

Dragon Dreaming Festival Development Application 2025 – Supporting Statement

Dragon Dreaming Festival& REGEN Incorporated

Executive Summary

This submission is prepared for the consideration of Yass Valley Council in support of the Development Application submitted by the **organisers or event organisers** of the Dragon Dreaming Festival 2025 (and beyond).

This application has used the previously provided submission and supporting documentation relating to Development Application and resulting Development Consent 200025 (**the 2014 & 2020 development consent**) as the base for preparation of this submission and supporting documentation with the addition of some further detailed management plans to guide a safe and sustainable event for the coming decade.

In short, this supporting statement requests a development consent that is materially the same as the 2020 development consent, with one key change, being the removal of Clause 24 of Part A of the 2020 development consent. The basis for these requests are stated in full within this submission, and the event organisers trust that you will give these requests due consideration.

With regard to the other conditions including the 2020 development consent, the event organisers support these in full and support the increased engagement from Yass Valley Council and the structured framework for reporting on compliance against these conditions.

The Dragon Dreaming Festival has evolved to deliver an event to the highest degree of safety (satisfying both ILGA and MOH) and sustainability. We look forward to our continued strong working relationship with Council, and event stakeholders to secure a successful continuation of the event and its benefits to the community of Wee Jasper and the economy and cultural landscape of the Yass Valley.

Directors

Dragon Dreaming Festival & REGEN Incorporated

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Introduction

Dragon Dreaming Festival is an annual music, arts and lifestyle festival which in 2025 will be entering its seventeenth year of operation (excluding the COVID years), after being held successfully in the ACT between 2008 and 2011 and in Wee Jasper, NSW between 2013 and 2024. On average, the event takes around ten months to organise and construct, with experienced individuals and event production crews from Canberra, Sydney and across Australia contributing to the event, the majority of whom work on a volunteer basis. In 2025, we intend to extend our positive footprint of ecological restoration through continued revegetation to support the last 3 years of native restoration onsite.

Our aim is to provide the most sustainable, ecologically positive, professionally run event that showcases local and upcoming artists alongside some of Australia's best electronic, instrumental and live musicians, in an environment that is safe, inviting and stimulating for attendees from diverse backgrounds and from a wide range of age-groups. As the festival has grown, we have attracted more varied and popular artists from across the country and around the world.

During our first 10 years in Wee Jasper, we have been humbled by the support we have received from the land owners, the Wee Jasper community, the Yass Council, Police, Fire and Ambulance services, and businesses throughout the Yass Valley. We look forward to returning in 2025 to host the next instalment of this unique event in close collaboration with all stakeholders.

Event Summary

We offer patrons at Dragon Dreaming Festival the opportunity to experience a unique four-day collaboration of music and visual art performances, as well as educational workshops on a broad range of topics and numerous retail and culinary attractions. The event takes place in a safe and fully self-contained environment that contains three music stages: two stages are electronically focussed with music ranging from relaxed electronic sounds through to varied electronica and the third stage showcases a wide range of live performers, encompassing a range of genres such as jazz, blues, folk, rock, dance, theatre and stand-up comedy.

The event is centred around a market village, which promotes a culture of community and togetherness. In 2022-2025 the village hosted over 55 food, clothing and special interest stalls, including the "Wee Jasper Community Stall" run by locals from the surrounding area selling necessities such as bags of frozen ice for the duration of the festival (with all proceeds going towards the local community). Dragon Dreaming Festival also hosts a complete healing village and workshop space which allows festival goers to enjoy a massage or alternate healing therapy sessions or to attend workshops on diverse topics such as geology and palaeontology, music production, bush tucker, acrobatics or personal development. As part of our family-friendly philosophy we also run a kids' space dedicated to entertaining the younger members of our community. The festival features an outdoor cinema showing short films, abstract documentaries and other quirky night time entertainments. These attractions are complimented by a dedicated art gallery and diverse range of installation art pieces, roving performers, professional audio-visual displays, and world-class fire twirling and acrobatic shows on offer over the weekend. Into the future, Dragon Dreaming Festival will continue to build our sustainability and environmental focus.

Dates: The 2023 and 2024 events were run across the first weekend in October of each year. The organisers propose to run the 2025 event over a similar period (e.g. in 2025 this falls on the 3rd October – 6th October 2025), which is an important date as it strategically provides our interstate

participants a long weekend opportunity for their transport needs. As in previous years, the gate would open at 10am on the Thursday of the event and the gates would close at 12pm on the Tuesday following the event. We recognise extreme weather conditions are possible, and we want all stakeholders to be satisfied with our date. To this end, in 2020, we contracted a Bushfire Management Plan (**Attachment K**) to assess risks and the result is supportive of our site, provided the provisions outlined are met and a catastrophic fire danger is not present within the region.

Expected Attendance: The organisers expect an attendance of 3000-4000 tickets in 2025. The maximum number of tickets proposed is 5000 for the 2025 event and beyond. This will be only a slight increase from the previously approved capacity and number of tickets sold for the 2024 event (4200) and will ensure that the organisers are able to safely and effectively manage the number of patrons at the event. The increase in capacity may allow the organisers to pay for increased operating costs while keeping ticket prices lower. Past event analysis shows that attendance levels steadily increase from late Friday afternoon peaking on Saturday afternoon and then decreasing again on Sunday afternoon.

Demographic of Festival Goers: Dragon Dreaming is an all-ages event. Last year the major demographic at the festival consisted of people aged between 19 and 35 years, with a large number of families and older members of the community also attending the event including 200 children between the ages of 0-16. Based on our event history we expect a similar demographic to enjoy the event again in 2025.

Promotion: The main promotional avenue for Dragon Dreaming Festival is through word of mouth, supported by a campaign on social media and an online presence through our website, www.dragondreaming.com.au. Responses to our survey of patrons following the 2024 event showed that 85 per cent of attendees had first heard about the event from a friend or family member, 51 per cent of attendees were repeat-customers, and 94 per cent were either likely or very likely to attend the event again. See **Attachment A** – DD25 Topline Survey Results

Event Format: Dragon Dreaming is a four-day event open to the public from 10am on the Thursday before the event starts (early entry – 5th day - no entertainment/only camping). The first entertainment day is Friday and the event finishes at approximately 7:00pm on the Monday. All patrons camp within the festival grounds, with camping sites established at a minimum distance of 100m and a maximum distance of 2km from the festival proper to ensure that participants rest as required. In an effort to encourage safer participation of festival goers, we are proposing to continue with only 1 single evening of continuous music on all stages (Saturday night). All other nights the high-energy stages will have a set close time to encourage rest. Although stage close times exist on all other evenings, we propose providing continuous low energy entertainment at one of the chill out spaces on the close nights. This allows Dragon Dreaming Festival and our contractors to manage participants in a central area that can be monitored by medical services for the duration of the event. This “chill out/pre-rest” area, is low energy entertainment with low bpm music to reduce participants heart rates and encourage rest. This is a strategy successfully delivered by similar events and in line with the recommendations made by the Ministry of Health.

Management Structure

Dragon Dreaming Festival is run by the registered not-for-profit charitable organisation Dragon Dreaming Festival & REGEN Incorporated ABN 32 623 266 197. The committee of the organisation holds the decision-making authority for the organisation's core business. The event organisers are a committed group of over 25 managers, all of whom specialise in event production, artistic performance and/or community engagement/building. These individuals bring a range of experience and knowledge including event planning and management in both government and community sectors, artistic design, construction and technical production, ecological management and restoration. The organisation relies heavily on members of the public who volunteer (over 200) as part of the event and on a number of paid contractors who provide essential services (including Yass Valley businesses).

Organisation Objectives

Our organisational objectives include:

- Promote the talent and diversity of Australian and international musicians, artists and performers in a professionally managed large outdoor event format.
- Provide a fun and safe environment that encourages social interaction, community, creativity and learning.
- Deliver an event that creates long-term and lasting positive social benefits for the local communities of Yass Valley and Wee Jasper.
- Providing a reliable and significant annual revenue source for retailers in the Yass Valley, as outlined below, and
- provide opportunities for local and up-coming musicians to perform with some of the most well-known artists in their genre.
- Promote education, personal development and learning through the provision of an educational and mentally stimulating environment.
- Promote respect and understanding of Australian outdoor flora and fauna by immersing members of the public in an outdoor event and creating an awareness of impact while encouraging participation in managing that impact.
- Leaving a positive trace on the local ecosystem by engaging a strategic revegetation project for the benefit of flora and fauna diversity, soil retention and erosion control and abatement of soil salinity.
- Promoting positivity amongst participants engaged in the revegetation project, delivering an understanding that each individual is able to make a difference in this world.
- Promoting ecological/ sustainability learning throughout the workshop space program.

Benefits of the event to the local community

Throughout the event's life at its current location in Wee Jasper, the organisers have built a strong and supportive relationship with the local Wee Jasper community. The Wee Jasper Community Association has provided a statement in support of the event continuing in its current location, a copy of which is at **Attachment B**.

Following every event since 2018 event, the organisers conducted a survey of their ticket purchasers. Of the 4200 ticket purchasers surveyed, a total of 622 responded (22 per cent). The responses received showed that attendees of the event spent, on average, \$222 in the Yass Valley area in 2024. Based on an estimated attendance of 4200 patrons and approximately 1200 staff, musicians, performers, workshop presenters, market stalls and contractors, this amounts to between \$950,000-\$1,200 000 spent in the Yass Valley area across the week of the 2024 event. This flow on effect has been present since 2014 proportionally to ticket sales. See **Attachment A** – DD25 Topline Survey results.

The festival has had great support from local businesses in Yass and this support continues to grow. On our webpage there is a Wee Jasper & Yass Valley page with a "shop local & support our local businesses" section where we have a substantial list that we continue to add to. This is another way we can help promote the local businesses to our attendees. We have received letters of support from some of these outstanding local Yass businesses. They are as follows; Toni Heuhaus of Trader & Co, see **Attachment Ci**. Martyn Pearce of the Tyger Gallery, see **Attachment Cii**. Joanna Hicks of The Yass Book Store, see **Attachment Ciii**. Matt Leahy of Kaffeine 2582 cafe, see **Attachment Civ**.

Further to this, where possible the event sources hire equipment, contractors and consumables from local businesses in the Yass Valley shire. For the 2024 event, the organisers spent approximately \$80,000-\$100,000 in the local community, with more than 95 per cent of this being paid to independently run local small businesses. Dragon Dreaming Festival continues to expand this every year by contacting more local businesses in the hope to further support the Yass community.

Provided is the 2024 Dragon Dreaming Festival Event Report Key Stakeholders which is a detailed report from the 2024 event that covers attendance, patron survey results, operational successes, identified areas for further improvement, see **Attachment D**.

Each year, the local Wee Jasper Community Association operates and staffs a stall selling food, beverages and ice to the attendees of the event. Since the events inception the stall has raised more than \$90,000 in profits (net), 100 per cent of which goes towards funding activities and operations within the local Wee Jasper community.

Following each event, including the 2024 event, Dragon Dreaming Festival and REGEN Incorporated donates funds to the local Wee Jasper school. Since 2013 DDF&R incorporated has donated \$35,000 (in funds or in-kind support) to the local school. The Wee Jasper School has provided a statement in support of the event continuing in its current location, a copy of which is at **Attachment E**.

In addition, the Wee Jasper branch of the Rural Fire Service, in recognition of their efforts providing fire support and safety, we have donated \$65,000 which goes to improving the local RFS capability to support the community throughout the year. Michael Carey on behalf of the RFS has provided a letter of support, a copy which is at **Attachment F**.

Dragon Dreaming Festival is very proud and honoured to have the continued support of Robert Bulger and his family of the Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri people, traditional owners of the land. They welcome us to Country, showcase their art in the art gallery and camp onsite for the event engaging with the punters sharing stories at the sacred fire. Robert Bulger has provided a letter of support, see **Attachment G**.

Dragon Dreaming Festival is a member of the Yass Valley Business Chamber and is a contender in 2 categories for the business of the year 2024 in Yass Valley.

The festival has received a letter of support from The Hon Kristy McBain MP Member of Eden-Monaro, who has supported us with other funding grants to provide cultural and economical benefit to the Yass Valley. See **Attachment H**.

Benefits of the event to the land and environment

Our ongoing ecological and sustainability goals for Dragon Dreaming 2025 and beyond include the following:

Environmental Outcomes:

- Support and promote biodiversity of flora and fauna.
- Control/remediate erosion.
- Create habitat corridors.
- Control of siltation.
- Deliver the most sustainable event possible.

Social/Community Outcomes:

- Share and increase environmental awareness.
- Provide opportunities for creating future change makers through active participation in the revegetation project.
- Build community and a sense of positivity.
- Promote environmental education, personal development and learning through the active participation in the land care project.

Requested variations to the current Development Consent

Having previously been provided with a two (x) five-year Development Consents for the operation of the event, the organisers have identified 2 variations to the current consent. These are defined below and are focused on the safety and financial sustainability of the event. Supporting a safer operation of the event through a re-direction of funds to positive health projects including Dancewize (education and patron care), TCAPS (Traffic, Camping and Patron Care), pill testing trials, enhanced services and medical resources and in the interests of running a viable event while meeting all of our compliance needs in relation to our commitments to council, we propose the following amendments.

Patron Number Increase

The maximum number of tickets proposed is 5000 for the 2025 event and beyond. This will be only a slight increase from the previously approved capacity (4500) and number of tickets sold for the 2024 event (4200) and will ensure that the organisers are able to safely and effectively manage the number of patrons at the event. It is not our intention to sell to this capacity in 2025, however in the future the increase in capacity may allow the organisers to pay for increased operating costs while keeping ticket prices lower during a 'cost of living' crisis.

NSW Police Requirement (Part A Clause 24)

The 2020 development consent states at Clause 24:

“To ensure appropriate policing at the event the event organiser must negotiate with the NSW Police Force regarding a “User Charges” policing service in accordance with the Cost Recovery and User Charges Policy produced by the NSW Police Force prior to the commencement of the event.

Note: The number of police should take into account the NSW position that a level of policing is required at some times during the event whilst recognising:

- *the event organisers’ provision of event security, their management plans/procedures/process, including any for harm minimisation;*
- *the community nature of the event; and*
- *the social, environmental and economic value of the event to Yass Valley.*

Note: The negotiations shall be completed no later than 4 weeks prior to the event;

Note: NSW Police access to the site cannot be limited to the User Pays arrangements only[.]”

It is the view of the event organisers that the NSW Police Local Area Command has not taken into account the events provision of event security, our management plans/ procedures/process including harm minimisation, and the community nature of the event. Dragon Dreaming festival have paid close to 1 million dollars in User pays to NSW Police (over the duration of the event) that has been used for revenue raising road operations outside the event and has seen the closure of many events in NSW.

The event organisers recognise the benefit to the event and its patrons of having uniformed NSW Police officers in attendance at the event. For this reason, the event organisers agree without reservation to the intention of engaging NSWPF user pays, however the previous DA consents clause, gave no grounds for negotiations and none has ever been given.

At the 2024 event, for every adult festival ticket sold, approximately \$46 dollars was paid to NSW Police. The Australian Festival Association (AFA) have provided information around other similar events, in NSW and Australia that pay in orders of magnitude less, including some less than a quarter for higher risk events than Dragon Dreaming festival.

