

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Plea for State to match Federal funding for Cooktown 2020 Festival

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COOKTOWN

Cooktown's 2020 Festival will be boosted by \$5.45 million for local infrastructure from the Federal Government, announced by Prime Minister Scott Morrison in Cooktown on Tuesday.

The funding will support the development of a place of pilgrimage and reflection at the Reconciliation Rocks precinct on Adelaide Street, implementation of the Botanic Gardens Master Plan, upgrades to the Gamaay Dreaming Track and development of the Boathouse on Charlotte Street into a cultural centre. "This funding and these projects are incredibly important to the success of the Cooktown 2020 Festival," Cook Shire Mayor Peter Scott said. "They will create employment and be an attraction in their own right, however to showcase them at the 2020 Festival, we are lobbying the State Government to follow the lead of their Federal counterparts with funding."

The Festival, proposed to include seven weeks of events in 2020, will commemorate the 250th anniversary of James Cook's 48 day stay on Cooktown's Endeavour River in 1770. "It is not a celebration of colonisation, or European arrival, but a commemoration of a pivotal time in our shared history," Cr Scott said. "Cook's stay here included the first recorded act of meaningful reconciliation between the Traditional Owners and Cook's men, as well as significant scientific discoveries. Through the Cooktown 2020 Festival we want to not only commemorate our history, but also showcase our region as a national leader for reconciliation and multiculturalism."

In addition to the 2020 Festival funding, the Prime Minister announced \$6.7 million for a circumnavigation of the country by the replica HMB *Endeavour*, including a stop in Cooktown.

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