

ORDINARY MEETING**26 AUGUST 2026****5.1****CEO MONTHLY REPORT**

EXE | 93/1/2 | #7932402

RECOMMENDATION:**That Council notes:**

- 1. The status of Council Resolutions;**
- 2. The CEO Monthly Update; and**
- 3. The Monthly Activity Review – July 2026.**

Outstanding Council Resolutions

Since the previous reporting period 19 resolutions have been completed, leaving 9 open resolutions. See below table:

Date of Meeting	Type of Meeting	Report Title	Directorate
26/11/2025	Ordinary	Contract 3011 – Waste and Recycling Kerbside Collection Services <i>Negotiations with the selected contractor ongoing.</i>	CIA
15/07/2026	Ordinary	Reimbursement of Legal Assistance Fees <i>In progress.</i>	POP
29/07/2026	Ordinary	Reimbursement of Legal Assistance Fees <i>In progress.</i>	POP
12/08/2026	Ordinary	Adoption of Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy <i>In progress.</i>	POP
12/08/2026	Ordinary	Project Launch Approval and Contract 3086 for Construction of Cairns Community and Multicultural Centre 600384	CIA
12/08/2026	Ordinary	Development Application for a material change of use (dwelling house & short-term accommodation) – 25A Cairns Street, Cairns North – Division 5 <i>In progress</i>	PGS
12/08/2026	Ordinary	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements – Various Events Funding Submissions and Project Launch Approvals	CIA
12/08/2026	Ordinary	Prejudicial Matter – Support for Major Event <i>In progress</i>	EDA
12/08/2026	Ordinary	Prejudicial Matter – Support for Major Event <i>In progress</i>	EDA

CEO Monthly Update

Monthly Activity Review – July 2026

Queensland Audit Office (QAO) – Local Government 2025 Report

At the July Audit Committee Meeting, the results of the QAO Local Government 2025 Report were tabled and discussed. The report summarises the results of QAO's Local Government financial audits for 2025 including the timeliness and quality of financial reporting, assessments of internal controls, and financial sustainability. The report highlights that in general, across the sector, timeliness of financial reporting has declined while weaknesses in internal controls has increased.

Cairns Regional Council (CRC) received an 'optimised' rating for financial statement maturity, defined as being a leader of best practice for financial governance. Cairns was the only council in Queensland to receive an optimised result. This is evidenced in the timeliness of audit sign off with Council's financial statement certification being completed 81 days after 30 June 2025, the second earliest of all Tier 2 councils. Certification of Council's 2025/26 financial statements is planned to be well in advance of the statutory target of 123 days.

CRC was within required benchmarks for all financial sustainability ratios except for the operating surplus ratio, which was slightly outside the target of > 0% due to impacts to Council's operating position from Tropical Cyclone Jasper along with timing differences relating to the payment of the federal financial assistance grant. This highlights a potential risk of long-term reduction in cash reserves, and an inability to fund asset renewals. To improve this ratio, operating surpluses greater than 0% should be generated consistently. Council's Long Term Financial Forecast shows operating surpluses averaging 3% over the next 10 years.

The QAO Local Government 2025 Report can be found at the following link: <https://www.qao.qld.gov.au/reports-resources/reports-parliament/local-government-2025>

Cairns Water Security Stage 1

The Cairns Water Security Stage 1 (CWSS1) project has reached its two-year construction milestone and is now entering the final phase of delivery, transitioning from major construction activities to testing, commissioning and operational readiness. This milestone represents significant progress on one of the largest and most important infrastructure projects ever undertaken in Cairns, ensuring a secure and reliable water supply for future generations.

Key Achievements

- Over 1 million work hours completed safely.
- More than 1,100 workers have contributed to the project.
- Approximately 80% of the workforce has been sourced from the Cairns region.
- More than \$100 million invested locally.

