

Sponsorship

Sponsorship provides key support for Australia Day celebrations and can make a difference to the shape and scale of how your event is delivered.

A good rule of thumb is to treat sponsorship as a business partnership, with firm outcomes required by both sides. You must have a clear idea of the nature of the event you are seeking sponsorship for and should be prepared and ready to consider a sponsorship proposal.

Businesses are reluctant to provide cash, goods or services unless they see a benefit for themselves. Fortunately, these benefits aren't always tangible and that is why many organisations are willing to sponsor events that they see as worthwhile for the community.

Once you are successful in securing a sponsor it's important that you work hard to keep them. A happy sponsor can be a useful advocate for your event and can help you attract other supporters from your community.

As each event and sponsor are different, there's not really a single formula that can be used to find and keep sponsors, however below are some tips, guidelines and examples to help you in securing sponsorship.

Preparation before approaching a potential sponsor

- + Outline your event particulars—who you want to attend, how long it will run, where it will be held etc.
- + Develop a budget and outline where you may need help—remember that goods and services are a form of sponsorship too, and some sponsors may find it easier to provide goods and services than a monetary contribution.
- + Brainstorm with organisers/committee members what you are able to offer the sponsor in return for their contribution —you will need to think creatively.
- + Do your research on the sponsor – check their website or corporate publications to determine criteria for considering sponsorship, existing sponsorships or partnerships they have, community involvement they already undertake and what their brand 'values' are.
- + Identify the sponsor's target market/audience and consider how you can help them to achieve their goals/reach their target markets through their involvement with Australia Day.
- + Actively make known your need for sponsorship—this will mean networking, attending community functions, engaging in and initiating discussions surrounding Australia Day events and issues. This may generate unexpected expressions of interest in sponsorship (e.g. the sponsor may ask: How can we help? Is there anything we can do? We are very interested in keeping the elderly active).
- + Modify your preparation as needed, after the initial meetings or phone conversations with the potential sponsor.

Approaching a potential sponsor

- + Arrange an opportunity to speak with the potential sponsor.
- + Two-way communication (face-to-face meeting or phone conversation) is definitely the best way to begin - it will have a much bigger impact than a letter or email.
- + It's important at the first meeting that you don't go in with a full proposal, instead provide a clear and brief account of the opportunity and what's in it for them.
- + Ask potential sponsors what they are looking for and learn what's of interest to them. This will help you tailor ideas on mutual benefits and develop a sponsorship agreement of relevance to the sponsor's business or image.
- + Have specific ideas of where sponsors' money or services will go - sponsors will ask for this information.
- + 'Fit' is essential for a company considering sponsorship. Identify possible link/s between the work and focus of the company and your planned Australia Day event - these could be health; wellbeing; quality; local produce; community welfare; supporting youth; serving a specific section of the community for years.
- + If the first contact is by phone, send a follow up 'teaser' to elicit interest - this could be a brochure or one page outline explaining why you would like to meet and what's in it for them. This is not a formal proposal but will provide the potential sponsor with an idea of the event and some possibilities.

