Safe Events Framework

Making events at ANU as safe and respectful as possible

Australian National University

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ANU RESPECT

The Safe Events Framework is designed to provide information and resources to members of the University community for planning, setting up, running and reflecting on safe events.

It is based on research of effective strategies for organising safe events using case studies as examples, and engagement with stakeholders (including University functions administrative staff and key members of student organisations).

The Framework aims to help all attendees feel safe and respected at ANU events, thereby allowing them to enjoy themselves fully and focus on building valuable social connections and support networks. It also aims to drive cultural change that prevents sexual violence.

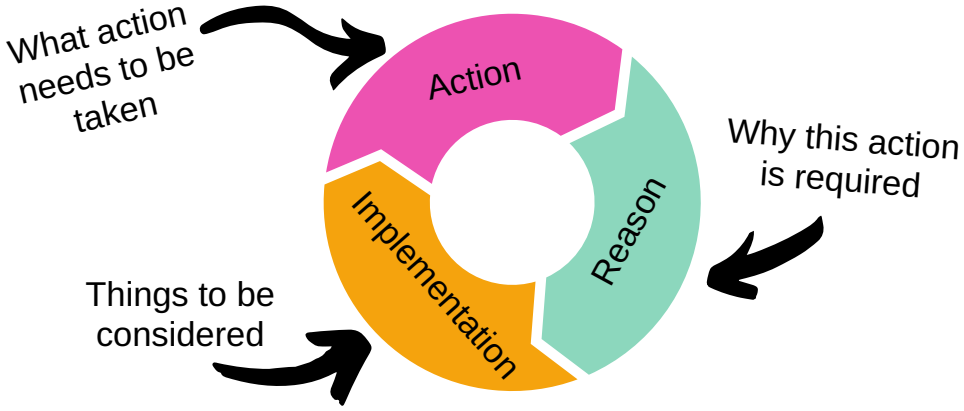
Introduction

This framework is designed to provide event organisers at ANU with a set of effective strategies they can implement to make their events as safe as possible. They are designed to minimise the incidence of antisocial and harmful behaviours, while also encouraging both event organisers and attendees to become more aware of the culture that underlies such behaviours. Through awareness, problematic cultural norms can be challenged, fostering a more respectful community.

This list is not designed to be exhaustive. It is intended to be considered a working document to be updated over time as new strategies become available. Event organisers should supplement this framework with any additional strategies they deem useful. Furthermore, not all strategies are relevant to every event. It is the duty of the event organiser to make a reasoned judgement about which are applicable. Essentially, the aim of this framework is to supply a self-selecting checklist of recommendations for supporting attendees to feel safe and respected throughout an event, with information and resources for actioning them along the stages of the event-organising journey.

Note: This framework is intended to complement existing processes of event organisation though bodies such as Functions on Campus, SCAPA, ANU Security and Halls of Residence. Please visit the appropriate offices and websites for more information about their policies and guidelines when starting to plan an event.

The framework contains three key descriptors:



Stage 1: Planning

Preparation in the lead-up to an event is an important time to contemplate foreseeable risks and work to mitigate them as much as possible. It is also a valuable opportunity to consider the experiences of a diverse range of attendees and how they can be enriched.

Action	Reason	Implementation
Initial planning review	*Prevention* – to determine what the desired outcomes would be and prepare for possible risks (create a safety plan)	Imagining what a successful event would look like and where risk factors might arise from in order to minimise their likelihood of occurring. A hazard and risk assessment should be considered at this stage.
Connect with relevant ANU Services beforehand	*Prevention and response* – to gain multiple perspectives on planning for event safety and prepare for any incidents	Reaching out to ANU Services (e.g. ANU Functions on Campus, ANU Security, ANU Counselling Centre) to inform them of the event and gain their insight in planning to minimise risk while also preparing them in case incidents occur that require response.
Venue selection and planning for safety	*Prevention* – to minimise risk	Selecting a venue with reasonable lighting and open spaces. When alcohol is involved, controlling where it is consumed and ensuring that there will be access to sufficient food and water. Considering whether and how the venue can cater to underage attendees.