- Support provided to 140 local suppliers and businesses.
- Over 25 kilometres of pipeline infrastructure installed.
- Major construction milestones achieved across the water treatment plant, reservoirs, intake infrastructure and pipeline network.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Monthly Activity Review – July 2026

DM#[7932403](#)

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ken Gouldthorp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Gouldthorp
Chief Executive Officer

Monthly Activity Review

93/1/2 | #7932402 / #7932403

July 2026

The data contained within this review relates to the following:

- Community and Civic Events
- Major Events
- Volunteering
- Library Loans & Programs
- Vandalism costs
- Cairns Infrastructure and Assets Customer Requests
- Planning Growth and Sustainability Updates
- Major Projects and Initiatives
- Economic Development and Advocacy Highlights
- Economic Snapshot

Ken Gouldthorp
Chief Executive Officer

Community and Civic events

Cairns Show Exhibition

Date: 15 – 17 July 2026

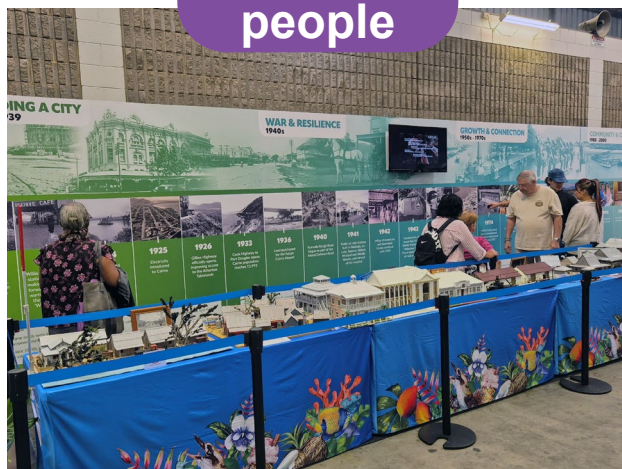
Venue: Fred Moule Pavilion

Attendance: 3,000 over the three days

Purpose: In line with Cairns' 150th Anniversary, this year's Cairns Show Exhibition featured a timeline of key moments, stories, photographs and milestones from Cairns' past, present and future, alongside historical miniature buildings and the Major Events Precinct Masterplan consultation and survey. The exhibition also included a Brisbane 2032 athlete meet-and-greet with Olympian Ellie Beer and Paralympian Grant "Scooter" Patterson, including community interactions and merchandise giveaways.



3,000
people



Cairns Show Community Stage

Date: 15 – 17 July 2026

Venue: Cairns Show Grounds

Attendance: 2,000 pax over the three days

Purpose: Council's sponsorship of the Cairns Show Community Stage showcases the diversity, talent and creativity of the Cairns region. The stage features a range of local performers, community groups, cultural organisations, schools and educational activities, creating a free, inclusive and entertaining program for visitors. The Community Stage also provided an opportunity to celebrate Cairns' 150-year milestone, incorporating Cairns 150 branding and recognising this significant anniversary as part of the Cairns Show program.



2,000
people



Community and Civic events

July Citizenship Ceremony

Date: 16 July 2026

Venue: Cairns Performing Arts Centre

Attendance: 300 Pax

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Purpose: Cairns Regional Council citizenship ceremonies formally welcome new Australian citizens into the local community. The ceremonies celebrate the commitment individuals have made to Australia and recognise the cultural diversity that strengthens Cairns, while marking an important milestone as new citizens are welcomed as active members of the community. Delivered on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs.



300
people



Major Events - July



Attendance
≈4,300+ runners

7Cairns Marathon Festival

Date: Sunday 12 July 2026

Venue: Cairns Esplanade

**Estimate figure—
pending final acquittal reports*

The 7Cairns Marathon Festival is a community-focused running event, offering distances to cater for all ages and abilities.

2026 Race Categories included:

- 7News Marathon
- McDonalds Half Marathon
- Reef Magic 10km
- Oaks 5km Run
- Royal Rehab LifeWorks 5km Walk
- RMHCNA 2km Family Dash

Showcasing the best of Tropical North Queensland's winter climate, the festival highlighted Cairns' natural beauty, with the course traversing the iconic Cairns Esplanade and attracting strong community support along the route.

2026 Attendance*

- International: 170+ participants (24 countries represented; top markets: Japan, New Zealand and the United States)
- Interstate: 400+ participants (all Australian states represented)
- Intrastate: 1,800+ participants
- Local: Approximately 2,000 participants
- Total: 4,300+ participants across all race categories (excluding staff, volunteers, sponsors and spectators)

The 2026 event was again a sell-out, demonstrating strong demand for the festival and reinforcing its value in showcasing Cairns, driving out-of-region visitation, and delivering economic benefits to the region.

