

BUDGET 2026–27

An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape. A large, wide river with a light-colored, silty delta flows from the top left towards the center. The river is surrounded by dense, lush green mangrove forests. In the lower half of the image, there is a small settlement or clearing with several small buildings and a cluster of vehicles. A network of red dirt roads winds through the greenery, connecting different parts of the land. The overall scene depicts a natural environment with human presence.

Acknowledgement of Country

Cook Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout the Shire and recognises their continuing connection to lands, water and community.

We pay our respects to the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our vast Shire and to Elders and leaders past, present and emerging.

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Message from the Mayor

This year's budget is about more than numbers on a page. It's about the kind of Shire we're building together, and I'm proud of the balance Council has struck between managing cost pressures responsibly and continuing to invest in the things that matter most to our communities.

Over many months of planning, workshops, briefings and careful consideration, Councillors and staff have worked together to develop a budget that responds to both the challenges we face and the aspirations of our community. A key part of that process has been listening to our residents. Community feedback has played an important role in guiding our decisions and ensuring this budget reflects the priorities of the people who live, work and invest in Cook Shire.

Ratepayers are feeling the same cost-of-living pressures as everyone else, and Council has been mindful of that. General rates and fees and charges have increased modestly this year. We're keeping the \$100 annual discount in place for ratepayers who pay on time and lifting the pensioner concession from \$200 to \$240 per annum, so those doing it toughest get a little more relief.

Through our largest-ever [community budget engagement](#) program, residents told us clearly that roads, footpaths and drainage are their highest priorities. You'll see that reflected in this budget, with significant investment in road renewals, sealing and drainage improvements right across the Shire, backed by more than \$9.3 million in

Council's own capital works and a further \$90 million in Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) restoring our road network.

A liveable Shire is about more than roads. This year's Operational Plan also commits us to investigating innovative waste management and recycling practices, developing a master plan for Lions and Endeavour Parks in Cooktown, and undertaking condition assessments of parks, open space equipment and marine infrastructure across the Shire. We're also investing in shovel-ready project plans and advocacy documents to ensure Cook Shire is well positioned to secure future state and federal funding opportunities.

None of this happens without the many months of work and the countless hours Councillors and staff have dedicated to workshops, briefings, analysis and community conversations across the Shire. The community's willingness to share its views has helped shape the direction of this budget and given Council confidence that we're investing where it matters most. I encourage everyone to read the minutes of the 30 June 2026 Special Meeting of Council to see the full extent of that work, and I thank everyone involved in bringing this budget together.

Cr Robyn Holmes
Mayor, Cook Shire Council



Message from the CEO

In every budget during my term as CEO, I have written a paragraph which states the crux of our methodology:

“Your Council administration will continue to work with Councillors and the community to deliver services and projects in a responsible manner. We continue to work towards long-term financial sustainability.”

This year is no different, and the results are showing. Our revenue will again grow at a greater rate than our expenses. Despite certified agreement pay increases and costs that continue to rise across the economy, we have budgeted almost the same total expenses as the previous financial year (excluding Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements – DRFA). In a high inflationary environment, holding expense growth below inflation while strengthening our core operating result has taken strong fiscal management right across the organisation. It has been achieved while keeping increases to general rates and fees and charges modest, retaining the \$100 annual discount for ratepayers who pay on time, and increasing the Council pensioner concession from \$200 to \$240 per annum.

The community will see that discipline translated into delivery. We will invest more than \$9.3 million in capital

projects this year, with an additional \$90 million in DRFA works restoring our road network. Most of our works will involve sealing and resealing roads and providing new footpaths, kerb and channelling. This is exactly what the community has told us matters most: better roads and core infrastructure across the Shire. Stage 2 of the Shire Hall upgrade will also be completed, delivering a fully disability-compliant facility with sound baffling to support local events.

Our smaller communities remain top of mind. Following the most extensive community consultation conducted in my time with Council, every town and locality will see either works delivered or design commencing on community-led initiatives this year. This budget reflects what you have told us, not guesswork.

I’m very positive about the years ahead for our Shire and communities. Our economy is growing, major projects are flowing into our towns, and we are achieving this while maintaining the feel and beauty of our towns and surrounds. It’s a great time to be living in Cook Shire.

Brian Joiner
Chief Executive Officer, Cook Shire Council



A piece of Laura's railway history beneath a blaze of poinciana.

Budget Overview

Cook Shire Council's 2026–27 budget sets out a considered and community-informed plan to maintain essential services, protect critical infrastructure, and respond to the real cost of delivering them across one of Queensland's most remote and geographically dispersed local government areas.

This year's budget was shaped by more direct community input than any previous budget process. More than 115 community members participated in [Council's budget engagement program](#) — through online surveys, in-person dotmocracy sessions and written submissions — making it the most extensive engagement in Council's history. Roads, footpaths and drainage emerged as the community's highest priority. Cost-of-living pressure was identified as a defining concern, with 77% of participants reporting moderate to severe financial stress. Both findings are directly reflected in the decisions this budget contains.

The budget supports 23 Operational Plan initiatives and a \$9.3 million capital works program. Alongside Council's own capital program, approximately \$90 million in Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) works are expected to be delivered across the Shire during 2026–27, with Council also progressing the recently announced \$2.4 million Davies Hill upgrade through the Queensland Government's Cape York and Torres Strait infrastructure package.

Council is forecasting total operating revenue of approximately \$122.9 million and total operating expenditure of approximately \$136.5 million. As in previous years, DRFA funding represents a significant component of revenue — vital funding that allows Council to restore damaged road infrastructure following severe weather events, but which is restricted to disaster-related works and cannot be applied to other services or community projects.

Cook Shire's fundamental financial challenge remains unchanged: with approximately 2,700 rateable properties supporting the revenue base, Council is responsible for managing more than 100,000 square kilometres of land and an extensive network of roads, bridges, water systems and public infrastructure. This imbalance between asset responsibility and ratepayer income produces a recurring operating deficit once depreciation is taken into account. Council's depreciation expense — estimated at \$15.9 million this year — reflects the ongoing cost of ageing infrastructure and the urgent need for continued investment in asset renewal.

The 2026–27 budget enables Council to sustain vital services, pursue external grant opportunities, and advocate strongly for the long-term investment this Shire requires. It reflects what was heard through community engagement, takes a considered approach to rates and charges, and reinforces Council's commitment to transparency and value for money.

Rates

For 2026–27, Council has moved away from applying a single average percentage increase across all residential rates and instead applied a structured approach that keeps the general rates increase to a fixed dollar amount for the majority of ratepayers.

Approximately 51% of residential ratepayers, including most households in Cooktown and the Shire's rural townships, are assessed at the minimum general rate applicable to their differential rating category. These ratepayers will see their general rates increase by \$79 per year, or around \$1.50 per week.

The remaining residential ratepayers are generally located outside the major townships, where land

has been valued by the Queensland Valuer-General at more than \$130,000. The majority of these properties are assessed under Council's differential rating system, meaning general rates vary according to each property's land valuation and rating category. The minimum rate has increased by 6.6–7.3%, producing median increases of \$150 to \$241 per year.

This approach was a deliberate choice. Rather than applying one averaged percentage that obscures the different impacts on different ratepayers, Council has set charges it can clearly explain — and which it can stand behind in the context of the cost-of-living pressures the community told Council it is experiencing.

What this means for a typical household

General rates are only one component of a rates notice. Water, sewerage and waste collection are charged separately because they reflect the real cost of operating those networks — all of which currently run at a deficit. The following shows the combined change for a typical residential ratepayer across all rates, levies and service charges.

Town	2025–26 \$	2026–27 \$	Change/year \$	Change/week \$
Cooktown (240L bin)	4,250	4,552	+302	5.81
Coen	4,665	4,974	+309	5.94
Laura (240L bin)	4,008	4,342	+334	6.42

Includes general rates, waste collection, environmental and waste operations levies, water access charge (20 mm connection) and sewerage. Water consumption based on 200 kL/year; per-kilolitre charge unchanged.

Supporting ratepayers

From 1 July 2026, Council's own pensioner concession increases from \$200 to a maximum \$240 per annum — providing additional relief to eligible pensioners on top of the Queensland Government's concession of 20%, capped at a maximum of \$200 per annum.

Council's Early Payment Incentive continues, providing a \$100 annual discount (\$50 per rates notice) to ratepayers who pay their rates by the due date.



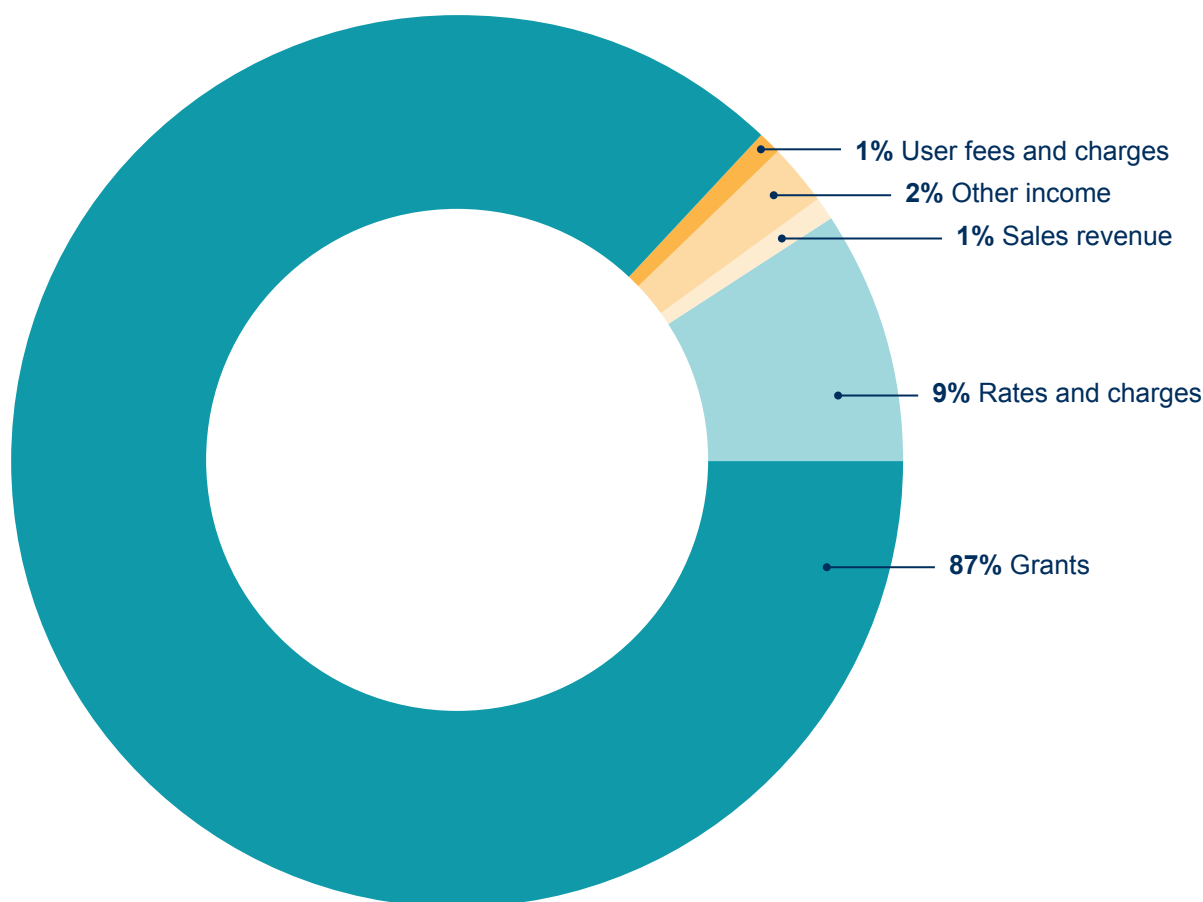
Community conversations in Coen following Tropical Cyclone Narelle in March 2026.

Operational Revenue

Cook Shire Council receives revenue from several streams, with the majority collected through State and Federal Government grants. Council's own-source revenue is made up of rates, levies and cost-recovery charges for services including water, sewerage and waste, as well as user fees, sales revenue and other income.

Our projected operational revenue for 2026–27 is approximately \$122.9 million.

PROJECTED REVENUE 2026–27 \$122.9 MILLION



As in previous years, DRFA funding is the largest single component of Council's revenue. It is important to note that this funding is restricted — it can only be used for the restoration of infrastructure damaged by disaster events and cannot be redirected to other services or community priorities. Council's own-source revenue — rates, fees, charges and sales — funds the day-to-day delivery of services and local infrastructure the community relies on.

Gross rates, levies and charges are forecast at approximately \$11.6 million, an increase of \$979,000 on 2025–26, reflecting the rate and service charge changes described in the Rates section above.

Expenses

Cook Shire Council is committed to making the Shire a vibrant place to live and work, and an exciting place to visit. In 2026–27, the expected operational cost to deliver on this commitment is approximately \$136.5 million.

Council's cost base continues to increase above the national Consumer Price Index, driven by wages and on-costs, electricity, insurance and contractor rates. These pressures are not unique to Cook Shire, but the distances involved in delivering services across more than 100,000 square kilometres make them particularly acute. Council's focus remains on finding efficiencies and directing resources where the community has said they matter most.

Below is a snapshot of how funds have been allocated to support our community in 2026–27.

ROADS, FOOTPATHS, DRAINAGE AND PUBLIC WORKS

\$90.4 million 

Maintaining roads, kerbs, bridges, footpaths, drains, car parks and boat ramps, including works funded under Council's DRFA program.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

\$8.7 million 

Supplying water and sewerage services via seven treatment plants, operating 12 waste disposal facilities and collecting household waste from approximately 1,500 properties across the Shire.

COMMUNITY LIVEABILITY

\$15 million 

Keeping Cook Shire a great place to live through health inspections, responsible pet ownership, tourism and local business support, community events, disaster planning and management, engagement and communications.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

\$4.7 million 

Providing construction and maintenance of facilities to use for little to no cost including parks, playgrounds, community halls, public toilets, Cooktown's Events Centre and swimming pools, galleries, airports, sports fields, heritage sites and buildings and funding for community groups.

DEPRECIATION

\$15.9 million

An accounting method to recognise the reduction in value of Council's assets each year, as they approach the end of their useful life.

CORPORATE ADMINISTRATION

\$1.7 million

Managing Council operations including State and Federal legislation compliance, records management, information technology, human resources, reception, elected members and Council meetings.

