



The Great Wheelbarrow Race
FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND



GREAT WHEELBARROW RACE RULES AND REGULATIONS 2026

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The Great Wheelbarrow Race

Rules and Regulations 2026

1. Overview

The Great Wheelbarrow Race is a three-day relay endurance event held each May, covering around 140 km between Mareeba and Chillagoe (or reverse).

Stages:

- Mareeba → Dimbulah – 42 km
- Dimbulah → Almaden – 65 km
- Almaden → Chillagoe – 33 km

Teams and individuals compete for fun, fitness, charity, or competition. Safety and sportsmanship are the highest priorities.

Each Team Captain is responsible for ensuring all team members, drivers, and support staff understand and follow these rules.

2. Event Organisation

The event is managed by Mareeba Shire Council and the Great Wheelbarrow Race Advisory Committee.

- **Chair:** Cr Ross Cardillo
- **Proxy Chair:** Cr Nipper Brown
- **Chief Marshal:** Frances Schafer
- **Event Coordinator:** Council's Corporate Communications Officer Rochelle Harding

The Chief Marshal, in consultation with the Chair and Committee, can issue warnings, penalties, or disqualifications for unsafe or unsporting behaviour.

Further information about the Advisory Committee is outlined in the [Great Wheelbarrow Race Charter](#) available on Mareeba Shire Council's website.

3. Event Public Liability Insurance

The event's public liability insurance **does not cover competitors or spectators**.

Participants are encouraged to obtain **personal accident or risk insurance**.

4. Conditions of Entry

Registration Fees (10% early bird discount closes Monday, 5 January 2026):

Category	Early Price	Standard Price
Team	\$792	\$880
Trio	\$495	\$550
Duo	\$396	\$440
Solo	\$297	\$330

Registrations close 5.00pm Sunday, 1 March 2026.

Fees must be paid with the lodgement of online registration or entry forms.

General Entry Rules

- Alcohol or drugs are strictly prohibited for all participants and drivers during the race.
- All drivers, captains and marshals must attend compulsory daily briefings.
- No substitute or unregistered runners (except in Social teams).
- Competitive teams: maximum 10 runners (no substitutions after race start).
- Social teams: may have more than 10 members, but only 10 may run per day.
- Drivers must be 18+ and hold an open licence.
- Runners must be 13+ (younger only with committee approval and parental consent).
- Each team must supply one marshal (official).
- Teams without a Team Marshal compete in the Social category only.

Each team / competitor must have:

- **Team Captain** – A Team Captain is a solo runner, or is part of the duo, trio or team.
Responsibilities:
 - Ensure all team members have registered by Sunday, 1 March 2026.
 - Be aware of any medical conditions a team member may have and to notify the Chief Marshal of any concerns, restrictions, or injuries.
 - Must attend daily briefings with the Chief Marshal
 - Ensure their team members know and understand the *Rules and Regulations*
 - Ensure the Team Marshal has handed in the daily timesheet as soon as the team has crossed the finish line.
 - Need to know your start time each day. This changes every day – please check the score board on display each night, our Facebook page, or check your email for your daily start time.
 - Ensure your team has a working UHF radio (Channel 10) and an amber flashing light for your support vehicle. This is a mandatory requirement.
- **Team Marshal** – A Team Marshal is not a runner but is an essential part of the team.
Responsibilities:
 - Always keep the runner in sight

- Record all unofficial times and incidents and submit timesheets to the Chief Timekeepers immediately at the end of each stage of the race. The unofficial time recorded will be cross checked by the Chief Timekeepers against the official time.
- Carry a copy and know the *Rules and Regulations* to monitor the actions of competitors during the race.
- Record any alleged rule breaches or incidences that occur during the day's racing and immediately report them to the Chief Marshal at the end of each stage.
- Team Marshals can walk alongside a runner (especially solos and duos) for moral support.
- Each team must provide a Team Marshal for the race, with the marshal's name provided at registration. Teams that fail to provide a Marshal, or cannot do so, will be eligible to compete in the *Social* category only.

In some situations, teams may be allocated a different Team Marshal for each day. Marshals may be assigned to teams other than their own to avoid potential conflict of interest in enforcing race rules or recording timed stops. This decision rests at the discretion of the Committee. An exception may be granted for a dual role involving a solo, duo, or trio driver, with approval from the Committee or Chief Marshal.

- **Driver** – Each team / entrant will need a driver and support vehicle/bus.

Responsibilities:

- Must be 18 years of age or older and hold a valid open driver's licence appropriate to the vehicle being operated.
- Communicate with other teams to safely overtake.
- Make sure that there is no more than 20 m between the runner and the vehicle at any time. This will protect the runner from traffic overtaking.
- Drive a registered vehicle.
- Follow all traffic and special event rules.
- Attend daily briefings with the Team Captain, Team Marshal and Chief Marshal.

5. Special Event Permit Compliance – Queensland Police Service Terms and Conditions

A special event is defined by the [Queensland Transport Operations \(Road Use Management- Accreditation and Other Provisions\) Regulations 2005](#). It is an event which is wholly or generally of a public nature, uses or affects the operation of public roads, may require full or partial road closures or altered traffic conditions and involves some inconsistency with the usual operation of the Queensland Road Rules. Please see Appendix One for previous Special Event Conditions as a guide for 2026. *(This document will be updated with the current conditions as soon as they are available. It is reasonably expected that these conditions will not change).*

Key requirements:

- All **road rules apply** at all times.
- The race is held **only in daylight hours**.

- Participants must follow the **approved route**.
- If 4+ vehicles are delayed behind, teams must **move left and pause** to clear traffic.
- **Always keep left** and obey any lawful direction from police or officials.

6. Race Schedule

Friday, 8th May – Mareeba to Dimbulah 42 km

- Solos, Duos and Trios start at Vaughn Street, Mareeba (estimate time around 7am) and will have a pre-race briefing at the start line.
- All other teams meet at Davies Park, Mareeba for the pre-race briefing and official opening
- Downtown parade in Byrnes Street
- Teams line up at the Vaughn Street start line.
- Run from Mareeba to Dimbulah.
- Rest – purchase lunch in town and set up camp
- Dimbulah evening – highlights video
- Results and next day's race time posted by 6:00 pm.

Saturday, 9th May – Dimbulah to Almaden 65 km

- Solos, Duos and Trios and Teams start at Raleigh Street Dimbulah (same location as finish line)
- Each team will have an individual meeting with the Chief Marshal just before their start time. The start times are based on the previous day's results.
- Dimbulah to Petford – 20 minutes rest stop at Petford for teams
- Petford to Almaden
- Rest – purchase lunch and set up camp
- Almaden evening – highlights video
- Results and next day's race time posted by 6:00 pm.

Sunday, 10th May – Almaden to Chillagoe 33 km

- Solos, Duos and Trios and Teams start at Almaden (same location as finish line)
- Each team will have an individual meeting with the Chief Marshal just before their start time. The start times are based on the previous day's results.
- Almaden to Chillagoe
- Closing ceremony and results

7. Race Rules

The safety of competitors on the road is paramount. Drivers, runners, and support crew must interpret prevailing race and traffic conditions and apply the *Rules and Regulations* accordingly.

Responsibility

- Each team, entrant and driver must comply with road traffic laws and event permit conditions

- Breaches can lead to time penalty or disqualification.

