

7.16. FINANCIAL EVENT SUPPORT FOR NAIDOC RUGBY NINES MEMORIAL EVENT

REPORT AUTHOR	Event Officer
EXECUTIVE	General Manager Corporate and Communities
DEPARTMENT	Corporate and Communities
TEAM	Community Services
DATE	27 July 2026

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1) Approve \$10,000 (excluding GST) financial and in-kind contribution for the 2026 National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Nines Rugby League Carnival and associated memorial event on the basis that:**
 - a) Funds are expended for costs directly associated with the hosting of these events to be held at Coronation Park, Mossman over the weekend of 12 September 2026; and**
 - b) Adherence by the event organisers to any Council terms, conditions and requirements that would normally apply relevant to the provision of such financial support.**
- 2) Delegates authority under *Section 257 (1)(b) of the Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) to negotiate, finalise and execute any matters associated with the funding.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation has requested funding of \$10,000 to support the delivery of the NAIDOC Nines Rugby League Carnival and Memorial Event to be held on Saturday, 12 September 2026.

The event has been created in response to a motor vehicle accident that occurred on the Captain Cook Highway on Friday, 22 May 2026 and the significance of the loss and trauma felt by the local indigenous community.

This incident has created conversation about other significant losses through interconnected family groups in indigenous communities across the Douglas Shire in recent years.

As a tribute, and to bring the extended communities together, 12 regional teams will play in honour of a person lost to each of their respective communities. The families of each person lost have been engaged and are supportive of the event.

The timing of the loss and the culturally appropriate Sorry Business period that follows, combined with the proposed date of the event, puts this request outside of the scheduled Community Grants timeline. Jabalbina are requesting out-of-round Council support for \$10,000 to assist with the delivery of the event.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS / RESOLUTIONS

This event has not appeared before council to date.

REPORT/BACKGROUND

The 2026 NAIDOC Nines Rugby League Carnival will present 12 Senior Rugby Teams from across the region, competing in an event, open to the public, on Saturday, 12 September.

The carnival will be followed by a private event for players and families and will feature musical entertainment, a kids' zone and an in-memoriam component taking place at the Mossman Shire Hall.

An estimate of 300-400 players and families are expected to attend from around the region and, including local spectators, could see a total attendance for the Saturday competition reach around 800-900 people.

The event has received National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) funding and support from the Queensland Rugby League.

Jabalbina has also engaged with the Mossman Port Douglas Senior Rugby League Club (Senior Sharks) executive seeking their input and support for this event.

The event is centred around communities coming together to celebrate and grieve and recognises sport as a positive outlet and connector for the community. Organisers hope to promote community cohesion and cultural pride and to meet the requirement of culturally appropriate programming aligned with NAIDOC celebrations.

Coronation Park will be available for camping and will see teams arrive on Friday, 11 September with approximately 60 families camping in the grounds. Teams will depart Sunday, 13 September. Camping is permitted in Coronation Park if defined as *Community Purpose* as its both a *community facility and parks and recreational facility*.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Council's contribution for funding of the 2026 NAIDOC Nines Rugby League Carnival will be allocated from the current Community Development 2026/27 operational budget.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There is a potential risk of misuse of funds. Council mitigates this risk by having a clear agreement with event organisers specifying the use of the funds and a robust acquittal process.

Another potential risk is event cancellation. This risk will be mitigated in the funding agreement with provision for the funds to be refunded if the event does not proceed.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Waste generated at the event will be managed by event operators and in accordance with Council conditions and expectations.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This event brings together a social cohesion rarely available for regional communities located long distances away from each other. It also reduces social isolation and increases connection through the positive avenue of sport. The event links families together in a time of grieving which is positive for long term wellbeing.

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.

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

1.3 - Be culturally sensitive, inclusive and improve Council's cultural competency.

Theme 4 - Recovery and Resilience

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

4.3 - Foster collaboration, sustainability, and a strong sense of belonging.

Operational Plan 2026-2027 Actions:

New project arisen during the financial year.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- *Local Government Act 2009*

CONSULTATION

Internal Consultation:

- Events Officer
- Property Team
- Local Laws Team

- Environment and Planning Team
- Manager Community Services
- Councillor workshop 21 July 2026

External Consultation:

- Queensland Police Service
- Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation.

CONCLUSION

The 2026 NAIDOC Nines Rugby League Carnival will provide a family-focused event that promotes sport, wellbeing and community connection across the Douglas Shire and beyond.

The funding will go towards the safe delivery of the event, provide entertainment and essential event resources. It supports the participation of families from geographically isolated communities, contributing to Council's livability, inclusion, achieving community resilience objectives, and building social capital.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil