

Grand Prix Public Safety Risk

Save Albert Park Inc

Nearly all of Melbourne's major sporting venues know exactly how many patrons are present. They count their patrons in a careful, credible, auditable and safety conscious way; that is except for the Victorian government's temporary grand prix circuit in Albert Park.

Our investigations have revealed all the major sporting codes except the grand prix accurately count their attendees with up to date bar code scanners and turnstiles, even hiring extra equipment for the really big events like the Spring Racing Carnival and the Royal Melbourne Show. The grand prix organisers do none of this, even though their ticketing agency supplies the bar code scanners free of charge. Why not?

Our attendance counts from 1998 to 2002 and subsequent annual estimating exercises reveal the grand prix boasts a four day crowd that exceeds the actual number of people visible in the venue or in the audited ticket sales data by more than 100,000 over the four day event, *every year*.

This means the grand prix has a huge public safety risk because they never know how many people are in the venue. Last year they defied an order of Parliament when they bluntly refused to turn on their scanners and record their patrons. Do they consider themselves above the law and our lawmakers, even in regard to public safety?

For example, we can demonstrate when 69,800 spectators are claimed to be in attendance, we have full [sets of photos](#) of the whole circuit that show fewer than 10,000 actually in attendance and watching the racing. A primary school student could calculate the maximum crowd capacity and then observe the percentage occupied to give a reasonable estimate. Here's how it's done: With 24,396 grandstand and around 7,000 corporate seats that is the total seating area. The remainder is a few grassy mounds – at most 12,000 capacity in total - and some trackside viewing areas that would not average four deep, so the total venue capacity is fewer than 70,000 and this accords with the audited ticket sales figure.

It is obvious that the grand prix organisers would sooner risk the safety of the unknown number of patrons than switch on their ticket scanners. They deliberately choose to be unaccountable. In the 21st Century, with an event that boasts up to the date technology on the cars, it is a failure as an emergency manager. Why won't the government take proper responsibility for this?

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