Support Vehicle

- The support vehicle must follow no more than 20 m behind the runner.
- This protects the runner and lets other vehicles safely overtake both together.
- If another vehicle cuts between the runner and support vehicle, the runner must immediately move off the road.
- Only one vehicle per team is allowed and must carry all team members and one marshal.
- Additional support vehicles are NOT to follow a team or team bus at any stage of the race.
- Remember to pack: Food & water, basic first aid kit (bandages, cold packs, saline, etc.)
- A working radio is essential to be able to communicate with other teams when overtaking. You cannot compete without a working radio.
- Ensure there is a first aid kit on board with bandages, ice packs and hydration. Have food and water available on the bus.
- **Mandatory safety equipment for support vehicles/buses**
 - An amber flashing light attached to the roof - generally with a magnetic base, 12 or 14 volt depending on the vehicle's electrical system, usually purchased from an auto or electronics store.
 - A working UHF CB Radio - to remain on Channel 10 for communication with other teams and the Chief Marshal.

Runner Changes

- Performed from the following vehicle, either:
 - Wheelbarrow placed on the ground, or
 - Handed over while moving.
- Changes must occur **safely and to the left side**; the vehicle should **slow to a rolling stop**, not block traffic.

Passing Protocols

- No passing where there is a solid centre line.
- Slower teams must submit or yield to faster teams at the first safe opportunity.
- The slower team's driver must communicate with the faster team and help facilitate a safe, efficient pass. Faster teams should make **radio contact (UHF Ch 10)** with slower teams before attempting to pass.
- Slower teams must acknowledge and maintain communication, preparing to yield or submit.
- Passing must always be done on the right-hand side only — passing on the left is illegal and will result in severe penalties.
- The slower team must not speed up or race while being passed.
- The slower runner may walk or jog slowly to allow a smooth pass but must not sprint ahead or separate from the support vehicle.
- The passing team should nominate a fast runner to minimise time spent in the right-hand lane.
- Slower teams should pull over and stop (yield) whenever possible to allow safe overtaking.

- After being overtaken, the slower team must allow the faster team to establish a safe gap before resuming the chase.
- The driver makes the final decision on when it is safe to overtake or yield.

Submit vs Yield

- Submit: Slow or jog lightly during runner change to allow a pass.
- Yield: Stop completely (minimum 30 seconds) to let another team pass safely.
- Both teams are responsible for ensuring a safe pass.

Traffic Convoys and Congestion

When encountering a line of teams (convoy):

1. Fall in line and match the speed of the lead team.
2. Observe and assess what the lead teams are doing for at least 30 seconds before taking action.
3. Never overtake multiple teams at once or attempt to pass from the rear of a convoy.
4. Be patient and wait for safe, legal passing opportunities.
5. Slower teams are encouraged to use a safety yield (stop briefly) to help faster teams move forward safely if a yield is possible.

Time-Out Stops

Teams may take a minimum 30-second stop for:

- Unsafe traffic conditions
- Medical emergencies
- Driver/marshal toilet stops
- Vehicle or wheelbarrow breakdown
- Safety yield (to allow multiple passes)

Maximum 20 time-outs per stage (social teams unlimited, but limited use encouraged).

Other Rules

- No overtaking on bridges or tight roads unless safe.
- Petford Stop (Day 2): Compulsory 20-minute rest for teams (optional for solo/duo/trio). This is the halfway point from Dimbulah to Almaden.
- Controlled Sections: Teams must stay in the left lane marked by cones and never cross into the right lane.

8. Race Categories

Solo Male	A single male competitor
Solo Female	A single female competitor
Duo	Combination of two (2) runners - male, female or mixed
Trio	Combination of three (3) runners - male, female or mixed

Teams

Male	Male members and including non-conforming teams
Female	Female members
Mixed	Male and female members - a minimum of four (4) female members
Over 35s	Combination with all members over 35 at the time of the race
Over 55s	Combination with all members over 55 at the time of race
Corporate Services	At least six (6) persons employed at one business and four extras making up the team who have an association with the business (relative).
School	All members must attend the same High School and aged 13 years plus
Fitness Club	Male and female members - a minimum of four (4) female members who are a part of a fitness group or a sports club.
Social	Any combination of runners (maximum 15 members)

