

12.1 Events Strategy and Outdoor Events Policy 2023-26

Question from Louisa Williams

In regards to the shutdown of the lane between Bay Street and Post Office Place, this is the third year that a shutdown is being requested. The first two years were attributed to COVID and assurances given that it would no longer occur when COVID measures ceased. In this third year a shutdown has been requested for the entire long weekend of the Grand Final with the full lane shut. We were not informed prior to approval. The pub has two storeys to cater to their patrons, Bay Street frontage and the chain it owns hosts the Beach Exchange on the dog beach over summer, so they're not shy of public space. We're also concerned about access for emergency vehicles, which cannot access our place from Bay Street, as well as Rouse Street bottlenecks. There are impacts to the pub closing the public place to both the schools, the Albert Park College campus and the gym. We've dealt over the years with anti-social behavior and have provided many photos and submissions to Council.

We would like to know why the views of the residents are being ignored as there has been extensive information contributed by 44 residents. Where else are residential areas being shut down for a pub extension and why are residents not being notified or having a say.

Response:

We have temporarily permitted extensions of trade both to support the venue but also to create entertainment opportunities for residents and visitors. We have received no complaints from either the gym or the school regarding the Local's activations. The Esplanade Hotel in St Kilda is another example where we have temporarily permitted extensions of trade. We always seek to find a balance between all stakeholders in such applications.

Both Council's own Traffic Engineers and external traffic management consultants have deemed no issue with the closure. Emergency Management was consulted and again, had no issues with the closure.

The Local Hotel operates as a pub with or without this closure. Council is not responsible for drunken or antisocial behaviour caused by licensed venues. There has been no evidence that permitting this extension has increased this issue – if it had, the police would have provided us with that feedback as we work in tandem with them wherever possible. This extension is not just granted to assist the pub with revenue; it is granted to provide an activation that residents and visitors can enjoy. This event invites the community to come together and celebrate an iconic day on Melbourne's events calendar.

Resident notification takes place after events are approved. Residents are not consulted regarding individual events. We permit 500-600 events per year and consulting residents is not possible nor viable.

**Please note: answers to any questions in Public Question Time and Councillor Question Time which were answered at the meeting are included in the minutes of that meeting.*