

# Harm Minimisation Strategy

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## 1 Overview

Following the death of a patron at the 2015 event, significant improvements in both infrastructure and personnel resourcing have been made to the event. It is recognised by the organisers that there is adverse risk that patrons in medical or psychological distress may neglect to seek medical assistance either for themselves or their friends, for fear of a perceived threat of legal repercussions should their distress be related to having taken illicit substances.

The organisers recognise that the provision of full on-site medical assistance is of little use if an individual does not present to these facilities if they are required. For this reason, it is imperative that anyone requiring assistance must seek help, and that any possible barriers to this are reduced or removed at all costs.

With this view, the following changes and strategies have been implemented to increase the capabilities of the on-site team to more closely monitor patrons at risk of being in distress, to better respond to situations relating to patron welfare, and to encourage patrons to better look after themselves, their friends, and other attendees by seeking help when required.

## 2 Harm Minimisation Strategies

### 2.1 Redistribution of Personnel Resourcing (Contractor Procurement and Engagement)

It has been identified by the organisers that a number of operational requirements in the running of the event produce a disproportionate drain on management resources relative to their complexity or to the cost of outsourcing these roles. Further, some high-risk roles, such as Emergency Management, are best suited to an individual with significant industry experience. For these reasons, wherever feasible, contracted entities have been engaged to assist with personnel and logistical management of the event, to leave the organisers better equipped to engage with the event and monitor its patrons. Some of the operational roles that were previously performed by the organisers but have recently been outsourced include

- Hygiene services (toilets) management and coordination
- Volunteer and staff catering before, during and after the event
- Site management (in combination and coordination with existing personnel), and
- Radio communications monitoring and emergency services coordination.

## 2.2 Emergency Control Centre and Emergency Services Coordination

From the 2016 event onwards, the organisers have engaged former police officer Matthew Wood to coordinate interactions between emergency response personnel both internally and externally, and to manage radio communications at the event. The coordination aspect of the role involves ongoing communications with emergency personnel in the lead-up to the event, and the facilitation of a post-event debrief between all interested parties.

On site, an Emergency Control Centre is established within a secure, easily accessible demountable office, staffed 24 hours a day. From this location, radio communications are monitored and logged, and regular (four per 24 hour period for the duration of the event) meetings are held between representatives of the Organisation, NSW Police, the onsite medical provider, the onsite security provider, Dancewize NSW and the site owners. At these meetings, incidents are discussed and logged to help facilitate an ongoing coordinated approach to harm minimisation and the maintenance of public order by all interested parties.

All emergency services personnel, both internal and external, are instructed in a harm minimisation approach within the festival grounds, and are strictly directed to avoid encouraging individuals to go to bed if they are in potential distress, instead to always engage with medical personnel for evaluation in the first instance, and Dancewize NSW (below) for further monitoring.

## 2.3 Dancewize NSW

At the 2016 event, the organisers engaged Dancewize Victoria to provide a visible onsite peer education and harm minimisation presence available to all attendees. Since the 2017 event, the organisers have engaged Dancewize NSW, a sister entity to Dancewize Victoria, who are funded by Health NSW. The organisers work closely with Dancewize NSW to ensure a best practice approach to harm minimisation. This will involve a pre-event meeting with the Event Coordinator of Dancewize NSW to discuss strategic direction, provisions and staffing requirements for the event. Dancewize NSW will provide volunteer staff trained in first aid response to roam the festival and campgrounds, seeking out individuals who may require assistance and directing them to the medical tent if necessary. They will also maintain a highly visible presence within the festival at a designated space that is open 24 hours to patrons who are in distress but not in need of medical assistance, or who have previously been discharged by the onsite medical personnel but may benefit from further supervision.

The involvement of Dancewize NSW in the event will be publicly promoted to patrons in the lead-up to and during the event, to encourage uptake of this facility by both patrons in distress and individuals who may encounter a patron in distress.

## 2.4 Festival Design (Layout)

From the 2017 event onwards, the organisers have implemented a conscious approach to festival design and layout that incorporates comfortable spaces designed to promote relaxation and decompression, in complement with the higher energy spaces already catered within the festival grounds. The intention behind these spaces is to provide an easily accessible alternative for patrons at potential for distress to relax at, should they feel uncomfortable seeking direct help from medical personnel or Dancewise NSW volunteers. These spaces will be regularly patrolled by festival staff and Dancewise NSW volunteers, in order for easy and unobtrusive monitoring of patrons who may need assistance.

The organisers will also be facilitating and staffing an information and assistance point within the campgrounds, in order to create a visible presence within this relatively isolated space. This facility will be staffed 24 hours and intended to provide an easy access point to patrons in distress, as well as to mitigate anti-social or reckless behaviour by reminding patrons of the organisers' presence.

Further, the location of the police tent at the event will be discrete and not highly visible from the medical tent or the Dancewise NSW space, in order to encourage patrons in distress to seek help should they need it, without fear of retribution or legal repercussions.

## 2.5 Education Campaign

The organisers have engaged a promotions manager who is undertaking a daily promotions and engagement strategy via the Facebook event page. Incorporated into this strategy will be targeted messages relating to patrons' individual responsibilities to look after themselves and one-another, as well as information relating to on-site medical, security, and harm minimisation resources.

At the opening ceremony for the event, a representative from the Organisation will be speaking to those in attendance and reminding them to take care of themselves, and to engage with emergency services and Dancewise NSW personnel in the first instance if they or someone they know is in distress. Emphasis will be placed on a "better safe than sorry" mentality, and patrons will be encouraged to seek help as early as they feel that it might be necessary, rather than waiting for a situation to escalate, or going to bed.

## 2.6 Intelligent Content Design (Programming)

The organisers recognise that there is potential with an event of this type for individuals to feel encouraged to stay awake for inappropriate periods of time that have the potential to be detrimental to emotional and physical wellbeing. For this reason, the musical programming of the event is catered to intentionally have peaks and troughs in energy levels, to encourage individuals to take it easy often, and to get enough rest. Further strategies involve but are not limited to shutting down the second stage each night, and only running the main stage from Saturday afternoon until the event's close. The only stage that will be running for the duration of the event will be the downtempo chill space.