Capital Works

The 2026–27 capital works program reflects Council's commitment to delivering the infrastructure our communities rely on while pursuing every available opportunity to leverage external funding and reduce the burden on ratepayers. Roads, drainage and essential services infrastructure remain the clear focus — directly responding to the community's highest stated priority.

This year's program delivers almost \$9.4 million in capital investment across the Shire, including projects funded through Queensland Government programs and Council's own resources. Alongside the Capital Works Program, approximately \$90 million in DRFA works are expected to be delivered during 2026–27, and Council is also progressing the \$2.4 million Davies Hill upgrade through the Queensland Government's Cape York and Torres Strait infrastructure package.

Works have been prioritised based on strategic risk, compliance, asset condition and community value. Selection criteria include:

- renewal of essential or high-risk infrastructure
- alignment with Council's Community, Corporate and Operational Plans
- compliance, environmental impact and safety requirements
- community priorities and consultation outcomes
- preference for maintaining existing assets over creating new ones

Council continues to actively pursue external funding to reduce pressure on ratepayers and deliver broader infrastructure outcomes across the Shire.



Every waste stream has its place at the Cooktown Waste Transfer Station.

CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM 2026–27

Budget Node	Location	Description	Type	Funding Body	Total Project Cost \$	Budget 2026–27 \$	Total Council Contribution \$
Building & Facilities	Various	Capital Works Allocation	Renewal	Council	200,000	200,000	200,000
Water & Waste Water	Various	Capital Works Allocation	Renewal	Council	300,000	300,000	300,000
Civil & Roads	Various	Capital Works Allocation - Footpath Network	Renewal	Council	200,000	200,000	200,000
Building & Facilities	Cooktown	Depot Redevelopment - Safety and Security	Renewal	Council	200,000	200,000	200,000
Fleet	Cooktown	Fleet Renewal Program	Renewal	Council	500,000	500,000	500,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Adelaide Street - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	Council	130,000	130,000	130,000
Civil & Roads	Lakeland	Hurse Road Culvert	New	Council	150,000	150,000	150,000
Building & Facilities	Cooktown	Shire Hall Sound Baffling	New	Council	100,000	100,000	100,000
Waste	Lakeland	Rehabilitation of Lakeland Landfill	N/A	Council	700,000	700,000	700,000
Waste	Cooktown	Geotechnical Works - Cooktown Waste Transfer Station	N/A	Council	200,000	200,000	200,000
Parks & Open Spaces	Cooktown	Cooktown Historic Railway Trail External Works Rectification	New	Council	162,310	162,310	162,310
Airports	Cooktown	Cooktown Airport Fencing	Renewal	RAUP/Council	75,000	37,500	75,000
Building & Facilities	Various	Events Centre & Bloomfield Hall - Solar Panels	New	CEUF/Council	612,156	306,078	612,156
Civil & Roads	Bloomfield	Weary Bay Esplanade - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	TIDS/R2R	700,000	-	700,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Railway Avenue East - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	TIDS/R2R	910,000	-	910,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Finch Bay Road - Upgrade to Seal & Drainage Improvements	Upgrade	TIDS/R2R	750,000	-	750,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Knight Lane - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	18,500	-	18,500
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Tip Access Road - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	260,000	-	260,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Wawu Lane and Cemetery Frontage - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	150,000	-	150,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Ida Street, Parkinson Street to Malanda Street - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	90,000	-	90,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Power Street - Section Boundary Street to Howard Street - Upgrade to Seal & Drainage	Upgrade	R2R	110,000	-	110,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Police Camp Road - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	65,000	-	65,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	West Starke Street and Bradbury Street - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	160,000	-	160,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Brown Street - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	35,000	-	35,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Unit Street - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	84,000	-	84,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Hip On Street - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	58,000	-	58,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Pandanus Street - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	45,000	-	45,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Hutchinson Street - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	195,000	-	195,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Starke East Street to Ratcliffe Road - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	95,000	-	95,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Bauhina Street - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	75,000	-	75,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Burkitt Street - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	60,000	-	60,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Hagarty Close - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	45,000	-	45,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	South Road - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	80,000	-	80,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Walsh Close - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	140,000	-	140,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Clay Close - Upgrade to Seal	Upgrade	R2R	120,000	-	120,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Hope Street - Reseal	Renewal	R2R	398,000	-	398,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Ida Street - Reseal	Renewal	R2R	122,000	-	122,000
Civil & Roads	Rossville	Causeway at Devil's Elbow, Mt. Amos Road	New	R2R	300,000	-	300,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Fairview Palmerville Road Drainage Upgrades (Yellow Belly, Rocky Creek, Christmas Creek Causeways)	Upgrade	R2R	650,000	-	650,000
Civil & Roads	Cooktown	Finch Bay Road - New Culverts and Causeway	New	TIDS/R2R	105,000	-	105,000
Total					9,349,966		3,185,888

