



Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated

Business Plan

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Murray Heron'.

Murray Heron

President

Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated

Dated: 1 June 2026

Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated

Business Plan

‘Regionally Rich, Locally Loved’

Executive Summary

Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated is a Queensland-based not-for-profit organisation committed to celebrating Gympie’s rich heritage through its annual festival, held each October. The festival’s key theme, ‘past, present, and future’, inspires community engagement, cultural preservation, and forward-thinking celebration. The purpose of this business plan is to outline the organisation and execution of the festival, ensuring compliance, sustainability, and maximum impact. Key objectives include fostering local pride, attracting visitors, and providing a platform for education and entertainment.

Historical relevance

We acknowledge and celebrate the discovery of gold in the Gympie region by James Nash in October 1867, which ostensibly prevented the state of Queensland from bankruptcy. Since that time, Gympie has been known as the ‘town that saved Queensland’ and between 1867 and 1927 Gympie was one of the richest and highest-grade goldfields in the world, including the find of the 27.6kg ‘Curtis Nugget’ in 1868, Queensland’s largest gold discovery.

In a speech in the Federal Chamber on 27 November 2026, Llew O’Brien, MP (Wide Bay) noted that from its inception in 1973 through to 2020, the *‘Gympie Gold Rush Festival was established to celebrate this incredible history and the role of the gold rush and it played in shaping Queensland’*. He also stated that *‘the festival brought the community together’* and *‘local businesses, schools and community groups all chipped in to create a lively mix of entertainment and activities that honoured Gympie’s colourful past and showed off just how vibrant the town is today.’*

In 2027, Gympie will acknowledge 160 years since the discovery of gold, and it is expected that the Gympie Gold Rush Festival will be central to the historic celebrations.

Mission, Vision and Values

The Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporation’s **Mission** is to recognise and honour Gympie’s gold rush history, celebrate the vibrant contemporary community, and inspire future generations—embracing the spirit of ‘past, present, and future’. Guided by our motto, ‘Regionally Rich, Locally Loved, our **Vision** is to strive to be one of Queensland’s leading regional festivals for community spirit, cultural heritage, innovation, and inclusivity. As a not-for-profit organisation, we will deliver an annual event each October, fostering local pride, attracting visitors, and providing engaging educational and entertaining experiences for all.

Our **Values** are centred on:

- **Community Spirit:** We foster strong connections within our community, encouraging participation, collaboration, and a sense of belonging for all who call Gympie home.
- **Cultural Heritage:** We are dedicated to preserving, honouring, and sharing Gympie's rich gold rush history and regional traditions with pride and respect.
- **Inclusivity:** We welcome and celebrate diversity, ensuring our events and activities are accessible and enjoyable for everyone, regardless of background or ability.
- **Innovation:** We embrace new ideas, creativity, and forward-thinking approaches to make our festival engaging, relevant, and sustainable for future generations.
- **Integrity:** We operate transparently and ethically, upholding the trust placed in us by our community, partners, and supporters.
- **Sustainability:** We are committed to responsible stewardship of our environment and resources, ensuring the festival's positive impact for years to come.
- **Celebration:** We create joyful, memorable experiences that unite people in recognising Gympie's achievements, both past and present.

Organisation

The Gympie Gold Rush Festival is an incorporated association governed by a volunteer committee. The committee exists of an executive/management group, operational sub-committees, and community (ordinary) members. Attracting and retaining a dedicated volunteer workforce is critical to the success of the operation of the committee.

Committee members are bound by a sound code of conduct that supports the principles of not-for-profit volunteer organisations. This includes acting with integrity, avoiding conflicts of interest, and putting the interests of the Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated above personal or external interests. Breaches of conduct will be addressed in line with organisational policies and relevant legislation.