Key notes about categories

- Teams can only nominate to compete in one race category.
- Solo, duo and trio competitors are permitted safety time-outs to relieve or avoid traffic congestion and toilet stop time-outs for drivers and marshals only.
- Solo, duo and trio categories are pure endurance events. Time-outs for fatigue management and injury treatment are not permitted. If a solo, duo or trio competitor stops for any reason other than the time-outs indicated, the elapsed time will continue to accumulate.
- The mandatory 20-minute stop for teams at Petford on day 2 is optional for solo, duo and trio competitors.
- To compete in the over 35s and 55s category and be eligible for a prize all team members must provide proof of age with valid ID.
- Teams can have a maximum of ten (10) members (registered runners to push the wheelbarrow) and the exception to this rule is the social category.
- Teams can enter the race with fewer than ten (10) members. The proportionate team composition applying to categories with conformance criteria ratios of male/female or age members will remain i.e. Mixed team with eight (8) members = five (5) males and three (3) females. If a team is unsure whether they conform to criteria they can seek clarification from the committee.
- The social category is designed for teams that do the race to fundraise and for the challenge of saying they competed in the Great Wheelbarrow Race. While they will be timed, social category teams are considered non-competitive and are ineligible to win any of the other categories. Once entered in the social category teams cannot change classification mid-race.

9. Penalties

Offence	1 st Time	2 nd Time	3 rd Time
Runner with wheelbarrow passing on left side of vehicle	Up to 20 min time penalty	Expulsion (day)	Disqualification
Runner separated from vehicle	Up to 20 min time penalty	Expulsion (day)	Disqualification
Failing to yield/submit to an overtaking team. Blocking or stalling behaviour is not in the spirit of the race and can cause congestion.	Up to 20 min time penalty		
Travelling with multiple support vehicles – all team members need to travel in one vehicle.	Up to 20 min time penalty	Expulsion (day)	Disqualification
Other vehicles (e.g. family members carrying camping equipment etc. cannot travel with the team as it causes too much congestion).			
Crossing centre line without overtaking	Up to 20 min time penalty	Possible disqualification	
Anti-social behaviour	Up to 20 min time penalty	Possible disqualification	

- Penalties apply to the team and not individuals.
- Team Marshals will monitor the actions of teams and report alleged breaches and race incidents to the Chief Marshal for consideration. The power to issue a time penalty or to disqualify a team and/or individual participant is vested with the disputes committee.
- A decision to issue a time penalty or disqualify participants can be appealed through the disputes committee after the initial result has been conveyed by the Chief Marshal.
- The decision of the disputes committee will be final and binding.
- Should an individual or team be expelled or disqualified from the race they will be automatically excluded from future races. Offending teams or individuals may be required to show-cause why the committee should accept subsequent nominations to enter the event.
- Acceptance of individual and/or team nominations is at the discretion of the committee.

10. Disputes

- a) The Disputes Committee consists of three (3) persons - the Chief Marshal, GWR Committee Chair and committee competitors' representative. This committee is appointed by the GWR Advisory Committee.
- b) Disputes and breaches of the Rules and Regulations shall be recorded by a Team Marshal and reported to the Chief Marshal as soon as possible or on the completion of that team's day of racing.

- c) Any breach or dispute must be reported to the Chief Marshal on the day that it occurred.
- d) If possible, the Chief Marshal can record and resolve the dispute prior to it being referred to the disputes committee at their discretion.
- e) Two representatives of each team subject to the dispute and the relevant Team Marshals may be present during submission, consideration and resolution of the dispute.
- f) The Disputes Committee has the absolute right to issue any penalty or disqualification in the enforcement of the race rules and regulations.
- g) The findings of the disputes committee and subsequent penalty imposed are absolute.

