## EVENT PLANNING HELPSHEETS

These Event Planning help sheets are suitable for use by non-council Crown land managers (CLMs) and has been created to assist CLMs manage and plan for events held on a Crown reserve.

Events and other activities on reserves managed by other parties (e.g user groups or individuals hiring a site at a reserve) require a separate lease or license agreement. Refer to the Leases and licenses section for more information <https://reservemanager.crownland.nsw.gov.au/using-crown-reserves/leases-and-licences2>. If you noted any risks during your event that are ongoing please record the risks using the Risk Register accessible via the [Reserve Portal](https://portal.crownland.nsw.gov.au/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f). Further information is available on the Crownland Reserve Manager website <https://reservemanager.crownland.nsw.gov.au/>

# Fire Up Your Fundraising Events: How to Make More Money While Having Fun

## Contents

1. Introduction
2. Research
3. Planning & scheduling
4. Committees & subcommittees
5. Finances
6. Risk management
7. Marketing
8. Donations & sponsorship
9. Venue, equipment & site planning
10. Volunteers
11. After the event
12. Special Events

# 1. Introduction

The most successful fundraising events start with having fun – and that goes for organisers and participants alike.

For you as an organiser, having fun comes from being able to relax and enjoy your special event knowing you’ve anticipated every need and planned for every contingency, right down to the last cupcake.

But the fun starts long before the main act takes to the stage and continues long after the applause has finished. Running special events raises your organisation’s profile, attracts new supporters, inspires your volunteers to greater heights and brings your community together.

This will guide you through the process of running a special event, step by step. Drawing on the experience of professional event planners, teachers, parents and community fundraising experts, we’ve pulled together all the tools you’ll need to pull off a fantastic event.

We cover venues, risk management, marketing, sponsorship, volunteers and more cover the principles of successful event management in detail. And if you’re worried about liquor licensing, in a flap about food safety, or unsure what permits you need to run a raffle, you’ll find everything you need to know.

Even if you’ve run special events successfully in the past, you’ll find handy tips on increasing your profits next time.

The accompanying templates are designed to save you time by providing commonly used documents, such as sponsorship pitches, volunteer job descriptions and equipment checklists.

So cue the musicians, fire up the barbecue and spin the wheel – and have fun!

# 2. Research

It is vital you do some research to ensure your event is likely to be viable before you start detailed planning. If you are to confidently take on the risks, the costs and the distractions from other fundraising tasks that come with mounting a special event, then one of these two things must be true:

1. You’ve done it before. It worked, it was profitable and there have been no significant changes in the environment. If so, much of your prior planning work should serve you well in preparing for the next event.
2. You’ve not done it before, but you’ve assessed the situation rigorously and it still looks good. There is nothing like experience. If you haven’t done it before (and if you can’t recruit anyone else who’s done it before), then don’t do it now unless you can guarantee it will work. This is where a thorough assessment comes into play.

## Does the community know you?

Take a good look at your organisation, your community and the current fundraising environment. If your organisation has an established name or has been getting its name out there through publicity and media relations or has a purpose that’s recognisable and easy to explain, you can go to the community with confidence.

But being little-known and unproven can place a greater load on your campaign. Do people know what your mission is, and do they trust you to do it? If you’re raising money for something straightforward, it’s an easy concept to get across. If not, you might have a harder task, and a harder ‘ask’ to convey.

**Ask yourself these questions:**

* Do people acknowledge the need your organisation is meeting?
* Have they got positive or negative feelings about the people you’re helping? Having an unpopular cause doesn’t necessarily mean you shouldn’t go out there and try, but it does raise the bar for your feasibility study. Remember, you’re not asking what people *should* think, you’re asking what they *do* think.
* Has anybody out there heard about you?

## Have you got what it takes?

By going into the event management business, you’re leaving behind the world of the charity donation, where people give you money because they believe in you. The event management business is a world of mixed motivations, where people are paying partly for altruistic reasons and partly for the delivery of goods and services.

This can cause problems. Someone who might have been prepared to give you a $15 donation might object if you charge them $15 for an item worth $5. Once people are exchanging money for goods or services, they have certain expectations of quality and value for money, whether it’s $5 for entry to a film night or $500 for a star-studded dinner.

Ask yourself whether your organisation has what it takes to produce a special event that is profitable and also meets people’s expectations of quality.

* Can your organisation continue to carry out its everyday activities and simultaneously manage a special event?
* How many volunteers can you count on to help – and we mean really count on. Once you have that figure, take a third away for those who won’t show, and you might have a more realistic number.
* Are there any special skills you’re lacking?

Be frank about the quality of your leadership as well. You’re not asking whether your leaders are nice people, or good staff, or even good committee people; you’re asking about their skills in management, motivation, budget planning and coordination. What are their strengths and weaknesses?

## Operating environment

Review the internal and external environmental factors that have the potential to affect your event. Run a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), and consider:

### Demography

What’s the make-up of your target market? Age, gender, occupation, education?

### Legal issues

Will the success of your event be affected by laws and regulations concerning, say, the consumption of food and alcohol?

### Economy

Will unemployment, conspicuous wealth or local wage levels affect demand?

### Social and cultural issues

Is the community’s population skewed to any ethnic or religious group? Is there a particular pattern of leisure behaviour?

### Technology

Are current technological habits – the internet, mobile phones, games – going to play a part in determining the way you run the event or how people enjoy it?

### Environment

For outdoor events, what about waste management, pollution risks and weather hazards?

### Goodwill

Have there been any recent scandals about charitable fundraising in your area – or even involving your group – or any big fundraising drives that may have reduced the local community’s will or capacity to give?

### Competition

Are any other better-known organisations about to kick off major campaigns that will draw from the same volunteer or donor base? Are there any events planned for the same time as yours?

None of these things on their own is critical, and you may be able to live with a problem in one area. But if your analysis flags problems in several areas, then think things through objectively and weigh up whether it’s safe to go ahead.

Devil’s advocate

It’s worth assigning someone the role of official “devil’s advocate” for your special event, with the job of asking at every point, ‘But what if it doesn’t work? What will you do then?’ As painful as this sounds, it will force you to be rigorous in your assumptions and estimates and develop viable contingency plans.

# 3. Planning & scheduling

Once you have decided your special event is likely to be viable, it’s time to work out a schedule to guide your planning, and to govern which tasks get done at certain times.

Special events need more planning time than many people imagine. Because there are so many variables, and so many things can hinge on one component, just one hitch can throw out the entire schedule. Events must be planned with more attention to detail than almost any other fundraising activity.

Not allowing enough time to prepare for the event is one of the most serious – yet most common – mistakes.

Successful events can be months in the making, though the exact length of time needed will of course vary depending on the type of event being staged. Planning for a dinner dance should begin no less than six months before the date, whereas at the other end of the scale, a disco may need only a few weeks’ planning. No standard timeline can cover all situations.

Sometimes you must proceed with an event even though you know the schedule is far too tight. This is nearly always because you must meet an externally imposed deadline. If that is the case, you will need to simplify the event to something more manageable in the time available.

## Setting the date

In setting a date for the event, take into account other events on at the same time, and the prevailing weather conditions. What season is it? Will it be warm or cool? Does the date fall during daylight savings? How many volunteers will you have available? Do you envisage making more money by inviting people from outside your organisation?

After considering these factors, you may decide to have a weekday, weekend, weeknight or twilight event, or a combination.

Whatever timeframe you choose, remember to book everything as early as possible to ensure you get the best choice of venues, entertainment and volunteers.

## Developing a schedule

*See Template 1: Event Planning Schedule*

Develop a realistic timeline for your activity by following these 10 easy steps:

1. Refer to the Event Planning Schedule template (Template 1).
2. Work with a group of people to list all the tasks that must be accomplished in the ‘What’ column. Don’t expect any one person to anticipate all the tasks that need doing. A team is more likely to catch the missing elements. Include every minute detail – even those things you are sure no one would forget, such as putting sponsors’ logos on the program and sending invitations to the board.
3. In the ‘Time estimated’ column, note the estimated hours or days the task might take. Don’t underestimate the time. In fact, most people recommend you increase the time estimates by a minimum of 20%. Many suggest you double the estimate. Finishing ahead of schedule is unlikely to cause problems.
4. In the ‘When’ column, note the deadline for each task. Then determine when work should begin in order for it to be completed on time. Set targets at regular intervals to ensure the work is on schedule. If there is a problem, you must know about it before the deadline is upon you. Remember to establish a system that checks progress along the way.
5. Arrange the list into chronological order, so that you have a list of things that need to be done and the order in which they need to be done.
6. Now build in a few extra days between stages in case of delays. When scheduling the distribution of invitations, for example, make sure the printer’s deadline calls for delivery of the finished product a week before. Then, if they actually arrive a few days later than expected, you have a buffer.
7. Schedule the date by which you must have a capable person in each role. These are critical ‘do-or-die’ dates.
8. Assign tasks to reliable people and complete the ‘Who’ column. Make sure one person feels personally responsible for every task. Don’t assign a task to a committee – it may fall between the cracks.
9. Assemble a team of skilful generalists who will look after any emergencies that might affect the schedule. Give them the authority to act. Make sure everyone knows who to call and how to reach them, night and day.
10. Tick off each task as it’s completed in the ‘Done’ column.

## Tracking progress

Provide a hard copy of the schedule to every person involved. Highlight the tasks that involve them personally. In another colour, highlight the tasks that are dependent on their tasks.

When the schedule changes, make new copies for everyone. Date each new edition, so everyone knows they’re working on the same version.

Encourage everyone to book the time they’ll need in their personal diaries.

Revisit and review the schedule at each meeting.

## Developing contingencies

Begin contacting suppliers or locating possible venues as early as possible to discover what’s available, request quotes and make bookings.

For each supplier, try to think of an alternative that would be your second choice if your first choice was not available. Make sure the costs of these alternative goods or services are still well within your budget. For example, if Speaker A was not available, is there someone else who could do the job for the same price or less?

Check progress before delays become a crisis. It may seem like a waste of time to sort out all the alternatives in advance, but it is an essential step.

One person’s tasks may influence other people’s tasks, so it is vital that everyone is committed to sticking to the schedule. The people who organise the advertising billboards and flyers containing eye-catching features of a fete, for example, can’t do their job until:

* The date and times are decided.
* The theme is set.
* The entertainment is booked.
* The venue is chosen and booked.
* The marketing image is designed.

## When to cancel

Sometimes there is no other alternative but to cancel an event. For example, if you haven’t sold enough tickets to make the event viable, or the book you are launching is late being published, you will not be able to continue.

If you can’t stick to your ‘do-or-die’ dates, cancel the event.

Know what commitments make it impossible to cancel. Once you’ve booked the venue, it may not be possible to cancel without incurring enormous penalties or losses. Even rescheduling may be impossible.

# 4. Committees & subcommittees

A successful fundraising event relies heavily on the skills, expertise and hard work of staff and volunteers. There are no prizes for martyrs. One person cannot do everything, nor should they even try to. Sometimes it is best to convene a distinct Special Events Committee to work on your major fundraising event while the rest of the Fundraising Committee works on the smaller events and offers support to the larger fundraiser closer to the event and on the day. The committee organising your trivia night, for example, doesn’t need to be involved in the selling of lamingtons from week to week.

Don’t assume people can’t or won’t help. If you don’t ask, you will never know. Not asking people to help can be interpreted as not wanting them to help. People can easily be put offside and feel excluded.

You want everyone to feel ownership of the event, to contribute in whatever way they can to its success. The more people involved, the more other people they will bring along to swell the crowds and make the event more exciting, more popular and more financially successful.

If you have genuinely tried to involve others and you’re still unable to get help, then this could be an indication that the event is not a good idea right now for your organisation. It may be that your regular supporters are involved in too many other activities at this time of year, or it’s wrongly pitched, or this event follows closely on the heels of another major enterprise and people need some time out.

The important thing to remember is that even though the final responsibility for the event lies with the Special Events Committee, the committee’s job is made much easier if you’re able to recruit competent, enthusiastic volunteers to coordinate the critical components of the event.

## Special Events Committee

Set up a Special Events Committee and clearly define the aims of your event. Maybe your aims are to build community spirit and make money for a specific item needed for your organisation or a member of your organisation. Make sure all members of the committee understand these aims. Being explicit about your aims allows you to set targets and stay focussed.

### Purpose

Establish the committee’s purpose in the first meeting and schedule monthly meetings (these meetings will increase in frequency as the event nears). The committee should consist of, at a minimum, a Chairperson (Chairperson), Secretary and Treasurer, with the balance made up of the coordinator of each subcommittee, as set out below.

The purpose of the Special Events Committee will be to:

1. Define the aims of your event.
2. Set a date, type, and theme for the event.
3. Select the venue for the event.
4. Establish, distribute, and maintain a schedule for planning and executing the event.
5. Oversee the execution of the event.
6. Ensure subcommittee reports are presented at each committee meeting to keep everyone up to date.
7. Keep track of finances and ensure budgets are not exceeded.
8. Evaluate the event when it’s over.

### Structure

A suggested simple but effective Special Events Committee structure:

### Roles of Special Events Committee members

*See Template 2: Special Events Committee Contact Details*

*See Template 3: Special Events Committee Responsibilities*

At the first meeting of the Special Events Committee, distribute contact details and information on the responsibilities of each role to every subcommittee coordinator. Encourage coordinators to keep clear notes that can be formally documented and used for future events.

The size of your organisation and the number of volunteers in your community will help determine the number of subcommittees you establish. The list provided below is intended only as a guide, and can be tweaked to suit your situation, with the possibility of some subcommittees combining or expanding. For example, you could combine the Marketing Subcommittee with the Sponsorship & Donations Subcommittee.

If you don’t have enough volunteers to justify forming any subcommittees at all, and if your event is small enough to allow it, parcel out responsibilities to individuals instead. Remember that it’s considered unhelpful to have more subcommittees than people.

Find out what support and resources your leaders need to get their tasks done. Don’t give people responsibility without the power to do the work.

The role of each Special Events Committee member or subcommittee coordinator might entail the following responsibilities.

#### Chairperson

* Organise and chair meetings.
* Maintain open communication between Special Events Committee and organisation.
* Ensure enough people are recruited for the committee and the right skills are represented.
* Liaise with subcommittee coordinators on progress and make decisions when required.
* Represent the committee at official functions and in the media.
* Organise evaluation of the event.
* Organise post-event celebrations and thanks.

#### Secretary

* Manage correspondence.
* Notify committee members of upcoming meetings.
* Record, distribute and file all meeting minutes, contact lists and rosters.
* After the event, collect information from subcommittees and collate for future reference.
* Ensure thank-you letters have been sent to sponsors, donors, volunteers etc.

#### Treasurer

* Develop, monitor,and report on budgets and finance reports.
* Arrange audited financial statements (acquittal of funding) for grant providers if necessary.
* Receive and bank money, pay accounts, organise procedures for handling money and reimburse expenses.
* Convene Finance Subcommittee meetings and report progress to the Special Events Committee.
* Provide final financial report for review.

#### Risk management coordinator

* Develop a master plan for risk management.
* Revisit the risk management plan for each event.
* Check relevant food handling regulations.
* Oversee liquor and food stalls to ensure guidelines are followed.
* Arrange all necessary permits, such as permits for food handling, service of alcohol, and parking. A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is generally not necessary for one-day events involving parents and their children, but you should contact the Department of Justice (or equivalent) in your state or territory to confirm the situation at the time of your event.
* Check the public liability status of your organisation and obtain copies of public liability certificates from any entertainers booked.
* Organise insurance and security if necessary.
* Convene Risk Management Subcommittee meetings and report progress to the Special Events Committee.

#### Marketing coordinator

* Create, monitor, and implement the marketing plan, marketing budget and marketing schedule.
* Seek approval from the committee for marketing costs.
* Write and distribute media releases.
* Organise design, printing, and distribution of promotional material.
* Organise staff email signatures advertising the event.
* Organising event photographer.
* Promote the event on the website
* Convene Marketing Subcommittee meetings and report progress to the Special Events Committee.

#### Sponsorship & donations coordinator

* Develop a sponsorship plan.
* Prepare sponsorship packages.
* Write sponsorship pitches.
* Maintain relationships with sponsors.
* Ensure all sponsors are approved by the committee to prevent conflict of interest.
* Maintain a list of all sponsors and donors for acknowledgement and future contact.
* Ensure all promotion and acknowledgement is completed as promised.
* Convene Sponsorship & Donations Subcommittee meetings and report progress to the Special Events Committee.

#### Venue & facilities coordinator

* Source and book a venue.
* Develop a detailed site plan for the event.
* Identify areas needing maintenance before the event and organise repairs.
* Organise directional signage.
* Hire equipment as needed.
* Keep records of loaned equipment and organise its return after the event.
* Organise clean-up during and after the event.
* Oversee equipment needs (e.g. seating, stage, screen) at the event.
* Convene Venue Subcommittee meetings and report progress to the Special Events Committee.

#### Entertainment & activities coordinator

* Develop a plan for entertainment, speakers, games, incentives, stalls and add-ons and present to the committee for approval.
* Provide cost estimates and monitor expenditure.
* Book, schedule and manage entertainers.
* Organise special functions; e.g. official opening, announcements and Master of Ceremonies.
* Devise contest rules.
* Devise pricing for entertainment and activities.
* Appoint judges.
* Distribute program to the Venue & Facilities and Marketing Subcommittees.
* Manage the entertainment program on the day of the event.
* Convene Entertainment & Activities Subcommittee meetings and report progress to the Special Events Committee.

#### Catering coordinator

* Identify catering requirements.
* Seek quotes for catering and appoint caterers with approval from the committee.
* Liaise with the risk management coordinator on relevant permits (e.g. service of alcohol, safe food handling).
* Identify equipment needed.
* Oversee training and accreditation of volunteers.
* Monitor food handling procedures on the day.
* Convene Catering Subcommittee meetings and report progress to the Special Events Committee.

#### Volunteer coordinator

* Collect information from subcommittees on the number of volunteers needed.
* Seek volunteers from the community and any other relevant networks.
* Create master list of volunteers with contact details.
* Create and distribute roster of volunteers.
* Oversee the training and briefing of volunteers.
* Organise refreshments for volunteers.
* Organise secure storage for volunteers’ belongings.
* Liaise with volunteers during the event.
* Thank all volunteers appropriately after the event.
* Convene Volunteer Subcommittee meetings and report progress to the Special Events Committee.

## Subcommittee tasks

*See Template 4: Event Checklist*

Details of the tasks to be carried out by each subcommittee are summarised below. Each subcommittee should also use the Event Checklist (Template 4) to make sure they haven’t forgotten any critical tasks.

#### Finance Subcommittee

* Prepare and keep track of a detailed budget.
* Monitor the budget carefully and present progress to the Special Events Committee each month.
* Document clear procedures for handling money on the day. Consider volunteer counters, income sheets, recording procedures, securing of money in a safe, money bags for collection at stalls, sponsorship sheets, identification badges etc.
* Establish a roster of money counters for the day if needed.
* Train the counters in correct recording procedures.
* Distribute float.
* Develop income and expenditure sheets.
* Evaluate the event financially.
* Provide reports to sponsors.
* Bank money.
* Pay accounts.
* Reimburse expenses.

#### Risk Management Subcommittee

* Develop a list of all possible risks, with contingencies.
* Liaise with subcommittees to ensure they are reaching timeline targets.
* Check with local authorities (e.g. local council) about permits and fees required to run the event.
* Obtain all permits – food handling, alcohol, parking etc.
* Make sure someone from the Catering Subcommittee is accredited with a food handling certificate.
* Check the public liability status of your organisation.
* Obtain copies of public liability certificates from entertainers if necessary.
* Organise security and insurance if necessary.
* Oversee the sale and consumption of alcohol throughout the event, ensuring permit conditions are adhered to.

#### Marketing Subcommittee

* Identify your target markets – kids, young adults, parents, local community, special interest groups, older people, particular cultural groups, etc.
* Devise a marketing plan.
* Advise the state or territory and regional tourism authorities of the event for inclusion in their special events calendar.
* Place event details online on community noticeboards (see [www.ourcommunity.com.au/event\_ads](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/event_ads))
* Establish media relationships.
* Prepare and distribute media releases.
* Pitch feature articles on the event.
* Determine appropriate media for advertising and timing of ads.
* Arrange advertisements.
* Organise printing and distribution of posters, flyers, programs, tickets, sponsorship forms etc.
* Erect event signage on roads leading to your event, if permitted (check with your local council).
* Erect billboards or banners on the fence of your organisation.
* Prepare emails to member databases and other potential supporters.
* Include event information in email signature of all staff members and, if appropriate, ask committee members and volunteers to alter their email signatures as well.
* Promote the event on your website (and take down old information after the event).

#### Sponsorship & Donations Subcommittee

* Identify major and minor sponsors as early as possible.
* Prepare a sponsorship plan.
* Prepare sponsorship packages.
* Prepare submissions to sponsors.
* Organise sponsorship signage and recognition in programs and brochures (in association with the Marketing Subcommittee).
* Seek donations of goods from businesses for prizes.
* Manage sponsor relationships before, during and after the event.
* Maintain a list of sponsors and donors for future events.
* Identify alternative funding sources, including grants from commonwealth, state, territory or local governments (check Our Community’s grants database: www.fundingcentre.com.au/grant/home).
* Ensure sponsors are acknowledged during the event and thanked appropriately after the event.

#### Venue & Facilities Subcommittee

* Source and book a venue for the event if required.
* Identify alternative venues in case of cancellation / inclement weather.
* Liaise with venue management before, during and after the event.
* Check the condition and suitability of the venue, identifying useable and unusable spaces.
* Decide on areas for catering, stalls, activities, entertainment, officials etc.
* Create the setting of the event to suit the theme by incorporating additional equipment, displays and signage to match.
* Distribute a site plan to the Special Events Committee.
* Produce directional, stall and activities signage.
* Liaise with subcommittees to identify equipment to be hired.
* Request the use of equipment for free from your community.
* Choose and hire equipment where necessary – eg audio-visual equipment, tables, chairs, stage, marquee, trestle tables.
* Ensure the site is cleaned and restored to its original condition after the event.
* Ensure someone is in charge of maintaining the toilets and collecting litter on the day.

#### Entertainment & Activities Subcommittee

* Source entertainment and events, such as on-stage or roaming performers, rides, stalls and prizes.
* Pass details of all entertainment on to the marketing coordinator.
* Organise payment of entertainers through the Finance Subcommittee.
* Schedule the entertainment and distribute a copy of the schedule to all performers and the Special Events Committee.
* Organise ‘add-on’ events to raise extra funds at the event.
* Provide first aid equipment.
* Establish the requirements of each performer and provide a list of required equipment (e.g. public announcement system, chairs, stage, lighting) to the Venue & Facilities Subcommittee.
* Organise a person to officiate at the opening (e.g. local mayor, Chairperson, celebrity)
* Appoint a Master of Ceremonies and provide an announcement running sheet that includes the advertising of stalls, activities and entertainment as well as recognition of major sponsors.
* Be aware of the level of acknowledgement each sponsor requires as part of their sponsorship package.

#### Catering Subcommittee

* Plan and organise a variety of food and beverages, catering for a range of ages, cultures and tastes and taking into account the time of day, weather and venue.
* Source food (e.g. meat, salad, bread and condiments for a sausage sizzle) and arrange vendors (e.g. ice-cream van, coffee cart) or a catering company.
* If using a catering company, source menus and pricing and liaise with the company before and during the event.
* Consider BYO food and beverages for the event.
* Train volunteers on safe food handling requirements
* Ensure safe food handling practices are adhered to at the event.
* Liaise with the Venue & Facilities Subcommittee to organise signage (including signage and pricing for food), equipment and any other requirements (e.g. barbecues, electricity supply).
* Organise napkins, plates, cutlery, cups and bins, including recycling bins.

##### Tips for committee meetings

* Hold Special Events Committee and subcommittee meetings monthly to begin with, then fortnightly and weekly closer to the day (or as required).
* Set an agenda for each meeting to keep everyone focused. Distribute the agenda before the meeting so everyone is prepared, and ensure no meeting lasts longer than two hours.
* Complete an action sheet during every meeting and distribute it at the end so members remember what they have volunteered to do before the next meeting.
* Encourage members to bring along a plate of food to share at the meeting to encourage teamwork and a sense of community (but don’t insist on it – it might be the straw that breaks the camel’s back for a busy committee member).
* Ask all subcommittees to keep all documentation for future events.

#### Volunteers Subcommittee

* Liaise with all subcommittees to determine the number and types of volunteers needed for the event.
* Canvass for and recruit via the newsletter and local newspapers. Respond quickly, enthusiastically, and courteously to all requests for information.
* Allocate tasks to all volunteers.
* Ensure each volunteer is given a job description.
* Create a list of names, times, tasks and contact details of all volunteers and distribute to the Special Events Committee.
* Foster enthusiasm and commitment by briefing volunteers on the purpose and objectives of the event and encouraging teamwork and social interaction.
* Train volunteers where necessary.
* Provide branded badges, T-shirts, caps, vests, or aprons so volunteers can be clearly identified.
* Ensure volunteers are acknowledged in speeches and reports and that each volunteer is thanked personally by the relevant subcommittee coordinator and the Chairperson.

# 5. Finances

To help ensure the financial success of your special event, you need to be able to track every dollar, record every decision and retrieve the data promptly when you need it.

The Finance Subcommittee should create a budget before the event as a target and keep detailed records of all expenses and income throughout the event. Use previous events or budgets as a guide if possible. If starting from scratch, use the information outlined below, combined with the knowledge of committee members, to create the budget.

The budget for your event must be:

* Comprehensive, including all your liabilities and all your potential gains
* Flexible, able to be adjusted as your expectations change
* Up to date, including the latest figures for everything
* Fully documented, meaning you should keep earlier versions of the budget (and distinguish them clearly from the up-to-date master copy).

## Expenses

*See Template 5: Expenditure & Income*

Set your mind to coming up with your best guess against all possible expenses, as per the following list.

### Activity & entertainment supplies

* For competitions – prizes, markers, medals, awards
* For stalls – face paints, beads, show bags, craft supplies, plaster moulds, balloons
* Amusements – these will form a huge part of your expenses, but will also produce income, so it is worthwhile listing this item separately (remember to include the cost of printing tickets and wristbands for ride entry)
* Auction items – creating hampers, topping up supplies, part cost of a big prize
* Promotions – free tickets, free drinks.

### Catering

* External catering – what is the price per person?
* In-house catering – ingredients, food, plates, cutlery, serviettes
* Drinks – cups, glasses, alcohol, juice, soft drink
* Plates, trays, cutlery, tablecloths, napkins.

### Consumables

* Paper – tickets, sponsorship forms, auction sheets, answer sheets
* Stationery
* Aprons, caps, lanyards or T-shirts with branding
* Ride wristbands.

### Entertainment

* Entertainers’ fees
* Airfares, taxi fares, car hire and other travel expenses
* Flowers and other gifts
* Accommodation and meals
* Any special insurances required.

### Equipment

You may need to hire, buy or borrow these items:

* Chairs (indoor, outdoor), tables, trestles
* Cooking facilities – urn, microwave, stove, barbecue etc.
* Entertainment facilities – sound system, public address system, projectors, screens, computers, projection screens
* Special lighting
* Recording facilities (audio or video)
* Purpose-built equipment – catwalk, easels
* Directional signage
* Marquees
* Floral arrangements and other decorations for the room and tables
* Onsite personnel such as security and technical support
* Safety barriers.

#### Marketing

Budget for the design, production, printing, and distribution of necessary items:

* Promotional fliers
* Invitations
* Banners and other corporate signage
* Posters
* Programs
* Place cards
* Name tags
* Media kits
* Paid advertisements
* Photographer and photos
* Postage.

#### Risk management

* Parking permits
* Liquor licence
* Food service certification
* Insurances
* Other clearances (e.g. late opening).

#### Staff

Hopefully you will have enough volunteers to cover your needs, but if not, you’ll need to pay for staff to handle:

* Parking
* Security
* First aid
* Catering (e.g. cooks, waiters)
* Technical equipment
* Money
* Administration (registration, membership etc).

#### Sundries

* Venue decorations
* Bags that are secure for storage of money, a money belt is a good idea (allow one per stall)
* Certificates or gifts for volunteers and sponsors.

#### Taxes

Budget for all applicable taxes, and don’t forget to allow for GST, even if you expect to get it back. If so, list it as both expenditure and income to allow you to calculate cash flow.

#### Communications

* How much calling will you have to do in organising and marketing?
* Will you reimburse phone calls made by committee members or will they use the organisation’s phones?
* How do you want committee members to record phone/internet costs, or is that part of their voluntary contribution?
* Will you need mobile phones on the day, and who will pay for them?

#### Venue

* Site hire
* Site cleaning, restoration, and repairs
* Disability access changes.

#### Contingency

It is customary to allow 5% of the total budget for contingency. Most events, even those expertly planned and managed, tend to involve unavoidable lastminute changes. These can be as dramatic as having to hire more marquees to cater for wet weather or as minor as having to hire a courier to pick up a forgotten musical instrument.

The contingency category is not another name for ‘miscellaneous’ or things you’ve forgotten. All items need to be covered in other variable expense categories or absorbed in fixed expenses.

##### Saving on expenses: 10 quick tips

1. Ask community members to bake items for stalls or donate ingredients for in-house catering.
2. Seek in-house entertainment and ask community members if they know any entertainers willing to work for free in exchange for promotional opportunities.
3. Seek in-house design work from a member of your organisation.
4. To save on printing costs, include competitions and vouchers on flyers.
5. Seek donations from local businesses and organisations.
6. Ask members of your organisation to lend their equipment – barbecues, eskies, fry pans, bar fridges, marquees, shade structures (be prepared to dip into profits to repair/replace anything that gets damaged).
7. Use tables and chairs from your organisation (roster someone to clean them afterwards).
8. Use natural shade and rain protection before hiring marquees.
9. Ask local schools or businesses if you can borrow or hire (at reduced cost) their equipment.
10. Hire or buy equipment in bulk to receive discounts.

## Income

In the same way you’ve estimated your expenses, set down your best estimate of income under the following headings.

### Activities & entertainment

* Raffles
* Outsourced stalls
* Loud auctions
* Silent auctions
* Rides.

### Advertising sales

Advertisers can place ads in your program or on your signage.

### Donations

The items you can bring in through donations, or financial donations you can use to buy products, are what make your spinning wheel, auction and raffle enticing.

Donors’ support may come in cash or in kind. Look through past or similar event budgets to realistically estimate how much you can expect to receive under this item.

### Ticket sales

You may choose to charge for entry to your event (though that may mean you get fewer people through the doors).

### Sponsorship

* Company sponsorship
* ’a-thon sponsorship (e.g. readathon, walkathon, bikeathon).

##### Eight tips for increasing profits

Put a price on everything. Increase the profit from your event with these strategies.

1. The simplest way to raise money – a classic technique that never grows old – is to take around a bucket at the end of an evening, or a couple of times in an evening, and ask people to drop money into it.
2. Operate a bar (check the licensing laws in your state). In any case, sell soft drinks and snacks.
3. Create a printed program for the event, and charge for it. Charge for advertising in it too.
4. Send around a photographer – preferably with a Polaroid or digital camera, for quick viewing – to take people’s pictures. Charge extra for pictures with the guest of honour or a celebrity (the bigger the celeb, the greater the fee). Charge extra for having the talent sign the Polaroid (clear this with them in advance and don’t overload them).
5. Ask a local florist to donate flowers as decorations, or to provide them at a discount. At the end of the event, sell the flowers, or offer them up as raffle or lucky door prizes.
6. Get some value out of surplus tickets: give away tickets to those who, if they come, will have to come with a full-cost adult (e.g. young children). Or give free tickets to a local radio station to distribute, or cut prices, or offer two for the price of one.
7. Offer incentives to buy tickets: discounts for pensioners, over 55s, children and bulk purchasers; early-bird pricing; or payment in instalments.
8. If you’ve got a fundraising target, keep a running total displayed at the office and at the event, showing how much money has been raised. Update it frequently to build momentum.

## Reviewing your budget

Circulate the budget at Special Event Committee meetings, so committee members can understand the big picture and add any items you’ve overlooked.

Check the budget regularly. What happened last time? What have you forgotten? Run an eye over the budget every week, and at every point where a cost or a gain is finalised, to see whether you are on track or in trouble.

As the stalls are chosen, programs are published, sponsors are secured and other event details start to firm up, you will be able to further refine your budget. If you have done your research well, your actual budget will not differ from your estimates by very much and there should be no unpleasant surprises. That said, do be realistic – you’d have to be very lucky indeed to have come up with a budget that is 100% correct from the outset.

Make sure you keep all quotes, invoices, and receipts for every aspect of the event to ensure your final report contains a completely factual and accurate record of finances. Record the final figures next to the budget figures to make comparisons. This will be invaluable in helping you and other event organisers in the future.

## Keeping records

Keep paper records of any significant authorisations – e.g. permission to run the event, decisions to spend money – and forward them to the secretary for filing.

Keep good records of the costs of organising, executing, and cleaning up. Make sure your filing system can keep track of receipts against cheques. An auditor should be able to backtrack over the entire series of transactions.

Record expenses for each event separately so you can determine the costs involved in each event.

If you’re taxed, make sure you can identify any possible deductibles, and keep an eye on which financial year your expenditures and income fall into.

Are you going to be getting a large sum in pre-payments? Are you going to be spending it as it comes in? If not, look at the short-term investment options available at your bank.

## Handling money

All money collected needs to be guarded and recorded while it’s in your possession before it goes to the bank. Make sure your organisation’s procedures protect cash, accounts, and credit card details appropriately. (Sample financial control policies and procedures can be downloaded from Our Community’s Policy Bank at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank).)

To protect everyone involved in handling cash, make sure two people are always present when money is collected and counted for banking. The documentation should be dated and signed.

## Banking

Depending on how your organisation works, you may need to open a special bank account dedicated to fundraising. Consider setting up a separate fundraising cheque account, at least, to isolate expenses for your special event, and use this account to make all deposits, payments, and reimbursements. Consider carefully who you want as signatories to this account. Make sure you keep track of the components of your deposits, so your different revenue sources don’t get irretrievably mixed. Arrange for credit card payments if necessary (or if possible).

If your event is held outside banking hours, you’ll need to make special arrangements for the security of the money overnight or over the weekend.

# 6. Risk management

## Developing a risk management plan

*See Template 6: Sample Risk Management Plan*

Think for a while about all the unexpected things that could go wrong at your event. What if not enough raffle tickets are sold? What if the main speaker or entertainment cancels at the last minute? What if it rains? What if it’s too hot? What if the toilets get blocked? What if you don’t get people bidding for the auction items? What if you don’t get enough volunteers to staff the stalls? What if someone gets injured? What if…?

Don’t let the size of the list of risks overwhelm you. You can minimise risk through good planning and careful contingency planning. If you weigh up the risks in advance you can sometimes provide answers or fail-safes, cover possible shortfalls and put insurances in place.

Remember, though, that managing risk carries a cost, and losses can hurt you more than wins help you. Take a conservative view of your chances and don’t enter an arrangement where the downside of any eventuality leaves your organisation financially exposed. Think about possible reputational costs as well.

If you really can’t insure against a serious and unfixable threat, such as bad weather, ask yourself whether you’re prepared to take a loss on one event. Remember the three basic questions of risk management:

1. What can go wrong?
2. What have we done to prevent it from happening?
3. What will we do if it does happen?

You can’t foresee all possible risks, and you’re still going to be faced with the unexpected. Even so, it helps to have procedures in place. Remember, too, that your liability for anything that happens is going to be affected by whether people perceive you’ve done all you could have done to avoid it. Record your procedures early to lower the risk.

## Public liability & property insurance

Check the details of your organisation’s public liability insurance coverage. Also ask any companies from which you hire rides or entertainment for a copy of their public liability insurance certificate.

Check if your volunteers have their own insurance for any equipment you borrow from them – it really cuts into the profits if someone walks off with a laptop while you’re in the toilet or takes off with the barbecue in their ute while you’re cleaning up at the end of the day.

## First aid

*See Template 7: Incident Report*

Put someone in charge of first aid (preferably someone with a first aid certificate or someone with training as a nurse, doctor, or paramedic). Make sure they are present for the whole day, that they have all the medical supplies and equipment they might need, and that everyone knows how to get hold of them.

Ensure the first aiders have a copy of emergency contacts for all participants if it is a sporting event, in case of injury.

## Licences & permits

Check with your local council and government to see what licences and permits you need. These might include:

* Food service certification
* Liquor licence
* Gambling permit
* Parking permit
* Other clearances, such as late opening.

Many of these are listed at <https://explore.fundingcentre.com.au/help-sheets/fundraising-legislation>

## Safe food handling

These days you must meet the highest standards in food handling whether you’re running a sausage sizzle, a cake stall, or a fairy floss machine. Nobody is going to cut you any slack just because you’re amateurs. The National Food Standards, for example, state:

A food business is identified as a business, enterprise, or activity (other than primary food production) that involves:

1. the handling of food for sale, or

2. the sale of food,

regardless of whether the business, enterprise or activity concerned is of a commercial, charitable or community

nature or whether it involves the handling or sale of food on one occasion only.

This definition of a food business includes all food activities involved in fundraising, including preparation of the food before it is sold.

And, just in case you’re looking for a loophole, the ‘sale’ of food includes raffling it, selling it on a stall, giving it away as a prize, and offering it in exchange for a donation.

If anybody at your special event is eating anything, then you must observe the regulations on the safe handling of food.

### Food legislation

Businesses and organisations are required to follow the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code when it comes to handling food. The enforcement and interpretation of the code is the responsibility of state and territory health departments and food agencies (including local councils in many states).

The standards are continually changing so it’s recommended that you contact your relevant authority each time you stage an event to familiarise yourself with current standards.

Check the Food Standards Code website for details of which agency to contact in your area regarding food handling regulations: visit [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au).

### Food stalls

Ensure one person oversees coordinating the food stalls, both before and on the day of the event, to see that everyone is following the rules.

The food safety coordinator will need to contact the relevant authorities to obtain the needed permits, guidelines and regulations regarding hygiene, food storage, cooking and cleaning.

### Food labelling

*See Template 8: Home Produce Labels*

The more information you can provide on what you’re selling, particularly in relation to ingredients that cause allergies, the better.

To assist with this, you should issue your food-making volunteers with a set of labels to be attached to all food items sold. The labels should include:

* Product name
* All ingredients
* Date made
* Storage instructions (e.g. refrigerate after opening)
* Allergy information (e.g. contains gluten, sesame, peanuts, eggs, milk, fish, soy)
* Made for (name of event)
* Made by (cook).

If you have stalls selling food without packaging, such as a hot potato stall, then all ingredients should be listed at the stall on a poster in view for all to see.

## Alcohol

If your event involves the sale of alcohol, then you enter a whole other sphere where the government takes an active interest in what you are doing. Go to the Our Community website (<https://explore.fundingcentre.com.au/help-sheets/fundraising-legislation>) to find relevant information specific to your state.

Some issues, however, apply no matter where your event is held. Alcohol is a volatile and inflammatory substance in every respect, and your procedures for dealing with it need to be exhaustive and reliable.

It’s also worth remembering that alcohol causes harm to sectors of the community, and it’s wise to check with your stakeholders to see whether anybody – or your organisation as a whole – has a moral objection to raising funds from the sale of alcohol, especially in educational settings.

Serving alcohol may well bring in money, but it also brings certain complications. The licensing process could well be arduous, it will entail fees and charges, you will need to have certain safeguards in place, and then there is the issue of insurance.

All in all, you must be sure you’ve considered all these issues before you decide to serve alcohol at your event, and you must then make sure that the extra arrangements have not eaten too far into your projected profits.

### Responsible service of alcohol

If you decide to go ahead with the sale of alcohol, remember that alcohol-related fundraisers take many forms, from selling commemorative bottles of wine to selling beer in plastic cups.

Different standards of care will be applicable at opposite ends of the spectrum, but it is nonetheless imperative that you plan your procedures to minimise the risk of any harm coming to any person. The principles of responsible service of alcohol (RSA) and harm minimisation must be followed:

* Will food be served with the drinks?
* Is a low-alcohol alternative available?
* Are soft drinks, water, and juice available as alternatives to alcohol?
* Are the drinks to be served in glass or plastic?
* If the event is to be held at night, is your lighting adequate? Are there any steps, corners or protruding handles that might bruise the sober and would be even trickier for people with dulled reflexes?
* Can you ensure no underage customers will be served?
* How will you make it clear that intoxication is unacceptable behaviour?
* Do you need signage encouraging moderation and covering the rules of alcohol consumption?
* How will you ensure that people approaching intoxication will not be served?
* Do you have a first aid facility? Do you have the ambulance and hospital numbers handy?
* What arrangements (taxis, lifts, designated drivers) are available for people who shouldn’t drive home?

Responsible service of alcohol may require special training offered by the state regulatory body.

### Security and alcohol

Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) can reduce the risks of disorder, but it’s hard to remove the risks entirely. You will probably need a backstop. This needn’t necessarily involve hiring bouncers (who also must be licensed, incidentally) but it might, and you will then need to consider carefully your liability in case of any injury to them or to customers. You are responsible for ensuring a safe environment.

In any case, put one person in charge of the RSA program, someone who’s going to be there for the entire event. You will need to be able to ensure that

* there is no violence
* noise is kept to an acceptable level
* hi-jinks are confined to your own premises
* there is no public littering in the form of bottles, cans, or cups.

Security doesn’t need to be heavy-handed, and experienced workers can often change the mood simply by playing soothing music, for example, in the last hour of the event.

## Gambling

If you want to offer gambling activities at your event, then you are going to face a maze of regulations that are different in every state and territory.

In Australia, even the games we play differ from state to state – meat trays, chocolate wheels, cup sweeps, lucky door prizes, scratchies, footy tips, two-up games, video lottery games, get six and win, keno, crown and anchor, dice, alphy and hoi are all games of chance that get a mention in at least one state’s regulations.

For detailed information on gambling rules in your state, contact your local or state government or go to Our Community’s Funding Centre website (<https://explore.fundingcentre.com.au/help-sheets/fundraising-legislation>).

### Gambling permit requirements

Most states require your organisation to register with the relevant gaming authority if you are going to carry out gambling-based activities, including for fundraisers.

You’ll need to find out:

* The cut-off point between informal unregistered gambling, and gambling that requires a permit (this ranges from $200 to $5000, depending on the form of gambling and the state).
* The allowable or compulsory profit margin.
* How much you are allowed to pay premises, centres, or outside organisers to run the gambling for you (some states set a fixed percentage; others just say it has to be ‘reasonable’).
* The maximum prize permitted (jackpots are generally not allowed).
* How much a permit costs.

### Raffles & lucky envelopes

These activities are generally considered forms of gambling. Check with your local or state government with regards to the regulations that apply.

Depending on your state or territory, you may find you can’t offer prizes of gold, shares, guns, cigarettes, surgery (or just cosmetic surgery), or more than $1000 worth of alcohol, or more than 20 litres of alcohol.

If you’re offering a meat tray, food preparation regulations apply (and there are special rules for fish).

Ticket prices for raffles and lucky envelopes can generally be set at any level you think you can reach.

# 7. Marketing

When it comes to marketing your event, it’s important that you get started early – there’s no party without party-goers. Get the date into people’s diaries and make sure you make people want to attend.

If you’re organised early enough, send out a list of events for the whole year so members can plan ahead, avoid clashes, budget, and invite outsiders.

You must set specific, realistic goals for your marketing to have a chance of success.

Be clear in all your marketing materials what message you want to convey: do you want people to come, sponsor or donate? A different type of document will need to be created for each different message.

Make sure your marketing campaign and materials are approved by the Special Events Committee.

## Audience

Your main audience may be the members of your organisation, but you need to think beyond them as well. Who do you want to hear or see your message? What is the best way to approach that audience? Your audience might consist of:

* Similar organisations
* The local community
* Schools, pre-schools or kindergartens
* Sports clubs
* Businesses
* Extended families
* Surrounding suburbs
* Alumni – past members of your organisation.

Hold a brainstorming session to consider who you want to talk to about your event and how you’ll reach them. Embrace new media opportunities (websites, email lists, online forums, Facebook etc.) but don’t forget old-school techniques. Posters, billboards and flyers are still terrific ways to advertise an event.

## Marketing methods

There are many methods you can use to spread the word about your event. Use the list below as a menu from which to pick your strategy, bearing in mind the costs (in time and money) and the resources you have available.

### Word of mouth

Word of mouth is one of the most potent forms of marketing you can get. Start with your own organisation. Use your meetings, regular communications and newsletters to let people know about the event and encourage them to tell their friends and friends of friends.

Word of mouth works because it comes with a reliable, credible endorsement. Get your committee members out spruiking.

Even better, provide people who are spreading the word with books of entry tickets, raffle tickets, lists of auction items or armbands for rides at your event so that marketing and fundraising can be completed in one simple operation.

### Newspaper articles

Appearing in the news section of your local newspapers is a powerful way of spreading your message. Your local newspaper is always looking for stories to fill its pages, so with the right pitch and plenty of time you might be able to get an article in. An article with a picture is even better.

Try to think of a novel angle that might spark your local media’s interest in your event – a headline performance, an appearance by a celebrity, or a chance to see the local MP on the catwalk, for example.

Work your media list and try out story ideas over the phone to see which gets the best response. Send out press releases as far in advance as possible, with professionally prepared photos (or photo suggestions, in case they want to send their own photographer).

Your press release should not be written like an advertisement. It must be concise, informational (not overtly promotional) and newsworthy – that means you need to think up a good angle. For more information, visit Our Community’s Marketing, Media & Post Centre at [www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing).

### Letters to the editor

Letters are among the most read pages of a newspaper, so they’re a great way to spread your message, but only if you can link to a current event.

Free newspaper advertising

Most newspapers will run community service ads for community groups as fillers. Fillers are exactly that – items that fill space where the advertising doesn’t quite fit the allotted space.

The competition for space is quite fierce, and it’s rare for newspapers to include ads that plug a particular event. But if your print ads point to your website, and if you have a big reminder of the event sitting on your home page, that can’t hurt.

Most newspapers require completed, designed and laid out ads, and they tend to give you space in the back pages of the papers, but a free ad is a free ad, and every little bit helps.

### Events media

Most newspapers have What’s On sections in the body of the paper or in special weekend supplements, or both. And the calendar of events is an often-overlooked resource. People who read these columns are looking for things to do. They are motivated and looking for options.

Most capital cities have a street press, meaning free newspapers with a focus on events. These are read by people looking for something to do too, so list your event here.

Some websites, too, have general calendars of events, just like newspapers. The greatest advantage of the web is that it’s available to audiences 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so don’t miss the opportunity to publish notices in online calendars such as the ABC’s online Rural Events Diary. For a list of more outlets like this, see [www.ourcommunity.com.au/event\_ads](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/event_ads).

### Commercial radio

Send your media release to local radio stations as well. You’re aiming for both news coverage and interviews on magazine-style programs. Aim for multiple appearances – you’ll need to think of a different storyline for each one.

One popular way of getting your message across is as a talkback caller – just ring in and give details. Most presenters frown on callers using their time for free ads but tend to be a lot more sympathetic if callers are plugging a genuine good cause that relates (at least a little bit) to the topic at hand.

### Community radio

Most community radio stations are very keen to support their local organisations and tend to be under-utilised when people think of local media. To find your local community stations, visit the website of the Community Broadcast Association of Australia at [www.cbaa.org.au](http://www.cbaa.org.au).

Ask your local station whether you can come on for an interview. Also ask whether they can help you record a free announcement they can air during the week. Different stations will have different attitudes to this. Some stations will be able to assist you to make your announcement for free, some may charge a small fee to cover their time and costs, others will run it if you get someone else to record it. It’s worth asking the question.

### Your website

Put the details of your event on your organisation’s website. This has the disadvantage that you’re only going to reach the people who know you exist and are interested in what you are doing, but they are also the group most likely to invest in a ticket.

Make sure you have a colourful, eye-catching notice on your home page, and approach your supporters to see if they will place it on their websites too, just for the month or so leading up to the event.

Your website provides a place for anybody who hears vaguely about the event (via an ad, for example) to get more information.

### Social media

Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter allow you to promote your event far and wide. Encourage members of your organisation to spread the word via their friends and followers.

### Online forums

There is an online chat group for almost any issue, and if you can link your event to the issue at hand, it is well worthwhile posting details in the relevant forum. Your event might have a stall or an act, for example, that the online group would be interested in.

Email bulletins

Email is a great way of spreading a message to large numbers of people very quickly and cheaply. Mass email bulletins can be sent to members, supporters and business partners to let them know about the event (where, when, why).

Remember not to spam people: your organisation should have a policy that governs obtaining permission to send email to members, supporters and partners.

Ask your recipients to forward your email to other people they think would be interested in your event or to post the information on any site or noticeboard they think would be appropriate. It’s amazing the networks people have that you would never think of or have access to yourself.

### Email signatures

Your organisation’s email signature can be used to ensure that every piece of electronic mail that leaves your office includes a reminder of your event in both text and images. Change the text once a week (promote a new attraction, for example) to keep the message fresh.

If your organisation involves children, ask parents to get on board as well by adding information about the event to their private or work emails. Supply them with the wording and artwork.

### Flyers

Have flyers available in your organisation’s reception area, clubrooms or office, and publish a PDF version on your website as well.

Mobilise your volunteers to deliver flyers to letterboxes and place posters in shop windows and on community noticeboards. The more (and bigger) billboards you have access to, the better. Check with your local real estate agent if they can supply and install a free signboard (many do).

### Posters

Use the tried-and-true poster. Print your event details in colour onto A3 or larger sheets of paper, laminate them and stick them on every power pole and public wall within 10 blocks, particularly in areas with lots of pedestrian or vehicle traffic.

Do, though, check restrictions on billposting with your local council, and remember to take your posters down after the event.

Most local shops will be prepared to display your information in their windows and lunchrooms if you ask politely. And don’t forget libraries, offices, cafés, shopping centres and laundromats – basically, anywhere people gather and there is a window, board or public space for information.

### Buildings & banners

Catch the passing trade with a large sign. You can sometimes get a local real estate firm to donate a sign and a signwriters; otherwise, ask among your members for a volunteer and put their painting skills to the test. Put it up in a high-traffic area, with balloons and flags if possible.

Don’t miss any chance to spread the word about your event. Make sure your own buildings carry signage too.

### Your newsletters

Don’t be shy about plugging your event in your organisation’s own newsletters (emailed and hard copy). Spruik early and often to build momentum and support.

### Local politicians’ newsletters

Most members of parliament (state and federal) and many local councillors put out regular newsletters on what’s happening in the electorate. You’re paying for it, so you might as well get a plug.

Ask for a mention and see whether you can put posters or flyers in the politician’s electorate office while you’re at it.

### Other newsletters

With enough advance notice, you can chase up the editors of other newsletters even tenuously connected to your area, or your area of interest. It could be a school, church, crèche, preschool, kindergarten, local progress association or arts organisation, or even groups in neighbouring suburbs whose members might be interested in your event.

Ask them to include a mention of your event in their next publication. Offer to plug their own event or services in your newsletter in return.

### Direct mail

Consider sending a letter through the post to your full mailing list, including your suppliers and past members. Be aware, though, that your success rate will depend on the quality of your list. Weigh the cost of postage against the potential benefits.

It’s better still if you can avoid the costs of postage altogether by inserting a flyer in someone else’s mailout. Why not ask for a free ride? Approach local businesses that do regular mailouts and ask whether they would mind dropping in a flyer advertising your event. Let them know that research on buying patterns has shown that people respond to companies that support community causes. It’s also another option for an ‘in-kind’ donation for businesses that are unable to support you financially or by donating products.

### Council publications

Most local councils produce regular bulletins telling residents what’s happening in the district. Most have a section on upcoming events. If you’re well organised, you can get your event listed in a publication delivered to every household in the area. Note, though, that they normally need a long lead time.

Some local councils also have a What’s On section on their website where local organisations can advertise their events for free.

### Letterhead & envelopes

Every piece of stationery that leaves your office can be used to spread your message. Get a stamp made so you can add a reminder about your event to each piece of paper that goes out.

### Paid advertising

There are many benefits to paying for ads, not the least being that you get to control the message. The downside, of course, is that you have to pay for it.

## Marketing budget

Setting your marketing budget is a crucial step. You need to work out how many of the items in your marketing plan you can afford to execute.

The costs associated with each type of marketing vary. Advertising, for example, can be very costly. Some media outlets have a special discount rate for public service or community sector ads. But try to get it for free first.

Consider whether you can have any of your marketing costs donated. The media might be willing to donate airtime or column inches, or at least give you a break on the cost. You might have a great designer in your organisation who can design ads for you or adapt students’ designs.

## Marketing schedule

Set a clear timeline for rolling out your marketing strategy. Give yourself plenty of time and be aware of other deadlines beyond your own – you may be surprised how early the deadlines are for advertising and for What’s On columns in newspapers, for example.

Assign someone the task of checking and setting deadlines associated with each key marketing task.

##### What’s the theme?

Theming your event provides a great springboard for marketing and promotional opportunities. It creates a talking point beforehand, and adds to the atmosphere, colour, excitement and photo opportunities

of your event.

You could run a competition asking for ideas for a theme or use one of the suggestions in this book (there are ideas for every almost type of event, from trivia nights to discos).

Once you’ve decided on a theme, plan to incorporate it into your event in as many ways as possible through:

* Tickets
* Advertising
* Media coverage
* Signage
* Decorations
* Dress code
* Entertainment
* Prizes.

## Producing marketing materials

Seek assistance from your organisation’s staff, volunteers or members to design the artwork for your marketing materials. Alternatively, seek pro bono work from a company or university, or (as a last resort) pay an advertising company to assist you, remembering that this will eat into your profits.

Make sure your ads include all the information people need. Every single piece of artwork should answer these three questions:

* Where is the event?
* When is the event?
* Why should the reader come?

You may also wish to produce separate documents aimed at attracting sponsors, donors, volunteers and stallholders. Aim to have a similar ‘look and feel’ to each piece of artwork to help people remember it.

## Measuring marketing success

As your marketing campaign rolls out, try to gauge how effective each element is in attracting attention to your event. This will help you to know how efficiently your money has been spent and gives you an idea on how to improve your advertising strategies in the future.

While one measure of success will be how many people go through the turnstiles, there may be other ways to measure the effectiveness of your various strategies. For example, in the lead-up to the event, you could count:

* How many phone inquiries your organisation receives?
* How many stall or ticket sales you make?
* How many sponsors, donors and stallholders seek information?
* How many hits your website receives
* How many offers you receive from prospective volunteers.

# 8. Donations & sponsorship

One way to maximise the effectiveness of your fundraising efforts is to seek financial support in the form of donations and sponsorship.

No matter who you approach to provide this support, remember to begin early, offer incentives and communicate regularly.

## Donations

When it comes to asking for donations, start with your inner circle and work your way out.

### Friends

Put a notice in your newsletter and a sign at reception asking your members for donations that are not overly expensive but are necessary for the event. Be specific about what you need. Some items you might request include:

#### Food and drink

Jam, lollies, chips, potatoes, salsa, tomato sauce, soy sauce, sweet chilli sauce, salt, pepper, soft drinks, water bottles.

#### Catering supplies

Foil, napkins, paper bags, disposable cutlery and plates, plastic wrap, garbage bags.

#### Decorations

Balloons, crêpe paper, sticky tape, streamers, textas.

#### Stall supplies

Bum-bags, notepaper, pens, pencils.

#### Vouchers

Request vouchers that can be used to purchase items for a particular stall; e.g. butcher shop vouchers to buy sausages for the barbecue, or fruit shop vouchers to buy potatoes for the hot potato stall.

#### Gift basket items

Request items for a gift basket that can be raffled, offered as a prize or sold. Gift basket themes could include garden, kitchen, bathroom, stationery, barbecue, holidays, men, women or kids.

### Friends of friends

Another avenue for donations is to ask the members in your organisation about their own contacts.

* Do they own or work for a business that could make a donation?
* Do they know someone who could source goods at wholesale prices?
* Do they know someone with skills in design (or marketing or something else that you need) that they’d be willing to swap in return for a free ad?
* Do they have a contact for free or discounted items (e.g. stickers, pens, notebooks)?

### Local businesses

Look to the businesses in your area for donations of any size that you can use for raffle prizes, auction items or spinning wheel prizes. Consider approaching:

* Bakeries
* Bike shops
* Book shops
* Bottle shops
* Butchers
* Cafés
* Car dealerships
* Cinemas
* Clothing shops
* Fast food outlets
* Fruit shops
* Gyms
* Hairdressers
* Hardware shops
* Jewellers
* Mechanics
* Newsagents
* Petrol stations
* Pharmacies
* Restaurants
* Sports shops
* Toy shops
* Travel agencies
* Banks
* Real estate agencies.

Be aware, though, that small businesses may be running on slim profit margins themselves and may be approached by a number of different community groups for donations in any given year.

To ease the burden, make sure you coordinate your donation requests so that the same place is not called on by three different people involved in your event, and give businesses a few different ways to give; e.g:

* Direct donation of an item
* Cash donation (to be pooled with other cash donations to purchase required items)
* Gift vouchers or discount vouchers
* Space to advertise your event (e.g. a sign in the shop, an insert in their mailouts)
* Pro bono support (eg auctioneer, design, printing).

## Sponsorship

*See Template 9: Sponsorship Letter*

*See Template 10: Business Sponsorship/Donation Form*

Requests for sponsorship should be set out in writing so businesses can see exactly what you are offering in return for their sponsorship dollars. Quantify the benefits to potential sponsors by indicating how many people you estimate will see your advertisements and how many people you expect to attend the event.

You can ask businesses to sponsor a single item – financial support for a sideshow ride, for example, in exchange for their name on the attraction and in announcements throughout the day – or offer them a sponsorship package.

Depending on your event, these are a few benefits you might offer:

* Banner displayed at event
* Name announced at event
* Dinner table supported by sponsor (e.g. each person at the table receives a promotional item and literature from the sponsor and the sponsor’s logo is displayed at the table)
* Small banner or logo displayed on podium
* Name or logo in organisation’s newsletter
* Name or logo in newspaper and magazine advertisements
* Advertisement in program or flyer (ad size can range from business card size to full page)
* Logo on your organisation’s website, with a link to the sponsor’s site
* Logo on T-shirt
* Category exclusivity (a guarantee to sponsors that once they sign on, none of their competitors will be allowed to sponsor).

### Sponsorship packages

*See Template 11: Sponsorship Packages Letter & Flyer*

Combine some of the above benefits into various packages to make it easier for businesses to find a sponsorship level that suits their needs and budget. You should set the price of each package on the basis of the benefits to the sponsoring company. Here are some sample sponsorship packages:

#### Gold sponsorship

* Business logo on all newsletters, ads, flyers and programs, with the business identified as a gold sponsor
* Business card display rights at the event information booth
* Regular public announcements of the business name at the event
* Naming rights to the fireworks display, and involvement in starting the fireworks
* Logo banner (supplied by sponsor) displayed on main stage at the event for all-day advertising
* Logo and website link on your organisation’s website in the month leading up to the event
* Promotional stall at the event
* Framed certificate of appreciation after the event.

### Silver sponsorship

* Business logo on all newsletters, ads, flyers and programs, with the business identified as a silver sponsor
* Business card display rights at the event information booth
* Regular public announcements of the business name at the event
* Logo and website link on your organisation’s website in the month leading up to the event
* Two logo signs (supplied by sponsor) displayed around the venue
* Logo banner (supplied by sponsor) on a food stall or bar at the event for all-day advertising
* Framed certificate of appreciation after the event.

### Bronze sponsorship

* Business logo on all newsletters, ads, flyers and programs, with the business identified as a bronze sponsor
* Business card display rights at the events information booth
* Logo and website link on your organisation’s website in the month leading up to the event
* Logo banner (supplied by sponsor) on a food stall for all-day advertising
* Framed certificate of appreciation after the event.

#### Six steps to signing sponsors

##### 1. Make connections

Grill your board, staff, members and volunteers and make a list of their contacts. Investigate their connections. You should contact:

* Members in your organisation who work at or have contacts with a business that offers sponsorship.
* Local businesses that your members already support.
* Companies linked to your event; for example, fashion stores or cosmetic companies for a fashion parade, or cinemas and beanbag shops for a movie night.
* Events similar to yours or events with similar audiences. Ask to share their sponsor lists.
* Companies with a similar focus. Some companies have a policy of sponsoring groups that support particular causes, such as children or the environment.

##### 2. Work the phones

Don’t skimp on this. Put aside a meaningful chunk of prime time. Expect to ring 10 or 20 duds for every real prospect. Get on the phone and pitch your event as an unmissable marketing opportunity.

##### 3. Make the pitch

Send out a proposal to every prospect. Personalise the letter – it’s important that sponsors feel you are asking for support specifically from their company.

Be clear about what you are asking for and – even more importantly – what you have to offer. Outline the benefits the event will have for the business in terms of goodwill and exposure.

Invite the business to make contact if they want to talk to the Special Events Committee or make an alternative sponsorship offer.

Your sponsorship proposal letter should include the following (see also *Template 9: Sponsorship Letter*):

* A list of sponsor benefits and packages on offer. Use bullet points to make the benefits stand out.
* Your name, address and phone number, the date and location of the event, and an address for sending cheques and in-kind donations, or a website to make donations online. Register with Our Community’s GiveNow service to make collecting online donations easier (www.givenow.com.au).
* A short description (two paragraphs, or a few bullet points) of what your organisation does, plus a one-page fact sheet or a brochure about your organisation.
* Hand signature.
* If this isn’t the first time your organisation has hosted an event, include a flyer listing sponsors and describing the audience from previous events.
* Attach a small coloured Post-It note saying, “Thanks for speaking with me yesterday. Here’s the information I promised.”

##### 4. Seal the deal

A couple of days after sending your pitch letters, follow up with a call to each potential sponsor to find out their thoughts and seal the deal if possible.

When a business agrees to sponsor your event, have the sponsor sign an agreement (but don’t make it too legalistic ... you might scare them off).

##### 5. Follow through

Give your sponsors plenty of publicity – that’s one of the reasons they signed on! It sounds obvious, but make sure you deliver everything you promised.

##### 6. Plan for next time

Invite the companies that didn’t sponsor you to attend the event. Your written invitation might say something like, ‘Even though you weren’t able to sponsor us this year, we hope you’ll come along and enjoy the event.’

Sometimes a company employee will attend, see what a great event it is, and make sure the money is in the budget for next year’s sponsorship.

# 9. Venue, equipment & site planning

## Consider your needs

*See Template 12: Venue Criteria Checklist*

Choosing the perfect venue for your event will be guided by the type of venue you need, the time you have available to find it, and your budget. The venue should be confirmed at least six months before the event, which means you need to start making inquiries at least a few months sooner.

The more specific your event’s requirements, the fewer options you are likely to have. What are your parameters? Before you start looking for a venue, consider which of the following features you really need.

### Location

Do you need the venue to be:-

* near your organisation?
* near the city centre?
* near public transport, the airport or another facility?
* in your municipality or your service’s catchment area?

### Indoor venues

An overcrowded venue will leave people dissatisfied and have them leave early. On the other hand, a too-large venue will leave your event looking under-attended, making it hard to generate the kind of buzz that goes with good fundraising. Consider:

* How many people do you expect will attend your event?
* Will activities be going on simultaneously and require separate rooms?
* How many rooms will you need?
* What size rooms are needed for each activity?
* What is the largest number of people who must be accommodated in one room?
* How much stage space do you need?

### Outdoor venues

* Will the event go ahead if it rains?
* Do you require widely separated spaces, shelters and alternative spaces if it rains?
* How much flat land will you need for your stage, seating, marquees etc?

## Finding a venue

Useful resources for finding a venue include listings in council resource guides, What’s On guides in your local paper and internet searches. For indoor venues, type Halls, Function Centres, and Convention & Conference Centres into your search engine. For outdoor events, look up Parks, Gardens & Reserves.

Don’t be afraid to think creatively and choose an unusual space. But if a venue is not regularly used for events such as yours you will most likely have to allow time and money to bring in your own equipment, and to modify the venue’s layout and facilities. These extra costs can blow out your budget very quickly.

Consider these possibilities:

* Wherever other organisations hold their events
* Halls – scouts, guides, schools, churches
* Parks
* Hotels
* Clubs
* Reception centres
* Galleries
* The town mall or square.

### Timing

When you’ve identified a number of venues that might be suitable for your event, the next most important factor to consider is availability.

* Is the venue available on the date of your event?
* How much earlier can you have access to the site to set up?
* Does the venue have other bookings at the same time, or will you have exclusive use?
* How long before the event will you need to book?

### Site inspections

*See Template 13: Indoor Venue Checklist*

*See Template 14: Outdoor Venue Checklist*

Aim to visit possible venues at the same time of day (or night) your event will be held.

Never rely on the recommendations of others or the promises of the venue manager, even if they’re friendly (and even if they’re on the committee). There is no substitute for seeing the site with your own eyes. Consider:

#### Size

Is there room for an admission area? A dance floor? Sales booths? A catwalk? The DJ’s equipment?

#### Quality

Is the venue up to scratch? Focus on the essential facilities you need. For example, if food is the focus of your event, then the kitchens and catering must be superior. If you need people to be heard then the sound system must be up to the task, or you’ll need to hire proper speakers. If you’re running laps, then the grounds must be safe and the toilets must be nearby.

#### Risk management

Are there any visible hazards? Will any extra work need to be done to remove these? At what cost?

#### Acoustics

Concrete, steel and glass are unforgiving surfaces and make sound bounce. Carpets and curtains, on the other hand, absorb sound. Could your event be competing with another event in an adjoining room? Is there enough acoustic insulation between events? Are there any plans to renovate the venue or build a new structure next door at the time of your event? Is there a lot of traffic noise?

#### Cost

Be realistic about how much you can afford to spend on the site. This will depend on the sort of event you are planning to stage. Cheaper is not always better. If you wish to attract a well-heeled big-spending crowd, you may need to spend more on securing a better, more established venue or on dressing up a slightly cheaper one.

### Facilities

Check exactly what facilities are included with the hire of the venue. Sometimes, the more equipment you can provide from your own resources, the lower the venue’s cost.

It may be, however, that your function calls for better equipment and services than your organisation can provide. Consider your need for:

* Chairs (indoor and outdoor)
* Tables and trestles
* Cooking facilities (urn, microwave, stove, barbecue etc.)
* Bar facilities
* Presentation and media facilities (data projectors, slide projectors, video screens, computers, sound system, public address systems, screens, stands, raised platforms, microphones, phones etc.)
* Special lighting
* Marquees, tents, shade screens
* Parking spaces
* Change rooms, indoor toilets, outdoor toilets, wheelchair-accessible toilets.

### Getting a quotation

Get firm quotes on basic venue hire costs and on all possible add-ons. Check whether any services (e.g. security, catering, tech support) are compulsory, and if so, how much they will cost. Try to avoid surprises. The quotation might include:

* Catering
* Decorations, e.g. floral arrangements
* Equipment rentals
* Phone and power charges
* Public address and sound systems
* Special lighting
* On-site personnel, such as security and technical support
* Safety barriers
* Signage
* Licences, permits
* Donations to SES and St John’s Ambulance
* Cleaning
* Site restitution if damage occurs.

### Confirmation

Once you are in a position to decide which site you want, book it immediately and send a letter or email of confirmation to the site. The letter should include details of:

* Time, day and specific location of the event if the venue has more than one room
* Type and theme of event
* Access to the venue for setting up and pulling down
* Details on fees, expenses, deposits, refunds, cancellations
* Rooms and facilities to be booked
* Items you will be providing, and items the venue will provide
* Numbers and types of staff, and their hours of duty, provided by the venue
* Name of venue contact person on the day of the event.

Ask the venue manager to sign and return this letter. Keep a copy and bring it with you on the day of the event. This saves potential misunderstandings on the day.

## Equipment

*See Template 15: Equipment Borrowed*

An event requires a lot of equipment to run efficiently and successfully. To keep costs down, try to borrow what you can and hire what you can’t.

Ask members of your organisation whether they have connections with a hire company that might help you to get a better deal. Or ask for sponsorship from a hire company in return for advertising at the event.

