

2025-26 OPERATIONAL PLAN



About the Operational Plan

The adoption and implementation of an Operational Plan is 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 2025-2026 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 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.

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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. #	Project	Outcome	Corporate Plan Ref.	Responsibility	Funding	
					Grant \$	Council \$
OP26-1	Ayton Drainage Rectification	Once completed, the upgraded stormwater infrastructure will reduce flooding incidents on Third Street and East Street, preventing property damage and lessening the inconvenience experienced by local residents. A well-designed kerb and channel network will improve road safety by minimizing water pooling on carriageways, reducing the likelihood of hydroplaning and pothole formation. The project will also help Council control ongoing maintenance costs by alleviating the need for frequent emergency repairs. Overall, these improvements will enhance the liveability of Bloomfield and reinforce the Council's commitment to responsive community service.	PLA 3	Manager Engineering		Absorbed into operational budget
OP26-2 UPDATE	Rossville Marketplace – Safety Initiative	Trimming works will be carried out on the large shade trees located at the Rossville marketplace. The works will result in a safer, more accessible public space with improved sightlines and reduced risk of branch failure, while maintaining the natural character and shade value that the	PLA 4	Manager Engineering		\$18,000

		trees provide to this regularly used community area.				
OP26-3	Perfume Gully, Lakeland	Work with the Lakeland community to deliver rehabilitation of the site and improvements to its recreational amenity, including walking trails.	PLA 3	Manager Engineering		<i>Absorbed into operational budget</i>
OP26-28 UPDATE	Cooktown and Surrounds Masterplan	Commence a masterplan for Cooktown to enable housing growth in areas without essential services and infrastructure (road access, power, water, etc.) Masterplan to include connectivity of walking paths and other active transport options.	ECO 2	Manager Planning and Environment	\$325,000	
OP26-32 NEW	Cape York Regional Plan Review	Engagement of a suitably qualified planning consultant to support Council's review and submission to the Cape York Regional Plan.	PLA 2 PLA 3	Manager Planning and Environment		\$30,000

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.

Project Ref. #	Project	Outcome	Corporate Plan Ref.	Responsibility	Funding	
					Grant \$	Council \$
OP26-4 UPDATE	Landowner Bushfire Mitigation Plans	Landowners across the Shire have an increased resiliency to fire and are able to implement new strategies to reduce their overall fire risk.	WEL 1	Disaster Management Officer	\$35,000	
OP26-5	Free Dumping Days in Preparation of Extreme Weather Events	<p>Reduced risk of cyclone-related damage by removing the waste that can damage homes, cars and other infrastructure (e.g. power lines).</p> <p>Reduced risk of injury or death by removing waste that may become airborne.</p> <p>Removing debris ahead of time ensures that the waste transfer stations are able to transfer waste to landfill before a serious weather event.</p> <p>Community preparedness and awareness, including supporting vulnerable members of the community.</p>	WEL 1	Waste Management Coordinator		<i>Absorbed into operational budget</i>
OP26-6	Lakeland Health Services	<p>Continue to advocate for improved and expanded access to health services for the Lakeland community.</p> <p>Local health services will also support the Lakeland First Responder volunteer group who attend to multiple road accidents and other</p>	WEL 3	Chief Executive Officer		<i>Absorbed into operational budget</i>

		emergencies, each year, of both locals and travellers to the region.				
OP26-7	Regional Aged Care	Continue to advocate and plan for a Regional Aged Care facility in Cooktown, including resolution of land tenure matters at the identified site.	WEL 3	Chief Executive Officer		<i>Absorbed into operational budget</i>
OP26-8	Cook Shire Community Safety Enhancement	<p>This project aims to improve community safety and wellbeing across Cook Shire through a multi-faceted approach. Key actions include the installation of CCTV in public spaces (subject to funding), advocacy for a 24-hour police presence throughout the Shire, and supporting the development of community-led Neighbourhood Watch programs in each township.</p> <p>These initiatives are designed to deter crime, increase community confidence, and promote a safer environment for residents and visitors alike.</p>	WEL	Chief Operating Officer		<i>Absorbed into operational budget</i>
OP26-31 NEW	Lakeland Hall Upgrades for Health Clinics	<p>Successful progress has been made on the Operational Plan initiative to advocate for improved health services in Lakeland (OP26-6).</p> <p>Upgrades to the Lakeland Hall will provide an appropriate venue for health and medical clinics.</p>	WEL 3	Chief Executive Officer		\$20,000

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. #	Project	Outcome	Corporate Plan Ref.	Responsibility	Funding	
					Grant \$	Council \$
OP26-9	Priority Roads off-alignment in Cook Shire	Work towards aligning Council's roads within road reserves and avoiding encroachment onto private property, thereby reducing the risk of Council liability.	ACC 1 ORG 2	Land Tenure Officer		Absorbed into operational budget
OP26-10	Ida St. and May St. Intersection Pedestrian Safety Improvements	Enhancing this intersection will maintain or improve pedestrian safety, especially for school children, while preserving traffic efficiency. Improvements to line marking and installation of new signage will reduce near misses, limit speeding, and preserve the intersection's traffic flow.	ACC 4	Manager Engineering		\$20,000
OP26-11	Ayton Footpath Network	Continue to deliver expansion of the Ayton footpath network.	ACC 4	Manager Engineering	\$220,000 <i>Local Roads & Community Infrastructure program</i>	

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 with encourage and facilitate public and private sector investment and development.

