

Event Traffic Marshals

Discussion paper

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Introduction

The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) is responsible for setting the standard for traffic management across Queensland's road network. This can include undertaking maintenance and construction activities or conducting special events.

The department requires traffic to be managed and controlled when these activities occur to ensure:

- that the work carried out or the conducted event can be performed safely with due care shown to both workers and all road users
- the times at which the task is to be performed is such that any lane closure causes minimal disruption to traffic flow
- protection of departmental assets
- that all traffic control activities are carried out in accordance with the latest version of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices Part 3 – Works on Road (MUTCD).

At present, when traffic control is needed on the road network, the services of accredited traffic controllers are also required. This is important to ensure both the safety of the individual providing the traffic control as well as road users, road workers and the public more broadly. Roads can be a dangerous environment, particularly where there are high speeds or a significant volume of traffic, or road users not complying with road signs and speed limits.

For the purpose of this discussion paper we are focussing on traffic management activities associated with small local community, sporting and charity events, where roads need to be temporarily closed to allow the event to proceed. In such cases the flow of traffic around the event needs to be managed. These events are usually held in local communities, on low speed roads, and where there are significantly lower numbers of vehicles being impacted.

What's the issue?

The department has received feedback from a number of Councils, community service organisations, event organisers and sporting associations about the costs associated with traffic management at small local events.

Their concern is that the requirement to use accredited traffic controllers for every traffic management task involving on-road traffic control, places an excessive burden on these events, particularly for smaller local community events,.

In some instances, the costs associated with this traffic management exceed the funds raised by the event. In some cases this results in the event not being held at all.

Often these types of events are run and managed with the support of community volunteers, including SES volunteers. It has been questioned whether there is any possibility for volunteers and paid event personnel to assist in providing traffic management in low risk situations, to support these events being held.

In response to these concerns, the department has been exploring mechanisms for volunteers and possibly for paid event staff (such as set up staff, car park attendants and event guides) to provide traffic marshalling services at sporting and community events, subject to specific conditions and in suitable low risk road environments.

What's the proposed approach?

While the department is firmly of the view that accredited traffic controllers are necessary to ensure a high level of safety on a multitude of road environments, particularly in high speed situations (greater than 60kph) and on roads with significant traffic, we believe there is an opportunity to review the status quo and to address the concerns that have been raised.

The proposed approach is to make minor amendments to traffic control requirements, providing a mechanism for event staff to perform basic traffic control services as 'event traffic marshals' at community events, subject to specific conditions and in suitable low speed/low risk road environments.

Event Traffic Marshals would:

- Be required to participate in a short training course followed by an assessment, proving they have sufficient knowledge and skills to undertake the proposed role in a competent manner to ensure personal and public safety.
- Only be able to operate in low speed environments, of 60kph or less.
- Only perform traffic control for a limited period, after which time the person must have a 15 minute break.
- Be required to use a stop/slow bat.
- Be required to wear hi-vis clothing that is a different colour to accredited traffic controllers.
- Be a suitable role for volunteers, donating their time to the particular event.

The intent of this approach is to provide the organisers of community and sporting events with a low cost option for traffic management in the interests of:

- allowing existing events to continue to be held but with minimised risk a higher level of safety
- allowing events to proceed, that otherwise may not have been held due to being financially unviable.

Ultimately, this is about supporting and empowering communities to hold events, while still ensuring that road safety is maintained for those providing and attending the events.

How are Event Traffic Marshals and accredited Traffic Controllers different?

Event Traffic Marshals and accredited Traffic Controllers are different in a number of ways:

(1) **Types of activities undertaken**

Accredited Traffic controllers are paid professionals who are competent to control traffic in a wide range of circumstances and road environments, whereas Event Traffic Marshals would be controlling traffic in very limited circumstances relevant to just that event.

(2) **Type of authority they hold**

Accredited Traffic Controllers hold a 3-year regulatory authority that is widely transportable in the industry, whereas Event Traffic Marshals would only be authorised by registering with the event organiser and would be only eligible to control traffic at the designated locations for the duration of the event.

(3) **Training and other prerequisites**

Event Traffic Marshals would be required to undertake a brief training course and must be assessed as practically competent before every event they work at. In contrast, Accredited Traffic Controllers are subject to government pre-requisite checks; a rigorous assessment in a national competency for controlling traffic; and a requirement to have undertaken 20 hours or practical experience under close supervision, before being eligible for the authority.

(4) **Accountability**

In the case of Accredited Traffic Controllers, the Traffic Management Company, worksite Manager and the traffic controller are all accountable, and can be fined/penalised under the various laws if traffic is not performed properly and safely. In the case of Event Traffic Marshals, the onus would be on the event organiser as being fully accountable for the selection, management and insurance of Event Traffic Marshals in accordance with the approved Traffic Management Plan for the event and the event permit conditions. The event permit could be cancelled if the event organiser fails in these important obligations.

Event Traffic Marshals and Accredited Traffic Controllers may work together at the same events controlling traffic at different locations.

In what types of events and circumstances is it expected that Event Traffic Marshals would work?

It is envisaged that Event Traffic Marshals would assist at the following types of events:

- Local street festivals and sporting events (such as fun runs) that have a minimal impact on roads and traffic flow and negligible impact on the non-event community
- Local ANZAC Day marches and parades under police escort
- Cycling events in regional areas that may cover larger distances, with event traffic marshals assisting at minor side streets while accredited traffic controllers manage more complex locations.

Event organisers will still be required to obtain appropriate traffic management planning for these events, which must be developed by a qualified Traffic Management Design professional. These professionals may be accessed through existing traffic control companies or via local governments supporting the events.

What are the expected benefits of this proposed change?

The expected benefits of this approach are:

- Improving the ability for Councils, community service organisations and sporting associations to stage community events.
- The associated local business, tourism and charity opportunities afforded by these events.
- Local communities, who benefit from being able to hold events that otherwise might not have been feasible, including additional business opportunities that hosting these events may introduce.
- Sporting clubs, such as cycling and running clubs, will benefit from being able to stage events that may not have otherwise been feasible. Being able to stage events using purely local volunteers, strengthens local communities where the events are held, and builds new skills for volunteers and other event staff.
- Volunteers at these events will have a greater ability to support the events, in a safe way.
- Event participants will see improvements in safety, through having volunteers being trained in tasks they may already informally be undertaking.
- Traffic control companies may see an overall increase in the number of events being held, with the flow-on potential for increased work as a result of these events occurring.

What are the regulatory and other changes associated with this proposal?

If this proposal was to proceed, the following changes would be made to regulation and standards:

- Development of a Department of Transport and Main Roads standard specifically for Event Traffic Marshals
- The content of training courses will be agreed and new training courses developed including an online training module course
- The Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Accreditation and Other Provisions) Regulation will be amended.
- Fact sheets will be developed.

How do I get involved?

The department welcomes feedback from the community and industry regarding their views on the proposed changes.

To provide feedback please visit the Get involved website and complete the survey online, or providing a written response by emailing Event_Traffic_Marshals@tmr.qld.gov.au, or posting to:

Department of Transport and Main Roads

ATTN: Event Traffic Marshal Scheme

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