



Bluesfest Byron Bay Regulatory Working Group

Minutes from Meeting
10am, Tuesday 21 June 2022, Bluesfest Offices
The Byron Events Farm

AGENDA

Welcome and Introductions
Bluesfest 2022 Performance
and update on RWG Coverage Items
The Green Room Facility
Other Business

Attendees:

#	First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Abbreviation
1	Phil	Mallon	Community Rep	PM
2	Detective Chief Insp Matthew	Kehoe	NSW Police Force OIC Byron Station	MK
3	Fabrizio	Calafuri	Community Rep	FC
4	Mark and Leah	Ross	Rural Fire Service	MR\LR
5	Matt	Adams	TNSW, Devel Services	MA
6	Bob	Wilcox	Rural Fire Service	BW
7	Matty	Williams	Bluesfest Site Mgr	MW
8	Peter	Ryan	RWG Bluesfest RWG Chair	PR
9	Nadja	Konietzko	Bluesfest COO	NK
10	Tash	Morris Esch	Assistant to BF COO	TME
11	Ryan	Farrell	Roads Maritime-Special Events	RF
12	Peter	Noble	Director, BF	PN
13	Lisa	Sedger	TNSW, DS	LS

Abbreviations:

BF = Bluesfest

RWG = Regulatory Working Group

Welcome and Introductions

RWG Chairman, Peter Ryan, opened the meeting at 10 am, welcomed the RWG members and outlined the scope and purpose of this RWG. Round-table introductions were then made.

Apologies

Norm Graham (NPWS), Ben Buckland (RMS), Chris Larkin (BSC), Jess Gilmore (BSC)

Discussion Items

Introduction

NK addressed the meeting, welcoming all to the meeting at the multi-purpose “Byron Events Farm”, and provided details since the December 2021 RWG meeting.

Easter 2022 Bluesfest

Management was very pleased with the overall attendances and with patron and staff/provider satisfaction levels for the Easter event.

101,024 people attended over the festival days, with over 48,000 classed as unique attendees. Single day tickets were very popular possibly due to specific headline acts on those days. Ticket holder “no-shows” were about 12%, probably reflecting current social trends and some indecisiveness with respect to jobs, covid and travel.

Staffing to full complements across all sections of BF proved challenging, mirroring other businesses across the nation.

Good Friday saw a traffic issue on the M1 (see below for full discussion).

It is worth noting that the last 3 months of 2021 were wet, added to by record -breaking rains in the 3 months preceding Easter 2022, including 2 flood events. This created unique ground and logistical conditions, to which BF staff had to continually adapt.

The recently completed Economic Study has calculated the economic benefit to NSW from BF to be about \$390M.

Majority of patrons are in the 45-59 years old bracket and include many families.

Camping

Camping was very popular and operated with some on-site location changes created by ground conditions. Campers were allowed to enter and set up on the Wednesday 13th April, even if they held one of the previously available 4-day tickets (revised to 5 day). Ground conditions (e.g., bogging) created some internal queues and processing delays, exacerbated by some campers arriving with larger than advised caravans etc, and accreditation and ticketing being conducted as one operation.

BF have observed a significant increase in the size of camping vehicles, such as caravans and RV trucks over the past few years, in addition to the increasing popularity of camping on-site in general.

MW and NK advised that in future, these functions will be separated to speed up the settling in of campers, and additional lay-by lanes will be added to “hold” entrants if needed.

Additional drainage is being constructed in campgrounds and car-parking areas to alleviate any future wet ground conditions.

Parking

Paid parking, especially pre-paid, was very successful with very few parking patrons not using the pre-paid system. \$100 for a 5-day pass and sliding scale thereafter.

Buses

Bussing to and from regional centres and towns operated as per usual. Securing sufficient buses was difficult and took close management. Bus companies have not escaped the general shortage of qualified drivers and staff.

Some bus schedule delays were created by the Good Friday traffic issue on the M1 (see below).

BF management are discussing cashless ticketing for buses in the future to avoid cash exchange delays.

