

**Good Practice Guide
for Staging **All-Ages**
Music Events in
New South Wales**

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This publication has been prepared by The Push. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors.

The Push is proud to present this **Good Practice Guide for Staging All-Ages Music Events in New South Wales**, prepared in partnership with MusicNSW, with strategic funding support by Sound NSW. This initiative marks a significant step forward in enhancing the inclusivity and accessibility of live music events for young people across New South Wales.

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Push and MusicNSW acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Lands across Australia where our work takes place and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, community and culture. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present. First Nations culture and community are integral to the way we work with young people in music.



Thanks

The Push and MusicNSW would like to acknowledge and thank all those who have contributed to and participated in consultations to develop this guide.

Definitions

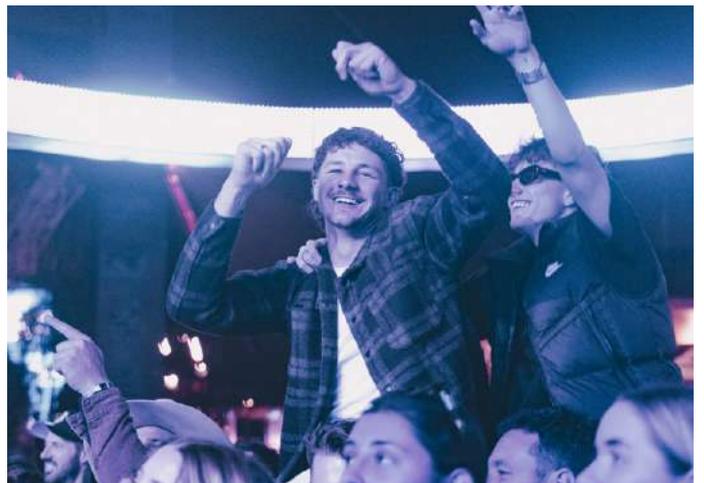
ALL-AGES MUSIC EVENTS

All-ages music events come in many forms, and a key principle in the preparation of this guide is the ability for young people to attend events without restriction, such as needing a parent/guardian in attendance. While this guide is designed with this principle in mind and focuses on all-ages contemporary music events, the information provides benefits to all events across the state that young people can engage with and attend.



YOUNG PEOPLE

In line with the definition presented by the Australian Government through the [Office for Youth](#), and captured within the *Engage!* strategy (Office for Youth 2024), young people are generally defined as being between the ages of 12 - 25. For this guide, given we're discussing the exclusion of young people from live music events and venues, we've broken this down further to ages 12 - 17 to align with the prohibited drinking age that governs most young people's interaction with live music.



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Foreword



Welcome to the **Good Practice Guide for Staging All-Ages Music Events in New South Wales.**

This guide is designed to provide valuable insights and strategies for creating exciting, engaging and relevant music events for *young people*. It's not designed as a step-by-step manual for staging events. If you want to learn how to stage an event many resources are available, including the [Event starter guide](#) (Premier's Department 2023). Our aim with this guide is to outline key considerations unique to organising an *all-ages music event*. It's designed to support event organisers, artists, promoters, live music venues and music enthusiasts to create memorable music experiences that resonate with the vibrant communities of young people across New South Wales.

We've opted to refer to this resource as a 'good practice guide' instead of a 'best practice guide' to reflect a more nuanced understanding. The term 'best practice' implies that there's only one perfect way to achieve an outcome. In contrast, 'good practice' recognises that there can never be a one-size-fits-all solution, given the uniqueness of events. Rightly so, all-ages events are as unique and diverse as the young people of New South Wales. We allow for a variety of approaches that can be tailored to specific

circumstances and contexts. For successful all-ages music events, we promote adaptability and encourage event producers to explore multiple avenues for success, fostering an environment of continuous learning and innovation rather than rigid adherence to one way of working. By embracing the concept of 'good practice', we support a more inclusive and dynamic framework for development.

This guide is intended to serve as a resource for those dedicated to producing or looking to start creating exceptional all-ages music events in New South Wales, where young people can attend without restriction, such as needing a parent/guardian in attendance. While this guide is designed with this in mind, the actions and information we present can benefit any event across the state that young people engage with and attend. By focusing on the unique needs and interests of young people and by emphasising the importance of inclusivity, engagement and safety, we hope to inspire and empower event organisers to create memorable and impactful events. We invite you to explore the insights and recommendations within this guide and to apply them in your event planning endeavours. Doing so will ultimately contribute to a vibrant and thriving music scene for young audiences across New South Wales and will help to build a new generation of live music audiences across the state.

Introduction



The landscape of music events for young people has changed significantly over the past 10 years, however the demand for all-ages music events has remained as young people seek out opportunities to engage with live music events in safe, inclusive and dynamic environments.

Research shows that music plays an essential role in the daily lives of young Australians (Australia Council for the Arts 2020), with two in three (64%) young people aged 16 - 25 confirming that attending music events is important to them (Strong 2024). Despite this, access to live music events isn't a reality for all young people, as it's rare for live music events to be staged for underage audiences or designed to be accessible or 'culturally safe' (see 'Cultural Safety'). Almost half of 16 -17-year-olds (48%) find their age a barrier to participation in music events (Strong 2024), highlighting the gap between the desire to participate and the lack of all-ages music activities that encourage participation.

There's been a steady decline in the number of all-ages music events over the past 10 years, and a decline in attendance by young people at music events in general (Creative Australia 2024). The reduction in live music spaces for young people

and all-ages music events has been so dramatic that it's been identified as a major barrier to growth in the sector (Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade 2024) and acknowledged within the amendments to the [*Music Festivals Act 2019 \(NSW\)*](#) (Morris 2024). However, legislative requirements alongside the added costs of infrastructure, site modifications and event staffing (to ensure the safety of minors), remain key factors contributing to the reduction in all-ages music events and the exclusion of young people from many of Australia's music events.

This guide addresses the unique needs and preferences of young people, focusing on good-practice approaches to enhance the event experience while fostering a positive and inclusive atmosphere. It's essential to recognise that staging successful music events for young people involves more than just logistics and planning. While technical considerations such as sound quality, stage setup and security are crucial for any event, the heart of a memorable all-ages music event lies in creating an environment where young people feel seen, heard and celebrated. This guide explores aspects that directly impact the experience of young people, including programming, community engagement and barriers, as well as discussing strategies for maintaining a safe and secure atmosphere, while respecting the autonomy and independence of young attendees.

About Us



ABOUT THE PUSH

The Push is an Australian youth music organisation and registered charity. For almost four decades we've supported millions of young people to access contemporary music programs and events; fostering a pipeline for young people into the contemporary music sector as artists, audiences and industry practitioners. Our work is guided by our purpose to give every young person the opportunity to participate and thrive in Australian music. At the forefront of emerging trends and innovations, The Push delivers a range of programs nationally, which are relevant and responsive to Australia's future music industry leaders and audiences.



**Youth Music
Organisation**

ABOUT SOUND NSW

Established by the NSW Government in 2023, Sound NSW is a dedicated office committed to the promotion of contemporary music in New South Wales. Through targeted programs and advocacy, Sound NSW champions and invests in the contemporary music sector to deliver positive outcomes for artists and audiences alike. Sound NSW supports the contemporary music sector by encouraging collaboration, innovation and identifying investment opportunities.



ABOUT MUSICNSW

MusicNSW is the peak body for contemporary music in New South Wales. It's a not-for-profit organisation that empowers and connects artists and industry by providing access to professional and skill development opportunities and resources, facilitating strong industry networks, and bringing artists and industry together for consultation and collaboration. MusicNSW believes that music and music making exists as an essential expression of our humanity and works to develop and strengthen the critical skills, knowledge, imagination and industry infrastructure needed to see New South Wales music communities truly thrive.

MUSICNSW

Why All-Ages Music Events Are Important



Staging all-ages music events offers a wealth of benefits that extend far beyond the immediate experience of live music.

For young people these events provide valuable social and health advantages, while for live music venues and the music industry more broadly, they represent a strategic investment in long-term growth and sustainability.

Participation in music can be a defining moment in a young person's life; it can help shape their identity and establish lifelong relationships. Moreover, attending a live music performance can provide feelings of social connectedness, commonality, belonging and collective understanding (Perkins et al. 2021). This sense of belonging is crucial during the formative years, helping to mitigate feelings of isolation and providing a supportive environment where personal and social development can flourish. Live music provides a way to explore changing identities, bond with other young people, gain new skills and confidence (Howard 2022), and can play a critical role in forming core memories; providing an important rite of passage (Green and Bennett 2020).

From the perspective of live music venues and the music industry, all-ages music events present both economic and audience development benefits. Engaging young audiences is crucial for cultivating a new generation of music fans. By drawing in younger crowds, the industry can establish a loyal customer base that's likely to continue supporting live music as they age. This early engagement is essential for building long-term patronage, ensuring that the industry remains vibrant and dynamic.

From an economic perspective, young audiences contribute to revenue streams through ticket sales, merchandise, and food and beverage purchases, and while their spending power might be less than that of older patrons, the cumulative effect of their purchases shouldn't be underestimated. Moreover, by attracting this demographic, venues and promoters can diversify their revenue sources to create additional income opportunities by utilising venues and creating performance opportunities outside of traditional operating hours.

All-ages music events enhance the diversity of programming offered by music venues. By hosting events that appeal to younger audiences,

venues can attract a broader range of attendees and increase attendance. This diversification not only helps in maximising the venue's use but also bolsters its reputation as an inclusive and engaging space. Additionally, all-ages music events help introduce young people to live music venues, making them feel comfortable within those venues and teaching them how to act appropriately on licensed premises. Prioritising all-ages music events can lead to positive brand association for venues. Venues that support programming for young people are perceived as community-oriented and progressive, which can enhance their public image and attract favourable media coverage. This positive reputation can open doors to new sponsorship opportunities and partnerships.

The benefits of staging all-ages music events are many, impacting both young people and the broader music industry. For young people, these events provide a platform for social interaction, personal development and emotional wellbeing. For the music industry, staging all-ages music events offers crucial opportunities for audience development, economic growth and brand enhancement. By fostering a vibrant all-ages music scene, stakeholders contribute to a thriving and sustainable future for live music.



Engaging with Young People



Incorporating young people into the planning and delivery of live music events is a fundamental 'good-practice' approach.

The most impactful and engaging music events for young audiences are those where young people are actively involved in the process. By embracing this approach, event organisers can create more meaningful, relevant and successful experiences. This enhances the relevance of the event and fosters a stronger connection between the attendees and the experience, as they see their tastes and ideas represented.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Young people have unique perspectives on what appeals to them and their peers, and their involvement in the planning process allows for the curation of line-ups, themes and activities that resonate deeply with the target audience.

 - ▶ By being part of the decision-making process, young people gain a sense of ownership and pride in an event, which can lead to increased enthusiasm and commitment to its success, which in turn leads to increased ticket sales.

 - ▶ Young people from various backgrounds and communities bring different perspectives and ideas. Their involvement ensures that the event is inclusive and accessible, which helps in creating a welcoming atmosphere where all young people feel represented and valued.

 - ▶ Events that are led by young people often encourage innovation. Young people are more likely to embrace new trends and technologies, which can lead to creative and cutting-edge event formats. Their fresh ideas and enthusiasm can introduce novel elements that mightn't emerge otherwise.

 - ▶ Including young people helps to build a network of engaged volunteers and advocates for the event and the venue. When young people are actively engaged, they're more likely to draw in their peers, ensuring a larger and more engaged audience. Their networks can be powerful tools for promoting the event, leading to increased visibility and attendance.

 - ▶ Be sure to allow for and consider constraints on young people's time due to school, exams, extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, etc.
- ▶ Engaging with young people helps demonstrate a commitment to respecting and valuing their contributions. This can lead to stronger community ties and long-term benefits, including the potential for future collaborations and sustained engagement with the audience.

 - ▶ Authentic engagement with young people requires providing them with actual authority and responsibility, as well as opportunities to develop the skills needed to make sound decisions (Youth Rex 2019).

 - ▶ Avoid superficial or purely symbolic involvement, such as consulting young people without giving them any real influence over decisions. This tokenism won't provide any real benefit in the long run. To be effective, ensure genuine collaboration occurs where young people aren't merely consulted but actively involved in planning, decision-making and execution.

 - ▶ Be responsive to the timeframes of young people, which may differ and be more immediate. Make space for multiple young people as they may feel more confident with their peers.

 - ▶ While it's important to get young people involved in the planning and delivery of live music events, make sure you're not asking too much of them.

 - ▶ Compensating young people demonstrates respect for their time and contributions to your projects. It shows that their involvement is valued and helps offset potential sacrifices, such as missing a work shift, which may happen when participating in these opportunities. At a minimum, make sure they're rewarded for their efforts. A complimentary ticket or meet-the-artists session is a great way of saying thanks.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Connect with the local council. Most councils have an active youth team and they'll have great connections to young people in the community. If you're a live music venue or event producer, let them know you're interested in supporting or partnering on all-ages music events.

- ▶ Reach out to young people in the community already staging all-ages music events. A quick online or social media search can tell you who they are. Let them know you're keen to get involved.

- ▶ Get in touch with [Police Citizen Youth Clubs \(PCYC\)](#), a youth organisation working with the police and community to empower young people to reach their potential.

- ▶ Connect with [Youth Action](#), a peak body representing young people and youth services in New South Wales. They've a range of networks and programs to connect like-minded people, and some great resources to assist.

- ▶ There are many other youth clubs and organisations across New South Wales. Partnering with youth organisations or networks is a great way to connect with young people to create more meaningful, relevant and successful experiences.

- ▶ Make sure you review the [Key elements of good youth work practice](#) (Youth Work - Agency and Empowerment Evidence Review, NSW Government).



Barriers to Participation



Every young person in New South Wales should have the opportunity to participate and thrive in music.

However, not all young people are given access to the same opportunities, and there are countless reasons why young people may find it challenging or may decide not to participate.

There are fewer events in regional and outer-suburban areas, many events come with unaffordable ticket prices, and rarely are live music events staged for underage audiences or designed to be accessible and culturally safe.

The barriers young people face vary; some are easy to address, but some challenges are entrenched and subconscious. There's been extensive research into these barriers, which are best understood as three distinct categories (Tait et al. 2019):

- **Practical barriers** include issues such as time, distance and cost, all of which can be magnified for young people in regional, rural and remote locations, and for young people from marginalised backgrounds.

- **Functional barriers** are often linked to a lack of provision, for example not being able to participate because opportunities aren't available. For young people under the age of 18, this can be a result of live music taking place in licensed venues.
- **Attitudinal barriers** also known as 'psychological barriers', address feelings that young people don't belong, that music events are 'not for people like them', or are not culturally safe. Studies have shown that attitudinal barriers pose the greatest challenge to young people's engagement.

Practical barriers can be easier to identify and action and generally have a short-term focus, but they're just the tip of the problem. Functional and attitudinal barriers are harder to identify, require long-term thinking and often take collaboration and larger networks to resolve, but if resolved can provide significant long-term benefits.

Practical Barriers



Money is unsurprisingly one of the biggest barriers for young people. Financial barriers are twice as prevalent among young audiences compared to older audiences (Patternmakers 2022).

Cost is the most common barrier identified for young people attending music events, with three in five (59%) 16 - 25-year-olds identifying cost as a barrier, and 35% identifying it as the most significant barrier (Strong 2024).

In addition to the cost of the ticket, hidden financial barriers might include the cost of transport and lost wages. This is particularly relevant for young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Time is another barrier. Part-time work and study mean attending live music events can be seen as a luxury. 27% of 16 - 25-year-olds identify time as a barrier to their participation in music events (Strong 2024).

Distance is a barrier that combines the pressures of time and money. Distance from the venue and access to public transport plays an important role, with 37% of 16 - 25-year-olds identifying location as a barrier to their participation in music events (Strong 2024).

Access considerations can also be a barrier, with 11% of 16 - 25-year-olds stating disability access is a barrier to their participation in music events (Strong 2024).

Access to *information* can limit young people's knowledge of opportunities. This can be made worse by marketing that doesn't engage with young people.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Is the ticket price out of reach? Could the event be free? Could you provide complimentary tickets to young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds? Could you look at early-bird or rush ticketing discounts? Could you create a 'pay-it-forward' or a 'bring-a-friend' ticketing scheme?

Is it feasible to offer tickets at special prices for young people from specific groups, for example, 'Mob tix' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people?

- ▶ Could you provide travel subsidies to help get young people to the event? Is there a venue near a range of public transport options? Could you run a shuttle bus if the venue isn't close to public transport?

- ▶ Is the venue accessible, and is this information known and readily available?
- ▶ Are you speaking to young people about what time would suit them?
- ▶ Are you holding the program at a location convenient to young people or at locations that young people know?
- ▶ Are young people involved in the design of marketing materials?
- ▶ Have you asked young people what they need to know or would like to know about the event?
- ▶ Are you promoting the event in ways and on platforms that engage with young people?



Functional Barriers



For young people living in regional, rural and remote areas, *distance* is a functional barrier. Young people simply can't attend live music events if the opportunities aren't available near where they live.

For young people under the age of 18, one of the most common functional barriers is their age and simply not being allowed into *licensed venues*. Young people can't be part of the audience if they aren't allowed to attend or are discouraged from attending. With the live music industry so closely tied to alcohol sales and strict licensing laws, licensed venues find it difficult to stage all-ages music events. 37% of young Australians aged 16 and 17 agree that licensing and not being allowed in licensed venues is a barrier to attending live music (Strong 2024).

48% of young Australians aged 16 and 17 identify *age* and the limited number of all-ages music events as a barrier, with 12% saying this is the most significant barrier (Strong 2024).

Parent and guardian *permission* is also a functional barrier for young people with 13% of 16 - 25-year-olds stating this as a barrier to attending live music events (Strong 2024).

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Is it possible to add a regional location to an upcoming tour? If not, could you work with regional teams and offer cheaper tickets to encourage participation from young people in regional areas?

 - ▶ Could you partner with other event promoters to look at regional touring? If not, consider applying for a grant to subsidise the cost of regional touring.

 - ▶ Could you subsidise the cost of travel?

 - ▶ Consider working with other live music venues and event producers to stage all-ages music events to build a committed future audience.

 - ▶ For live music venues, consider how many all-ages music events you can commit to and set a plan. Even staging one all-ages music event every 3-6 months starts building a committed younger audience. It takes time to build a community of young people; it won't happen overnight.
- ▶ Consider multi-show scheduling (matinees and evening shows) to accommodate different age groups.

 - ▶ For live music venues in close proximity, work together to build a network of venues that support and promote all-ages music events. You can promote each other's all-ages music events to build a dedicated audience. How can young people develop a habit of attending live music if they can't attend regularly? Regularity is key to building a consistent audience for all-ages music events.

 - ▶ Consider what information is available for parents/guardians about an all-ages music event. Do you need to provide information about safety policies? Make sure communications address parent/guardian concerns and questions.

 - ▶ Policies, such as no pass-outs, and having a drop-off zone, help parents/guardians understand that the event is designed with safety in mind.



Attitudinal Barriers

A significant attitudinal barrier is perceptions of *safety*. Many young people have indicated not feeling safe in live music venues and at events. Young people are unfamiliar with these spaces and can feel self-conscious or concerned about attending. 25% of 16 - 25-year-olds identify safety as a barrier to attending live music events (Strong 2024).

Young people's attitudes towards *alcohol* are rapidly changing and are becoming another barrier. This is due to young people choosing to not engage in activities that focus on the consumption of alcohol and linking excessive consumption of alcohol with perceptions of safety. 16% of young people aged 18 - 25 identified that they don't like to attend licensed venues because of the presence of alcohol (Strong 2024).

In 2022-23, 31% of young people aged 14 - 17 had consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months, a substantial reduction from 2001 (69%) (AIHW 2024). If this decline in alcohol consumption continues, it has the potential to become a major barrier in the future, particularly for licensed venues.

Feeling welcome and having a sense of *belonging* is critical for young people to attend live music events. Many young people perceive live music spaces as spaces that aren't open to them. This includes feelings that they don't belong there, that music events are 'not for people like me' and 'not for young people'. 9% of 16 - 25-year-olds identify feelings of not belonging as a barrier (Strong 2024).

There's confusion and a lack of understanding from young people about what live music events they're allowed to attend. Over time, this confusion becomes a barrier to participation.

Community is another attitudinal barrier to attending live music events. 19% of 16 - 25-year-olds have indicated that not being part of a live music community or not having other people to go with is a barrier to attending (Strong 2024).

Representation and feeling that music events don't reflect or represent their identity is also an attitudinal barrier. If young people can't see themselves reflected in the artist line-up, it's easy to think 'this event isn't for people like me'.

Additionally, if event marketing fails to represent diverse communities, those from marginalised backgrounds may feel excluded. 8% of 16 - 25-year-olds identify representation as a barrier to their participation (Strong 2024).

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Adopt venue policies that promote patron safety and then promote these to the audience. A great example of this is the 'Ask for Angela' campaign, which encourages patrons to approach bar staff and ask for Angela if they need help to leave an unsafe situation (NSW Government Digital Channels 2019).
- ▶ Create a 'safe space policy' for the venue and make sure the venue rules are displayed (Onto It Media n.d.)
- ▶ Make sure to provide a quiet/chill-out area at the event.
- ▶ Consider offering a two-for-one 'friends discount' to encourage people who may feel that they 'don't belong' to bring a friend to the event.
- ▶ Make sure staff go out of their way to welcome young people and encourage them.
- ▶ Make sure that young people can see themselves represented in event marketing and on artist line-ups.
- ▶ Be open and transparent about what events young people can attend.
- ▶ Consider what else can you do to make sure young people feel safe and welcome in the space.



Programming



Programming considerations are key to staging successful music events for young people.

Young people are among the most exciting musicians on Australian stages; they're some of the most innovative recording artists and producers in Australian studios, and the songwriters of some of the most streamed songs across the globe.

Young people want to see themselves represented on Australian stages, reflecting the diverse voices in their community. Data from the 2022 Audience Outlook Monitor reveals that young audiences are more than ever before focused on matters related to access, representation and inclusion (Patternmaker 2022). Feedback from young people highlights the critical role that these factors play in their purchasing decisions. Event producers therefore can't underestimate the importance of curating line-ups that reflect the wide musical tastes and cultural backgrounds of young audiences.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Contemporary music is broad and ever evolving, and young people are often at the forefront of new trends. By offering a diverse range of musical acts, event organisers can ensure that their events appeal to a wide spectrum of interests and provide an inclusive space for all attendees.
- ▶ Young people aren't all the same, so programs need to accommodate this. Sometimes this means creating separate programs based on age or gender. Don't assume all young people like the same things.
- ▶ Consider multi-show scheduling (matinees and evening shows) to accommodate different age groups.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to highlight local talent and emerging artists to give young performers a platform. However, make sure they're being paid appropriately. Emerging artists shouldn't be an opportunity to obtain free or low-cost talent.
- ▶ Aim to get young people involved in programming decisions. Ask them who they want to see and try to understand the musical preferences of the target age group.
- ▶ Gather feedback from young people before and after the event to improve future programming. Ensure the aims and actions of the event resonate with the target audience.
- ▶ Don't underestimate the value of creating an engaging and interactive event experience. From incorporating elements like artist meet-and-greets and open mic sessions, to offering creative workshops or interactive installations, there are numerous ways to enhance the event experience for young people and foster a deeper connection between them and the music.
- ▶ Make sure you consider cultural and gender representation in the line-up. This matters to young people more than ever before.
- ▶ Make sure performers understand they're performing at an all-ages music event. This means no alcohol as part of artist riders, and controlling and minimising sexual content, drug and alcohol references, and inappropriate language. It also means no smoking or vaping by the artists.
- ▶ Ensure that performance agreements highlight the conditions for all-ages music events, including any venue or regulatory conditions. Make sure these are signed and adhered to by all parties.
- ▶ Performers should be directed to their 'duty of care' to young people in the audience and should discourage dangerous behaviour, such as stage diving and moshing.
- ▶ Aim to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere in the programming, which can encourage participation.

Partnerships



Partnerships can support events in several ways.

Typically, partnerships fall into the categories of either community or corporate, though they frequently overlap. Partnerships are characterised by an exchange of value, which may be financial (grants or sponsorship) or in-kind (provision of venue, marketing support, labour or equipment). It's best to clarify the expectations of a partnership in writing, via a 'memorandum of understanding' or a contract.

Partnering with local youth organisations and government bodies can greatly enhance the success of all-ages music events. Youth

organisations offer valuable insights into the interests of young audiences, ensuring better engagement, while local governments can provide resources, funding and promotional support. These collaborations foster community involvement and create a more vibrant cultural scene focused on the development of young people. Strategic partnerships also help maintain long-term community impact beyond the event. These partnerships can also address logistical and safety concerns. Youth organisations have experience managing age-appropriate, safe events, while local governments assist with permits and regulations, streamlining planning, and potentially offering funding. Together, these partners help create a positive, community-focused environment for young attendees.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ There are many benefits to partnering with youth organisations, including connecting to a broader range of local artists and young people, as well as building event expertise.
- ▶ More partners mean more people promoting the event, which can increase attendance and community interest.
- ▶ Local governments can assist with funding all-ages music events, and can provide logistic support, as well as support sourcing venues and helping with permits, compliance, and navigating the approval process.
- ▶ Local governments usually have a good reach into the community so can be vital to get the word out to young people and their parents/guardians.
- ▶ Partnering adds credibility to the event, which can assist in getting parents/guardians on board. Remember that parent/guardian permission has been identified as a functional barrier for young people attending live music events (see 'Functional Barriers').
- ▶ Partnering also helps achieve long-term sustainability. It takes time to build a community of young people; it won't happen overnight.
- ▶ Partnering doesn't have to be limited to youth organisations and local governments. Consider other like-minded event producers or live music venues.
- ▶ Check in with your partners throughout the planning and delivery process to make sure they see the value of the partnership. The more you can involve them, the more they'll likely offer support.
- ▶ Corporate partnerships often come with an expectation of promotion. Be sure that you can commit resources to fulfil these obligations.
- ▶ Choose corporate sponsors wisely. As all-ages music events are alcohol, drug, smoke and vape-free, avoid partnerships or sponsorships that compromise this or lead to mixed messaging.
- ▶ Remember that functional and attitudinal barriers often take long-term thinking to resolve and may require collaboration with other like-minded groups and larger networks, but doing so provides long-term benefits to the whole music community.

Funding



Staging all-ages music events can be costly, particularly when traditional income opportunities such as alcohol sales aren't possible.

This can make staging all-ages music events seem financially impossible, despite the long-term benefits to young people and the sector as a whole. However, in light of the evolving attitudes towards alcohol consumption among young people, it's crucial to explore diverse funding options that don't depend on bar revenue. This shift requires innovative thinking and strategic partnerships to sustain the vibrant live music scene, ensuring it remains accessible and appealing to all ages.

There are many government initiatives and local programs that are designed to foster engagement in the arts for young people and provide platforms for emerging talent. By leveraging diverse funding sources and innovative strategies, organisers can create vibrant, inclusive all-ages music events that thrive in this new landscape, ensuring sustainability for both artists and audiences.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Many councils offer community grants specifically for cultural events, including music festivals and performances.

- ▶ Grants have specific deadlines and windows of activity, so if you're looking for grant support, you may need to be flexible around timing.

- ▶ Ticket sales remain an important avenue to recoup investment in all-ages music events, however it's unlikely to cover all costs. In order to achieve high ticket sales, ticket prices need to be carefully considered against affordability.

- ▶ Consider alternative funding strategies. Looking at corporate sponsorship to fund all-ages music events might be an option. Look to partner with businesses that align with the interests of young people in the area.

- ▶ Selling event-related merchandise can generate additional revenue, helping to create a sustainable financial model. For all-ages music events, consider asking for a higher percentage of merchandise commission.

- ▶ Implementing tiered ticket prices which considers affordability for young people, enables wider access while still generating income.

- ▶ Partnering with like-minded event producers, or live music venues that want to focus on all-ages music events, is a good way of sharing the workload and costs. It also looks attractive to funding bodies.

- ▶ When alcohol sales aren't possible, consider what alcohol-free drinks you can sell. And consider the range you're offering.

- ▶ Engage with the regular 'of-age' audience and community, and encourage them to support all-ages music events financially. This could be done by adding an optional \$1 ticketing fee to support all-ages activities. Check out [The Sound Lounge](#) in the UK for inspiration.

- ▶ Consider how many all-ages music events you can commit to and set a plan. It takes time to build a community of young people; it won't happen overnight.

- ▶ Remember the other long-term benefits to all-ages music events that go way beyond the financial considerations (see 'Why All-ages Music Events Are Important').

- ▶ The Australian Government Office for Youth provides grants to organisations that work with young people. It also provides a range of valuable resources and support for initiatives aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of, and opportunities for, young people in the arts.

- ▶ Creative Australia is the Australian Government's principal arts investment and advisory body, which offers a number of grants and funding programs.

- ▶ Create NSW offers funding and grants for projects that foster artistic innovation and the involvement of young people.

- ▶ Sound NSW also provides grants, funding and support for New South Wales artists, live music venues, organisations and professionals in the New South Wales music industry.

Additional Costs



There are a range of costs to consider when staging all-ages music events, which can impact the overall budget significantly and pose challenges for organisers.

Event organisers must prioritise safety, accessibility and inclusivity so to create a welcoming environment for younger audiences.

Compliance with legal regulations means increased security and crowd control measures and often involves specialised insurance, which can drive up expenses. These considerations highlight the financial complexities associated with staging all-ages music events, which means careful planning and resource allocation is required to ensure success.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ All-ages music events often need to implement stricter security and crowd control measures. Make sure the budget allows for extra security and crowd controllers, including staff of mixed genders, and ensure staff have experience with younger attendees.

- ▶ You may also need to consider additional training and staff briefings, which can add to costs.

- ▶ Make sure you've budgeted for the *Working with Children Check* (WWCC) for paid employees: volunteers can obtain WWCC for free. This is essential to safeguard younger attendees, and when advertised to parents/guardians, enhances perceptions of safety.

- ▶ Insurance premiums can be significantly higher for events catering to all ages. Organisers often need specialised liability coverage to protect against potential risks. This additional layer of insurance can add a substantial amount to the overall budget as insurers often view all-ages music events as higher risk.

- ▶ Accessibility is another critical factor that can increase costs. Ensuring that venues are suitable for younger audiences may require modifications to comply with accessibility standards, which can include everything from improved seating arrangements to the installation of extra signage. Review the Australian Human Rights Commission's *Accessible events - a guide for organisers* for more information.

- ▶ Depending on the licensing situation, if the event is exclusively for underage people, or if you're hosting a mixed-age event, you may need to separate sections of the audience. This might require temporary infrastructure.

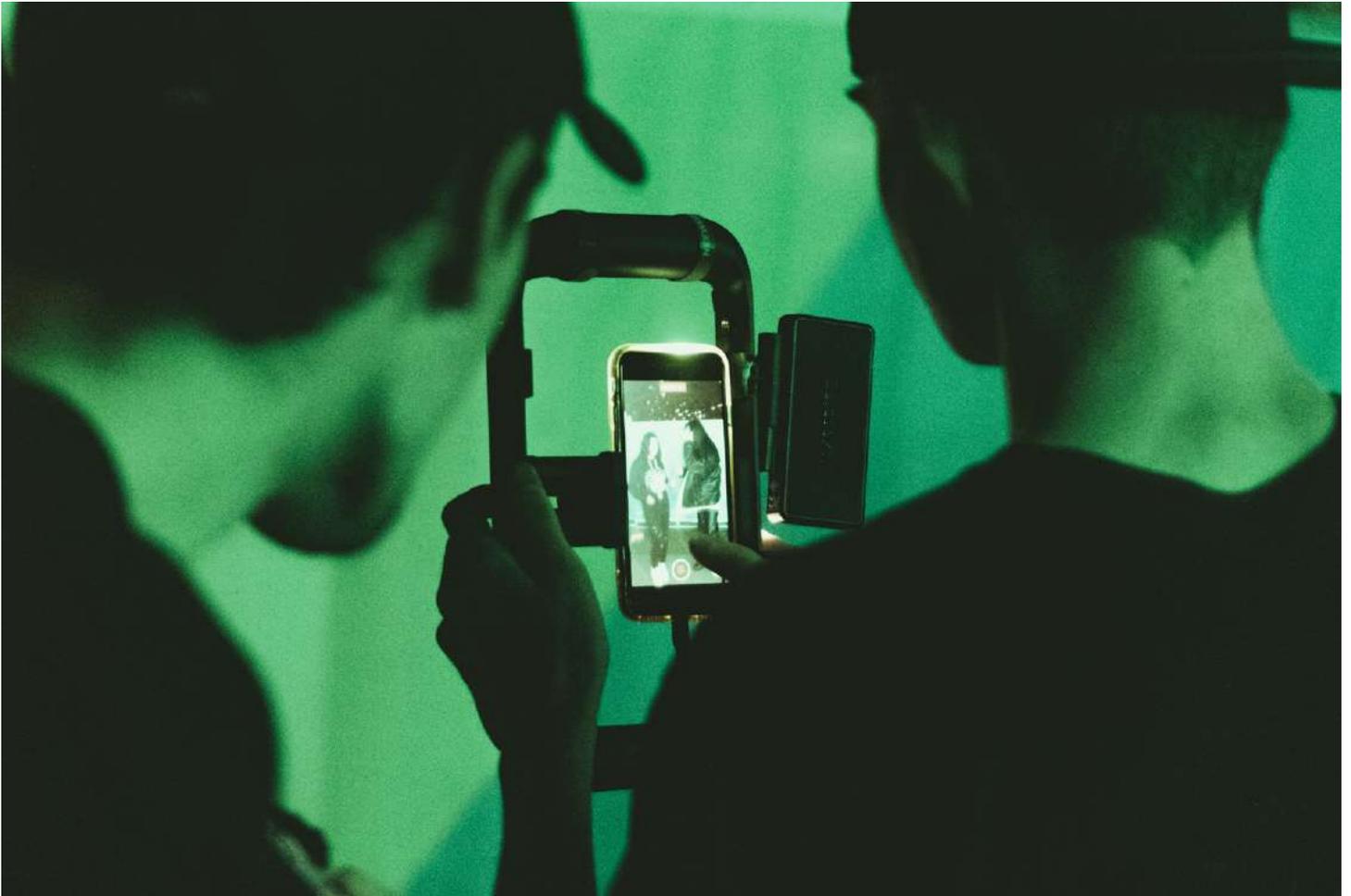
- ▶ Marketing strategies for all-ages music events may also differ significantly from those targeting older audiences. Engaging with younger demographics often necessitates a more vibrant and interactive promotional approach, utilising social media platforms, influencer partnerships and creative content marketing.

- ▶ Don't forget the hidden resourcing costs of new marketing approaches and utilising partnerships to assist with marketing.

- ▶ Try to allocate funds to address the practical, functional and attitudinal barriers (see 'Barriers to Participation'). You may need to support transportation costs, offer early-bird or rush ticketing discounts, or offer a two-for-one 'friends ticketing' discount to encourage young people who may feel that they don't belong to come with a friend.

- ▶ You'll most likely need to consider increased staffing to accommodate a younger crowd. For all-ages music events it's good practice to have a youth worker on staff.

Marketing



Marketing an all-ages music event to young people requires a strategic approach that resonates with their interests and values.

The 'build it and they will come approach' doesn't necessarily work when it comes to all-ages music events. By implementing a comprehensive marketing strategy that includes both digital and community-focused initiatives, organisers can create a buzz that attracts young people to an event. But, if only marketing to young people were that straightforward!

The reality is, if the marketing strategy targets an audience as broad as 'young people' you're likely to miss the mark. Young people aren't a singular group with uniform experiences that can be easily 'tapped into' for a campaign. Young audiences are often more fragmented than other demographics. The experiences of a 14-year-old girl are significantly different from those of a gender non-conforming 17-year-old. Recognising this is a crucial step towards creating a targeted campaign.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ The introduction of the *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 (Cth)*, preventing young people under 16 from having social media accounts, will have implications on the way you reach and connect with young people under 16.
- ▶ Social media is still a great way to reach parents/guardians of young people, older siblings and friends, and young people over 16. Try to leverage existing social media channels and use platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat to create visually appealing content. Share teasers, artist interviews and behind-the-scenes footage to engage young audiences.
- ▶ Find the quickest way to reach as many young people as you can: identify quick wins in the local community.
- ▶ Don't underestimate traditional marketing channels as a way of reaching parents/guardians who influence young people. Remember that permission to attend is a functional barrier that marketing can help overcome.
- ▶ Engage with local youth organisations and the youth team at the local council. Collaboration is a great way to promote an event through other channels. They can provide valuable resources and access to local young people and networks. Then make sure you return the favour.
- ▶ Encourage attendees to share their experiences online. This builds engagement and creates a buzz around the event.
- ▶ Make sure you're not just asking young people for their opinions, but actively involving them in the campaign. Can they produce videos or content for you? Peer-to-peer marketing is valuable and helps emphasise your authenticity.
- ▶ A good way to get other organisations involved is to offer ticketing discounts, group discounts, or even complimentary tickets for them to give away if they support your marketing and share your content.
- ▶ Contact the local schools in the area. These partnerships not only lend credibility to the event, but also create opportunities for joint promotion and activities that can enhance the overall experience. Furthermore, involving local schools can facilitate direct engagement with students, making it easier to disseminate information and generate excitement about the event.
- ▶ You may not be able to rely on existing marketing channels. The way young people find information and communicate is vastly different. Ensure you're getting to know your audience. Attention spans online are short, so having a visible presence around your community is still important. This could be done in a variety of ways, such as posters and outdoor signage.
- ▶ Get your artists involved in the marketing process. Artists often have a strong online presence, so ensure you include clear marketing expectations in their agreements.
- ▶ Don't underestimate the benefits of offering affordable ticket options, including early-bird prices and group rates, which ensures the event is accessible to all young people.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ To appeal to a broader audience, promote not only the music, but also additional activities such as workshops, art installations and food vendors.

- ▶ Make sure your marketing is very clear regarding dates, times, costs, access information and expectations of the young people attending.
- ▶ Be genuine and authentic. For young people, this matters.



Risks



Staging all-ages music events presents a unique opportunity to engage younger audiences.

However, these events also come with a distinct set of risks that promoters, venue operators and event organisers must carefully navigate as they've a duty of care to young attendees. Understanding these risks is crucial for a successful event that prioritises the wellbeing of participants.

Younger audiences may exhibit different social dynamics, which can lead to increased risks of disruption or altercations. Additionally, the potential consumption of alcohol and/or drugs can pose a heightened risk at all-ages music events. Event organisers must be aware of the legal implications, as they're responsible for ensuring that underage attendees aren't exposed to inappropriate content or situations. Lastly, there's the logistical challenge of ensuring appropriate security and crowd control measures are in place to protect young attendees while also maintaining a welcoming atmosphere.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ All events should undertake a risk assessment and have appropriate risk management systems in place. The type and severity of risk exposure varies depending on the circumstances of the event, and the degree of preparation and risk mitigation undertaken by organisers.

- ▶ Another risk specific to all-ages music events is that younger audiences may be less experienced in navigating large crowds. They may be less aware of personal safety in crowded environments, leading to potential injuries or emergencies. Further, they might be more susceptible to negative influences or emotional distress from intense situations, such as mosh pits, crowd surfing or overwhelming sounds. To avoid these risks, it's good practice to have trained staff onsite. Make sure staff are briefed about the increased risks. Have a quiet area set aside for young people who need a break. Organisers may need to hire additional security personnel and crowd controllers, and have trained staff to handle youth-specific issues, which can increase costs and logistical complexity.

Make sure the *first-aid provider* onsite is aware of the drug and alcohol risks, and consider having a trained *drug and alcohol worker* onsite for larger events.

Crowd spotters can be helpful in assisting with crowd issues. Position these people in front of the stage to allow an uninterrupted view of the crowd.

- ▶ All-ages music events must be alcohol, drug, smoke and vape-free, but the risk is in trying to achieve this. Make sure your publicity reinforces these rules and they are clearly displayed as conditions of entry, as this helps control the risks.

- ▶ Ensuring no pass-outs is another good risk control and an effective way of making sure the event is alcohol, drug, smoke and vape-free.

- ▶ Remember that event organisers also have a duty of care to young people outside the venue. Make sure security staff and crowd controllers patrol inside and outside the site. Consider having a dedicated drop-off and pick-up zone for parents/guardians that's well advertised.

- ▶ Organisers should screen performers and their content for appropriateness, and make sure they're reminded that the event is all-ages. This means content that's suitable for young people. Encourage performers to look out for audience behaviour that might be dangerous, such as mosh pits, crowd crushing and crowd surfing. Performers should also refrain from drinking or smoking while at the venue including in green room areas.

- ▶ Make sure your 'risk matrix' is tailored to suit an all-ages music event, and as part of a usual risk management process, consider the risks specific to young people.

Safety and Regulations



Prioritising safety is essential when planning all-ages music events in New South Wales.

Ensuring a safe environment not only protects young attendees, but also fosters a positive experience that encourages community participation and engagement.

Organisers of all-ages music events need to be aware of the range of safety interventions that mightn't be necessary for over-18 events. Many young people have indicated not feeling safe in live music venues and at events. Young people are unfamiliar with these spaces and can feel self-conscious about attending. Remember that 25% of 16 - 25-year-olds identify *safety* as a barrier to attending live music events (Strong 2024), so preparation and clear communication about the event's safety is essential.

Community trust also hinges on safety. When attendees feel secure, they're more likely to return for future events and recommend them to others. This enhances the reputation of the event organisers and contributes to a thriving community culture.

Safety is also linked to legal compliance, which is critical. Adhering to local regulations regarding safety, noise and crowd control not only avoids potential fines, but also ensures a well-organised event. But focusing on safety at all-ages music events in New South Wales isn't just about compliance, it's about creating an enjoyable, inclusive and memorable experience for everyone involved.

It's important to recognise that some young people may be more vulnerable than others. Think about the target audience and consider what they might need to make them feel safe.

Young people who may need further safety consideration include:

- young people with disability
- young people experiencing mental ill-health
- young people who identify as LGBTQIA+
- young people who are non-binary or gender diverse, or are questioning their sexuality or gender
- young people from low-income households
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people
- young people who have newly arrived in Australia, or are culturally and linguistically diverse
- young people unable to live at home, including those who are homeless or living in foster, residential or kinship care.

It's important to remember that this guide isn't designed to be a step-by-step manual for staging events. It provides insights and strategies specific to young audiences. Event organisers must be aware of the broader safety implications, regulations and requirements. Numerous laws and regulations govern the planning and execution of an event. Event organisers must be aware of and comply with all applicable laws, including *NSW Health's Public Health Orders and restrictions*. Event organisers have a responsibility to secure all necessary permits and approvals to successfully stage the event. If in doubt seek advice. The NSW Government's *Event starter guide* for organising public and outdoor events is a great place to start.



NSW Health Guidelines and the Music Festivals Act



The *Guidelines for music festival event organisers: music festival harm reduction* (NSW Health 2024) is essential reading for all event organisers in New South Wales.

While the guidelines have been developed to support music festival organisers to deliver safer music festivals, they're relevant for all event producers and contain important safety information relevant to all events. They combine existing event-planning guidance alongside harm-reduction strategies. Regardless of whether the event is a music festival that's required to have an agreed 'health and medical plan' under the Music Festivals Act, the guidelines should be reviewed to:

- *consider the site environment to promote health and amenity for patrons;*
- *include peer support and harm-reduction messaging; and*
- *ensure appropriate onsite medical service capability.*

Under the Music Festivals Act, organisers of all music events in New South Wales are required to prepare a 'health and medical plan'.

A music festival is defined in the Music Festivals Act (NSW Government 2019) as an event, other than a concert, that:

- is music-focused or dance-focused*
- has performances by a series of persons or groups that are engaged to play or perform to live or prerecorded music, or to provide another form of musical or live entertainment*
- is held within a defined area*
- is attended by 2,000 or more people*
- is a ticketed event.*

The Secretary of the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport determines which festivals need their safety and medical plans to be assessed and agreed to by NSW Health. The Music Festivals Act applies to festivals regardless of whether the event is licensed to sell liquor under the Liquor Act 2007 (NSW) and does apply to all-ages music events if the above definitions are met.

