



Regulatory Working Group

Minutes

Monday 26th August 2013 - 12.30pm to 3.30pm
Parklands Office – 54 Jones Road, Wooyung (02 6680 4049)

Present:

Peter Ryan (Chair, Regulatory Working Group)
Mat Morris (General Manager, North Byron Parklands)
Jessica Ducruo (Festival Producer, Splendour in the Grass)
Elise Huntley (General Manager, Splendour in the Grass)
Brandon Saul (Falls Festival Director Byron Bay)
Chris Cherry (Community Representative)
Paul Arrowsmith (Community Representative)
Mayor Simon Richardson (Byron Shire Council)
Cr Sol Ibrahim (Byron Shire Council)
Cr Basil Cameron (Byron Shire Council)
Ray Darney (Director of Planning, Byron Shire Council)
Inspector Gary Cowan (NSW Police)
Michael Baldwin (Roads and Maritime Services)
Wayne Pettit (State Emergency Services)
Damien Hofmeyer (National Parks and Wildlife Service)
Greg Alderson (Traffic Consultant)
Michiel Kamphorst (GAA, Traffic Consultant)

Apologies

Simon Millichamp (Community Representative), Cr Diane Woods (BSC), Todd Hayman (RMS), Adrian Deville (OEH), Bob Wilcox (RFS), Matt Inwood Rural Fire Service, Corey Philip (Rural Fire Service), Alan Bawden (Rural Fire Service).

Agenda Items

1. Introductions

Confirmation of previous minutes

The Chairperson presented the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 May 2013. Minutes were confirmed with one request from Chris Cherry that the final Traffic Management Plan 2013 discussed at the last RWG meeting be sent to the RWG. The Chairperson would check this, and send out to members.

2. Meeting Focus

The Chairperson stated the primary intent of the meeting was to discuss the performance of the recent Splendour in the Grass event held between the 26th and 29th of July 2013. With the attendees' agreement, there would be post-event presentations from Jessica Ducrou, Mat Morris and Brandon Saul followed by an open discussion with a "round-table" of inputs and discussion from all attendees.

The members agreed on this approach to discussions. The intention was to highlight problem areas and offer potential immediate solutions. The venue and the festival would also during the ensuing month analyse a range of data and evidence to revise and/or develop alternative improved systems and processes.

The Chairperson advised there would also be time at the end of the meeting for any other matters of consideration.

3. Post Event Overview and Discussion

A roundtable discussion and airing of views and issues was held and highlighted the following:

Jessica Ducrou gave a frank and open debriefing to the meeting. She advised of her personal disappointment covering some aspects of the recent Splendour in the Grass (SITG) event. She has a very experienced team who have successfully organised and operated numerous large events over many years, however a few key areas did not perform at optimum levels.

Specifically, technical issues were experienced with the electronic wrist-banding technology leading to patron queues, and slower than planned distribution of camping traffic inside the site. This resulted in a build up of internal traffic, which at times had a flow-on effect onto the public roads such as Tweed Valley Way. This in turn led to traffic congestion for bus drop-offs and at times, delays for passing motorists not associated with the event.

When coupled with some miscalculations on the assumptions used for bus scheduling (i.e. where, how many, and how often buses were scheduled), frustration was experienced for some patrons, people dropping off patrons, buses, and in some areas, local resident traffic. The inconvenience caused to patrons and local residents was deeply regretted by Jessica Ducrou who took responsibility for the situation and inconvenience. Finally, due to weather conditions in the first half of 2013 construction activities took place up to the first day of camper bump in, placing pressure on staff responsible for managing traffic. Thankfully this conflict will not occur in the future as the approved road works have been completed.

The management team now has a significant range of actual data sets covering private vehicle usage, public transport take-up and peak traffic times which will be used to refine future traffic management plans. A traffic evaluation report has been prepared and forwarded to DOPI, RMS, BSC and a number of other agencies and debrief meetings have been held with neighbours, Council and a number of community and business groups to discuss issues and opportunities.

In particular, Jessica Ducrou felt deeply disappointed about the local traffic and local residents' inconvenience. The upside is that the causes have been identified and they are fixable. Mostly they relate to internal traffic management and priority for buses and public transport.

Chris Cherry advised that many people were using social media to lodge complaints and make comments on SITG 2013, and suggested these also be included in the Register of Complaints. Mat Morris rejected this as most postings were anonymous, not appropriately worded, some were offensive and many were not actually complaints. The Chairperson advised all there was a formal process for complaints approved by the DOPI, which was available to everyone, and it was this process for complaints reporting that should be followed. Mat Morris advised he had read and absorbed the social media comments and would take note of those comments that assisted them in improving event operations in the future.

