



Report 04.337
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Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy
Author Matt Ballantine Principal Ranger - Western Sector

The New Zealand Music Festival

1. Purpose

To advise the Committee that a proposal for a large-scale commercial music festival event has been submitted to Council and to seek Council's approval in principle for the event to take place.

2. Background

Parks and Forests has received a proposal from Mark Wright, of Xtreme Air Ltd, to hold a music festival at Queen Elizabeth Park, Kapiti Coast. Mark is an experienced event director and has run six consecutive Xtreme Air events in Hamilton. Xtreme Air is the largest and longest running action sports and music event in Australasia and it is broadcast to 100 million people in 65 countries.

Queen Elizabeth Park has been chosen as a potential site to hold a major musical event after a search of the entire North Island. The park offers a scenic beach environment, natural amphitheatres, strong infrastructure, close proximity to a large city and ties in with major transport routes (State Highway 1 and train services).

The event would be held at Whareroa (accessed from the MacKays Crossing Park entrance) on five stage sites to cater for different music types. All musicians would be leading New Zealand groups and DJ's. The festival would run from 12.00pm to 12.00am on the 5th March 2005. The first year's attendance is anticipated to be 10,000 people, growing in consecutive years if successful.

Apart from music, additional entertainment is offered as a celebration of New Zealand culture. This is to include:

- Arts and Crafts
- clothing
- food
- bungy tramps
- rock climbing
- jumping castles
- charity participation
- performance art

- art integrated into the environment
- breakdancing
- graffiti art
- comedy.

3. Is an event of this nature appropriate for Queen Elizabeth Park

We have assessed this proposal against the provisions of the current Queen Elizabeth Park Management Plan (1993) to see whether it is appropriate for an event of this nature to take place at the park. The results of that assessment follow.

3.1 Management Plan Objectives

The Management Plan allows for special events to take place in the park so long as they do not conflict with other permitted uses and that they comply with the objectives of the Management Plan. An assessment of the proposal against these objectives shows that the event would comply with them (See Appendix 1).

3.2 Management Plan Policies

The festival also generally conforms to the required policies as set out in the Management Plan.

4. Important issues to consider

4.1 Noise

Noise levels for this type of event will be high. However our initial assessment is that the noise should not disturb residents who adjoin the park as music sites are far enough away from residential areas to be within acceptable noise levels. Kapiti Coast District Council will fully consider noise requirements as part of their resource consent process. The Whopper Chopper event has successfully run over the last two years and no complaints regarding excessive noise were received.

4.2 Impact on existing park users

The event organisers will need exclusive site occupation for four days; two days to set up for the event, one day for the festival, and one day to dismantle and clean up the site. On the event day, the Mackays Crossing entrance to the park will be closed to the general public. The Paekakariki and Raumati entrances and facilities will still be available.

Displaced park users will generally be made up of picnickers, walkers, horse riders and casual visitors. Park users coming from either Raumati or Paekakariki will not be able to access either the Coastal or the Inland track through Whareroa on the four exclusive site occupation days. However, the beach will still be available to link between these areas therefore maintaining a link to the main walking tracks. Horse riders would also be restricted to where they could ride, although the horse riding concessionaire based in the park may be able to offer horse rides to the festival goers.

The event organisers would provide signage in the park to give advance notice of the event to park users.

The Tramway museum will be invited to offer rides from the carpark to Whareroa and back for a small fee. This is similar to their involvement in the Whopper Chopper events.

Those who use the park on the day of the festival may encounter noise arising from the venue. While the noise may detract from their experience (particularly if people are seeking peace and quiet) the noise will be present for only one day of the year.

4.3 MacKays Crossing entrance gates

The width of the current entrance gates at MacKays Crossing only allows one vehicle at a time to either enter or exit the park. This is a major issue for the event organisers for two reasons:

1. Traffic will need to flow freely to enable more than 10,000 people in and out of the park. If traffic backs up from the gates it could adversely affect the flow of traffic on State Highway 1.
2. In case of any emergency, emergency service vehicles need guaranteed free and unrestricted access in and out of the park

Altering this gate so that two lanes of traffic can pass through is critically important to the festival's viability.

For some time we have recognised that the narrow Memorial Gates restrict traffic flow into and out of the park. As part of the MacKays Crossing redevelopment, Council officers are already in the process of gaining approval from Kapiti Coast District Council, New Zealand Historic Places Trust and the US Marine Corps to move the Memorial gates to allow safer and easier access into the park. We are aiming to have the gates repositioned, and the problem solved, prior to the festival in March 2005.

5. Environmental Impacts

5.1 Fire

Fire safety is a primary concern in an event such as this. A number of fire appliances, fire buffer zones and signage notifying fire risk would be stipulated in the contract.

5.2 Ecological Impact

Fragile ecological areas will be fenced off from spectators. Some areas near the beach have existing fencing in place to protect the dune vegetation and help facilitate other events such as the Whopper Chopper.

The stage areas would be sited in existing mown grounds or areas of rank grass and blackberry that will need mowing. No native species will be affected by site development.

5.3 Whareroa Pa Site

The event organisers would be required to protect the Pa site by fencing off the western and eastern boundaries and posting security personnel to ensure no spectator access. Local Iwi will be consulted over any further requirements.

5.4 Removal of Rubbish

All rubbish and litter would be removed immediately after the festival by event organisers and the park reinstated to its condition prior to the event.

6. Facilities

The proposal includes provision for traffic control and safety, security, medical facilities, extra toilets, enhanced water supply and generators for electrical power.

7. Conclusion

This proposal comes from a proven large-scale event operator with the appropriate resources, sponsorship backing and experience. A festival of this type and scale would help to promote Queen Elizabeth Park and put its infrastructure and facilities to good use. At the same time the event would be in keeping with the park's intended use while also providing the Greater Wellington region with an exciting new cultural opportunity as the site of one of the largest music festivals in New Zealand.

Events of this nature never come without a downside. Officers have considered the noise and exclusive use and we believe they can be mitigated so that other park users will not be too badly affected. Environmental impacts will also be minimised.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee

- *Note the received request to run a large scale music event in March 2005*
- *Note that the proposal meets the objective and policies of the Queen Elizabeth Park Management Plan (1993)*
- *Approve the proposal in principle and Officers to enter into negotiation to develop a commercial concession agreement.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Matt Ballantine
Principal Ranger - Western
Sector

Murray Waititi
Manager, Parks and Forests

Rob Forlong
Landcare - Manager