It is also the understanding of the event organisers (AFA) that Dragon Dreaming Festival is the only one of its kind in NSW that is currently being charged a fee for resourcing of a road-based operation, and it is the view of the organisers that this charge is not supported by the Cost Recovery and User Charges Policy produced by the NSW Police Force. When this has been raised with the Local Area Command, these concerns have been dismissed by the Officer in Charge, with no reasonable explanation provided. Unfortunately there are no review rights available relating to the provision of a quote for User Charges policing in NSW, meaning that the event organisers have each year been forced to comply with whatever quote for services was provided by the Local Area Command in order to meet the development consent conditions, without scope for genuine negotiation. This has and continues to compromise the financial viability of the event.

For the reasons above, and the fact that we propose that Clause 24, as it currently stands, is reworked in consultation with NSW Police, with a view to achieving a policing approach that is proportionate of the event and its risks, and genuinely takes into account the benefits of the event to the Yass Valley community.

Event Management and Patron Safety

Emergency Coordination

Since the 2016 event, the organisers have engaged an emergency consultant to undertake on-site emergency coordination, as well as to lead engagement with emergency and support service providers in the months before the event.

Since 2016, we have established an Emergency Control Centre (ECC) at each event, which is staffed 24 hours a day and provides a dispatch centre for all radio calls relating to medical, security, police, fire or other emergency incidents. This facility supports a coordinated approach to emergency management and ensures that all incidents are electronically logged at the time of reporting, and all involved parties are kept up-to-date as incidents progress and unfold. The ECC also monitors regional weather warning, fire warnings and wind speeds throughout the event, to ensure that any necessary precautions are in place whenever a weather event strikes.

A copy of the Emergency Procedure and Evacuation Plan provided by Ranwood Solutions, developed in consultation with the organisers, is provided at **Attachment I**.

Risk Management

Organisers, in consultation with their emergency management provide, have developed a comprehensive risk management plan based on risk management standard AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009. This plan is a living document that is constantly updated as the organisers identify new potential risks which may affect patron or event staff safety.

Included with the submission is a detailed risk management plan at **Attachment J** which includes the risk matrix used for our event. This document is referenced during event planning, construction and operation to identify and assess risk and determine appropriate risk controls. In all procedures, the document is referred to and identified event staff take responsibility for each role outlined within the document.

Fire Management

Dragon Dreaming has typically operated during or just prior to nominated fire danger periods. In the past organisers have worked closely with the ACT and NSW Fire Brigades and Rural Fire Service crews and will continue to work closely with the NSW fire/Rural Fire brigades going forward. Dependent on conditions, well managed fire pits may be approved by RFS, and all stalls and stages have appropriate fire response equipment located in an easy to reach and clearly identified locations.

To support this submission, we have engaged consultants from Travers Bushfire & Ecology (**Travers**), who are certified under the Bushfire Planning and Design Accreditation Scheme, which is administered by the Fire Protection Association Australia. Travers have developed a revised Bushfire

Management Plan (**BMP**) that is specific to the festival site and time of the year. A copy of this plan is provided at **Attachment K**.

The Bushfire Management Plan provided by Travers Bushfire is supportive of our proposed date (3rd October – 6th October), provided the provisions outlined are met and a catastrophic fire danger is not present within the region.

Travers have made the following recommendations within the BMP:

Recommendation 1 - At the commencement of the event, and for its duration, the full extent of the festival site as depicted in Schedule 1 of the BMP – Bushfire Protection Measures shall be managed as an IPA as outlined in section 4.1.3 and Attachment 5 of the NSW Rural Fire Service's *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019* document (PBP) as and the NSW RFS guidelines Standards for Asset Protection Zones (RFS, 2005).

Recommendation 2 - Dragon Dreaming will implement a ban on all gas cylinders on total fire ban days. Approved food market stall holders are to ensure that any gas supply on site is to comply with section 4.1.3 of the PBP as follows;

- Reticulated or bottled gas bottles are to be installed and maintained in accordance with AS1596 and the requirements of relevant authorities. Metal piping is to be used;
- All fixed gas cylinders are to be kept clear of flammable materials;
- If gas cylinders are to be kept close to the structures the release valves must be directed away from the structure and away from any combustible material, so that they do not act as a catalyst to combustion.

Recommendation 3 - In recognition that no reticulated water exists on site, and in addition to the existing dam supply, it is recommended that a tanker (10,000 litres) is provided with suitable connections for a fire truck. This supply will be provided solely for fire fighter use during the event and is to be provided with the following:

- a 65mm Storz outlet with a gate or ball valve is provided as a suitable connection for fire-fighting purposes;
- gate or ball valve and pipes are metal (not plastic) and are adequate for water flow;
- a hardened ground surface for truck access is supplied within 4m of the tank;

Recommendation 4 – On-site camping will be restricted to nominated camping areas only and will be structured with internal tracks / carriageways provided to ensure that all parts of the camping areas are accessible by emergency response vehicles and equipment (i.e. a 6.5m clearway width). The existing festival access road is to comply with the performance criteria outlined in Section 4.1.3 of PBP 2006.

Recommendation 5 - Arrangements for emergency and evacuation are to comply with the requirements of Section 4.2.7 of PBP 2006 and an Emergency Evacuation Plan is to be prepared consistent with the NSW RFS document 'Guidelines for the Preparation of Emergency / Evacuation plan' and in consultation with NSW RFS Yass Valley District Office.

