ORDINARY MEETING 11 NOVEMBER 2026	5.3

MAJOR EVENTS SPONSORSHIP ECONOMIC OUTCOMES 2025-26

EDA | 52/1/16 | #7947003

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council notes the outcomes of the Major Events Sponsorship Program for the year ended 30 June 2026 as outlined in this report.

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Nil

Note: The identification of interested parties is provided on a best endeavours basis by Council Officers and may not be exhaustive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides Council with an update of the economic impact and visitation outcomes of the Major Events Sponsorship program managed under the Economic Development & Advocacy Directorate for the 2025-26 financial year.

BACKGROUND:

Council currently delivers a Major Events Sponsorship program within the Economic Development & Advocacy directorate designed to attract and support events within the region that create significant economic benefits, attract intrastate, interstate, and international visitors, and raise the profile of Cairns.

This funding program is aligned to the Cairns and Great Barrier Reef Event Strategy 2035, a joint strategy with Tourism Tropical North Queensland focused on event acquisition and growth for the region.

During the 2025-26 financial year Council sponsored 12 Major Events. Funding decisions are governed by Council's Major Events Policy, and all decisions on funding are made by the full Council at an Ordinary Meeting.

COMMENT:

Council's Major Events Sponsorship program continues to perform strongly, delivering key economic and tourism outcomes for the region. The portfolio of events contains several highly successful event partnerships that deliver extensive benefits to the region, industry, and community.

Table 1 below provides a list of events supported over the period. *Table 2* below provides an overview of the total economic and tourism impacts from Major Events that occurred in the 2025-26 financial year.

Table 1: Major Events Sponsorship 2025-26 – Event listing

7 Cairns Marathon 2025
Cairns Italian Festival 2025
Cairns Super Carnival 2025
Port Douglas Gran Fondo 2025
Men's International Cricket 2025 (T20 & ODI – Aus vs Sth Africa)
AFLW Northern Nest 2025
Shine on Gimuy 2025
Dream Aloud 2025
BE Social 2025
Cairns Fashion Week 2025
Cairns Rainforest Rumble 2026
IRONMAN Cairns 2026

Table 2: Major Events Sponsorship 2025-26 - Economic & Tourism impacts

	TOTAL
Events Supported	12
Council Investment	$1.18m
Total Economic Impact*	$29.9m
Total Visitors *(Primary Purpose**)*	27,439
Visitor Nights	93,655
Local Spend***	$3.09m
Return on Investment***	25:1
$m = $ million	

**measured as Direct & Incremental Expenditure*
***visitors that travelled to the Cairns LGA specifically for the purpose of attending the event*
****event organiser's reported operating expenditure in the Cairns LGA*
*****Economic impact divided by total annual council investment (direct and indirect)*

OPTIONS:

Option 1 (recommended):

That Council notes the outcomes of the Major Events Sponsorship Program for the year ended 30 June 2026 as outlined in this report.

Option 2:

That Council **does not** note the outcomes in this report at this time and requests further information from Council officers before reconsidering this matter.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

Council officers assess individual event funding applications on their respective merits and against the relevant assessment criteria for Major Events as outlined in Council's Major Events Sponsorship Policy. This will include assessment of any potential risks associated with the application and/or Council contributing funding towards the event.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

Events supported through the Major Events Sponsorship program are budgeted for within Council's annual OPEX budget. Actual sponsorship costs for the year ended 30 June 2026 were within the OPEX budget allocation for that year.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The assessment of applications for Major Events Sponsorship is directly aligned with Council's Corporate Plan 2025-2030 Focus Area 1 (Robust Economy), where growth in high-profile events is a key performance indicator and Focus Area 4 where attracting live music and major events is a key performance indicator.

Policy:

Council's Major Events Sponsorship Policy is applied in the assessment of individual applications for Major Events funding and also in the ongoing performance management of Council's Major Events portfolio.

Nick Masasso
Director – Economic Development and Advocacy