

May 2026

Council endorses new Development & Investment Incentive Framework

At its latest Ordinary Meeting, Council endorsed a new **Development and Investment Incentive Support Policy**, to commence on 1 July 2026.

The new framework follows a comprehensive review of Council's existing incentive policies, including the Deferred Payment of Levied Charges Policy and the current Development and Investment Incentive Support Policy.

The review considered policy effectiveness, usage, administration, benchmarking, organisational priorities and feedback from targeted industry engagement.

The review identified that:

- While the Deferred Payment of Levied Charges Policy supported some developments, uptake remained relatively limited;
- Administration of deferred infrastructure agreements created a significant operational and compliance burden for both Council and applicants; and
- Deferred payment mechanisms did not materially alter the overall financial feasibility of development, given that the full charge remained payable over time.

In contrast, the existing Development and Investment Incentive Support Policy has facilitated around \$11 million in incentives since it began. It has supported a range of residential accommodation, centre activation and catalytic development outcomes across the region.

The newly endorsed **Development and Investment Incentive Support Policy** will deliver a more targeted and streamlined incentive framework focused on:

- Supporting catalytic and transformative projects;
- Revitalising key centres;
- Encouraging infill residential development and housing diversity; and

- Directing incentives toward projects that demonstrate strategic alignment, market demand and broader community and economic benefit.

As part of the resolution, Council also rescinded the Deferred Payment of Levied Charges Policy and the existing Development and Investment Incentive Support Policy, effective from 30 June 2026.

We thank industry stakeholders and representatives who provided feedback and engaged throughout the review process.

Fees and Charges Schedule clarification – Reconfiguring a Lot

Within the Reconfiguring a Lot fees, the schedule outlines an additional \$535 for Code Assessable applications and \$800 for Impact Assessable applications per additional lot proposed to be created on Plan of Subdivision.

For Reconfiguring a Lot proposals (1 Lot into 2 Lots), the fee **is only charged for the additional lot**. For example, a Code Assessable ROL (1 Lot into 2 Lots) will result in the following charge:

ROL Code Assessment Fee - \$1,350

Plus Per Additional Lot proposed to be created on Plan of Subdivision - \$535

Total Application Fee = \$1,885

Design and Construction Requirements

Prior to approval of a standard or building format plan, the owner/builder must ensure that:

- Council verge levels have not been altered;
- All rocks, builders' debris, star pickets and stockpiled materials have been removed from the Council verge;
- The verge area has been backfilled so that no ponding or waterlogging occurs across the surface of the grassed area;
- There are no trip hazards between the newly laid turf and recently constructed access crossovers; and

- The Council verge has been turfed in accordance with FNQROC development manual specifications for landscaping **FNQROC development manual specification S8 landscaping - S8.04 turfing (materials) & S8.12 turfing (construction)**

Note: Access crossovers would not be considered compliant if the crossfall exceeds 2.5% across the Council verge area as shown in FNQROC standard drawing S1015.

It is also important that the 600mm aprons have been constructed as required in the standard drawing.

The building contractor must comply with all erosion and sediment control requirements as per clause 440ZG of the *Environmental Act*. Penalties for a breach can be harsh; fines in excess of \$12,000 can be issued.

It is important that access crossovers and driveways are designed and constructed using the standard specifications. Correctly designed and constructed driveways:

- Avoid steep driveway slopes;
- Avoid stormwater runoff into homes;
- Do not damage significant vegetation on private property and street trees;
- Do not impact street parking; and
- Ensure the driveway is safe for pedestrians, cyclists and road users.

The design standards for access crossovers are contained in the current version of the [FNQROC Development Manual](#) and the CairnsPlan 2016 (Planning Scheme) – [Part 9.3.7 Parking and Access Code \(PDF, 15.71 MB \)](#).

Refer to the [Access Crossover / Driveway fact sheet \(PDF, 0.63 MB \)](#) for more information on the design and construction requirements of an access crossover / driveway

Reminder - Council endorsement of Building Format Plans

To assist in the timely endorsement of Building Format Plans, it is important that a Final Inspection Certificate/ Certificate of Occupancy is issued by the building certifier **prior to** the sealing/signing of a survey plan.

We have recently received a number of survey plan submissions where the Final Certificate had not yet been issued. This leads to unnecessary delays in the endorsement process for applicants and stakeholders.

Providing the Final Certificate as part of your initial submission for survey plan endorsement will help make the process smoother and more efficient for all parties.

We appreciate your continued support and collaboration in the plan sealing process.

Design Futures Forum: Living Tropical

We are excited to invite you to this year's **Design Futures Forum: *Living Tropical*** on 18 June.

We'll be welcoming some of Australia's leading voices on design to the Far North alongside Cairns-based experts to explore the latest in housing, climate, Culture and place.