Recommendation 6 - Fire drums and pits will be confined to approved fireplaces only (outside of 'flame impact' areas as depicted in Schedule 1) and will not occur within camping areas in

accordance with the details lodged with Council in support of the DA. All fires (including fire twirling) are not to occur on TFB days. Event organisers are to ensure that safe conduct is maintained around the approved fire drums / pits at all times. They are located in public areas and are constantly monitored by site maintenance crew.

We submit to council in support of this application that we will accept and implement all of the above recommendations for any future events held at the proposed location.

We will be continuing to contract the local RFS as a critical incident response team to be onsite throughout the festival that will be armed with a professional fire response unit. The organisers restrict the use of fires (if permitted by RFS) on the event site. These are in public areas and are constantly monitored by a site maintenance crew. When a high fire danger alert is issued or Total Fire Ban, there are no solid fuel fires permitted at the event.

Security

The safety of festival patrons is of paramount importance. Organisers worked closely with NSA Security Pty Ltd (**NSA**) since 2018. NSA are a professional licensed security company, in ensuring a safe festival experience for all of our attendees and crew.

The final security personnel to patron ratio is determined in planning discussions with NSA approximately six weeks before the event, once the event organisers have a relatively stable projection of the number of attendees to expect on site. A detailed Security Management Plan from the 2024 event, including a proposed roster and details of guard movement throughout the event, prepared by NSA in consultation with the event organisers, is provided at **Attachment L**.

Medical

Since relocating to Wee Jasper, organisers have contracted a professional paramedic support company to provide onsite medical support to festival patrons. This is the most appropriate level of response given the nature and location of the event.

The medical provider employed for the event submits to the event a comprehensive medical plan and roster is submitted within the SMP for approval. Any changes made also needs to be approved by ILGA and MOH.

See medical plan at **Attachment M**. We have also provided the 2024 Medical Motos debrief report at **Attachment N**.

The organisers will continue to contract a professional paramedic support company to provide 24-hour medical support for the event.

DanceWize NSW

Since 2017 Organisers contracted the services of DanceWize NSW to increase the safety of festival patrons. DanceWize NSW, funded by the NSW Ministry of Health, is a program of NSW Users and Aids Association, the leader in peer-led harm reduction in NSW.

DanceWize NSW works closely with the event organisers, emergency medical, police, and security service providers to support a coordinated, safety-focussed approach. The program sets-up and mans a 24-hour dedicated care space to look after festival goers who are experiencing difficulty or simply need a time out. In addition, roving teams move throughout the event checking on the safety of patrons and offering credible and evidence-based information about safer partying and delivering a range of peer-delivered prevention and harm reduction services including crowd care services (e.g. water, sunscreen, information). In 2018, this coverage was extended to an outpost in the campgrounds.

One of the many benefits of contracting the services of DanceWize NSW is to offer additional resources and support to festival organisers, executive staff, emergency services and security personnel. They offer a peer level bridge between the punters and the uniformed services to ensure that anyone that needs help can feel safe to ask for it.

Dancewize has provided a letter of support, a copy which is at **Attachment O**.

Lifeguards

In 2017, organisers procured lifeguard services during the daylight hours of the whole event to ensure the safety of patrons swimming in Lake Burrinjuck immediately adjacent to the festival site. In 2018, organisers sourced and contracted the services of professional water safety experts Lifeguarding Services Australia and these supervision times were extended to cover Monday as well. The lake is manned by the security team outside of these daylight hours. The event organisers propose to further extend this coverage for future events to run for all daylight hours from gates open to gates close, **being from Midday Thursday (in 2024) to Midday Tuesday (currently Monday PM)**

Alcohol and Illicit Substance Use

The organisers recognise and acknowledge the significant risks associated with drug and alcohol use by attendees at Dragon Dreaming Festival.

Event organisers do not permit the sale of alcohol at the Dragon Dreaming festival and advise all market stallholders that if they are found in breach of this they will be escorted from the event. Patrons are able to bring reasonable personal supplies of alcohol to the event however in the interest of public safety and environmental risk minimisation, are asked not to bring any glass bottles into the festival at all. This policy is communicated to and enforced by NSA during the event, as well as promoted to patrons in the lead-up to the event.

The organisers take a multi-faceted approach to reducing harms caused by drug use at the event. The organisers understand the significant risk posed by participants use of drugs to themselves and to others at the event. We also recognise there is a risk to the event's reputation, as well as the reputations of associated parties such as Yass Valley Council, should a drug-related incident occur. Accordingly, the organisers take all available measures to discourage patrons from bringing illegal drugs to the event, as well as from purchasing them while they are in attendance. These measures include:

- Publicly advising patrons to expect the roadside testing and drug dog operation, run by NSW Police on the road into the event;

- promoting through social media that the event takes a zero-tolerance approach to the supply of illegal drugs, with anyone caught supplying illegal drugs to be ejected from the event; and
- messaging through social media discouraging patrons from choosing to take drugs at the event.

