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# *The Good News and Australian Events*



Workshop on Practical Responses to the Gospel  
Overflow Seminar, 26 July 2008  
Children & Families Ministry, Centre of Theology and Ministry

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## **1. Where are we coming from?**

- a. Mission is incarnational: Alongside, engaged and word'n'deed
- b. We 'live into' the kingdom of God: Signs of a new community with porous boundaries
- c. Christ can be reflected in every culture: Contextualisation, celebration
- d. Christ transforms every culture
- e. Most mission action occurs outside church buildings



## **2. Events shape our identity**

- a. Whether international, national, city-wide or local
- b. In the media: Sydney Olympics, World Youth Day, Tour de France
- c. In our community: Anzac Day ceremonies, Celebrate Lygon, street parties
- d. They are similar to 'third spaces' (not home, not work but places to relax and hang out)



## **3. Some suggested guidelines for event-focused engagement**

- #1. The aim is to build community
- #2. It takes place as part of ongoing engagement
- #3. Christians work together
- #4. It is offered as a humble gift, not in Christian triumphalism

- #5. It welcomes everybody
- #6. It identifies what the Good News of Jesus means in this context
- #7. It is free of religious jargon
- #8. It is more about Jesus than Christianity
- #9. It is creative, relaxed and enjoyable
- #10. It is people-focused rather than program-focused
- #11. It is visible
- #12. It makes people think
- #13. We offer something to take away and a next step
- #14. We envision, consult, plan, implement and evaluate



#### **4. Some possibilities for engaging Australian cultural events**

**Local events:** Street parties, municipal festivals, council events, sports finals, community centre events, school fairs, multicultural events, church fairs and festivals

**City-wide events:** Show Day, Cup Day, Chinese New Year, music festivals, arts festivals, Moomba, Comedy Festival

**National events:** Anzac Day, Australia Day, Thanksgiving Day, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, NAIDOC Week (early July), Sorry Day (26 May), opening of Parliament, Mind-Body-Spirit festivals

**International events:** Olympics, Commonwealth Games, Grand Prix, World Environment Day (5 June), Make Poverty History events, World Refugee Day (20 June)

**Christian festivals:** Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Blessing of the Animals

## **5. Workshopping some possibilities**

Choose one of these three events:

1. Fathers' Day
2. Anzac Day
3. A council-sponsored annual festival in a suburb

a. Very brief introductions around the group

Name?

Where from?

Had an experience of event-focused community engagement?

b. What does this event mean to Australians? What could it mean from a gospel perspective? [Allow up to 5 minutes for this]

c. Brainstorm for ideas for action (accept all ideas without critique)  
[Allow up to five minutes for this]

d. Select an idea and develop it a bit, e.g.,

What?

Where?

When?

Who to consult?

Who to do it?

What resources are needed?

Who to attend?

What message?

How to be creative and fun?

What to give out?

How can people respond?

e. Someone can report back briefly to the larger group

## Resources

Extensive resources are provided by Awakening, coordinated by Fusion ([www.awakening.org.au](http://www.awakening.org.au)). Manuals, brochures, annual events and so on.

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council produces an annual social justice diary called *Seasons of Social Justice*, listing many dates of note.

Darren Cronshaw, *Credible witness: Companions, prophets, hosts and other Australian mission models* (Springvale: Urban Neighbours of Hope, 2006). Good contextual missiology.

For a list of Australian festivals, see <[www.culture.gov.au/articles/festivals](http://www.culture.gov.au/articles/festivals)>.

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