

Fetes and Outdoor Events



I never did a day's work in my life, it was all fun.

Thomas Alva Edison, American inventor

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL LEARN:

- how to plan what is often the most important day in your fundraising calendar
- strategies to make your fete stand out from all the others in your area
- how to put everything in place for this year and get ready for next year's fete
- why planned communication is so important
- top tips from the experts for a fabulous fete
- how and where to get your message heard in a noisy world of competing messages.

Great fetes and festivals don't just pop up—voilà!—like magic. They result from months of hard work and rigorous planning.

Mix together creative planning, astute preparation and a bit of luck with the weather, and every fete can run smoothly, be an enjoyable day out for all who attend and be financially rewarding to boot.

In Australia, primary schools dominate the fete scene but whether you are organising a community-based festival, fiesta or fair, the same principles apply.

Success rests with what happens behind the scenes. Take a deep breath. Don't be frightened. You can organise a fabulous fete because I'm about to share all the know-how I have that will enable you to create a GREAT fete.

Breathe!

If you look at the fete as one big fundraiser, you may well have a panic attack! And run!! Instead, as with any fundraising task, let's break the event into bite-sized chunks.

My own fete planning goes like this:

- Set a goal
- Make a date
- Dream themes
- Appoint a fete committee
- Pull out your fete file (if this is your group's first fete ever read this to mean 'create a fete file'!)
- Check and cross-check your pre-fete check list

- Get the guide right
- Round up sponsors
- Recruit volunteers
- ‘The day before’
- Show time
- Clean-up/wrap-up

Let me explain...

SET A GOAL

I bet you are thinking that you should set a date first. Wrong! The first thing you need to do is set a goal! If you are having trouble, go back and re-read the strategic planning chapters of this book.

Setting a tangible or visible target can be the lynchpin of your fete. One clever fete co-ordinator from Victoria organised a large sign of their goal to be printed in black and white and displayed in the months leading up to their fete. The picture was of plans for their proposed playground. As time progressed, they would colour a proportional amount of the playground plan to let everybody know they were getting closer to their goal!

MAKE A DATE

The right date is critical to your event’s success.

You cannot predict the weather a year in advance but you can save yourself some major disappointments and time clashes by finding out what’s going on in the wider community.

Find out as much you can about:

- scheduled dates of similar events in your locality over the next twelve months
- your own school's activity calendar. The last thing you want is for your fete to clash with a major away-game — or an all-year level camp. That immediately impacts on children and parents, as volunteers and supporters. On the other hand, if there's a significant home game, it may draw a bigger crowd to your activities
- major sporting finals — such as national football finals
- public holidays
- pupil-free days (creating 'long weekends')
- school holidays.

Armed with this information, you can go ahead and set your date! Keep in mind that Friday evenings are now becoming an increasingly popular alternative to crowded Saturday calendars. Evening events also lend themselves to firework finales.

Consider also *how long will this event run?*

Over the years, some fetes have morphed into day and night extravaganzas. This is great in theory but do you really have the capacity to stage such a huge event?

To answer this question, you need to answer some other tough questions with brutal honesty:

- Does your group have the volunteer capacity to staff an event extending over six or eight or ten hours?

- Would extended hours truly be compensated in profits? You really have to work hard to make an event worth sticking around for.

DREAM THEMES

Finding the right theme is more than creating ambience. It provides cohesion to all the different elements of a fete and is a wonderful ‘hook’ for all event-related communications.

Some popular themes for fetes include:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Country fair | • Rock and roll |
| • Around the world | • Mother’s Day |
| • Father’s Day | • Spring fair |
| • Colour | • Jazz |
| • Haunted house | • Outer space |
| • Sports day | • Old-fashioned carnival |
| • Christmas in June/July | • Medieval |

A country fair theme, for example, can have stalls decorated with hay and dried flowers. Volunteers can get into the spirit, dressed in denim jeans, flannel shirts and straw hats. A bush band can be hired for entertainment and an animal farm fits in fantastically as a fun (and educational) experience for children.

Likewise, an international fair opens up a world of food stalls, quite literally, and encourages your community’s different ethnic groups to get involved. Use flags for decoration and dress in national costumes. Tailor some games and activities around certain countries or cultures.



TIP

My favourite theme was ‘the circus’. The kids loved it — and so did the teachers. They were able to work the theme, and all the preparation that goes with it, into class time with drama and art lessons. An Arts Council troupe of performers came to the school in the lead-up and taught the students some fun moves. They even returned on the day of the fete and worked the crowd for us.

Linda, experienced fete convenor

APPOINT A FETE COMMITTEE

A fete is usually ‘the big event’ on a fundraising calendar and its complexity demands a committee all of its own. Yes, the school P&C/ P&F/ School Council is a good source of assistance and advice, but don’t limit your selection pool: you are looking for the most enthusiastic, motivated, creative and organised volunteers available to steer the fete committee. Select your key committee members well and the workload will be distributed evenly, there’ll be less volunteer stress and tears of joy (rather than hopelessness) when the big day arrives!

THE SELECTION CRITERIA

Fete Convenor (Chief Event Organiser – CEO)

This person carries overall responsibility for the event, without the pay incentive! The fete convenor is a ‘big picture’ person who can:

- chair all committee meetings
- liaise with stall holders, the school principal, teachers and the P&C

- • mediate disputes (and yes, they will happen).

The fete convenor needs time and energy to tackle this job. Alternatively, it can be job-shared by two or three people who work well and closely together.

TIP 

If I can walk away from of all this with friends intact, I'll be a happy person.

Karen, successful fete convenor for five years

Fete Secretary

This important role looks after correspondence, meeting minutes and other ‘office type’ work involved in the fete’s organisation. You need someone with a good eye for detail, ideally someone with strong office, computer and organisational skills.

The fete secretary needs to be a brilliant communicator, keeping all on the committee plus significant stakeholders like school administration, up to speed on what’s happening.

Once your committee is finalised, the fete secretary should compile and distribute a comprehensive contact list, ensuring every members’ details are on the list (including email, home, work and mobile telephone numbers). Committee members need to be able to contact each other quickly and easily.

I recommend using group email for issues that suddenly arise and need to be dealt with urgently.

I also advocate sub-categorising email lists — for example, fete committee, stall holders, volunteers — so that you can be specific with

communication. Some fete organisers prefer a network pyramid model to forward information on but if you do go with that style, be confident no-one falls through the cracks.

The fete secretary is responsible for taking minutes at meetings, distributing those minutes to committee members and key stakeholders (such as the P&C), and preparing and distributing agendas for meetings.

The fete secretary's role continues past fete day, ensuring thank you letters and certificates of appreciation are sent out to sponsors and stall holders and that the handover book is updated.

Fete Treasurer

Money isn't just about the cash handed over at the cake stand on the day of the fete — it will be coming and going for months before the event; afterwards as well. Accurate financial records are essential. Your fete treasurer — or financial controller — will be great with numbers and ideally have experience in accounting or bookkeeping.

These three strategic positions form the nucleus of your fete sub-committee, supported by parents and friends who volunteer to oversee all other aspects of the event, including:

- sponsorship
- security
- set up
- equipment hire
- purchasing
- entertainment
- ride passes
- signage
- graphic design
- publicity
- electrical supply
- safety

- gate control
- stall convenors
- first aid
- clean up
- parking
- money handling
- photography
- website

Fetes have so many independent components yet there's good reason to pool resources in some key areas. For example, good businesses know about economy of scale purchasing. Take a leaf out of the corporate book and appoint a purchasing officer: someone who can source items required in bulk (when a number of stalls' needs are added up). Think in terms of items like disposable table cloths, bunting, napkins, plates, cups and packaging. Bulk orders can attract significant discounts.

Likewise, coordinating hire of equipment through one person not only streamlines the process but can reap savings too.

Another key appointment is the publicity officer: someone who ensures an accurate, clear, attention-grabbing message is spread throughout the school community and beyond—including local media.

You might even consider appointing a volunteer coordinator to assist stallholders with the recruitment and time-tabling of helpers.

With so many players involved right from the start, good communication is critical.

Meeting for the first time

Your first meeting will set the agenda for the whole planning process of your fete. The convenor needs to outline a clear plan that lists all the elements of the fete and the dollar target.

If this is your school's first fete, it is a good idea for your fete secretary to implement a comprehensive filing system (paper or online) now. This will assist in planning this fete as well as those you hold in future years.

At the outset, every committee member should receive an information folder or access to a shared online folder, providing as much detail as possible about their tasks. Encourage them to keep notes. These will prove invaluable reference points for subsequent committees.

Set the expectation early that everybody will be required to contribute to the handover process once the fete is over.

Another thing to get right from the start relates to money. Aside from inclement weather, extravagant spending by well-meaning stall holders is a fete's NUMBER ONE profit-muncher! Be clear about your committee's accounting practices from the start. Money handling procedures should be included in the information folder given to all committee members. Establish how goods can be purchased for stalls; even include an approval form for the reimbursement of expenses.

In addition, make certain you know where the up-front money will be coming from. Do you have reserves and do you require authority to access them? Revenue will most often go down before it goes up, so make certain you provide for this.

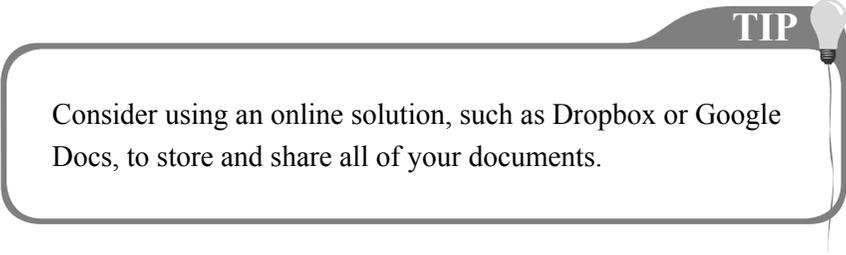
Initially, monthly meetings will be fine but as your event gets closer, be prepared to meet fortnightly: even weekly.

Meetings need to be in a location that is easy and convenient for everyone. Light refreshments add a nice touch: ask everyone to bring a plate of food or bottle of something to share. The most productive atmosphere will be one that's warm and friendly. But that doesn't mean forgetting about business! No-one — least of all busy fete volunteers with families at home and other aspects of life requiring attention — has time for meetings that go off on tangents or around in the circles.

Your fete convenor needs to have the strength of character to keep discussion on track. Your fete secretary will have distributed an agenda well before the meeting to allow members to gather their thoughts and make considered responses.

Minutes of the meeting will not only be distributed to committee members but to the P&C (or its equivalent). Such transparency gives confidence to those outside your committee, can help identify any problem areas as they arise and invite ideas from the ‘outside’.

The fete secretary is responsible for maintaining all paperwork, including meeting minutes, in the fete file...



TIP

Consider using an online solution, such as Dropbox or Google Docs, to store and share all of your documents.

THE FETE FILE: A FETE CONVENOR’S BIBLE

How many times have I heard a new fete committee convenor lament: “There’s nothing written about the last one. All the paperwork’s missing!” It really is tragic to think of the time and effort spent by so many volunteers forced every year to reinvent the wheel.

That’s not happening on my watch!

So right now, before the coffee cups (or wine glasses) are cleared, resolve to create a Fete File. All the details of what’s needed in your handover and how to safely store this treasured material is in chapter 10 but for now, consider it anything and everything that’s relevant to the event, from start to finish. Next year’s convenor will be so impressed.

If you set the expectation from the outset that you expect every person to complete a handover report for their areas of responsibility, they can't complain about having to do it at the end, when they may consider their job 'done' and simply want to put their feet up.

YOUR PRE-FETE CHECK LIST

There are **14 absolutely essential** elements that need consideration early in your fete planning. If you have a fete file, check that these are included. Refer and update.

Two of these — volunteers and sponsors — are just SO integral, that I deal with them separately. Here are the remaining 12...

1. Location

Location seems like an obvious thing to decide but have you thought of all the different, sometimes competing, demands on your available space? From my experience, a flat space (like a sports oval or car park) is best. There's merit in keeping the event space limited too (without being too squeezey). A defined space creates natural pathways and the 'crowd' effect lends itself to a carnival atmosphere. A locality that can be seen from a main road ticks boxes because it can draw in passing traffic.

Early in the planning, draw a scaled site map. Plan where each stall goes. This requires consultation with the stall convenors. Some have unquestionable needs. For example, amusement rides need a large flat surface with easy road access. Pony ride and animal farms need space too—but small animals and the shrieks from sideshow rides do not mix. Keep them well separated. A petting farm with about 30 animals needs a space at least 10m in diameter. Pony rides needed a cordoned-off riding circle about 80m wide.

TIP

A clever way to prepare a site map is to zoom in on the fete grounds on Google Earth, and then trace the buildings. Your plan will be as accurate as humanly possible! Save the blank map for future years.

Live entertainment requires a stage and space for an audience to sit and stretch out. A grassy area is ideal; shady trees make it even better.

Live entertainment and food stalls are just two users of power. Power leads typically can run no more than 30m. Try to group all stalls and activities requiring power in one section, close to the main power supply. Get expert advice early on power needs: you may need to hire generators.

Allow access to the general fete area for an emergency vehicle, just in case.

A typical fete layout on an oval may go like this:

- Stage at one end of the oval, as far from rides as possible, so that performances are not ‘drowned out’ by sideshow alley
- Carnival rides at the opposite end of the oval
- In-house stalls and activities requiring power to one side of the oval, close to school buildings and power outlets
- Outside vendors and stall operators (providing their own power using generators) on the opposite side of the oval
- Static stalls, not requiring power, down the centre of the oval

- A breakout tent (or multiple tents if there is space) in the middle of the oval.

Closer to the day, mark out where each stall is to be set up and number each section, so that it is easily recognised. Use spray paint for grass and chalk for concrete. Do a walk-through ahead of the event, ensuring each spot has the access it needs for set-up. If you are using a new ride company, have a rep along for the walk-through. Their experience really can save you headaches.

Provide all stall holders and committee members with a site plan and the contact numbers of all activity coordinators.

Including a copy of the site map on your fete flyer makes a handy reference for visitors.

2. Entertainment

Amusement rides

From inflatable jumping castles and merry-go-rounds to climbing walls, dodgem cars and Sizzlers, amusement rides of all kinds are a HUGE drawcard. They will also probably be your biggest expense, so choose wisely.

Amusement rides are transported on semi-trailers. They need plenty of space to access your site. Get a company rep to visit your site in the early planning phase, to ensure your location has what they need.

If your space has artificial grass, you may be limited as to your choice of rides.

Your fete file will detail operators and rides that have worked in the past. Some amusement rides are so popular that they need to be booked at least a year in advance!

If you're starting from scratch, here are some key considerations:

- Consider your market. For primary school fetes, most joyriders are likely to be students (aged up to 11 or 12).
- Choose a mix of rides and activities for different age groups (and fear levels!)
- Be mindful of height restrictions: they can vary from 1m to 1.3m minimum.
- Don't forget toddlers—they may be tag-alongs but they need entertaining (and there's money in it for you if planned well!).
- Talk to a number of amusement operators before committing. Price alone is not the deal-maker. You want to be sure the supplier you use is reputable, has a solid safety record, provides professional service (including hiring appropriate staff) and is fully insured. Ask potential operators for a list of events they are attending and see them in action.


TIP
Outright hire or percentage?

Most amusement ride operators offer two payment options: outright hire or a percentage. This is just one example of where the fete file comes in handy: what worked before? Or did it?

‘Outright hire’ means you pay a set fee and retain all proceeds of ticket sales. Caution: you must pay the hirer no matter how popular or unpopular the ride is and if you are rained out. Many established fetes choose to take this option and bear the risk as it likely to be more profitable at a proven event.

‘Percentage of takings’ means you split the profit with the ride operator. Usually you get 20% to 25% of overall ticket sales. This may mean less profit than outright hire but it also hedges against making a loss due to bad weather or unpopular choices. Often you will get more rides than you would if you had chosen the ‘outright hire’ option.

- Sell ‘ride bands’ leading up to your fete. The pricing of these will depend on the number of rides at your event. Ask around some schools in your area to get a better idea. Offer a discounted rate for ride bands ordered early, and a higher rate for those bought on the day. It is a good idea to hand out receipts rather than ride bands, and have a table or two set up (break it up by alphabet and mark names off the list) on the day where the receipts can be swapped for the ride bands. This avoids the inevitable ‘lost’; wristbands as well as the unfortunate (but real) risk of students sourcing identical wristbands and ‘ripping off’ the system.

On stage entertainment

Your first priority with your entertainment program is to appoint a Master of Ceremonies (MC). Appoint one or two people with outgoing personalities whose job it will be to work the crowd.

Your MC will need a good sound system to be heard over the entire site. If the school's existing sound system isn't adequate, add this to your hire/ sponsor list: your messages on the day need to come out loud and clear.

The MC will require a comprehensive running sheet that lists all stalls and performances, promoting them throughout the day. Your MC will announce 'specials' as they occur, sprinkle through kind words about sponsors' generosity, declare raffles and broadcast information about lost children (it will happen!). Between announcements, play a selection of popular music to add a great vibe to the day and boost everyone's mood.

When it comes to onstage entertainment, schools have an immediate source: the students! By encouraging every class to perform one song, play or dance routine on the day, you guarantee a strong family turn-out to support their child's performance. Of course, once the family is there, few will escape without spending on rides and refreshments!

To achieve this, liaise closely with your school's performing arts department and get those involved to prepare special segments which will enliven the day and give participating kids a great confidence boost.

But don't limit your ideas to song and dance. Demonstrations by a local martial arts group or gymnastics team can be another popular drawcard (and again, performers have family entourage). Displays by local fire and police services are ever-popular. Your local dog obedience group may be willing to also put on a show, adding a touch of animal magnetism.

Go one step further. What about a debate: students against teachers? Or a stand-up comedy segment? Cooking demonstration? Aerial acrobatic show (yes, it has been done)? The sky is literally the limit!

Entertainment should support your fete's theme. If your fete is an International Fair, invite, for example, the local Chinese community to perform a traditional lion dance. The crowd will love the beating drums and vibrant colours. For a Country Fair, hire a bush band and encourage a bit of square dancing and line dancing. A fete themed on the musical 'Grease' will be revved up by a 50s style rock and roll band.

Include your entertainment line-up and schedule in printed flyers, distributed to promote the day.

3. Insurance and risk management

Fetes and outdoors events bring with them their own special risks. Refer back to chapter 4 about the importance of risk assessment absolutely stands – but on top of public liability insurance, you need to weigh up:

- property insurance
- personal accident insurance
- liability cover for fundraisers (in case they are sued for negligence)
- weather insurance – be warned it is expensive but if your event already has a history and following, it could be worthwhile.

It's good practice to carry out a risk assessment for each stall. Here's a quick template:

Category of Harm	Risks What could go wrong	Level L/M/H	Risk control Measures Actions taken to prevent harm, limit damage, reduce liability	Evaluation of controls Satisfactory/unsatisfactory
Harm caused by school or P&C employee				
Harm caused by another student				
Harm caused by a non school or P&C employee (eg volunteers)				
Self-harm				

Outside vendors participating in your event are responsible for their own public liability insurance. Keep a copy of their insurance on your fete file.

4. Utilities

Seek professional advice early to ensure safe and adequate power supply, sound, gas and other utilities for your stallholders. You may be able to source qualified volunteers from within your own community.

Check your local health and safety regulations as certain protocols, for example the tagging and testing of electrical appliances, may need to be complied with.

5. Hire a generator

Fetes use a lot of power. Relying on extension cords and double adaptors is just asking for trouble. If a qualified electrician says you'll need more power, hire a generator.

6. Equipment hire

Make equipment hire an agenda item early in the planning process. Every stall will need some kind of equipment. Give stall convenors a comprehensive equipment requirement list and ask them to complete the form as soon as possible, specifying exactly what they need. For example, the food stalls will need cooking equipment, ice chests or refrigeration (a portable cold room or portable fridges), food warmers, covered serving stands, deep fryers, barbecues and more. Ask your local council about food regulations. Ensure each food stall has access to a fire extinguisher if required, to comply with local fire regulations.

Walk around the area selected for the fete. How much is undercover and protected from the elements? Use as many undercover areas as possible to provide shade from sun and shelter from rain.

Two things that are often underestimated are toilets and rubbish bins. Sure, schools have them, but do they have enough to manage a crowd? Hiring portable toilets is a sensible and sanitary investment. Likewise, hire a rubbish skip for the end of day clean-up. Don't forget the extra toilet paper that will need to be ordered.

Before handing over money for equipment hire, source what you can for free:

- tables and chairs from the school, or borrowed from a friendly neighbouring school
- borrowed ice chests, barbecues and big sun shades from within the group's community (make sure they are named)

- marquees from local businesses (e.g. real estate agents, car dealerships, hotels) and your local council representative.

Coordinating equipment hire is recommended. Once your equipment coordinator has sourced the freebies, the ‘bulk buy’ principle can be applied for hiring.

A word of advice: get equipment delivered the day before. Food stalls particularly always take longer than anticipated to set up!

7. Money matters

A lot of money will change hands at your fete. It’s a huge responsibility for a treasurer. Clear procedures make it simpler. As does planning ahead.

On the day, plan to have:

- a secure and lockable area set aside for the collection and counting of money
- coins and money bags
- a coin counting machine
- cash on hand for every stall to create a float (with details of how much each stall started with to provide an accurate record of profits)
- sturdy bags (such as calico), two per stall (and marked with the stalls’ names). The float goes in one while the other is used for cash collection.
- authorised money-handlers, who wear identification badges distinct from other fete-related badges.
- a spreadsheet to track each cash collection (carried out every hour or two).



TIP

To avoid misunderstandings or mistakes, have two people collect the takings as well as count the money collected from each stall. Record the amount (if possible) on a sheet of paper and have both collectors sign beside the amount. This accountability will assist in reconciling the takings for banking and reporting and leaves no room for temptation or accusations.

Investigate the feasibility of a credit card or EFTPOS facility for bigger ticket items like ride passes and live/silent auction items to decrease the amount of physical cash taken on the day. You can even look into hiring a portable ATM to enhance ‘cash flow’ on the day!

As well as the regular collections, have a couple of ‘runners’ on standby for extra collections— your ride ticket booth may become uncomfortable with the amount of cash it is holding and would like it cleared out more often.

Consider whether you will need a security company to collect the takings at the end of the day. If collection is unavailable, does your bank offer a secure after-hours drop box? Is your school safe adequate in the meantime?



TIP

No treasurer deserves the stress and risk of carrying thousands of dollars over a weekend.

Linda, ‘fete great’

8. Stalls

Stalls are a pivotal part of a fete. Their success rests entirely in the planning, paying particular attention to diversity and quality.

Parent groups often have specific stalls they like to operate. Send out an invitation for these groups to convene stalls, giving them a simple theme to work with. Welcome fresh ideas from parents new to the school.

Each class or year level can also be responsible for a stall. That encourages both students and parents' participation. Stir up the competitive spirit: offer a pizza party to the year level that raises the most money!

TIP

Sideshow alley with activities like a Haunted House or dunkin' teachers should remain the domain of school classes. It's a great way for the kids to get involved in organising and running activities. It's also fun for them.

James, Carnival Land Amusements, Queensland

Many parents within school communities own businesses. Offer them a stall. For example, it makes sense to offer the ice-cream van to a parent who owns the local ice cream parlour rather than an outside vendor. After all, the parent has a vested interest in the fete's success.

If yours is a very small group, outside vendors may be critical to your viability. Your fete committee will decide whether to charge a flat fee or negotiate a percentage of profit (an option not dissimilar to the amusement ride suppliers). Outside vendors need to be self-sufficient in

terms of power. They need to have appropriate insurance and, if serving food, they will need to be properly licenced. Copies of relevant permits should be kept in the fete folder.

A few golden rules for working with outside vendors

- Don't be greedy. They need to make money too. Be fair about what you charge for the privilege of allowing them to be a part of your event.
- Be fair. Don't book a balloon stall and then have a sponsoring company give away 1000 helium balloons.
- Likewise, avoid booking two or three similar stalls.

You will find a list of suggested stalls at www.fetesandfestivals.com.au/stall-ideas.

9. First Aid

Having somewhere to turn for headaches, a touch of heat, upset tummies and overexcitement is essential. Consider booking a first aid service (such as St John's Ambulance) to be on hand.

Make certain the first aid facilities are clearly marked and that a phone number is included in the list of numbers carried by all co-ordinators.

10. Publicity

Publicity is about getting your message out so as many people as possible know that your fete is on.

Chapter 8 provides valuable how-to's for fundraising publicity generally, but there are some specifics that apply to events like fetes that warrant special mention:

- As soon as your date is set, contact your local council for permission to place promotional banners on major roads near your event site. Councils usually limit promotional banners and it is often a case of ‘the early bird catches the worm’.
- Ask local shops and businesses to display your event poster in their window. If they are a major sponsor, make sure the poster acknowledges that.
- Specifically invite other schools, kindergartens, child care centres, churches and clubs in your area, and place flyers around there.
- Offer a major lucky door prize to be drawn at the fete, and stipulate that the winner must be present to receive the prize. You can number the programmes handed out on the day and keep drawing out a number until a winner comes forward.

Local newspapers can be tough to get into. A ‘hook’ or a gimmick that sets you aside from other fetes is needed. It could be an attraction. It could be the fundraising’s purpose.

TIP 

We combined our Circus theme with a bid for a world record: the longest mural on calico. It attracted media attention — newspapers and radio — and the ‘curiosity’ boosted our crowd numbers.

Linda, experienced fete convenor

Either way, don't count on the local paper to be your sole source of publicity. That's where chapter 8 can help, where we include media release templates that can be helpful for fete publicity.

11. Photography

'Fete great' Karen swears by the value of a roving photographer to catch the highlights of the day. She has used the images for subsequent sponsorship pitches, in newsletters, accompanying media releases; even as a slideshow for the wrap-up party.

Photographs taken during the set-up, kept in the fete file, also serve as a useful resource for the following year's organisers. After all, a picture tells a thousand words.

Make certain you photograph all sponsor banners in case you decide to include it in your 'thank you' message.

12. Fete Program

For something that is a MUST, the fete program is often overlooked or left until the last minute.

A program provides the who, what, when and where of activities, entertainment, feature events and stalls.

As well as a map showing specific locations of stalls, and a timetable of the day's entertainment, the program serves to publicly recognise sponsors.

TIP 

With a program, no-one misses out on seeing something; everyone knows where to go. Make a big red cross for First Aid so that in an emergency, there is no question about finding the right person.

Karen, successful fete convenor for five years

The fete program deserves to be eye-catching and well-designed. Attempt to find a graphic designer within your community and try to offset the cost of production by asking your local printer to produce the program in exchange for being a sponsor, with their name in print.

Flyers can be handed out on the day as people come through the gates and used to pre-publicise your event, in a letter-box drop.

QR codes (two-dimensional bar code images that, when scanned by a camera on a smartphone, open a link to a specific web page) or other scannable image technology are increasingly being found in magazines, advertisements and conference material. I foresee a big spike in their use by fundraising groups in coming years. You could, for example, use a QR code on your flyer, opening to details of auction items, the entertainment schedule or a map (yes you guessed it, we use them at our school fete!).

13. Sponsors

Sponsorship is probably **the most overlooked and underestimated** ingredient to a successful fete.

Sponsorships can offset the cost of running your fete (sometimes completely) and increase your revenue.

Business sponsors can provide:

- financial assistance
- in-kind help
- vouchers
- prizes

But be aware: you won't be the only one seeking support. That means you will need to start early, know how to ask and what to offer in return. The low-down on sponsorship for grassroots fundraising is detailed in chapter 7, including a full example Fete Sponsorship proposal.

Look first within your 'community' (for example, the families who make up your school).

- A parent I know runs a catering business. She was surprised to learn that her school fete was buying the hamburger buns at the local supermarket and paying full retail price. She offered to order them through her business at wholesale rates — a significant saving. Plus she arranged for the rolls to be delivered on the day, pre-split.
- Another parent is a food distributor. She was able to source and donate gourmet cookies for the fete café.
- A parent who works in the public service was able to put his school in touch with marketing people in a government department who provided bundles of stickers as token prizes. It cost nothing but the kids all thought they were winners!

TIP **Spot Days!**

In the lead-up to the fete, families are asked to donate goods such as cans of drink or packets of chips for prizes.

Include Spot Day dates in the school newsletter well ahead of time: this allows donations to be factored into the family budget, demonstrates good will and encourages maximum participation.

Kids love taking part in Spot Days because there's a chance of getting something in return. Items are placed in the middle of numbered circles (or 'spots'). When all the circles are filled, a number is drawn from a hat. The child whose donated item corresponds with the number wins a small prize (such as a free ice block at lunchtime from the canteen or tuckshop).

Alternatively, have a class competition and award points for donations. The winning class gets a class party.

Some aspects of sponsorship are unique to events like fetes. For example, Karen, whom I consider a 'fete guru' for her successes, explains how she uses cash donations from sponsors to offset costs:

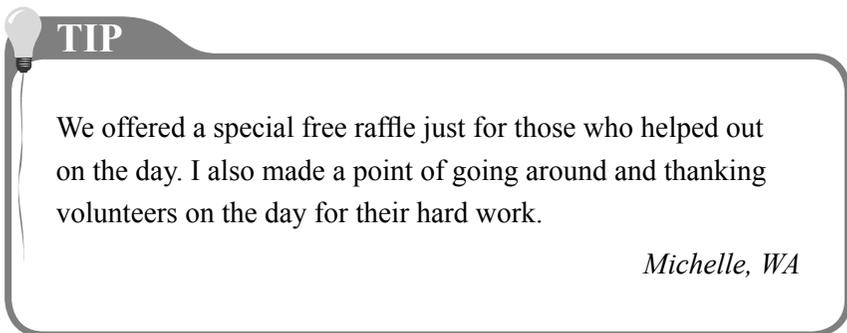
A \$50 cash donation from a butcher is used to buy sausages for the barbecue; a similar cash donation from a greengrocer buys some of the salad. The barbecue would carry a sign saying it was proudly sponsored by the butcher and the greengrocer. Similarly, a cash donation from the local haberdashery offsets craft material spending.

Chapter 7 explains the importance of thanking sponsors. Karen took this to a whole new level by inviting sponsors to the fete. She requested that they come at a certain time and then offered drinks and canapés in a ‘Sponsors’ tent’ as a show of appreciation. This seasoned fundraiser wasn’t only being appreciative: she was ensuring sponsors had no hesitation in saying ‘yes’ to continued support! And of course, their generosity was recorded in the fete manual.

14. Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of events. They make them happen. Chapter 9 provides proven tips on how to recruit and retain volunteers.

Fete days are huge. They use a virtual army of helpers. I’ve found that breaking down jobs into small, manageable tasks works best. When people realise it is only a small amount of work, for a short time, they are more receptive to joining in.

A tip box with a lightbulb icon on the left. The word 'TIP' is written in a bold, sans-serif font inside a dark grey banner that extends from the lightbulb. The main text of the tip is in a serif font, and the author's name is in an italicized serif font.

TIP

We offered a special free raffle just for those who helped out on the day. I also made a point of going around and thanking volunteers on the day for their hard work.

Michelle, WA

While all stalls will have their own volunteer roster, it’s a good idea to also have ‘floaters’— people who can provide short-term additional help during busy periods, run off to get sausages or soft drinks if stocks run critically low or cover a volunteer wanting to watch their child’s performance.

THE DAY BEFORE THE FETE

Aim to set up as much as possible on the day before the fete. Not only will you have enough to do on the actual day, but this gives your committee time to address any problems that suddenly arise.

The physical set up of a large fete can overwhelm some volunteers. Have a plan of action ready to make this as smooth and stress-free as possible:

- Ask for volunteers to help collect tables and chairs from classrooms. This can all be done the day before.
- Organise delivery of all hire equipment and distribute to the appropriate stalls.
- Book your electrician for the afternoon before the big day, to get all power requirements in place. All stalls needing power require workplace health and safety checks complete before 'show time'.
- Create a central station for children dropping off cakes, lollies and other items. These may need to be stored in your portable cold room.
- Use spray paint on grass or chalk on concrete to outline areas for stalls.
- Collect the float and change from the bank, and store safely.
- Let ride operators know when you are setting up. They may choose to set up major rides the day before.
- Ask some willing fathers to sleep overnight onsite as volunteer security. (Thank them profusely!)
- Create a contingency plan in case of wet weather.

- Ensure all stall convenors have a finalised map so they know where to set up.

IT'S SHOW TIME!

The day of your fete has arrived! For fuss-free preparation, allow plenty of time before gates open.

- Hand out identity badges to all stall holders and fete workers. These can be anything from a proper lanyard with an ID tag to a laminated tag with a hole punched in it, pinned to clothes. Include key contact numbers, such as First Aid, the 'floating roster' coordinator and the money collector on the reverse side of the badge.
- Convenors need to be easily identifiable: let the theme be your dress guide. Alternatively, have matching shirts printed or wear silly hats.
- Have someone direct traffic to stalls that need to be set up and give people ample time to move their vehicles off the grounds.
- Hand out maps to as many helpers as possible so they can direct outside vendors to their sites.
- Make information available to a trusted group of helpers so that they can assist as many people as possible. This overcomes any one person being overwhelmed by questions demanding answers.
- Do a last-minute check that stall holders have everything they need, and have the mobile phone number of specific contacts for emergencies.
- Hand your MC a final running list and program guide.

- Schedule money collection throughout the day.
- Breathe — it really is going to be okay.
- Smile: It's going to be great!

CLEAN-UP AND WRAP-UP

The fete is not really over until the clean-up is finished, thank-you's taken care of and the handover manual completed.

Once again many hands make light work... Have the clean-up committee rostered prior to the fete (delegate somebody as the clean-up sergeant) — don't just rely on your exhausted core team of helpers.

Many hands need rewarding. No matter how tired, the Fete Convenor needs to continue to show leadership and *bon homie*, breaking out drinks and cooking a simple barbecue dinner for all the helpers. It will be appreciated and remembered when next year's fete comes around. Now is a time to relax and breathe easy, with new and old friends.

Offer any leftover food and other perishables that can't be used at a later date to fete helpers.

If possible, read out the takings from each stall. People like to know that their hard work has paid off.

Within a week of the fete, the Fete Secretary needs to send out thank-you letters and certificates to sponsors (prepare these before the fete as you may struggle for energy afterwards!), as well as stall and task convenors. A thank-you to all volunteers should also appear in your school newsletter.

Once all costs are paid, and money is in, let your community know the final profit figure and how it will be used.

Within a fortnight, hold a wrap-up meeting at which all stall and task convenors return their folders with their handover report including updated information about suppliers, quantities, helpers, sales and recommendations for improvement. Pulled together, this forms the bulk of your fete manual.

See chapter 10 for a full explanation on the importance of handover, and for an overview of online file storage options.