ECO 3 Advocate for a sustainable, viable and active waterfront in Cooktown.

Project Ref. #	Project	Outcome	Corporate Plan Ref.	Responsibility	Funding	
					Grant \$	Council \$
OP26-12	Economic Development Strategy Refresh	Review of the Economic Development Strategy would result in an updated roadmap that aligns economic priorities with current market conditions, identifies new growth opportunities, and provides clearer guidance for resource allocation and stakeholder coordination to drive sustainable economic growth.	ECO 1	Manager Regional Development		Absorbed into operational budget
OP26-13	Small Business Development	Support businesses with access to resources and funding, and targeted programs that help entrepreneurs start, grow, and sustain their businesses while strengthening the local economic ecosystem.	ECO 1	Manager Regional Development		Absorbed into operational budget
OP26-14	Building Tourism Across the Shire	Increase in tourist experiences across the region through working with prospective tour operators expressing interest in business opportunities. Creating coordinated and targeted strategies to increase tourist numbers, extend visitor stays, and generate economic benefits throughout the Shire.	ECO 1	Manager Regional Development		Absorbed into operational budget

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OP26-15	Cooktown Dinghy Pontoon – Advocacy	Continue to advocate for funding for the installation of a new pontoon in the Cooktown harbour to provide improved safety of residents living on vessels, tendering to and from the shore, as well as other recreational and commercial boat users.	ECO 3	Chief Executive Officer		<i>Absorbed into operational budget</i>
OP26-29 NEW	Explore Cooktown and Cape York tourism website upgrade	Upgrade and overhaul the existing tourism website to align with the new Council website. Aiming to increase in website traffic and promotion of Cooktown and Cape York as a holiday destination	ECO	Manager Regional Development		\$40,000

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 alternate 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. #	Project	Outcome	Corporate Plan Ref.	Responsibility	Funding	
					Grant \$	Council \$
OP26-16	Animal Desexing Program	Provision of free and/or subsidised pet desexing within the Shire to manage excessive breeding and unwanted pets.	ENV 2	Compliance Officer / Manager Planning and Environment		\$20,000
OP26-17	Lakeland Stormwater Drains Cleaning Project	Significantly reduce the risk of stormwater overflow and improve overall drainage performance in Lakeland. Residents will benefit from fewer flood-related disruptions, and the improved water flow will help maintain the integrity of road surfaces and private accesses.	ENV	Manager Engineering		\$30,000
OP26-18	Increased Use of Renewable Energy	Investigate further opportunities to utilise renewal energy solutions at Council facilities.	ENV 1	Building and Facilities Team Leader		<i>Absorbed into operational budget</i>
OP26-30 NEW	Leak Detection Dogs	Specially trained dogs can be used to detect leaks in water and wastewater infrastructure up to 6m underground and have been highly successful in various other council areas. This initiative could save the Council approximately \$128,820 in lost water revenue. The program will also provide an opportunity for	ENV 1	Manager Water and Waste		\$20,000

		good public relations with leak detection dogs visible working around town with their handlers.				
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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.

Project Ref. #	Project	Outcome	Corporate Plan Ref.	Responsibility	Funding	
					Grant \$	Council \$
OP25-19	Corporate Plan 2026-2031	Council's 5-year Corporate Plan is reviewed a year early to align with the 10-year Community Plan. A Corporate Plan review will ensure Shire-wide strategic outcomes are relevant and aligned with the current community vision.	ORG 1	Manager Office of the CEO		\$10,000
OP26-20	Regional Impound Facility - Concept Plan	A new pound will improve the welfare of impounded animals, increase staff safety and morale, make the housing of impounded animals more efficient and increase overall capacity. In addition, a new facility will enable Council to assist neighbouring local government areas before, during and after disaster events. By way of an example, Cook's ability to assist Wujal Wujal post-Jasper was severely impeded by the current design/facility.	ORG 3	Manager Biosecurity and Local Laws		\$10,000
OP26-21 UPDATE	Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP)	Developing a new LGIP will: improve alignment with the current planning scheme, strategic priorities, and growth forecasts, address identified inconsistencies; provide clearer and more accurate data for identifying and delivering shared infrastructure; help Council estimate costs effectively; increase transparency of	ORG 2	Manager Planning and Environment Director Infrastructure		\$165,000