Budgeted Statement of Comprehensive Income

Income	Budget 2026–27 \$'000	Forecast 2027–28 \$'000	Forecast 2028–29 \$'000
Recurrent Revenue			
Gross rates, levies and charges	11,593	12,162	12,758
Less discount and remissions	(241)	(241)	(241)
Fees and charges	1,455	1,506	1,559
Sales revenue	1,134	1,174	1,215
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations	106,771	65,000	54,954
Total recurrent revenue	120,712	79,600	70,244
Capital revenue			
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations	6,164	6,672	8,006
Total Capital Revenue	6,164	6,672	8,006
Other income			
Rental income	728	753	780
Interest and investment revenue	1,249	1,082	1,061
Other income	219	318	302
Total other income	2,196	2,153	2,143
Total income	129,073	88,426	80,393
Expenses			
Recurrent expenses			
Employee benefits	20,385	20,997	21,626
Materials and services	100,069	59,680	52,842
Finance costs	131	131	131
Depreciation - Property plant and equipment	15,924	16,208	16,537
Total recurrent expenses	136,510	97,016	91,136
Total expenses	136,510	97,016	91,136
Net operating result	(13,601)	(15,262)	(18,750)
Net result	(7,437)	(8,590)	(10,743)
Other comprehensive income			
Items that will not be reclassified to net result	-	-	-
Increase/(decrease) in asset revaluation surplus	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income	-	-	-

Budgeted Statement of Financial Position

	Budget 2026–27 \$'000	Forecast 2027–28 \$'000	Forecast 2028–29 \$'000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	46,261	45,517	41,614
Receivables	1,200	900	600
Inventories	800	800	800
Contract assets	1,700	1,700	1,700
Total current assets	49,961	48,917	44,714
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	562,935	555,249	548,569
Total non-current assets	562,935	555,249	548,569
Total assets	612,896	604,166	593,283
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Payables	1,750	1,750	1,750
Contract liabilities	4,000	4,000	4,000
Borrowings	353	353	353
Provisions	3,000	3,000	3,000
Other Liabilities	144	144	144
Total Current Liabilities	9,247	9,247	9,247
Non-current liabilities			
Borrowings	802	793	784
Provisions	12,000	12,000	12,000
Other liabilities	381	381	381
Total non-current liabilities	13,183	13,174	13,165
Total liabilities	22,430	22,421	22,412
Net community assets	590,465	581,745	570,871
Community equity			
Asset revaluation surplus	483,398	483,398	483,398
Retained surplus/(deficiency)	107,067	98,347	87,473
Total community equity	590,465	581,745	570,871

Long Term Financial Forecast

	2025–26 Estimate \$'000	2026–27 Budget \$'000	2027–28 Forecast \$'000	2028–29 Forecast \$'000	2029–30 Forecast \$'000	2030–31 Forecast \$'000	2031–32 Forecast \$'000	2032–33 Forecast \$'000	2033–34 Forecast \$'000	2034–35 Forecast \$'000	2035–36 Forecast \$'000
Operating Revenue											
Net rates, levies and charges	10,382	11,353	11,921	12,517	13,143	13,800	14,352	14,926	15,523	16,144	16,789
Fees and charges	1,690	1,455	1,506	1,559	1,613	1,670	1,711	1,754	1,798	1,843	1,889
Sales Revenue	1,269	1,134	1,174	1,215	1,257	1,301	1,334	1,367	1,401	1,436	1,472
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations	99,620	106,771	65,000	54,954	54,363	57,520	57,534	57,109	57,178	57,203	57,309
Rental Income	616	728	753	780	807	835	865	895	926	959	992
Interest Received	1,615	1,249	1,082	1,061	1,146	1,169	1,132	1,189	1,196	1,148	1,171
Other Income	615	219	318	302	325	314	313	314	313	316	314
Total Operating revenue	115,807	122,909	81,754	72,387	72,654	76,609	77,241	77,554	78,336	79,049	79,937
Capital Revenue											
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations	13,809	6,164	6,672	8,006	7,234	6,306	5,644	6,772	6,792	6,550	6,413
	13,809	6,164	6,672	8,006	7,234	6,306	5,644	6,772	6,792	6,550	6,413
Total Revenue	129,616	129,073	88,426	80,393	79,888	82,914	82,884	84,326	85,128	85,598	86,350
Operating Expenses											
Employee benefits	18,424	20,385	20,997	21,626	22,275	22,943	23,632	24,341	25,071	25,823	26,598
Materials and services	77,908	100,069	59,680	52,842	53,038	55,924	56,386	56,614	57,185	57,706	58,354
Finance costs	142	131	131	131	131	131	131	131	131	131	52
Depreciation & amortisation	15,503	15,924	16,208	16,537	16,828	17,088	17,326	17,602	17,878	18,147	18,410
Total Operating expenses	111,977	136,510	97,016	91,136	92,271	96,087	97,474	98,688	100,265	101,806	103,414
Total Expenses	111,977	136,510	97,016	91,136	92,271	96,087	97,474	98,688	100,265	101,806	103,414
Operating Result	3,829	(13,601)	(15,262)	(18,750)	(19,617)	(19,476)	(20,234)	(21,134)	(21,930)	(22,757)	(23,477)
Net result	17,638	(7,437)	(8,590)	(10,743)	(12,384)	(13,172)	(14,590)	(14,362)	(15,137)	(16,208)	(17,064)
Capital works program expenditure	16,361	9,350	8,522	9,856	8,734	7,806	7,144	8,272	8,292	8,050	7,913
Community Assets											
Total assets	642,600	612,896	604,166	593,283	585,189	575,906	565,724	556,395	546,809	536,712	526,214
Total liabilities	39,797	22,430	22,421	22,412	22,403	22,394	22,385	22,376	22,367	22,358	22,354
Net Community Assets	602,803	590,465	581,745	570,871	562,786	553,512	543,339	534,019	524,442	514,354	503,860

