

# Ordinary Council Meeting

## Urgent Reports Business Paper

Pursuant to section 9 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, notice is hereby given that an Ordinary Council Meeting of Parkes Shire Council will be held in the Parkes Council Chamber, 2 Cecile Street, Parkes, on Tuesday 17 March 2026 at 3:00 PM.



Kent Boyd PSM

**GENERAL MANAGER**

## Order of Business

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**18 REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES****18.2 REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF ALCOHOL-FREE ZONE COOKE PARK: HOMEGROWN AND LIGHT UP PARKES EVENTS****IP&R Linkage:** Pillar: Community**Goal:** Our community is creative, proud and has a strong sense of belonging.**Strategy:** Support and deliver events, festivals and local celebrations that support community connectivity, citizenship and pride.**Author:** Brendan Shipley, Manager Events and Tourism**Authoriser:** Anthony McGrath, Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy**Annexures:** Nil**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Receive and note the report by Director Customer, Corporate Services and Economy on the temporary suspension of the alcohol-free zone in Cooke Park for the events taking place in March and April 2026.
2. Suspend the alcohol-free zone from Cooke Park between 9am to 2pm on the Saturday 21 March 2026, for the Homegrown Parkes event.
3. Suspend the alcohol-free zone from Cooke Park between 5pm to 9:30pm on the Saturday 18 April 2026, for the Light Up Parkes event.
4. Provide a public notice of the suspension of the alcohol-free zone in Cooke Park between 9am to 2pm on the Saturday 21 March 2026 and 5pm to 9:30pm on the Saturday 18 April 2026.

**BACKGROUND**

Parkes Shire Council ("Council") has established Alcohol-Free Zones (AFZs) across key public areas, primarily within the Central Business District (CBD) Peak Hill and Parkes, including Cooke Park. Council provides publicly accessible maps showing the designated AFZ areas, which outline the specific streets and public road-related areas where alcohol consumption is prohibited. The current declaration was adopted on 17 June 2025 and will apply for four years to June 2029.

AFZs are part of Council's broader strategy to maintain safe public spaces, reduce alcohol-related anti-social behaviour.

Parkes Shire Council previously temporarily lifted the alcohol-free zone (AFZ) for its 'Saturday Sounds' events, overseen by on-site security personnel, and has consistently managed these events without any alcohol-related incidents.

**ISSUES AND COMMENTARY**

Council is asked to temporarily lift the alcohol-free zone in Cooke Park to facilitate two upcoming events including

1. Homegrown Parkes on Saturday 21 March 2026 from 9am to 2pm and
2. Light Up Parkes community event on Saturday 18 April 2026 from 5pm to 9:30pm

The **Homegrown Parkes** event will include a vendor offering wine tasting for the first time within the Cooke Park grounds, therefore requiring a temporary suspension of the AFZ. Parkes Brewhouse will be conducting a home brewing workshop inside the Cooke Park Pavilion, which is not included in the AFZ and not subject to this temporary lifting. However, both vendors are required to comply with the Responsible Service of Alcohol provisions.

The **Light up Parkes** event will involve lighting up the heart of Parkes with a vibrant evening of live performances, local food vendors and a glowing community atmosphere. Like previous “Sounds” events, attendees will be allowed to bring their own drinks including alcohol along to the event. Food will be available for purchase, and event staff and security guards will monitor crowd behaviour. As an added safety precaution, glass bottles will not be permitted.

Additionally, Council will coordinate with the Parkes Police Local Command to inform them of expected attendance and ensure adequate police presence.

### **LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT**

Alcohol-Free Zones (AFZs) are established, operated and suspended under Sections 644–646 of the NSW Local Government Act 1993, with Section 645 empowering councils to temporarily suspend an AFZ by publishing a notice that clearly identifies the period of suspension. During this period, the zone does not operate as an AFZ. The NSW Ministerial Guidelines on Alcohol-Free Zones (2025) provide further direction on council obligations for establishing, operating and suspending AFZs, including requirements for public notification consistent with the Act.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Any advertising costs to publicise the temporary suspension of the alcohol-free zone is included within Council's existing Operational Budget.

### **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

Running an event involving alcohol within an Alcohol-Free Zone (AFZ) carries several risks. If the AFZ is not formally suspended, alcohol consumption remains unlawful and Police may confiscate alcohol, creating compliance issues for Council and event organisers. The Local Government Act requires councils to publish a suspension notice for any temporary exemption, and failure to do so may constitute non-compliance. Allowing alcohol where AFZs are intended to reduce anti-social behaviour also increases the potential for disorder and safety incidents. Inadequate stakeholder consultation or unclear communication may result in reputational and operational risks for Council, including confusion in enforcement and negative community perception.

Risk Mitigation controls include:

- Formally suspending the AFZ in accordance with Section 645 of the Local Government Act through appropriate public notification.
- Consulting NSW Police and relevant stakeholders to ensure safety and enforcement clarity.
- Implementing appropriate crowd, security, and alcohol management measures to minimise anti-social behaviour.
- Providing clear public communication about the temporary suspension to avoid confusion or enforcement conflicts.

### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

Council must provide a public notice of the suspension of the alcohol-free zone in Cooke Park for the dates and times as outlined in this report. In addition, the event organisers will coordinate and cooperate with the Parkes Police Local Command.