

STRATHFIELD COUNCIL

BUSKING POLICY

2025



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1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Purpose of Policy

Strathfield Council supports artists and performers, and values the vibrancy, vitality and cultural expression that they bring to Strathfield.

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework that supports artists and performers and monitors and mitigates any risks which could arise from busking. This policy supports the Strathfield Council's Community Strategic Plan to facilitate and support cultural and learning programs and activities.

The Policy provides the conditions under which busking is permitted in Strathfield Council on Council owned or managed properties.

1.2. Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of this policy are to:

- a) Encourage performances that enhance the vibrancy, vitality, and cultural expression of artists and performers in the Strathfield Local Government Area (LGA)
- b) Support creative communities by providing accessible opportunities for artists to showcase their work in public spaces.
- c) Enhance public spaces as vibrant destinations that attract visitors and contribute to economic activity.
- d) Position busking as a tool for placemaking, creating attractive public areas that encourage foot traffic, support local businesses, and strengthen Strathfield LGA's identity as a lively, culturally rich destination.
- e) Provide a framework to ensure busking activities are supported and managed whilst maintaining the well-being and safety of Buskers, and the broader community.
- f) To ensure that Buskers do not present a hazard or obstruction to pedestrians or motorists or the efficiency of a road or traffic control devices.
- g) To ensure the busking contains appropriate content.
- h) Ensure busking is managed in a coordinated approach and does not result in a proliferation of busking in any one area.

1.3. Coverage of the Policy

The policy applies to all Council owned or managed land and property.

2. Permit Approvals

An application must be lodged for all busking activities on Council owned or managed property. A Permit for busking is issued under s68 of the Local Government Act. The application will be considered by the relevant Council staff. Granting of a Permit is subject to the Busker agreeing to comply with the requirements of this Policy.

People approved to undertake busking will be provided with a Council issued Permit. A copy of this Permit must be available on request for inspection by any Council Authorised Officer including Council's Rangers.

The Permit does not provide the Busker with sole use or reservation of a site.

The fees for busking are outlined in Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges, which is available on the Council website.

Performers Under 18 Years of Age

Council supports young performers under 18 years of age contributing to the vibrancy of the Strathfield area. Busking Permit applications for people under 18 years of age must be signed by a parent or guardian.

Strathfield Council provides no supervision of buskers under the age of 18 years and recommends an adult accompany young buskers at all times.

3. Types of Performances

The following types of performances are permitted:

- a) Playing a musical instrument
- b) Singing
- c) Comedy routines (non-offensive, as outlined below)
- d) Juggling (non-dangerous items)
- e) Mime/ statue
- f) Dance
- g) Circus skills
- h) Magic
- i) Temporary or handheld artwork
- j) Speeches (non-offensive, as outlined below)
- k) Cultural performances
- l) Recitation/Storytelling
- m) Puppetry
- n) Pavement Art (such as chalk art, drawing and painting)
- o) Council may also approve unique and special activities that meet the busking principles.

The following types of performances are not permitted:

- a) Any performance content promoting or containing alcohol, drugs, firearms, gambling, pornography, tobacco, obscene language, or obscene acts. Performances must be appropriate for all ages.
- b) Any performance containing hazardous activities, e.g. fire, knives, or other dangerous goods.
- c) Any performance with live animals.
- d) Any performance which is offensive including, but not limited to: age, disability, race, sex, intersex status, gender identity sexual orientation discrimination, and political bias.
- e) Any performance which teases, humiliates, or harasses anyone.

4. Sale of Items

Buskers may accept voluntary donations from the community in appreciation of their performance. Buskers must not request donations from the community.

Buskers must not engage in any commercial activities other than selling their own CDs, DVDs, or artwork. This must be supplementary to the performance.

Advertising or promotional material is permitted, only if it:

- a) Is displayed in a manner that does not impact on pedestrian access
- b) Is only displayed during the performance period, and
- c) Complements the busking performance.

5. Locations

Busking is permitted in the main streets/urban centres in the Strathfield Local Government Area. The most appropriate busking areas are locations which are open, clear areas. Examples of appropriate busking areas include a public bench, public plaza, parks, and wide footpaths.

When selecting a location, Buskers must:

- a) Ensure they are not creating a physical obstruction or hazard.
- b) Be aware of their location and ensure that pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular thoroughfares are left clear. This includes ensuring that gathered audiences also do not block thoroughfares. A minimum of two meters must be kept clear for pedestrian access.
- c) Not block access to the entry or exit of any building, shop, pedestrian walkway, street, or car park.
- d) Keep their performance area clean, safe, and free of trip hazards. Buskers must not leave or abandon any equipment in the public domain. Any unattended equipment may be impounded by an Authorised Officer and there may be a fine for its recovery applied.
- e) Ensure they have a suitable clearance from roads and meet appropriate road safety standards.
- f) Share the public space with other members of the community in a courteous manner.
- g) Be at least 50 meters away from another Busker or approved event or gathering.
- h) Be located away from residential areas, so it does not create a nuisance to residents.

Buskers must use less than 2m² of public space when performing. If the proposed performance area is greater than this, they must seek prior written approval from Council for the specific location.

Busking is not permitted in areas designated for other specific purposes, e.g. within 2 metres of bus stops, within 2 metres of a taxi rank, adjacent to a pedestrian crossing, car parks, within 100m of an approved event area, or within paid outdoor dining areas.

Buskers must respect the rights and diversity of nearby business owners and community members. Buskers are encouraged to advise nearby cafés/stores/businesses of their plans to perform, before setting up.

6. Pavement Artists

Pavement artists must use chalk that is entirely removable by water or draw onto a removable canvas placed over the pavement.

Pavement artists must ensure that there are no trip hazards by taping down the edges of any canvases which are placed over the pavement.

7. Busking Times

Except where otherwise permitted in writing by Council, holders of a Permit may perform:

- a) 8am to 10pm, Sunday to Thursday
- b) 8am to midnight, Friday and Saturday

Performance times for Buskers are limited to a maximum of 2 hours per day in any one location. Any new performance location must be at least 500 metres away. If the proposed performance time is greater than 2 hours per day in any one location, Buskers must seek prior written approval from Council for the extended performance time.

8. Amplified Sound

Amplification is permitted. Only a battery powered speaker and amplifier is permitted. Buskers must ensure that their performance does not unreasonably disrupt nearby businesses, residents, or public amenity. The busking performance must not be able to be heard more than 50 meters away.

9. Policy Breaches

Council reserves the right to direct a Busker to reduce the volume of their performance.

Council reserves the right to direct a Busker to cease their performance on Council owned or managed properties, at its sole discretion.

Buskers must obey all reasonable directions issued by Council or its Authorised Officer.

Repeated breaches of this Policy may result in Council revoking a Busker's Permit.