Operational Plan 2026–27



On the ground: Council crews delivering improvements to Cameron Creek Road

Acknowledgment of Country

Cook Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout the Shire and recognises their continuing connection to lands, water and community. We pay our respects to the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across our vast Shire and to elders and leaders past, present and emerging.

About the Operational Plan

The adoption and implementation of an Operational Plan is a requirement under Section 174 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*. It is an annual document which outlines activities and actions Council will undertake for the financial year 2026-2027 in accordance with the adopted budget. These activities and actions directly align to the themes and strategies of Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2027, aiming to progress the long-term strategic direction of Cook Shire.

1. Places for People
2. Wellbeing and Empowerment
3. Accessibility and Connectivity
4. Economic Development
5. Environmental Responsibility
6. Organisational Capability

Measuring Performance

Quarterly reports will be presented to Council that document the progress towards the completion of the adopted Operational Plan.

Managing Risk

The operational planning process includes the management of council's strategic and operational risks. Implementation of the Operational plan will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Risk Management Framework.

Theme 1 – PLACES FOR PEOPLE

Creation of relaxed, welcoming and liveable places and spaces for all

- PLA 1** Advocate with State and Federal Governments for Resolution of Land Tenure constraints impacting on Cape York Peninsula.
- PLA 2** Advocate with key stakeholders for the growing residential population to be provided with access to diverse, affordable and accessible lifestyle housing options.
- PLA 3** Improve the amenity value and sustainable uses of our streetscapes and public open spaces.
- PLA 4** Adopt a place-based approach to development in our town centres and gathering places to increase activation, improve wayfinding and create inviting and attractive destinations for all communities.

Project Ref. #	Operational Initiative / Project	Description	Measure of Success	Responsibility	Budget
OP27-1	Laura Entry Statement	Review and refresh of a 'Welcome to Laura' entry statement and signage to improve the amenity of the town for locals and visitors and showcase local heritage and culture.	Installation of a new entry statement / signage for Laura.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Regional Development	\$50,000
OP27-2	Rossville Marketplace Scour Repair Works	Address significant scouring and erosion around a large tree and riverbank at the Rossville marketplace area, while preserving both the tree (where feasible) and the structural integrity of the adjacent bank and marketplace structures.	Works completed.	Director Infrastructure / Manager Engineering	\$60,000
OP27-3	Maytown Cemetery Signage	Install interpretive signage at the Maytown Cemetery to acknowledge those buried at the site, for both local heritage preservation and visitor interest, consistent with the historic character of the site and surrounding Palmer River goldfields area.	Signage designed, procured and installed at the Maytown Cemetery, with content reflecting the site's cultural and heritage significance.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Regional Development	\$10,000
OP27-4	Open Area Stage	Prepare an options paper for Council consideration for the design and construction of an outdoor performance stage (permanent and/or temporary) in a suitable open area, to support community events, markets, and cultural activities across the shire.	Report presented to Council by December 2026.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Building and Facilities	Absorbed into operational budget

<i>Project Ref. #</i>	<i>Operational Initiative / Project</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Measure of Success</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Budget</i>
OP27-5	Review of Events Centre Master Plan	Desktop review of the existing Event Centre Master Plan to assess its relevance, priorities, and alignment with current community needs and Council's strategic direction.	Review completed and findings reported to Council; updated or reaffirmed Master Plan endorsed by Council.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Regional Development	Absorbed into operational budget
OP27-6	Lions and Endeavour Parks Master Plan — Cooktown	Develop a Master Plan for Lions Park and Endeavour Park, Cooktown, to guide the long-term activation, improvement, and maintenance of both precincts.	Draft Master Plan presented to Council for feedback; final Master Plan endorsed by Council; document is grant-ready and suitable for use in external funding applications and future project planning.	Director Infrastructure	\$70,000

Theme 2 – WELLBEING AND EMPOWERMENT

Development of a resilient, healthy and compassionate Shire, united in community pride

- WEL 1** Support communities across the shire to become more resilient, self-sufficient and sustainable, with a continued focus on genuine regional collaboration.
- WEL 2** Facilitate and advocate for the provision of regional education facilities delivering a wide range of tertiary and vocational study and training opportunities.
- WEL 3** Advocate for a full range of regional health services providing our communities with 'whole of life' care.
- WEL 4** Support, acknowledge and celebrate indigenous cultural heritage and history and foster the development of productive partnerships with indigenous people and groups across the Shire.

