

Queanbeyan's Music by the River – 2018

Category: Innovation in special events

Clear and concise event brief describing the goals, situational analysis, audience, event plan and format and what the event is intended to deliver.

Queanbeyan's Symphony by the River encompasses the character of the region while still being outwardly ambitious about our people and place.

Aristotle observed the relationship between string instrument vibrations and water as fundamental for the formation of harmonies.

Queanbeyan's Symphony by the River is a harmonious example of strategic partnering between the arts (Canberra Symphony Orchestra – CSO), Government (Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council) and a commercial body (icon Water). In 2018 the CSO played outside of Canberra to crowds reaching 2-3 thousand people as part of the event. This augural relationship was renewed and is now a significant part of the regions strategic approach to events and tourism.

The key goals achieved as part of the Queanbeyan's Symphony by the River event were:

- increased visitation and new audiences for the Queanbeyan region, including local and interstate visitors by presenting Queanbeyan in a new light.
- stimulated business opportunities for the regional local producers by showcasing high-quality unique foods of the region and stimulating the CBD area.
- allow an opportunity for more of the community to experience arts and culture in a relaxed and inexpensive way.
- provided an event that showcased Queanbeyan's Queen Elizabeth II Park, voted Winner of the Best Park NSW/ACT 2017 and the first park to be rated as 'excellent' by ISCA (Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia) for our environmental sustainability, is seamless in capturing the character of the region.
- Further reinforce the importance of the Queanbeyan River as a place to both enjoy and protect.

- Allowed a mutually prosperous relationship to develop between the arts (Canberra Symphony Orchestra – CSO), Government (Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council) and a commercial body (icon Water).

A short description of strategy development, communication and stakeholder involvement

Queanbeyan's Symphony by the River is bold in its complement of the event landscape. It is an event like nothing this region has experienced, with music offerings which would be unaccustomed in the region. But for this reason 2017 was a huge success. It was different, it was new and it deliberately aimed to challenge expectations of the region and it worked! Why it worked is because it not only showcased what our region is but was inspirational about our future as a community and a tourist destination.

The event was innovative because it;

- provided a way for Government, the Arts community and business to work together using asserts unique to each partner.
- challenged the preconceived perceptions of the area and developed a platform for fresh tourism messaging.
- created an opportunity for the community to become aware of the unique food and wine of the area.

Partnerships Manager for the Canberra Symphony Orchestra Frances Corkhill described the event as a 'vibrant and creative collaboration which made it possible for the CSO to engage with people in regions beyond the ACT borders and allows the vision of being accessible and diverse'

Summary of event funding, budget and revenue.

A barrier and reality to any event innovation is one time and money. Both these were overcome by the investment in building strong trust in the central partners. Each had to know that quick and nimble decisions about programming, costs and communication messages could both represent the needs of all while still delivering a quality event for the community. The applicability of this project is in the management of these relationships where the people involved work together for the betterment of the event – 'we are simply instruments playing the same song'. The costing for the event was a collaboration of the following:

QPRC provided In kind support by providing Event management and established resources to the value of \$22090.00.

- Venue Hire
- Operational cost
- Infrastructure (pavilion, table and chairs)
- Local food Venders and wine suppliers

Icon provided sponsorship to the value of \$20000

- Securing performance
- Marketing and promotion

Canberra Symphony Orchestra provided to the value of \$20000

- Orchestra/ Musicians
- Music program

All partners involved contributing equal amounts of significant in kind and cash support for the event.

Total event cost \$62090.00

The learning from 2018 was that this innovative approach worked and that there was real value in the concept moving forward. In 2018 this understanding allowed for a modest fee to be applied to some seating at the venue which had two positive outcomes (1) the event was even more sustainable (2) decreased no-shows because when tickets were free in 2017 this was a concern.

Show communication methods and distribution outlets, use of innovation and differing communication tools and how they motivated their audience.

Queanbeyan's Symphony by the River was a huge success and was built, designed and executed in a period as short as four weeks. The event was well received by all target groups and QPRC social media channels were a wash with praise the following day. Because of the short lead we worked hard with local media, our event partners (CSO and Icon), to create a teaser campaign. The use of dream like images, coupled with the food and drink offerings asked local to enjoy a night in their local park and for those over the border in the ACT to experience a new look at Queanbeyan.