We have the following speakers joining us from across to share their insights on:

- Lessons from Darwin, Cooling a Tropical City*** – [Martin O'Dea](#), (NSW/NT) Clouston Landscape Architect
- Precincts for People and Place***– [Laura Harding](#), (NSW) Urban Designer
- Compact Living with Landscape*** – [John Elway](#), Architect (QLD)
- Affordable Housing*** – [Jennie Officer](#), (WA) Officer Woods Architects

We'd love for you to be part of the conversation.

Tickets are **\$35** and on sale now via Ticketlink: [Design Futures Forum: Living Tropical - Ticketlink](#)

Planning & Development team update

Executive Manager Development & Planning

As part of recent staff movements within the Development & Planning Branch, we acknowledge and sincerely thank Brett Nancarrow, who recently concluded his role as Interim Executive Manager Development & Planning.

During his time with the Branch, Brett provided steady leadership, valuable support and continuity across a range of strategic and operational priorities. We are grateful for his contribution and the experience he brought to the role during this period of transition.

We are also pleased to welcome Claire Simmons back to the role following her period of leave. Claire looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with industry, stakeholders and the community to support positive development outcomes across the region.

Development Engineering team update

The Development Engineering (DE) team is now at full operational capacity. Following a successful recruitment period, all positions within the unit have been filled.

We are now well-positioned to support the continued growth and development demands within the Cairns region. We look forward to our continued close working relationship with our industry partners.

Development Assessment team update

We recently welcomed several new team members.

James O'Reilly

James O'Reilly joins Council as Principal Planner (Infrastructure Coordination and Strategy). He brings more than 15 years of experience across strategic and social planning, project and property management, and community and economic development.

James has built a highly regarded career spanning local and state government, as well as private industry, giving him a well-rounded perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing infrastructure planning and delivery. Joining us from Redlands City Council, he has developed a strong reputation for leading complex planning initiatives and delivering practical, outcomes-focused solutions.

His expertise includes the preparation, coordination and implementation of infrastructure-related strategies, plans and policies across Queensland, with a strong focus on aligning long-term growth with sustainable community outcomes.

With his collaborative approach, strategic mindset and deep understanding of infrastructure coordination, James will be a major asset to Council to strengthen our strategic infrastructure planning capability and deliver infrastructure outcomes that support sustainable growth and thriving communities.

Daniel Catmur

Daniel Catmur has commenced in the team as a Planning Officer, where he will play a key role in supporting development assessment activities across the region.

Daniel completed his Bachelor of Planning at James Cook University, building a strong foundation in statutory planning, urban development and community-focused outcomes. Having studied locally in Cairns, he brings a genuine understanding of the region's growth, character and planning priorities.

In his role, Daniel will focus on all aspects of development assessment, applying a thoughtful and solutions-focused approach to planning matters. He is recognised for his calm and professional presence, and proactive mindset when working through planning considerations and negotiating positive outcomes for the Cairns community.

Protecting our Heritage: The Wet Tropics Management Plan 2026

Protecting Our Heritage: The Wet Tropics Management Plan 2026 was recently delivered to council officers. Take away key points:

- The Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area is much more than just a local landmark it is a globally significant treasure;
- It was recently voted as the second-most irreplaceable natural World Heritage site on earth; and
- While covering only 0.12% of Australia, it is home to an extraordinary concentration of biodiversity, including 50% of the nation's bird species and 60% of its butterflies.

To ensure this "Outstanding Universal Value" is preserved for future generations, the area is governed by the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993* and the *Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998*.

The primary goal is the protection, conservation, and presentation of the area's natural heritage. Management is divided into three primary zones:

- Zone A: Offers the highest level of protection;
- Zone B: Acts as a buffer and allows for essential community infrastructure when necessary; and
- Zone C: Accommodates visitor and community service infrastructure.

Note: The Management Plan overrides local planning schemes in cases of inconsistency.

Local authorities are prohibited from making decisions that conflict with the Plan. In addition, destroying any "forest product" (which includes a wide range of native plants, seeds and even fungi) is a serious offence with significant penalties.



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Tourism
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WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



Call to Action: Yellow Crazy Ants

The Wet Tropics Management Authority is leading the charge against invasive species, specifically the Yellow Crazy Ant.

These pests are a major threat to our local environment and often spread through the movement of infested materials or illegal green waste dumping.

Residents are urged to use the **Antzone tool** before starting works and to report any sightings of these frantic, long-legged ants to 1800 CRAZY ANT.

How to identify a yellow crazy ant



*Approximately 4 mm long *Long skinny legs *Saddle shaped back *Day & Night foraging
*Spray formic acid *Head is distinctly longer than broad *Golden-brown body, with darker abdomen, sometimes striped

Regional Development Update

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