Chris Cherry also advised concerns regarding the Yelgun rest area and interchange being used as a drop-off zone, with consequent problems associated with patrons walking along Brunswick Valley way and Tweed Valley Way. All RWG members agreed this was an issue that required addressing. Elise Huntley advised safe pedestrian access along these sections would be provided in future in consultation with Council and RMS.

Michael Baldwin advised not to solely rely only on this, and to get more patrons onto buses. He expressed concern about increasing patron numbers at SITG whilst traffic issues remained. He also advised the height of road safety barriers was too high. This was agreed as an issue, and one that can be rectified by a more appropriate choice of barrier type. Jessica Ducrou reiterated her strong view that the traffic issues experienced this year at SITG were related to internal traffic and camping management, and that they were definitely fixable (as was the case for this event's second year in Woodford, Queensland).

Cr Basil Cameron advised some road signage and directions were not clear enough and lead to some confusion by drivers. He repeated an earlier speakers suggestion that better, more efficient public transport was the solution to many of the issues being discussed at this meeting. He suggested the prioritising of buses when it came to traffic control so buses moved in and out of the site efficiently and patrons trusted the system.

Cr Cameron also suggested NBP and management talk to large event organisers who rely on efficient bus transport, such as Metricon who host the AFL games on the Gold Coast, and learn from them how large numbers of patrons are moved into and out of the site. Everyone agreed this was a good idea.

Mat Morris, Brandon Saul and Jessica Ducrou alike responded to the above speakers that there were several key lessons learnt from this inaugural SITG, and that the venue and the festival organisers were focusing on these to improve future performance. Key lessons included better internal traffic management, prioritising bus traffic internally, better bus scheduling, pedestrian

safety on Tweed Valley Way and discarding the RFID wristbanding technology that created much of the camper vehicle placement delays. The organisers were particularly regretful of traffic impositions on local people and would rectify this as the number one priority.

RMS representative Michael Baldwin advised RMS had two representatives present during the event. He commented people did not know where the event was and better signage was needed. He advised better on-site processing was required and that the RMS had always assumed queuing traffic would discharge into site but this had not occurred. He also clarified that the Traffic Control Plan is event specific and that it is the event organisers responsibility, not that of RMS or Council. He suggested a priority was to fix internal traffic distribution as it was the root cause of the road network issues experienced. Given the proposed Falls event with 15,000 patrons during the New Year's eve period, this was a very important point. Brandon Saul replied that the Falls event was smaller and internal traffic would be distributed across a wider available area within the site. He also advised that as a rule of thumb over 80% of the lessons learnt occur from operating the first event. With the actual traffic data now available and a range of possible strategies to manage these issues currently being formulated, traffic will be well managed for the Falls event.

There was some debate about the validity of factoring traffic issues against event size. These are technical issues and require some further discussion. The Chairperson suggested that Michael Baldwin, RMS, NBP, and Greg Alderson meet to discuss and resolve technical aspects and concerns soon. NBP will follow this up as an Action Item.

Paul Arrowsmith raised some observations regarding the occupational health and safety aspects of camping grounds, including tents too close for emergency access, potholes, toilets at capacity and open drains. NBP advised these were valid issues, although regarding tent spacing and emergency services access the relevant authorities had not raised any concerns. For the next SITG, a gridded internal road and walkway system will be implemented across the camping ground. Open drains will be either a part of the roadway system or will be fenced. It is Brandon Saul's view that segregating camping from cars is safer and creates a better sense of community. The organisers will continue to have dedicated camping areas separated from dedicated car parking areas, and a specific area for trailer and large vehicle\4WD parking and camping.

Cr Sol Ibrahim advised he had heard concern about cars parked on major roads instead of car parks and legal areas. Chris Cherry advised attendees that the Alderson Post SIG Traffic report reported 52 vehicles parked along Tweed Valley Way. Cr Basil Cameron commented he drove past the site and found the traffic signage confusing. This will be addressed in the future.

Jessica Ducrou advised the key management team for Falls was the same as SITG and as a result, the lessons now learnt and the issues raised at this meeting can be readily assessed and implemented.

Inspector Gary Cowan advised NSW Police were very satisfied with the SITG event and its organisers and they experienced no major incidents. The temporary command post set up on site worked well. He advised there were no liquor license breaches and no overall aggression. The only anti-social incidents were minor and confined to a few patrons with existing "issues". Mayor Richardson commented how pleasantly surprised he was to see widespread cordial and happy behaviour from patrons. SITG further advised there were no major medical incidents, the worst being a broken ankle and the most common being blistered feet from wearing gumboots.

