

PSQ CONVENTIONS:

SOME SUGGESTIONS RATHER THAN RULES



Photographic
Society of
Queensland

The items have been divided roughly into BEFORE, DURING and AFTER the Convention.

BEFORE:

- A request to host the PSQ Convention may come from PSQ Committee, or a Club can offer to host the event.
- The logistics of hosting the convention should be discussed with club members as it is a considerable commitment over the last two months before the event.
- Seed funding of \$1,000 is available from PSQ, to be returned in addition to half of the profit from the event.
- Once the Club decides to host the convention, it should form a Steering Committee 6-12 months before the event. Attachment A describes the roles and some of the tasks required of the committee.
- Consult previous hosts about what they did or what they learned during hosting of the convention. Avoid the pitfalls and grab the opportunities. There are example documents available from Yeppoon, Redcliffe and Rocky. These are the documents from 2023 <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ijtlv4qrpjx2g5r/AADEZXYeEiTWRgLfVeOcdFVOa?dl=0>
- Consult widely on which speakers are good at presenting as well as having something desirable to say: The presenters that delegates would want to see and learn from.
- Most Important: Set a theme for the convention. Know *why* you set that theme. When you are talking to prospective speakers, they will possibly want to know the reasoning for the theme. Speakers (their skills/achievements background) should then be relevant to your theme and asked to speak to the theme as they are engaged.
- Limit costs to around \$900 per speaker, to include travel, accommodation and any presentation fee (if required – remember famous photographers have to give up paying jobs to present). The cost varies depending on where the speaker is coming from. Less for local speakers, more for interstate speakers.
- Shortlist your speakers as they relate to your theme. Ideally you should start with more speakers than you are going to need as some speakers may not be available at the time of the convention. Also have a contingency plan for if some are sick or unavailable on the day.
- When contacting speakers, ask them to do a one hour presentation, a two to three hour workshop and provide a print for the auction. Check if speakers are bringing own laptop, if it has HDMI or USB connection to an external screen. They also need to bring their PowerPoint or Presentation on a USB Memory stick. Also ask speakers if they can email the presentation file to you so you can have all presentations pre-loaded on a host laptop that is pre-tested and ready to go. If this seems like a lot to ask, perhaps the workshop could be optional, but previous experience is that most photographers are happy to do both if asked. Many are even happy to present their workshop twice to allow more delegates to attend.
 - Provision of the print may also be negotiable. If you have someone with a good semi-professional printer in your club, the speaker could provide a digital image for them to print. Usual size is around 20x16 inches.
 - Alternately, an attending vendor or sponsor may provide the prints
- Look for grants and sponsors in support of your convention as soon as possible. There are many available. Start by googling “grants Queensland”. Make sure that you have prominent signage at the convention displaying the names of your sponsors/grant providers AND make sure there are photos taken at the event with these signs included in the foreground/background.

- Choose your convention venue carefully. Consider the following:
 - Main room size for 100-120 delegates – don't forget to include numbers for speakers and other guests – you may end up with close to 130
 - tiered seating for delegates or a raised platform for speakers
 - height of viewing screen
 - microphone amplification, fixed and roving mics, spare mics (all tested), spare batteries
 - break out rooms (or locations) for workshops and suitable for the numbers attending
 - projection screen (needs to be BIG!) and projector quality
 - comfortable chairs
 - space for mingling, sitting and chatting
 - space for catering morning teas and lunches
 - access to food preparation and cleaning equipment
 - liquor licence if you are having your Gala Dinner at the main venue
 - space for display of SEQ Photography
 - parking availability
 - ease of access, wheel chair accessibility, hearing loop
 - numbers of toilets for speed of access during breaks
- When you have decided on the venue, pay attention to the following (as the event is held over a long weekend):
 - Contact numbers for Security
 - Venue opening hours – you may have to arrange for an earlier opening time
 - Suitability and security of location where vendors are to hold/display equipment
 - Staff availability for maintaining cleanliness/toilet cleaning/replenishing and contact numbers
 - Electrical/AV equipment repair emergency contact
 - Evacuation plan, location of first aid/fire extinguishers. DO NOT assume nothing will happen!
- Provide PSQ Exec with a financial forecast for your convention. It should include estimated costs such as venue hire, catering, additional equipment hire, travel & accommodation for speakers, publicity, printing, gifts for speakers, etc. PSQ underwrites the convention and prefers that you do not make a loss. Profits and Losses are shared equally between the PSQ and the host club.
- Members of the PSQ Executive attend every convention. The host Club may be asked if it is possible to provide billets for up to 8 people for the 3-4 days of the convention.

PLANNING THE CONVENTION:

- Scheduling is always difficult. LIMIT the number of speakers to no more than two or three x one hour sessions per day. Two is more manageable. Ask to look at examples of previous convention programs.
- There is PSQ business which MUST be scheduled within the event. These include
 - One hour PSQ Annual General Meeting
 - One hour PSQ Judges Forum
- Breaks are important. Allow half an hour for morning tea, an hour for lunch and half an hour to get to the afternoon workshops which are away from the main venue.
- Photography workshop sessions are important to delegates. These should be no less than 2-3 hours and not too far away from the event location. Organise enough workshops so that all of the delegates can be involved. Groups of more than 20 are very difficult to manage, so if your convention has 100 places, you will need at least eight to ten workshops on Saturday and Sunday.
- Day Two is similar to Day 1 – BUT – you may have to cut workshop time shorter so delegates have time to get ready for the Gala Dinner. This depends on locations and ease of access.
- Day Three can start early with a dawn shoot workshop somewhere. Then plan a half day with 1 or 2 Sessions and no afternoon workshop. Packed lunch and Self-Drive photography locations handouts should be offered, but many delegates head for home after lunch.

- Evening events can include
 - Friday night informal meet and greet. If you include this welcome, list it on the booking page and charge \$10.00. It is helpful to know definite numbers of delegates to attend. Maybe offer finger food and say BYO drinks and dinner. You may need to locate a suitable venue for this that is separate from the main venue. It depends on numbers and catering capabilities. Suss them out early.
 - Saturday night Barbeque/Pizza/Pig on a spit or casual dinner. Or make it a Shipwreck (everyone for themselves). If dinner is provided, it should be provided as an additional cost on the booking page.
 - Sunday night Gala Dinner. This can be a bit dressy, and must include time for presentation of the SEQ Awards and a print auction (Attachment B). May be included within the convention cost or provided as an additional cost on the booking page. It is suggested that bookings for the Gala Dinner be a separate item in TryBooking, as not everyone who has a full convention ticket will attend the dinner.
 - Meals for non-attending partners must be paid for, so make allowance for it on the Booking site.
- Appoint a Catering Officer: Catering is an important aspect that should be well planned in advance. If you are thinking of self-catering - **DON'T!** Your club members who volunteer to be involved in catering, serving and clearing tables will not get to see much of the convention. There are many styles of dinner/venue. Yeppoon used a local school tuckshop and non-club volunteers at the venue, the Brookfield venue had a full kitchen service provided as well as accommodation and Emerald used a local restaurant, all with paid staff.
- Use TryBooking to collect dietary requirements at the time of booking. Later, this information has to be provided to the caterers, with a request for them to provide separate named food packs for specific delegates, so include that in your request for quotes.
- If the caterers are external to the venue, you may need to have them include crockery, cutlery, cups, serviettes, etc, in their quote if these items are not available at the venue. They can be disposable. Make sure you and the chosen caterer fully understands what is being provided and what is not!
- IMPORTANT- if using external caterers with food being brought in from their own kitchens, make sure they are provided with an accurate (and updated) convention schedule, so they know when to have food available – AND – they are able to do a quick turn-around between morning tea and lunch. Make sure both of you have contact phone numbers.
- Include presenters, volunteers and vendors in your catering numbers. The costing for these will be carried by your club funding. Be aware of this. You will have to ask them about dietary requirements separately as these people are not on your TryBooking spreadsheets.
- When contracting Catering Services, ensure that they understand that recycling unused morning teas is not acceptable.
- Limit the number of choices of morning tea snacks. If you provide six varieties of cakes/biscuits, many delegates will take one of each leaving none for other delegates!!!
- No afternoon Tea should be necessary – delegates are keen to get to the workshops.
- Lunch on Monday could be provided as a takeaway pack. Many delegates head for home after the Closing Session, and being able to leave with portable lunch is appreciated.
- Make sure these venues are not too far from your main auditorium if possible. Some of us would like a drink so walking distance would be wonderful.
- Invite Product Sales Representatives to the convention e.g., Nikon, Canon, Lowepro, Sigma, Tamron, Adobe etc. Camera House is a good supporter of the convention, and has provided access to the sales reps as well as products that can be used as prizes in convention raffles. Also consider inviting a camera cleaner/repairer to provide services to cameras during the convention. Remember that it costs these organisations to send a person and all of their equipment both in travel and in accommodation, so ask them for prizes by all means, but don't expect them to pay additional fees for their presentation table/s in regional locations. Consider charging for space in Brisbane, perhaps.

- Lanyards and convention bags can be donated by the Vendors. Ask for them.
 - Convention Bags: These will contain the Program and detailed information about the speakers and the Convention Timetable, a pen, Delegate Lanyard, Workshop Information with maps to non-venue locations, Dinner address information, Self-Drive Photography locations, Tourist Information and any freebies you manage to get from sponsors, etc. Contact your local council for tourist info books.
 - Lanyards: These need to be double sided so that if they flip over, people's names are still readable. People not wearing Lanyards should be asked to leave the venue. Lanyards can also be used to identify who has purchased tickets to the two dinners (if they are purchased separately).
- Templates and documents developed by previous convention host clubs are available. Before you re-invent the wheel, ask to see what others have done. E.g., Early distribution Date Claimer, A4 Flier promoting convention speakers and their subjects, A5 Bookings Closing Early Flier, Convention Program Booklet, Convention Timetable, Self-Drive Photography Locations, etc.
- Advertising of the event: Seek free publicity, radio, newspaper articles, Council websites, Fliers in libraries, camera shops, photo processing shops, etc. Don't forget the PSQ Facebook page and website. Also, email all of the delegates who attended the previous convention with an invitation. Previous research shows that prior attendance at a PSQ Convention is the biggest predictor of subsequent attendance.
- Details of the Convention should be provided for the PSQ Website as early as possible.
- Communicate with delegates as the convention date nears: Date Claimer, Information on Presenters, Information on the Program, Information on the workshops available. This can include by direct emails to people who have booked, by information on your Club or on the PSQ website, by visits to clubs to promote the event. Engage people in other areas to promote the Convention on your club's behalf. For example, PSQ Exec members can visit clubs in Brisbane if you are a regional club.
- The Salon of Excellence is the premier PSQ Photography Competition. Prints are displayed at the Convention, and Digital Images are shown at the Convention Gala Dinner. So, PSQ Display Boards need to be organised and set up at the Convention Venue for the duration of the event. Contact the PSQ President to get the numbers of prints to be displayed, then arrange for the Display Boards mounting clips and approximate numbers of display boards etc. to be transported. Also allow the space for viewing these display boards within the convention venue.
- Booking website: There is a website called TryBooking which has been used successfully by both Yeppoon, Emerald, Redcliffe and Rocky. It is easy to set up and you can download regular updates of booking progress. Delegates go to the website and make their own Booking choices and direct credit card payments.
- The TryBooking website has provision for people with special food needs (vegetarian, vegan and gluten free are the main ones).
- On the Booking Website, please allow for these options (example)

PSQ 2022 Convention at The Komo, REDCLIFFE.

Registration	Early Bird Opens 1 February Closes 31 March	Standard 1 to 14 April <small>No bookings accepted after 14 April 2022</small>
FULL REGISTRATION 3 Days/ 3 lunches/ 1 Gala Dinner	\$225.00	\$270.00
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT 3 Days/ 3 lunches	\$145.00	\$175.00
DAILY REGISTRATION Includes Morning Tea & Lunch Only	\$75.00	\$85.00
Additional Gala Dinner Guest: Sunday 1 May at The Komo	\$50.00	\$55.00

In case of Cancellation of Event by COVID, full refund of payment will be made, not including the TryBooking fee.

Booking and Payment may be made at <https://trybooking.com/BWYXI>

- Signing on for Workshops. Use TryBooking because it can be done in advance, and you can limit the numbers of delegates in each workshop if you want to. Workshop Tickets can be free on TryBooking, but only send the booking link to people who have paid to attend.
- If someone has to cancel their tickets, it is easy to give a refund on TryBooking. DO NOT let anyone give their ticket to a different person. The original name will appear on the Spreadsheet, and give you issues when you make nametags or workshop bookings. The unwanted ticket should be refunded and then rebooked in the right person's name.
- Signage outside and inside the venue needs to be organised in advance. If the site is complex, also provide a site map in the convention bag.
- Appoint an Audio-visual Manager – this can be a paid position as it is EXTREMELY important to the professionalism of your convention. Ask your presenters if they have any special needs for AV BEFORE the convention and discuss this with your AV Manager so that they will be accommodated. See Attachment A
- Prepare your Evaluation strategy. This can be as simple as three questions. What was good? What could be better? Anything else you want us to know? Print the forms in advance and make one person responsible for handing out and collecting the evaluation forms towards the end of the convention.
- Prepare delegate name tags. These can be colour coded to identify
 - Full convention delegates or day attendance delegates;
 - PSQ Executive Members
 - Guest Speakers or Workshop Presenters (who may or may not be registered ticket holders.)
 - Your Club Members
 - Volunteers