While the event organisers strongly discourage the use of illegal drugs at the event, they take a harm minimisation approach to patrons within the festival. This approach includes measures such as:

- Advising patrons that they are free to seek non-judgmental support from DanceWize NSW or medical at any time, without fear of prosecution by NSW Police;
- supporting the integration of DanceWize NSW into the event, including through giving them a highly visible location in the event grounds, and providing them with a platform during the event's opening ceremony to address the crowd and encourage them to seek assistance if required; and
- running a social media campaign encouraging individuals to take care of themselves and others at the event.

Patrons are advised of this in the Conditions of Entry listed on our website and they must agree to these conditions prior to purchasing their ticket. Reminder notices of the event's policies are placed on the organisation's Facebook page in the weeks leading up to the event.

As per our previous events, the event security team will be instructed to uphold the event policy regarding harm minimisation and the use or supply of illicit substances and will manage matters in accordance with relevant state legislation, including referral to Police where necessary.

The event organisers have developed a Harm Minimisation Strategy, which is provided at **Attachment P**. This document is provided to all service providers and emergency stakeholders prior to the event each year to ensure a consistent approach to harm minimisation by all parties.

It is the view of the organisers that the current approach to harm minimisation is effective in its intended purpose of reducing the harms caused by alcohol and other drugs to its patrons. This position is strongly supported by a Letter of Support provided by Wee Jasper local, Brian Proudfoot, a retired police officer who spent periods of his career in law enforcement working on organised crime, drug squads and police undercover units. A copy of this Letter of Support is provided for consideration at **Attachment Q**.

Working with ILGA and MOH : music festival harm reduction

Annually since 2021, Dragon Dreaming Festival has been working closely with Liquor and Gaming NSW and the Ministry of Health to deliver our events to the highest standard of safety for music festival events in NSW. This involves developing a detailed Safety Management Plan that outlines the events specifications, maps and all of our safety protocol. The organisers with the support of the operations manager will submit a thorough Safety Management Plan (SMP) to ILGA. Following lodgement, Liquor & Gaming NSW (L&GNSW) will provide copies of this safety management plan to an inter-agency assessment committee. This committee includes representatives from NSW Health, NSW Ambulance, the NSW Police and other relevant government agencies (e.g. the Rural Fire Service for regional events). The committee will assess whether this safety management plan appropriately deals with the risks associated with the event and will provide expert advice and support. There will be a briefing with all stakeholders prior to raise any concerns pre-event and a

debriefing post event to discuss the outcomes of the event and/or pass on praises in relation to the operation and management of the event.

The process can deny your event or can provide expert advice and support to assist you to run a safer event. For the past 3 instalments of the event, we have not only been approved but have exceeded expectations.

The organisers, since inception, have employed the NSW Music Festival Guidelines for harm reduction to provide the safest possible event, see **Attachment R**. For the sake of brevity, we have included a few of the actions below to comply with best practice:

Recommendations	Organisers' response
Free cold water at multiple stations throughout festivals	Dragon Dreaming Festival has always had ample locations and supply of cold water for patrons available free of charge.
Well ventilated chill out spaces and the regular checking of ambient temperatures	Dragon Dreaming Festival has always provided well ventilated (outdoor) shaded areas on all stages, in the workshop spaces, kids space, in the food market areas, seated performance stages, as well as safe access to a lake for swimming with life savers on duty. Event is held during the cooler period of early October.
Additional activities to music to encourage chill out (particularly for longer festivals)	Dragon Dreaming Festival has always provided a diverse offering of activities designed to encourage patrons to chill out, including a chill out stage, seated performance stages, workshops, lectures, tree-planting, swimming, art gallery and interactive art spaces.
Promotion of novel harm reduction strategies	<p>The organisers have delivered and will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a lounge, serving tea during late night periods that provides chill music and opportunity for participants to prepare themselves for sleep; • only run a continuous schedule on the Saturday night, and all other nights provide time for rest; and • move participants around the festival site through programming to encourage swimming, revegetation activities and workshop participation.

Emergency and Support Services

Stakeholder Consultation

Each year between 2013 and 2024, organisers have met with Yass Police, Fire and Ambulance services to discuss the event and address any concerns each service may have. These meetings assist organisers and emergency services groups to identify key information and establish the most appropriate method of communications before, during and after the event. Organisers will continue holding these meetings with emergency services representatives on an annual basis into the future and working closely with them for the benefit of our patrons and the Yass Valley.

Police

When located in the ACT, Dragon Dreaming ran in consultation with the Australian Federal Police. Organisers met with police during the planning stage of the event and actively supported police attendance at the festival. In past years AFP representatives attended the event on occasion to discuss matters with organisers and we are proud to say we had a very positive working relationship with the AFP.

Organisers have also worked to establish robust relationships and collaborate annually with representatives of the NSW Police in the lead-up to our Wee Jasper events and we look forward to this relationship continuing to deliver the safest event in 2025 and beyond. As discussed in section 2.2 above, on-site security is managed by our contracted security providers NSA. Organisers engaged NSA for 2018 due to their excellent understanding of our specific security requirements and the capacity to provide a superior service. NSA are again being contracted for the 2025 event to provide primary management of the security of our event for the comfort and safety of our patrons and to ensure that Dragon Dreaming Festival does not place any unnecessary burden on local police resources. Over the past 14 years the festival, the event has not placed any burden on local police resources that we believe is specifically related to our focus of event safety (no violence occurs) and harm minimisation.

