

BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

ORDINARY (PLANNING) MEETING

9 AUGUST 2005

(50)

Report No. 6.6. Review of the 16th East Coast Blues and Roots Festival

Director: Planning and Development Services

File No: 4210G#532857

Principal Activity: Planning & Development

Purpose: To advise Council of the issues and results of the festival. Also attached is the organisations report.

Summary: The event was generally orderly, with the few complaints. There have been improvements over the past three years with regard to the operation

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council note the continued refinements to the event and that future events at this site can be managed with reduced impacts on the local community.

Background

The Blues Festival is an annual music event conducted over the Easter weekend. This application represents the 16th year in which the event has been conducted at Byron Bay over the Easter period.

The festival does cause some impacts on the public however there has been significant effort by staff and the organisers to try to develop ways of managing these public impacts. The 2005 Festival was seen as the best event during the past four years with regard to traffic and noise management.

At the close of each of the past five events a debrief has been held.

Some of the strategies developed have included

- There will not be a “separate” event on the Monday of the festival
- A Traffic Control Plan (TCP) and Traffic Management Plan (TMP) that has minimised traffic delays. The TCP and TMP have been conditioned that all parking along Bangalow Road should be parallel parking, and lighting is to be provided a minimum of 400m west on the Northern side of Bangalow Road.
- A sole liaison officer.
- The Section 68 applications are being applied for with the development application
- Improved arrangements for disabled access including a disabled access liaison person and the provision of a guide indicating where the viewing platforms are located as well as the toilets and disabled pick up and drop off points
- The Clubhouse was removed as an entertainment venue for the 2005 event
- The TMP has been amended to include recommendations from the de brief meeting held after the 2004 event

Key Issues

- Noise
- Traffic
- Public amenity
- The site reaches capacity at the peak time

Relationship to Management/Strategic Plan

The event is an important part of tourism and cultural activity each year.

Consultation

Extensive during the processing of the development application.

Finance/Resource Implications

The promoter is responsible for staff time and 50% of the town centre clean up cost at Easter.

Legal/Policy Implications

Nil

Sustainability Implications

The event assists in ensuring that the viability of the football ground but there are neighbourhood and traffic impacts.

Introduction

The 16th East Coast Blues and Roots festival was held over the Easter weekend from Thursday 24 March to Monday 28 March

Overview

The event was carried out in an orderly fashion and **generally** in accordance with the Development Consent Conditions.

A number of internal layout changes were made which included the relocation of toilet modules and some minor modifications to the orientation of the tents, which resulted in a less congested site.

The result of this year's event was the culmination over the past four years of improved co-operation between, the promoters of the event, the festival manager, and consultants for the promoter and Council staff.

The weather for the event was generally fine and calm. The wind was from a Southerly direction for three (3) days of the event.

IssuesTraffic

The structures associated with traffic management, whilst being required to be in place two (2) days prior to the event were generally in place prior to the opening of the festival. Lighting for public safety on Broken Head Road was not completed until 7.00PM Thursday prior to the event.

Council staff clearing dead vegetation from the road reserve in Broken Head Road adjacent to the site prior to the event found three unexploded devices. This delayed some of the traffic management installation being undertaken at the time.

The NSW Police service noted that considerable traffic delays were experienced along Ewingsdale Road into Byron Bay for the Easter period. They requested that the additional market that took place in Byron Bay on the Easter Monday not be granted in future as any market greatly increases traffic movements in an already congested and gridlocked Byron Bay. It was suggested that future markets may be relocated from the Butler street site to the land that Council has purchased in Ewingsdale Road.

Some concerns were made with regard to the lighting in Bangalow Road with regard to the safety of pedestrian movements to and from the event and the lighting in the school-controlled car parks. Vandals destroyed a section of the festoon lighting along Broken Head Road, which required organisers to replace the damaged lighting fixtures.

Parking complaints were received from residents in Cemetery / Old Bangalow Road, Mahogany Drive and Suffolk Park where patron parking obstructed access to their property. A suggestion was made that these areas be made into local area parking with cars having a CP sticker allowed to park. For this to happen the traffic management plan would have to be expanded to include appropriate signage in these areas for this to happen.

It was also suggested that the vegetation in the road reserve to the north of the site toward Cemetery Road be cleaned up prior to the event to help with Pedestrian movements.

Bus movements

Blanch's bus service advised that the traffic plan worked well with regard to bus movements and some 20,000 people utilised bus transport to and from the event during the duration of the event.

Noise

Council received one (1) noise complaint on the Wednesday night prior to the festival starting. The Blues Festival advised that preliminary sound checks may have occurred on this night. The promoter advised that this noise was not supposed to happen prior to the event. Calls to the noise hotline on the Wednesday evening were unsuccessful as a delivery vehicle had damaged telecommunications equipment. Otherwise the hotline worked throughout the festival.

The Blues Festival received two (2) calls on the noise hotline during the event.

Council received no noise complaints during the festival, or after the event concluded.

Rubbish

A submission was made that patrons parking in nearby residential locations such as Lilly Pilly Drive, Cemetery Road and Mahogany Drive areas emptied out the rubbish from their cars and dropped beer bottles on the footpaths and in neighbourhood front yards. The promoters of the event pay a \$5,000 bond that covers the removal of rubbish from the road reserve adjacent to the site. This condition could be expanded to include nearby residential locations, which patrons utilise for parking.

St Johns Ambulance

The St Johns Ambulance stated that the premises provided for this years event was the best ever with regard to location and size. A total of 632 casualties were treated as well as 559 self help people, which were mainly for the provision sunscreen. The main casualties treated were for asthma related symptoms, which was aggravated by dry dust in the air. (The inside of the crossroads stage was hosed prior to the start of the programs on the Friday)

Building and fire safety issues

A number of issues such as the location of emergency exits and the location of water tankers arose during the event.

These issues were resolved prior to the commencement of the event and any issues that arose during the event due to changes in the stage configurations etc were amended in an orderly fashion.

The security company used for this years event was different from previous years and a number of people were seen to breach the security to enter the event without tickets.

Communication between Council officers and the organisation was sound, and signage and the use of delineated areas was advantageous.

It is obvious that on the Monday night, the pinnacle event that the crowd numbers had reached capacity and further numbers could not be accepted without a reconfiguration of the layout.

Report from the promoters of the East Coast Blues and Roots Music Festival, 2005.

"The reports, unsolicited emails and calls, debriefs and feedback we have received from staff, crew, artists and patrons, indicates the event was a tremendous success.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE AUDIENCE

Our attendees comprise of the following, based on an analysis of postcodes:

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Location		%		#of TIX
TOTAL	100%		32,362	
Northern Rivers (including Byron Shire)	23.8%		7723	
Queensland		33.2%		10,745
NSW (excluding Northern Rivers)		31.9%		10,337
Victoria	6.6%		2,132	
South Australia	1.2%		395	
ACT		1.2%		395
Tasmania		0.6%		188
West Australia	0.5%		161	
Northern Territory		Nil		Nil
New Zealand		0.2%		75
Overseas		0.6%		210
Comprising – Canada - 47 Europe 10 Germany – 43 England – 16 Hong Kong – 1 Scotland – 4 USA – 89				

(NB: the process of rounding these numbers results in total percentage of 99.8%).

CHARITIES/GROUPS SUPPORTED BY THE BLUES FESTIVAL

We made available 6 stall spaces, for free, which we gave to local and national charity groups. We wanted to give them the chance to (i) get profile for their respective causes, and (ii) to procure donations and/or membership. A list is below (with amounts raised at the event). We tried to invite representation from a cross section of organisations, such as environmental/conservationist groups, youth services, illness and ailments, rescue services, and the humanity and personal relationship groups. We have included the parking revenue raised by the schools.

Byron Youth Services	\$9,000
Whales Alive	\$500
Westpac Lifesaver Helicopters	\$4,000
Uncle Program	\$4,000
Aunty Program	\$4,000
Pathways Foundation	\$2,000
Cystic Fibrosis NSW	\$12,750
Australian Conservation Foundation	\$337 + 19 new members
Starlight Children's Foundation	\$3,000
Byron District Hospital (Pink Ladies)	\$2,000
Coorabell Primary School raffle	approx.\$100
St Finbarrs (parking revenue)	\$27,500
Byron High School (parking revenue)	\$33,500
Red Cross*	
Amnesty International*	
TOTAL	\$102,687

(* charities insisted on by certain artists, generally for artist's show day only.)

We were also involved in several Tsunami Appeal fundraiser events for Sri Lanka, before and during the Festival. In total these events have raised an additional \$121,000.

\$15,000 contribution to the Byron Junior Rugby League Club, to be applied to fencing at the grounds, in addition to our venue rental of approximately \$100,000 which allows the Club to completely maintain its grounds.

The Bluesfest is considering establishing the Bluesfest Foundation, with the mandate of targeting charities and not-for-profit organisations, to which we will donate a percentage of festival profits. While we investigate this proposal for 2006, we have taken steps toward this in 2005 by agreeing to (i) co-sponsor the Dolphins Awards (the only non genre specific regional music awards) held annually in November (this year at the Beach Hotel), and hosted by NCEIA (the North Coast Entertainment Industry Association); and (ii) sponsor the Byron Bay Surf Life Saving Club rescue vehicle to the tune of \$5,000. The Bluesfest has supported many such organisations in the past (such as Byron Environment Centre; the Performance Arts Centre at the High School), but we are considering a long term strategy through a Foundation.