Damien Hofmeyer [NPWS] advised complete satisfaction with security, access and Billinudgel Nature Reserve [BNR] patrolling arrangements for the event. NPWS would respond to any relevant ecological aspects when these reports were tabled. Fire remains the biggest concern for NPWS. The retention of existing measures to prevent spread of fire to the BNR and ensuring sufficient personnel and access to the BNR was important for future events.

Wayne Petit [SES] advised satisfaction with their involvement in the event, and requested inclusion in future evacuation planning. This was agreed by NBP and will be actioned. Wayne advised SES was listed as a member at the Emergency Control Centre, which was incorrect.

Chris Cherry stated she found it difficult to orient herself when surrounded by high hessian fencing in the internal laneways. Mat Morris advised it was a condition of approval that such light shielding measures were in place.

Chris Cherry queried the use of the northern egress road and the breaching of a KPI in doing so. SITG responded that it had been agreed with authorities to use the road for camper disbursement on the Monday as the central spine road was showing evidence of deterioration and safety issues thereby arose. The consequences of using this northern road were traffic congestion in Pottsville, with some negative side-effects for locals, and mud on Wooyung Road, which Elise Huntley advised was cleaned up with the hired road sweeper.

Chris Cherry reminded Mat Morris that he had categorically stated that there would be no traffic exiting onto Wooyung Rd besides emergency vehicles and that this possibility had not been included in the approved Traffic Plan presented to the RWG. He agreed and stated this was because there was no intention to exit vehicles onto Wooyung Rd but this had been done as an emergency measure due to deterioration of the internal Spine Rd. Chris Cherry stated that that situation should obviously not occur again but asked that if this possibility did exist a suitable KPI should be included in the TMP and the congestion in Pottsville should be managed appropriately. Chris Cherry reported traffic queued back more than a kilometre along the Tweed Coast Rd outside Pottsville on July 29th and asked why Greg Alderson did not include this in his post event traffic report. He replied that he was aware of queueing but that it simply needed to be managed.

Mayor Simon Richardson made the following comments:

- The perception that the NBP events are located in Byron Bay should be toned down in advertising, especially for the Falls which is to be specifically billed as an alternative to Byron Bay at that time of year. Brandon Saul and Jessica Ducrou agreed and would attend to this matter;
- The length of patron entry queues was excessively long, notably on the Friday. Public transport and patron drop-off issues need fixing. People don't mind crowded buses as it's part of the fun, but they need frequent service if they are to use public transport;
- The southern carpark at the site requires better foundation to restrict vehicle bogging. Chris cherry supported this comment;
- Many people gained business patronage as a result of SITG. Byron has a tourist economy and local businesses and stallholders need to be given priority;

- Next time, many patrons will be aware the site is further from Byron than at first thought, and many may try to park or camp in nearby suburbs. He was pleased this didn't occur this year, but the organisers will need to be watchful next time; and
- Given all factors, the Mayor thought the organisers did a pretty good job.

Chris Cherry asked if the sediment controls were in place on all drains. Mat Morris replied that gross pollutant traps and sediment control structures were in place, however NBP intended to add a number of smaller ones to improve controls. Chris Cherry also asked if some internal roads were constructed higher than 100mm and if this was impacting on natural flow directions and sediment loads off-site. Mat Morris advised that there was no mandated specification for minor internal roads, only the main spine road (which was required to be constructed above the 1:100 year flood event). He further advised he was in discussions with BSC, Tweed Council and DOPI regarding a reported issue of fill in the catchment. BSC council officers had visited the site and confirmed there was no such unauthorized filling. Further BSC officers took water samples at the northern and southern boundaries of the site and the results indicated no problems with dissolved oxygen levels, pH levels and only very minor elevated turbidity levels.

Ray Darney (Director of Planning, BSC) offered the opinion that wet years were a common and natural occurrence here, and all events needed to cater for wet conditions. He suggested additional sealing of sections of Jones Road by NBP as it was experiencing increased sightseeing traffic. He also suggested consideration of a walk/cycleway from Shara Blvd along Brunswick Valley Way, then Tweed Valley Way to the festival site as a means of catering safely for local patrons. As a resident of Ocean Shores, he personally believed some reported impacts such as noise from the event were overstated at Ocean Shores and South Golden Beach. Due to the traffic congestion issues outlined at this meeting and Council staff views, Ray Darney was pessimistic regarding increasing SITG patron numbers until the issues, notably traffic, were resolved. He advised that Council staff will draft a report to Council to DOPI regarding increased numbers at SITG 2014.

