

Evaluation and reporting

Evaluate

We can all learn from experience and identify where things can be improved for future events. The guidelines below will help in evaluating your events to assess what worked, what didn't and what improvements can be made for the next event.

There are many places or moments during and after events when you can collect feedback. Here's a couple of examples.

1. Survey at an event

- ✦ Conduct a survey or provide feedback forms during the event – ask people what they liked about your event and what they think could be improved.
- ✦ If you do intend to conduct a survey, the venue or landowner should be consulted prior to the event.
- ✦ Ask attendees if they know who the sponsors are – if large numbers of people associate the sponsor with the event, this will prove valuable when renegotiating sponsorships for the following year.

2. Debriefing (both informal and formal)

Engage casually at an event or in meeting places or walking home from an event with attendees – what may appear to the participant as simply a conversation can be a debrief mechanism and ideas exchange.

For a more formal process, debrief as soon after the events as possible.

Include as many people as possible who were involved in the event in the debrief session – this may include staff, regulatory authorities, volunteers, emergency services, etc.

Give people enough notice – schedule and invite participants well in advance of the proposed date to ensure as many people can be involved as possible

Circulate an agenda prior to the debrief that covers the key areas for discussion (even if there are only a few questions) – this also gives participants the chance to prepare for the meeting.

3. Evaluation form to key stakeholders

- ✦ Send out an evaluation sheet to key stakeholders (especially those who can't attend the debrief).
- ✦ Seek feedback from suppliers, performers, venue managers and security guards as well as those directly involved with coordinating the event.

Guidelines for debriefing

These guidelines are relevant regardless of the size of the group or project/participants. The same approach can be applied to a small project involving only three or four people or a project involving a large number of people and multiple projects.

Facilitator role:

- + There should be a facilitator—someone who leads the discussion (not the organiser).
- + The facilitator or Australia Day organiser prepares a set of questions.
- + The task of facilitator is not to present his/her own opinion but to create a possibility for all participants to contribute their ideas and feelings.
- + The facilitator needs to make acceptable practice clear (e.g. to make sure there are no personal attacks on people).
- + The facilitator has to 'keep an eye open' to make sure individuals are not sitting passively and not getting off the track.
- + The facilitator should acknowledge time constraints while also assuring group that their contributions are important.

Two key questions can be very effective in structuring a debriefing:

- + What went well?
- + What didn't go well?

Within each key question you can ask:

- + Why did things happen?
- + What will we do differently and better next time?
- + How can we use this information?

Guidelines for reports

You may consider preparing a report about your Australia Day celebrations, which is useful for reporting back to your local council, sponsors or supporters. Each community and event is different, so every Australia Day report will be different. The template below can be used as a guide for preparing your report, including the elements you think are most useful.