Action	Reason	Implementation
Selection and training of volunteers/staff	*Prevention and response* – to empower volunteers/staff to intervene as ethical, active bystanders and respond to disclosure if necessary	Selecting a diversity of volunteers/staff and requiring as many of them as possible (ideally all) to complete comprehensive training, including bystander intervention, having difficult conversations, first aid training, and reporting and university policies on sexual violence (such that there is a variety of training amongst the volunteers/staff). You can talk to the Respectful Relationships Unit about some of these options.
Selection of diverse and responsible entertainment	*Prevention* – to promote equality	Choosing diverse (in terms of gender, race, sexual orientation, etc) and responsible (actively discouraging inappropriate behaviours, potentially through announcement) entertainment for an event.
Event registration (information checkpoint) and pre-event publicity	*Prevention* – to ensure all attendees are aware of expectations	Including information about expectations of event attendees and any corresponding University policies on pre-event communication to define the tone of the event.

Stage 2: Setup

The preparation shortly before an event is a useful opportunity to walk through the venue, ensuring that all necessary precautions have been taken to facilitate safety and accessibility. It is also a chance to strategically implement techniques that will remind attendees of the expectations upon them throughout the event.

Action	Reason	Implementation
Event walk-through	*Prevention* – to ensure that reasonable adjustments have been made to minimise risk and enable accessibility	Touring the event space as various attendees might, in order to ensure that it is safe and accessible, making final alterations as necessary. Hazard and risk assessment should be completed, or revisited if done at the planning stage.
Staff/volunteer (and security) briefing	*Prevention and response* – to ensure that all staff, volunteers and security are fully informed about their responsibilities and the resources they should access if necessary	Communicating important information to staff, volunteers, and security, such as schedule and safety plan (including contact details for emergency/incident that are either given materially or entered into phones directly).

Action	Reason	Implementation
Visual cues ('nudges') e.g. Event policy posters	*Prevention and response* – to remind attendees of expectations and provide information about what to do in the case of an incident	Positioning visual reminders around the event providing information about the expectations applying to attendees in relation to event policies, procedure in the case of a breach of these policies, and resources which will provide help if necessary (volunteers/staff, security, etc), including contacts of multiple genders if reasonable.
Signage/maps	*Prevention and response* – to provide attendees with a clear indication of where various amenities are located	Locating helpful signs or maps detailing the entire event space around the venue in locations that are highly visible (particularly for a multi-space event).
Safe space(s) design (or equivalent)	*Response* – to encourage attendees to feel comfortable seeking out and using a safe space	Designing a safe space to be private and comfortable without being too secluded or difficult to find by those in need (suggested if 50+ attendees).

Stage 3: During Event

The duration of an event is the time to be alert and ready to respond to any unexpected occurrences. It is also an opportunity to be continually promoting safety at the event.

Action	Reason	Implementation
Ease of access to volunteers/staff	*Prevention and response* – to increase likelihood of volunteers/staff being able to intervene and enable attendees to access help effectively	Employing a sufficient number of volunteers/staff who are easily identifiable (but not overly conspicuous such that people may feel self-conscious talking to them) and tactically dispersed around the venue in order to be of most use.
Safe space(s) (or equivalent)	*Prevention and response* – to provide attendees with a place to go if they feel unsafe or need help following an incident	Creating a well-promoted, accessible, relaxing space managed by volunteer/staff member(s) for attendees to visit if they feel the need.
Processes for caring for the intoxicated during and after the event	*Prevention* – to reduce risks of intoxicated people to themselves and others	Allocating an area for intoxicated attendees to be directed to and cared for until safe arrangements can be made for them to leave (for example, walking groups or security escorts).

Stage 4: Post Event

The period following an event is an occasion to process tasks that arose from the event and could not be completed at the time. It also enables the generation of constructive insight into how events could be better organised in the future.

Action	Reason	Implementation
Processing of reports	*Response* – to ensure that any incidents are dealt with effectively	Passing on reports to the official channels within the University (according to the preferences of the reporter)
Feedback from attendees	*Prevention and response* – to accrue attendee input for future improvement and enabling attendees to report if necessary	Facilitating a space for attendees to provide feedback about their experience of the event and responding to it appropriately (noting possible improvements and passing on reports) – choose forum and questions suitable to type of feedback which would be of greatest use.
Reflection of event organisers	*Prevention* – to accumulate input of event organisers for future improvement	Collecting reflections from the event organisers and enabling their provision to prospective event organisers so that ineffective strategies can be avoided, and effective strategies can be replicated in the organisation of future events.