The management of communication was quick, responsive, and surprising. To have such an event in Queanbeyan took everyone by surprise – this in turn was our greatest communication angle and the QPRC events team motivated local and interstate audience based on this new and innovative perspective.

Partnership Manager, Canberra Symphony Orchestra Frances Corkhill said 'Queanbeyan's Symphony by the River' was made possible through a partnership between Icon Water QPRC and the CSO. This event is a brilliant case study and model of how arts, business and government can collaborate to create important free cultural events that enrich the lives of those in the region'.

Describe delivery of the event and its results.

The goals of the project were both reached and exceeded. The evening brought new visitors to the area and many who had not yet visit the Queen Elizabeth Park since the redevelopment, further engaged local businesses and food suppliers with ongoing relationships being formed, a cross demographical pool of new people exposed to

culture in the region and finally continuing to realise the importance of the Queanbeyan River as a destination for fun and living but also environmental sustainability.

Feedback from the public gathered through surveys and post event interviews was overwhelming and a new standard set for events in the region. As a team and as a Council the Music by the River event showed that being innovative is needed and welcomed by the community.

In 2018 over 1200 people attended the event, with 3-5 thousand liking and commenting on the Facebook event, the event was one of the largest free events CSO performed at in 2018 and post event images was rated as one of QPRC highest Facebook and Instagram post(s) of that year.

There is a new confidence to do new things. The result has been other events have been attracted to the site, CSO are looking at the region for additional opportunities with our local schools and Icon Water was a stronger relationship with the community to deliver messages about water care.

Outline the innovation and legacy elements.

Queanbeyan's Symphony by the River featuring Canberra Symphony Orchestra continues to be innovative and offer longevity for a number of reasons:

- The event saw multiple partners with distinct assets coming together for common goals. CSO contributed amazing musicians, icon water a financial commitment, and QPRC offered event management and distinct location.
- Numbers indicate that the public is willing to attend and purchase tickets to such an event which in turn increases the sustainability of the event.
- The event has been successful in securing the commitment of Icon water for a further two year period making this a committed event on the regions calendar.
- This event has been successful in securing Destination NSW incubator funding for 2018 further increasing the scope of the event.
- The event is aligned with other key important outcomes for QPRC including the Tourism Plan.
- Awarded Australia Day Community Event of the Year
- Presented at the NSW Tourism Conference regarding event activation

Outline the sustainability and accessibility elements if appropriate.

Queanbeyan's Symphony by the River provided an opportunity to showcase Queanbeyan's Queen Elizabeth II Park, voted Winner of the Best Park NSW/ACT 2017 and the first park to be rated as 'excellent' by ISCA (Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia) for our environmental sustainability, is seamless in capturing the character of the region. The event allowed the public to be emerged within an award-winning environment for sustainability and understand the flexibility of the site. Our proud partner Icon water also worked with event organisers to further reinforce the importance of the Queanbeyan River as a place to both enjoy and protect. Music was chosen with the theme of water and messaging before, during and after the event put sustainability in focus for event goers. For other council areas there is huge opportunities to bring cultural experiences to city members, use existing assets like parks and rivers and express the unique sense of place for tourism outcomes and liability for the residents. There is also a wonderful chance of to work with a corporate partner who has public health or environmental messages and deliver this in a unique and innovative way.

In terms of accessibility the event offered an opportunity for segments of our community to see first-hand award winning classical music. Event organisers worked hard to engage with community groups, disability groups and also aligned the event with NSW Seniors Week in an effort to target those members of our community who might not previously had an opportunity to experience such a musical offering.

Describe evaluation methods and results.

The post event evaluation survey showed over 90 percent of the community enjoyed the event and would attend again. The Canberra Symphony Orchestra has used the Queanbeyan's Symphony by the River event as a case study when approaching other regional council areas and Icon water positively was apparent when a further two year sponsorship arrangement was cemented after the success of 2018. For the 2019 event key people from the ACT and NSW arts community have been invited by the CSO to witness the outcome of the partnership. Icon have also identified the Queanbeyan's Symphony by the River event as a key strategic approach for connecting with the community. What you cannot measure however is the pure joy (and sometimes tears) on the faces of event goers, the tapping of feet, the spontaneous dancing from all ages, and the warmth of a community hanging on every note.