

7.7. REGIONAL TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT - HERITAGE SIGNS

REPORT AUTHOR Tourism and Economic Development Officer

MANAGER Manager Community Services

DEPARTMENT Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the proposed four-year Heritage Sign Project and efforts to pursue funding through the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation's Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, released annually from 2025 to 2028 inclusive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) recently released the first of four rounds of funding for shovel-ready tourism infrastructure projects, providing funds of up to \$300,000 per annum.

There are 46 heritage signs across the Shire that are in need of repair and in some cases replacement. This presented an opportunity to revitalise the signage and create an improved visitor experience.

One of the identified tourism destination priorities is a need for public art, signage and interpretation, trail and experience development.

A four-stage project has therefore been developed with key partners to design and create new interpretive signs incorporating public art, culture and heritage, and trail development to replace the current signs.

A funding request for the first stage was submitted on 12 November 2025. Further funding submissions are required to be made in subsequent years to continue and complete the project.

BACKGROUND

DETSI released the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) in line with the focus of the Destination 2045 Plan to invest in infrastructure and experience development, specifically for regions outside of Southeast Queensland. RTIF offers four rounds of funding over four years with up to \$300,000 available each year with no co-contribution required.

The 46 heritage signs across the shire are in need of repair, and in some cases replacement. This presented an opportunity to explore critical infrastructure development, visitor experience development, cultural and heritage experience development, place-making and public art development projects with a view to enhancing and further developing tourism infrastructure across the Shire.

As a result, a four-stage project has been developed with key stakeholders and partners to design, develop the story and the delivery of an interpretive arts and culture trail across

Douglas Shire. This will significantly add to the connections and experiences of both visitors and the community.

COMMENTS

A key component of the project is the broad support from the Historical Society, the Low Isles Preservation Society, Tourism Port Douglas Daintree and Jabalbina. They bring valuable knowledge and expertise.

Of note is the participation of Griffith University, in particular, the Griffith Institute of Tourism, who have generously donated their time and expertise to co-create the project and the funding application.

PROPOSAL

That Council endorse the proposed four-year Heritage Sign Project and efforts to pursue funding through the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation's Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, released annually from 2025 to 2028 inclusive.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Costs associated with the removal of the old signs and the installation of the new signs will be incurred.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The project will not be able to be delivered without the RTIF resulting in limited ability to deliver improved arts and cultural signage.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic:	By enhancing the visitor experience, it is expected that this will improve the overall visitor spend, visitor length of stay therefore an overall economic benefit to the Douglas Shire
Environmental:	The heritage signs will be designed to enhance the environmental story of the region, influencing visitor behaviour.
Social:	The heritage sign project brings together many sectors of the community and showcases the stories and heritage of the region both recent and of first nations people. This will bring increased knowledge, pride, and revitalised connections across the community.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

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.

1.2 - Encourage and grow creative opportunities across the arts.

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.

3.4 - Ensure capital and maintenance programs for infrastructure/open spaces are prioritised and delivered on time.

3.9 - Preserve, protect and improve our unique environment.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 Actions:

New project arisen during the financial year.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following areas outline where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

Facilitator	Council often brings stakeholders together on important issues, projects or for service delivery. In this role, Council can act as a mediator, connector, collaborator or initiator.
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CONSULTATION

Internal:	Relevant departments have been consulted.
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External:	Griffith University, The Historical Society, Low Isles Preservations Society, Jabalbina, and Tourism Port Douglas Daintree are key stakeholders and partners in the project.
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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement plays a vital role in ensuring the authenticity of the project.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil