

# Community Fairs

Engagement range	Inform/Consult
Difficulty level	Medium to hard (reasonable level of skill in communication, media public event organising)
Cost	Medium (\$1,000 to \$10,000) to high (over \$10,000)
When might you use it	To showcase a product, plan, policy To discover community issues To communicate an issue
Number of people required to help to organise	A team of people may be required (3- 12)
Size of audience	Large, depending on publicity, topic, event activities
Time to organise	Medium (six weeks to six months)
Issues/resources to think about	Publicity; Venue; Catering; Staffing; Moderator/facilitator; Recorders; Artists or photographer; Events organiser; Cleaners; First aid; Other audio and visual recording and amplification; Overhead projectors; Printed public information materials; Response sheets; Data projectors; Video; Slide projector; Projection screen; Props for working in groups (pens, paper, pins, etc.); Furniture; Children's requirements; Entertainment and events; Duty of care; Insurance
Innovation level	Medium to high

## Description

A community event intended to provide project information and raise awareness about particular issues. The fair includes a multiplicity of activities and events of interest to cater for the broadest range of people (e.g. sausage sizzles, rides and activities for children, young people's activities and events of interest to adults).

The events incorporated within community fairs, if focused on the main issues, will act as magnets to encourage public participation and will raise awareness on this basis.

## Objective

- To provide a fun venue that will draw a crowd of all ages and backgrounds, and then use many different ways to inform and engage the participants on a community issue.

## Desired Outcome

- Raise awareness of an issue or proposal, and provide a venue for collecting contact details and getting signatories to any submissions or alternate proposals.

## Uses/Strengths

- Focuses public attention on an issue.
- Can create interest from media groups and lead to increased coverage of the issue.
- Allows for different levels of information sharing.
- Builds social capital, that is, people who are more willing and able to participate in community decision making and management.

## Special Considerations/Weaknesses

- The public must be motivated to attend.
- Fairs can be expensive to do well.
- The project's reputation can be damaged if the fair is not done well.

## Step by Step Guide

1. Select a date and venue that will encourage the greatest number of participants to attend (generally weekends or public holidays). Liaise with key groups to avoid clashes.
2. Arrange for a number of activities and events of interest to various groups in the community (i.e. all ages, children, young people, adults, the elderly).
3. Provide low cost or free activities (rides, sausage sizzles, etc.) to encourage attendance.
4. Advertise and publicise the event with emphasis on the issue to be considered. Advertise start and close times.
5. Provide adequate staffing and consider the employment of volunteers.
6. Determine appropriate consultative activities for the fair. Organise duty of care and insurance issues.
7. Consider employing an events manager.
8. Develop a plan of the site, and ensure all those participating know where they are to go. Consider some form of marking out sites (tape or stakes).
9. Prepare a traffic plan (for trucks, cars, etc.) including a site for parking.
10. Allow adequate time for setting up.
11. On the day, ensure that coordinators circulate to assist people to focus on major issue and participate.