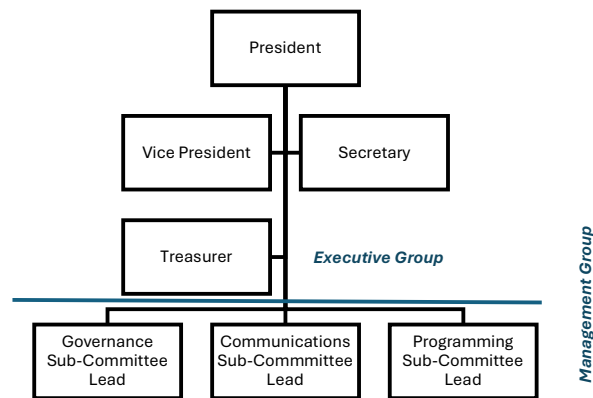
Organisational overview

- Organisation Name: **Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated.**
- Legal Certification: Incorporation Number – IA4936311 (*Associations Incorporation Act 1981*), dated 20 March 2026.
- Australian Business Number (ABN): 90107953265 (*Australian Business Register*), dated 20 March 2026.
- Registered Address: c/- 45 Horseshoe Bend, Gympie 4570 Queensland.
- Contact Details:
 - Murray Heron, President.
 - Sharon Hogan, Secretary.
 - Donagh Archer, Treasurer.
 - Email – executivegympiegoldrush@gmail.com.
- Date Established: 12 February 2026.
- Charity Registration: ACNC approval on 30 April 2026 under ABN.

Committee responsibilities

- **Executive Group**
 - Lead: President.
 - Members: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.
 - Provide overall leadership and direction for the organising committee.
 - Maintain general oversight of all sub-committees and their activities.
 - Facilitate communication and coordination between sub-committees.
 - Ensure compliance with festival objectives and governance requirements.
 - Provide monthly and ad hoc reports for each executive position.
 - *Note: The Management Group adds the sub-committee leads.
- **Governance Sub-Committee**
 - Lead: Committee member.
 - Develop and implement festival policies and procedures.
 - Oversee legal, financial, policy, and grant-related matters.
 - Ensure compliance with relevant regulations and governance standards.
 - Manage risk and provide guidance on governance issues.
 - Provide monthly and ad hoc a Sub-Committee reports.
 - Engage all Sub-Committees to enhance productivity and reduce duplication.
- **Programming Sub-Committee**
 - Lead: Committee member.
 - Coordinate key activities and events throughout the festival.
 - Engage and liaise with key stakeholders involved in programmed activities.
 - Plan, deliver and support the annual formal launch event on the opening weekend of the festival (eg Prospectors' Cocktail Party or Prospectors' Ball).
 - Plan, deliver and support the Gympie Gold Rush Street Parade on the final weekend/day of the festival.
 - Plan, deliver and support the Gympie Community Concert on the final weekend/evening of the festival.
 - Provide monthly and ad hoc a Sub-Committee reports.
 - Engage all Sub-Committees to enhance productivity and reduce duplication.
- **Communications Sub-Committee**
 - Lead: Committee member.
 - Manage media and communications for the Gympie Gold Rush Festival.
 - Engage stakeholders and secure sponsorship opportunities.
 - Develop and implement broader marketing initiatives within and beyond the Gympie region, including print, web, social, radio, and television media.
 - Promote festival events and activities to maximise community participation.
 - Provide monthly and ad hoc a Sub-Committee reports.
 - Engage all Sub-Committees to enhance productivity and reduce duplication.

Committee organisational diagram



Committee Member Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct sets out expectations for all volunteers of the Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated, reflecting our dedication to honouring the region's heritage, fostering community pride, and delivering a safe, inclusive and vibrant festival experience. As a Queensland-based not-for-profit organisation, we operate under the guidance of the Queensland Office of Fair Trading and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC), ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation and ethical standards.

Our Values

- **Community Spirit:** We celebrate the rich history and local pride of the Gympie region through our actions and engagement.
- **Respect:** We treat everyone—volunteers, festival-goers and the public—with courtesy, fairness, and dignity.
- **Integrity:** We act honestly and ethically, upholding the reputation of the Festival and our community, and adhering to regulatory requirements as set by the Queensland Office of Fair Trading and ACNC.
- **Inclusivity:** We embrace diversity and strive to ensure all people feel welcome and valued, regardless of background or ability.
- **Safety:** We prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all, following all relevant laws, organisational policies, and official guidance.

Expected Behaviour

- Represent the Festival in a positive manner at all times, supporting our key messages: 'Regionally Rich, Locally Loved' and 'Gold Rush is Back!'
- Communicate openly, honestly, and respectfully with fellow volunteers, organisers, and the public.
- Follow instructions from event organisers, and adhere to all festival guidelines, procedures, and regulatory obligations.
- Promote a safe, clean, and friendly environment by promptly reporting hazards, accidents, or concerns.
- Respect the confidentiality of organisational and personal information in accordance with relevant privacy and applicable charity laws.

- Refrain from any behaviour that could bring the Festival, community, or organisation into disrepute, including discrimination, harassment, or inappropriate conduct.

Responsibilities

- Arrive on time for shifts and notify your coordinator as soon as possible if you are unable to attend.
- Wear designated volunteer identification/clothing, and maintain a neat appearance.
- Assist all attendees courteously and provide information about the Festival and local area when requested.
- Care responsibly for Festival property and resources, ensuring compliance with ethical and legal standards set by regulators.

Breaches of the Code

Any breaches of this Code of Conduct may result in a review of your volunteer status, and in serious cases, may lead to removal from the event or organisation. All conduct will be assessed in accordance with the standards set by the Queensland Office of Fair Trading and the ACNC.

Commitment

By volunteering with Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated, you agree to uphold this Code of Conduct, championing our vision for a vibrant, proud, and inclusive celebration of our region's gold rush heritage, and ensuring we remain compliant with Queensland and Australian charity regulations.

Event Description

The Gympie Gold Rush Festival is a multi-day event featuring historical reenactments, live entertainment, workshops, markets, sporting events, parades, and exhibitions. Activities reflect the 'past, present, and future' theme, connecting gold rush history with modern cultural expressions and visions for Gympie's future. The festival caters to families, tourists, and locals, with accessible venues and diverse programming.

Below is an indicative list of events that are planned, managed, and delivered by the Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated Committee. In addition to these events, there are numerous other independent community events that celebrate Gympie's past, present, and future. The Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated aims to partner and/or align with these independent events to showcase Gympie's culture and beauty and allow residents and visitors alike to 'experience authentic Queensland'.

Gympie Gold Rush Festival Annual Events

Annually, the Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated will host a minimum of three key events as detailed below. Where opportunities exist, the organising committee will plan, manage, and deliver other activities in the spirit of Gold Rush. This may include, community BBQ, lunchtime concerts in Mary Street, and a busker competition.

- **Prospector's Formal Function.** The organising committee will host a formal function to officially launch the Gold Rush Festival in early October each year. This will be a ticketed event to acknowledge the support of our sponsors and amazing efforts of our organisers.
- **Community Street Parade.** On the final weekend of the Festival, a parade will be held on historic Mary Street, setting off from close to where James Nash originally found gold. The parade will be a free community event and will showcase Gympie's diverse past, present, and future. On show will be heritage floats, community groups, schools, classic cars, marching bands, emergency services, and much more.
- **Community Concert.** The Festival will culminate with a community concert at Nelson Reserve. Showcasing local talent and a headline band, the Gympie Gold Rush Festival will host a free all-ages concert for all residents and visitors to the Gympie region.

Gympie Gold Rush Festival promotional and marketing events may be conducted early in the planning period, including:

- **Business launch – sponsorship proposal.** The Business Launch is for local business leaders, organisations, sponsors and community champions to get up to date information about the Gympie Gold Rush Festival. Coordinated by the Communications and Marketing Sub-Committee, Attendees can hear what's ahead for the Festival's revival year, connect with partners, and discover how they can support the Festival through sponsorship, participation and/or volunteering
- **'Go for Gold' – activation weekend.** This event is designed to get community members from all walks of life to show everyone else via Facebook *'Their Kind of Gold'...* with the chance to win trophies, prizes and most importantly local and regional bragging rights. The weekend is a socially media driven event with community or sporting groups, businesses, schools and individuals all encouraged to take part and enter a pic of their chosen activity via Facebook. Other activities during this event may include a geocaching activity (eg Where's the Gold?) and pop-up stall with merchandise and information for the community.
- **Opportunity promotional events.** The Communications and Marketing Sub-Committee will seek additional opportunities to promote the Festival, including Gympie Show (May), Gympie Rally (April), Gympie Races (July), and Gympie Music Muster (August). The organising committee will also work closely with major sponsors, headline acts and principal supporters, to ensure that marketing is maximised.

Independent Events in the Gympie Region

The following events are normally held in the region around the same time as the Gympie Gold Rush Festival (October). Where possible the Festival will partner or collaborate with the event organisers to embrace the spirit of Gold Rush and to 'celebrate Gympie'.

- Mary Valley Rattler birthday, 'Gold Rush' train and regular services

- Mothar Mountain Speedway Gold Rush race events
- Gympie Gold Mining Museum & Historical Society Steam Festival
- Milky Way Masterclass
- Kilkivan Professional Bull Riding competition
- Matt Hillcoat's Truckies Big Day Out (charity event)
- Kilkivan Canapes by the Creek
- This is Livin' Festival at Rainbow Beach
- Queensland Seniors' Month
- Get Ready Queensland
- Gympie Gem Club Event
- Gympie Camera Club Event
- Widgee Balladeers
- Gympie Sunday Markets
- Theebine Hall Hoedown
- Gympie South Bowls competition
- Gympie Turf Club – Race Day.

Event Objects

The Incorporation is established to be a charity whose purpose is to advance culture by:

- Promoting and celebrating the heritage and history of Gympie, particularly its gold rush legacy, through events and related activities.
- Planning, delivering, and supporting community events that are inclusive, accessible, and beneficial to the social and cultural life of the Gympie Region.
- Operating as a not-for-profit association, applying income and property solely towards the achievement of the association's objectives.

Legal Requirements

- **Incorporation status.** The Gympie Gold Rush Festival Organising Committee was certified as an incorporation on 20 March 2026 (*Associations Incorporated Act 1981*) – IA4936311.
- **Registering as a charity.** To receive donations in Queensland, Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated may need to register with ACNC. This will be reviewed and action by the Governance Sub-Committee through the incorporation's legal advisors, as required.
- **Permits.** The Programming Sub-Committee is responsible to obtain all necessary permits for the formal event, street parade, and community concert. Appropriate applications are to be made through the Gympie Regional Council and Queensland Police Service at least nine months prior to the event.
- **Insurance.** The Governance Sub-Committee is responsible to secure appropriate public liability, volunteer, and equipment insurance, and renew this insurance each year.
- **Risk Management.** The Programming Sub-Committee is responsible to ensure compliance with health, safety, and accessibility regulations, through the development of risk assessments for each event that the organising committee is responsible for. See below for a broad outline of risk management for the Festival.

- **Contracts.** The Programming Sub-Committee is responsible to review and update all contracts with vendors, performers, and sponsors. Contract drafts are to be reviewed by the Festival legal advisors prior to signature.
- **Privacy laws.** All members of the Gympie Gold Rush Festival Organising Committee are to acknowledge and adhere to privacy laws regarding attendee and volunteer data.

Financial Requirements

- **Festival budget.** The Treasurer is responsible to prepare a comprehensive festival budget including expenditure for venues, marketing, staffing, equipment, insurance and operating costs. The budget is to be presented to the committee for endorsement six months prior to the Festival. A budget plan is to developed in isolation to this business plan.
- **Funding sources.** The Treasurer is to assist sub-committees to identify funding sources such as grants, sponsorships, donations, and ticket sales. Sub-committee responsibilities are detailed in this plan.
- **Finance management.** The Treasurer is responsible to establish and maintain transparent financial reporting procedures. This includes providing finance reports at all general and extraordinary meetings, as per the agenda. This will include monitoring cash flow and manage expenses against budgeted allocations.
- **Finance compliance.** The Treasurer is to ensure the committee maintains compliance with Australian Taxation Office requirements, and to provide advice to members as required.
- **Finance reporting.** The Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated financial year ends on 31 December each year. The Treasurer is responsible to conduct post-event financial review and reporting to stakeholders.

