7.14. DAINTREE FERRY UPDATE OCTOBER 2026

REPORT AUTHOR	Contract Manager
EXECUTIVE	General Manager Infrastructure
DEPARTMENT	Infrastructure
TEAM	Infrastructure Planning and Delivery
DATE	24 November 2026

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Daintree Ferry operational report for October 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS / RESOLUTIONS

At the Ordinary Meeting held on 10 December 2024, Council resolved that Councillors would receive monthly financial details relating to the Daintree Ferry.

REPORT/BACKGROUND

Project Progress:

1. **Landside Infrastructure**

The new landside infrastructure works have progressed well. Key civil and electrical works are now complete, all earthworks expected to be delivered in 2026 are now complete including pavement and subgrade treatments to finished surface level, and pedestrian paths are now complete. Additionally, crews have laid turf on the southern side and completed the kerb and channel work for the bus parking lane, shelter slabs, underground conduits, and the new main switchboard at the ferry house. Works yet to be completed this year include final coat sealing and pavement delineation works expected to be finalised in November prior to demobilising from site which is planned for late November/early December 2026.

Planning for the change over from the old ferry to the new ferry in late 2027 is underway, with consideration being given to a range of challenges including scheduling, materials, constructability, communication with the community and weather contingencies.

2. **New Ferry**

The new ferry construction remains on schedule for delivery in late 2027. Council representatives and a marine consultant will travel to the shipyard in NSW at the end of November 2026 to conduct the first walkthrough inspection.

Progress continues obtaining relevant Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) approvals in preparation for vessel completion and delivery.

Consideration is being given to appropriate disposal of the existing ferry with several options being considered to achieve the best outcome for the Douglas Shire.

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.

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

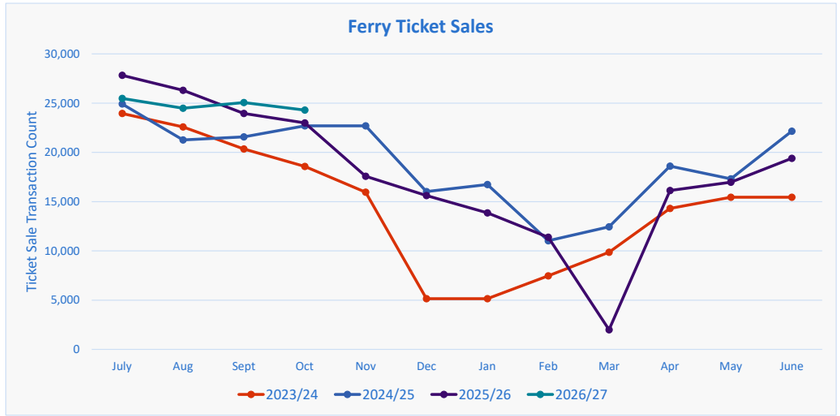
That Council notes the Daintree Ferry operational report for October 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Daintree Ferry Monthly Report - Operations Statistics Oct 2026 [**7.14.1** - 2 pages]

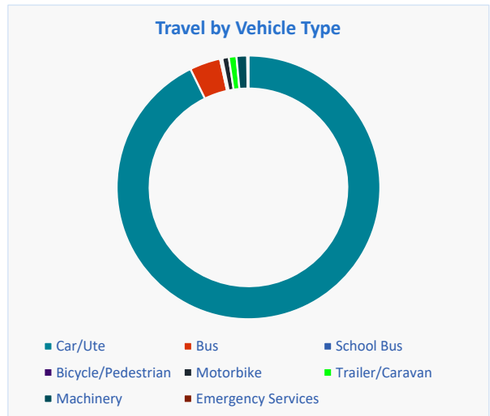
Daintree Ferry Monthly Report
October 2026

