

Festival should have to abide by development control plan

Dear Editor,

Further to the proposed concert on Mount View, a few points I would like to bring to your attention.

Cessnock Council has a Development Control Plan for typical one-off temporary entertainment events attracting large numbers of people (eg. Concerts and music festivals).

Chapter 8. 6.1 Hours of operation states: As a general rule, minor and major events shall not commence prior to 8am or continue after 11pm. Variation to these hours may be permitted in special circumstances (eg. New Year's Eve).

To our delight, council's planning department did see fit to bring the music finish time back from 5am to midnight.

Why, when the DCP clearly states the cut-off time as 11pm and only can be changed for special circumstances (eg. New Year's Eve) has council's planning department seen fit to recommend a special cut off time of 12am to a music festival for young upper-class Sydney patrons?

This festival has been objected to many times by mail by all close residents to the Mayor Bob Pynsent, general manager Stephen Glen, planning department Kayla Volker and all councillors. Why have a DCP at all if you are not obliged to abide by it?

I am finding it very hard to comprehend that this "one-off temporary event" can, with a DA, come into our area for a period of six days, using some heavy vehicles and possibly 500 cars, set up, make money then leave with the only provision re the upkeep of our roads being that "they must leave it the way they found it".

I queried this with a councillor who confirmed "Yes, if the roads are poor when they find them that is how they will leave them". Surely this does not apply to all concerts in our area.

I know of many in our area who when submitting a DA to build a home or create a portion of property for sale, have been compelled to tar sections of our gravel roads before DA permission is granted.

Why then are these restrictions placed on local residents trying to build a home and these concert organisers may leave without contributing a cent?

This also brings me to wonder why, with the casting vote of our Mayor, council sees fit to write to IPART (Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal) to seek a special rate variation of 9.55 per cent to fund additional renewal of council's road network.

Why should we as rate payers always be the ones to pay?

Finally, of the three elected councillors in our Ward A, I would like to personally thank Cr. Allan Stapleford for his ultimate support in this matter and say disappointingly, that the opposite is true about Cr. James Hawkins and Cr. Cordelia Troy.

Having tried many times to point out the dangers of our so called 'goat track' of a road, we would expect these councillors to show common sense in dealing with this matter.

I found a statement from Cr. Hawkins that "the locals are frightened to try new things" and from Cr. Cordelia Troy "We are all hysterical and seems like a storm in a teacup" very rude.

My understanding was that elected councillors to a ward would be working for the locals, not music festival organisers from Sydney. Accidents will happen.

It's a shame elections are not till 2016.

Judy Howard

Mount Baker Road, Mount View.