

RWG MEETING BLUESFEST Offices, Tyagarah, 11 am, Tuesday 9 October 2024

Minutes

The meeting opened with a welcome from the chairman and BF management.

#### Attendees

Nadja Konietzko (BF), Peter Noble (BF), D\C Insp. Matt Kehoe (NSW Police), Jodie Sharpe (BF), Laura Highley (BF), Leah and Mark Ross (RFS), Peter Ryan (Chair), Kane Hitchcock (TfNSW on line).

#### Apologies

Phil Mallon, Fabrizio Califurni, Chris Larkin, Helen Motteram, Jess Gilmore, Peter Mair

#### Agenda Items

#### Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting in Feb 2024 were finalised and posted by BF management on the relevant websites.

#### Action Items

The Action Item from the Feb 2024 meeting, regarding Leisa Sedger's item re the closure of Greys Lane at times was addressed by NK: the Transport Management Plan reflects that when daily patron numbers exceed 18,000, the road will be opened at peak times. This is expected to occur during BF 2025.

Modification for Small and Medium Events: NK thanked the RWG for their input to BF's consultations with Council. The Modification is underway.

#### Bluesfest 2024 Summary

PN, NK and JS advised the event went smoothly. Overall total numbers were about 60,000. This compares to a historical average of 98,000 and is an issue for on-going sustainability of such a large event. Costs across the board are up and cannot be totally reflected or recovered in ticket prices. Government support for the Arts is not significantly forthcoming despite industry pleas for support. BF has invested significant time and resources writing submissions for temporary relief to all levels of Government.

The recent amendments to the NSW Festivals Act should not significantly affect BF (MK).

Opinions on the changes and increased powers are varied. The State Govt has announced \$3M in assistance for up to 6 festivals (half now, half later if making a loss).

About 2,600 people work directly or indirectly on a major BF event. Budgets will be tight closely managed given the economic and costs situation.

#### Bluesfest 2025

The 2025 event is currently more than 70% sold, which is a pleasing outcome. The petition to assist BF be held into the future is halfway through, with 10,000 signatures (20,000 needed for Parliament to formally discuss).

BF 2025 is currently a 4-day event.

Camping is already sold out: due to increasing numbers of larger vehicles being brought in by patrons (vans, campers, larger tents etc, reflecting patrons' ages and associated desire for more

comfort). This has necessitated a search for additional off-site camping sites, for perhaps 5,000 patrons. An options study is underway. These patrons would be bussed to the BF event on a daily basis.

The BF TMP allows for off-site camping and parking, and MK thought the transport and traffic issues associated with this, for example on Tweed Valley Way, were manageable in the scenario whereby North Byron Parklands was used as a satellite camping site. No sites have yet been confirmed.

KH advised TfNSW would likely want to see traffic network impacts, arrival schedules and safety aspects addressed in correspondence. NK advised the current TMP is a flexible and robust document, designed to be adaptable.

Bussing is subject to an options study by BF management, looking at multiple contractors including smaller, more adaptable operators.

Camping registration processes for patrons were amended for BF 2024, and worked very well, with camping patrons guided to their sites, prior to registration.

Entry gates for vehicles will also be widened prior to BF 2025.

BF confirmed there will be permanent “eyes” on the M1 tunnel and Ewingsdale bridge to give traffic controllers early warning of any traffic issues for BF 2025.

#### Site Items

The Koala Management Plan is on-going.

BF will spend \$150,000 on waterproofing the camping and parking areas.

The meeting closed at 12 noon, with thanks to the attendees.

The next RWG meeting will be scheduled around February 2025.