

The Chairman opened the meeting at 10am and welcomed the attendees.

Attendees

Mark Elm (SES, via link), Peter Mair (SES), Peter Noble (BF Director), Jodie Sharp (BF), Tash Morris-Esch (BF), Mick Williams (BF Site Mgr), Michaela Meli (BF), Leisa Sedger (Transport For NSW), Neil Gendle and Kane Hitchcock (TfNSW via link), Mark Ross (RFS), Phil Mallon (Comm Rep), Fabrizio Calafurni (Comm Rep), DCI Matt Kehoe (NSW Police), Peter Ryan (Chairman)

Apologies

Nadja Konietzko (BF), Norm Graham (NPWS), Chris Larkin (Byron Council).

Action Items from March 2023 Meeting

There were four items listed for action:

1. Temporary opening of south ramp off M1 to site during BF 2023. Comment: This was not enacted due to lower patron and traffic numbers
2. Informing relevant residents of temporary traffic changes near Greys Lane. Comment: This was enacted.
3. Addition of hardstand material at RFS sites. Comment: This item was enacted. Site Manager, Mick Williams, also advised that additional drainage works were proposed shortly.
4. Review of Consent Condition 73, relating to how and when relevant residents are notified of proposed events. It has previously been agreed with Council reps and the RWG that BF could propose a more contemporary wording for this condition.
Comment: This issue has arisen because condition 73 was written 10+ years ago and focussed on only larger scale events. The Green Room, which is specifically built and designed for small events less than 2,000 people, was not present at that time.
At the March 2023 RWG meeting it was agreed that Council and BF management should review this condition to more contemporary methods of consultation and notification and also recognise the likelihood of multiple small events at the Green Room.
Detailed discussion was held at this June meeting, outlined in the following section.

SMALL EVENTS UPDATE

Peter Noble opened the discussion with an outline of BF management's embedded intent on being a local, community-focussed operation. This is an important foundation for BF management. He would appreciate the input of RWG members and BF management to provide input to modify Condition 73, such that it reflects the current operation and is inclusive of all stakeholders.

Considerable discussion ensued on ways to make the condition more contemporary. For example, letter box drops, and newspaper ads were considered by many members to be out of date and ineffective, in comparison to websites and social media that most people have access to.

In addition, many members expressed a view that the type of small events proposed at the Green Room fell into two categories: ticketed public events to 2,000 max capacity, and private events (eg. weddings, forums, yoga etc) theoretically to 2,000 max capacities but realistically in the 200–500-person range.

The RWG members considered it would be the ticketed public events that would be of most relevance for notification requirements, not small private functions, or for example, a public community forum.

Condition 73 is mostly about notification (MK).

The members felt that contemporary wording and actions under this condition could be put forward by BF following consideration of the appropriate wording and including consultation with the Tyagarah Community Association regarding notification processes. Council planning staff would also be consulted for wording and modification process advice.

Action 1 A modification to Condition 73 proposed by BF management that is contemporary and includes effective notification was endorsed. The RWG members advised their willingness to provide comment on a draft if requested. Consultation with the community Association via the community representative (FC) is also proposed.

BLUESFEST 2023

TM-E and JS gave a summary:

Patron numbers were approximately half capacity on the peak days (approx. 12500 on both Friday and Saturday) and less on other days. In all approximately 64,000 attended over the five days.

About 18,761 campers were on site.

PN observed the changing face of large festivals following covid, greater and different expenditure and leisure diversity options, and some reputational damage from other 2022 events.

The introduction of the new Emergency Control Centre was well received and ran smoothly.

Traffic issues were not significant, attributed to lower numbers, less single occupant vehicles, and the change in security check from entrance to post-entrance.

The agreement that M1 signage stating the Liberty service station was open did not eventuate. It was agreed that the Traffic Management Plan would now include this requirement.

Two noise complaints were received and in accordance with procedures, were investigated by the noise consultant and found to be within approved limits.

With respect to health and safety, there were seven ambulance transports and a low incidence of general \minor injuries and referrals. Over the five days, 63 persons were requested to leave site due to intoxication.

The new licence operator, Cross-Promotions, operated 9 bars smoothly.

MK advised NSW Police were satisfied with the event and its patron management. Sniffer dogs were in operation and detected a small range of the usual drugs. Staffing and rostering arrangements for Police are to be reviewed with BF management prior to 2024.

With respect to koala management, MW and TM-E advised the monitoring programme by Univ Qld has recorded 11, probably 12, koalas on site, including 5 joeys born in the past 12 months. Monitoring includes the use of a heat-sensing drone. Chlamydia is present on site, and BF is a candidate for trialling a new potential vaccine.

SITE ACTIVITIES 2023

Mick Williams advised considerable drainage works and drain clean-out works that were commenced in early 2023 would continue throughout the year. These are having good effect. The new pedestrian bridge was under-utilised during BF 2023, and improved signage and pedestrian routing will increase its usage and thus, site people management. PM advised the groundwater pumping and removal beneath the hardstand behind the Tyagarah service station was cleaning up the adjacent creek. Water sampling and analysis is being undertaken.

BLUESFEST 2024 PLANNING

BF 2024 will run between 28 March and 1 April 2024. It will be BF 35th year. Planning and bookings are well underway, and as MW advised site ground preparations and improved drainage works are continuing.

Leisa Sedger (TfNSW) noted that changes to the Traffic Management Plan are difficult to enact if they come too close to or at the event. Changes that affect, say, traffic flows on the M1, cannot be enacted at short notice. An example would be for buses to use the Grey's Lane exit between 8pm and 2 am.

A broadly scoped TMP can include such contingencies that may require changes close to events. This is an acceptable mechanism to adopt once the TMP is tested and proven. The Traffic Guidance Scheme is also a component of a proactive TMP (LS, MK).

Action 2. BF management and their traffic consultant to revise the TMP content and timing for approval to allow for a wider range of scenarios and contingencies. The earlier the revised TMP is given to the approval authorities, the better. MK observed that for BF 2024, a TMP lodged in late 2023 would allow for good time for assessment and approvals.

OTHER BUSINESS

Peter Mair (SES) requested a A2 sized site plan for future use by SES.

Action 3. BF to supply plan.

The meeting closed at 11.30 with thanks for the Chairman and PN for a constructive and useful meeting.