At the 2024 post-event debrief meeting (as in previous years), NSW Police representative Inspector David Cowell gave high commendation to the event for its excellent management by Dragon Dreaming Festival staff and contractors and raised a number of concerns that the NSW Police continue to have with the event.

These concerns are summarised below:

- The remote location of the event site;
- There were a number of illegal drug detections at the Dragon Dreaming Festival funded road operation;

In response to Inspector David Cowells concerns, the organisers offer the following:

- The organisers have in place a comprehensive strategy to reduce drug use and harm at the event, as outline in sub-section **Alcohol and Illicit Substance Use** of this document and expanded in the organisation's Harm Minimisation Strategy (copy at **Attachment P**). The organisers also note that it is widely documented that illegal drug use is present in all aspects of society and it is inevitable that it would occur at any large event.

The organisers would like to note the vastly improved relationship with NSW Police over the recent years. The organisers appreciate the collegiate approach that Inspector Cowell takes to communication and planning, and the understanding that he has of harm-minimisation practices in regard to policing onsite. The organisers are committed to working closely with the NSW Police in future years, and hope to be able to develop a best practice approach to the policing of events of this type together with the Yass branch of NSW Police without it impacting the future viability of the event with over resourcing or payment for road side operations that outside the scope of the 'User Pays' policing policy.

Ambulance NSW & NSW HEALTH

The organisers have been liaising closely with NSW Ambulance and NSW Health since the 2013 event. Each year, the organisers have met with representatives from NSW Ambulance in the months leading up to the event to confirm the plans and preparations for the event, and to discuss any concerns that NSW Ambulance may have. The organisers intend to continue this practice and ensure that any concerns raised by NSW Ambulance are treated with due consideration and addressed wherever possible. Following feedback from Ambulance NSW (since 2022), the organisers have provisioned an on-site NSW Ambulance transport for the duration of the festival, and we are committed to this support.

The organisers consider that the event has a good track record with minimal requirement for the support of NSW Ambulance. The table below sets out the number of ambulance transports required from the event since 2013.

<i>Year of event</i>	<i>No. of ambulance transports</i>
<i>2013</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>2014</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>2015</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>2016</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>2017</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>2018</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>2022</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>2023</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>2024</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>13</i>

At the 2024 post-event debrief, Steven Owen representing Ambulance NSW, provided only positive feedback, including stating that they were very impressed with the on-site medical facilities and the collaboration with our onsite medical teams. Steven Owen has provided a Letter of Support, see **Attachment S**.

We have been advised by Michael Sandford (Disaster Manager SNSWLHD) via email, that the Regional Emergency Management Committee with basic advice that the festival was successful from a medical response perspective and this LHD (Local Hospital District) was not impacted, to any significant degree by festival goers attending the LHD hospital facilities.

NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) + SES

The organisers have been working closely with the Wee Jasper and surrounding RFS chapters/members to deliver our fire management response with annual donations that go to improving the RFS capacity throughout the year. We have been working directly with the very experienced Michael Carey. The RFS teams have been highly effective and worked closely with our ECC and emergency commander to deliver a safe container for the event.

At the 2024 post-event debrief, Michael Carey, Southern Tablelands Group 3 Captain, was very satisfied with the site, patrons, emergency and event management structure and has provided a letter of support in **Attachment F**. Michael Carey has also provided a letter of support in regards to flood threat in Attachment 17 – DD – RFS – Flood risk, see **Attachment T**. In addition, we have also provided the letter of support for the use/appropriateness of the site from the Yass Unit Commander of the SES, Jason Bell in relation to flood threat, see **Attachment U**.

Logistics

Food Preparation

Event organisers do not prepare or sell food for the public of any sort. Organisers invite expressions of interest from commercial stall holders for the provision of food at the event, as well as for the provision of catering for crew in the weeks before and after the event. This is done on a fee basis with operators paying to host a stall at the event. All operators are required to hold public liability insurance and a NSW Food Safety Supervisor certificate. As part of our food vendor registration, organisers request that food stalls demonstrate compliance with the NSW Food Authority, and register their business with the Yass Valley Council. Since 2018, the organisers have appointed a dedicated market stalls manager, who works closely with the organisation's Safety Officer to ensure strict adherence to council and state requirements, prior to the arrival of council's officers on site. Yass Valley council compliance officers have been very happy with this format.

Communication

Internal communication onsite is primarily handled via radio. As with all previous events, organisers will be operating a licensed repeater which allows radio communication over an almost unlimited distance. A dedicated licensed frequency is allocated to the event with sub tones programmed into the event radios to prevent outside interference from other radio communication sources.

External and internal communications are handled via Starlink internet (5 units used by the organisers) and this technological advancement has provided solid, secure networks for all communications and will continue to be utilised into the future.

For emergencies, organisers a satellite phone on site held at the Emergency Control Centre (ECC) office. The office is staffed 24 hours per day and the phone is available in the case of emergency communication.

