

7.9. PORT SHORTS RESOURCE AND PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT

REPORT AUTHOR	Events Officer
MANAGER	Manager Community Services
DEPARTMENT	Corporate and Communities
DATE	16 June 2026

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1) Resolves to enter a Resource and Performance Agreement with the event organisers of the Port Shorts Film Festival for a period of three (3) years (2026, 2027 and 2028).**
- 2) Endorses the inclusion of \$30,000 (\$25,000 cash funding and \$5,000 in-kind) in the annual budget for each relevant financial year to support the Port Shorts Film Festival.**
- 3) Subject to budget approval, authorises the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) to finalise any minor amendments required to execute the Resource and Performance Agreement.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Port Shorts Film Festival is a short film festival held in Port Douglas in October each year that celebrates emerging and established filmmakers through a curated program of short films from Australia and around the world.

Organisers of the Port Shorts Film Festival wrote to Council's Event Officer, requesting to enter a new three (3) year resource and performance agreement for funding the festival from 2026 to 2028.

The total value of Council's support is \$30,000 per annum consisting of \$25,000 cash and \$5,000 in-kind support that goes towards securing Rex Smeal Park as the venue and covering application fees.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS / RESOLUTIONS

At the Ordinary Meeting held on 24 November 2015 it was resolved that Council:

- 1. Resolves to support Port Shorts Film Festival Incorporated for the delivery of the Port Shorts Film Festival with funding of \$8,000 (Exc. GST) and in-kind assistance for venue hire for a period of three years under terms set out in the Resource and Performance Agreement, subject to the successful acquittal of the Community Support Program 2014-2015 grant.**

2. Delegates authority to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* to finalise any minor amendments and execute the Resource and Performance Agreement

At the Ordinary Meeting held 20 August 2019 it was resolved that Council:

1. Resolves to request the Chief Executive Officer to allocate in the Community Development 2019-20 Budget \$15,000 (Exc. GST) for sponsorship and \$5,000 in-kind assistance per annum for three (3) years for the Port Shorts Film Festival event.
2. Notes that this request is an out of funding round request for funding and acknowledges the Community Development Budget will be seeking additional funds in 2019-20 to accommodate the request.
3. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with *Section 257 of the Local Government Act 2009* to determine and finalise any and all matters associated with this matter.

Council supported the event in various ways during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, Council increased its funding of the festival from \$15,000 to \$20,000. This both enabled the festival to continue to operate as well as to present a free community screening, 'Port Shorts Best of the Fest' as part of a COVID-19 economic and social recovery stimulus package. Due to COVID restrictions, only 1,000 attendees were permitted, and all available tickets were allocated.

At the Ordinary Meeting held on 27 June 2023 it was resolved that Council:

1. Enters into a three (3) year Resource and Performance Agreement with event organisers of the Port Shorts Film Festival Inc. with funding of \$20,000 (Exc. GST) and \$5,000 in-kind support per annum, for a period of three (3) years (FY2023/24, FY2024/25, FY2025/26) under the terms set out in the Resource and Performance Agreement.
2. Delegates authority under *section 257 of the Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise all matters associated with the Agreement.

REPORT/BACKGROUND

Port Shorts Film Festival is an annual short film festival held in Port Douglas that celebrates emerging and established filmmakers through a curated program of short films from Australia and around the world.

The festival showcases diverse storytelling across genres, providing a platform for creative voices while engaging the local community through public screenings, workshops and filmmaker events. It also contributes to the region's cultural life and creative economy by positioning Port Douglas as a destination for film, arts, and storytelling.

For over 20 years, Port Shorts Film Festival has provided opportunities for local and emerging film makers, actors and support crew to garner experience within the film industry and the opportunity to present local content to the world.

Port Shorts Film Festival has grown its reach significantly, attracting national and international short film submissions, expanding its awards program, and incorporating filmmaker workshops and youth engagement initiatives. It has become known for its outdoor

screenings at Rex Smeal Park, positioning Port Douglas as one of Australia's most picturesque film festival locations.

Port Shorts Film Festival is a unique cultural event for the region and an Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts (AACTA) qualifying festival, contributing to the local creative economy while continuing to support emerging filmmakers and celebrate short-form storytelling in Tropical North Queensland.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The festival provides economic benefits through the attraction of filmmakers and audiences from outside the region. The event regularly attracts hundreds of attendees to the various events and promotes our region as a movie making destination.

The presentation of the festival is during the regions' shoulder season and provides economic benefit through room nights and increased economic activity during a traditionally quieter time of the year. Figures provided by the Port Shorts Festival organisers post the 2025 festival, suggested the festival contributed \$217,675 total direct and incremental expenditure for the Douglas Shire.

The festival engages local suppliers for staging, food stalls and beverages.

Port Shorts Film Festival contributes to the regional events calendar and actively promotes the region through various tourism agencies via annual destination marketing activities.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There is a real and immediate risk that the Port Shorts Film Festival will not continue without funding support by Council. Although well supported by sponsors and other funding sources, Council's contribution provides confidence for the organisers, as well as assurances for other organisations and sponsors who engage with and support the festival. Council's on-going support is pivotal to the continued presentation of the event.

Should the festival discontinue, there is a risk of negative public perception of the decision and reputational damage to Council. The Port Shorts Film Festival provides opportunities for emerging film makers in our region who would miss out on these opportunities due to our regional remoteness.

As this is a public event, there are permit requirements for the festival management to adhere to regarding public safety and the event's delivery. Port Shorts Film Festival will require a Prescribed Activity Permit for each event and will provide an Event Management Plan that adheres to current compliance standards and best practice event management.

Clear terms, conditions, and reporting requirements will mitigate the inappropriate use of public funds.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Port Shorts Film Festival prides itself on being an environmentally aware event and follows best practice when delivering their events. They have a ban on single use plastic and use biodegradable and recyclable materials.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Port Shorts Film Festival provides opportunities for local and emerging film makers, actors and support crew to get involved with the film industry and to present local content. The festival generates significant viewer interest and presents our region as a destination for film and television producers.

Organisers encourage people to make films, and advocate the benefits of a physically, culturally and socially healthy activity.

The screening events provide locally run, community events for families to enjoy and exposes local audiences to short films from around the country.

Post festival surveying conducted by the festival organisers around audience satisfaction suggest 96% of those surveyed said locals should feel proud of the festival with 99% agreeing that Port Douglas is a great place for the festival.

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.

1.4 - Promote inclusivity, connection and accessibility for individuals/people of all abilities.

Theme 4 - Recovery and Resilience

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

4.1 - Support our community's journey of recovery and rebuilding after natural disasters.

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

Operational Plan 2025-2026 Actions:

New project arisen during the financial year.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- Events General Policy

CONSULTATION

Internal Consultation:

- Team Leader Community Services, Tourism and Economic Development Officer, Events Officer

External Consultation:

- Executive Officer - Tourism Port Douglas Daintree

CONCLUSION

Council support for the Port Shorts Film Festival demonstrates a commitment to the arts, innovation and creative industries, while also aligning with broader objectives relating to economic diversification, destination marketing and liveability. Without ongoing support, there is a risk of losing an established cultural event that provides significant value to the community and contributes positively to the region's identity and profile.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil