

Mackay Region

How to Organise Special Events and Festivals

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Introduction

Special events are widely recognised as being a growth sector of the tourism industry with potential to generate substantial economic benefit for the city, region or community involved. With only 5% of visitors currently travelling to the Mackay region for business or leisure tourism events, there is potential to grow visitation for events as well as provide the perfect opportunity for mid-week visitation and dispersal¹. Because of the many different types of special events, the planning, management and marketing requirements will vary from event to event. Nevertheless, there are a number of fundamental principles which apply to all events irrespective of size, scope and type.

This handbook explains principles for special events and provides a practical step-by-step guide to assist clubs, associations and event committees with the event planning, management and marketing process, including the preparation of submissions for sponsorship, and conducting a post-event evaluation.

It has been produced by Tourism and Events Queensland in partnership with Mackay Tourism.

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¹ Mackay Region Destination Tourism Plan



Planning your Event

Preparing a Business Plan

All events should have a Business Plan. If grant funding is required, a Business Plan will be essential to support your application. However, the plan does not need to be a large document, you can keep it simple as long as you focus on key issues including:

- What is the aim of your organisation (why does it exist)?
- Describe the event
- What is the objective of the event?
- What will make the event 'special/different/unique'?
- How will the event be funded?
- What is the event budget?
- How will the event be staffed?
- How will the event be promoted?
- What is the action plan (main tasks) and time line?
- What is the event program?
- How will you evaluate the benefits created by the event?
- And, if an ongoing event, how to do you plan to ensure its ongoing viability (financially and sustainably)

REFER TO APPENDIX A - BUSINESS PLAN TEMPLATE

What type of event?

Tourism Events can act as a hook that complements the already existing tourism infrastructure and product of an area AND:

- Give visitors a reason to visit
- Extend the nature and length of a visitor's stay
- Increase visitor spend/yield
- Provide valuable media exposure, bolstering image, branding and positioning
- Foster regional pride
- Create jobs

A Typical Event Hierarchy

Major

Hallmark festivals or events (including major exhibitions).

- World Class, annual or biennial
- Create substantial economic impact;
- Attract significant interstate and international visitation to the state;
- Attract significant national/international broadcast coverage;
- e.g. Townsville V8s, Brisbane International (Tennis), Magic Millions, PGA Golf

Significant Regional

Festivals or events (including exhibitions) in-region that:

- Create economic impact by bringing significant domestic visitation to the region (and possibly the state);
- Get significant regional/state/national coverage. e.g. Mt Isa Rodeo, Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers, Hamilton Island Race Week

Regional

Festivals or events (including exhibitions) in-region that:

- Bring visitation to the region and gain some regional (and maybe some state) coverage
- Local passionate supporters; potential to grow and evolve over time
- eg: Mackay Harbour Beach Race Day, River Sessions, Airlie Beach Race Week

Community

Does not attract visitation from outside the region;

- A community event is primarily created for the immediate locale.

Assessing the Idea and Opportunity

In planning a new event you need to consider if there is a clearly identified opportunity to stage the proposed new event.

Refer to local event calendars or check with Mackay Tourism and your local Council or when planning a new event to assess:

- The number and type of events held annually in the community and elsewhere in the region.
- Any likelihood that the new event may duplicate (wholly or partly) an existing event.
- The peak and low months in the region's annual events calendar.

In the planning stage you will also need to consider:

- The human resources likely to be available at the time the event is to be held.
- If the event is reliant on sponsorship support, is your target list or style of sponsors being considered already saturated in supporting similar style events within the region?

Event Calendars and Contacts

Mackay Tourism Ltd

Mackay Event Calendar www.mackayregion.com/events
Contact: 07 4944 5888

Mackay Regional Council

Whats On Calendar www.mackay.qld.gov.au
Contact: 1300 622 529

Isaac Regional Council

Events Calendar www.isaac.qld.gov.au
Contact: 1300 47 22 27

Setting Objectives and Theme

From the outset, a clear objective (or objectives) should be established for the event and each member of the committees and other organisations involved must be fully aware of it/them.

Typical objectives could be:

- To increase local or regional tourism during off-peak seasons
- To raise funds for a charity or community service organisation
- To raise funds for a particular project

Your objective/s can play a major part in generating support from local and state government, Mackay Tourism, Tourism and Events Queensland, the community, sponsors, volunteer resources and the media. Despite the importance of the event objective, this issue is not always given adequate recognition by event committees.

In the case of festivals and special events, as well as having clear objectives, it is important to establish a strong theme. This theme should be innovative, and one which 'grabs' attention to stimulate wide interest in the event.

Strive to create a strong and unique identity, preferably based on some aspect of the local area. An event may generate interest because of its scale or, as with competitive events, the prizes to be won. Nevertheless, the important issues are the theme, identity and originality to ensure the event provides a compelling reason for people to want to attend/participate.

The Importance of Lead Time in Event Planning

When the objectives and theme have been established, the next step is to estimate the required lead time to undertake the planning process.

As well as establishing how the event will be financed, by far the most critical issue in planning a special event is allowing sufficient lead time: the time it will take to plan, organise and promote the event. As a very general guide, appropriate lead times are:

- Small local events: 6 – 12 months
- Medium scale events: 1 – 2 years
- Large events: 2 years +

Ideally, planning should start at least 12 months prior to any event. Failure to allow adequate lead time invariably increases the chances of errors and of overlooking some aspect of the planning process, gives inadequate time for sponsors to consider submissions, and can result in ineffective promotion. Also, as the pressures compound, the workload on the committee during the lead up to the event can become intense. So, it is crucial to make a realistic estimate of the length of time (months) needed to complete the many tasks required. Realistically, only then should the date of the event be set and the venue booked.



Setting the Event Date

Clashing of event dates is one of the main constraints faced by many event committees, and as regional event calendars are increasingly being expanded, finding clear dates at suitable times of the year can be difficult.

The selection of a suitable date should take into account such factors as:

- Venue availability
- Probable weather conditions at the particular time of the year.
- The potential market/s, if there is likelihood of other events placing constraints on gaining patronage
- The type of event and possible competitive influence from any similar events to be held at the same time.

Refer to Council and RTO contacts and event calendars under 'Assessing the Idea and Opportunity' on page 4 when assessing possible competition from other regional events.

Staging the Event during an Off-Peak Period

This can substantially boost off-season business and would normally be well supported by local tourism operators and the business community.

Staging the Event during a Peak Tourist Season

If the objective of the event is to raise funds for a worthy cause, then advantage can be gained by tapping into the large numbers of visitors staying in or travelling through the area. Nevertheless, caution should be exercised when endeavouring to attract more visitors from outside the area for an event held during a peak period, in a popular holiday destination region at a time when traffic density is high, little accommodation is available, and the area is already crowded.

Developing the Action Plan

As soon as the lead time has been defined, an action plan or schedule should be drawn up for each month detailing tasks and responsibilities, and distributed to each committee member, the sub-committees and other participating organisations.

The Action Plan must identify all the activities needed to make the event happen, what is to be done, when it has to be done, and by whom – this forms the core of a Business Plan. However, the date by which everything must be completed should be set at 2-4 weeks before the event, thereby establishing a buffer period to allow for unexpected delays in getting things organised. If it is necessary to alter the timing and/or sequence of some tasks, the Plan should be immediately revised and redistributed. Another important advantage is that if a key committee member leaves the area or becomes ill, the person taking over can quickly find out the status of the planning process in any given month.

REFER TO APPENDIX B - ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

Using Professional Services

A wide range of specialist expertise is available on a consultancy basis to assist clubs and associations with special events. This expertise includes:

- Preparation of business and marketing plans
- Preparation of applications for grants and subsidies
- Professional event organisers
- Marketing
- Public relations
- Advertising agencies
- Sponsorship submissions
- Risk management
- Security
- Traffic control/management
- Catering
- Entertainment promoters

The capacity to employ a specialist will be tied to the budget available. For larger events, and given the increasing competition for event patronage in many regions, engaging professional assistance may well be advantageous. However, specialist expertise is not essential and many good regional events are organised and staged without employing consultancy services.

If the appointment of a specialist/s is being considered, the first step is to decide as precisely as possible what they will be required to do, and the expected outcomes of this work. The next step is to prepare a brief, and identify appropriate individuals or firms or to advertise for proposals or by inviting proposals from recommended firms.

Depending on the type of expertise required, to identify suitable consultancy firms a good starting point can be Mackay Tourism and/or Tourism and Events Queensland. Other sources for this information can include:

- Councils
- Other event committees
- Professional associations

REFER TO APPENDIX C - CONSULTANT BRIEF TEMPLATE

Licences and Permits

Licences and permits needed for an event should be identified as early as possible and applications submitted to the relevant authorities. Early action is essential to allow time for applications to be processed and the necessary licences and permits to be issued.

Depending on event requirements, licences or permits may be needed from

- Local Government
- Venue managing body
- State Government Departments including Police Service, Department of Main Roads and Liquor Licensing.

Mackay Regional Council – Event Planning Guide

Mackay Regional Council has developed an Event Planning Guide to provide assistance to festival and event organisers within the Mackay local government area which contains valuable guidance for complying with Council regulations when planning a festival or event.

Strategic Planning

With a more demanding market that is constantly seeking new experiences, combined with much greater competition in the events sector, long-term strategic planning is essential to ensure sustainability. The fundamental question to ask here is: Where do we want our event to be in future years?

If your event is more than a once-off, you should develop a 3–5 year strategic plan that will establish the foundation and duration for the sustainability of your event i.e., how you intend to make sure it is viable each year and will keep attracting visitors.

It is important to make sure the event program focuses on the core business. In regular events there is the tendency, as the years go by, to add program components that have little relevance to the event name and/or objectives or theme. With a far more selective market, keep in mind that quality of the components, not quantity, is the most important factor.

You may also want to consider opportunities across 'boundaries' and join with other communities and regions – there may be co-operative opportunities that are being overlooked.

The Constraints of Tradition

It is important for event committees to be receptive to new ideas, perhaps to improve the planning process, gain membership, improve the event in some way, or achieve more effective promotion.

Organisations that have been staging an annual event over many years usually undertake a traditional approach which they believe has proved to be successful. While tradition can be a good thing, it can also be a constraint. Some event organising committees have a tendency to do certain things - not necessarily because they produce the desired results, but simply because 'it has always been done that way', - which may not work in the present as effectively as in the past.

Resolving Stagnation or Decline of Annual Events

Over time, some events that have been held annually for a number of years may experience stagnation or gradual decline in attracting public interest and patronage.

This is usually caused by any one, or a combination of, the following reasons

- Public attitude of 'we've seen it all before'
- Inadequate market research
- Decline in the effectiveness of marketing methods traditionally used to promote the event
- Events being held too frequently to maintain the level of public interest and support
- Oversupply of special events in the community or region
- Competition from other events in the region or elsewhere, aimed at similar markets
- Spectator and/or competitor dissatisfaction with a previous event
- Seasonality factors
- Consistent inclement weather
- Economic conditions
- Similarity to other events in the community or region or even the state.

Over time, society and attitudes change and the rate of this change is increasing, with the result that an event that has been popular for a number of years may no longer generate the same level of patronage simply because the public is no longer interested in the experiences offered by that event, despite the best efforts of the organising committee.

Event organisers can consider the following options when faced with a decline in interest or attendance at their event:

- Expanding the marketing effort to attract new markets
- Boosting the event program with new experiences.
- Changing the date/s of the event to a more appropriate time of the year
- Extending the time between the events to every two/three years
- Combining with other compatible events to create greater impact and wider interest
- Discontinuing the event

TEQ Regional Events Conference

Tourism and Events Queensland hold an annual Regional Events Conference which is a great opportunity for event organisers to share knowledge, network and learn about creating and growing a successful event. The conference is in a different regional Queensland town each year and always features an exciting program of workshops, forums and keynote presentations, as well as ample time to network and exchange ideas with other delegates.

For further information, visit

www.eventsqld.com.au/regional-events-conference



Sponsorship and Grants

In the economic climate of today businesses and governments are becoming far more selective in providing sponsorship funding and other resources for special events, and they also being asked more often, making it a competitive market place.

The underlying question businesses are asking is 'What's in it for us?' Sponsors seek value in return for their investment. Public funding schemes such as festival and event and even community grants also will require some level of evidence of return on investment.

To gain and maintain support from sponsors or grant schemes, event organisers must focus on:

- A professional approach
- Giving sponsors/funders value for money and demonstrating financial stability of the event
- Delivering on promises
- Building goodwill and an ongoing relationship

This section talks about sponsorship and grant funding separately.

Sponsorship Plan

If you want sponsors you must develop a sponsorship plan before submitting any requests.

This plan should complement your business/marketing plan, and address the following:

- What will benefit the event sponsors
- Which organisations would be likely to provide sponsorship (eg: local, national, regional, state)
- What type of sponsorship will be sought from each potential sponsor (cash, in-kind, other)
- Identification of any potential conflict/s of interest between the objective/s of the event and any sponsor - including any likely conflict of interest if more than one major sponsor is involved
- For annual events, are these any opportunities for sponsorship to be maintained for longer than one year
- Recognition of the time required to allow for the preparation, submission and approval of sponsorship applications

REFER TO APPENDIX D - SPONSORSHIP PLAN TEMPLATE

Sponsorship Submission Guidelines

With the above points in mind, these guidelines outline the methods that should be adopted when seeking sponsorship.

- Submit sponsorship applications well in advance of the event; give sponsors ample time to consider the applications; set a time-frame for the preparation and submission of applications, and allocate these responsibilities.
- Ensure the sponsor's products/services are compatible with the event;
- Be realistic with your request; a sponsor's product may be much easier to obtain than cash, and depending on the product/s, this could help to offset costs.
- Gain an understanding of sponsor expectations; once potential sponsors have been identified, do some homework to find out what each sponsor expects in the submission, and the benefits they require. Consider tailoring each sponsoring proposal to each sponsor you approach rather than a generic version to them all.
- Address sponsorship proposals to the relevant decision-maker.
- If an approach is to be made to competitive companies, for example, airlines, submit the sponsorship request to one company only, and make this point clear in the application. If this application is unsuccessful, only then should an application be sent to a competitor.
- Ensure the application is professional; there is only one opportunity given to create a good first impression, so it is essential that the submission is professional in every way: well written and typed with good page layout, and professionally presented.
- Maintain effective communication with sponsors; once sponsorship has been gained, ensure good communication is maintained throughout the period leading up to the event. Keep them informed of any media releases, instances where sponsors' names have been publicised, and any other relevant information.
- Take advantage of every opportunity to 'plug' the sponsor/s; take every effort to give maximum publicity to sponsors in pre-event media releases and interviews.
- Deliver on agreed outcomes; standing by your commitments to sponsors and giving recognition wherever and whenever possible are the keys to building a foundation for future sponsorship. Make sure that each and every outcome proposed in the sponsorship application is delivered (and only include outcomes you know you can deliver!). If possible, work on the basis of delivering a little more than the sponsor expects, i.e. under-promise and over-deliver.
- Reporting; as soon as possible after the event a comprehensive report should be prepared for ALL sponsors. Apart from being a matter of courtesy, this will demonstrate their return on investment and potentially strengthen the partnership in order to gain support for future events.

How to Prepare a Submission for Sponsorship

Content of the submission may vary according to the type of event, but all submissions should include the following information:

- Full details of the event. If it is a regular event, include copies of press clippings and other relevant information on past events.
- Event committee expertise/experience, and if a regular event - the track record.
- Contact name/address/telephone number/email
- Sponsorship requested, i.e. funding and/or in kind.
- How the sponsorship will be used.
- Detail benefits for the sponsor, for example:
 - Naming rights
 - Signage
 - Advertising
 - Presentation of prizes by sponsor representatives
 - Unique or special benefits
 - Other participation

Make sure the major sponsor is offered the greatest benefit. Make every effort to give equivalent monetary value for the benefits given. Most large sponsors will look for an indication of the worth of the sponsorship.



Grant Funding and Subsidies

Depending on the type of event, a range of grants and other assistance may be available from Local, State and Federal Government sources.

While event committees shouldn't rely on grant funding to run their event, it can be useful to boost marketing activity or employ professional services to assist in running or promoting the event. Tourism grant programs will generally look for a focus on marketing activity which will draw visitors to the region, ultimately contributing to creating a direct economic impact to the destination. Each funding source will have different submission requirements, however most will require an event to have a business plan, marketing plan, evidence of financials and event statistics, which is where the evaluation section of this handbook will be useful. Remember, these grant funds are from public money so the organisations or agencies offering them will be looking for a return on investment just as private enterprise would.

Some grant funding options to consider for special events are:

Tourism and Events Queensland Programs:

Regional Development Program

Tourism and Events Queensland's Regional Development Program (RDP) is an investment program designed to extend the flow of economic and social benefits of events to regional Queensland.

The Regional Development Program offers two funding options for regional events:

1. Core Event Funding - single year event support
2. Significant Regional Events Scheme - single or multi-year support (up to three years)

Further details can be found at www.eventsqld.com.au

Major Event Funding

One of TEQ's objectives is to identify, attract, develop and promote major events that contribute to the state's tourism and events industries and economy. TEQ works to secure major events to be held in Queensland that:

1. contribute to the Queensland economy
2. attract visitors to Queensland
3. enhance the profile of Queensland
4. foster community pride in Queensland

Organisations seeking financial support from Tourism and Events Queensland for major event funding must have a well-developed business case. Those seeking to make a submission for support are required to fill out the online checklist which can be found at www.eventsqld.com.au

Tourism Assistance Database

The Tourism Assistance Database provides:

1. information on relevant funding programs and grants for the tourism industry
2. advice, hints and tips on submitting a funding application

A list of other potential grant/funding sources is provided on page 16.

For information and advice on accessing and applying for grants, check Tourism and Events Queensland's Grants Guide at www.tq.com.au/tad

To assist with obtaining Australian Government grants please visit www.business.gov.au/BusinessTopics/Grantsandassistance or for Queensland Government grants visit www.smartservice.qld.gov.au/services/grants

Acquittal of Grant Funding

In just about every case government departments and authorities will require a funding acquittal; ie: confirmation that the funds were used for what they were awarded for.

This information will need to be supplied accurately and promptly following the event. Many programs will generally supply an acquittal template, and you should be sure to keep accurate and detailed records that show how the funding was received and spent (eg: via your financial statements). Accountability is paramount for public funds and supplying details of funding acquittal must always be treated as a mandatory and priority part of the post-event action. Event organisers that fail to properly address acquittal requirements of grant funding will have little if any chance of gaining future grant funding from the same grant program and may even be asked to repay the funding they were awarded.





Marketing and Promotion

Preparing a Marketing Plan

A marketing plan is crucial for three main reasons:

1. The events industry is competitive, and an ad hoc or scattered approach to marketing may increase the risk of failure and financial loss, as indicated earlier. Marketing activity must be carefully planned and targeted to achieve maximum results from each dollar spent.
2. If approaches are to be made to Government or semi-Government organisations for grant subsidies or other assistance, in most cases these organisations will request a marketing plan as part of submissions.
3. Major sponsors will want to see how the event is to be promoted. A marketing plan assists in obtaining a favourable outcome from sponsorship submissions.

REFER TO APPENDIX E - MARKETING PLAN TEMPLATE

Identify your Target Markets

Know who you are targeting; consumers today are constantly being bombarded by an ever-increasing stream of advertising messages, and if event promotion is to achieve maximum effectiveness, it must be carefully targeted at the right audience. This means taking the time to identify the target groups by conducting market research and formulating the appropriate strategies to reach these markets.

A basic marketing plan can be developed from some fundamental investigations, focusing on three questions:

Who are the target markets?

E.g. age groups, families, couples, children, special-interest, competitors, spectators, tourists.

Where are these markets?

E.g. local community, region, state, national, international. Be realistic - determine what type/s of tourists already visit the region

How do we reach the target markets?

Formulating marketing strategies necessitates identifying the most appropriate and cost-effective ways to get the message across to the particular group (or groups) you wish to attract.

Consider alignment to the markets that Mackay Tourism is targeting for the destination; Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR), Family holiday-makers and Tourers.

Both Mackay Tourism and Tourism and Events Queensland can assist with research tools and resources, including destination data, visitor profiles and market segmentation. These can be found at www.tq.com.au/research and www.tq.com.au/marketing.

Market Research

In-depth market research is usually beyond the resources of smaller events. Even so, market research can be done easily and at minimal cost.

The simplest method is to request a postcode when a ticket is purchased. This information will indicate the existing trade catchment area for your event. Ideally a survey should be conducted to seek information on such factors as:

- Place of origin (town or region or state)
- Age group
- Number in party (adults/children)
- Accommodation used (if staying over)
- Method of travel, i.e. own vehicle or type of public transport; fly/drive etc
- How they heard of the event
- What attracted them to book/buy a ticket
- What they considered were the highlights of the event

The more information you can obtain the better because it is this hard evidence that sets the foundation for subsequent sponsorship, grant funding and other assistance.



Timing

Timing of promotional activities is extremely important. The initial promotion should start as soon as the date has been set to create awareness of the event in the target market and enable people who may have to travel some distance to make plans to attend. For larger events, promotion should continue throughout the lead up time, for example, news releases, other media publicity and newsletters.

For smaller events, budgets are normally limited so promotion should be considered in two main stages: Firstly, initial promotion early in the planning process, and secondly, during the three/four weeks prior to the event. In the interim, every effort should be made to gain media support to generate ongoing publicity.

Marketing Activities

There are a number of options available for promoting a special event, the most common methods used for events are:

- Online – event website, social media advertising
- Press/radio advertising
- Leaflets and posters
- E-newsletters
- Direct mail to special-interest groups
- Co-operative marketing with other organisations
- Banners and signs
- Australian Tourism Data Warehouse

In addition to paid promotion, full advantage should be taken of opportunities for low or no cost publicity, such as:

- Event calendars in print and online: local/regional/state
- News releases
- Media interviews
- Public speaking about the event
- Word-of-mouth through friends and relatives
- Social media
- Complimentary website links
- Any channels your sponsors can offer that fit with your target audience

Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)

Opportunity exists for event organisers to have events listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse free of charge. The ATDW is a database of Australian Tourism product held in a common format ready made for distribution via websites such as:

Tourism Australia www.australia.com

Tourism and Events Queensland www.queenslandholidays.com.au

Mackay Tourism www.mackayregion.com

Event listings are free and up to four images can be included. Mackay Tourism and Tourism and Events Queensland use events on ATDW to populate their events calendar and for any media promotion. Event organisations can provide event information to ATDW using the online link at www.atdw.com.au

Regional Tourism Organisations, Local Tourism Organisations and Visitor Information Centres

Ensure that you contact Mackay Tourism and your local council when putting together your marketing plan. They may not be able to provide financial support but in most cases they may be able to provide marketing advice and include information about your event on websites and in some of their own communication tools/channels.

Accredited Visitor Information Centres can also be a great distribution point for information on your event. Brief the staff about your event and keep them up-to-date on new events or other information they can pass on to visitors to the region. Consider VIC's within and outside of your region, depending on your target market.

Contacts for Mackay Tourism, local councils and Visitor Information Centres can be found on page 15.

Developing a Dedicated Website

The event website is today what the special event brochure was a generation ago: a place to provide information, create interest, entice people to attend and even buy tickets online.

The best websites allow people to find out everything they need to know about the event. The core rules of a successful event website include:

- Present a clear, easy way to find information
- Focus on the 5 W's about the event (who, what, where, when and why)
- An option for your customers to book/buy tickets (if applicable), remembering that many people like the immediacy of being able to purchase online
- Complimentary information such as accommodation and transport/tour options, maps, destination information etc.

It is vital to have a website developed in the early stages of your event planning. As soon as you have an event name and date, place a static display page on the site with a note "additional information posted soon" – ensure that the critical information is entered as soon as possible and is updated on a regular basis.

Tourism e-Kit

The Tourism e-kit is an educational resource, developed to assist small and medium Australian tourism operators successfully market their business online.

The e-kit is made up of a number of tutorials that cover a range of topics including planning and developing a website, writing web friendly content and successfully promoting products online. Each tutorial has been designed to be a standalone document, so users can read just one tutorial to learn about a specific topic of interest or they may read all tutorials to have a broad understanding.

The Tourism e-kit can be found at www.tq.com.au/marketing/online-marketing

Social Media Networks

Social media includes the various online technology tools which enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information and resources.

Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts and other multimedia communications. Accessible world-wide, social media has substantially changed the way organisations, communities, and individuals communicate. Some social media networks to consider that can assist in promoting your special event include:

Twitter - is an online social networking service and microblogging service which enables its users to send and read text-based posts of up to 140 characters.

Facebook - is a social networking service with more than 1 billion active users. Users can exchange messages, including automatic notifications and join common-interest user groups.

YouTube - is an online video streaming service. YouTube allows registered users to upload videos for public viewing. Anyone who goes to the site can view the videos that are posted.

Instagram - is an online photo and video-sharing network that enables its users to take pictures and videos, apply digital filters to them, and share them with other users.

Engaging with Queensland on Social Media

Got a Queensland story that you want to share with the world? Here's our guide to sharing and playing with Queensland in social media.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/visitqueensland>

The Visit Queensland, Australia Facebook page is a visual way of enticing prospective travellers into a Queensland holiday by featuring Queensland photography, latest competitions and events.

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/Queensland>

The Queensland Youtube channel features entertaining and informative destination videos.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Queensland>

Sharing Queensland photos, blog posts and answering traveller's questions in 140 characters or less.

Google +: <https://plus.google.com/+queensland/posts#+queensland/posts>

Queensland participates in a few communities on Google + like Amazing Places to See, Animal Lovers and Travel Photography.

Instagram: <http://instagram.com/queensland#>

Instagram is a mobile photo-sharing app that is perfect for capturing holiday moments. Queensland monitors the #thisisqueensland hashtag for photos to repost and has guest Instagrammers posting on our behalf every now and then.

Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/visitqueensland/>

Pinterest is a virtual Pinboard that allows Queensland to browse, organise and share visually inspirational content with fellow pinners to help them plan their perfect Queensland holiday.

Foursquare: <https://foursquare.com/queensland>

Queensland shares the best destination tips and curates must do lists for visitors to check-in and tick off their bucket lists.

3 ways to strike up a conversation:

1. **Post a Queensland photo** to the Visit Queensland, Australia Facebook page. This is one of the places where the social media team looks for new content to post. When a photo is reposted a credit will be given by tagging the Facebook page of the photo owner.
2. **Use the #thisisqueensland hashtag** in Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Google + and Pinterest. This hashtag is one of the tools TEQ uses to collect community photos and stories for retweeting or resharing.
3. **Mention @queensland** on Twitter and Instagram to let us know what's happening.

Prepare Media Releases

To get a media release published it is important to prepare newsworthy items. The level of success achieved will be proportional to the initiative and amount of effort put into preparing the media release.

Become familiar with the relevant papers and media outlets both online and print that are consumed by your target market/s. Determine the times of the different editions and the publication dates. For example, monthly magazines require a long lead time as they go to print well before the magazine release date. Ensure the angle of your media release is attractive to the publication i.e. it is 'newsworthy'. If sending photographs, provide high resolution images and avoid those that are vague in content, quality or composition, and ensure images are labelled clearly.

REFER TO APPENDIX F - MEDIA RELEASE TEMPLATE

Advertising

Print Media

When preparing advertising for print media:

- be clear
- be brief
- be believable

Convey information in short, simple sentences or in points - which should act as links in a chain, leading from one point to another and maintaining interest. When the copy is written, carefully go over it several times and delete all unnecessary wording. Strive for simplicity and clarity. Make it as easy as possible for the reader to become motivated. Importantly, highlight the benefits for the reader. Ensure spelling is correct. Research has shown that advertisements with photographs or illustrations will be read by more people than those without.

When deciding which media outlet to provide your advertising, consider:

- Your target audience - does it align with the media outlet's readership
- Timing
- Circulation and readership numbers
- Deadlines for material

Newspapers have the shortest lead in time with advertisements accepted up to a few days prior to publication. Magazines have a much longer lead time with advertisements due 1-2 months prior to the publication date.

Online Media

When preparing advertising for online media:

- be relevant
- keep it simple
- be shareable

Tune into the type of content that engages your target audience and create advertising that aligns with this. Make your advertising appropriate to the context of the site and your audience. Reduce confusion by simplifying the message and imagery, and making call-to-actions clear and concise. A great way to extend reach is to make your ad easily shareable with a message that appeals to your audience.

When deciding on websites or social media channels for advertising, consider:

- Target audience - does it align with the website's readership?
- Timing and website visitation - who looks at the website and when?

Signage

Signage is often displayed during the period leading up to major local or regional events, and this method of promotion can be effective in assisting to get the message across to the local community and passing visitors.

When using signage, keep the messaging simple and copy at a size that can be easily read from a distance. A common mistake is too much wording - in most cases, the name of the event and the date will be sufficient. If a permanent sign is erected for a regularly occurring event, ensure the sign is properly maintained. Also ensure you have permission to erect the signage to avoid unwanted fines!





Evaluation

Evaluating the success of events and identifying the benefits generated for sponsors/funders and the community is the foundation stone for gaining future sponsorship and community support.

Because of limited financial resources and time constraints, some event organisers can find it difficult to undertake an evaluation, particularly in the case of events that are not ticketed. However, time should be committed to evaluating three key areas in order to generate sufficient information for meaningful reports to sponsors and the community.

1. Debriefing Meeting/Planning Assessment

The first step is to arrange a debriefing meeting of the event organisers / main committee / sub-committees as soon as possible after the event, while everything is still fresh in the collective memory.

The aim of this meeting is to review each aspect of the event planning, management and marketing, examine any problems, and identify ways future events can be improved. Importantly, the event outcomes should be evaluated against the goals. As part of this review, organising committees also need to recognise what worked well, i.e. the successes achieved throughout the planning and staging processes.

2. Event Assessment

This step should examine the event in the context of patronage and financial performance. When estimating attendance, there is often a tendency to over-estimate numbers and committees should guard against this. If the event is not ticketed and there are no counts of attendance, estimates should be sought from several different sources, particularly any participating individuals who may have experience in special events such as stallholders/concessionaires and police.

3. Business Activity Assessment

The final stage in the evaluation process looks beyond the event itself to gain an indication of the economic benefit gained by local business by investigating the business activity which occurred during the event. This means contacting frontline tourism operators and other key businesses either by email, phone or in person.

For annual events, the most significant issue is the comparison of evaluation results with the previous year.

REFER TO APPENDIX G - EVENT EVALUATION TEMPLATE



Key Contacts

Tourism and Events Queensland

Level 10, 30 Makerston Street, Brisbane

Phone: 07 3535 3535

www.tq.com.au

Mackay Tourism Ltd

320 Nebo Road, Mackay

Phone: 07 4944 5888

www.mackayregion.com/corporate

Mackay Regional Council

Sir Albert Abbott Administration Building, 73 Gordon Street, Mackay

Phone: 1300 622 529

www.mackay.qld.gov.au

Isaac Regional Council

Grosvenor Complex, Batchelor Parade, Moranbah

Phone: 1300 47 22 27

www.isaac.qld.gov.au

Visitor Information Centres - Mackay and Whitsundays

Bowen Visitor Information Centre

Bruce Highway, South Bowen

07 4786 4222

www.tourismbowen.com.au

Mackay Visitor Information Centre

Nebo Road, Mackay

1300 130 001

www.mackayregion.com

Sarina Tourist Art and Craft Centre

Railway Square, Sarina

07 4956 2251

www.sarinatourism.com

Whitsundays Regional Information Centre

Bruce Highway, Proserpine

07 4945 3967

www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au

For a full list of all Queensland Visitor Information Centres visit
tq.com.au/resourcecentre



Appendices

Other potential Grant/Funding Programs

Arts Queensland

Arts Queensland is dedicated to supporting and growing Queensland's vibrant and innovative arts by promoting a diverse, dynamic, creative culture; strengthening partnerships and collaboration; and capitalising on Queensland's unique strengths and characteristics.

<http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/>

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

The Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing has a range of funding programs available to 'active organisations', making it easier to access the funds needed to spread the words 'Get Active Queensland'.

<http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/>

Gambling Community Benefit Fund Grants

The Gambling Community Benefit Fund distributes grants to Queensland based not-for-profit community groups to provide services and activities to benefit Queensland communities.

<http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/corporate/sponsorships-and-grants/grants/community-benefit-funding-programs>

Queensland Week

The Queensland Week sponsorship program aims to encourage Queenslanders to celebrate and commemorate Queensland Week in a way that reflects the unique culture, heritage and aspirations of their own community.

<http://www.qld.gov.au/about/events-awards-honours/events/queensland-week/sponsorship-program/>

APPENDIX A

BUSINESS PLAN TEMPLATE

What is the aim of your organisation (why does it exist)?
Describe the event
What is the objective of the event?
What will make the event 'special'?
How will the event be funded?
What will be the event budget?
How will the event be staffed?
How will the event be promoted?
What will be the action plan and time line?
What licences and approvals will the event need?
What will be the event program?
How will you evaluate the benefits created by the event?

APPENDIX B

ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

EVENT NAME: _____

EVENT DATE: _____

ACTION PLAN FOR (months): _____

TASK	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETED	FOLLOW-UP

APPENDIX C

CONSULTANT BRIEF TEMPLATE

DATE: _____

ISSUED BY: _____

EVENT: _____

Background of the event
Management structure
Work required
Expected outcomes
Timeline
Budget for the consultancy OR requirement for a quotation
Outline of proposed method <i>Request a brief outline of the consultant's proposed method or approach to the work</i>
References <i>Request for two to three references</i>
Contact name:
Address:
Email:
Phone:
Closing date for proposals <i>(indicate if required by mail or electronically):</i>

APPENDIX D

SPONSORSHIP PLAN TEMPLATE

What benefits can we offer potential sponsors?
Which organisations would be likely to provide sponsorship: Local, Regional, State, National?
What type of sponsorship will be sought from each potential sponsor: Cash, In kind, Other assistance?
Is there likely to be a conflict of interest between the objective/s of the event and the sponsor?
Is there likely to be a conflict of interest if more than one major sponsor is involved?
For annual events, can any sponsorship be maintained for longer than one year?

APPENDIX E

MARKETING PLAN TEMPLATE

For smaller events, a basic marketing plan should address the following subjects:

Event objectives
Management structure
Target markets
Event budget
Marketing budget and how the budget is to be allocated
Implementation program

For larger events the marketing plan should also include:

Market research
Competitive analysis
Competitive advantages
Product packaging

APPENDIX F

MEDIA RELEASE TEMPLATE

MEDIA RELEASE

(date) or Embargoed for (date)

MAIN TITLE

Subtitle

FIRST PARAGRAPH – include all of the important information up front:

- who?
- what?
- where?
- when?
- why?
- how?

SECOND PARAGRAPH

THIRD PARAGRAPH

(In most cases the media release should be limited to one page.)

–ENDS–

Contact name:

Phone number:

Email address:

APPENDIX C

EVENT EVALUATION TEMPLATE

DEBRIEFING MEETING/PLANNING ASSESSMENT	
Committee structure & operation	
Funding	
Budget	
Sponsorship	
Event program	
Timing	
Venue	
Equipment	
Support services	
Risk management	
Transport and parking	
Accommodation	
Security	
Volunteer resources	
Marketing	

EVENT ASSESSMENT	
Number of spectators and origin	
Number of competitors and origin	
Number of exhibitors	
Gate takings	
Number of programs sold/distributed	
Food, beverage and other stallholder revenue/patronage estimates	
Number of vehicles/traffic management, including car parking	
Number of 'hits' on the event website (if relevant)	
Ticket sales processed through the event website (if relevant)	

BUSINESS ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT	
Accommodation bookings	
Airline/coach/rail bookings	
Restaurant and fast food sales trends	
Taxi usage and revenue trends	
Retail sales trends, e.g. at supermarkets, clothing stores, souvenir outlets, photographic retailers and processors, and chemists	
Did operators experience an increase in patronage and revenue during the event?	
If so, by what percentage?	
How did this performance compare with the time of last year's event?	