The managers present at the meeting all responded that the identified issues would be resolved and repeated that at no stage was the Pacific Highway impacted (i.e. queuing, etc.) or traffic safety compromised. The traffic issues experienced on local roads and Tweed Valley Way were a result of internal traffic management procedures, which will be fixed, and by bus scheduling and prioritising which can also be resolved. Much has been learnt from this first SITG.

Chris Cherry advised some noise had been reported in the Wooyung areas closer to the site, but that noise was not experienced at her residence and business in Wooyung. Chris asked about the noise report and when it will be available. Mat Morris advised the hard work to keep noise within compliance had yielded results and event monitoring had found that SITG had complied with strict DOPI noise criteria at all sensitive receivers. NBP acknowledged that noise affected individuals differently, and compliance did not necessarily translate to not hearing the event. The full report had been distributed to DOPI but was embargoed pending discussions shortly with one resident with whom the venue was currently in the midst of legal proceedings. Mat Morris expected the all clear to release the report soon. This is an action item.

Chris Cherry asked about the supply of fresh water on site as there had been reports of supplies running out at times. Jessica Ducruo responded that there was a report that one tank at the Country Club had run dry for a short period of time, but alternate free water supplies were

available short distances away. Free water was also available at every bar across the event. The event undertook to ensure adequate supplies were available at all times at future events. Chris Cherry advised she had been advised by parents of under-age volunteers being given 18 year old wristbands enabling them to buy drinks on site. This was of surprise and concern to Jessica Ducruo who had not received any similar reports from security, bar managers or the NSW Police. She would look into the matter.

Chris Cherry asked when the flora and fauna reports would be tabled. Mat Morris advised that per the approved BACI monitoring regime it was a requirement that post event monitoring (i.e. August and September) was completed before final assessment of the results could be made and a report provided. He expected to table the report in October/November 2013.

Chris Cherry and Paul Arrowsmith asked if the Falls event was approved. Brandon Saul responded yes. The Chairperson elaborated that 3 specified events per year were approved under the PAC approval of 2012, conditional upon the company providing numerous reports detailed in the approval to DOPI. The Director General of Planning must be satisfied with and then approve these plans prior to events. This is what is known as a conditional approval and is a normal procedure in NSW.

Chris Cherry tabled some comments and questions from the community. These will be read by the company and where requested, responses provided. Chris also asked why the bump-out period was extended. Mat Morris explained that a large crane broke-down and needed repair prior to completing the dismantling of the two story cocktail bar structure. The alternative of using a smaller crane to complete the task earlier was considered less safe and was not adopted.

The issue of no or interrupted mobile telecommunications during the SITG event was noted. Optus infrastructure set up on site seemed most affected with 4 days of "emergency only" transmission. Telstra experienced some limited interruptions. The company will ask Optus to increase availability during events, but this will be up to them.

Mat Morris advised the Office of Environment and Heritage had returned the \$25,000 bond lodged by NBP prior to the event. He also advised that \$25,000 had been distributed as part of the Community Grants Fund to:

- Ocean Shores United soccer club - \$10,000;
- Ocean Shores Tidy Towns - \$5,000;
- WIRES - \$2,000;
- Ocean Shores Primary School - \$2,000;
- Brunswick Heads Primary School - \$2,000;
- Crabbes Creek Primary School - \$2,000; and
- The Pocket Primary School - \$2,000.

In closing Cr Sol Ibrahim requested that members of the RWG ensure they maintain a clear distinction between customer experience (i.e. muddy walkways, etc) and the actual role of the group to confine itself to those matters listed in C2 of the consent conditions. He noted that a number of issues being raised at this meeting and in public forums related to customer experience and are not within the scope of the RWG.

4. Actions

Action 1 – Distribution of the Traffic Management Plan to RWG members – RWG Chairperson;

Action 2 - NBP, RMS, SITG, Falls and traffic consultants to meet to develop solutions to traffic issues - NBP as soon as practicable;

Action 3 - SES to be included in on-site evacuation planning – NBP and SES;

Action 4 - Consideration of extending the TMP to cover use of northern egress road and Pottsville areas - NBP, RMS, LTMC;

Action 5 - Noise report to be issued to RWG members - NBP 09/2013;

Action 6 - Responses to community questions tabled by Chris Cherry will be undertaken as part of the responses to community documentation received from DOPI (which includes questions tabled by Chris Cherry) – NBP 09/2013;

Action 7 - Flora and Fauna Reports to be issued to RWG and DOPI – NBP October/November 2013.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the RWG will be focused on the Falls event, and will be scheduled on 16 October 2013.

The Chairperson closed the meeting at 3.15pm. He and Mat Morris both thanked all attendees for their valuable and constructive input. The SITG management backed up this sentiment and advised their appreciation for the inputs and a firm desire and confidence to improve those aspects identified herein.