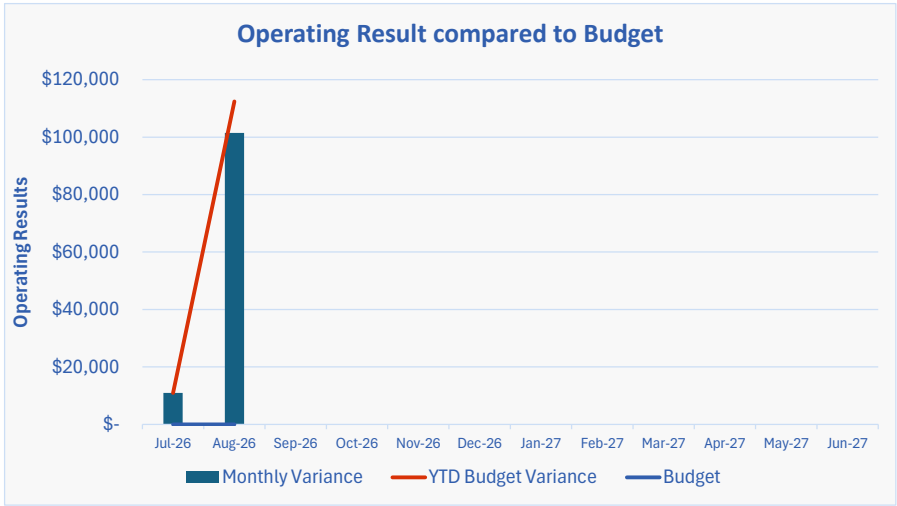


In addition to operating 19 hours per day, the Daintree Ferry operates an on-call service for emergency services between midnight and 5am. There was no reported emergency call outs in August 2026.

Number of After Hours Emergency Call Outs	Jul-26	Aug-26
After Hours Emergency Call Outs	1	0

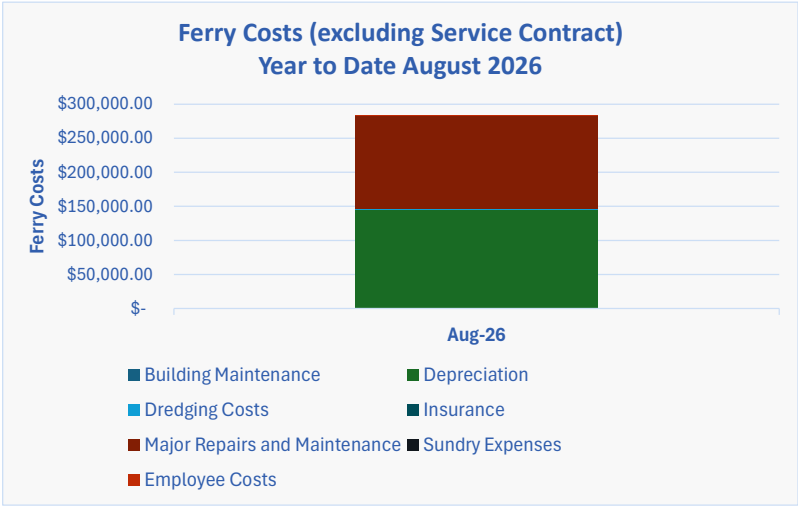
Daintree Ferry Monthly Report
August 2026

OPERATING STATISTICS - PART B



The August 2026, fee and income after contractor costs are behind budget, primarily due to higher contract labour costs during the month. Major repairs are also now over budget following the engagement of a new contractor who undertook a significant amount of repair work on the vessel.

Dredging costs are below budget, as grant funding was successfully utilised to offset a portion of the works. Overall, the key variances for the month are primarily driven by contractor and repair costs, with favourable dredging variance partially offsetting these higher costs.



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