

5.9. DAINTREE RIVER FERRY - RECEIPTING TRIAL

REPORT AUTHOR(S) Darryl Crees, Acting Chief Executive Officer

DEPARTMENT Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- **approves a trial for an additional ferry staff member to receipt on the ferry for the hours 1:00pm to 6:00pm daily from 1 August 2018 to 31 October 2018; and**
- **delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer pursuant to section 257 of the Local Government Act 2009 to finalise any and all matters associated with this trial.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During peak tourist season queues develop at the ferry due to the volume of vehicles wanting to travel across the Daintree River. This report recommends to Council to undertake a trial of engaging an additional staff member/ deck hand to work on the ferry to assist with receipting. It is anticipated that the inclusion of another staff member will deliver efficiencies in the receipting process which in turn could lead to a reduction in wait times at the ferry crossing.

BACKGROUND

Due to successful marketing and the draw card of the Daintree National Park, each year in the peak tourist season there are queues at the ferry crossing. The ferry operates on the basis of "travel in the order of arrival" however at certain times of the day, the number of vehicles waiting to travel exceed the carrying capacity of the ferry. Generally speaking the range of these times are:

- 9:00am to Noon (approximately) – South Bank with travellers heading north; and
- 1:00pm to 6:00pm (approximately) - North Bank with travellers heading south.

The majority of travellers are day trippers who visit the area for a few hours before returning back south of the Daintree River. Accordingly, most of these travellers purchase a return fare however there are travellers who journey from north of the shire down the Bloomfield Track to the ferry and are required to purchase the relevant fare to travel on the ferry.

COMMENT

On the South Bank, the staff operating the ticket booths ensure that at the times when congestion occurs they have a full ferry load receipted so that there are no delays in loading caused by having to issue tickets to travellers. This also means that the staff on the ferry do not have to check and/or issue tickets for the north bound trip.

On the North Bank there is no infrastructure available to operate a ticket booth therefore the staff on board the ferry are required to check and/or issue tickets to travellers on the south

bound trips. At different times the ferry speed has to be reduced to allow this ticketing process to occur.

In an attempt to increase efficiencies in operations, Council investigated having an additional ferry staff member located on the North Bank to undertake the ticket checking/issuing so that this function did not have to occur on the ferry during the south bound trip. Council's Workplace Health & Safety staff have been on site and assessed the risks of an additional person undertaking the ticketing process, which would require them to walk along the road.

With all factors taken into consideration, including driver behaviors, it was determined that the safety risks to that additional staff member could not be mitigated sufficiently to allow for a safe work place. Therefore this initiative cannot proceed.

Although Council cannot proceed with the above initiative, it is deemed important to undertake a trial to the ticketing process onboard the ferry during peak travel periods to determine whether wait times can be reduced. In this regard it is proposed that an additional staff member/deck hand be employed for the hours from 1:00pm to 6:00pm. This trial to be conducted for the period 1 August 2018 to 31 October 2018 and a review to be conducted as to the effectiveness of this trial on wait times. The cost to implement this trial is detailed below.

PROPOSAL

That Council approves a trial as proposed and delegates authority pursuant to section 257 of the Local Government Act 2009 to the CEO to finalise any and all matters associated with this trial.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

In this instance Council's expenditure budget for the ferry operations does not include an allocation for this trial however it is recommended to proceed to determine whether the wait times can be reduced. If successful, a permanent arrangement can be established which will be included in future budgets.

Table 1.

Week Days	Hourly Rate	Hours/Day	\$/Day	No. Days	Cost
Mon to Fri	\$43.41	5	\$217.05	5	\$1,085.25
Saturday	\$51.45	5	\$257.25	1	\$257.25
Sunday	\$67.51	5	\$337.55	1	\$337.55
Weekly Cost					\$1,680.05
1 Aug 2018 to 31 Oct 2018 – approximately 13 weeks					
Approximate Total Cost For Trial Period					\$21,840.65

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications with this trial. Safe management plans are already in place to provide ferry staff members/deck hands direction in how they undertake their duties.

CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

Corporate Plan 2014-2019 Initiatives:

Theme 5 - Governance

5.2.1 - Provide Councillors and community with accurate, unbiased and factual reporting to enable accountable and transparent decision-making.

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:

Fully-Responsible Funding the full cost of a program or activity

CONSULTATION

Internal: The Executive Leadership Team

External: Ferry contractors

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As this is a trial, community engagement is not required at this stage.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil