



Agenda for RWG Meeting Thursday 25 July 2019

11:00

Welcome \Introductions Chair; Peter Ryan, Bluesfest Management, Brendan Meek, Nadja Konietzko

11.10

Summary of Bluesfest 2019 by B\F Management: Event Planning and RWG Scope Items: illegal camping | litter | security services | noise | event traffic | carparking | complaint mechanisms | koala management | flooding | bushfires | evacuation procedures | other issues from State or Council reps; recap of 2019 BF festival performance and highlights
Feedback from regulators on 2019 BF festival: general discussion by all.

12.15

Update on any Events 2019\2020: Future Plans: Modifications (BF management)

12:30

Other Business

Attendees at Meeting

First Name	Last Name	Organisation
Phil	Mallon	Community Rep
Ben	Buckland	Roads and Maritime Services
Detective Chief Inspector Matthew Kehoe	Kehoe	NSW Police Force
Chief Inspector Gary Cowan	Cowan	NSW Police Force
District Inspector Bobbie	Cullen	NSW Police Force
Mark	Somers	State Emergency Services
Leah	Ross	Rural Fire Service
Mark	Ross	Rural Fire Service
Alice	Heasman	Byron Shire Council
Peter	Ryan	RWG Bluesfest Chairman
Brendan	Meek	Bluesfest
Nadja	Konietzko	Bluesfest

Minutes of Meeting

Introductions and Welcome

The Chairman, Peter Ryan, welcomed the attendees and introductions were made.

Apologies

Apologies for the meeting were received from Chris Larkin (Byron Shire Council), Norm Graham (NPWS) and Bob Wilcox (RFS).

Summary of Bluesfest 2019

Bluesfest management walked the meeting attendees through a series of drone pictures to demonstrate festival layout and carpark volumes at the 2019 event. One obvious point was that only 70% of carparks were filled (at the most) over the five-day event. This suggests bus and car-pooling initiatives are gaining traction.

The 2019 event was well received, with a more or less typical spread; capacity or near-capacity crowds on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, and with less patrons on the Thursday and Monday.

Thanks to efficient and closely managed traffic management, there were no problems with traffic flowing onto the highway.

It was discussed to add another light tower in the corner of the Northern Entrance to be added for 2020 event.

Drop of / pick up procedures worked out well, with little or no serious delays. Car parks were cleared much faster than in the past as a result of some changes and closer focus on spreading anticipated departure times at the close of each day.

One further initiative discussed was to totally separate buses from patron vehicles.

Illegal Camping

No knowledge or reports of illegal camping were evident or reported during the festival; no issues raised.

Litter

Litter issues were well managed, and no significant or widespread issues were reported by crews or public. The placement of recycle and rubbish bins at strategic points, especially on exits worked well.

Phil Mallon relayed the appreciation of the operators of the Tyagarah Shell Service Station for the provision of the two portaloos at the Station by Bluesfest (to avoid over-use of the existing, older style, septic toilets there) for the duration of the festival.

One issue, however, was the absence of NO PARKING signs in front of the portaloos, leading to access and congestion issues as a result of people parking there all day/night over the entire festival period. It would help if 30min parking signs will be put up in 2020. That still allows for flow to the station but avoids permanent parked cars and associated congestion.

ACTION ITEM: Bluesfest management will investigate this suggestion for 2020.

Security services

CI Matt Kehoe advised that his meetings and discussions with site security services was well received and their systems were well managed. The CCTV system is sophisticated and suits the style of festival well. BM reported that BF management are well satisfied with site security providers.

Noise

Nadja Konietzko advised there was 1 noise complainant over the BF period. Consultant, David Moore, followed protocols and went out to the property (see below) and checked the noise levels and reported that noise levels were compliant. He did this on Thursday and again on Monday to check the same house that lodged the complaint.

Event traffic / Carparks

BM reported that traffic management performed well and was assisted by the upgraded arrangements for pick-up and drop-offs.

Car parks only ever 63% - 70% full.

Paid Parking is to be introduced in 2020 (\$25 per vehicle per day is likely). CI Matt Kehoe suggested that to further encourage the use of buses, the upgraded bus options should be advertised on the same page as parking tickets, on Bluesfest website.

Police Transport Command (Sydney based) may be asked by CI Matt Kehoe to assist in future with traffic and patron management at crucial bus stops, especially Byron Bay central, where the potential for congestion and delays is most.

Complaint Mechanism/ Community Hotline:

During the event the BF admin team managed the phone hotline. Each call that needs actioning is logged, with name, phone, date, time, query, if the problem was solved and the staff name handling the call. Most calls are ticket inquiries.

If there is a complaint, it is highlighted if the complaint was resolved and if not, pointed out to the Admin Manager. Should a follow up phone call be required the Admin Manager / Head of Department responds.

For the 2019 BF event the following number of daily calls were logged:

Wed: 41 (no complaints, pre-fest)

Thursday: 60 (3 complaints, incl. 1 noise complaint from Mevlana, noise consultant David Moore checked on this Thursday and again on Monday and advised that noise levels were compliant)

Friday: 91 (6 complaints)

Saturday: 45 (3 complaints)

Sunday: 43 (5 complaints)

Monday: 22 (1 complaint)

Full details of all complaints are maintained by BF management in the Complaints Register.

Koala Management

Bluesfest has engaged Dr. Sean Fitzgibbon from Queensland University and consultants AWC to manage their Koala Management Plan. This includes monitoring and treating of Koalas as well as strategic tree -planting and trapping for natural predators such as wild dogs.

This programme is on-going.

Flooding

There were no flooding issues this year.

Several attendees noted that as a result of site drainage engineering works over the past few years, the site was performing after rain.

Bushfire

No bushfire issues occurred. BF management will be changing the fencing for the RFS unit in Campground 7 to improve security and patron management.

Evacuation procedures:

All evacuation procedures were in place. No incidents occurred.

For 2020 there are further road works planned to widen roads from event site to camp site in South. The pre-existing gate behind the service station residence will be reinstated.

Feedback and Future Suggestions:

Mark Somers suggested the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and its physical location in relation to the Police Command centre be reviewed and made closer.

Mark and Leah Ross suggested that all emergency channels be manned together in the EM Centre, although RFS do monitor emergency calls and currently also escort any emergency vehicles through the site.

BF management, SES, RFS and Police will discuss during their normal, scheduled de-briefs and day-to-day communications.

Ben Buckland offered some observations on traffic management, especially on departure, including following discussion with BM, the positioning of an additional camera, at the Highway/Tyagarah service station location.

BB also advised his appreciation of the direct line of communication to BF traffic manager.

Action Item: BM advised this was a good suggestion and would be implemented for 2020.

It was discussed amongst several attendees that it would be beneficial to have the Deputy Coroner visit Bluesfest 2020 to demonstrate the difference between Bluesfest and high-risk events like EDM events. She visited Splendour in the Grass this year.

BF festival director, Peter Noble, briefly visited the meeting, advising the effect the original "broad brush" announcements by NSW Govt on festival deaths and the consequent publicity had on management issues such as access to finance and perceptions in the commercial world. This needed to be dispelled and distinctions made between types of festivals. The average age of a BF patron is 49.

PN also advised an application to increase patron numbers by up to 5,000 for 2020 was likely to be lodged with Council. This is seen as necessary to keep BF profitable, and to allow for more patron experiences and options for entertainment and dining (ie. not only music) within the site, as patron preferences change rapidly.

More "glamping" and large vehicular camper units are also in growing demand, requiring more space within the current set-out and a consequent shuffling of artist areas.

Other business

Phil Mallon observed that the improvements to the BF event and its on-site features such as lay-out, drainage and safety were noticeable year upon year.

Brendan Meeks advised the RWG would meet again, pre-BF 2020, nominally February-March next year.

The Chairman thanked all attendees for contributing to a productive meeting.

The meeting closed at approximately 12.45 pm.