

5.2. REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM PORT SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL

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DEPARTMENT	People and Community Services
RECOMMENDATION	

That Council resolves to:

1. increase funding for Port Shorts Film Festival from \$15,000 to \$20,000 for the life of the current triannual agreement, expiring October 2021.
 2. provide one-off funding of \$9,000 in 2020/21 for a live broadcast of the event.
 3. delegates authority under section 257 of the *Local Government Act 2009* to the Chief Executive Officer to finalise any minor amendments in relation to funding Port Shorts Film festival.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Resource and Performance Agreement is in place with the Port Shorts Film Festival that began in August 2019 and expires in October 2021.

Council received an email from the Port Shorts Management on 11 June 2020 requesting a meeting with the CEO to discuss the 2020 event and new opportunities for national promotion of the event and region.

This report proposes Council increase the current Resource and Performance agreement funding as well as provide one-off funding to go towards a national broadcast of the 2020 event.

BACKGROUND

The Port Shorts Film Festival has been an iconic international film festival event for 20 years that highlights local and regional short films and incorporates classes for upcoming filmmakers in the area. The Port Shorts Film Festival attracts the best short films from local, regional and international film makers with more than \$15,000 in cash and prizes in various awards.

Douglas Shire Council has previously provided \$15,000 in cash and \$5,000 of in-kind support as part of an existing funding agreement for a three (3) year period of \$15,000 in cash and \$5,000 of in-kind support per annum 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.

On 15 June 2020 Port Shorts management met with the Mayor, the Chief Executive Officer and council staff, requesting an increase in funding from Council for the current resource and performance agreement from \$15,000 to \$20,000 to assist in delivering the event, and one off funding of \$9,000 in 2020-21 for a live broadcast of the event.

PROPOSAL

That Council increases funding of Port Shorts Film Festival from \$15,000 to \$20,000 for the life of the current triannual agreement and provides one -off funding of \$9,000 in 2020/21 for a live broadcast of the event.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The initial funding for the Resources and Performance agreement has been budgeted for 20-21 however the proposed increase will need to be sourced.

The ability for the event to broadcast relies on input from different contributing bodies. In the instance that the broadcast does not go ahead, the \$9,000 funding contribution will be withdrawn.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

As this is a public event there will be a number of issues for Port Shorts to navigate regarding public safety and the delivery of the event.

Port Shorts Festival will still require a permit to be issued by council and will have to present an Event Management Plan that must address current compliancy concerns as well as best practice event management.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic: The event will provide economic benefits through the attraction of filmmakers and audiences from outside the region. The event regularly attracts over 1000, however this will likely be reduced and affected by the current event climate.

The proposed national broadcast of the event for 20/21 will significantly promote the event outside the region by way of Television and digital platforms.

Port Shorts also works with local suppliers for staging, food stalls and beverages.

Another benefit of the Port Shorts Film Festival is encouraging filmmakers to use the Douglas Shire as a location for future productions.

Environmental: Port Shorts 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: For the 2020 event, Port Shorts intends to present a free or low-cost ticketed event to assist in the social and community resilience aspects of COVID 19 recovery.

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

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2019-2024 Initiatives:

Theme 1 - Celebrating Our Communities

Douglas Shire Council embraces the diversity of our communities and values the contribution that all people make to the Shire. We recognise that it is a core strength of the region. We acknowledge our past so that it may guide us in the future. We recognise the wrongs done to our Indigenous community and we actively seek to reconcile so that we may all benefit from and enjoy our Shire. We acknowledge early European settlers who forged an agricultural base for our economy and we welcome all new arrivals as part of our broader community.

Goal 1 - We will celebrate the diversity of our community and ensure that all infrastructure, programs, and services are underpinned with inclusiveness and accessibility.

Goal 3 - We will make sound financial decisions by ensuring robust strategic planning, financial management and reporting.

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.

In fulfilling this, Council plays many important roles within the Community as Service Provider, Regulator, Funder, Advocate, Facilitator, Information Provider, Agent, Builder/Owner and Custodian.

CONSULTATION

Internal: Consultation had taken place with the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer, Manager of People and Community Service and the Events Officer.

External: The funding request has been developed in conjunction with the applicant.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Port Shorts Proposal [5.2.1 - 2 pages]

BEST OF PORT SHORTS 2020

Organisers were forced to cancel plans for the 2020 Port Shorts Film Festival scheduled for October 16-17 in Rex Smeal Park in April due to the financial impacts of COVID-19.

Like major festivals and events around Australia and worldwide, the restrictions imposed on crowd sizes and the financial impact in particular of COVID-19 in the Douglas Shire meant we could not generate the revenue required through ticket sales and sponsorship to continue with the festival as planned as this would send our otherwise financially sustainable festival broke.

Working with our festival partners Douglas Shire Council, Screen Queensland and Tourism & Events Queensland, Port Shorts organisers have come up with a proposal for a "Best Of" celebration of Port Shorts that promotes Port Shorts and the destination to a huge new audience.

As Port Shorts Inc is in the second year of a three-year funding agreement with Douglas Shire Council valued at \$15,000 cash and \$5000 in-kind per annum from 2019-21, the preference of Port Shorts Inc is to defer this funding agreement by 12 months as we will not be able to satisfy the requirements set out in the agreement due to the impacts of COVID-19 and strike a new one-year funding agreement that takes into account current circumstances and allows Port Shorts to produce an event for the Douglas Shire in 2020.

Port Shorts has secured \$10,000 in funding from Tourism & Events Queensland for national marketing of a Virtual Film Festival and is awaiting confirmation of \$10,000 in funding from Screen Queensland to produce the Virtual Film Festival.

Port Shorts organisers and Ambassadors Matt Hearn & Stephen Curry are also in discussions with Channel 10 for a national primetime broadcast of a one-hour "Best Of Port Shorts" special in October.

There are three proposed elements to the BEST OF PORT SHORTS 2020 production.

Port Shorts organisers and Ambassadors have the technical and creative skills and experience to produce all three elements to showcase Port Shorts and the Douglas Shire to a huge national audience but for reasons explained we are financially hamstrung in 2020 due to COVID-19 so any production costs need to be met by our festival partners and/or new sponsors.

PORT SHORTS VIRTUAL FILM FESTIVAL

Port Shorts organisers are committed to this event which will stream the BEST OF PORT SHORTS over the past five years, scheduled for October 16-17. The Virtual Film Festival will also include free Virtual Masterclass Series workshops. Port Shorts has received \$10k from TEQ to market the virtual film festival nationally and is expected to receive \$10k from SQ in late June to produce the show.

BEST OF PORT SHORTS LIVE

Port Shorts organisers have the skills and experience to produce a free COVID-19-compliant scaled down live event on October 17 hosted by our MC Stephen Curry however this would need to be funded by Douglas Shire Council as Port Shorts organisers have no other means to cover production costs in 2020 due to COVID-19.

BEST OF PORT SHORTS ON NATIONAL TV

Port Shorts organisers and Ambassadors are in discussions with Channel 10 to partner for a one-hour primetime national broadcast of the Best Of Port Shorts.

To see the proposed program including amazing inserts of the Douglas Shire [CLICK HERE](#) and enter password PSbest

COUNCIL PROPOSAL

Attachment 5.D

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If Council agrees to defer the current agreement with Port Shorts by 12 months, Port Shorts organisers and Ambassadors believe we can work with Douglas Shire Council to promote the festival and our local tourism industry which has been hit harder financially than any other LGA in Australia as a result of COVID-19 to a local and national audience.

While Port Shorts does not require any financial assistance to produce the Virtual Film Festival, the below outlines what assistance would be required from Council to produce a live event and national TV broadcast.

BEST OF PORT SHORTS LIVE

The cost of producing a live event regardless of audience size is significant. While Port Shorts organisers and Ambassadors are happy to contribute at least \$50k in-kind for their services to produce a live event this year, **Council would need to fund the event with a minimum \$20,000 cash and \$5000 in-kind investment in 2020 to cover additional production costs.**

BEST OF PORT SHORTS ON NATIONAL TV

Port Shorts Ambassador Matt Hearn has been in negotiations with Channel 10 on behalf of organisers in the past week. Channel 10 executives have viewed the program and are supportive of the concept of a national one-hour television broadcast that not only showcases the festival but the destination. Matt is meeting with Channel 10 programmers this week to get final approval to move ahead with national broadcast. If we do get the go-ahead, Channel 10 would be seeking some advertising investment from Douglas Shire Council and Tourism Tropical North Queensland to support the broadcast. Channel 10 has two program sponsorship packages, one for approximately \$36k and another for \$18k. If Channel 10 commit to the national broadcast but want some advertising commitment in return, Port Shorts organisers would like to recommend TTNQ for the \$36k package and DSC for the \$18k package. Channel 10's final decision should not hinge on advertising support from festival partners however any sponsorship opportunities will support the concept. **Port Shorts organisers would like Council to consider if they would support investing in the Best Of Port Shorts program if it is broadcast nationally to a primetime audience with an advertising sponsorship that promotes the Douglas Shire to this national audience.**

WHAT NEXT

Port Shorts organisers need to get a revised national marketing plan back to Tourism & Events Queensland by the end of June so we need to finalise if we're doing a Virtual Film Festival only or a live event and/or national television broadcast as well this month as these additional aspects will significantly affect our marketing plan.

Please consider our proposal to defer our current funding agreement for 12 months and enter a new agreement that provides Port Shorts Inc with \$20,000 cash and \$5000 in-kind to produce a COVID-19-compliant live free Best Of Port Shorts event in October 2020.

If you have any feedback positive or negative on the prospect of Council investing in a sponsorship package to promote the destination and support the national television broadcast that Port Shorts organisers and Ambassadors can feed back to Channel 10 that would be greatly appreciated.

Port Shorts organisers will keep Council informed of negotiations with Channel 10 and the amazing opportunities this broadcast would present for our destination as well as our discussions with TTNQ if you would like to be kept updated.