Communication and Marketing Requirements

The Communications Sub-Committee is responsible for the effective planning, management, and delivery of the following:

- Develop a marketing plan aligned with the festival's theme. This is to be completed by March each year and developed in isolation to the business plan.
- Create branding materials, including logo, signage, and digital assets.
- Through the President, engage local media, radio, and newspapers for publicity.
- Leverage social media platforms for community engagement.
- Coordinate promotional partnerships with local businesses.
- Design festival programs and merchandise for attendees. Produce a Festival Merchandise plan and review each year.

Risk Management

All members and Festival partners must be aware and understand potential significant risks that may impact the planning, management and delivery of the Gympie Gold Rush

Festival. Each event of the festival will be required to develop and circulate a risk assessment, and are to include the following steps:

- **Identify the hazard:** Review and investigate all potential issues such as uneven ground, electrical hazards, marquee safety, crowd congestion, severe weather, and use of vehicles/mechanical equipment.
- **Assess Risks:** Rate risks based on likelihood (eg rare to very likely) and their consequence (real or perceived).
- **Implement controls to mitigate any risk:** Apply the hierarchy of controls. This includes: Eliminate, Substitute, Isolate, Engineer, or Administrative controls.
- **Document:** Create a formal risk management plan for each event, including bump-in/bump-out, emergency management, actions-on, key contacts, utility failure, and resource shortage.
- **Monitor and review:** Regularly review controls, especially if the event changes.

Other considerations for risk management:

- Conduct risk assessment for all festival activities and locations.
- Implement and/or coordinate safety protocols, including first aid, event security, and evacuation plans.
- Develop contingency plans for weather, emergencies, or cancellations.
- Train volunteers and staff on incident response procedures.
- Maintain records of incidents and near-misses for review.
- Ensure compliance with pandemic guidelines, if applicable.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

A SWOT analysis for the Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated (a Queensland non-profit organisation) focuses on leveraging strong community trust and local volunteering against challenges like funding pressures, staff shortages, and rising operational costs.

Key Opportunities may include digital transformation; partnership with government, businesses, and organisations; and expanding service reach.

Conversely, *Threats* involve economic volatility, competition for funding, and compliance, hence the importance of ensuring compliance with the relevant State and Federal legislation and policies (eg Queensland Office of Fair Trading, Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Queensland Business, and Australian Taxation Office at a minimum).

Below is a succinct SWOT analysis to be used as a guide for all committee members when planning, managing, and delivering activities on behalf of the Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated.

Strengths (Internal)

- **Strong community connection:** High trust, local presence, and understanding of regional Queensland needs.
- **Volunteer base:** Dedicated, passionate volunteers, though engagement levels may vary.

- **Mission alignment:** Clear, purpose-driven goals attracting dedicated staff and donors.
- **Service impact:** Proven track record in delivering specialised support services, through decades of ‘Gold Rush’ festivities.

Weaknesses (Internal)

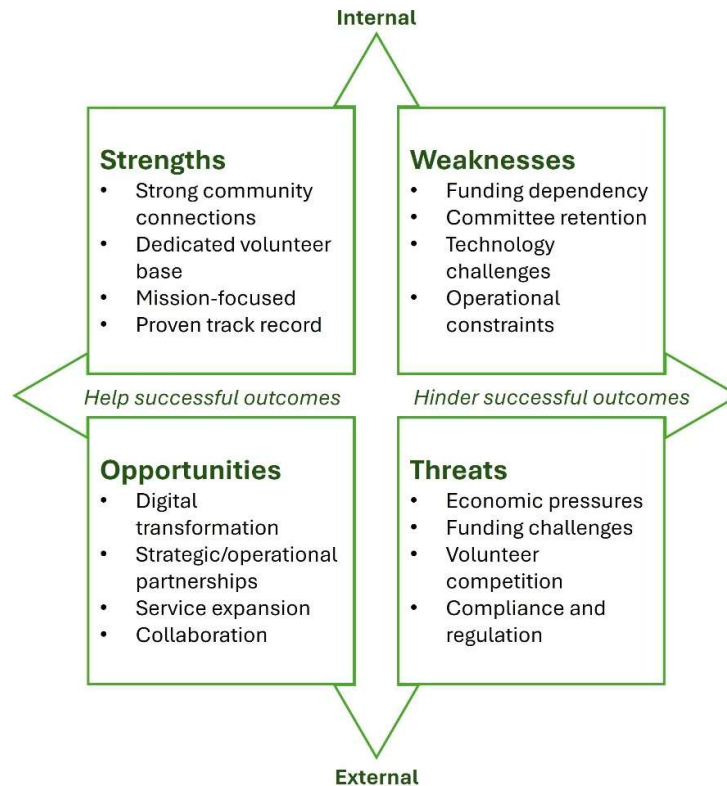
- **Funding dependency:** Reliance on sponsorship, grants and a limited donor base.
- **Committee member retention and capacity:** High burnout, recruitment challenges, and reliance on volunteers.
- **Limited technology:** Outdated IT infrastructure or limited digital, marketing, or CRM capabilities.
- **Operational constraints:** Limited cash reserves, financial pressures, or aging infrastructure.

