

Position Statement

The Intentional Release of Sky (Chinese) Lanterns and Balloons

1. The Council will not allow the intentional release of sky (Chinese) lanterns and balloons on its own land which is open to the public, including council owned parks or open spaces.
2. The Council is committed to creating a clean and attractive environment across the district. Through taking this decision, the Council aims to raise awareness of the negative impacts of the intentional release of sky (Chinese) lanterns and balloons on the environment, wildlife and livestock. It is hoped that publicising this statement will also lead to greater public awareness and a reduction in smaller scale private releases.
3. The intentional release of sky (Chinese) lanterns and balloons has grown in popularity. They are often released into the sky as part of festivals, commemorative events or for charity fundraising. It is impossible to control where they will land, and they can travel over large distances before falling to the ground.
4. However well intentioned, it is recognised that there are a number of safety and environmental impacts associated with this activity. There is growing recognition that the debris creates a risk to wildlife and livestock as well as being a source of litter on land, in watercourses and at sea and in the case of sky (Chinese) lanterns, an avoidable risk of fire and damage.
5. The Council is committed to helping event organisers and fund raisers and will offer advice on alternative ways to raise funds or commemorate in line with national initiatives such as the Marine Conservation Society's 'Don't let go' campaign.
6. This statement is intended to prohibit the deliberate release of sky lanterns and helium balloons at events on council owned land which is open to the public. The Council recognises that there may be instances where single helium balloons will be accidentally released into the environment such as may happen at children's parties.
7. This statement does not apply to hot air balloons, weather balloons or other balloons used for scientific purposes.

Definitions

"Sky lanterns" or "Chinese lanterns" refers to a lantern made of paper or other thin material typically supported by a wire or bamboo frame and lifted by heat from a naked flame or any other heat source. This statement covers all sky lanterns whatever their construction.

"Balloon" refers to any inflatable flexible bag filled with gas, such as helium, hydrogen, nitrous oxide, oxygen or hot air made from materials such as rubber, latex, natural latex, paper, polychloroprene, foil, mylar or a nylon fabric. This includes all balloons whether or not biodegradable.

"Release" refers to the intentional act of releasing a balloon or Chinese/sky lantern into the general environment.