<i>Project Ref. #</i>	<i>Operational Initiative / Project</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Measure of Success</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Budget</i>
OP27-7	Local Disaster Management Plan Review	Review and update the Cook Shire Local Disaster Management Plan to ensure it remains current, compliant with the <i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i> (Qld), and reflective of current community risk profiles, inter-agency arrangements and lessons learned from recent events including Tropical Cyclones Narelle and Maila.	The updated Local Disaster Management Plan is endorsed by the Local Disaster Management Group, adopted by Council, and submitted to the Queensland Disaster Management Committee in accordance with statutory requirements.	Chief Operating Officer / Disaster Management Officer	Absorbed into operational budget
OP27-8	Portland Roads Helicopter Landing Pad – Feasibility and Design	Investigate the need for and develop a shovel-ready design and costing for, a dedicated helicopter landing pad at Portland Roads to improve emergency access and aeromedical response capability for this remote coastal community.	Feasibility assessment and shovel-ready design/costing documentation completed for a helicopter landing pad at Portland Roads, ready for funding submission.	Chief Operating Officer / Disaster Management Officer	\$35,000

Theme 3 – ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

A growing Shire that supports active, connected and mobile communities

- ACC 1** Preserve access to the range of natural areas throughout our region and balance the conservation of natural values with our lifestyle expectations.
- ACC 2** Encourage the development of partnerships to promote investment in state-of-the-art and efficient telecommunications services that meet the growing needs of our region.
- ACC 3** Advocate for efficient, effective and sustainable freight links across the shire to provide flexible and cost effective solutions for industry.
- ACC 4** Support active transport to enhance walking and cycling in Cook Shire and ensure our pedestrian and cyclist networks are well-designed, safe, and accessible and encourage increased use.

Project Ref. #	Operational Initiative / Project	Description	Measure of Success	Responsibility	Budget
OP27-9	Marine Infrastructure	Develop and implement a marine infrastructure program supporting maintenance and ancillary improvements to increase community use and connectivity with water-based activities.	Condition assessments completed. A report outlining structural integrity, estimated remaining life, and recommended remediation measures for improved community access to marine infrastructure.	Director Infrastructure / Manager Engineering	\$65,000
OP27-10	Open Spaces Equipment and Seating	Condition assessments of open spaces equipment, seating and other outdoor furnishings in various parks and open spaces Shire-wide, to identify items for minor repairs, rehabilitation or replacement over the next two years.	Up-to-date condition assessments completed and works commenced through a two-year program. Improved safety, use and amenity of parks and outdoor spaces.	Director Infrastructure / Manager Engineering	\$50,000 (Year 1)
OP27-11	Management Plans for Council Reserves	Develop and implement management plans for Council reserves used by travellers, to support sustainable access and protect environmental and cultural values.	Management plans completed and endorsed for Coen, Starcke, Marina Plains, Lakeland and Port Stewart reserves, with plans lodged with relevant land managers and approval authorities as applicable.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Planning and Environment	Absorbed into operational budget

Theme 4 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A sustainable, diverse and innovative economy that attracts investment and provides local employment all year round

- ECO 1** Improve Investor confidence and foster a “can do” attitude that encourages investment and assists businesses to develop, with a focus on emerging industries.
ECO 2 Adopt Land Use, Transport and Infrastructure planning methodologies which encourage and facilitate public and private sector investment and development.
ECO 3 Advocate for a sustainable, viable and active waterfront in Cooktown.

Project Ref. #	Operational Initiative / Project	Description	Measure of Success	Responsibility	Budget
OP27-12	Advocate to State and Federal Government for high priority initiatives	Advocate, facilitate and progress high priority community infrastructure and service projects supporting economic growth and community wellbeing.	Preparation of a suite of advocacy documents for distribution to key stakeholders. The progression of high priority initiatives and projects through advocacy efforts, partnerships, secured funding and delivery outcomes.	Chief Executive Officer	Absorbed into operational budget
OP27-13	Planning and Development Customer Experience Improvements	Implement improvements to public access to planning and development information and services through upgrade of Council's planning and development website content. Investigation and implementation of an online pre-lodgement booking system using existing systems.	Updated website content published. Online pre-lodgement booking system investigated and if feasible, operational and promoted to the public.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Planning and Environment	Absorbed into operational budget

Theme 5 – ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

To be recognised as a leader in environmental management, enhancing and sustainably managing our local natural areas and resources

- ENV 1 Encourage investment in alternative energy and water efficiency initiatives, including consideration of emerging technologies.
 ENV 2 Manage proactively invasive plants and animals to protect the Shire's natural environment.
 ENV 3 Encourage residents to reduce, reuse, re-purpose, re-gift and recycle waste.