Cairns Regional Council is proud to support 7Cairns Marathon Festival with secured funding until 2028.



Major Events - July



Attendance
≈11,000+

Cairns Italian Festival

Dates: Thursday 23 July to Sunday 2 August 2026

The Cairns Italian Festival is an annual celebration of Italian culture and heritage. In 2026, the festival celebrated its fifth year, recognising the significant contribution of the Italian migrant community to the development of Tropical North Queensland, while showcasing the region's rich cultural diversity.

The 2026 festival featured 13 events across 10 days, including:

- La Messa - Italian Holy Mass
- Opera in the Tropics Cathedral Edition
- Post Opera Dinner @ Floriana Mediterranean
- Beats & Spritz - Italian Disco Party
- La Festa Food & Wine
- Taste of Sicily @ Italicious
- Sausage Making Master Class & Dinner
- Fresh Pasta Night @ il Chiosco
- Pizza Tasting Night @ Vitalia's
- Italian Movie Night "Naples to New York"
- Tropicale Italiano - The Long Lunch
- Il Calcio - Moriconi/Bomben Soccer Cup
- Mareeba Salami & Sausage Festa

It is estimated that more than 11,000 people attended the various events.

Through a diverse program of food, wine, music, sport and cultural experiences, the festival promotes community connection and local activation, attracting both residents and visitors alike.

The festival's continued growth reinforces its importance within the region's events calendar, enhancing Cairns' cultural profile, fostering community pride and supporting local businesses.

Cairns Regional Council is proud to support the Cairns Italian Festival with secured funding until 2027.



**Estimate figure—
pending final acquittal reports*

Volunteering

May, June & July 2026

Creative Venues Volunteers

Creative Life Volunteers participate as Home Library Services & Libraries' School Holiday Program Assistants and Tank 4 Gallery Attendants. CPAC does not utilise Volunteers.

Month	Tank 4 Gallery*	Libraries*	Special Events*	**Annual volunteer replacement cost
July 2026	15	20	-	\$1,674
June 2026	33	23	-	\$2,774
May 2026	42	25	222	\$15,082

** Number of Active volunteer hours*

Green Space Our Place Volunteers

GSOP Volunteers actively participate in Little Taccas, Stratford Nursery, Sugarworld and Cairns Botanic Gardens, Cattana, Arrow tracks, Parks & Reserves and Tanks Heritage Tours.

Month	Number of Active Volunteers (cumulative total)	Volunteer Hours	**Annual volunteer replacement cost
July 2026	440	1,575	\$75,348
June 2026	432	2,031	\$97,163
May 2026	430	1,818	\$86,973

** Number of Active volunteer hours*

***Calculation of the Values \$ per year all ages via the [Volunteer Calculators – Volunteering Queensland](#) (Aust Accounting Standard (AASB1058) Income of Not-For-Profit Entities. Methodology – the replacement cost of a volunteer is calculated using the average hourly part-time wage of a person of their age in QLD, plus 15% employer on-costs (inc of super, payroll tax and admin expenses).*

Library Loans & Programs

May, June & July 2026

July 2026

All loans: 62,537 (Physical: 47,696 Digital: 14,841)

All library attendance: 68,533 (68,433 door and 100 outreach)

Library program attendance: 3,537 across **167** inhouse and outreach programs.

July 2026 represented the highest door count in 12 months, and an increase on the same period last year. Libraries' pop-up outreach at NAIDOC in the Park engaged with 100 attendees.

Combined loans are 16% higher than July 2025, largely due to higher loans across all digital library collections which accounts for 24% of total loans this month. This is an immediate positive outcome through an increased investment in digital collections for 2026/27, including the addition of a second eNewspaper platform through BorrowBox.

Library Programming was slightly higher compared to July 2025 with school holiday programming responsible for the bulk of programs delivered.

June 2026

All loans: 52,358 (Physical: 40,882 Digital: 11,486)

All library attendance: 54,211 (54,141 door and 70 outreach)

Library program attendance: 1,531 across **74** inhouse and outreach programs.

Physical loans are slightly higher on June 2025. Digital loans are 10% higher than June 2025. Program and program attendance statistics are lower compared to June 2024 due to fewer programs delivered this month.

