

# **Guidelines for Organisers of Cultural Events**

**Demonstrations and Marches**

# INTRODUCTION

Australia is a free and democratic country where people may express views openly without the fear of harassment or persecution.

Australians cherish the freedom of speech which is one of the fundamental democratic freedoms in our country.

People may feel strongly about particular issues of concern to them. They may wish to use the means of demonstrations or marches to express their views in public.

The peaceful conduct of a demonstration, or a march is vital for the successful outcome of such an event. Demonstrations or marches which are poorly organised, unduly interfere with the rights of fellow citizens and endanger their safety or result in property damage, cause great inconvenience to the public and may end up in violence.

Violent demonstrations or marches are counter - productive as they do not achieve the desired goal, are not condoned by the general public and undermine the very principles of a multicultural Australia and community support for multicultural policies.

Polices as key institutions in society charged with the responsibility for preservation of law and order, play an important role prior and during demonstrations or marches. Police, therefore will not tolerate any violent behaviour. To avoid any conflict or misunderstanding, organisers are advised to closely liaise with police on organisational aspects of the event.

The following information will assist organisers with planning a well organised, peaceful event.

## STEPS TO BE TAKEN

1. If you have decided to stage a demonstration or a march, select the venue and the date. It is good practice to select alternative venues and dates.
2. Check with police in your State or Territory whether the date and venue you have selected do not clash with some other demonstration or march.
3. Check with the appropriate municipal council officers whether you need approval for your demonstration or march. Obtain it if necessary. Also discuss with the council your specific needs such as the need for loud speakers, as permits may be required.
4. Notify police in your State or Territory of the following details:
  - Date, time and venue of demonstration or march
  - The route of demonstration or march
  - Purpose of demonstration or march
  - Anticipated number of people attending
  - Name(s) of the organiser(s) of the demonstration or march with whom the police may be able to communicate during the event, if necessary
  - Anticipated duration
  - Should you anticipate any trouble, please tell the police
  - The police will then discuss with you any procedures you may need to know and the level of police assistance you may receive.

5. Carefully select, visibly identify and brief thoroughly the marshals for your demonstration or march, who would ensure the good behaviour of protesters.
6. Should provocation of any kind occur, do not respond but tell the police immediately.
7. Exercise your leadership firmly by reminding demonstrators of the need to remain peaceful at all times.
8. Should you be unhappy with any aspect of police performance, do not hesitate to discuss it with police as soon as possible after the event.

*Please remember that police will appreciate your co-operation before and during the event and will assist as much as possible with the smooth conduct of your demonstration or protest march.*

The above guidelines are also applicable to the organisers of cultural events such as publicly held community festivals and similar events.