

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A BUSH POETRY SHOW

DEFINITION:-

A Bush Poetry Show is an event where quality performance Bush Poet/Poets are engaged for the sole purpose of delivering an entertaining Show to an audience. Poets are usually paid entertainers and a door charge is expected. Shows can be conducted simply as an entertainment event or could be run as a Fundraiser.

VENUE RECOMMENDATIONS

Venues should be vibrant, central, welcoming with food, refreshments and rest room facilities e.g. Clubs, auditoriums, beer gardens (all out of earshot of the bar), festival marquees, country halls, vacant stud stock arenas. For those out-of-the-way venues, contact local committees to provide "catering", as a means of fundraising for their own cause (e.g. Pre-School & Hall Committees, CWA). The aim is to attract large numbers from the general public (i.e. the audience).

Performing area must be completely free of clutter, clean, and appropriately decorated with a Bush/Australiana theme. It should ignite pride in every performer to step up on a professional platform, to enhance their confidence and presentation of their hard learnt work. If there is a stage, use it! If the organisers have their own banner, use it! If local sponsors are supporting the event, use their banners.

Use a reliable quality sound system, preferably with two microphone stands.

Use the sound system to play Australiana 'mood music' prior to the event to create an engaging atmosphere. A sound-check should be done prior to the event and monitored throughout the event.

For the audience – a neat arrangement of chairs or hay bales; or if the audience are required to bring their own chairs, advertise as such.

DURATION OF SHOW:-

While the duration of a Show is variable depending on circumstance it is recommended that 2 hours be the Maximum. Shorter shows ranging from 1/2 hr up to 2 hr are acceptable. Shorter duration Shows should be viewed as 'Spot Entertainment', which can be beneficially utilised as a part of an overall program, such as entertainment at a Corporate Dinner.

POET SELECTION:-

Number of Poets required is flexible and could vary depending on length of Show and Budget

As a guide: 2 hr show – 4 poets for a top level show

1.5 hr show – 3 poets

1 hr show – 2 poets

Poets vary in style, experience and quality. Care should be exercised in selecting poets suitable for the requirements of the show. When considering which poets to engage you should consider the following:-

Venue – Some poets are better in closed environments like a hall, while others are better on an outdoor stage.

Demographic of Audience – Different Poets relate better to different audiences.

Material – Poets vary in the type of material they perform. For example some specialise in Comedy. Choose a poet who has the preferred material.

Fee: Poets are free to negotiate their own fees. Fees typically vary on the quality of the poet, the popularity of the poet, the versatility of the poet and the distance that needs to be travelled. Care should be taken in finding the right balance between the expected quality of performance and fees charged.

Compatibility – When engaging more than one poet it is important to select poets whose styles complement each other.

Availability – The more popular a Poet, the earlier you may have to contact them ensure their availability. On average we recommend 3 months prior to the show.

Duration of Individual Performance – Poet repertoires vary in length and should be considered.

BUDGET:-

Budget dictates most things when putting on a show. Major Budget items to be considered are, Poets Fees, Advertising, Sound Production, Catering (in some cases), Venue Hire.

Ticket Price should reflect the Quality of the Show you running and predictions of attendance figures. Well run shows can be profitable for the organisers.

PRODUCT SALES:-

Most Performance Poets will have books and CDs to offer for sale during any intermission and at the conclusion of the show. To facilitate this a suitably sized table should be placed in a prominent position close to the entry point to the performance area where transactions can take place with minimum disruption to those on stage. Organisers should, in consultation with poets, arrange for a float and someone to supervise the sale of product at the product table.