For festivals and events that don't require an agreed health and medical plan under the Music Festivals Act, event organisers are still encouraged to read and follow the *NSW Ministry of Health's Guidelines for music festival event organisers: music festival harm reduction*. If the event isn't required to have an agreed health and medical plan, you should still undertake a risk assessment to cover anticipated health harms through their risk management plan.

First Aid and Health



While first aid is essential at any event, events tailored for young attendees require specific considerations to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

One of the primary differences in first aid for young people compared to the general population, is the *range* of potential medical issues. First-aid responders at all-ages music events should be knowledgeable about age-specific medical concerns, such as managing

asthma attacks, allergic reactions, etc. Younger audiences may be less experienced in navigating large crowds, and they may be less aware of personal safety in crowded environments, leading to potential injuries or emergencies. Further, they might be more susceptible to negative influences or emotional distress from intense situations, such as mosh pits, crowd surfing or overwhelming sounds.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Event organisers should consider first aid as part of the risk assessment of the event. If there are high risks involved (e.g. an expected full capacity in a large venue, an outdoor event in summer heat, or an event with moshing expected) then the event may need more first-aid officers, with a minimum qualification of [St John Ambulance Australia Level 2](#).
- ▶ If the event is low risk, in an existing venue and with limited capacity, perhaps a trained staff member and existing first-aid processes might be enough.
- ▶ Guidance provided by [St John Ambulance Australia](#) suggests a ratio of 1:250 (1 first-aid officer to 250 attendees). Determining the exact requirement for the event should be done in consultation with emergency services and your risk management plan.
- ▶ If possible, set up a first-aid station in a separate room or location that's close to the main performance area. Make sure it has clear signage so people can find it, and make sure it's private.
- ▶ Establish a process for dealing with young people who show signs of drug and/or alcohol intoxication when arriving at the venue.
- ▶ Make sure you plan for and have staff capacity for dealing with and helping young people who are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Don't eject an intoxicated minor onto the street without a plan to support them. Phone family or friends to ensure they get home safely.
- ▶ Make sure first-aid personnel are equipped to communicate effectively with young people. Young people may not always be able to articulate their symptoms or understand health-related instructions.
- ▶ First-aid providers should employ a 'child-friendly approach'; using simple language and engaging techniques to assess injuries and provide care.
- ▶ Make sure you've considered parental involvement as part of the first-aid plan. At all-ages music events, parents/guardians often expect to be informed about any medical incidents involving their children. First-aid teams should have protocols in place for timely communication with parents/guardians regarding their child's condition, especially if further medical treatment is required.
- ▶ First-aid training for staff at all-ages music events should emphasise scenarios specific to young people. For instance, training might include how to respond to bullying-related injuries or emotional crises, such as panic attacks or distress during a group activity.
- ▶ It's good practice to inform and involve local health districts and NSW Ambulance in the early stages of event planning, depending on the scale of the event. This may be required if you're delivering a music festival and are required to have an agreed health and medical plan under the Music Festivals Act.

Conditions of Entry



Having clear conditions of entry for all-ages music events is crucial.

These conditions establish rules that prioritise the safety, enjoyment and protection of younger attendees. Conditions of entry can set expectations around behaviour, supervision, and prohibited items, helping to prevent incidents, such as underage drinking or inappropriate behaviour. They also provide clarity on important policies like re-entry/pass-outs, security checks,

and what parents/guardians should know when allowing minors to attend alone. Establishing and enforcing these conditions helps create a controlled, secure environment where young people can enjoy the event without compromising their safety, and it reassures parents/guardians that appropriate precautions are in place.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Ensure that the conditions of entry are clearly displayed on tickets, promotional materials and at the door. It's good practice to make sure this information is available to parents/guardians before the event.

 - ▶ Make sure staff, security and crowd controllers are aware of the conditions of entry. If there are any changes to the existing conditions of entry, which are specific to the all-ages music events, make sure these are known by everyone. Everyone needs to clearly understand the conditions of entry.

 - ▶ Direct door staff and crowd controllers to reinforce these conditions to young attendees upon entry.

 - ▶ Have a responsible, friendly and welcoming adult working the door. You want young people to feel welcome, especially if this is their first live music event.

 - ▶ You may wish to conduct bag checks as people enter the venue to ensure that attendees and performers aren't bringing alcohol or other inappropriate products, such as weapons, vapes, or glass on to the premises.

 - ▶ Ensure there's at least one non-male security guard or crowd controller at the entrance to check the bags of non-male attendees.
- ▶ Display signs that reinforce your conditions of entry, and explicitly state that drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping won't be permitted at the event.

 - ▶ Having no pass-outs ensures the event remains alcohol, drug, smoke and vape-free. Make sure this is well known ahead of time, visible at the entry, and included as part of the conditions of entry.

Venue



When staging an all-ages music event, selecting the right venue is crucial in helping to meet the needs and safety of young attendees.

Choosing the right venue sets the tone and framework for the entire experience and there are some specific things to consider when staging an all-ages music event. Venues that are appropriate for all-ages events should have clear safety protocols, including well-lit entrances

and exits, and staff who are trained to handle a diverse age range. Ideally, the venue and staff will have experience working at all-ages events and understand their unique needs.

The venue's location should be convenient for young people and it's advisable to ensure it's within close proximity to public transport. Try to select a venue that also has an area that can be used as a designated drop-off/pick-up area and is accessible (including toilets) for people with disability.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ A well-chosen venue aligns with the event's theme, purpose and audience, and helps ensure that young attendees feel comfortable and engaged.
- ▶ The venue's location, accessibility and parking options can influence attendance, as a conveniently located venue makes it easier for young people to participate.
- ▶ Try to make sure the venue is in a well-lit area that's close to public transport.
- ▶ Younger attendees may be dropped off or picked up by parents/guardians, therefore it's important that the venue has good parking or offers safe drop-off zones.

If you're expecting large crowds for an all-ages music event, make sure the drop-off and pick-up zone is staffed with security and crowd controllers.

Clear signage for pick-up and drop-off areas can prevent congestion and ensure smooth traffic flow, contributing to a safer experience for young attendees.

- ▶ Ensure the venue has good disability access. A recent national survey of young people revealed that 11% of 16 - 25-year-olds identified access as a barrier to their participation (Strong 2024)
- ▶ Make sure the venue conditions are sanitary and clean.

- ▶ Some venues, particularly indoor venues such as theatres or bigger facilities, may have multiple events taking place during the day. If a function for adults is held in the same venue on the same date as an all-ages music event, a minimum of 45 minutes should be allowed between the conclusion of one event and the commencement of the next. This allows for attendees to depart and arrive with little or no cross-over.
- ▶ If an event for adults is taking place at the same time, make sure you have security and crowd controllers monitoring any common areas, and that the young people attending the event can't access the event for adults.
- ▶ All event organisers must ensure that a thorough assessment of the site has been undertaken to identify any hazards before the event starts.

Security and Crowd Control



Having crowd controllers and security at events is common practice and is governed by strict regulations to ensure the safety and security of both attendees and staff.

These rules are outlined primarily within the *Security Industry Act 1997 (NSW)* and the *Security Industry Regulation 2016*. Crowd controllers and security personnel must hold a valid security licence issued by NSW Fair Trading. This licence

allows them to work in roles such as crowd control, patrolling or guards at public events. However, there are some specific factors to consider when it comes to security and crowd control at events for young people.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Establish a 'crowd management plan' based on the expected number of patrons, style of music and expected crowd behaviour, and situate crowd controllers around the venue accordingly. The crowd management plan is an extension of your risk management plan.
- ▶ Factor into your crowd management plan that the audience could be inexperienced at attending events. This means you may need to put more effort into communicating with them about what's expected.
- ▶ Security and crowd controllers should employ a child-friendly approach, using simple language and engaging techniques to provide a calm and safe atmosphere.
- ▶ Security staff and crowd controllers should be dressed appropriately, as a heavy-handed approach or appearance can cause distress to some young people, which is unnecessary if the event risk is deemed low.
- ▶ Supervise the queue before the show to ensure that attendees are queuing safely, and the queue is clear of any roads or clearways.
- ▶ Coordinate the event with public transport timetables. Publish the playing times and public transport details local to the venue on your website, on tickets, and outside the venue so parents/guardians can determine when the event starts and finishes.
- ▶ Make sure your security and crowd controllers are approachable and friendly.
- ▶ Remember that event organisers have a duty of care to young people outside the venue, both before and after the event. Make sure patrols occur inside and outside the site.

Many younger attendees may be dropped off or picked up by parents/guardians. Therefore, patrols must occur in relevant areas before and after the show.
- ▶ Before the event starts, brief all staff including security and crowd controllers so they understand the nature of all-ages music events, and can contribute to supporting the positive behaviour of attendees and performers.
- ▶ Harassment of young people, women or any individual must not be tolerated. Crowd controllers should be briefed to support the needs of all individuals who express they feel threatened.
- ▶ Crowd controllers and/or staff should check toilets regularly, and should safely respond to any bullying or antisocial behaviour throughout the event.
- ▶ It's important to make sure you include security and crowd controllers of mixed genders.
- ▶ Depending on the event's size, location and risk assessment, there are often minimum ratios of crowd controllers to attendees, which must be adhered to. For example, high-risk events and large music festivals typically require a higher presence.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ The number of security guards and crowd controllers required isn't explicitly set by a specific law. However, industry standards and local council requirements often use ratios based on the size of the crowd and the risk profile of the event.

For public events where the audience capacity is below 100, it's good practice to ensure you have a minimum of two fully licensed security guards/crowd controllers.

For any public event where the audience capacity exceeds 100 but is less than 500, it's good practice to employ fully licensed security guards/crowd controllers at the rate of one for every 100 patrons.

- ▶ You should always check with the local council, police and licensing authorities, as they may have specific requirements for the event, especially if it's considered high-risk or you are expecting a large crowd. The venue may also have minimum requirements.

- ▶ In some cases, event organisers must notify or gain event approval from the NSW Police. In discussions, make sure they're aware that the event is alcohol, drug, smoke and vape-free, and is an all-ages music event for young people.

- ▶ Security guards and crowd controllers are responsible for managing entry, preventing overcrowding, ensuring safe evacuation routes, monitoring behaviour and enforcing conditions of entry. They must act professionally and be trained in conflict resolution to manage any issues that arise without escalating the situation. Make sure they're aware that the event is an event for young people.

- ▶ NSW Police generally provides policing services to the community free of charge, however, in certain cases where services extend beyond standard responsibilities, events may be charged fees for additional services.

Cost recovery services provided by police include policing services at some special events (NSW Police Force n.d.) Consider the role of user-pays police service compared to that of private security and seek advice early.

- ▶ All security guards and crowd controllers employed during events should have their security licence clearly displayed at all times. Each guard is required to wear a number clearly visible at least 10cm x 10cm so they can be easily identified. All numbers allocated must be recorded within a security sign-in book and provided to police upon request.

- ▶ Ensure you plan for and have the capacity to deal with and help young people who are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Don't eject an intoxicated minor onto the street without a plan to support them. Phone family or friends to ensure they get home safely. This responsibility might sit with first aid or security.

- ▶ Make sure security and crowd controllers reinforce the conditions of entry to attendees upon entry. Remember this might be the first time a young person has attended an event by themselves.

- ▶ You may wish to conduct bag checks as people enter the venue to ensure that attendees and performers don't bring alcohol or other inappropriate products on to the premises. If doing so, ensure that there's at least one non-male crowd controller at the entrance to check the bags of non-male attendees.

Working with Children Check



When staging all-ages music events in New South Wales, ensuring all staff hold a Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a critical safety measure to protect young attendees.

The WWCC is a legal requirement for individuals working in roles that involve direct contact with children, which helps to screen for potential risks by identifying people who are barred from working with minors. Conducting these checks ensures that event staff, volunteers and performers are safe and appropriate for interaction with children and young people. Prioritising WWCC compliance fosters a secure, welcoming environment for younger attendees, reassures parents/guardians, and helps organisers meet legal and ethical standards for child safety.

The process involves a [National Police Check](#) (criminal history record check) and a review of reportable workplace misconduct. Results of a National Police Check can take up to four weeks. The outcome of a check is either a clearance to work with children or a bar against working with children. If cleared, the check is valid for five years, however, applicants are continuously monitored. If you're applying because you're a paid employee or self-employed, there's a fee for the WWCC. If you're a volunteer or a student on a professional placement, it's free.

Remember that child-related work (including voluntary work) includes:

- providing services for children and young people under the age of 18
- working face-to-face with children or young people
- situations where contact with children is more than incidental to the work.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Apply for your WWCC through [Service NSW](#).
- ▶ It's good practice to ensure that all staff, contractors and volunteers maintain a current and valid WWCC. Make sure there are appropriate processes in place to record this and ensure compliance.
- ▶ Organisations and events can determine which staff require a WWCC. A good rule is that anyone with direct and unsupervised access to children and young people under the age of 18 should hold a valid WWCC. This includes both the event planning process and the event itself.
- ▶ Generally, performers on stages will not need a WWCC unless they're a specific children's entertainer, or they've direct contact with young people. For example, if the performers are holding meet-and-greets or conducting workshops with young people, a WWCC may be required.
- ▶ Make sure you review the available information thoroughly and seek advice from Service NSW as required.
- ▶ The WWCC process is about creating environments where young people's voices are valued, they're physically and psychologically safe, are encouraged to freely enjoy their cultural rights, and their diverse needs are recognised and respected.
- ▶ The *National principles for child safe organisations* (the National Principles) have been developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission to provide a nationally consistent approach to creating cultures that foster child safety and wellbeing. Australian organisations aren't legally required to adopt the National Principles; however, they're considered best practice for fostering child safety and wellbeing culture and practice (Australian Human Rights Commission 2019).

Liquor Licensing and Alcohol



When planning an all-ages music event for young people in New South Wales, you may need to consult with Liquor and Gaming NSW regarding liquor licensing.

This may sound contradictory, but this is especially important if the event is taking place in a venue that's normally licensed, or if you intend to sell alcohol to people over the age of 18. It's essential to ensure compliance with laws around alcohol sales, and to put in place actions that minimise risks and prioritise attendee safety. Young people, particularly those under 18, are vulnerable to alcohol-related risks, and event

organisers must understand and follow the strict guidelines and legal requirements.

Liquor and Gaming NSW provides guidance on licensing requirements, which vary based on factors such as event type, expected attendance and whether the venue already holds a liquor licence. For events specifically targeting young people, they may offer additional recommendations or restrictions to prevent underage access to alcohol. Consulting with Liquor and Gaming NSW early in the planning process can help organisers make informed decisions that align with both legal obligations and the safety needs of young attendees.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ For all-ages music events it's important to ensure that young people (under the age of 18) don't have access to alcohol. The Liquor Act details restrictions that apply to under 18's in licensed and unlicensed premises.
- ▶ Failure to comply with liquor licensing laws can lead to significant legal repercussions, including fines or event shutdowns.
- ▶ Understanding and selecting what licence your business or event needs can be a complex and difficult process to navigate. However, there's a licence selector tool to help you find the most appropriate liquor licence type for your business or event. Visit [Liquor and Gaming NSW](#) for more information.
- ▶ A proactive approach to alcohol supports a safer environment, reduces the likelihood of alcohol-related incidents, and reassures parents/guardians.
- ▶ By consulting with Liquor and Gaming NSW, organisers can implement effective measures for controlling alcohol access. This collaboration helps create a safe, controlled environment that allows young people to enjoy the event without exposure to alcohol risks.
- ▶ Your responsibility extends beyond Liquor and Gaming NSW. Event organisers also have a responsibility to ensure that young people don't enter intoxicated.
- ▶ Conducting bag checks as people enter the venue is an effective way to ensure that attendees and performers don't bring alcohol or other inappropriate products, such as weapons, vapes and glass on to the premises. If doing bag checks, ensure that there's at least one non-male crowd controller at the entrance to check the bags of non-male attendees.
- ▶ Direct security staff and crowd controllers to check toilets regularly, and safely respond to underage drinking throughout the show.
- ▶ Ensure you plan for and have the capacity to deal with and help young people who are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Remember event organisers have a duty of care to the young people in attendance, so make sure you don't eject an intoxicated minor onto the street without a plan to support them. Phone family or friends to ensure they get home safely.
- ▶ Make sure performers understand they're performing at an all-ages music event. This means no alcohol as part of artist riders, and no smoking or vaping on the premises.
- ▶ Reach out to organisations, such as [DanceWize NSW](#) and [Red Frogs](#) for information and strategies on how they host all-ages events.

Cultural Safety



Beyond the broader safety considerations, 'cultural safety' is equally important when planning events for young people.

Cultural safety ensures that the diverse backgrounds, identities and experiences of all attendees, staff and performers are respected and acknowledged.

By creating a space that's inclusive of different cultures, religions and social backgrounds, event organisers can help young people feel valued, understood and safe to express themselves. Culturally safe spaces empower young people to engage fully in the event without fear of discrimination or judgement, promoting a sense of belonging and positive social interaction.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ To create a culturally safe event it's essential to consider various aspects that promote respect, inclusivity and understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds.

 - ▶ Ensure that event messaging avoids stereotypes or biases and is sensitive to cultural diversity.

 - ▶ Engage with representatives from diverse cultural groups in the planning process. This helps ensure that different perspectives are included, and cultural needs are understood and respected.

 - ▶ Make sure you're providing dietary options that consider religious or cultural restrictions.

 - ▶ Make sure the entertainment line-up is diverse and reflects the community, including gender, cultural background, ability and age.

 - ▶ Aim for an event team and staff that reflects the diversity of the audience.

 - ▶ Provide facilities that accommodate cultural needs, such as prayer rooms or gender-neutral restrooms to ensure all attendees feel comfortable. Accessible areas for individuals with disabilities also promotes inclusion.

 - ▶ Make sure that event staff are trained in cultural awareness as this can foster a more inclusive environment.

 - ▶ Display the venue's commitment to cultural safety in a public area.
- ▶ Including an Acknowledgment of Country is a great practice for any event. If possible, engage local Traditional Owners to perform a Welcome to Country.

 - ▶ To extend this respect, is it possible to display Aboriginal and Torres Strait flags at the event?

Can you display an Acknowledgment of Country, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait flags on your website to show respect for First Nations peoples?

 - ▶ On social media platforms, make it clear that hate speech and offensive language aren't tolerated and will be reported through the platform's official complaint channels.

 - ▶ Use language that's inclusive of all types of families, such as using 'adults' or 'parents/guardians' rather than 'mums and dads'. This recognises a diversity of family structures. Avoid welcoming and referencing 'ladies and gentlemen' as this might feel exclusionary.

Further Safety Issues



Safety should always be a priority when delivering all-ages music events.

However, ensuring safety goes beyond meeting legal requirements. It also means actively involving young people in the planning process. Their perspectives can help identify potential risks and improve safety measures in ways that truly meet their needs. Engaging young people in discussions about crowd management, emergency procedures, and safe event spaces empowers them to take responsibility for their wellbeing and that of their peers. By including young people in safety planning, event organisers can create a more inclusive, secure and enjoyable experience for all.

Here are some further safety issues to consider when staging your next all-ages music event.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Your safety obligations extend to staff, performers, volunteers and contractors onsite. Event organisers must ensure they comply with [SafeWork NSW](#) as well as any obligations imposed under legislation.
- ▶ If the event includes young people performing, volunteering or working at the event, make sure they're being looked after and take regular breaks.
- ▶ You should have a system in place to record any incidents, accidents or near misses that occur. For all-ages music events make sure this process includes capturing parents/guardians' contact information where possible.

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Make sure you've plenty of free water available for all-ages music events. Young people may not be able to afford to buy drinks.

Free drinking water should be kept cool to be appealing to patrons. Where chilling isn't possible, place free water outlets under shade.

- ▶ Outdoor events should provide a minimum of one water outlet per 500 people (NSW Health 2024). This ratio must be met for music festivals that require an agreed health and medical plan and must be detailed in the 'site plan'.

- ▶ Ensure you consider heat, shade, cooling measures and sun safety as part of event planning.

- ▶ Event organisers should consider strategies to reduce the risk of noise-related harms, such as providing quiet areas or chill-out zones for audiences, providing opportunities for breaks from noise and promoting the use of personal hearing protection, such as ear plugs.

It's good practice to ensure you have a free supply of earplugs available.

- ▶ Consider locating chill-out spaces away from stages and separate from crowded areas. Provide free drinking water to patrons in these spaces. Chill-out spaces should be monitored by security and crowd controllers and should be well-lit.

- ▶ Make sure marketing and communication materials are clear about the all-ages aspects of the show. Parents/guardians should be able to easily find out start and finishing times, drop-off zone locations, and information about what you're doing to make sure the event is safe for young people.

- ▶ Make sure the event's finishing time is accurate and that it's well advertised prior to the event. This is especially important for parents/guardians who are picking up young people after the event.

- ▶ Food should be available for the duration of the event but consider the pricing of food and beverages as young people may not be able to afford expensive items. This is especially important if the event is over mealtimes, or if crowds aren't allowed to bring food or drinks into the event, and especially if there's a no pass-outs policy in place.

- ▶ It's illegal for offensive noise to emanate from a public place (Premier's Department 2023). Young people who are less experienced in attending live music events may not be aware of how noise, when leaving a venue, can impact neighbouring properties and residents. Security and crowd controllers should remind young attendees to be mindful of noise levels as they depart a venue. All-ages events are an opportunity for young people to learn appropriate behaviour and etiquette, and this includes how to depart a venue respectfully.

Summary



Thanks for reading the *Good Practice Guide for Staging All-Ages Music Events in New South Wales*.

All-ages music events create important opportunities for young people to experience the magic of live music in safe, inclusive spaces, which foster creativity, connection and community. These events not only enrich young lives but also build a foundation for a thriving, resilient music culture that spans generations. For young people, all-ages music events offer important social and health benefits, while for live music venues and the broader music industry, they serve as a strategic investment in future growth and sustainability.

The all-ages music events taking place in New South Wales are as unique and diverse as Australian young people, and this guide recognises that there can never be a one-size-fits-all solution. Embracing the philosophy of 'good practice' means we're allowing for a variety of approaches that promote adaptability to foster an environment of continuous learning, which we must encourage. Furthermore, we need to keep prioritising and encouraging the incorporation

of young people into the planning and delivery of live music events. By focusing on the unique needs and interests of young people, and highlighting the importance of inclusivity and engagement, we aim to inspire and empower event organisers to create impactful and unforgettable music experiences.

The process of staging all-ages music events requires thorough planning, a commitment to safety, and a focus on inclusivity to ensure a positive experience for attendees of all ages. By following the good practices outlined in this guide, event organisers can feel more confident in delivering all-ages music events that leave a positive, lasting impact on their communities. With careful planning and a proactive approach, all-ages music events can thrive as vibrant, inclusive spaces that bring young people together in the spirit of celebration and shared experiences.

Resources and Links



This guide has been designed to provide valuable insights and strategies for creating exceptional all-ages music events for young people.

It's not designed as a step-by-step manual for staging events. If you want to learn how to stage an event, some wonderful resources are available.

In addition to using this guide and these resources, it's important to seek advice from qualified professionals.

The following are links to the businesses and departments listed in this guide, alongside further information to assist you in staging an all-ages event.

Accessible events: a guide for organisers has been developed in partnership with the Meeting and Events Industry (MEA) of Australia. This guide is designed to help organisers ensure that events are accessible for people with disability.

humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/disability_rights/publications/Accessible_Events_Guide.doc

Destination NSW focuses on driving tourism, and acquiring and developing major sporting and cultural events for Sydney and regional New South Wales. It does this by working with industry partners to develop existing events, attract new events, and maximise the economic, strategic and community benefits of events.

destinationnsw.com.au

Create NSW

nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/create-nsw

Event starter guide for organising public and outdoor events assists people to navigate the many aspects involved in organising events. In particular, anyone organising public, outdoor events in New South Wales should find this guide helpful.

nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/community-engagement/event-starter-guide

Creative Australia

creative.gov.au

DanceWize NSW provides peer-based harm reduction at festivals in New South Wales through the provision of crowd care, education, roving, training and advocacy.

dancewizensw.org.au

Liquor Act 2007 (NSW)

legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2007-090

Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport

nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/dciths

Liquor and Gaming NSW

liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au

Live Performance Australia (LPA) has an extensive collection of fact sheets, guidelines, templates and guidance on topics of relevance to the events and entertainment industries under 'Resources' on the LPA's website.

liveperformance.com.au

Music Festivals Act 2019 (NSW)

legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2019-017

MusicNSW

musicnsw.com

National Police Check

checked.com.au

National Principles for child safe organisations (the National Principles)

childsafety.gov.au/resources/national-principles-child-safe-organisations

NSW guide to traffic and transport management for special events

has comprehensive information for event organisers with a focus on traffic management.

transport.nsw.gov.au/operations/roads-and-waterways/business-and-industry/event-management-guidelines

Office for Youth

youth.gov.au

Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People (ACYP)

has some wonderful resources available including *A guide to establishing a children and young people's advisory group* and *a guide to Understanding and supporting children and young people's participation*.

acyp.nsw.gov.au

acyp.nsw.gov.au/a-guide-to-establishing-a-children-and-young-peoples-advisory-group

acyp.nsw.gov.au/participation-resources/understanding-and-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-participation

Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024 (Cth)

aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r7284

Patternmaker's Audience Outlook Monitor *The time is now: young audiences 2022*

creative.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/AOM_March2022_Fact-Sheet_Young-People.pdf

Police Citizen Youth Clubs (PCYC) is Australia's pre-eminent youth organisation working with the police and community to empower young people to reach their potential.

pcycnsw.org.au

Public Health Orders and restrictions

health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx

Red Frogs is a support program for young people. It provides a presence in alcohol-fuelled environments where young people gather, educates young people on safe partying behaviours, and promotes alcohol-free and/or diversionary activities that engage young people in these environments.

redfrogs.com.au

SafeWork NSW

safework.nsw.gov.au

Security Industry Act 1997 (NSW) and Security Industry Regulation 2016

legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-1997-157

legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/sl-2016-0557

Sound NSW

nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/sound-nsw

St John Ambulance Australia

stjohn.org.au

The Push

thepush.com.au

The Sound Lounge

thesoundlounge.org.uk

Toolkit for accessible and inclusive events has been developed to assist event organisers in creating an event that's accessible to all members of the community.

nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-07/Toolkit-for-Accessible-and-Inclusive-Events.pdf

Working with Children Check (WWCC)

wwccheck.ocg.nsw.gov.au/Apply

Youth Action is a peak body representing young people and youth services in New South Wales. It has a range of networks and programs to connect like-minded people and some great resources to assist.

youthaction.org.au

Tip: Check with the local government authority where the event is being held. Many local governments have wonderful resources designed to assist with staging events.



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