

## Running a successful History Festival event

As the 2017 History Festival approaches, we've compiled a list of tips to help you prepare:

### Planning your event

- Make sure your venue is well-signed so people can easily find you. Think about the routes people will take to get to the entrance (are there multiple entrance points? Make sure they're all covered). Use the posters and corflutes signage delivered to you from the History Festival to help.
- Use a microphone for talks and large tours (remember a roving mic for Q&A sessions)
- Think about making your venue as accessible for all visitors as possible. Is it easy for people with mobility, vision or hearing issues to participate? If there are any potential limitations, make sure they are highlighted.
- Invite people to attend: you might like to send formal invites; use inviting language in promotional materials and signage; and make sure people are welcomed when they arrive.
- Consider the comfort of all attendees where appropriate. eg provide seating, let people know if the event will be outdoors etc.
- Organise volunteers and/or staff for the day to make sure you have the help you require. Brief everyone working with you on the day on what will happen and what you need from them.
- Consider the health and safety of your visitors. Check your event space or tour route for potential hazards.
- Ensure someone has first aid training and you have a risk management plan in place. You can download a risk management plan template from the History Festival website: [historyfestival.sa.gov.au/resources-organisers](http://historyfestival.sa.gov.au/resources-organisers).

### Taking bookings

- Send a confirmation email after taking a booking (and perhaps a reminder a week before your event).
- Include event details and any important updates, reminders or notes (eg how to find the place, what to bring/wear etc.)
- Send a clearly marked map to help people find you on the day (and check your listing on the History Festival website to make sure the marker pin is in the correct spot on the map).

### Welcoming your guests

- Make your guests feel welcome. Position someone at the entrance to greet visitors, answer questions and give out information.
- Tell visitors at the beginning how long the tour/talk will go for.
- If appropriate, give them permission to leave before the end.
- Don't forget to point out the essentials - where are the toilets/exits/tea & coffee facilities? What are the emergency evacuation instructions?
- During talks or tours, ask attendees to switch their phones to silent.
- Introduce yourself and any other members of your organisation.

- If you are in a historical venue, consider including an overview of its history (even if the event is not specifically related to the venue).

### **Tours**

- Remember – you can't include everything. Think about the key messages and pick a route that makes sense to the theme of the tour and practical walking distance.
- Walk/drive along the tour route before the day. Work out where you will stand. Check for noises (eg traffic) and any hazards along the way.
- For walking tours - how far will you be walking? (Let people know both when booking and at the start of the tour).
- Warn people if there are any obstacles along the way (tree roots/pavement bumps/crossing busy roads etc)? Inform people when they book.
- Give the group a brief outline of the route you'll be taking before setting off.
- Don't make attendees face directly into the sunlight.

### **Use the History Festival to your advantage**

- Include the History Festival logo on your promotional materials. The logo can be downloaded here: <http://historyfestival.sa.gov.au/resources-organisers>
- Cross-promote with other History Festival events in the area:
  - Give visitors suggestions of other events they could attend nearby or that have a similar theme.
  - Get together with other organisers and create a handout for visitors with events in the area.
- Encourage attendees to enter the History Festival Instagram Competition. You could get great word-of-mouth publicity and might win a prize.

### **Gathering feedback**

- Prepare an evaluation form to gather useful information on how you can improve your event next time. Download and customise a template here: <http://historyfestival.sa.gov.au/resources-organisers>

### **From 2016 feedback survey**

- A number of respondents were disappointed when events were booked out. Perhaps keep a couple of dates up your sleeve and announce them later.
- Be sure to let the History Festival team know if your event books out or if you add extra sessions so we can update your website listing.
- Using an online registration system (eg Eventbrite) makes it easier for people to book for multiple events. If you're setting up an online booking system for the first time, you can download a help sheet here: <http://historyfestival.sa.gov.au/resources-organisers>