Emergency Lighting

Organisers utilise generator powered lighting towers during the event. In addition to this, event lighting is also provided in all public locations, including at major intersections and toilets within the campground areas. All pathways to the camping areas from the festival are clearly lit during night time hours. Organisers have determined the most appropriate level of emergency lighting to be as follows:

A minimum of eight lighting towers will be onsite:

- One at each toilet block.
- One at the ticketing gate.
- One at the operations and emergency management compound.
- One at each of the emergency assembly points, to be utilised only in an emergency.

In addition to these general lighting provisions each music stage has a substantial light show component. The market area is lit with all stalls providing their own lighting and organisers will provide lighting for the general area. The lifestyle area is lit whenever in use and architectural lighting is used to highlight natural formations such as trees and nearby sculptural artworks.

Traffic Management Plan

The organisers reviewed and updated the Traffic Management Plan previously provided in support of the 2014 Development Application. A copy of this Traffic Management Plan is available at **Attachment V**.

Toilet Facilities

For the first four events at the current location, organisers used a composting toilet system of their own design to manage the human waste produced at the event. This was in keeping with the organisation's goal of minimal ecological impact.

Due to the difficulties in finding suitable solutions for the compost of solid waste, the organisers have moved to traditional portaloo systems.

Waste Management

As in previous years, in 2025 event the organisers will procure the services of an experienced and waste management team, who will be responsible for the management of any waste that is generated onsite during the event. In 2025, we have adopted a new goal to increase our sustainability targets across the board including waste.

A copy of the waste management plan, provided by the contractor engaged to manage waste at the 2018 event, is provided at **Attachment W**.

Continuous Improvement

The organisers are committed to ensuring that at all times, best practice is upheld by the organisation and service providers and all related parties with regard to operations, patron safety, sustainability and risk management. In 2025, we are further developing our sustainability goals of becoming a leader in outdoor festivals in Australia.

Following on from each event, the organisers host and document a debrief meeting with all emergency and safety service providers, key stakeholders including council staff, and local emergency services. This practice has been in place since the 2016 event and has served to create a space where all key stakeholders are able to raise any concerns or pass on praises in relation to the operation and management of the event. The organisers undertake to continue this practice in all future years, to improve the organisation's culture of continuous improvement and continue to strengthen relationships with all stakeholders.

The stakeholder debrief meeting minutes following on from the 2023, 2024 events are provided at **Attachments X** and **Attachment Y** respectively.

Public Liability Insurance

The organisation holds a current Public Liability Insurance policy with Berkley Insurance and underwritten by Arena Underwriting for a total cover of \$20,000,000 for any one occurrence. A copy of the organisation's current Certificate of Currency is provided at **Attachment Z**. The organisation will renew this policy before the 2025 event.

Summary of attachments

- A. 2024 Top line survey results
- B. Letter of Support – Wee Jasper Community Association
- C. Letters of Support – Local Businesses Ci - Trader & Co/Cii - Tyger Gallery/Ciii - The Yass Book Store/Civ - Kaffeine 2582 cafe
- D. 2024 Event Report Key Stakeholders
- E. Letter of Support – Wee Jasper School
- F. Letter of Support – Michael Carey of RFS
- G. Letter of Support – Robert Bulger of the Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri people
- H. Letter of Support – The Hon Kristy McBain MP
- I. Emergency Procedure and Evacuation Plan
- J. Risk Management Plan
- K. Bushfire Management Plan
- L. Security Management Plan
- M. Medical Management Plan.
- N. Medical Debrief Report.
- O. DanceWize Letter of Support
- P. Harm Minimisation Strategy
- Q. Letter of Support – Brian Proudfoot
- R. Guideline for music festival event organisers – Harm Reduction
- S. Letter of Support – Steve Owen NSW Ambulance
- T. RFS Flood Risk
- U. RFS Flood Threat
- V. Traffic Management Plan
- W. Waste Management Plan
- X. 2023 Stakeholder debrief minutes
- Y. 2024 Stakeholder debrief minutes
- Z. Public Liability Insurance certificate of currency

Annexure A: Photographic assets from recent events



Dragon Dreaming Festival prides itself on being an open and accessible event for individuals of all ages.



The festivals colourful patrons gather at the main stage for the opening ceremony.



Patrons of the event enjoy the shopping opportunities within the event marketplace.



Dragon Dreaming Festival attracts artists of all mediums, including in stage and shade design.



Performers at the event's Opening Ceremony.



Patrons of the event enjoy an energetic morning yoga class on the shores of Lake Burrinjuck.



Musicians flock to Dragon Dreaming Festival where they are greeted by enthusiastic crowds and provided with the opportunity to share their music with thousands.



Each year, an amazing and eclectic world class Art Gallery is built that showcases Visual artists from all over the country. International artists are beginning to make the journey to be a part of this immersive and creative space.



The Workshop space provides patrons with a refuge within the event, offering a range of activities from yoga and sound healing to informative lectures on such topics as harm reduction and sustainability.



Patrons of Dragon Dreaming Festival gather in the open spaces of the event.



All weekend we have amazing world class performers and roving performers that will entertain and amaze.



An aerial shot of the lake stage which shows an example of one of the festivals incredible shade structures.



At night the lighting displays from the stages and from art installations come alive to create a bright and magical visual feast.



Within our market village we have an information hub with a Volunteer HQ, Info desk and Dragon Merch desk.



The Wee Jasper Community stall is one of the busiest food stalls in the festival.