

7.8. SOUND AUSTRALIA - RESOURCE AND PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

REPORT AUTHOR	Events Officer
MANAGER	Manager Community Services
DEPARTMENT	Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to enter into a Resource and Performance Agreement with Sounds Australia for funding of \$80,000 (incl. GST) and \$7,000 in-kind support for 2026 and by agreement for 2027 and 2028 based on annual outcomes, for a period of three years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, Council entered into an agreement with Sounds Australia—the production company behind the Savannah Sounds brand—to deliver a three-day festival as part of the Douglas Shire’s annual Carnivale.

Savannah Sounds is a three-day music festival taking place during the Port Douglas Carnivale and held at Rex Smeal Park. Curated for the Carnivale, Savannah Sounds presents nationally known headline acts along with a broad program of musical artists covering a wide variety of genres, blending high energy performances with laid back tropical vibes and a range of food and beverage options.

Savannah Sounds is a feature event for the Port Douglas Carnivale and is aligned to the events destination marketing objectives that aim to promote the region and encourage overnight stays.

Sounds Australia management have forwarded a proposal outlining an agreement to continue to present the Savannah Sounds event, as an integral part of the Carnivale in 2026/27/28.

BACKGROUND

Sounds Australia provided the Savannah Sounds 3-day music festival as part of the 2025 Carnivale. \$55,000 incl. GST was allocated from the Carnivale budget to secure the event. Approximately \$6,271 in fees were waived as in-kind support for the use of Rex Smeal Park.

The event presented a diverse selection of musical talent from around Australia with well-known headline acts featured each day. The tailor-made musical program appealed to a broad range of demographics and showcased the iconic location of Rex Smeal Park.

This addition to the Carnivale was very well received by locals and visitors and viewed as a positive collaboration for the Carnivale. In its debut year, the event drew 3,200 attendees over the 3 days and contributed to the 2025 Carnivale’s gross economic stimulus of \$5.3m.

Organisers ensured the festival integrated into the Carnivale program and contributed content for media campaigns and promotions as well as providing entertainment for other Carnivale events.

Organisers were diligent in their care for the Rex Smeal Park site and sought out guidance on how to best run their event with the least impact to residents and the park itself, inviting Council staff to inspect the site post event to ensure it was in a satisfactory condition

COMMENTS

The Savannah Sounds festival contributed to the success of the 2025 Carnivale by touring well known musical artists at Rex Smeal Park and by providing a concert experience that has become an expected part of the Carnivale.

Since Council took over as the organiser of Carnivale in 2018, staff have actively sought to engage a concert promoter to manage the Saturday night event and help mitigate the various risks associated with concert promotion and large-scale events.

The proposal outlines a three-year agreement based on 1 year (2026) plus 2-year option (first right of refusal 2027 and 2028). This would provide long-term security for planning, grant funding and overall development, and is a commonsense approach for an event of this size and nature.

PROPOSAL

That Council resolves to enter into a Resource and Performance Agreement with Sounds Australia for funding of \$80,000 (incl. GST) and \$7,000 in-kind support for 2026 and by agreement for 2027 and 2028 based on annual outcomes, for a period of three years.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the proposed agreement will come out of 2026/2027/2028 Carnivale financial year budgets. Council officers will be responsible for administering payment and acquittal. The organiser will be required to participate in post event market research activity to provide an economic impact report for each year of Council funding.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

As part of the Resource and Performance Agreement, an Event Management Plan will be required, as well as all appropriate Council permits. A comprehensive Risk Management Plan for the event will be required in consultation with Queensland Police, Queensland Ambulance, professional event medical support companies and Douglas Shire Council.

The three-year agreement will be disbursed in instalments. At the conclusion of each event, a financial acquittal is to be provided to Council for assessment.

Funds will be disbursed based on the successful acquittal of the previous year's funding and achieving KPI targets as outlined in the agreement.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic:

Carnivale provides economic benefits to the Shire by increasing visitor spending, encouraging the uptake of overnight accommodation as well as partnering with local businesses to stimulate local business activity or employment.

Environmental:

Impacts will be limited ensuring correct permits and measures are in place including adherence to the Council's Sustainable Events Policy.

Social: Carnivale provides an opportunity to support and promote community celebrations and community involvement; increase opportunities for use of public space and facilities across the Shire, support and build relationships with disadvantaged or vulnerable groups in our communities and promote the Shire as an area of opportunities for families, lifestyle and business.

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.

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:

Funder Council often partly funds services, events or community organisations through grants, donations, subsidies and in-kind support. Council will apply robust governance to ensure that such funding is fair and appropriate.

CONSULTATION

Internal: Community and Economic Development department, Councillor workshop held on September 9.

External: The funding proposal and agreement was developed by the applicant with the support of various local tourism bodies, local government and business groups.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Feedback provided via post event surveys to be distributed after each event.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil