

Building a Better Event

For Communities &
Individuals

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Pre-production & Planning

The success or otherwise of any event is determined by the thoroughness of the pre-production and planning phase.

It's a necessity for the cohesiveness, the health and vibrancy of any community to have communal events that encourage the creativity and participation of communal members. They provide a means of artistic expression, engaging participants in activities that will stretch their personal boundaries while broadening exposure to different styles and techniques. Sharing these moments as participant or audience produces a powerful moment of understanding and appreciation which contribute significantly to the building of solid and lasting communal bonds. Getting the process wrong can lead to quite the opposite.

Inspiration and the desire to create are a great starting point but it's an absolute necessity for all involved that the process of delivery is grounded in solid discussion and engagement with all the participants and stakeholders. (Stakeholders are those who will be directly involved or indirectly affected by the delivery of that idea as an event or performance.)

This is by no means a definitive model but is intended as skeletal framework for developing your event in a way that maximises the enjoyment and pride of all while minimising the considerable risk involved in mounting a public performance or event.

Event Description:

Get it out of your head and down on paper!

The process of putting your thoughts down onto paper (or into the computer) is absolutely crucial to the development of your idea. It will clarify:

- ❖ The Objective: What is it you want to do? How do you want to deliver that concept?
- ❖ The Audience: Who are you hoping to engage and how many do you hope to attend?
- ❖ The Participants: Who is going to perform / participate in the event?
- ❖ The Date & Time: When will this event occur and at what time of the day?
- ❖ The Location or Venue: Where are you going to hold this event?
- ❖ The Stakeholders: Who is this event going to engage or impact upon?
- ❖ The Organisation: Who is going to deliver the event and what type of legal entity will this be (if it doesn't exist already)?
- ❖ The Money: How do you intend to cover the costs?
- ❖ The Risks: What are the risks to your event, your staff, contractors, patrons, environment and community?

For those of you working as members of an existing festival or cultural organisation the structure and key participants are possibly already in place for phase two, Project Development. If not, it's time to identify those friends and colleagues who have the mettle, patience, time and support to join you in a commitment that far too often exceeds the expectations.

Organisational Structure.

For the purposes of any type of funding support or event application the event will need to be delivered by a legal entity. Briefly the accepted norms are as follows:

Individual: An individual assumes all legal rights and responsibilities for the event. This means that all liability for financial, legal and statutory issues will be met by that individual, their estate and or assets.

Incorporated Association: An association may be formed at any time by a group of individuals with common cause or purpose. This is a legal entity which must make application to incorporate under state legislation overseen by the Department of Commerce. This entity mitigates some of the liability for association members other than those who hold office and those who have made decisions as members of a board or committee. For full reference as to the process, legal rights and responsibilities please refer to the following link.

<http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/associationsguide/>

Proprietary Limited Company: Probably the least likely vehicle for a community to use unless that community or individual wishes to incur the additional expense and overheads associated with this structure for the purposes of actually creating a commercial business from the event. Further information as to the hows and whys can be found here:

<http://www.asic.gov.au/asic/ASIC.NSF/byHeadline/Starting%20a%20company%20or%20business>

Staffing

Once the legal entity has been decided upon you will need to work out the roles and responsibilities needed to deliver the event in its entirety. Listed below is a summary of common roles

Event Producer / Manager: This role assumes overall responsibility for the delivery of the event from conception to acquittal. It's a role best suited to those who are comfortable and confident in working as a team leader and who can mix it with everyone from the premier to the cleaner. This role assumes the bulk of the accountability for financial, safety and legal outcomes.

- Authoring & negotiation of all event funding applications
- Authoring & negotiation of all event applications to statutory bodies
- Authoring & development of the Risk Management Plan
- Authoring & development of the Evacuation and Emergency Response Plan
- Authoring & development of the Traffic and Parking Plan
- Contracting of all employees and contractors
- Arranging logistics and accommodation in support of contracted performers and staff
- Representing the event as spokesperson as and when required
- Overall control on expenditure and responsibility for income
- Overall command and control (responsibility) for the safe and successful delivery of the event (on the day)

Production Manager: This role deals with the delivery of all the technical aspects of the event:

- Site Plan
- Staging
- Lighting
- Sound
- Performers technical needs
- Performance and technical staff and or contractors
- Power & distribution
- Toilets
- Temporary structures or buildings
- Fencing and barricades
- Waste management
- Logistics
- Occupational health and safety of all staff and performers
- Emergency response or evacuation of all production staff and performers
- Co-ordination of police or security presence in back stage area
- Production schedule
- Production budget
- Assisting the Event Producer / Manager in developing all documentation and procedures

This role may be assumed by the event producer / manager if the overall scope of the event and their expertise permit.

Front of House Manager (FOH Manager): This role deals with all matters relating to the safety, well-being and comfort of the audience. As such they will be responsible for

- Box office or gate
- Seating or supervision of the allocated audience area (audience numbers, density and obstruction of exits or clearways.)
- FOH staff employment, supervision and rostering.
- Operational budget; income & expenditure line items for FOH
- Food & beverage sales
- Ticketing
- Site cleanliness including toilets and waste management
- Occupational health and safety of all FOH staff and audience members
- Emergency response or evacuation of the FOH area
- Co-ordination of police or security presence in FOH area
- Assisting the Event Producer / Manager in developing all documentation and procedures

Marketing & Publicist: These roles deal with the publicity and promotion of the event. As such will be responsible for:

- Creation and implementation of the Promotion & Publicity Schedule
- Creation and delivery of Promotional Budget
- Creation of publicity and promotional materials
- Placement of advertising
- Distribution of promotional materials such as flyers and posters
- Engaging the Press across all media in promoting or reviewing the event
- Engaging with Press during event to co-ordinate access within the operational boundaries of FOH, BOH and artists contractual limitations
- Assisting the Event Producer / Manager in developing all documentation and procedures

These are the minimum recommended roles. Below them sit a plethora of other roles and responsibilities. The final staffing structure will be determined by the size and capacity of the event.

Listed below is a selection using the basic delineation of Back of House (BOH) & Front of House (FOH)

BOH:

- **Site Manager:** On large scale events that involve complex site constructions, a site manager takes overall responsibility for the safe and timely delivery of all elements of the site build (Bump- In), show infrastructure monitoring and maintenance. Finally the site deconstruction (Bump-Out)
- **Stage Manager:** Has overall responsibility for the timely and safe delivery of any performance program (whether on a stage or not. Also has immediate responsibility for OH & S of all stage based workers as well as patrons during the performance, they can stop the performance if accident or injury occur or is imminent.
- **Production Runner:** Assists Production Manager, Stage Manager or Site Manager.
- **Lighting Designer (LD) and /or Operator:** Designs, specifies and oversees the installation and operation of any performance Lighting.
- **FOH Sound:** Oversees the design installation and operation of the Public Address (PA) system. In situations where a Noise Exemption (Reg. 18, please refer to Applications & Approvals section, page 20) is in place to monitor overall sound levels this role is critical to compliance.
- **Monitor Operator:** Oversees the design, installation and operation of the artist's monitor (Foldback) audio system.
- **Audio Visual (AV) Technician or Operator:** Oversees the design, installation and operation of any visual reinforcement system such as projectors and screens or large scale LCD / LED based displays. Known to work with camera operators, line producers and switching operators.
- **System Rigger:** Either lighting, sound or AV. Assists with the set-up and operation of all equipment.
- **Rigger:** Oversees the design, installation and operation of any staging, ground support or roofing systems that will be subject to static or dynamic loads from equipment or the

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environment (wind, rain, snow, heat...). They must be licensed preferably to the level of advanced rigger. (National Occupational Health & Safety Certification Standards.)

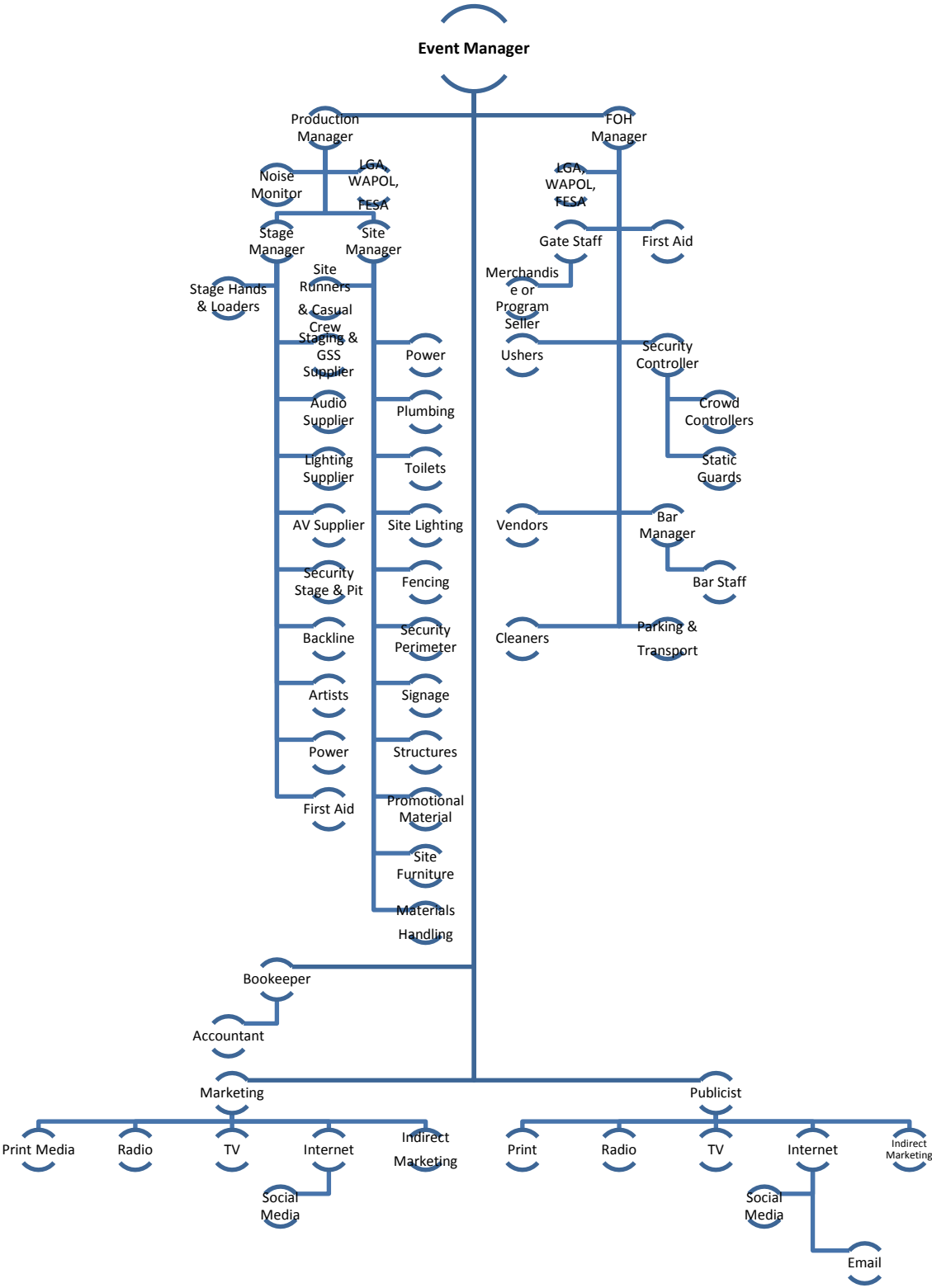
- **Engineer:** Will inspect any temporary structures for suitability to purpose, correct erection or installation and compliance with all specified load ratings. Generally only required for larger events with higher risk profiles though can be called upon by your Local Government Authority (LGA) to provide inspection and certification of any temporary structure. This is an important part of the process in gaining the final approval, (Cert 2) Building Compliance Certificate, from your LGA Approvals officer or engineer
- **Backline or Stage Technician:** Provide equipment and technical support for all artist's performance equipment and instruments. They have many sub genres; drum, guitar, keyboard, violin, didgeridoo....(add instrument) technicians.
- **Generator technician / Electrician:** As a legal requirement, any temporary electrical supply or distribution system will need to be inspected and certified (Cert. 5) by a Licensed Electrical Contractor. On large scale events using multiple supplies and / or generators, they will be employed to supervise the safe and continual supply of electricity.
- **Pit Security Manager:** For large scale events that have the need for safety barriers the Pit Security Manager supervises a team of Crowd Controllers to ensure the safety of patrons, security of the stage and integrity of the barrier.
- **BOH Hospitality Manager:** On large scale events with multiple artists the hospitality manager ensures that the artist is comfortable in their dressing room (Green Room) and have the required food, drink and indulgences (The Rider)
- **Security Guard and Crowd Controller:** The first looks after property and assets while the later looks after people as to where they go, what they do and how they interact with others. Access to backstage or any non-public area will usually be controlled by "a laminate" which will allow various degrees of access by code. This is latterly being augmented with security wrist tags due to the rise in forgery afforded by modern printing technology.
- **Roadie, Loader or Lumper:** Casual crew employed to assist with the transfer of equipment, usually on bump-in or bump-out

FOH

- ***Ticket Seller or Box Office:*** Sells tickets, handles inquiries and deals with guest lists and any other kind of VIP or variations to standard entry.
- ***Security Control or Manager:*** Looks after the rostering and all communications relating to security staff. Generally principal liaison with police on large scale events
- ***Crowd Controller or Usher:*** Assist patrons in the safe and orderly movement around venue while maintaining the security of sensitive areas (BOH, Box Office, Vendors areas)
- ***Vendors:*** Those who supply or sell food and beverages.
- ***Merchandise Vendors (Merch):*** Those who supply and sell merchandise such as CD's, DVDs posters, T-shirts, hats.....this could go on and on.
- ***Cleaners:*** If you've got toilets you need a cleaner. Also handy to have around if you have an event with large numbers or long duration to keep site clean and clear of hazards.
- ***Plumber:*** On larger sites with big numbers or long duration, supply of freely available potable water is a mandatory necessity. They also fix broken pipes, rescue irredeemable toilets and ensure that vendors have the necessary flows for hand washing and hygiene.
- ***Sound Monitor:*** In the event that your program is likely to breach sound restrictions in the immediate and surrounding zones you will be required to employ a qualified acoustic consultant and logging gear to monitor the noise output from your event. They will work with the FOH Audio Operator to ensure compliance to any exemption (Reg. 18, refer page 20). Their data will also be used as evidence by that LGA to prosecute the Event Producer for any breaches.
- ***Money People:*** If you are considering any financial dealings it's very advisable to consult with a book keeper or accountant to establish a system of financial record keeping to track and log all income and expense. There are now many relatively cheap or free programs or excel sheets which provide good templates or means to do this.

The following page contains an organisational chart on the reporting paths

Event Staff & Contractor Reporting Path.



Site Plan

Once you've established the Event Description, the structure and staff by which you'll deliver it the time has come to get down to the nitty gritty of the how, the what and the where. The Site Plan.

Generally this is a scaled plan of your venue or site, no matter how small, it helps to articulate your ideas, clarify your thoughts and communicate the detail to staff and employees.

Site Plan Elements

Most event applications to an LGA will require submission of a site plan at a scale of 1:100. The site plan should include some or all of the following details:

- Locality or Base Plan: Indicates any existing topographic or landscape features including existing buildings and facilities. The foundation of all site plans come from this base drawing which can be sourced in several ways.
 - Ask the land owner or LGA for a copy of the site plan / plot plan (please note that it is important to proof or check the scale and dimensions of any plan). Go to the site and measure the real world dimensions of an object featured in the site plan, check this against the scaled measurements indicated by the plan. For those unfamiliar with scale you can do one of two things. Buy a scale ruler from a stationer. This should have a scale required to read directly from scale to real world measurements. Or take the scale and do some math, in the case of a scale of 1:100 1mm of plan measurement is equal to 100mm in the real world, hence a measurement of 10mm on the ruler from your page translates to 1m in the real world.
 - Use satellite or aerial survey photographs. These are available from Google Maps, Google Earth and for Australian, much higher resolution maps with more recent data, search for Nearmaps and sign up for an account. Usually these images have a scale bar that changes based on the zoom factor. Using the scale bar assists in working out dimensioning. Capturing the image for use is up to you, Windows has a tool called the Snipping Tool in the Accessories Folder which "captures" images from your screen. A word of warning, these images are all copyrighted property of the site and their use should be strictly limited and if you can afford it, sign up for the pro versions and pay the fee that helps sustain these valuable sources of information. (here's one I did earlier for [Town Oval, Carnarvon](#))
- Location of stage or performance area. Including FOH location, crowd control barriers, artist facilities and backstage area
- Location of First Aid Post or Posts
- Location of power supply / ies.
- Indication of fence line and any intended entries and exits.
- Location of the Emergency Evacuation Muster Area
- Location of Emergency Services Access to site.
- Location of any bar and licensed facilities (including estimate of area, sq. m.)
- Location of vendors and any facility supporting that activity.
- Location of toilets indicating types and numbers.
- Location of freely available potable (drinking) water.
- Location of site information and or security command point.

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- Location of fire extinguishers or fire fighting equipment.
- Location of bins and waste management facilities.

For reference to the types and quantities of any of the above listed please refer to the excellent publication from the WA Health Department "[Concerts and Mass Gathering Guidelines.pdf](#)" a copy of which can be downloaded by clicking the link given above. It's the best resource available, use it!

Site Plan Information

Any site plan needs some other key information

- Title box
- Event name
- Event location (address)
- Event date
- Contact details of organisation
- Scale of drawing (including original page size)
- Date of issue
- Revision notes
- North point symbol: indicates the direction of magnetic North
- Scale bar: This assists anyone reading a reproduction of your drawing to quickly determine whether the copy is "true" scale. In these days of electronic transmission and reproduction documents can be printed in non-scale as programs such as Adobe Acrobat will "shrink" or "stretch" a document to fit your print page there by changing the original drawing scale.
- Legend: indicating what symbols represent.

Site Planning Considerations

Beyond the actual formality of submitting this document to an LGA, the site plan offers the producer a great opportunity to workshop and consider all the options.

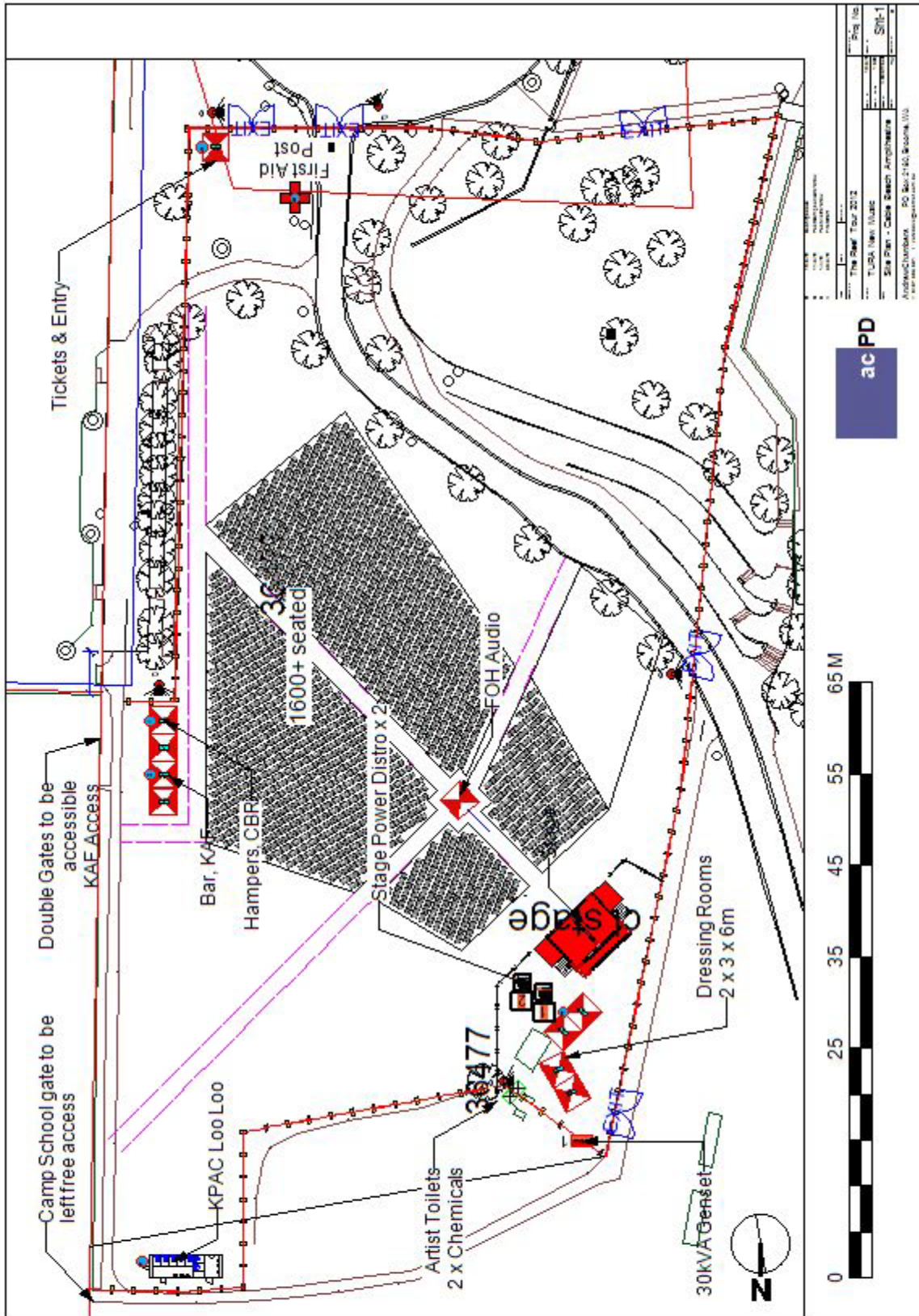
- Inter-relationship of infrastructure: How do all the components of your event work together? Can the audience see the performance clearly from the intended audience area? Is it a great idea to place the toilets next to the catering area? What kind of signage would you need to clearly show where the water point behind the trees is? It's an important part of planning that your patrons can clearly see or are clearly directed to all the essentials and that the space given to each is appropriate to the activity.
- Where is the prevailing wind coming from and at what strength on the day? You can research historical data for most mainland locations by searching the Bureau of Meteorology site. Wind has a huge bearing on the location and types of structures you can use and determines what kinds of measures should be in place to mitigate risks that arise. All temporary structures have wind load ratings and consequently differing levels of activity occur based on wind strengths. These wind loadings and soil types determine what kind of anchoring or ballasting is needed to keep that structure in place and operating to the point where wind strength dictates other action to reduce load or evacuation of the site. Wind also plays a role in performance; ideally the stage structure should provide a wind shelter for performance, with the back of stage facing into the wind.

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- Sun Location: Locating the stage so that neither performer or audience are staring directly into a setting or rising sun. If you have the great fortune to work with any type of orchestra then direct sun exposure is a huge determining factor as to when and where instruments can be used in performance.
- Crowd comfort and dynamics: Every site needs clearly defined pathways through them to access facilities and to facilitate evacuation as and when it becomes necessary. The larger the expected audience the more important this becomes. When planning large events it's critical to analyse the way people are likely to move through the venue, how services such as toilets and vendors can be serviced and accessed, how the entries and exits work especially in peak times such as exit at the end of the event. This is a specialised knowledge and if you're considering large scale (5000+ expected attendance) events then seek some professional advice or consider engaging an event management company or manager.

The image that follows is a site plan that the author produced for a recent tour by TURA New Music, The Reef Tour 2012. This shows the complete venue plan for The Cable Beach Amphitheatre in Broome. It doesn't include a Legend as all key elements have been identified on the plan.

This particular drawing was produced using a CAD (Computer Assisted Design) program which makes the creation of site and other plans so much easier. If you can find a CAD draft person who can produce your drawings it will very much help with the presentation as well as the ongoing revision of your site plan.



Production Budget:

From the site planning comes a list of equipment and facilities, the event description delivers the artistic needs and the event staffing structure details the whos and how manys. All this needs to be paid for and the next crucial document is the Production Budget. Budgets have as many formats as there are accountants and book keepers on the planet. Some funding applications now have standardised templates so be guided in your layout by these needs. If your principal funding agency has a template, use that. If not, find one of your own or create one in Excel or any of the financial management programs that are now readily available. Included is an Excel template derived from work by David Cotgreave from Festival of Perth with adaptation by the Author. Please note that the template is offered free of charge and is delivered as it is. If you use this template PLEASE check that the calculations are working and that the outcome is correct. The authors do not warrant the veracity or correctness of any information generated by this sheet, you are beholden to check!

If you find errors please send information a corrected version to the website manager.

[Showbook.xlt](#)

Costs

Principally the budget needs to detail:

- Category: such as “Production”
- Line Item: such as “PA”,
- Descriptive: such as “Main Stage PA”
- Supplier: such as “Audio Services PL”
- Quoted price
- Actual price
- Variance: The difference between quoted & actual cost
- Sub Total for Category
- Total of all Sub Totals
- GST Total.

There are many different cost categories & line items generated by an event and these may include:

- Site Hire Fees & Charges: Site rental fee, bonds, reparation costs, service charges.
- Artist Performance Fees
- Artist Rider and requirements: including, meals, refreshments, indulgences, equipment, staff, facilities.
- Artist Transportation: Airfares, taxis, car hire, equipment transport, staff
- Artist Accommodation
- Stage & Groundsupport Hire Fee: Including staffing costs, travel, accom., per diems.
- Public Address System Hire Fee: Including staffing costs, travel, accom., per diems.
- Lighting System Hire: Including staffing costs, travel, accom., per diems.
- AV System Hire: Including staffing costs, travel, accom., per diems.
- Backline Hire: Generic amplifiers and instruments needed for festival stages. Equipment hire charges, Transport Cost, may include staffing costs, travel, accom., per diems.
- Temporary site buildings & structures: Shade structures, transportable buildings, marquees. Including staffing costs, travel, accom., per diems.
- Toilets: Hire costs, transport costs, plumbing cost, service & discharge fees, cleaning and maintenance, damage waivers
- Power supply & distribution: Generator hire cost, distribution equipment hire cost, electrician charges, delivery cost, refuelling cost, casual labour costs.
- Fencing: Cost of fence hire, Fence cover cost, Transport cost, Labour Cost.
- Potable water: Cost of supply, plumber, specialist equipment hire.
- Site equipment: Material handling equipment, high access equipment, portable chillers, specialised bar facilities, site transport. All have a hire cost, running cost, transport cost, damage waiver and labour cost
- Site lighting: Equipment hire cost, labour cost, transport cost
- Site signage: Production cost, labour cost
- FOH & vendor facility: Till & equipment hire costs, EFTPOS costs, transport cost, labour cost.
- Fire equipment: Equipment hire charge, transport cost, labour cost.
- Bins & waste management: Equipment hire cost, disposal cost, labour cost, transport cost.

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- First Aid services: Cost of supply, refreshment and food Cost.
- Security services: Cost of supply, refreshment and food Cost. Possibly travel, accom. & per diems.
- Communications: Cost of equipment hire, transport cost, labour cost.
- Sound monitoring: In the case of a Reg. 18 exemption being issued for events that will exceed accepted environmental noise levels (rock concerts, speedways and anything with a PA system). Equipment hire charge, service cost, refreshment and food cost. Possibly travel, accom. & per diems.
- Engineering Services: Site visit and report/certification cost.
- Site Staff: Site Manager, Stage Manager, Loaders, Runners. Labour costs, refreshment and food cost. Possibly travel, accom. & per diems.
- FOH Staff: FOH Manager, Door Staff, Ushers, Casual Sellers, Bar Staff. Labour costs, refreshment and food cost. Possibly travel, accom. & per diems.
- Administrative costs: Staff costs, premises costs, equipment costs, services cost, consumables cost, communications cost, accounting fees, legal fees, Risk Management Planning costs, bank fees and charges.
- Insurance Costs: Public Liability, Workers Compensation, Damage & loss policy, Cancellation Insurance.
- Publicity and Promotion: Staff costs, premises costs, equipment costs, services cost, consumables cost, communications cost, ticket costs, printing Costs, advertising costs (Press, TV, Radio, Social Media), professional fees.
- LGA & Statutory fees & charges: Application fees, service charges, fixed fees for such things as road closures, noise exemptions.
- Licensing Fees: APRA levies a fee on all events that will utilise copyright material in a public performance. Please refer to the APRA website www.apra-amcos.com.au as to your liability.
- Contingency: It's absolutely necessary to include a contingency cost to cover the unforeseen or the ill-considered. Commonly a figure of 10% of total cost is attributed here, that figure will vary based on the risk assessment.

Costs are one half of the equation. Income pays for all that. To get a true picture of your events viability you need to determine what, if any, income there is to support this venture.

Sources of income:

- Ticket Sales: This is determined by overall site capacity versus the percentage of full ticket price plus the percentage of concession priced tickets minus the total number of guests on the free list.
- Merchandise Sales: T-shirts, programs, stubby holders, hats....the list is endless
- Bar & Vendor commission or revenue: Usually an event producer will charge vendors a commission for access to the site and provision of infrastructure and support. Bar revenue is probably the largest source of income for most large scale events; it can be incredibly profitable but increases the cost and risk profile for the event. Increasingly charitable organisations and professional bar management companies are running bars and providing the license. These can be commercial arrangements with a fixed percentage of turnover passing back to the producer.

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- **Grants and Funding:** Many LGAs, the State Government and Federal Government all have agencies for financially supporting cultural or event based activities. These ALL have reasonably long lead times for assessment and approval and are usually highly competitive. Grant application writing requires attention to the detail as well as a well-crafted and polished presentation. The documents listed previously will be very useful in convincing the funding panel of the strength of your project. Depending on the size of the request it may be beneficial to seek the services of a more experienced person or even professional grant writer. A professional will charge a fee or may take a percentage of any successful submission as commission. It is important to remember that you cannot base your entire event income on grant subsidy. It will be a less competitive application and it places the event at great risk should the application be declined.
- **Philanthropic Donation or Support:** From local business and individuals to multinational corporations there are channels for cash support and just as importantly “in-kind” support (the provision of goods and services free of charge). The more of this kind of support the lower the overall cash requirement will be either reducing the risk or freeing up cash to put into other areas such as paying all your artists and staff a liveable wage!

Viability

After you have completed the Cost Budget and the Income Budget the viability of the project will soon become apparent, subtract Costs Total from Income Total. If it remains in the positive then, prospectively there is hope for the event. If the figure is in the negative then you need to work on reducing costs or increasing income OR prepare to carry a personal and several cost liability. It is very unwise to sign any contractual commitment to artist or supplier if you cannot guarantee the income to support these commitments. Risk analysis on the variables affecting things such as ticket sales and events such as cancellation should inform any decision to commit.

Much better to postpone an event until the conditions are right rather than proceed into debt and the ensuing stress and tensions when your income doesn't cover costs.

Event & Production Schedule

Every event has a timeline. In some attempt to stamp your authority over time and circumstance we encourage you to put together a production schedule.

The schedule should include all key dates & times for actions required to deliver the event from Per-Production all the way through to De-Brief. It should consider the relationship between tasks and the fact that many activities are serial in nature: one cannot be started until the first is finished. It's impossible to rig the light show if the roof and stage aren't finished...

During the production period (bump-in – out) the format will break down to whatever time increment is necessary to show an action occurring on the site or in the performance. **Performance schedules** are a subset of the entire production schedule providing greater detail as required for the performance crew and artists.

Schedule Headers

Each Schedule generally has the following column headers:

- **Date**
- **Time**
- **Action**
- **Who**
- **Notes**

A Sample schedule is included in the Showbook.xlt file.

The production schedule is a key organisational document as it helps all your staff and contractors to know when and where they need to be and doing what.

Best Practice

A major problem with schedules is the issuing of changes and updates. It's important that one person, usually the production manager, has control over any editing and issuing of revised schedules. Remember to always save the new edit with a new file name, preferably containing the issue date eg: schedule121212.pdf

The other problem, is that in our time and attention starved world very few people read them. It's important to always follow up with phone calls, emails and purchase orders detailing scheduling information. Never assume they read it!

On the day, production & performance schedules should form the core of your briefing(tool box talk) to on-site workers and performance crew.

Risk Management Planning:

Now that you feel confident that you have determined all the factors necessary to create your event, done the plan and created the budget that says, yes, safe to proceed it's time to carefully assess the risks, those factors that adversely affect desired outcomes.

Risk Management Planning is a requirement for any event over 5000 expected attendance and follows a proscribed process as defined by AS NZS ISO 31000-2009 Risk management - Principles and guidelines. However the process of Risk Identification, rating its consequence, assessing its probability and determining processes to eliminate or mitigate the risk will make your organisation stronger and far better informed in its decision making.

This process identifies who in the organisation is responsible for action in eliminating/mitigating the risk or responding to the eventuality. It also brings together all the stakeholders and provides them with the necessary information and personal contact should they have to respond to any incident or emergency.

My recommendation is that it's worth the effort. Please refer to the tools listed in the appendix to assist you in making your RMP (Risk Management Plan)

Application and Approvals.

Your Local Government Authority

Now that the event is planned, budgeted and ready to go you will have to seek approval from the relevant authority to stage a public event. In most cases this will be your LGA (Local Government Authority). If you're lucky they have an Events Co-ordinator and an event application form to guide you through the process. If not you will be visiting several departments for their collective approval for your event.

Public Building Approval – Health Act 1911

Any public gathering requires an application for approval of a Public Building, whether it's an actual building or not. This ensures that your patrons have the minimum standards applied for such things as space, exit, toilets, water, a safe environment, safety & emergency equipment, information, illumination & adequate staffing.

Temporary Structures

Temporary structures such as stages and marquees will also need planning approval, this means submission of an application and supporting documentation for all structures. This documentation will include:

- Scaled drawings of the proposed structures.
- Original engineering certification for each structure.
- Certificates of Currency for Public Liability & Workers Compensation insurance covering the structural supplier.
- Certificate or statement by the supplier as to the construction compliance and this may be supplemented by an engineer's report at the request of the building survey or shire engineer.

Vendors and Bars

Health Inspections and Trading Certificates for Vendors: All food and refreshment vendors will need to seek approval and licence to trade from the Environmental Health Department.

In the case of the event having a licensed area for the sale of alcohol, approval from the shire will need to be given in the application to the licensing court.

Noise Regulation 18 Approval

The Environmental Health Department in consultation with Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) may also insist on the event seeking a Reg. 18 Exemption from the Noise Act if they consider the event is likely to breach acceptable levels. This entails an application fee (\$500), cost for consultants and monitoring as well as the possibility of a Breach Bond needing to be lodged prior to the event commencing. Breaches of the exempted levels can lead to heavy fines and legal costs. As mentioned previously, while the contractor may be employed by you their material will be used as evidence against you should court proceedings be instigated.

Temporary Electrical Supply or Distribution

All Temporary Electrical Installations need to be installed and certified by a licensed electrical contractor using a Form 5.

Other Services & Charges

Most LGA's will have a fixed schedule of charges and requirements if you need to book and use public reserves, buildings or facilities and services like bins, power, water etc. Likewise if the event requires road closures or modifications to the flow of traffic. Some LGA's will require bonds to be paid on the use of facilities.

Event Approvals Application

Every LGA will expect to receive the following documents as part of the application:

- Full event description
- Corporate summary and key staff contact list
- Site plan
- Event Schedule
- Risk Management Plan (if expected audience is greater than 5000)
- Evacuation and Emergency Services Plan
- Traffic & Parking Management Plan
- Proof of insurances

Once you have submitted the application with all supporting documents, expect a response and possible delay. Information and understanding are not universal, especially when the world of temporary structures confronts the engineering department. Also be very aware of local politics as they can have a major effect on the outcome of any deliberation or approvals process.

Always allow plenty of time for this process as no-one likes the stress of being forced to a decision simply for lack of time and a pressing deadline.

Other Approving Authorities:

In special circumstances other state and federal agencies will require their approval for events in such areas as national parks, anywhere on the intertidal zone of beach or river front, universities and other properties owned by such authorities.

Some events will need to seek approval from multiple authorities so it pays to check carefully who has an interest or authority over the proposed site.

Other agencies in Western Australia:

- The Police Force
- The Fire and Emergency Services
- St John Ambulance and/or Hospital
- If you're planning on using fireworks or aerial laser displays then you may also need to contact CASA (Civil Aviation Safety Authority) or the local airport.

Final Approval – The Certificate of Occupancy

After the initial approval to go ahead with the event a final inspection by council officers is needed to complete a Certificate of Occupancy which will dictate the maximum allowable audience based on the area, number of emergency exits and toilets. All the officers must approve that the conditions of the approval have been met and that what was stated has been delivered, safely. They may postpone or delay an event if those conditions are not met to their satisfaction.

In summary you need to work with these people and provide all the requested information in a timely manner. This will ensure that those council officers are working with you in delivering a safe event.

All approving authorities are legally bound with you in their exposure to risks created by public events. They need assurance and insurance. Without both you will not get an approval.

Generally your LGA is supportive of any effort to put on a public event. Their processes can sometimes seem laborious, frustrating and the costs onerous, these are their duties and without them not much would happen, safely.

Promotion & Publicity

The event is approved, money in play and you're rolling toward inevitable success!

Now comes the time to ensure that success through marketing, publicity and promotion.

It is recommended that you seek out an individual or company who works or has worked successfully in this field.

Without adequate advertising across all the applicable media your audience will not know about the event. The requirement is to get as many people as possible to attend so you make the income projection or meet the target audience requirements to successfully acquit your grant.

Generally the marketing of you event will fall into some or all of the following:

- Paid advertising: Paid advertisements in print, radio, tv and internet. Posters and handbills with distribution.
- Publicity: Feature articles, interviews, public appearances, promotional events, competitions
- Personal Endorsement & Social Media: Facebook & other social network campaigns, telling everyone you know and encouraging them to tell everyone they know.
- Indirect Marketing: Merchandise, novelty give-aways, guerrilla campaigns (footpath chalking...)

There are plenty of professional individuals and companies who specialise in one or more of the categories involved in marketing your event. Great marketing of a good event is too important a responsibility to be left in the hands of an overworked and under-resourced volunteer. The investment in some part or all of that process is definitely a good one.

Contracting:

It's all go and time to confirm the contracts for all suppliers, artists, agents and staff.

Purchase Order & Contract

To guard against misinformation and misunderstanding it's always a great practice to issue a Purchase Order (PO) or enter into a written, formal contract with your supplier.

Both documents should include:

- An accurate description of the services or goods.
- Schedule information relating to the delivery of those goods or services.
- The address for delivery.
- Contact details for the relevant site person.
- Contact for the accounts department.
- Conditions and special instructions.

Read all supplier quotes *carefully* before committing to them. Sometimes the quote will be deceptively cheap as there's no labour quoted or there's some other "omission". Remarkably cheaper quotes should be viewed with some suspicion. It may mean that the equipment is of a lower standard or that they are not experienced enough or too mean to pay their people appropriately or employ too few for the task. No one wins when too many corners are cut.

It's a growing practice for suppliers to demand at least 50% of the hire fee prior to delivery. Some artists will require that the performance fee and all costs are met before the event.

Damage Waivers & clauses

Most hirers of equipment will add costs for a Damage Waiver (insurance) for their equipment. This doesn't ever really cover you for any damage as you pay directly for that, the waiver is to cover the theft or loss due to acts of God. The waiver may be able to be negotiated down if you can engage your insurer into covering the equipment under your general insurance policy.

Others will have clauses whereby they can extend charges if there are delays in retrieving equipment, in flood & fire-prone country this can be a consideration.

Discounts and Penalties

Some businesses will now offer substantial discounts based on their terms of settlement. All can charge you interest on overdue amounts. Wherever possible meet their terms and remember that most small businesses have a high percentage of their fees invested in paying their staff and that's usually within 7 days of the event.

Variations

It's vitally important to update your suppliers if there are any changes to schedule or requirement. Always put these changes in writing as either a formal variation to the PO or at the very least an email followed by a phone call. *Remember that if the PA turns up at twice the size of the requirement and they didn't know about your change of circumstance you're still legally obliged to pay for the supply.*

Best Practice

Wherever possible ask your supplier to give you contact details for their key staff, even the delivery drivers.

Your contractors and artists are the heart of the machine that delivers your event. Good ones are worth their weight in gold so please respect them, black clad and grumpy as they sometimes can be.

Always make an attempt to feed them if it's a remote site and remember that you are obliged to ensure that they have free access to potable water and sanitary toilets. If you're providing transport and accommodation it must be at least compliant with the conditions of the applicable award (usually a minimum of 3 star.) Please refer to the MEAA site for award and conditions.

<http://www.alliance.org.au/crew-summaries>

Free Tickets and Comps.

Free tickets and entry to site for staff and employees is something that should be decided at the contractual stage. Decide upon a standard issue process and stick to it! You are under no obligation to provide free access to anyone, other than performance and site staff / contractors.

Complimentary entry is a privilege and completely at the discretion of the event producer. On really successful or high profile events, tickets are a tradeable currency and can be used in the financial negotiations.

If you're doing an annual event consider printing up a crew and staff t-shirt. If it's a good shirt for a great event then it will travel far and wide and be seen by many. It also helps with controlling backstage access on the day.

Bump-in

This is the term used to cover the set-up of any site infrastructure and the establishment of the site itself. The two principal documents in use will be the Production Schedule and the Site Plan.

Any site should be considered as a construction site so it is necessary to limit the access to public while any construction is happening. This may mean fencing the work area or at the very least providing barrier tape to delineate the work zone.

All construction sites now require workers to wear high visibility clothing and for them to be appropriately attired for the task, normally this means a minimum of steel capped boots.

Increasingly large sites are required to induct staff and contractors onto site, meaning they receive information on the OH&S policy, location of services like first aid, water and toilets and any other policies or requirements of the site. Most larger sites require a sign-in and sign-out for any contractor, staff or visitor entering the site.

The LGA or property owner may also impose conditions of use and entry limiting access to site for vehicles and the like to protect surfaces and sub-surface services. Most ground keepers will insist on marking out any reticulation or power lines to minimise damage by directing heavy traffic away.

Site Handover

The owner of the site or representative will usually require a formal handover of the venue where any existing damage, defects or deficiencies are noted and agreed. This is compared to the final handover report and any worsening or difference is usually paid for. It's good practice to photograph all areas of contention.

Site Mark-up

This is the process of marking out the site based on the site plan. If the surface is grass or sand then spray markers of different colours can be used to mark the location of services and infrastructure. It's much easier to spend an hour or two marking up fence lines than to follow the contractor around all day or having to make them "move" a mistake.

The mark-up also gives you the chance to walk through the site and consider the reality of your plans, prior to the often heavy and cumbersome object being put in place.

It's easiest doing this job with a partner as it usually involves lots of tape measurements, string lines, pegs, spray cans and a few other devices. If you need to make right angles the 3, 4, 5 rule works very well. Place a peg at the corner of your intended right angle, using tape one on that corner peg measure out 3 metres on your baseline place a peg and tape two at 3m point. Measure off 5m on tape two and 4m on tape one. Bring them together, where they intersect is your right angle. Right?

Tools you'll need:

- Reel Tape – 30 -50m
- Reel Tape 9 – 15m
- 8 x Steel pegs
- Gimpy hammer
- String lines x 2
- Spray marker cans – 2 – 3 colours (or more)

Optional:

- Metre wheel or rotary wheel type measure
- Wheeled spray can holder.

Equipment Delivery and Build

Once the site is secure and marked up it's time for the contractors to roll in, according to the schedule or not. The art of the schedule is to work around the variability created by suppliers of goods and services to minimise the impact on the overall schedule deadline and budget. It's a fine line between negotiation and dictating, there are some circumstances that simply will not bend to your will no matter how often you hold up the schedule and the contract.

Communication

It's important to meet the contractor and ensure they have a copy of the schedule, correct equipment and people. It's important that you show them to their location or locations and have a quick briefing to discuss the work plan and run through the site OH&S briefing. It's essential that there be no misunderstanding about the intent of their services as remedying mistakes can have a

huge impact on the schedule and the budget. It's always good practice to have a copy of the equipment specification and quote to confirm that what is being delivered is what was quoted.

Most contractors should be self-sufficient beyond that initial hand over and clarification of the plan & schedule. However it's important to remain in contact regarding progress and outcomes, so make sure you have their number and they have a copy of the contact list.

Progress has been plotted on the schedule but in reality so many things conspire to destroy that dream. The response is to be adaptive and concise in dealing with problems and communicating any changes. Contractors are very, very averse to sitting around and waiting, best to leave them happy at home by delaying their arrival. Sometimes it's also important to be able to call on additional resources to assist the supplier if deadlines are being pushed beyond what's achievable with the current resources.

A good site manager has an understanding of the resources and time necessary to do a job and will need to push and shove to meet the deadlines. It's an important job that can be stressful and very demanding. Wherever budget allows they should have at least one assistant, runner, to delegate responsibility to and assist with the many tasks that need to be completed, sometimes simultaneously.

The site manager & crew delivers the site complete to the production, event and FOH staff for the event but must remain responsible for the site and its safe function until the final item is removed and any handover complete.

Event or Performance Time

At this point the site usually splits to three distinct areas of responsibility:

FOH: Looks after the needs and safety of all the attending public. There will be a delegated FOH Manager responsible for all decisions relating to the safe and successful delivery of the event. They will be managing a variety of staff responsible for:

- Ticketing
- Seating
- Maintaining clear aisles and exits
- Keeping the area litter and hazard free
- Ensuring toilets and all facilities are safe, clean and usable
- Money handling
- Merchandise, vendors and licensed Area
- Security
- Site communications
- Lost property and persons
- First aid
- Access to water
- Dealing with customers / patrons
- Signage and lighting are sufficient to inform & direct patrons

Building a Better Event

- Emergency response and evacuation of the public area
- Food, refreshment and rest breaks for staff

BOH: Looks after the needs and safety of any performers or exhibitors, contractors and event staff. This will be the responsibility of the Production Manager. In the eventuality of a stage being used then there will be a separate chain of command headed by the Stage Manager who will be responsible for the timely and safe delivery of all performances. They also have direct responsibility for the control of the performance should it be impacting on the health of patrons. Both positions will be managing a variety of staff or contractors responsible for the following:

- Performers
- Sound reinforcement
- Lighting
- A/V reinforcement
- Stage & ground support systems (GSS)
- Backline
- Production communications
- Power supplies to the stage or performance area
- Backstage & pit security
- Ensuring backstage is a safe and clean environment
- Backstage toilets and dressing room facilities
- First aid
- Food, refreshment and breaks for staff and contractors.
- Emergency response and evacuation of the backstage area

SITE: Looks after all the site facilities, services, contractors and staff ensuring their safe and continued supply or activity. This is the responsibility of the Site Manager who will be managing a variety of staff or contractors responsible for the following:

- Site power & distribution
- Site lighting
- Site plumbing and water supplies
- Site toilets
- Site bins & waste management
- Servicing of these facilities
- Site communications
- Site fencing
- Site signage
- Site furniture
- Site structures
- Sponsors banners & promotional material
- Site logistics and movements.
- Perimeter security
- Emergency response and evacuation of the contractors and staff.

Emergency Situations

It's important to the safety of all that in the event of an emergency situation arising that the site is either able to be evacuated or safely allow the entry and movement of emergency services.

This process and chain of command should have been articulated in the Evacuation and Emergency Response Plan (Emergency Plan AS 3745) submitted as part of your event submission. It's important that all Area Managers and staff are aware of the process, the locations of muster points and the responsibilities each staff member has in that situation. This needs to be done during staff briefings prior to the event starting.

Likewise emergency services need to be in possession of a copy of that plan with contact numbers for key staff. Experience dictates that you follow up with the services to check that they have the plan and are aware of the event. Surprisingly, communications can be difficult. It's always best to develop a personal connection during the Risk Management Planning meeting and direct communications directly to one person.

The decision to cancel an event due to tragedy is a hard one. Sometimes the best decision is to continue on and keep an inquisitive audience engaged until the mess is sorted out and it's safe for all to return home. Every situation presents its own unique blend of human folly and circumstance, you and your staff simply have to deal with it and get everyone home safely.

Bump-out

The reverse of Bump-in. Everything goes out in the structured manner you've laid down in the production schedule. The Production Manager & Stage Manager clear the stage and production, usually as fast as they can. The FOH people clean and clear the site and assist with pack down as and how needed. The Site people secure the site, close down all the facilities and services and deal with the pack down of all that needs to be.

After Production has left the site the Site Manager and staff oversee the orderly removal of infrastructure and equipment until all has been removed. The site is then cleaned and prepared for handover.

Handover usually consists of meeting the site owners representative and discussing the damage and reparation as and where needed. It's good practice to photograph all areas of contention.

De-Brief

At the end of it all you've done something spectacular, despite the outcomes or forever more glorious because of them.

The De-brief is an important meeting where any suggestion, praise or grievance can be tabled and discussed. My suggestion for the format of the meeting would be to limit it two hours, the first for an internal debrief. The second as the RMP debrief with stakeholders invited. Try to arrange times that make it easy for the stakeholders to attend as their input can be invaluable in improving the event outcomes or for simply clearing the air of any misunderstandings.

Building a Better Event

The first half meeting needs to be structured around a review of the key event documents by all managers and key staff:

- Event Description: Did it live up to those expectations and can it be made better?
- Production Schedule: How did it survive the confrontation with reality?
- Site Plan: Did it work? Was everything easily accessible? Was there sufficient of each resource?
- Performance Schedule: Was it successful?
- Staff Structure and Responsibility: Was communication effective? Did everyone know what they were doing?

In the second session, RMP author and managers plus stakeholders

- The RMP: How did the risk assessment and changes stand up? Were there other unanticipated risks? When a risk turned into an incident, how did we cope?
- The Evacuation and Emergency Services Plan: Does it or did it work?
- Street Closure and Traffic Management Plan: How did it affect the area?
- Parking Plan: Did it achieve its intended goal?

It's important for annual events to be able to assess their performance and put in place means to improve if need be. One off event organisations and individuals will benefit from the feedback as the plans you used on today's show need very little tweaking in the world of Word to live again as another event application.

Thanks for your patience and consideration of this document and the author. It's a big job you've taken on and I wish you all the very best luck and better yet planning for whatever the endeavour you're embarking on.

And when you're in the middle of it all please remember to:

- ✓ **Keep Hydrated**
- ✓ **Eat Food and**
- ✓ **Take a Break (even if you don't get a chance to sleep)**

Stress is best dealt with when you're not exhausted, dehydrated or riding on a low blood sugar level.

All the best.

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- David Cotgreave
- Simone Rogers (for reading it from front to back and responding with helpful comments)

References:

The Author commends you to download the following as references:

Can You Risk It?

http://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/assets/files/Organisational_Development/Can_You_Risk_It_Web.pdf

Concert and Mass Gatherings Guidelines 2009

[Concerts and Mass Gathering Guidelines.pdf](#)

[An all in one folder with everything in it...\(bit like a mystery showbag\)](#)