Opportunities (External)

- **Digital transformation:** Using technology for online fundraising, service delivery, and better marketing reach.
- **Government and corporate partnerships:** Collaborating with local and state government initiatives, and local corporate grant and sponsorship programs.
- **Service expansion:** Identifying unfulfilled community needs (eg broader regional involvement, vulnerable persons groups, youth and aged care groups).
- **Collaboration:** Merging or partnering with other non-profits to share resources and overheads.

Threats (External)

- **Economic pressures:** Rising inflation, increasing operational costs (service providers, rent, insurance, marketing), and reduced donor disposable income.
- **Funding challenges:** Tightening government, grant criteria, or other competing community-based organisations or events.
- **Volunteer competition:** Increased competition for qualified committee members and declining volunteer participation rates.
- **Compliance and regulation:** Increasing administrative burden, data security requirements, and changing legal requirements.



Options for mitigation

The following strategic actions may be considered when planning, managing, and delivering outcomes on behalf of the Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated.

- **Strengths + Opportunities:** Leverage community reputation to boost corporate partnership efforts. Promote community success.
- **Weaknesses + Opportunities:** Invest grant money into technology and forward-marketing to reduce long-term operational costs and boost fundraising.
- **Strengths + Threats:** Use volunteer network to maintain service levels while reducing paid staff overheads.
- **Weaknesses + Threats:** Prioritise financial stability and donor retention to mitigate economic downturns. Future investment in ongoing Gold Rush festivals.

Governance Requirements

On behalf of the Executive and Management groups, the overall management of Festival governance is the responsibility of the Governance Sub-Committee. The Governance Sub-Committee must also work hand-in-hand with the other sub-committees to ensure synergy and compliance throughout the planning, management, and delivery of the Festival. The key outcomes include:

- Define committee member roles and responsibilities.
- Establish organisational policies, including conflict of interest and code of conduct.
- Schedule regular committee meetings and maintain accurate minutes.

- Schedule regular committee and sub-committee workshops and maintain accurate records where applicable.
- Monitor performance against festival objectives.
- Ensure accountability and transparency in decision-making.
- Report outcomes and financials to members and stakeholders.

Implementation Timeline

Milestone	Deadline
Committee approval of business plan	March
Permit applications submitted	April
Marketing campaign launch	May
Finalise sponsorship agreements	June
Volunteer recruitment and training	March-August
Event risk assessment and safety planning	September
Festival event execution	October
Post-event evaluation and reporting	November

Evaluation and Reporting

The Gympie Gold Rush Festival Incorporated is a not-for-profit association and needs to be able to report both on financial soundness and on mission outcomes. Hence, evaluation is an important part of the structure of the operation, and needs to be carefully costed into the budget. Each sub-committee is responsible to collect and present appropriate information for the Executive Group to collate and report as follows:

- Collect attendee feedback via surveys and interviews.
- Measure success against set objectives, including attendance, engagement, social media interaction, and financial targets.
- Document all lessons learned for future improvements.
- Share outcomes and recommendations with committee and key stakeholders.