May 2026

All loans: 62,661 (Physical: 49,010 Digital: 13,651)

All library attendance: 69,206 (Door: 66,956 and Outreach: 2,250)

Library program attendance: 3,835 across **127** inhouse & outreach programs.

Door count May was highest for FY to date, and 800 higher than the same period last year. Notably, May represents the first fully open month for Smithfield post refurbishment with a door count of (10,311) which matches 'pre' Smithfield Library refurb door count and is the highest for Smithfield FY to date along with Earlville & Gordonvale. This demonstrates strong community re-engagement with Smithfield Library following the refurbishment.

The May Outreach attendance figure is the highest for the FY with peak delivery in the cooler months. This is also boosted due to program delivery partnerships with Creative Life events such as Children's Festival, Night at the Library, & Tanks Markets pop up library.

**Does not include CCF 2026 outreach est. at 3,500*

Council Assets – Vandalism Costs

2026/27 VANDALISM & GRAFFITI COSTS	JULY	JULY YTD
Business Area	(\$'000)	(\$'000)
Facilities Maintenance	16	16
Community Spaces	24	24
Works	36	36
TOTAL	76	76

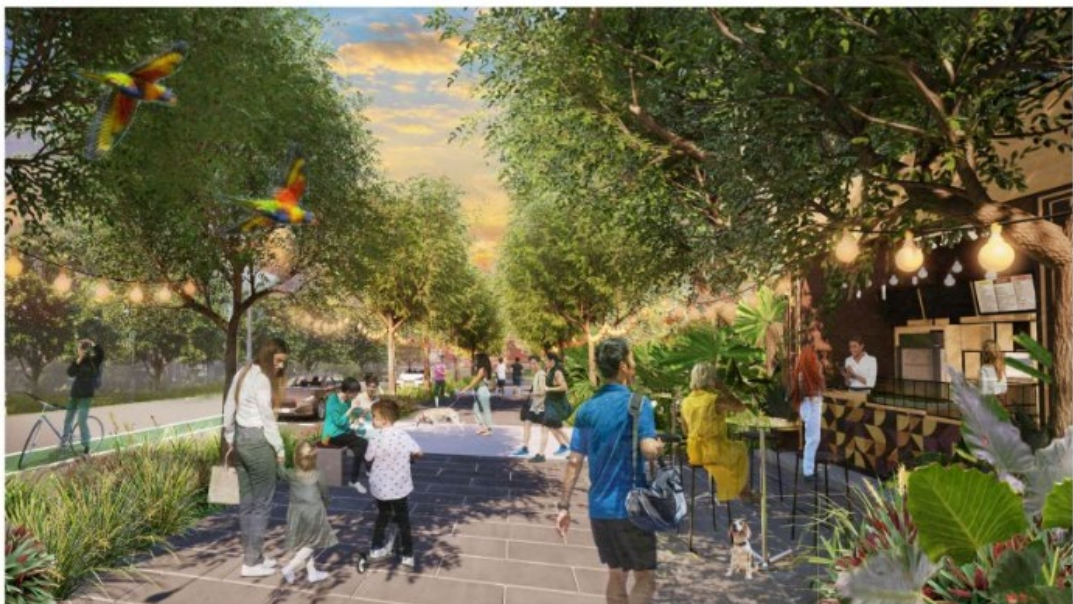
State Commendation - Cairns City Precincts Urban Regeneration Project

Cairns Regional Council's *Cairns City Precincts Urban Regeneration Project* was awarded a **Commendation** at the 2026 **Minister's Award for Urban Design**.

The Queensland Government's **Minister's Award for Urban Design** recognises contemporary Queensland urban design projects of the highest quality, encouraging cities, towns and communities across the state to strive for best practice in all projects. The award highlights the critical role of good urban design in shaping Queensland and how collaborative relationships can lead to the successful development of the built environment.

Presented by Hon. Sam O'Connor MP and Queensland Government Architect Leah Lang, the Project was commended for "exemplifying excellence in design-led urban renewal, addressing critical challenges faced by regional Queensland cities". The judges noted that "through its climate-responsive framework, the project integrates vibrant mixed-use precincts, cool green connectors and diverse tropical housing typologies to create a more liveable, walkable and resilient Cairns". They further recognised that, "with strong leadership from Cairns Regional Council, deep community engagement and a clear implementation roadmap, this visionary yet practical initiative sets a new benchmark for sustainable urban regeneration in a tropical regional Australian context".

