

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS

Why is Council no longer providing free road closures?

The road closures have always been at a cost to Council and its ratepayers. Some events in the past may have been held without Council approval. Council has a responsibility to approve budgets for all expenditure. The aim of the newly adopted Traffic Management Policy and Process is to ensure that there is transparency of the cost to Council and the community of all its donation and in-kind support. Refer to our website for a copy of the policy:

<https://www.balonne.qld.gov.au/council/publications/policies-plans-strategies>

This policy provides for three avenues for funding.

- 1) Self-funded.
- 2) That application be made under an appropriate community fund/grant program (Section 9b of policy). Groups can contact Council for assistance.
- 3) Council will consider community groups events that occur on an annual basis for funding and/or assisting in organising traffic management. (Section 11 of policy.)

This will ensure event traffic management, if funded by Council, is transparent and the true cost is known.

Why is Council's new Traffic Management policy necessary because Council doesn't approve road closures?

Council as the local road steward is required to undertake due diligence when assessing road closures to ensure they are appropriate and in accordance with legislative requirements. Queensland Police Service (QPS) does give the approval, however, require a letter of support from Council (letter of non-objection) as it is Council's infrastructure. Council cannot knowingly 'rubber stamp' a request that doesn't comply and have all required information.

Why does Council's Policy require event committees to source signs and road closure services including a traffic management plan?

With Council approval, Council can assist, with funding and/or assistance with the organising traffic management. More detail below.

Signs - Section 10 of the policy allows the use of Council signs, providing application is made and approval is given. Signage is required to be collected from Council and any damage/loss will be the responsibility of the applicant. Council will review case-by-case. As may be reasonably expected, Council may not have all the signs available to undertake event traffic management, especially if it is undertaking its own works or the signs required are special event signs that it doesn't have. This section is to ensure that application of the required signs is made to give Council a chance to check its stock. It is also letting applicants know that there is a cost of signage and the applicant is responsible for damaged/lost signs. Section 11 does allow for Council to assist in organising traffic management (including signage) if approved by Council.

Road closure services including a traffic management plan – The group can either apply for funding

and seek the services themselves under Section 9 or seek Council's assistance under Section 11. The group is to be involved with the service provider or Council staff to ensure the traffic guidance scheme and traffic management plan (if required) meets the event requirements. The road closure service must be undertaken by an appropriately qualified provider (a qualified traffic management designer for the traffic guidance scheme and traffic management plan and a trained person for putting out signs – i.e. Traffic Management Implementation qualified, Event Traffic Marshal). It's against the law for someone who is not an approved traffic management designer to approve traffic guidance schemes and traffic management plans, and for someone to put out/pull down signage that is suitably trained or authorised.

Can Council hold the Traffic Management Plan on file, and it be updated annually for each event?

Yes, if under Section 11 of the policy Council had provided the assistance with organising the traffic management. However, it is still owned by the group, and has to be developed and reviewed by the group and agreed to by the group. Review would need to be undertaken annually to ensure legislation or event details changes are included as appropriate.

Alternately, if the plan was prepared by an external traffic provider, it could be kept on file with that company or the group and updated each year for minimal cost.

Do we need to have Event Marshall training and event volunteer assistance?

If a group wished to erect/remove their own signage and had no one trained with a Traffic Management Implementation qualification, they could undertake Event Marshall training. Group members still are required to undertake training. It is an option however it requires personnel to be willing to undertake the training. Council are trying to make groups aware of the options available.

Groups should also note that for some events Council may struggle to get enough staff willing to work as these events are usually on weekends when staff may not be willing to give up their time, or may want to attend the event with their own family, local contractors may also not be available, in these cases an external contractor may have to be sort.

Refer to the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) website

<https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Community-and-environment/Planning-and-development/Other-matters-requiring-approval/Traffic-management-at-special-events/Event-Traffic-Marshals>

Why is 3 Months' Notice to Council required when QPS require 28 days?

Council require a minimum of 3 months prior to an event - this is required for a number of reasons and for some events a longer period will be required.

For a normal event QPS require 28 days, this ideally is to have all information submitted. For Council the minimum 3 months is to ensure it has adequate time to go to a Council meeting if funding and/or assistance is being requested and to work with groups if there are errors and mistakes to ensure all requirements are met.

If it is a special event QPS require applications 3 months prior to events (usually races/time trials), for these events a greater period is recommended to ensure Council approvals are met. Council officers would recommend approximately 5 months prior to event to meet with event team and

ensure adequate time to go to Council if required.

Council officers understand there may be some confusion over these requirements and have met with QPS and are developing a requirements checklist with QPS that sits alongside the policy to assist groups to meet Council and QPS requirements.

Ultimately Council wants to ensure there is adequate timeframes for groups to go through these potentially complicated processes.

Why would Council pay retail rates for something that can be done in-house for very little expense?

The cost to Council is still significant, it has to pay staff wages to undertake the Traffic Management Plans and Traffic Guidance Schemes (the same as a contractor would), it has to pay overtime and minimum hours on the weekend for its staff and charge out its plant (as a contractor would).

Without staff giving up their time and volunteering, the cost would not be a small expense.

Some Councils carry out road closures for community as a community service why doesn't BSC?

Balonne Shire Council will fund or assist if Council approves in the budget. As it can be appreciated the policy is a high-level document written for more than just community events and considers external events or commercial events that Council may not be willing to fund.

Will Community Events have to find extra funds to hold events?

Community groups may apply for and receive approval for funding and/or assistance by Council. It is reasonable for these costs to be transparent and for groups wishing to hold events in high risk environments to ensure that legislative requirements are met for the continued safety to all involved. Grant funding options may also be available to support community events.

How do I apply for funding or assistance from Council?

Having functions on the road is a high-risk activity when not controlled appropriately. It can be an onerous task to jump through the traffic management 'hoops', however it is one that is required by legislation and more importantly to protect those who attend the event. Community Groups are welcomed to write to Council seeking funding and/or assistance with community event traffic management. See our website for more information on how to apply -

<https://www.balonne.qld.gov.au/community/events> OR

<https://www.balonne.qld.gov.au/community/community-support-grants>

Does the Council have to make this change as a legal requirement?

Simple answer yes. Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that events carried out on areas under its control, are done so in accordance with legislation. Council must ensure that it has carried out due diligence when supporting road closures and that appropriate documentation is in place.

What about Community Events on State Roads?

Council cannot provide a letter of non-objection on state-controlled roads or areas outside its shire boundaries. For more information refer to the DTMR website:

<https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Community-and-environment/Planning-and-development/Other-matters-requiring-approval/Traffic-management-at-special-events>

What are Council's *Local Law requirements?*

Attention is drawn to Balonne Shire Council Local Laws (subordinate 1.15) schedule 1 for additional criteria for carrying out works or interfering with a road or its operation.

<https://www.balonne.qld.gov.au/downloads/download/46/local-laws-and-subordinate-local-laws-2018>

How can I find out more?

Council's Community Safety Committee plans to work with key government agencies and stakeholders to hold a workshop for community event organisers in 2020 – so stay tuned.

Email: council@balonne.qld.gov.au or phone (07) 4620 8888.