Project Ref. #	Operational Initiative / Project	Description	Measure of Success	Responsibility	Budget
OP27-14	Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan 2027-2037	Development of a new Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan to provide clear and contemporary strategic direction for waste reduction, recycling and resource recovery activities across Cook Shire, for both Council operations and the broader community. The plan will establish agreed priorities, targets and actions that reflect current local conditions, service arrangements and realistic waste diversion opportunities, supporting consistent decision-making and long-term planning.	Completion of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan 2027-2037. Achieve legislative compliance under the <i>Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 (Qld)</i>.	Director Infrastructure / Waste Management Coordinator	\$85,000
OP27-15	Waste to Energy Feasibility Study	Commission a Waste-to-Energy (WtE) Feasibility Study to investigate the viability of transitioning some or all of Cook Shire's waste stream toward energy recovery, as a long-term alternative to landfill disposal. The study will assess available technologies, the Shire's waste stream composition, potential energy outputs, costs, environmental impacts, and funding pathways — providing Council with the decision about future waste infrastructure investment.	Completion of the feasibility study.	Director Infrastructure / Manager Water and Waste	\$50,000

<i>Project Ref. #</i>	<i>Operational Initiative / Project</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Measure of Success</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Budget</i>
OP27-16	Mosquito CO2 Light Trapping	Trapping of live mosquitoes to identify and manage risks of mosquito borne diseases across high density population areas of Cook Shire.	Trapping exercises carried out during the wet season. Identification and reporting of mosquito species in conjunction with Queensland Health.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Planning and Environment	Absorbed into operational budget
OP27-17	Biosecurity Plan 2026–2031	Review of Council's Biosecurity Plan for 2026–2031 providing strategic direction for the identification, prevention and management of biosecurity risks across Cook Shire, including invasive plants and animals, in alignment with the <i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i> (Qld) and Council's land management obligations.	Biosecurity Plan 2026–2031 completed, endorsed by ELT and adopted by Council.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Planning and Environment	Absorbed into operational budget

Theme 6 – ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

An organisation characterised by strong leadership, good governance, effective community engagement and excellence in delivery

ORG 1 Manage council's activities and decision-making with strategic oversight, transparency and accountability.

ORG 2 Plan and manage the Shire's resources and assets in an efficient and sustainable manner.

ORG 3 Focus on collaborative projects that add value to the Shire's economic, social and environmental outcomes.

<i>Project Ref. #</i>	<i>Operational Initiative / Project</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Measure of Success</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Budget</i>
OP27-18	See Cook Shire: Expanding our visual library	Expand and enhance Council's media library to produce engaging content for marketing, social media, reports, and tourism promotion.	A renewed collection of high-quality, professionally captured video and photography assets covering diverse locations and themes across Cook Shire.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Communications and Engagement	\$20,000
OP27-19	Water and Wastewater Network Mapping – Coen	All water and wastewater reticulation assets in Coen will be identified and mapped, finalising Council's water and wastewater asset mapping program, already undertaken in Cooktown, Laura and Lakeland.	A complete mapping system for water and wastewater reticulation assets in Coen.	Director Infrastructure / Manager Water and Waste	\$60,000
OP27-20	Community Scorecard Study 2027	An independent, biennial community sentiment and performance measurement study that provides Council with robust, evidence-based insights into community satisfaction, priorities, trust, and perceptions of Council performance. Building on the successful delivery of the 2023 and 2025 Scorecards, Council proposes to repeat the study to ensure continuity of data, trend analysis, and informed decision-making. The project will measure changes over time, assess the impact of actions taken in response to previous results, and guide future strategic, operational, and advocacy priorities.	Consultation completed and Community Scorecard report and data analysis received.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Communications and Engagement	\$20,000

<i>Project Ref. #</i>	<i>Operational Initiative / Project</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Measure of Success</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Budget</i>
OP27-21	Asset Improvement Program – Year 2 of 3	Continue the systematic verification, correction and recording of Council's asset data to ensure all assets are accurately captured in Council's asset management system, completing Year 2 milestones of the three-year program.	Year 2 milestones of the Asset Improvement Program are completed, with targeted asset classes verified and updated in Council's asset management system, and a progress report presented to ELT.	Chief Operating Officer / Manager Finance	\$40,000
OP27-22	Technology innovation	Conduct a Technology and Innovation Review across all service areas, identifying opportunities to improve efficiency through digital tools, AI, and systems modernisation.	Review is complete and recommendations endorsed by ELT.	Chief Executive Officer	\$30,000
OP27-23	Shovel Ready Project Planning	Develop a portfolio of shovel-ready project plans for priority Council infrastructure and development projects, ready for activation when funding becomes available.	Completion of shovel ready project plans. Projects will be selected based on priority needs and as identified and endorsed in Council's strategic planning documents.	Chief Executive Officer	\$200,000

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