Council would like to acknowledge and thank its project partners, SMEC, Pilot Places, Civic Shifts, Bull and Bear Economics, People Oriented Design, WT Partners and Up North, as well as Council's City Architect, Ellen Buttrose, for her leadership and contribution to the project.



Planning, Growth & Sustainability

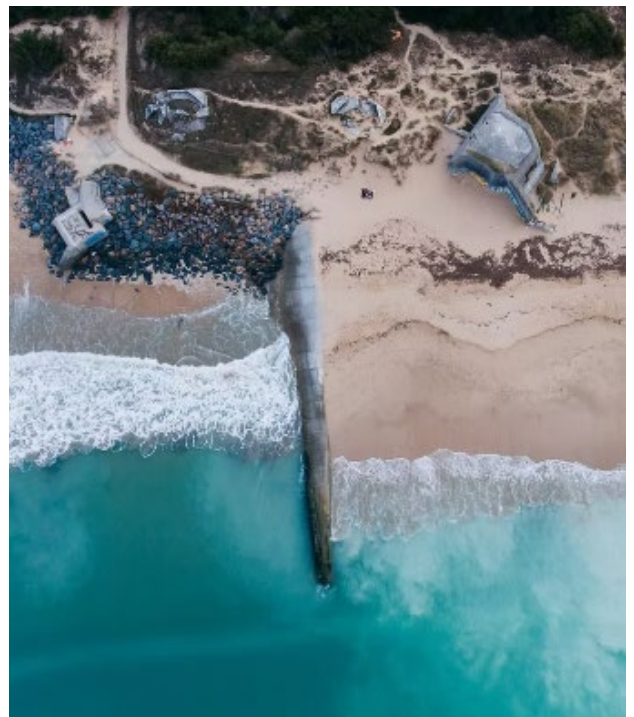
2026 Apter Coastal Resilience Practitioner Award – Sophie Barrett

We are delighted to advise that Sophie Barret, Sustainability Coordinator at Cairns Regional Council, is one of four recipients of the **2026 Apter Coastal Resilience Practitioner Award**.

The Award recognises practitioners whose work, experience and perspectives will strengthen Apter's *International Coastal Resilience Program*; a professional development course focused on coastal hazard management and climate adaptation, designed for practitioners across government, consultancy and academia.

The program features contributions from a range of leading experts and coastal professionals. Since its inception the course has trained over 600 participants from all Australian states and territories, as well as New Zealand and the Pacific. International editions have been delivered in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Chile.

Sophie will join as both a learner and contributor to the program. Congratulations Sophie!



Updated Climate Change Strategy and Energy Policy focus on resilience, efficiency and savings

Cairns Regional Council has completed a mid-term update of its Climate Change Strategy 2030, reflecting significant progress achieved since the Strategy was adopted in 2022 and aligning future actions with Council's Corporate Plan 2025-2030. The update demonstrates progress to date, incorporates lessons learned during delivery, and refines actions to focus on areas where Council can have the greatest impact.

These areas include disaster resilience, climate risk management, water security, urban greening, transport, environmental stewardship and community education. The update also simplifies actions to improve delivery and reporting, while clearly outlining where Council will lead, support and work with others on climate initiatives.

Since the Strategy was adopted, 32 actions have been completed and are ongoing, with a further 39 actions currently underway.

Initiatives delivered under the Strategy include renewable electricity procurement, solar installations across major facilities and energy efficiency improvements. Council has also updated its Energy and Emissions Management Policy, which guides energy efficiency, renewable energy and operational energy management activities across Council facilities.

Together, these initiatives are delivering operational savings of approximately \$1.5 million annually while also improving Council's long-term energy resilience and cost management.

The updated Strategy and Policy will guide implementation through to 2030 and support ongoing reporting of progress against Council's adopted commitments and priorities.