To ensure that all of the equipment needed is available on the day, you will need to:

1. Ask each subcommittee to record the equipment they need for their specific tasks.
2. Collate the lists into one master equipment list.
3. Advertise for equipment loans via the committee and newsletter. Set yourself a deadline for offers of equipment loans so you have enough time to organise hiring anything you can’t borrow.
4. Collect quotes, seek approval from the Finance Subcommittee, and book the hiring of any equipment you can’t borrow for the day.
5. Organise pick-up of all equipment. Make sure borrowed items are labelled with their owner’s name.
6. Organise cleaning and return of all borrowed and hired equipment.

## Site planning

Draw up a site plan detailing the layout of equipment, entertainment and any information specific to your event. You and your team should do a final walk-through of the site no later than three weeks before the event to check that all is in order.

## Set-up

Plan to set up the event the day before. If this is not possible, at least begin gathering all your equipment in one place a day ahead.

Ask for volunteers to help erect marquees, move tables and decorate. Invite any outsourced entertainment to set up the day before as well.

For security purposes it may be worth rostering a few members or hiring a security company to monitor the venue throughout the night.

Follow these tips for an efficient set-up:

* Make sure you have enough toilets, and that they’re clearly signposted. Bring in portable toilets if necessary.
* Be considerate when allocating space for stalls, entertainment, activities, seating and competitions. Placing a table right next to the speakers will deafen the people seated there.
* Place the entertainment in a position where it can be easily seen by passing traffic.
* Ask an electrician for advice regarding safe procedures for supplying electricity. Using too many extension leads, and power boards is unsafe and may cause power overload.
* Place extra bin liners in the bottom of each bin so that when full rubbish bags are removed you have quick access to replacements.
* Provide bins for recycling as well as rubbish.

## Clean-up

When the last supporters are walking out the door tired and happy after one of your organisation’s special events, you would like to think the job’s done.

It isn’t. There’s still a lot of work to do, although the hardest yards are well and truly behind you.

Don’t let yourself be caught by surprise on the clean-up. You don’t want to find there are suddenly only two of you left in the hall – organise your workers in advance.

If possible, you shouldn’t drop these tasks on the people who’ve been helping out during the event. Let them take the weight off their feet and ask the volunteer coordinator to have a fresh work crew ready with brooms and mops and garbage bags.

Pack up the chairs. Take down the signage. Are there any leftovers that can be returned for a refund, or recycled? Failing that, will the volunteers take them?

Make sure there are plenty of bins around and put someone in charge of emptying them.

# 10. Volunteers

Volunteers can make your event a huge success both financially and socially. They save you money on hiring people to service your attendees and can promote your organisation in a positive light to current and prospective members.

## Volunteer coordinator

Somebody has to take responsibility for all that – someone who not only meets the basic requirements of being adult, friendly and free on the day, but also is an organiser, a motivator, and a trouble-shooter.

That person is the volunteer coordinator, and must be on the Special Events Committee in order to manage liaison and make sure nobody makes unrealistic assumptions about what the volunteers can and can’t

do.

The volunteer coordinator is responsible for overseeing the Volunteer Subcommittee and coordinating the central workforce of your event.

## Volunteer management plan

*See Template 16: Managing Volunteers*

Liaise with the other subcommittees to prepare a volunteer management plan that takes into account:

* All the roles that are expected to be carried out by volunteers (before, during and after the event)
* The number of volunteers needed to take on supervisory roles
* The number of volunteers you will need during the event itself
* Resources the volunteers will need – badges, uniforms, training in safe food handling and ride supervision, food and drink, rest areas, communications
* Guidelines on volunteer behaviour, responsibilities and rights.

Set up guidelines on what will and won’t be provided to volunteers, expected standards of behaviour, insurance coverage, health and safety issues, training and orientation, food and drink entitlements, privileges, responsibilities, grievance and dispute resolution processes, emergency procedures and authorisations. Your organisation may already have a Volunteers Policy that can be adapted for this purpose (if not, check the Our Community Policy Bank – [www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/policybank)).

Speak to other event organisers and ask whether they’ve experienced any problems with their volunteer staff. Be prepared to deal with similar problems quickly and effectively.

## Volunteer role descriptions

*See Template 17: Volunteer Role Description*

You should provide a role description to each volunteer for large events.

This should cover:

* Role
* Time required
* Supervisor
* Responsibilities
* Training to be provided
* Emergency procedures
* Tasks.

## Recruiting volunteers

Start your volunteer recruitment early so you can slowly build up to your target. Keep in regular contact with anyone who has signed up to help so that they don’t lose interest. Don’t try to harass or guilt people into helping if they are unwilling or just too busy. A reluctant volunteer can be bad for morale.

For leadership positions you want people who have clout, command respect, can get things done, think on their feet, have the enthusiasm and humour to keep people motivated and know how to delegate.

If you are having trouble recruiting volunteers, you can try:

* Advertising on your organisation’s website or in the newsletter
* Organising a story to run in the local newspaper or radio station
* Approaching groups such as Rotary, scouts or guides, or local schools, universities or colleges
* Approaching other not-for-profit groups to see if they can assist
* Advertising online Go Volunteer (govolunteer.com.au)
* Placing posters where potential volunteers will see them; e.g. shops, libraries, neighbourhood houses, schools, sports clubs.

## Managing volunteer information

Establish and maintain an up-to-date volunteer database that includes the following information for each person:

* Name
* Phone number and email address
* Interests
* Qualifications
* Skills
* Experience
* Availability
* Police check status, if appropriate.

## Allocating tasks

Once you have all the volunteers you need, use your database and your Volunteer Management Plan to assign tasks to each volunteer.

Hopefully the recruitment process will have helped you to match people to suitable jobs. This is particularly important in areas where volunteers are dealing with the public – you want people who are good communicators, patient, decisive, and calm under pressure, and who project a great image of your organisation.

Create a timetable so you can make sure you have enough people for every task and can ensure everyone knows where and when they need to be on duty.

## Orientation and training

Organise briefings and training for your volunteers. It may be that only some roles required training and the remainder just need a good information sheet and a quick orientation session on the day.

Consider scheduling an informal get-together after the orientation session so the volunteers can mingle and get to know each other better. This helps to build a feeling of a team working together.

Orientation should cover:

* Introductions to other volunteers
* How to perform the task
* How long the volunteer is needed for
* Who to report to during the event
* Emergency procedures
* Money handling and collecting, if applicable.

## Recognition & thanks

On the day of the event, the volunteer coordinator will ensure that the volunteers perform their tasks, and deal with any issues or problems that arise. Just as importantly, the coordinator should provide recognition and thanks, and overtly acknowledge the work of the volunteers. At the event, make sure:

* Volunteers have the resources they need to do their jobs
* Refreshments are available
* Space is available for volunteers to relax on their breaks
* Volunteers are taking regular breaks
* Boring jobs are shared around
* You ask whether the volunteers have any concerns, problems or needs
* Some volunteers aren’t working like galley slaves while everyone else is whooping it up.

Your volunteers aren’t just volunteer labour; they’re the lifeblood of your organisation. If you make a good profit from the event but wear out your credit with the volunteers, that’s more of a loss than a gain. Make sure you thank and reward your volunteers (personally and publicly).

If you hold many events, you might provide one annual opportunity for the full celebrations. Nevertheless, acknowledge the efforts of your volunteers after every individual event in some way – with a certificate, through a note in your newsletter. Everyone loves a bit of praise.

## Debriefing volunteers

Hold a debriefing session after the event, with refreshments, to thank your volunteers (again), inform them of your financial achievements and let them know what your organisation is going to do with the money.

Mingle; have a bit of fun, make friends and build the team.

Don’t forget to:

* Celebrate! It doesn’t have to be elaborate but provide some time for all your volunteers to come together to talk about the event and be recognised for their efforts.
* Settle any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the volunteers.
* Ask volunteers to fill in a survey or have a discussion and record ways to improve next year’s event.
* Keep records of the whole process so you only have to update and refine your volunteer management plan next time, and not start from scratch.

# 11. After the event

At the end of the event, when the rides have stopped, the dancing is over, the stalls have been packed away, the stage is empty and the site is clean, it’s time to celebrate everyone’s efforts and debrief.

If your event was held during the day, consider organising a barbecue or an evening meal and gather everyone to share stories of the day – the highs and the lows. Ensure someone has a pen and paper handy to record the lessons while they’re still fresh.

## Thanks

It’s vital that you say thanks to everyone who has contributed and let them know their contributions are highly valued. Remember to thank the members of the Special Events Committee and subcommittees, and your organisation’s staff, members, sponsors and volunteers.

Thanks can take the form of speeches, or personalised letters, or certificates, or written pieces in your organisation’s next newsletter, mailout, email bulletin or website update – or all these forms. In any case, be sure to send certificates and thank-you letters to the businesses that donated items and services.

Let your members and volunteers know how much money was raised, and what it will be used for.

Then one last thing…

## Review

*See Template 18: Debrief Checklist*

As soon as possible after the thanks have been completed, ask all subcommittee coordinators to fill in an evaluation form in consultation with their subcommittee members and volunteers.

Then convene a Special Events Committee meeting to discuss the evaluations and allow subcommittee coordinators to hand over all of the information they gathered throughout the planning and debriefing process, compiled in a folder. Each folder should contain:

* Details of all committee members
* Details of suppliers
* Details of purchases
* A rundown of income and expenses
* An itemised list, if applicable, of what sold, what didn’t and where any leftovers are stored for the next event
* A list of what worked and what didn’t (the *Debrief Checklist*).

When reviewing your event, list what worked best (i.e. raised the most money for the least effort) and proved popular.

Work out what you would do more or less of next year. What worked, and what didn’t? Note anything that could have been improved with a better location or better promotion? In what areas could you save money?

Then begin organising the next event!

# 12. Special Events

## Trivia nights

Trivia nights are great fun. Everybody likes to think they could breeze through the questions on Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, and most people love to put some of their most useless knowledge to, well, good use.

To set your trivia night apart from others, ensure you develop a point of difference for your event. This is likely to attract more people and raise more funds.

### Venue

The venue sets the atmosphere for the event. Whichever venue you choose, try to keep it local to entice more people to attend, and make sure it can accommodate a layout suitable for a trivia night. Is there space for tables and chairs? Can everyone hear and see what they need to hear and see? Is there space for auction items and raffle prizes?

### Theme

A great way to set your trivia night apart from others is to develop a theme. The theme helps establish the dress code, decorations, table settings and trivia questions. To encourage participation, extra points can be awarded to the table with the best costumes or best themed table.

Themes could include:

* Colour (e.g. wear an outfit to match the colour of your ticket)
* Music or fashion era
* Movie star or superhero
* Silly hat or funny footwear
* Masquerade
* Bling
* Sport
* Season (e.g. winter wonderland).

### Tickets

Your ticket price needs to cover costs but be low enough that members can afford to attend. Add-ons such as auctions and raffles will contribute to your profit, but your ticket prices alone should cover your costs.

Tickets can be sold as tables or individually. Teams of between six and 10 people are desirable – any fewer and it is not as much fun and it can become hard for teams to communicate properly and to come up with consensus answers to questions. Selling tickets individually tends to be easier, but you should allow people to select their own table so they can sit as a team with their friends.

Design the tickets to reflect the theme you’ve chosen.

### Time

A trivia night can last from 2½ to four hours. Aim to keep things moving along so that people remain entertained and end up enjoying the night. Make sure you also provide time for socialising because this is important for community groups.

Starting after dinner is easier to organise but may reduce the fundraising potential.

### The questions

There are a number of ways you can source the questions for the event.

1. Have someone knowledgeable from your organisation draw up questions (don’t just take them from Trivial Pursuit – too many people have seen those ones). The questions might be formed around the theme you’ve chosen for the event, or around a topic relevant to your organisation.
2. Source a package from a trivia company that includes guidelines, questions, answers, music and scoring sheets. There are costs associated with this, but it can save a lot of work.
3. Contact a professional trivia company. Your role will be to sell the tickets and set up the venue, and that’s it. The company will run the night. Ask around to find the best company for you. Once again, costs are associated with this, but the lower workload may allow you more time for extra fundraising sub-events on the night.

The number of rounds and questions is up to you, but rounds could include:

* General knowledge
* Sport
* Celebrities – name their partner or most recent movie
* Movies – name the title from the DVD cover, or play the theme song and name the movie
* History
* Politics
* Music – guess the song or artist, or write the next line
* Identify the street and place in the local area from snippets of photos
* Logos – name the company
* Flags – name the country
* Geography – e.g. capital cities, highest mountains.

### Scoring

Ask each table to swap their answer sheet with the next table for scoring and then present it to the officials for recording.

Display the scores round by round for everyone to see using a data projector or whiteboard.

### Music

Have some music playing when people arrive, between rounds and at the end of the evening. The music could be from an iPod, DJ, musician or band, depending on your budget.

Keep the volume down at the beginning and between rounds so people can still hold a conversation, then pump it up at the end of the night to maintain the energy levels.

### Food

Food is virtually essential, especially if alcohol is involved. It could be supplied by the venue as part of the ticket price, or catered for by your members, or BYO.

If you’re holding the event in a restaurant or hotel, check what sort of meals and snacks they have to offer.

### Prizes

Prizes are usually awarded to the first, second and last placed teams (or second-last, to remove the incentive for people to deliberately tank).

Prizes could include bottles of wine, movie tickets, books, gift vouchers, restaurant vouchers, and for last place, wooden spoons. Try to provide prizes that can be shared among the team.

Seek donations and sponsorship for prizes from your local community and businesses. If your organisation has membership fees, offer one year’s free membership as a prize.

### Equipment

* Scoreboard – blackboard, whiteboard, electronic whiteboard or data projector
* Laptop computer
* Audio-visual equipment
* Tables and chairs
* Paper and pens or pencils
* Table decorations and table numbers
* Question and answer sheets
* Bar for selling drinks
* Table to display prizes and auction items
* A garbage bag for each table so they can help clean up at the end of the night.

### Volunteers

Before the event, you’ll need volunteers to set up the venue, including tables, chairs, decorations, auction items, sponsorship display, scoreboard and music equipment.

On the evening, you’ll need volunteers to:

* Collect tickets and usher guests
* Distribute answer sheets and pens
* Sell raffle tickets
* Collect money for bought answers
* Collect money for add-on events
* Collect silent auction sheets at the designated time, finalise payment and distribute prizes
* Clean up after the event.

### Add-ons

The key to a trivia night that’s successful in fundraising terms is to incorporate additional events. They not only add interest but add to the amount of money raised. Here are some suggestions:

#### Buy an answer

For a small fee, tables can buy one or two answers each round. They don’t need to write the answer on their sheet (they might share it with others). Just mark the question of their choice with a sticker, stamp or marker.

#### Auctions

(see section on Auctions)

#### Balloon prizes

Pop a balloon containing either a prize-winning raffle ticket or the name of a prize.

#### Raffle tickets

Sold throughout the night for a variety of prizes.

#### Lucky bottles

Buy a ticket and win the wrapped bottle corresponding with the ticket number. Bottles can range from wine to perfume to tomato sauce.

#### Toss the coin

Players stand about 10 metres away from a prize. One by one the players toss, roll or slide a $1 or $2 coin towards the prize. The player whose coin is closest to the prize after everyone has finished wins the prize. You keep the coins.

#### Best poker hand

Teams can purchase five cards for $5 or $10. The team with the best poker hand wins a prize.

#### Lucky dip

Wrapped prizes can include anything from gift vouchers to lollypops.

#### Heads and tails

Everyone stands at their seat. They put hands on their head for heads, or hands on their bottom for tails. A coin is tossed repeatedly, and people are eliminated until one person is left standing. He or she wins a prize.

#### Paper aeroplane

Contestants purchase an A4 sheet of paper for a dollar and make a plane. Each person throws their plane from a set starting point one by one. The furthest distance flown forwards wins a prize.

#### Team knockout

Teams pay $10 to enter. Names are intermittently drawn from a hat during the course of the evening. The last team drawn wins half the pool. The other half goes to the fundraising efforts.

#### Cards

Mark the four corners of the room with one of the suits in a deck of cards (hearts, diamonds, spades, clubs). People pay a fee to enter the game and stand in one corner of the room. A card is drawn from the deck and if you’re standing in the corner that matches the card, you’re out. The drawing of cards continues until only one person is left. People may choose another corner between the drawing of the cards.

## Dinner dances

A dinner dance provides a great opportunity for your community to get together and socialise in a relaxed environment. Dinner dances, balls, barn dances and the like are a great way to raise money.

### Venue

Any venue from a school hall to a larger reception centre or club is fine for this event.

Using a public hall or school hall keeps venue costs to a minimum, but requires more hiring of equipment and hands-on organisation by the committee.

Using a reception centre, on the other hand, removes the heavy workload from the committee, but increases costs.

#### Halls

If you use a hall, you’ll need to organise:

* Caterers
* Tables and chairs
* Table decorations
* Lighting
* Entertainment
* Compere
* Sound system
* Set-up and clean-up
* Games
* Prizes
* Tickets.

#### Reception centres

If you use a reception centre, you’ll need to organise:

* Menu
* Entertainment
* Compere
* Set-up
* Games
* Prizes
* Tickets.

### Theme

Setting a theme for the event creates interest, a talking point and atmosphere. It provides a springboard for advertising, entertainment, ticket design and decorating. Possible themes include:

* Casual
* Formal
* Era, e.g. Swinging Sixties, Livin’ in the Seventies, etc.
* Red carpet night, movie stars
* Music stars
* Famous historical figure
* Debutante night, prom night
* Bling it on
* Masquerade
* Colour theme – e.g. the blues
* Born to be wild.

### Tickets

Ticket prices will be determined partly by your choice of venue and inclusions.

If you are covering costs of hiring equipment and paying for a band or paying for a three-course meal at a reception centre as well as a band, then factor this into your ticket pricing.

It might be a good early move to gain some idea of what an affordable ticket price for people in your organisation would be. Then you can calculate your budget for the event based on that ticket price multiplied by the projected (slightly conservative) number of ticket sales.

If an affordable ticket price is not going to cover the attractions, food, entertainment and other items you wish to feature at your dinner dance, you might have to look at economising or compromising on some items.

For these reasons, it is important you try to sell as many tickets as early as possible to guarantee a certain base income. If yours is a school-based event, take the school holidays into account when you’re planning ticket sales. The event won’t be on anyone’s radar during the holidays.

To maximise early sales, consider offering early-bird tickets at a slightly reduced price. Or encourage people to lay-by their tickets. This spreads the cost to them and supplies you with some healthy up-front income.

Community members from outside your organisation may want to attend your dinner dance to offer support and socialise, so advertise your event in the local community, especially if your entertainment is a well-known act.

### Time

Around 7pm is a good time to start, and you should aim to finish by midnight. Check with your venue – some venues will have licensing restrictions or other restrictions imposed by their neighbours or other events booked.

### Entertainment

Great entertainment is the key to a successful event. A combination of music and theatrical performances adds an exciting element to the night.

First seek entertainment from your organisation’s community, then search further afield. If you book an expensive but popular band, you may be able to sell tables to people outside your organisation, which is a great money-maker.

Depending on your theme you may want to include a parade, with prizes for best costume or matching couple.

Entertainment possibilities include:

* Your own members – maybe some are performers
* Professional band
* Local school or community band, choir, or musical group
* DJ
* Poets
* Comedians
* Acrobats
* Magicians
* Dancers.

### Food

If you’re staging your event at a reception centre then you’ll need to meet with their functions coordinator to decide on the menu, remembering to cater for people with food allergies and intolerances.

If the dance is to be held in a hall, organise a caterer to come to your venue. You might offer a three-course sit-down meal or a buffet. Make sure the kitchen facilities are adequate.

### Equipment

The equipment you’ll need to provide depends on the venue. An outsourced venue might provide everything needed, leaving you only to make decisions on seating arrangements and general layout. If you’re using a school hall, you’ll need to source:

* Tables and chairs
* Tablecloths
* Crockery
* Cutlery
* Glassware
* Table centrepieces
* Decorations
* Sound and lighting equipment.

### Volunteers

Volunteers will be needed to set up the venue. Their workload will depend on the venue you have chosen. If it’s a restaurant, club or hotel, all they’ll need to do is set up table decorations and auction items.

In a hall, you’ll need volunteers to set up tables and chairs, decorate the venue and set up auction items, raffles and games.

### Add-ons

A good slab of your fundraising income should come via other events piggybacking on your dinner dance. Options include:

* Raffle tickets, sold throughout the night for a variety of prizes. You might sell them before the event too, so that people who can’t attend the dance can still contribute financially.
* Auctions (see Auctions section)
* Games (see Games section)
* Door prizes – ask people to place their dinner dance ticket in a barrel on arrival, then draw tickets to win prizes.

## Discos

A disco is a great way for younger people to have fun – and to raise some funds. Discos have similar requirements to dinner dances (see Dinner Dances section), with some tweaks.

### Venue

A school or community hall is ideal for this event. If you don’t have one, consider using a courtyard, a couple of classrooms, or the local scout hall, church hall or sports club.

If you really want to make a splash, find a commercial disco venue available for hire.

### Theme

A theme adds to the atmosphere and excitement of an event. Great disco themes include:

* Everything that shimmers
* Masquerade
* Hilarious hat
* Colours (e.g. one for each school year level).

### Tickets

Pre-sell tickets and keep prices to a minimum so that all children have the opportunity to attend. Consider offering something extra for the first 50 children who purchase tickets – perhaps a voucher for a free soft drink or

juice at the event, or a free glow stick.

Place ticket order forms in your organisation’s newsletter. As tickets are sold, make a list of children attending. Mark their attendance when they arrive at the disco.

### Time

It’s common to organise separate disco times for different age groups, especially when it comes to school discos. Possible age ranges might be:

* Prep – Grade 2
* Grades 3 – 6
* Years 7 – 9
* Years 10 – 12.

This helps your organisation to manage numbers and to cater for the different age groups’ different interests in music and games.

Allow 1½ to two hours per disco, with half an hour for changeover between age groups. The disco could be held on different days/nights if your numbers are large.

To manage student traffic flow, consider providing separate entry and exit points.

### Entertainment

For younger children, organise a DJ who specialises in children’s events. Make sure they provide some structure to the evening and include disco favourites – the chicken dance, macarena, nutbush etc. Games of limbo, corners, heads and tails or dancing in a conga line create extra enjoyment.

Make sure the DJ is clear about the types of music and songs that are acceptable for children of each age group. Songs with questionable themes, explicit lyrics or even of a certain style might not be what parents want their children listening to.

Secondary school students could invite student bands to perform throughout the evening, or have a student DJ. They might wish to incorporate a ‘battle of the bands’ run by the Student Representative Council.

### Food

Sell drinks, chips or lollies, but most importantly, have plenty of water available for thirsty disco dancers. These items could be included in the ticket price or sold on the night.

### Prizes

At events involving children, the more prizes (winners) the better. Keep the cost of prizes to a minimum so you can have many winners. You might offer prizes for:

* Best dancer
* Best original moves
* Game winner
* Door prize
* Best costume
* Best dressed.

### Equipment

The equipment you’ll need depends on your venue and the entertainment. Most DJs supply their own equipment but check when booking.

If you’re supplying the music yourself, you’ll need adequate sound and lighting equipment. There’s nothing like doof-doof and strobe lights to get things going.

You’ll also need to set up an area for food and drinks, and an assembly area for arrivals and departures.

### Volunteers

A disco usually involves children participating in an event outside school hours. Therefore it is vital that you have adequate supervision and volunteers to coordinate the event on the night. Volunteer roles might include:

* Collecting tickets
* Marking children off the checklist, making sure each one has provided a contact number for emergencies
* Selling (and supervising consumption of) food and drinks
* Supervising children both inside and outside the venue
* Supervising children in the toilets, especially if these are outside
* Administering first aid for bumped heads in the mosh pit or blisters from new high heels
* Caring for children who are upset and contacting parents if necessary.

Many young children are unaware of what a disco involves. They just want to be there because they’ve heard the playground hype leading up to the event. The darkened room with its flashing lights and blaring music can be a little daunting for some, so it’s important you have plenty of adults available to support these children.

### Add-ons

At a disco for young children it’s a little difficult to increase revenue on the night: they’ve usually paid in advance for tickets and don’t tend to bring money along. Therefore, it’s best to incorporate most or all costs into the ticket price.

However, when older children are involved, you can sell:

* Food and drinks
* Glow sticks
* Temporary or henna tattoos
* Photography – teenagers love to have photos taken with their friends. Hire a booth where they get instant photos and you keep the takings or organise a photographer from your organisation to take digital or Polaroid shots.

## Art shows

Community-based art shows have long been enjoyable and popular events, as well as effective fundraisers.

### Venue

This cultural event could be held in your organisation’s foyer or hallway, or as an outside event (weather permitting). If you don’t have a suitable venue onsite, look at local halls and art galleries.

Make sure there’s plenty of room to wander around the exhibition, and a place for food and entertainment. It’s also preferable that there is provision for hanging some artwork on the walls. Look for hooks, picture rails, or places for screens.

### Theme

Art for the show could be curated to highlight:

* **Artist types** – Australian, historical, modern
* **People** – Portraiture
* **Periods** – Renaissance, pop art, cubism, surrealism
* **Media** – Paint, clay, ink, multimedia
* **Place** – Home, school, suburb, city, country, universe
* **Emotions** – Happiness, jealousy, sadness
* **Issues** – Environment, sustainability, animal welfare.

### Tickets

You can raise funds by charging for admission, or selling the artworks, or both. You might ask for a gold coin donation or $5 per family with the aim of making most of your money on the sale or auction of artworks.

### Time

Providing opportunities for viewing artwork throughout the day and evening allows as many people as possible to participate. If you’re holding an auction as part of the event, make sure you advertise the starting time, so people don’t miss out.

### Sourcing art

Art can be collected from a variety of sources – staff and members of your organisation, their families, local artists and schools. This broad range of abilities means the art will be varied, which makes for an interesting art show.

How you structure the exhibition will be determined by the make-up of your organisation. If you are a school, you might aim to display one piece of artwork per child and offer it for sale to raise funds and recoup some of the costs of art supplies.

The specialist art teacher or the class teacher will need to be involved in planning the event so that suitable artworks can be created, perhaps with a common theme or medium.

Some schools have staff, parents or family members who are already established artists. Approach them to donate a piece of their work to be auctioned at the exhibition and provide them with the opportunity to display other pieces for sale if you have space. You could take a percentage of the sale price.

Past students who are now studying visual arts at secondary school or university might be willing to donate an artwork for the event. Contact your local school or check your alumni records.

Consider approaching local and regional artists from your area. Contact your local art gallery, framing shop or artists’ society for contact details and put the word out well in advance that your organisation is seeking works to exhibit. Many artists will be happy to contribute works, especially if there’s a chance they will make a sale, win a prize or receive recognition.

### Entertainment

Provide entertainment throughout the event to create an artistic atmosphere, raise attendance and add extra value. Consider on-stage and roving performers. The entertainment could include:

* School choir, band or orchestra
* Individual student performances – poetry, singing or instrumental
* Parent performers
* Dance groups
* Face painting
* An art space for children, with plasticine, pastels and pencils provided. Take care to ensure that artworks on display aren’t damaged.

### Food

Provide an area in the exhibition where attendees can buy a drink and a plate of canapés. Ensure there is entertainment in this area, and it is away from the artwork.

Provide serviettes and wet wipes for sticky fingers – you don’t want any artists upset by fingermarks on their artwork.

### Prizes

You can provide opportunities to win prizes to increase attendance and participation at the art show.

* Door prizes – ask people to place their entry ticket in a barrel on arrival, then draw tickets to win prizes.
* Ask attendees to vote for their favourite artwork and award a prize for the winner. If it’s inappropriate to have people vote for children’s artwork, hold the vote for artworks by local artists.

Prizes could include:

* Gift vouchers from the local picture framer
* Art canvases
* Art supplies – brushes, pencils, pastels
* Artwork donated by a local artist
* Art lessons
* Art hampers
* Art party.

### Equipment

The most important equipment is stands and wall space to display the artwork. You may be able to hire or borrow these from your local art gallery, art society, school, college or university, or have a parent or grandparent make some for your organisation to keep.

You’ll also need:

* Sound system
* Microphone to promote displays, interview artists and hold the auction
* Barrel for door prizes
* Glasses
* Crockery
* Table for food
* Serviettes and wet wipes.

### Volunteers

You’ll need some volunteers before the event to sell tickets and source prizes and artworks. However, you’ll need most of your volunteers in the week leading up to the event, and on the day. Use your volunteers to:

* Mount and label the artwork
* Hang artwork
* Set up seating in the entertainment area
* Set up sound equipment
* Collect entrance fees or tickets
* Sell raffle tickets
* Supervise the displays, ensuring artwork is not damaged
* Clean up after the event.

### Add-ons

#### Auctions

* Auction a piece of artwork donated by a local artist.
* Auction a piece of artwork created collectively by the staff of your school or organisation.
* Auction artwork created by students. Organise for each class to provide one piece of artwork to be auctioned. Class teachers could choose the artwork, or you could provide each class with a standard sized blank canvas or material for them to paint, draw or sew on.
* Auction artwork created by Prep and Grade 6 students. These years are special milestones in a child’s education, and the artworks will be sought after by the families.

#### Raffles

* Sell raffle tickets before the exhibition for those who can’t attend the event, as well as on the day. For prizes, see the suggestions in the Prizes section.

#### Art sales

Sell each child’s artwork. Make sure you cover the costs of art supplies and mounting the artwork in the price. Invite a picture framing company to be in attendance on the night to frame artwork for parents, with a portion of the sales going to the school.

#### Artists

Invite an artist to draw caricatures of people for a fee and share the profits. Ask your local artists’ society or look for artists busking at markets or in the city.

## Fashion parades

Another great special event fundraiser is the fashion parade. Fashion parades can be fun, stylish and a great way to involve not only members of your school or organisation, but the wider local community as well.

### Venue

Any venue, from the school hall to a reception centre, will work well for this event. It all comes down to your target audience, the time of the event (lunch or evening), the space available for the catwalk, and the type of food and drink you want to offer.

### Theme

If you program this event around Mother’s Day or one of the many breast cancer awareness dates, you could promote it as a mother-and-daughter event with a pink theme.

Another idea is masquerade. This is a great theme for marketing. The models could all wear or hold masks while they’re on the catwalk.

### Tickets

Sell tickets at a price that suits your audience, taking into account the venue and what you’re offering. If you have a theme, design the tickets to match.

### Time

A fashion parade could be part of a lunch or an evening event. Holding your event during the day limits the number of working parents who will be able to attend, but if the fashion parade becomes an annual event, people may make special arrangements to allow them to come.

### Entertainment

The fashion parade itself will be the main entertainment, but you could also:

* Organise music to be played before, during and after the fashion parade – nothing too loud because people like to talk.
* Invite a guest speaker, who could talk about a significant event in their life or about women in leadership, or a comedian who could joke about fashion or parenting and offer light relief.
* Invite groups of students with musical talent, a school choir or whole grades of children to perform. They might be able to hand every attendee a gift at the end – flowers, chocolates or a card.

### Food

Food could consist of a three-course meal, a buffet, finger food or BYO platters.

Drinks should cater for a range of tastes, but serious consideration should be given to serving glasses of champagne or sparkling wine: bubbly fits very well with the fashion theme. Remember also to provide tea, coffee and other non-alcoholic drinks.

### Equipment

#### Table settings

Ask a local florist to donate table arrangements for the fashion parade. At the end of the evening, use the arrangements as door prizes, or ask the organiser of each table to accept the arrangement as thanks for their

support.

#### Catwalk

The type of catwalk you have will depend on the shape and size of the venue. It could be a traditional catwalk down the centre of the room, or a set of podiums scattered around that the models walk to. Make sure the catwalk is clearly visible from every seat.

#### Fashion

Speak to local fashion retailers who stock men’s, women’s and children’s wear about providing clothing for your parade. This not only promotes local businesses and community spirit but develops a rapport between the school and the retailers for future events and donations.

Each section of the parade could feature a particular boutique or fashion category, such as children’s, teens’, women’s or men’s wear.

You could expand the parade to include fashion from your local opportunity shop or pet shop and include well-behaved pets.

#### Models

There is no need to pay models when you have abundance of potential volunteers in your midst. Ask staff, volunteers or members of your organisation, teachers, parents, students and their family members to act as models.

#### Hair & make-up

Ask parents with skills in this area to assist with make-up and hair or have the models do their own. You could also ask local hairdressers and make-up artists to help out.

For a dramatic effect, use masks or create artistic designs on faces instead of applying make-up.

### Sponsorship

Seek sponsorship from local boutiques, cosmetics companies, hairdressers, nail salons, restaurants, chocolatiers, hotels, bottle shops and car rental companies. They might be willing to donate prizes such as:

* Beauty therapy
* Facials
* Manicures and pedicures
* Blow-dries
* Clothing
* Shoes
* Lunches
* Chocolates
* Sports car hire
* Limousine ride
* Shopping vouchers
* Weekends away
* Champagne.

### Volunteers

Tasks for volunteers can include:

* Modelling
* Hair and make-up
* Waiting tables and serving drinks
* Selling tickets
* Seeking sponsorship
* Set-up and clean-up.

### Add-ons

#### Diamond drink

Seek a donation of a diamond (or other special stone) or purchase it at cost from a jeweller. Sell uniquely numbered glasses of champagne or sparkling water on arrival for $20. The winner can be determined in several ways:

* Each person takes their glass up to a table holding corresponding numbered envelopes. Each envelope contains a message, with one declaring the winner.
* A locked treasure box is unlocked to reveal the winning number.

Announce the winner only after all glasses of champagne/water have been sold.

Ensure the diamond is locked securely in a safe and passed on to the lucky winner when the event is over. At the event itself, give the winner a plastic ring as a memento of their prize.

#### Show bags

Fill show bags with a variety of beauty goods, chocolates, vouchers and pamphlets. Source donations of samples of beauty products from suppliers.

Hang a bag on the back of every seat ready for guests when they arrive, or hand one to each guest as they depart.

#### Lucky envelopes

Sell envelopes for $10 with donated vouchers inside ranging from $10 to $25 in value.

#### Raffles

Place a basket with envelopes containing 10 raffle tickets in the centre of the table. Sell the envelopes for $5 each. This way you can have the butts already in the barrel ready for the draw, before the event. However, make sure all tickets are sold before the draw.

Alternatively, have a volunteer roam around selling tickets or set up a raffle table showing prizes.

## Movie nights

Movie nights can be great family-oriented fundraisers involving your organisation or school’s immediate community, or the wider community.

### Venue

If the weather is right, you could hold your movie night outdoors (make sure you have wet weather contingency plans).

Otherwise, a school or community hall or multipurpose room is a great option.

Alternatively, hook up with a local cinema and hire out one of their screens for the night. Many cinemas now do this – you bring the audience; they provide the film and the venue; they take a cut, and you take a cut and everyone goes home happy.

### Theme

Whatever your movie, try to incorporate a theme to promote interest. For example, for children, encourage movie-goers to dress up as superheroes for Megamind, princes and princesses for Shrek, chefs for Ratatouille, witches and wizards for Harry Potter, villains for Despicable Me or mad scientists for Help! I’m a Fish. Or encourage everyone to wear their pyjamas.

For adults, choose some classic or cult favourites to ensure a good turn-up: Ferris Bueller’s Day Off, Grease, Gone with the Wind, Breakfast at Tiffany’s, etc. Alternatively, hold a themed event – a night of horrors, this decade’s best chick-flicks, or invite people to bring along their dogs for a screening of Best in Show.

### Tickets

In deciding on ticket pricing, consider film hire costs, screen hire costs and affordability for patrons.

If you’re hiring everything from the screen to the projector and movie, then $10 per person or $25 per family is reasonable. If you have or can borrow the equipment and you’re only hiring the movie, consider charging less. You want as many people as possible to have the opportunity to attend.

Promote ticket sales well in advance in your newsletter and on your website to maximise sales.

### Time

If you’re looking to stage the movie outdoors, maximise the odds that the weather will be fine and the temperature comfortable by choosing the right season. Timing the movie to start as the sun goes down adds to the event’s atmosphere. Don’t forget to take daylight savings into account.

However, if you need a winter fundraiser then an indoor movie night is ideal. Look at your event calendar and identify what works for your organisation.

If you’re running a family event, remind parents that they need to attend with their child for supervision purposes. It’s definitely not a drop-and-run event.

### Entertainment

Choosing the right movie is the key to success. For a school event, you could provide a list of movies and ask children to vote for their preference. Or choose the movie based on your committee’s recommendations, or screen different movies on different nights to cater for different age groups – for example, one night for a G-rated film for junior levels, then PG for middle to intermediate levels and M for senior secondary students.

For adults, themed events or new releases work well.

Another factor influencing your choice of movie will be the cost of hiring it. The newer the movie, the higher the cost. The risk with older movies, however, is that more people will have seen it already. You have to choose one that people like to see more than once.

Make sure you include the classification level in all your advertising:

* General (G) - Suitable for everyone
* Parental Guidance (PG) - Most suitable for age 15 and above
* Mature (M) - Not recommended for children under 15

For more information on movie classifications, go to the Australian Classification website: [www.classification.gov.au](http://www.classification.gov.au).

### Copyright

You must ensure you seek permission from the copyright holder to screen the film, because you’re screening it in public. This applies even to not-for-profit organisations holding fundraising events, and it still applies even if you don’t charge for admission.

For information on copyright laws, visit the website of the Australian Copyright Council and download the fact sheet titled *Films, DVDs, Videos & TV: Screening in Public*. The fact sheet provides contact details for some of the major relevant organisations, and also states:

There is no single organisation that can give you general permission to screen films and videos in public. In practice, you may need to purchase, rent or borrow films, DVDs or videos from a supplier that can give you permission to screen them on behalf of the copyright owners.

If you don’t want to bother with any of this, contact your local cinema and organise a special screening as outlined in the Movie Night section.

Building Stronger Communities Through Stronger Community Organisations 111

### Food

Sell food before, during and after the movie. Organise a variety of food stalls and start the event one or two hours before the movie begins so people can eat. Make sure you advertise this well in advance.

Set up your own food stalls with donations from your organisation or invite food sellers for a fee or a cut of takings. Make sure you provide all of the movie-goer staples (popcorn, choc-tops, lollies) as well as some dinner and dessert options:

* Drinks – alcoholic, non-alcoholic or both
* Sausage sizzle, including gourmet options
* Pies and sausage rolls
* Roast potatoes with toppings
* Paella
* Sushi
* Nachos
* Chips
* Yoghurt
* Coffee and tea from a barista.

### Equipment

Technology has made it easier to organise and stage movie fundraisers anywhere at any time. They can now be held indoors, outdoors, under the stars or in the sun.

There are companies that will provide you with all the equipment you need to hold the event, or you could check if any of your staff/volunteers/members have equipment they could lend you.

#### Screens

Films can be projected onto inflatable, portable or LED screens in various sizes or even onto the wall of your hall. It is recommended that you hire a screen if you’re planning an outdoor event.

#### Projectors

Projectors can be hired with screens to get the best resolution, or you can use your own projector. Projection quality and size varies depending on the type of projector.

#### Sound systems

Provide a good quality sound system so everyone can hear. Allow for wind direction.

#### Seating

Encourage ticketholders to bring their own beanbag, comfy chair, blankets, pillows and cushions. Hire these things as well to make some extra cash.

#### Food Stalls

Set up trestle tables and marquees as needed. Provide power to the area and erect the equipment far enough from the audience that noise won’t interfere with the movie.

#### Toilets

Toilets need to be plentiful and close by. People don’t want to spend half of the movie traipsing around trying to find a loo or standing in a queue.

### Sponsorship

Seek sponsorship from local traders and advertise their company on the screen before the movie, afterwards and at interval. Some hire companies will create the presentation of sponsors for you if you provide them with the images and information, or you can create your own. You could also offer sponsors the opportunity to display their banner below the screen throughout the event.

### Volunteers

Tasks for volunteers include:

* Selling tickets before the event
* Preparing food for stalls
* Collecting tickets
* Selling food
* Selling raffle tickets
* Providing security
* Providing technical support
* Set-up and clean-up.

### Add-ons

#### Games

* Before the movie begins, hold a gaming competition using the big screen. Set up a Wii, Xbox or PlayStation console. People pay a fee to play a five-minute game involving at least four people. Remember to sell only as many games as you have time slots available.
* Organise a knock-out competition where people challenge each other in an event such as bowling on a console game. Provide a trophy for the winner.
* If you’re holding a school event and time is limited, organise a knockout competition to run during lunch times, with the finals held at the movie night on the big screen. This will allow more students to enter and provide more revenue.

#### Free advertising

* Hold a competition for the ticket design.
* For a children’s movie event, create a colouring competition around the theme of the film to advertise your event. Send it to local kindergartens and schools. Announce the winner during interval at the event to encourage attendance.

#### Beanbag hire

Contact a local beanbag company to ask whether you could borrow some beanbags and hire them out on the night to raise extra funds.

## Readathons, walkathons, ride-a-thons…

Readathons, rideathons and walkathons are all examples of ‘a-thons’: events in which participants do a certain activity for a period of time and raise money through sponsorship (amount per book read, laps walked, kilometres ridden and so on).

The ideas for ’a-thons are endless, limited only by your imagination and your school or organisation’s capabilities.

The profit returned from these events is generally very good because there is a significant element of fun and competitiveness for participants. Sporting-related a-thons tend to be better fundraisers than offbeat a-thons, but unusual events can still raise plenty of money if they’re executed well, and they have the bonus of attracting greater media coverage.

Fundraising from a-thons comes from three main sources:

1. You can charge people (individually or in teams) to enter.
2. You can ask participants to seek sponsorship from friends, family and businesses.
3. You can sell food, drinks, T-shirts etc. to participants and audiences.

If your “a-thon” is a success, run it next year too. Make it an annual event until it becomes a local or school tradition.

That said, a-thons don’t run themselves. They require preparation, organisation, and monitoring. In particular, you should forget the idea that in sending people out to get sponsorship you’re passing the responsibility for fundraising onto other people. You’re actually responsible for the task of recruiting and motivating salespeople to carry out your fundraising plan.

### Venue

Most schools with an oval can use their own grounds for events involving long distances (lapathon, walkathon) and large spaces (kickathon, soccerathon). And virtually all schools are capable of holding indoor events such as a danceathon, skipathon or exerciseathon.

For those without a ready venue, running events could also be held at a local park, around the block or along the beach. Check with your local council for other possibilities and ask them about permit requirements. Or ask your local school if you can borrow their facilities for a few hours.

Mental events usually require space indoors on the day of the event (chessathon, spellathon, Sudokuthon) or can be completed at home over a period of time (readathon).

If you hold your a-thon annually and it’s looking a bit tired, try changing the venue. A walkathon with a picturesque view is much more enticing than laps of the oval.

### Theme

Add a theme to your a-thon to add interest and create photo opportunities. Consider these ideas:

* Funny hats
* Odd socks
* Crazy hair
* Bling
* Book characters
* Sports teams
* Superheroes
* Masterchefs
* Era, e.g. 1970s, 1980s.

### Time

Begin outdoor events early in the day, especially physical events held in summer, to avoid the hottest part of the day. Provide sunscreen and make sure all participants have hats.

If you need to cancel/move the event because of extreme weather, have an alternative date/venue ready to roll out. You don’t want to lose the funds already promised.

If space is limited or you have very large numbers of participants, stagger the starting times to reduce congestion. Those waiting to start can cheer others on and encourage them to go the extra mile.

### Entertainment

This list of ideas for a-thons is by no means exhaustive, but it may prompt some ideas of your own. For added interest on the day of the event, arrange some variations on the theme – an obstacle course, or a challenge to walk or spell backwards.

#### Aerobathon or exerciseathon

Organise gym or aerobics instructors to run exercise classes continuously.

#### Bakeathon

How many cupcakes or biscuits can you bake in a given time? Sell the items to raise extra funds.

#### Bikeathon, rideathon or skateathon

Ride or skate around a designated track. Use toddler bikes for extra entertainment value.

#### Bowlathon

Go to a bowling lane or set up your own ten-pin bowling and score one point for every pin knocked down.

#### Cartwheelathon

Record the number of cartwheels completed in a set time.

#### Chessathon

Record the number of hours or games played, with set breaks throughout the day.

#### Countathon

How high can people count in a set time? How many times can they count to 100? Organise your own counting pattern.

#### Danceathon

Perform the nutbush or macarena continuously in teams or class groups.

#### Hoolathon

Count how many times you can hoolahoop nonstop or in a given time.

#### Hoopathon

Play as many games of basketball or netball as possible in a given time, or hold a shooting contest where points are scored and money is raised per basket made.

#### Jumpathon

In teams, jump on a trampoline for a set number of hours.

#### Kickathon

Score six for each goal and one for each point kicked.

#### Lapathon, runathon, jogathon or walkathon

Walk, jog or run laps of an oval or a set circuit. Create obstacles or checkpoints to make the event more interesting. Record laps with marks on the hand or have each participant wear a ticket that is holepunched or stamped.

#### Marathon

Seek donations for kilometres completed and an extra bonus for finishing.

#### Readathon

Record the number of books read in a set time. Link up with a Reading Challenge in your state or territory for extra incentives.

#### Skipathon

Count how many times you can skip in a given time, or see for how long you can skip nonstop, individually or in teams.

#### Spellathon

Four weeks in advance, distribute sponsorship forms with a list of words for participants to learn. Younger children can learn ‘sight words’ or sight pictures. This works with adults too!

#### Soccerthon

Play soccer for a set number of hours. Divide into three teams and play soccer matches, rotating a team every 15 minutes. Sponsors pledge a set amount for each hour the player participates.

#### Sportathon

Rotate through a number of events during the day. Record points for each event or for hours spent competing.

#### Sudokuthon

Complete as many Sudokus as possible at school, at work or online in a given amount of time.

#### Swimathon

Swim laps individually or as a team.

#### Trashathon

Find a spot in your local area that is consistently littered. Seek sponsorship per garbage bag. Promote the environmental benefits: potential donors should be glad of the chance to help improve the neighbourhood. Give the collectors gloves for safety.

#### Triathlon

Compete in teams or individually.

### Distances

For children’s events, check with their sports teachers as to appropriate distances for each age group, taking into account the fitness levels of the kids.

Here are some general recommendations for a-thons involving running or walking:

* Prep–year 2: 750m to 1km
* Years 3–4: 2km
* Years 5–6: 3km
* Years 7–8: 3km
* Years 9–10: 4km
* Years 11-12: 5km

Adjust the distance to suit your students, the time available, the weather and the activity, whether it’s running, rolling, riding or walking. Cross-country events should generally be shorter than events on paths or ovals.

### Limits

Some ’a-thons are restricted by time not distance. Set a maximum time limit before the event so sponsors are aware of how much they may need to pay.

Don’t limit one-off donations, however – these amounts are up to each individual donor.

### Pledges

*See Template 19: Readathon Reading Record*

*See Template 20: A-thon Sponsorship Form*

Hand out sponsorship forms four to six weeks before the event. This gives participants plenty of time to seek sponsorship.

Provide opportunities for people to make a donation rather than pay per-lap or per-book. People can be reluctant to sponsor when their financial commitment is unknown until after the event.

Make sure participants understand how the event will be run so they can explain it to their sponsors. Consider linking the fundraising event to a specific item or cause within your school or organisation to help motivate people to support it.

Ask for sponsorship forms to be returned one week before the event.

After the event, redistribute the forms, detailing money to be collected. Keep a log of all amounts from each participant, calculate the final tally and let your sponsors and community know how much was raised from the event.

### Food

Provide healthy food that will sustain participants’ concentration and physical energy levels, such as:

* Fruit slices
* Vegetable sticks
* Nuts
* Yoghurt
* Water
* Fruit juice
* Icy poles.

### Incentives

Provide incentives for participants to raise more money. You could offer prizes for:

* Raising the most money overall
* Raising the most money in each grade or age group
* Completing the most laps, books, games etc.
* Raising more than $50 (e.g. a voucher for a free lunch from the canteen)
* Returning sponsorship forms early (e.g. early birds go into a draw for a cinema pass)
* The group with the highest average amount raised per person (e.g. win a pizza lunch).

### Equipment

The equipment needed depends on the event type, but might include:

* Marshalling table and chairs
* Start and finish markings
* Sports equipment
* Sunscreen
* Refreshments
* Individual marking cards
* Stopwatch
* First aid area and kit.

### Sponsorship

A-thons usually provide plenty of advertising spaces for your sponsors – e.g. hats, T-shirts, fences, the finish line, sponsorship forms and billboard spaces.

Depending on your event, sponsors might include sports stores, memorabilia stores, gyms, pools, fitness clubs, sports stadiums, health-food shops or book shops.

### Volunteers

Events held outdoors will tend to need a large number of volunteers to help ensure participants’ safety and guide them around the course or through the task.

Ensure volunteers can communicate with a coordinator via mobile phone or walkie-talkie. Other roles for volunteers might include:

* Course marshalls (equip them with stopwatches, clipboards, sunscreen, water, first aid kits and fluorescent vests)
* Checkpoint marshalls (to mark participants’ cards after each lap or minute)
* Food and drink servers
* Set-up and clean-up crew.

### Add-ons

* Hold a competition to design a logo for the a-thon. The winning logo could be printed on hats, drink bottles and T-shirts and sold at the event.
* Provide opportunities throughout the day for extra prizes – best dressed, best team outfits, funniest hat, etc.
* After the event, ask participants to write a snappy account of their experience and email, post or deliver a copy to all their sponsors, with a donation slip attached. Sponsors are sometimes willing to increase their level of support when they see what’s been achieved.
* If people have been unable to participate for health reasons, allow them to substitute a proxy. This means they can still raise funds and feel they’ve participated.

## Markets

Markets are great community events. They provide a wonderful opportunity to mingle with other members of your organisation or school while being entertained and picking up a bargain.

Markets come in many shapes and sizes and can be as simple or complex as you want, depending on the needs of your organisation, the size of your support base and your goals. Following are a few ideas for popular market formats.

### School markets

Each class takes a turn supplying the food for a market held immediately after school, between 3.30pm and 4.30pm. Simple, individually portioned food items are best because they can be eaten immediately.

The market provides afternoon tea for students and their families in a social atmosphere. The money raised could be split equally between the class holding the stall and the fundraising committee.

For added value, the school could purchase a coffee machine and sell coffees at the market, or hire a barista van under an arrangement where some profits are given to the school.

### Parent & student markets

Market stalls selling fresh produce (fruit, vegetables) and baked items are sold at an evening market after school each Friday (or as often as the school prefers).

Additional items made by a parent or community craft group could also be sold each week.

### Community markets

Establish a weekly or monthly Saturday or Sunday market with regular community stalls.

Rent out stall space for a fee, making sure you don’t allow stalls that conflict with your organisation’s own stalls (keep the easy ones – sausage sizzle, coffee, Devonshire tea – for yourself).

Involving the community increases attendance but can carry added risks, so make sure you provide clear guidelines for stallholders.

### Venue

Hold the market in the grounds of your own school or organisation to save costs. If this is not possible, speak to your local council about using park grounds or other public space.

Whatever the venue, make sure it offers shade and shelter from the sun and rain.

### Theme & time

Naming your market (particularly if it’s going to be a regular event) will help establish its identity in the eyes of the community.

Time it to suit your theme; the times provided are just suggestions.

* After School Market: 3.30pm–4.30pm weeknight
* Friday Night Market: 3.30pm–6.30pm Friday
* Twilight Market: 5pm–8pm Thursday or Friday
* Home Produce Market: 9am–1pm Saturday
* Community Market: 9am–1pm Saturday
* Farmers’ Market: 9am–1pm Saturday
* Summer Days Market: 11am–4pm Sunday
* School Class Market: Lunchtime weekday

### Entertainment

Entertainment adds atmosphere to any market. Encourage performers from your community – bands, singers, poets, artists and dance groups.

### Food

Make sure the majority of food stalls are run by your own organisation – they’re great money makers.

If your market becomes a regular event, try a range of different food stalls, keep the popular ones and introduce new ones each time.

Make sure you’re familiar with the food labelling and food handling requirements.

#### Market favourites

* Cakes
* Fairy floss
* Baked potatoes
* Sausages
* Hot chips
* Hamburgers
* Doughnuts
* Hot dogs
* Ice-cream
* Snow cones
* Icy poles
* Corn on the cob
* Pies, sausage rolls and pasties.

#### Multicultural food

* Indian samosas
* Greek sweets
* Japanese sushi
* Thai fish balls
* Turkish coffee, bread and dips
* Chinese noodles and spring rolls
* Mexican tacos
* Italian pizza.

#### Gourmet food

The more upmarket the item, the more you can increase your profit margin. Options include:

* Olive oil with herbs or garlic
* Flavoured vinegars
* Jams and marmalades
* Pickled lemons
* Pesto
* Fresh herbs
* Sauces and chutneys
* Chocolate-dipped fruit.

#### Healthy options

* Fruit and yoghurt
* Sandwiches and wraps
* Salad bar
* Rice paper rolls.

#### Lollies

* Lolly bags (pre-mixed)
* Lolly jars where children can buy individual lollies
* Lolly kebabs (soft lollies on skewers)
* Necklaces (lollies tied on curling ribbon)
* Bracelets (Lifesavers threaded on curling ribbon)
* Chocolate fountain.

#### Drinks

* Barista-made coffee
* Soft drinks
* Milkshakes
* Devonshire teas
* Fresh fruit juices
* Smoothies
* Water
* Cordial
* Alcohol (see Section on Alcohol).

### Writing market guidelines

*See Template 21: Instructions to Market Stallholders*

If you’re inviting stallholders from outside your organisation to participate in your market, it’s essential that you develop clear written guidelines for them. Your guidelines should cover:

* The purpose of the market (e.g. school fundraiser; community market)
* Fees
* Payment procedures
* Refund policy
* Stall sizes
* Arrival procedures – e.g. set-up time, access, parking
* Rules – e.g. noise levels
* Consequences for breaches of rules
* Safe food handling
* Labelling/signage requirements
* Food restrictions – e.g. nuts, eggs
* Extreme weather protocols
* Equipment required and disallowed – e.g. tables, marquees
* Rules for animals at the market
* Regulations on the sale of goods – e.g. counterfeit or dangerous goods
* Disposal of rubbish
* Market contact details (before and during the event)
* Market committee members
* Advertising.

### Equipment

You’ll need to provide:

* Tables
* Cash tins
* Marquees
* Seating
* Plates, serviettes, condiments
* Power, gas, water.

### Sponsorship

To increase funds you might be able to sell sponsorship of the market each month. This could give the sponsor naming rights to the market in all advertising and announcements.

If you have more interested parties than months available, offer packages (gold, silver, etc).

### Volunteers

Tasks for volunteers include:

* Responding to queries and taking bookings from stallholders
* Making goods for sale
* Running stalls
* Set-up and clean-up.

### Add-ons

* If your market has stallholders from outside your organisation, reserve the rights to some types of stalls for yourself. The most profitable stalls tend to be those selling cakes, scones, ice-cream, pizza, pies, hot potatoes, sausages, lollies and fairy floss.
* If your markets are a success, it might be worthwhile purchasing large items such as marquees, a coffee machine or a fairy floss machine to enable you to make more money in the long term.
* Run a raffle or spinning wheel at your market for added funds and excitement.

## Fetes

‘Fete’ is the French word for a celebration, party or festival. Fetes are about people having fun and developing social networks while making money – a marriage of frivolity and virtue.

For an exhaustive guide to running fetes, see the book Great Fetes: Fundraising and Fun – Without the Fuss, also published by Our Community.

### Venue

The grounds of your organisation or school (if large enough) are the perfect venue for your fete. If your grounds are inadequate, consider a local park or sports ground.

Whatever the venue, choose a site with good access and proximity to passing traffic to attract passers-by.

### Theme

Having a theme helps with marketing and decorating your fete. You could run a competition in your organisation’s newsletter to find a theme, or consider these:

* A day at the races
* Circus
* Christmas
* Easter
* International fiesta
* Sports
* Carnivàle
* Twilight
* Environment.

### Time

Try to choose a time of year when the weather is predictable. Check whether there are other fetes or events in your area on the same day that you need to avoid or link with to increase attendance at your event. Consider whether daylight savings time applies.

You might decide to hold your fete on a weekday or weekend, during the day, at twilight or in the evening.

### Entertainment

The performers, activities, competitions, rides and games you provide throughout the day will help to create an atmosphere to entice people to enjoy the fete, stay longer and spend more money.

Try to link at least some of the entertainment and activities to the theme of your fete. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination – the ones below are a starting point.

#### Performers

* Inhouse performers – staff, parents or students performing singing, juggling, magic, comedy or dance
* Local or school choir or band
* Buskers
* Local dance groups
* Musicians.

#### Rides

* Jumping castle
* Merry-go-round
* Giant slide
* Tea cups
* Animal farm
* Dodgem cars
* Chair-o-plane
* Miniature train
* Rock climbing
* Bungy run
* Other larger rides – rollercoaster, cyclone, pirate ship, etc.

#### Demonstrations & services

* Local interest group demonstration
* Sporting clubs – hockey, soccer, football, lacrosse, netball, basketball
* Chefs – cook-offs in the style of MasterChef or Iron Chef, or a demonstration from a local expert
* Local scouts or guides – demonstration of skills or games
* Martial arts – karate, jujitsu, taekwondo
* Exercise – aerobics, yoga, Pilates
* Police – police band, a police car or other police equipment, security tagging of bicycles and electrical equipment
* SES – a demonstration of rescue gear or CPR
* Firefighters – distributing fire safety messages and showing off the fire engine.

#### Activities

* Badge making
* Car wash
* Dunk a teacher
* Face painting
* Fingernail painting
* Jewellery making
* Painting fun
* Plaster craft
* Photographic evidence
* Pony rides
* Tattoos.

#### Competitions

* Air guitar contest
* Balloon car
* Basketball shooting
* One-hole or mini-golf
* Bust a balloon
* Colouring competition
* Egg them on
* Handball competition
* Longest kick
* Fun run
* Gumboot throwing
* Slow and steady wins the race.
* Games of chance
* Auction
* Balloons aloft
* Cakewalks
* Guess the lollies in the jar
* Hoops
* Lucky dip
* Mystery bottle
* Raffles
* Spinning wheel.

#### Stalls

* Helium balloons
* Books and DVDs
* Caricatures
* Clothing
* Cookbooks
* Craft
* Flowers
* Show bags
* White elephant or jumble stalls
* From the garden.

### Food

It’s vital to provide a range of food stalls to serve the many people enjoying the fete, while catering for a variety of tastes and budgets.

Look at the cultures and experience of the people in your community to see what they would like and how they can help.

### Prizes

You’ll need to source prizes for your competitions and games of chance, especially the spinning wheel.

Seek donations from local businesses, offering them naming rights to the spinning wheel. Try to link the prizes to the theme of each competition. For example, you could award an art shop voucher to the winner of the colouring competition, and football tickets for the longest kick.

### Equipment

A fete requires a lot of equipment to run efficiently and successfully, and you need to be prepared to ensure all of it is available on the day.

Consider combining stalls to reduce the amount of equipment needed. For example, you could join the face-painting, tattoo and jewellery stalls.

You will probably need:

* Trestle tables
* Refrigerators
* Barbecues
* Freezers
* Eskies
* Chairs
* Tables
* Audio-visual equipment
* Marquees
* Lighting
* Stage
* Sports equipment.

### Sponsorship

Fetes provide sponsors with plenty of opportunities and spaces for advertising. You could offer sponsorship packages, or rights to specific sections of the fete; for example:

* Billboards, flyers and competition registration forms
* Food court or individual food stalls
* Stage naming rights
* Competitions (e.g. Hampson Hardware’s Gumboot Throwing Competition).

### Volunteers

A fete requires a huge amount of commitment from volunteers both before the event and on the day. Volunteers will be needed for the following tasks:

#### Before the event

* Bake for the food stalls
* Pack lolly bags
* Wrap lucky dip prizes
* Source equipment
* Price goods for sale
* Make posters for food stalls
* Make directional signage.

#### On the day

* Set up
* Blow up balloons
* Count money
* Manage stalls and activities
* Run competitions
* Coordinate the stage events
* Pack up and clean up.

## Auctions

Auctions can be run as stand-alone events, or as invaluable add-ons to boost the fundraising potential of other special events. Auctions can be quickly and easily added onto markets, trivia nights, movie nights, art shows, fashion parades or dinner dances.

To add to the atmosphere and excitement of an auction, and to maximise participation, encourage people to bid as a group. There are many items and experiences that can be shared. It’s a great chance for groups of friends to end up as the winners of a dinner party at home or a weekend away in a holiday house.

### What to auction

Many of us have attended a fundraising auction where the items up for grabs could be described as lacklustre. But it doesn’t take much to think outside the square and find exciting items to sell to raise funds.

Look at your members’ skills. Maybe there’s a mechanic or detailer who can offer car-related services for auction. Are there any IT gurus, advertising people, farmers, tradespeople or restaurateurs who can donate auction goods and services?

Maybe your organisation has contacts in other areas – ‘friends of friends’ and others you’ve worked with before who might be able to offer something unique for your auction list.

Or maybe you have something – space on or in a building, access to a local landmark or high-visibility location – that might attract bids from people wanting to advertise their business. The great thing about these types of items is that they can be ‘sold’ for a year, and then auctioned again next time around.

There will be people in your local community who are very disorganised or very busy. Auction the opportunity for them to have someone from your organisation come in and help them out – to clean up their desk, get their contact lists in order, file their papers, do their holiday shopping, or buy birthday, baby shower or other gifts for them.

### Popular items

* **Accommodation** – Weekend away at an inner-city hotel or B&B
* **Vehicle** – Harley Davidson bike ride or weekend BMW convertible hire
* **Catered dinner party** – Someone cooks at your house
* **Signed memorabilia** – From a celebrity or sports star
* **Tickets** – Theatre, concert, movie or sporting event
* **Services** – Car, massage, house cleaning, dog grooming
* **Membership** – Gym, museum, sporting event or club, pool, or your own organisation
* **Sports equipment** – Bike, gym bag, ball, treadmill
* **Toys** – Doll’s house, Wii, trampoline, Lego
* **Vouchers** – Restaurants, shops, movies, theatres, petrol, food.

### Items with a difference

Many people already have all the things they want, so if you want to sell them something, you’ll need to offer a gimmick. Here are some ideas to consider – most of them cheap, and each with an extra ‘something’:

* Shopping spree at the shopping centre
* Lunch with your local MP, MLC or mayor
* Gingerbread house
* Pen and ink drawing of the winner’s house and garden
* Handmade items
* Signed work of art
* Caricature
* Makeover or spa treatment
* Monthly flowers for a year
* Christmas shopping and wrapping
* Season ticket for the zoo or the pool
* Cocktail party in the home
* Fresh produce from local farmers or members
* Celebrity artwork
* Signed book/photo.

### Goods, services & talents (GST)

Ask local businesses and members to donate goods, services or talents such as:

* Week at a holiday house
* Painting
* Solar panel installation
* Lawnmowing
* Handcrafted art
* Hairdressing
* Car tune-ups
* Gourmet food hampers
* Trays of frozen meat
* Pastries
* Restaurant vouchers.

### Bundled items

Some donated goods are not really suitable for auctioning individually. These include books, magazines, CDs, DVDs, Christmas decorations, beauty products and stationery items.

To make them more attractive, bundle them up to auction as a themed hamper, or sell them in a secret balloon sale. Write the name of an item on a piece of paper and insert it into a balloon, which you sell for $2 to $5. You could include one large item as an incentive, and perhaps some saying, “Sorry, please try again, and collect a chocolate bar from the ticket desk for your efforts.”

### ‘I’m not afraid’ items

This type of auction can be held with any number of participants. The idea is that you find out what people are afraid of doing, and then sell a service that does it for them. This is different from a service auction – there has to be an element of dread in the activity.

For example, some people can’t wash their windows because their apartment is too high, or they suffer from vertigo. You need to recruit volunteers who are not afraid of heights and are prepared to provide a window-washing service.

The same goes for drain cleaning, minor roof repairs, antenna fixing, and removing spiders, cockroaches, mice or rats.

Offer to clean out that dark corner of a garage or basement for a small fee.

How about allergies to dust, pollen and weeds? For people who suffer from these allergies, you can charge for dusting, cleaning, mowing or weeding.

##### What sells, what doesn’t

Research has shown that the following items tend to be the most popular and attract the highest bids at auctions:

* Unique trips and experiences
* Normally unobtainable items
* Restaurants
* Golf outings
* Handmade items
* Airline and cruise tickets
* Hotel stays
* Wine.

The items that tend to attract the fewest bids and sell at below their value at auctions are:

* Art
* Jewellery
* Business and professional services
* Antiques.

### Auction formats

#### Traditional auctions

The traditional loud auction creates a fun atmosphere and competition among bidders. Here are some tips on managing the event and maximising fundraising:

* Organise a professional auctioneer to run the event.
* Set a starting price for each item.
* Provide a catalogue, including starting prices, for everyone who attends.
* Organise someone to roam the room recording the names and phone numbers of successful bidders. Alternatively, require bidders to register before the auction.
* Collect payment as soon as the auction is over.
* Don’t hand over items until full payment has been made.

#### Silent auctions

*See Template 22: Silent Auction Bid Sheet*

Even silent auctions create a fun atmosphere and competition between bidders, especially as the ending time draws near. To make sure your silent auction runs smoothly:

* Number each item.
* Provide a catalogue, including starting prices, for everyone who attends.
* For each item, create a bidding sheet showing the item number and starting price, with space for each bidder’s name and bid.
* Tape the bidding sheet on the table next to the corresponding item so it can’t be removed from the area.
* Promote items throughout the night, especially those with few bids.
* Give time warnings so people don’t miss out on bidding.
* When the auction is over, have organisers collect all bid sheets immediately.
* Hand out winning bid slips to each winning bidder and request payment by the end of the event.
* Keep records of bids for each item for future reference when setting prices.
* Don’t hand over items until full payment has been made.

#### Online auctions

Online auctions (through eBay, for example) continue to grow in popularity and number. They provide opportunities for bidding from a wider audience and over a longer period of time. When you’re organising an online auction:

* Provide a detailed description of each item.
* List a starting price for each item.
* Give details of how winning bidders can collect items.
* Have an end time with a countdown to alert bidders to bidding time remaining.
* Provide an email address for queries about the item.

#### Chance auctions

This introduces an element of chance and can speed up a slow auction.

Display a few prizes on a table with a box next to each item. Sell people tickets with spaces for them to write their name and bid. People fill out a ticket and drop it in the box next to a prize.

During the auction, the box is brought up to the stage and a member of the audience draws a number (five, say) of tickets. The auctioneer reads out the bids, and the highest bid wins the item.

#### Combination auctions

You can combine the auction types outlined earlier to create more interest, attract more bidders, raise more money, and give more people a chance to win. For example, you could:

* List items online before your event, then continue the bidding at the live event.
* List some items online and others as a loud or silent auction at your event.
* Sell your smaller items at a silent auction and save higher value items for a traditional auction to create atmosphere at your event.
* Run a chance auction concurrently with a traditional auction.

### Collecting the money

*See Template 23: Auction Claim Ticket*

*See Template 24: Auction Winners*

One of the challenges of running an auction is ensuring successful bidders hand over their money. Fundraisers are often left with items not paid for, and then they face the embarrassing situation of trying to chase up the winning bidder, who might be less than enthusiastic about paying up once the excitement of the auction is over.

Have the auctioneer outline the terms and conditions of bidding, and methods of payment, before commencing the auction.

Have a team of volunteers responsible for ensuring that as the hammer falls on each auction item, they record the winning bid and give the winning bidder an auction claim ticket detailing the price and methods of payment. Another volunteer should record all winning bidders and their contact details on a master list.

The longer you leave it, the more difficult it will be to collect the money. Provide details of payment methods in all your advertising so that people come prepared. The aim should be to have everyone settle up before the event winds up.

You could require attendees to register beforehand in order to bid. Collect each bidder’s name and contact details in advance and issue them with a large uniquely numbered card with which they can bid.

### Volunteers

Volunteers are vital to the success of auctions. They are needed to:

* Source donations of goods, services and talents to be auctioned
* Prepare paperwork, auction lists, tickets and receipts
* Prepare items for auction (e.g. bundling items together)
* Promote items for sale on the night
* Serve food and drink
* Handle money.