



For the last 47 years, the residents of the Aputula community (Finke township) have welcomed competitors and supporters to camp in the valley on the edge of the community. This is a special place near the mighty Finke River where you can witness a great sunset and enjoy the company of fellow competitors and crews. It was the early 1980's that the train stopped coming through the tiny town of Finke and the train line to Alice Springs was rebuilt further to the west. The old buildings and infrastructure associated with the railway still exist and can be easily spotted.

With a large increase in competitors over the past decade, the area that was known as the race camp has grown considerably and there are now not only people camping all the way north to the Finke River, they are also camping along the southern bank of the river and into surrounding bushland. This is putting increased pressure on the land and there have been disturbances of sacred site areas, tracks created through the bush, rubbish left at campsites and a huge pile of collectable rubbish left to dispose of. Finke is an NT Tidy Towns participant and the community have gone to great lengths to support this.

With an expected 900+ competitors this year along with crew, that will see 2000 people in the overnight camp. Additional spectators, tour groups and random visitors choosing to stay in the same camp is not sustainable. Accordingly, we will be introducing restrictions to camping at the Finke overnight stop this year. Only competitors and their crews will be permitted to camp in the area to the south of the Finke River and only then from Saturday 10th - Monday 12th June 2023. All others will need to make alternative arrangements.

Alcohol
For many years, the Finke Desert Race club has applied for a liquor permit allowing the consumption of alcohol in the Finke race camp near the Aputula community. For many years this did not cause any issues within the local community, however more recently with the exponential growth of campers in and around the race camp, there have been alcohol related issues. The current situation, where within 400 metres of the community, people on one side of the racetrack can drink whereas those on the other side are prohibited, is difficult to reconcile. Additionally, both Motorcycling Australia and Motorsports Australia prohibit alcohol in the pit areas; it was always difficult to differentiate between the pits and the camp.

After discussions with a range of stakeholders including Police, Health, Licencing NT and St John Ambulance, the club has decided to no longer apply for a permit.

The Finke Township (Aputula community) including the surrounding Land Trust is an alcohol protected area and as such alcohol is not permitted be consumed within that area. There are considerable penalties for those who are caught consuming alcohol within an alcohol protected area. This area includes the race camp, all the area to the north of the race camp and along both banks of the Finke River. The alcohol protected area boundary to the north is 3.5kms (approx.) north of the Finke River. vA map is shown in this Z card.

Northern Territory Police will be in Finke Township for the weekend and the Health Clinic is located near the recreation hall should anyone need medical assistance, including spectators. The checkpoint staff at the start finish line can also provide limited assistance and will have an emergency phone if needed as there is no mobile service or public phones in Finke.

I would also ask all visitors to the area to respect the sacred sites as marked.

Enjoy what should be a great weekend.