Online Events

Online or virtual events can be a valuable way of making events accessible for a wider audience. For these events, there are steps that event organisers can take to ensure that attendees feel safe and supported.

Stage 1: Planning

Decide what online platform or tool will be used. Different platforms have different features, might have costs associated, and can be used in different ways by presenters and attendees. It is important to consider factors like what kind of engagement with attendees you want to facilitate in your event, whether you already have an online community on a platform like Facebook, whether ANU has authorised or discouraged the use of a particular platform for security or privacy reasons, whether there are limits to the number of people who can attend, and also any safety risks or vulnerabilities posed by platforms. For video-calling platforms, consider whether you want to be able to enable or disable functions like chat, the ability for attendees to broadcast video or sound, or the ability for presenters or attendees to share their screens. It is also important to be aware of what default security settings are applied, and reconfigure these to meet your needs. Most platforms have a privacy statement which should outline the information you need to make an informed choice. Also ensure that you read the platform's terms of use.

The eSafety Commissioner provides a resource called the eSafety Guide which gives more details about commonly used platforms on their website, and the Australian Cyber Security Centre has a guide to web conferencing security.

Establish meetings securely. Decide how you will distribute invitations, web links and access credentials to participants. Sharing links or access credentials on publicly-accessible websites or on social media might increase the reach of your event, but also increases the risk of unwanted participants joining. Requiring participants to enter a password to join the meeting can decrease the risk of unwanted participants, but passwords need to be distributed in advance and often to each participant individually.

Establish guidelines for organisers and presenters. Set up guidelines or consider training for organisers on how to respond to negative issues like cyberbullying or inappropriate content. Understand the reporting procedures of the platform you will use, collect evidence that documents the abuse if applicable, and understand the

option of reporting to eSafety if the service or platform has not taken action within 48 hours of a complaint. Ensure that organisers are familiar with support options available at ANU. The ANU Code of Conduct applies in an online space, and conduct can be reported if it does not meet the standards expected in our community.

Stage 2: Setup

Prepare presenters. Presenters who will be on video may feel more comfortable with a blank wall behind them, or with a virtual or blurred background if facilitated by the platform, to protect their privacy. If presenters are not in a private location, using headphones can help maintain confidentiality, and presenters who are not talking at any particular moment should mute their microphone.

Ensure organisers and presenters are aware of how to block video, audio or the chat function, and to remove a participant from the event. You may wish to configure your settings to mute participants on entry, or disable participants' cameras. Consider using moderation settings for discussions, such as reviewing all comments before attendees can see them. Practice to see what screen sharing reveals in order to to protect privacy, and make sure presenters are aware of how to share only an individual application on their screen instead of their device's entire screen. Disable email alerts and other notifications on a presenter's computer if they plan to share their screen.

Stage 3: During the Event

Set clear expectations with your audience about what engagements are appropriate, and what is and isn't acceptable content to share during the event. Participants should adhere to the ANU Code of Conduct, just as they would if they were attending a physical event. If you plan to record the event, this must be clearly communicated to attendees, including what details are being recorded - often this might be an attendee's video and their screen name, and any questions they might ask. Finally, let your participants know how they can interact with the presenter or (if facilitated) each other during the session.

Provide resources and support. Clearly communicate what participants should do if something goes wrong or they feel uncomfortable during the event - who should they contact and how? Depending on the topic of your event, there might also be relevant resources like important email addresses or websites that participants might find valuable: these could be shared through a chat function, pinned post, or shared via email shortly following the event.

Resources

Australian Cyber Security Centre's Web Conferencing Security guide: https://www.cyber.gov.au/publications/web-conferencing-security
eSafety Commissioner's website: https://www.esafety.gov.au/

Further Information

For more information on how to run inclusive events, see ANU Disabilities Student Association's Accessible Events Guide:
https://anudsa.com/resources/accessible-events/

For more information on how to make spaces safe for all, see the Safer Spaces Policies by:

- ANU Women's Department:
https://anuwomensdepartment.org/about/safer-spaces-policy/
- ANU Ethnocultural Committee:
https://ethnoculturalanu.wordpress.com/about/safer-spaces-policy/
- ANU Disabilities Student Association:
https://anudsa.com/about-us/safer-spaces-policy/