And if delegates have tickets to the additional evening meals or not. (Remember additional meals for non-attending partners also need to be ticketed.)

- Additional fundraising during the convention can be by running raffles at the convention. One per day with prizes being drawn before the afternoon workshop break, and with the “best” prize awarded on the last day. Buy the raffle books, each with different colours so that there are no double ups. Prizes could be subscriptions to magazines, software, photographic equipment, etc. These can be sought from sponsors such as the sales reps who are attending.
- Collect the presenters at the airport if they are flying in. They are your royalty and are working for you for free – treat them well – they need to feel valued. Deliver them to accommodation, introduce them to others who may be there, and orient them to the town and services they may need to access. If necessary, some may request a hire car. This can be included in your financial forecast.
- Buy or make gifts for the presenters ahead so that they can be given these on stage immediately after their sessions.
- Make sure you have first aid kits/providers, emergency exit and evacuation plan at the venue. Make sure everyone knows who and where they are. These may be a part of your Safety Management Plan if you are required to submit one.
- Appoint a designated photographer, especially for the Gala Dinner. Photos are important and delegates are involved in the proceedings and their personal development, so it is unfair to ask them to be responsible for taking photos.
- **Catering, technical glitches and uncomfortable chairs are the most common cause of complaints at conventions.**

DURING THE CONVENTION:

- Set up tables for meeting delegates and signing in at the convention, catering, spaces for urns, cups and plates, and food etc, tables and chairs for eating meals, break out discussion spaces, sales representatives' space, etc
- Crowd management can make or break your convention. Allocate members/volunteers to meet and greet at the door, and to provide directions. Consider providing or asking members/volunteers to buy matching T-shirts so that they will be clearly visible.

- Definitely appoint an Emcee. They will make announcements, introduce speakers and contribute to crowd management during break times. Getting people to move into the auditorium, out to morning tea and lunch and to return from breaks is always an issue. Bring a big loud bell. Cow bells are good – gongs are better!!
- Consider appointing a Presentation Manager to liaise with Speakers. They make sure that the speakers know where they are meant to be, collect presentations for the AV Manager (or get the speaker to the AV Manager early)
- On the first day, you will have 100+ people arrive at the door needing to be inside and seated within half an hour. Two possible solutions:
 - Allow for Sign in and collection of Convention Bag on Friday afternoon.
 - Have at least 3-4 people at the Welcome Desk for that first half hour, with Alphabetical signs (A-F) (G-L) (M-Z), for delegates to line up at. An instruction sheet for Registration is available. Have an extra person standing at the registration desk to field questions after delegates receive their bags. This stops them interrupting the people doing the registering and distribution.
- Catering: There are several ways fast access to food and drinks can be achieved at break times. Either have your tables accessible from both sides, or have enough service points to minimise long queues waiting for tea/coffee/food. Have one of your volunteers (or your paid caterer) available on site to troubleshoot. Also plan for washing up and/or disposal of rubbish.
- **Safety:** when placing out your tables, make sure you do not obstruct lift access, emergency exits or fire hoses/extinguishers and their associated warning signs!
- Conduct your Evaluation. Consider a handing out a raffle ticket for a small prize to encourage people to complete the form. Provide collection buckets if you are just collecting forms without a ticketing strategy.
- Clean the venue thoroughly if that is part of the conditions for use.
- One person should be appointed to ensure that everything that should be removed is removed.