OPERATING STATISTICS



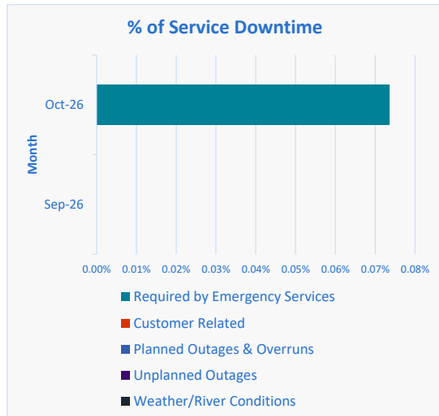
The line chart shows the number of ferry ticket sales purchased each month over the last four (4) financial years. It includes both actual travel and pre-purchased tickets for future travel months. As expected, ticket sales are lower during the wet season, particularly between December and March. In October 2026, ticket sales exceeded October levels in each of the previous three years, reflecting strong performance alongside the expected seasonal uplift during the peak 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	25,062	24,295								



The pie chart shows the breakdown of vehicle types which used the Daintree Ferry in October 2026. Car and ute travel makes up the majority of travel (92.8%), followed by buses (3.8%) and machinery (1.3%).

Travel by Vehicle Type	Sep-26
Car/Ute	92.8%
Bus	3.8%
School Bus	0.2%
Bicycle/Pedestrian	0.1%
Motorbike	0.8%
Trailer/Caravan	0.9%
Machinery	1.3%
Emergency Services	0.2%
	100.0%



The Daintree Ferry's operational hours are 19 hours per day, 365 days a year. In September 2026, there were no reported unplanned outages. In October 2026, there was one unplanned outage to accommodate an ambulance.

% Service Downtime	Sep-26	Oct-26
Required by Emergency Services	0.00%	0.07%
Customer Related	0.00%	0.00%
Planned Outages & Overruns	0.00%	0.00%
Unplanned Outages	0.00%	0.00%
Weather/River Conditions	0.00%	0.00%
	0.00%	**0.07%**

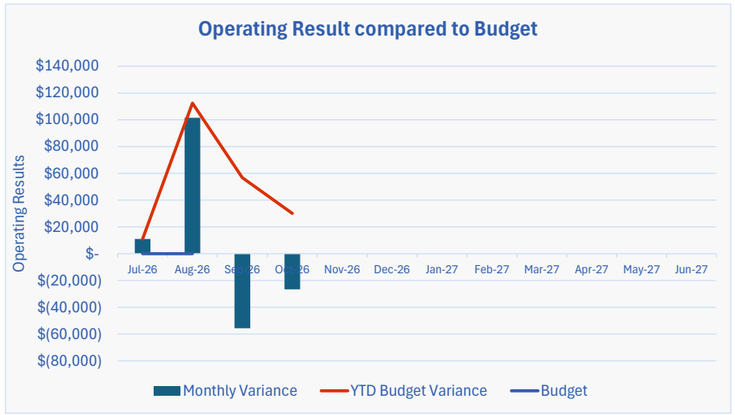


In addition to operating 19 hours per day, the Daintree Ferry operates an on-call service for emergency services between midnight and 5am. There were no reported emergency call outs in September or October 2026.

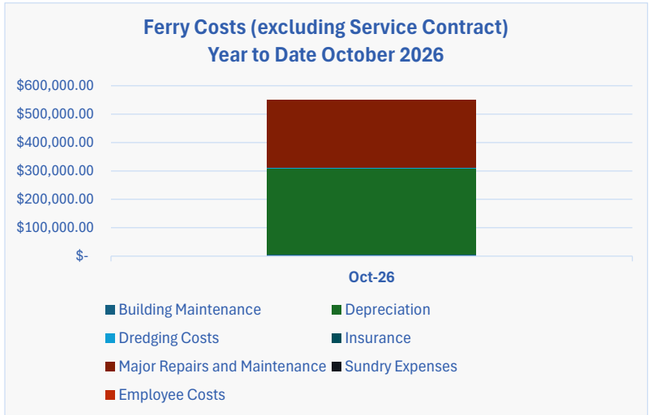
Number of After Hours Emergency Call Outs	Sep-26	Oct-26
After Hours Emergency Call Outs	0	0

Daintree Ferry Monthly Report
October 2026

OPERATING STATISTICS - PART B



The variance trend for October 2026 continues broadly in line with previous months. Fee and income after contractor costs remain behind budget, with fare income on budget. However, contractor and additional contract labour costs continue to trend above budget. Major repair costs also remain over budget, while dredging expenditure is below budget due to the timing of the next scheduled dredging works. Overall, the key variances continue to be driven by higher contractor and labour costs, major repair expenditure, and the timing of dredging costs.



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