More information: <https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/community-environment/climate-change/cairns-climate-change-strategy>



Community	Foster climate-resilient, informed and inclusive communities through supporting emissions reduction and increasing resilience to the physical, transition, social and economic impacts of climate change.
Industry	Collaborate to support the transition to a low-carbon, resilient smart green economy.
Energy	Improve energy efficiency, emissions reduction and accelerate the transition to renewable energy.
Transport	Enable a connected, resilient and efficient transport network, while advancing Council and community uptake of low emissions vehicles.
Built environment	Enable low-emissions, climate-resilient buildings, infrastructure and urban spaces through sustainable planning, nature-based solutions and resilient Council assets and services.
Natural environment	Protect, restore and enhance the resilience of a connected and thriving natural environment through strengthened catchment and biodiversity management, education and collaborative landscape restoration.

Development Application lodged for CBD unit tower

A development application has been lodged with Cairns Regional Council by Townsville-based developer Swanland Group, for a 14-storey mixed-use tower in the heart of the CBD.

The proposed *Swanland Grafton Street* development at 142-144 Grafton comprises 72 Short Term Accommodation units, 35 residential units, a rooftop pool and wellness area, and ground floor hospitality offering, and reflects growing investor confidence in the Cairns market.

Council planners will undertake a detailed assessment of the application and will work through the assessment process with the applicant.



Figure 1 – Render of the Proposed Development
(source: MAS Architecture)

Approval of Development Application at Reed Rd, Trinity



Figure 1: Render from Navigation Drive and Reed Road streetview (Source: HumacGroup)

Council has approved a mixed-use development at Reed Road, Trinity Park, comprising food and drink outlets, health care services, indoor sport and recreation facilities, offices and shops. The approval responds to growing demand for retail and community services in the Northern Beaches, a designated growth corridor expected to expand by 10% by 2050.

The development will provide a new neighbourhood centre to serve the local community, improve access to services and facilities, and create additional employment opportunities in line with Councils Towards 2050 Growth Strategy targets.

Cairns Infrastructure and Assets

Customer Requests – June 2026



98

Footpaths and
cycleways



24%



223

Roads and road
furniture



5%



68

Graffiti removal



20%

Percentages indicate movement on last month.

Major Projects & Initiatives

July 2026



Resource Recovery 2040 Roadmap

- Kerbside Collection Contract awarded November 2025 – Mobilisation meetings have commenced
- Residual Contract was awarded – Mobilisation commenced 15th August
- Marketing & Comms workshopped with Council new campaign “Know before you throw”

Cairns Water Security Stage 1

- Final coatings progressing well on water retaining structures
- Control building works progressing well with fitout ongoing.
- Mechanical and electrical component fit out underway in preparation for commissioning.
- Mulgrave intake pipeline and electrical conduits are substantially complete.



Smart Water Meter Project

- 42,000 + smart water meters installed, out of 55,000 scope
- SWM project rollout team installed 640 meters last month
- Potential leaks are being identified by the new smart water meters and customers contacted accordingly

Economic Development & Advocacy

Highlights – July

Economic Development

- An Expression of Interest (EOI) was submitted to the State Government's Regional Business Gateways Program to work with Screen Queensland and Cairns Chamber of Commerce to support Cairns' creative and screen industries. If successful at EOI stage, Council will be invited to submit a full application.
- Council officers, with support from the Department of State Development Infrastructure and Planning, coordinated a tour of the Marine and Defence Precinct on 31 July for delegates attending the ADM Queensland Defence Summit held the previous day on 30 July. Key stops on the tour included the GBR International Marine College and Norship, with participation from a number of other local stakeholders.

