

Trail Running Association of Queensland: Appendix.xls

Criteria	Considerations	Detailed applicant response
Public health & safety	Risks to other users	<p>A typical trail run is an endurance event, so the pace is relatively slow and runners have spread out to individuals after the first kilometer. Pre-race briefings include giving way to walkers, and any specific guidance on eg narrow sections.</p> <p>Provided the course had been well designed, eg wide trails or road at the start, risk to others from runners is low. Enquiries with other race organisers have only identified one collision between a runner and walker in the last two decades. These days, pre-race briefings are much more specific about giving way to walkers, and any specific guidance on eg narrow sections. Trail runs in earlier times were also more competitive, with closer links to established run clubs.</p>
	Risks to participants	<p>There are two significant risks to participants of trail runs; ankle sprains or other minor injuries, and getting lost.</p> <p>Less experienced trail runners have about a 1% chance of an ankle sprain on a typical trail with its associated trip hazards. This is not a risk in the sense that suggests an event should not be permitted. Every trail runner needs to train to develop the ankle strength and proprioception to unconsciously judge trail hazards and control ankle rolls; this is no different to the risk of crossing roads when running in the city. In thirty years of orienteering and trail running I've seen only one case where a person couldn't get back to the start without assistance.</p> <p>Should support be needed, its easy to locate runners given we use a set course, following runners will pass by, and we have checkpoint with a backup 4WD vehicle.</p> <p>Getting lost is best pevented by good signage. This can be provided in two ways; either by access to quality walking trails which are signed, or by temporary signage for the event. Supplementary options depending on trail complexity include dolomite arrows as reinforcement, tape on trees, checkpoints, ar</p>
	Risk mitigation	<p>Options for risk mitigation include checkpoints after higher risk course sections, first aid kits at checkpoints, 4WD backup, support offered by following runners, "sweeper" following last runner in.</p>
Park management	Activity consistent with tenure	<p>Trail events are feasible under any tenure, but the scale and nature of the event will vary according to local conditions and existing usage.</p>

Trail Running Association of Queensland: Appendix.xls

Activity consistent with management plans

In recent years QPWS has been incorporating the landscape classification system as a major element of determining permits. This is unfortunate, since the landscape classification system essentially describes the average rating across three spectrums (wilderness, usage, infrastructure) based on the *typical usage group*.

In practise this means any application by groups other than the historically dominant user group will be excluded. TRAQ supports an increased emphasis on shared usage, and developing new policies so that compatible user groups can share access to scarce resources like walking tracks.

Group running events and individual walkers are very compatible usages. Trail runs usually start early and quickly get to remoter areas. By contrast, the vast majority of individual walkers arrive by car and use short walks to a small number of high use locations. The current system amounts to enforced single-use by individual walkers, with resultant under-use of many longer and regional trails.

Increasing access for trail events offers many benefits including increased profile for fitness, increased use of existing trails infrastructure, and free regional publicity.

Is activity nature-based

Trail runners make the effort to travel to trails to enjoy nature, as well as the benefits of increased fitness, just like walkers.

Impact on conservation plan

Trail events use existing trails and the types of impact are consistent with those of walkers. Trail events are unlikely to get access more than once a year and training runs in non-urban parks involve very small numbers, so the net annual impact is considerably less than the existing walker load. Trail events are also an organised and controlled event, hence more subject to scrutiny eg dropping of litter or off-trail wandering is not an issue.

Impact on natural & cultural resources

Impact on cultural values

Trail events respect local cultural values. In other parts of the world are an important part of celebrating cultural heritage, eg Te Houtaewa Challenge in New Zealand, Copper Canyon Trail run in the Mexico, fell running and guides races in the UK.

Trail Running Association of Queensland: Appendix.xls

Social values	<p>Trail events have a positive social value, providing motivation and focus to keep people active and using our outdoor resources. Organised events provide support and safety to newer and less confident trail users. Trail events typically include a walk option too, which reaches that section of the community without the time to be involved in formal bushwalking groups.</p> <p>In Australia, trails use is lower than in most countries and much more vehicle-based. Group activity permit decisions frequently prevent rather than encourage quality trail events. By comparison, in America trail runners are now the number one recreational users of the outdoors, and the only group on the increase.</p> <p>Well organised and occasional events where participants pass other users with respect and care have no significant on other users. The current year-round restriction of most walking tracks to individual walkers has a much greater impact, excluding other potential uses and users.</p>
Impact on wildlife	<p>Trail events use existing trails and their impact is less than walkers, due to the scrutiny and controls associated with approved events, and limits on frequency. Runners also stay on-trail.</p>
Impact fauna & flora	<p>Trail events use existing trails and their impact is less than walkers, due to the scrutiny and controls associated with approved events, and limits on frequency. Runners also stay on-trail.</p>
Mitigating actions	<p>TRAQ aims to develop and reinforce a trail culture where shared use of trails is safe and courteous, through race briefings and member communications.</p>
Appropriateness	<p>Impact on physical, social & infrastructure aspects of area</p> <p>Trail events use existing infrastructure and require no new expenditure. They also provide a focus for publicising the community's outdoor assets and individual fitness.</p>
	<p>Impact on current desired setting of site</p> <p>In recent years QPWS has tended towards single-use settings for areas. TRAQ encourages greater openness to shared use by a range of user groups.</p>
Sustainable visitor capacity	<p>Trail events start early when usage is lowest and are generally finished by 11am. Each event is modified to accommodate other local user groups. During event planning each area is visited to check usage levels at that time of day and week.</p>
Precedent for future increase in activities	<p>TRAQ targets locations and times where there are few other users. More important for the future, Queensland needs to encourage more participative activity in the outdoors. Our proportion of vehicle-based recreation is too high, reinforcing the worrying trend towards higher weight and reduced health.</p>

Trail Running Association of Queensland: Appendix.xls

Compatibility with other users	Compatible with existing uses	The most important elements to ensure compatibility are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- either wide trails to start, or a staggered start, or a very early start- reinforcing a trails-event ethic of safe and respectful passing- good event design eg course choice and start-finish location
	Additional signage required	Temporary signage is useful to avoid lost runners since official signage is rarely clear enough about specific routes. The size and type of signage can be varied according to the sensitivity of the location, scale of event and experience of participants.
	Adequate services (parking/picnic/toilet)	No new services are required for trail events. Parking, toilets and shelter all contribute to the success of an event, but bus transport, temporary toilets and shelters provide alternatives. The early start of trail events minimises the impact on other users.
Exclusive use of area	Exclusive use required	TRAQ sees no need for exclusive use of facilities or trails.
	Impact on other users	Most members of the public enjoy seeing the passing excitement of other users in an organised event, provided there are no obvious negative impacts on their own use. A well designed event will minimise any impact on other users.
Match with community needs	Demand from the general public	According to the latest Outdoor Recreation Participation Study, America trail runners are now the number one recreational users of the outdoors, and the only group on the increase. Australia has fewer quality trails, resulting in lower historical use and a culture which emphasises the more recent growth in vehicle-based recreation. There is a real need to change policy settings which were established in this earlier era, with their emphasis on exclusive use and restricting large group activities. Allowing more trail events will encourage new users who put greater value on nature and fitness, notably younger adventure seekers.
	Supporting documentation	We visit the community prior to new events, talking to the community. The vast majority of the public support the concept of occasional organised walk/runs on their local walking trails. Locals too appreciate a supported walk as something special to motivate their fitness and enjoy the group atmosphere afterwards.
	Contribution to nature conservation	TRAQ supports nature contributions from trail events, as seen in NSW's Six Foot Track event which contributes \$30,000 p/annum. This is more achievable if event permits change to allow a reasonable scale of event which can generate a surplus.
Other matters	Consistent with any existing uses	Uses change and traditional bushwalking is in decline. Allowing more trail events can encourage new users, notably the overworked young and women who feel safer in organised group events, without detrimentally affecting other users.