11. Chief Timekeeper

- a) The Chief Timekeeper is charged with recording individual race times based on exact start and finish times validated by the official race clock.
- b) Team Marshals will immediately report to the Chief Timekeeper at the end of each stage with the team's unofficial timesheet listing accumulated timeouts. Team approved timeouts will be deducted from the official elapsed time.
- c) The Team Marshal's unofficial elapsed time will be used by the Chief Timekeeper to cross check and verify that no gross errors have occurred calculating official team times for each stage.
- d) The elapsed time recorded by the Chief Timekeeper will be official. Teams can challenge the Chief Timekeeper's ruling on appeal through the Disputes Committee. The Disputes Committee decision is final and binding.

12. Stage Time Limits

- Each of the three (3) stages has a designated timeframe in which race competitors are allowed to remain on the road. The Event Permit stipulates that the race is conducted in daylight hours. Expected timeframes for each stage of the race will be made available prior to the race briefing, via email to Team Captains and on the GWR Facebook page.
- For safety reasons, all participants must be off the road by 5.30pm at the very latest. An extension of time is at the discretion of the Chief Marshal.
- The designated timeframes consider staggered starting arrangements, and the committee believes they provide all teams with the opportunity to complete each race stage within the allowed time.

- Once the official finishing time for the stage has been reached, a team and/or individual participant must cease racing and move off the road even if they have not reached the finish line. In this situation, teams or individual participants will be collected and delivered to the finish line or given further operating instructions by the Chief Marshal.
- If a team or individual fails to complete a stage in the allotted timeframe, their involvement in the race ceases and they will not be allowed to compete in subsequent stages of the race, at the discretion of the committee.

13. Medical

- All participants must supply an emergency contact on the participation registration form in the event they are hurt and need medical attention.
- All participants must inform their Team Captain of any pre-existing medical conditions (i.e. recent surgery or injury, diabetes, heart or respiratory conditions). Team Captains need to let the Chief Marshal know if there are any concerns.

14. Prizes and Awards

Prize money is allocated to teams who finish the race first in their respective category with the quickest time. In the situation where there are no finishers in a category, prize money will be retained.

- **Category winners: \$250 each**
- **First \$500; Second \$300; Third \$150**
- **Best Theme Award** - Awarded to the team with the most creative or quirky theme, as judged by an anonymous panel appointed by the committee. Judging is based on presentation, costumes, originality, vehicle decoration, music, mascot, and overall appeal. All decorations must be safe and must not affect the normal operation or road safety of the support vehicle.
- **The Sandy Butler Team Spirit Award** - Presented to a social team that demonstrates exceptional sportsmanship, camaraderie, and team spirit throughout the event, as determined by the committee.
- **Highest Fundraising Total** - Awarded to the team that raises the greatest amount of money for a nominated charity, with all funds officially recognised as being raised in association with and presented under the banner of the Great Wheelbarrow Race.

15. Fundraising

While the race provides a platform for teams and individuals to fundraise for their chosen charity or cause, the Wheelbarrow Race committee does not administer or accept responsibility for any fundraising that may occur under the banner of the Great Wheelbarrow Race.

16. The Wheelbarrow

- Wheelbarrows will be supplied for the race by Mareeba Shire Council.
- Wheelbarrows will travel empty, and modifications are not permitted.
- Wheelbarrows must be pushed by hand and no harness or similar devices may be used.
- Wheelbarrows remain the property of Mareeba Shire Council.

Appendix A – Example of QPS Special Event Permit Conditions (Previous)



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

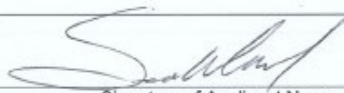
SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT

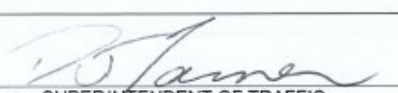
*Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Accreditation and Other Provisions)
Regulation 2015*