MW also advised that modifications to the bus pick-up areas was planned to alleviate queues and wait times.

Traffic

External traffic issues were managed generally well, with one significant issue. Queuing on the M1 northbound lanes occurred between about 12 noon and 4.30pm on Good Friday, 15 June, from the St. Helena tunnel to the first Gulgan Road exit to Mullumbimby and the roundabout/overpass to the BF site.

Much discussion of this was held, with all RWG members contributing.

The dominant cause of this being the two unprecedented flooding events taking place on Bluesfest site within one month. The second flood event 2 weeks out from the festival. This led to an increase in campground sensitivity to patron traffic, reduced campground space due to wet areas and increased bogging coming into the festival.

BF management, MK and the representatives from Transport for NSW offered much information and discussion around future assistance in response to a case like this. In which, TfNSW corporation discussed offering help during the festival for any real-time issues that may occur at future festivals.

The BF Traffic Management Plan will be revised in October 2022.

Koala Management

The Koala Plan of Management continues in operation.

Some tree plantings will be re-planted following unsuccessful establishment.

Camera monitoring continues and shows a moderate level of invasive pests on the site.

There are seven koalas currently known to be using the Bluesfest site (incl. three tagged males, three tagged females, and one untagged individual) according to Dr Sean Fitzgibbon, Koala expert from Gold Coast University. Five of which have been resident on site for at least 1-2 years – All tagged koalas in good health.

Planting of koala habitat and other trees continues, and Aust Wetland Consultancy (AWC) is managing the overall Management Plan in line with previous years, alongside Dr Fitzgibbon's reporting data in which AWC source and reference in their reporting's.

Noise

NK advised that no noise complaints were received during BF 2022.

Complaint Mechanisms

MW and NK advised that the complaint hotline for festivals was in place.

Emergency Services

The Emergency Centre and First Aid centre operated as usual under the direction of Steve Barnes.

In 2020 the EEC was to be centralised, however, due to CV19, it will be separated into the respective agencies own quarters, but in constant communication.

A daily meeting (usually 0900) for all ES staff was held at the BF offices and operated well.

Small Events/Medium Events

Annually, BF are permitted to hold; 10 days x “large” (30,000 total people) events including 2 x multi-day event up to 5 days; 10 x “medium” event days for up to 15,000 people (total on site) including 1 x multi-day event up to 5 days; and “smaller” events 100 days for up to 2,000 people of which 10 can be amplified, and 90 non-amplified. BF management will consider compliant events on a case-by-case basis.

The Green Room

The Green Room, a 1,000m² floor space facility adjacent to the BF site offices, is operational.

It can hold comfortably 1,500 standing, and 700 seated theatre style and 400 seated at round tables.

This can be rented to external and internal groups for the holding of small events which could range from corporate events, music, community events, weddings, etc.

The facility is a glass and hard plastic-sided and roofed structure, with a concrete floor onto which a stage, bar, partitions and if needed, tables and chairs can be fitted according to the event.

Other Business

Resource Sharing

BF management and the operators of North Byron Parklands (Splendour in the Grass and Falls) have, with Council consultation and approvals currently in train, proposing for about 6,000 campers for July’s SITG to be housed at nominated camp sites across the BF site. Again, ground conditions have precipitated this initiative. NK and PN advised they hoped this may if needed become a reciprocal arrangement for future festivals. This initiative includes to provide the ability for overflow day parking. Shuttle busses will run from and to both events sites.

The matter of traffic management for bussing campers and day parkers from the BF site to SITG and back was raised by MK. It was assumed the SITG TMP would cover this issue. BF management to confirm.

The matter of camper’s security at the BF site was also raised by MK. NSW Police do not currently intend to provide such services at the BF site. MK is to follow up.

Based on current plans, the next RWG meeting will be scheduled for late 2022 or early 2023.

The Chair and NK thanked the attendees for the constructive approach to the meeting and the items raised.

Draft Minutes will be circulated shortly.

The meeting closed 12 noon.