REFUSE, REUSE, REDUCE, RECYCLE

We are a WASTEWISE event, and believe we have the highest recycling of any event in Australia.

This year the quantity of product retrieved for recycling was significantly higher than previous years, and although the tonnage collected from the recycling bins was lower, this simply reflected less contaminated product being placed in the recycling bins than has been the case. We insisted our stallholders used corn starch-based plates and wood utensils.

In addition we supported the "bin ya butt" program, with 8,000 canisters available on site, and hired a local consultant (Bruce Alden) pre and during the event to ensure compliance with recycling standards (ensuring many products we purchased for the festival could be recycled, and providing guidance to volunteers and stall holders on what could be recycled and where to place it at the event).

LOCAL BUSINESSES WITH WHICH WE HAD A DIRECT RELATIONSHIP

(this list is not exhaustive. The Festival does direct business with over 170 local businesses. A more extensive list is attached)

Staff:

The festival employed approximately 200 staff, in such areas as site crew, ticketing, bars, production staff, drivers, administration, treasury, and miscellaneous.

ByronBay Accom.net:

Were our preferred accommodation providers, and we promoted the site on all media and to callers.

Local Media

For promotional purposes and to provide information, we relied on radio and print media.

Print Solutions

Designed our logos and 2005 artwork, as well as all printed materials (posters, adverts, passes, handbills, booklets, programs, etc)

Byron Business Group

Encouraged local businesses to get involved in cross promotional events, and we provided \$4,000 in tickets as giveaways and for packages.

Great Northern and Beach Hotels

Hosted our local 'outside shows'.

Soundwaves and Music at Byron

Acted as ticketing agents (as did 4 other northern rivers record stores). Clint Elder operated the on site CD stall.

Byron Bay Rugby League Club

Venue rental of \$96,000 (excl GST), which contributes to the upkeep of the grounds.

Local accommodation houses

We booked artists into 7 local hotels and motels (plus others on the peripheral of the shire), plus some houses we rented.

PMD Screenprints:

Printed all staff, crew, and volunteer t shirts

Local artists

Were hired to perform on two stages, as well as children's entertainment, roving festival performers, and buskers in and outside the festival grounds.

SAE:

We arranged with SAE to provide work experience to their film and audio students, who recorded many of the acts, in exchange for tickets and meals during the event. SAE were grateful we could offer the experience.

Service providers

Water truck, florist, helicopter, fork lifts, bank and bank staff (who worked the event), IT services, various consultants.

St Finbarrs and Byron Bay High School:

Provided parking and received the proceeds. St Finbarrs raised \$27,500; BBHS raised \$33,500

LOCAL MUSICIANS PLAYING BLUESFEST 2005

By Pass

Soulman

Jack Thorncraft

Jez

The Re-Mains

Ngaiire

Odessa

Bunna Laurence's band

James T

Scarlett Affection

Slim Pickens

King of the Byron Blues Buskers

Gypsy Puppets

The Turfs

Peter Notley Group

Ross Ward Band

VOLUNTEERS PROGRAM

The festivals' volunteer program provides an opportunity for people to attend the festival for free, and get work experience on a major event. For each shift (of 4-5 hours) they receive a day ticket, meal vouchers, and beverages. In addition they each receive a festival t-shirt and invitation to festival party.

We favoured local applicants when making the selection of 200+ volunteers.

BLUES OVER BYRON - BUSKING COMPETITION

With support from the Byron Business Group and BluesFest, this year's busking competition was successful. Over 40 buskers performed in the week prior to the festival. The venues included the Great Northern Hotel, Beach Hotel, The Rails and Cocomangas.

The winners were invited to play at the Festival, as paid performers. And some of the other outstanding buskers were invited to busk outside gate 2 and/or busk at a few spots inside the festival grounds. This proved very successful and a great opportunity for these emerging acts.

MISCELLANEOUS

St Johns Ambulance: were tremendous again this year. Council has a copy of their report. We donated \$5,000 to St John's. Noise levels: were consistently below EPA standards – in the vicinity of 5dB below.

FESTIVAL ACCOLADES

- *One of 5 finalists in 2004 International Festival of the Year Awards, as determined by Pollstar magazine (US publication, distributed internationally). Other nominees were Glastonbury Festival (UK), V Festival (UK), Montreux Jazz Festival (Switzerland), Summer Sonic (Japan) and Rock am Ring (Germany)*
- *Finalist in International Best Concert Poster, 2004.*
- *Awarded Best Australian Music Festival, by Rhythms magazine (which we have won every year (except 2) since 1994)."*