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		Council's provision of trunk infrastructure; support better financial planning and decision making; ensure compliance and support sustainable growth.				
OP26-22	Pound Fencing Upgrade	Replaced and upgraded fencing will make the pound more secure, eliminate the risk of cuts and scratches to staff and animals and remove the need for officers to spend time patching holes.	ORG 2	Manager Planning and Environment		\$10,000
OP26-23 UPDATE	Coen Landfill Fencing Upgrade	Installation of fencing and gate at the Coen Landfill to build reliable data on the waste types and volumes received at the facility and restrict unmonitored access to reduce risk and improve compliance.	ORG 2 ORG 3	Waste Management Coordinator		\$62,000
OP26-25	Commercial Road Crew Feasibility Study	An additional and dedicated commercial road crew would build organisational capability, not only ensuring quicker remediation of TMR roads but also positioning Cook Shire Council to generate revenue through external contracts. Potential advantages include improved local employment opportunities, better scheduling control for critical works, and enhanced capacity to leverage state and federal funding. This model could yield a self-sustaining revenue source, allowing for reinvestment in improved plant, training, and future strategic projects that benefit the entire Shire.	ORG 2	Manager Engineering		\$30,000
OP26-26	Asset Improvement Program – Infrastructure Data Enhancement and Annual Comprehensive Asset Valuations	Council will commence a coordinated approach to improving asset data quality and supporting long-term asset management planning. This initiative brings together existing activities across asset valuation, pickup, and condition assessment. The project will span multiple years, making use of bringing forward identified funds for necessary legislative compliance to achieve a	ORG 2	Manager Finance	\$100,000 <i>Works 4 Queensland</i>	\$150,000

		<p>stage-project to collect, record and use accurate asset data. Initial focus areas in Year 1 will include building assets and road infrastructure, with potential to expand to other classes as internal planning progresses. The project seeks to better utilise existing funding allocations and leverage external funding opportunities, including the \$100,000 W4Q grant for building dilapidation reporting.</p> <p>The work will support improved asset lifecycle forecasting, internal financial modelling, and assist with future funding applications. Detailed scoping and scheduling will be developed collaboratively by Financial Services and Infrastructure Services.</p>				
OP26-27	Cooktown Depot Redevelopment Project Plan	Deliver a modernised facility that enhances staff safety and working conditions, establishes secure fuel storage and handling systems, strengthens disaster response capabilities, provides proper animal holding infrastructure, and ensures regulatory compliance while supporting strategic asset management and future capital investment decisions.	ORG 2	Director Infrastructure		\$20,000
OP26-33 NEW	Childcare Expansion Feasibility Study	An independent feasibility study is completed by a qualified consultant, providing Council with a comprehensive assessment of options, demand, financial viability, and site considerations to inform a decision on expanding childcare services within the Shire.	ORG 1 ECO1	Chief Executive Officer		\$50,000

Funding Dependant Operational Initiatives

The projects listed below have been identified as operational initiatives that will be desirable: they will further Council's progress toward meeting its strategic priorities as provided in the Cook Shire Council Corporate Plan. Projects in this section depend on successfully sourcing external grant funding. Once funding is sourced the project will become an active Operational Initiative.

<i>Project</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Corporate Plan Ref.</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Cost Estimate</i>
Laura Entry Statement	Review and refresh Laura entry statement.	PLA 3	Manager Regional Development	\$50,000
Bloomfield Masterplan	Commence a masterplan for Bloomfield to enable housing growth in areas without essential services and infrastructure (road access, power, water, etc.) Masterplan to include connectivity of walking paths and other active transport options.	ECO 2	Manager Planning and Environment	\$50,000
Lions Parks Irrigation Replacement	Switching to high-quality poly piping and a Galcon controller will improve the operational efficiency, reduce the frequency and cost of leak repairs while offering greater control over watering schedules. Improved water efficiency should translate into lower utility expenses, while consistent irrigation coverage supports healthy turf and landscaping that better serves park visitors. The standardisation of equipment with other local irrigation systems further reduces operational complexity and facilitates staff training, ultimately helping Cook Shire Council maintain Lions Park to a higher standard.	PLA	Manager Engineering	\$200,000
See Cook Shire: Expanding our visual library	High-quality, professionally captured video and photography assets covering diverse locations and themes. Increased capacity for Council to produce engaging content for marketing, social media, reports, and tourism promotion. Strengthened community engagement through improved visual storytelling.	ORG 3 ECO 1 WEL 4 PLA 3 PLA 4	Manager Communications and Engagement	\$20,000
Water and Wastewater Network Mapping – Coen	Council staff and Dial Before You Dig will have a complete mapping system for water and wastewater reticulation assets.	ORG 2	Manager Water and Waste	\$50,000

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	This can be used by planning, customer service, roads and the water department as well as contractors.			
Rossville Marketplace Scour Repair Works	Stabilising the bank will preserve Rossville’s marketplace area, preventing potential damage caused by further subsidence or collapse of the embankment. If the selected option allows the tree to remain safely in place, it can continue to serve as a natural feature that enhances the character and shade of the marketplace. By mitigating erosion, the council can also reduce ongoing maintenance and storm-related clean-up costs.	PLA 4	Manager Engineering	\$40,000



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 vas Shire and to elders and leaders past, present and emerging.