AFTER THE CONVENTION:

- Take your presenters back to the airport and give hugs or handshakes. Follow up with thank you emails or letters of appreciation.
- Any equipment hired for the convention should be returned. Report if there is damage or breakages. If being collected by the hire company, make sure you know beforehand when they will collect and that if it is not immediately after the convention (next day) that the equipment will not impact the normal operation of the venue.
- Send your images to psqweb@gmail.com so they can be uploaded onto the PSQ Convention website.
- Have a debriefing of your Club convention organisers after the event and collect information about their experiences of the convention, both positive and negative.
- Pay all the bills and undertake a financial reconciliation.
- Collate the evaluation forms and write an evaluation report.
- If you received Grant funding, write your reports. Make sure you include photos, especially of the poster advertising who the grant is from!!!
- Circulate reports and or findings to Club members and to the PSQ Executive.
- Email all of the delegates when they get home to thank them for attending and to engage them in attending the next convention.
- Repay the seed funding if provided to by the PSQ, and transfer half of the profit or loss from the Convention.
- Provide your email list of delegates to the next Convention host Club.
- Update this 'PSQ Conventions' document with what you have learned.
- Treat yourself to a well earned rest!!!

Attachment A: Some possible Convention Roles

Appoint a Steering Committee of about four or five members, to plan and coordinate convention preparation. Ask PSQ for a Liaison Officer to assist this committee.

ROLES:

Convenor: Manages the steering committee. Makes arrangements with the Convention Venue owners. Contacts Speakers to invite them to present at the convention and let them know what is expected. Discusses their travel, accommodation or how much the allowance is so they can make their own arrangements. Collects promotional information about the speakers and details about their presentation for the Graphic Designer.

Appoints an Emcee. The Emcee may also be asked to conduct the Print Auction at the Gala Dinner.

Follows up on delegations to other roles and coordinates time lines. Identifies whether equipment will need to be hired or borrowed, gets quotes and makes arrangements for transportation to the venue. Arranges for the SEQ images to be displayed and for the PSQ Display boards to be delivered and set up at the venue.

Seeks club volunteers to pack convention bags or work at the convention. Often these are host club members who are not actually attending the convention, but are prepared to help out at specific times.

Graphic Designer: Prepares artwork for various invitations, website updates, programs, convention booklet, workshop handouts, maps, etc. May also make additional signage if required for the venue.

TryBooking Officer: Creates the website and manages communication of information on booking progress to the committee. May also be sender of emails to registered delegates with information and additional advice in the months before the convention begins.

Catering Officer: Prepares a Catering Brief for quotes for food and drinks provided at the convention. If the venue does not provide food, seek quotes from various caterers. Later, provides selected caterer with details of names of delegates dietary requirements AND an up-to-date schedule of each day's events showing when meals are required.

This dietary requirement information is available on the downloadable TryBooking Spreadsheets.

Audio Visual Officer: This can be a paid position, because many things can go wrong if there is not a designated officer watching every aspect of convention presentation. This convention hangs on the quality of its images and sound, so make sure it is as good as possible. They need to know everything about the equipment at the venue, ensure video/projector connections work and make suggestions for mobile microphones if there are none included.

Collect the PowerPoint Presentation from Presenters on a USB Memory Stick first thing in the morning of their presentation (or have them collected by email and pre-loaded). Preload it onto the presentation Laptop, and test to ensure that it works. Nothing goes wrong more quickly than a presenter turning up at their session without having already preloaded their presentation.

Workshop Manager: Contacts people to be workshop presenters. These can be club members, delegates who are already coming to the convention, or sometimes PSQ committee members might be asked to contribute. Looks for workshop locations and finds models if portraits or people are a workshop choice. Arranges for equipment if any is required – eg. Lighting or props. Identify the difference between workshops that are for skill development and ones that are primarily a photo opportunity, and get that into the promotion materials or workshop descriptions.

Treasurer or Finance Officer: The TryBooking website will collect your ticket fees and the funds can be downloaded directly into your bank. However, it is recommended that you buy a Square device for collecting credit card payments during the Auction. It is easier to collect the auction bids immediately during the Gala Dinner. Otherwise, someone will have to follow up to get the money after the event. Not good.

Attachment B: Print Auction

Guest Presenters are asked to provide images for the Print Auction at the Gala Dinner. These donated prints should be on display at the venue as long as possible prior to the auction. Arrange for suitable signs to be attached by prints to show makers name, etc.

During the Auction, have a couple of people to walk the images around the venue. Often there can be quite a bit of fun and competitive bidding from the delegates. Thank the donors during the auction.

Make sure a record is kept of buyers and prices, etc. All monies to be collected from credit cards via the Square device for later processing by the Treasurer. Once the delegate has paid, hand them the Print immediately so they can take it home.