CONDITIONS

1. A person to whom a special event permit is issued must ensure that the conditions of the permit are complied with. Maximum penalty - 20 penalty units;
2. Prior to the commencement of the event, all participants and drivers of event support vehicle/s shall be made aware of the terms and conditions of this permit;
3. The authorised route shall be followed and no deviations made by participants without prior consultation with local police;
4. The event shall only be conducted during the hours of daylight;
5. This permit does not exempt participants and drivers of event support vehicle/s from compliance with the provisions of the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Road Rules) Regulation 2009* nor any other legislation (unless expressly stated in this permit);
6. The issue of this permit does not exempt the applicant from obtaining any relevant permit or authority required by another authority, occupier or owner, e.g. Local Government, Department of Transport and Main Roads, private property owner, lease holder, etc.;
7. Participants and drivers of event support vehicle/s shall take all necessary precautions to avoid any road incidents and shall immediately obey any lawful direction given by a police officer;
8. Participants shall keep as far as practicable to the left side of the roadway;
9. Participants shall **walk/run** no more than two abreast at any time, unless passing another **walker/runner**;
10. Event support vehicle/s, designated by the applicant as safety vehicles, shall travel as far as practicable to the left side of the roadway and shall follow as close behind the **walkers/runners** as is safe and practicable along the entire route and display a sign (700 mm by 300 mm) with the wording in black lettering '**CAUTION WALKERS/RUNNERS AHEAD**' on a yellow background. This sign shall be affixed to the rear of the event support vehicle/s and shall not impede the driver's vision nor obscure the vehicle/s rear lights;
11. Event support vehicle/s designated by the applicant as safety vehicle/s, shall operate a flashing yellow/amber light affixed to the roof of the event support vehicle;
12. Event support vehicle/s not designated as safety vehicle/s shall travel independently of the participants and shall not impede, obstruct or otherwise interfere with the effective flow of traffic;
13. In heavy traffic, all event support vehicle/s shall travel independently of the participants;


Signature of Applicant Name
(Only if acknowledging agreement to these conditions)


SUPERINTENDENT OF TRAFFIC
(Derek Garner, Senior Sergeant, 6061)



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT

*Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Accreditation and Other Provisions)
Regulation 2015*



14. Should more than four (4) vehicles be adversely delayed behind the event, participants and event support vehicle/s shall move to the left of the roadway, pausing if necessary, until the traffic build-up has cleared;
15. The event shall be temporarily suspended by the applicant, participant/s or police if undue traffic delays are experienced along the route. The suspension shall be for as long as it takes to clear the traffic build-up;
16. The applicant shall ensure that the event is either suspended or cancelled if for any reason there is a danger to participants, other road users or the general public e.g. heavy rain, fog, serious accident, etc.;
17. Where participants are unable to proceed due to adverse or unsafe conditions, or official signs prohibit cyclists, event support vehicle/s shall convey participants to a location;
18. All stoppages along the route shall be conducted in places that are located off the roadway e.g. parks, rest areas, etc.;
19. All Event Marshals are to be identifiable by wearing of either a yellow or orange fluorescent safety vest;
20. The applicant shall ensure that children participating in the event are fully supervised and closely monitored by responsible adults at all times;
21. The applicant shall ensure that any animals involved in the event are under the control of a suitably qualified handler at all times;
22. The applicant shall ensure that an operational mobile telecommunications device is carried in each of the event support vehicle/s;
23. The applicant shall ensure that basic first aid supplies are carried in each of the event support vehicle/s;
24. This permit may be cancelled or the conditions altered by a police officer for the safe and effective regulation of traffic, or the safety of the general public and participants;
25. No fund-raising shall be conducted from the roadway;
26. Suitable public liability insurance should be arranged to cover this event;
27. The applicant shall ensure that a contact list is provided to the Police Planning Officer to ensure adequate two-way communications between Police and event staff;
28. A copy of this permit (and any associated permits) shall be held by the applicant during the event and shall be produced to police if required.

In respect of the permit application you gave, regarding a proposed special event, you are advised that I, Derek Garner in my capacity as a Superintendent of Traffic within the meaning of the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995*, do not oppose the holding of the special event in accordance with the particulars provided in this notice.