Advocacy

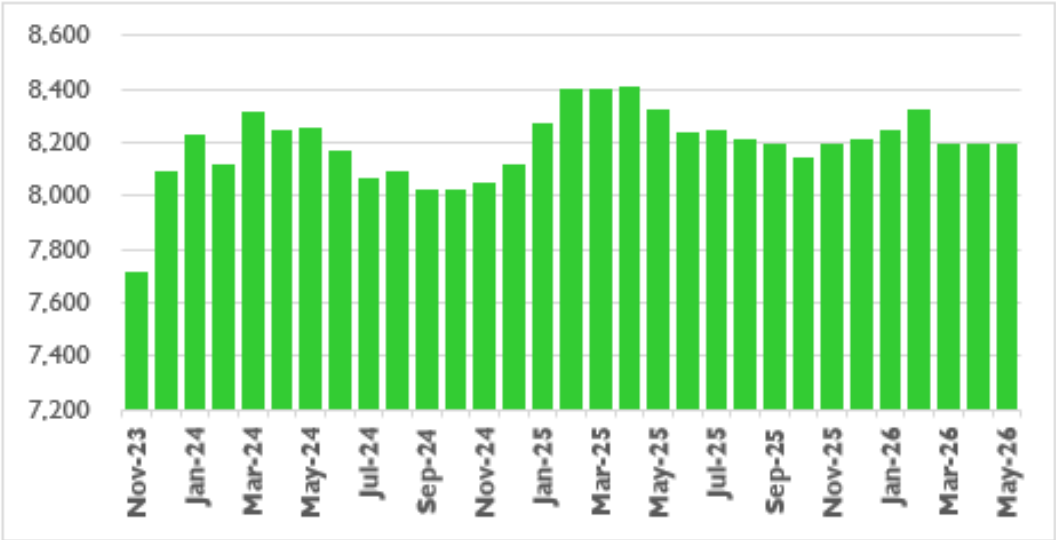
- Council's proposed motions for the 2026 LGAQ Conference and AGM have been submitted.
- Council's Quarterly catch-up with Cairns MP Michael Healy was held 14 July.

Film

- Principal photography underway on *The Conservatory*, a feature film utilising multiple Council-managed locations including the Tanks Arts Centre precinct, Cairns Botanic Gardens, the CBD and local parks over a three-week production period, while engaging local crew and businesses.
- Popular television series *Travel Guides* is filming throughout August across Cairns, Port Douglas and the Cassowary Coast, continuing to showcase Tropical North Queensland to a national audience.
- Locally produced feature film *Stormbird*, filmed across Cairns, Gordonvale and Babinda, has commenced its cinema release, with sold-out regional screenings in Babinda, Cairns and Malanda before continuing its National tour.

Economic snapshot

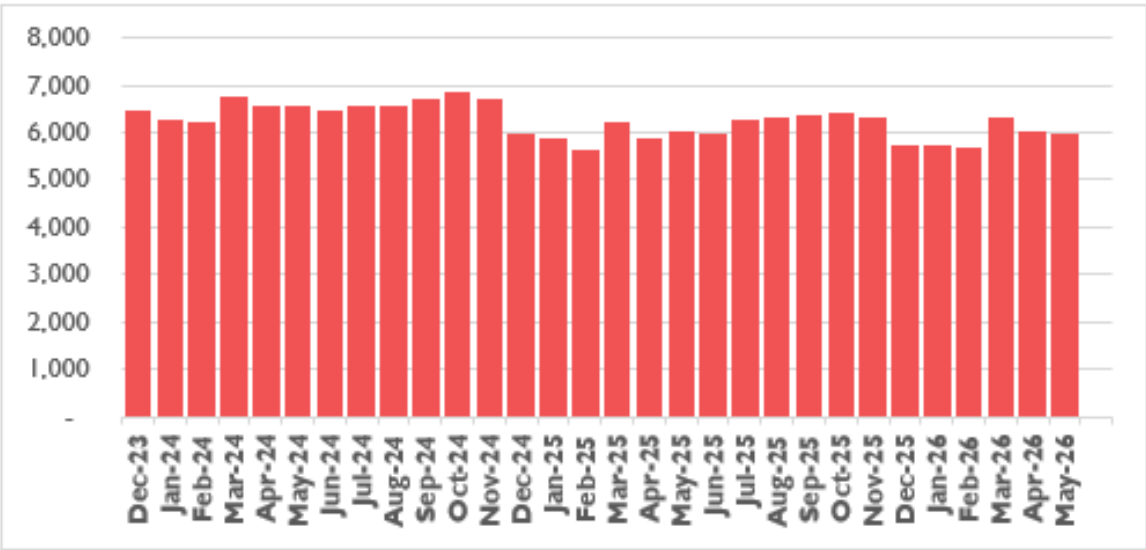
Jobseek Recipients (CNS)



Most recent JobSeeker recipient #s

May-26
8,195

Monthly Job Advertisement (FNQ)



Most recent FNQ Job Ad #s

May-26
5,961