

## THINKING ABOUT ORGANISING A BAND OR SOLO CONTEST ?

Thank you and good on you! The Pipe Band movement needs continued enthusiasm and vision from Contest Promoters just like you to sustain itself, bring fresh ideas to the fore, encourage new participants, build competencies, and generally fulfill its commitment to continuous improvement.

Within the movement is a considerable body of acquired knowledge relating to the skills required of Contest Promoters. These notes are intended to help you tap into that body of knowledge so that the planning and running of your contest can be as smooth and successful as possible.

Following is a summary of many of the tasks you will need to address

### SETTLE ON A FIRM DATE (MIN 6 MONTHS OUT)

In the first instance this can best happen by way of informal first contact with PBNSW Chairman [chairman@pipebandsnsw.com.au](mailto:chairman@pipebandsnsw.com.au) Other PBNSW contact details are [HERE](#). Out of this preliminary chat, you will likely find yourself liaising with one PBNSW Committee member as you work your way through the various steps needed to plan and run your event.

Be aware that this is not simply a decision. Rather, it is a process that culminates in a decision. It requires a good deal of thought if your proposed contest is to achieve its potential. The process concludes when the Branch Council signs off on the date. Keep in mind that many bands like to plan their contest schedule a year (or more) in advance. Earlier is better-much better. Try to think a year ahead at the very minimum.

The proximity of other contests locally, interstate and overseas, major public events, school and public holidays are all factors requiring consideration. Once the final date emerges from this process, you must seek 'formal' approval from the Branch Council via letter/email to the Branch Secretary. [secretary@pipebandsnsw.com.au](mailto:secretary@pipebandsnsw.com.au) Meetings are held every two months so check [www.pipebandsnsw.com.au](http://www.pipebandsnsw.com.au) for meeting dates and decide early which meeting you are aiming for.

### FINALISE YOUR SYLLABUS OF CONTEST EVENTS (3-6 MONTHS OUT)

Again, in the first instance informal discussion can save everybody a lot of headaches. Is this a new contest or is it a repeat occurrence of an existing one? Your contest events need to 'align' with the PBA Contest Regulation-and these change reasonably often.

The NSW Branch can supply you with 'templates' for band, mini band and solo contests. You do not need to reinvent the wheel and help is at hand – if you aim to keep the lines of communication open and constructive, much can be achieved quite quickly!

The development and approval process needs to be complete at least 3 months out (and 6 months out if it's a State Championship event) Start early and allow one to two months to see it through!

Finalise your list of entry conditions. In most/many respects these remain standard from contest to contest and again, must not conflict with PBA Contest regulations. Templates are available.

Once the informal process of getting your syllabus into shape is complete it needs final formal approval from the NSW Branch Council and its Vice Principals. Again, the Branch Council meets every second month-so decide early which meeting you are aiming for.

You should expect two or three weeks of ‘back and forth’ discussion to get your syllabus ready for submission to the Branch Council for approval.

After approval (and if you wish), the NSW Secretary can assist in the direct circulation of your Syllabus to prospective participants and the contest will be listed on the Pipe Bands NSW website [www.pipebandsnsw.com.au](http://www.pipebandsnsw.com.au)

## OPENING AND CLOSING DATES FOR ENTRIES (3-4 MONTHS OUT)

- What date will entries open ?
  - The group of bands that regularly compete is not large. Early notice for this group is critical to your prospects of a well supported contest. Early commitment from one or two larger bands can assist by attracting more entries from other bands.
- What date will entries close?
  - The Contest Draw takes place immediately upon close of entries. A week or so may be required to complete a band contest draw. Longer in the case of Solo Contests
  - For practical reasons to do with travel and possible accommodation etc, the publication of the Contest Draw an absolute minimum of the weekend before the contest is highly desirable. A better (and achievable) target is two weeks before contest day. (Championship events have more exacting standards that should be met in this regard)
  - What all of this means is that entries should close about three weeks before contest day in order to allow time to compile the Contest Draw and publish it in plenty of time for contestant to make proper preparation.
  - Recent experiences in NSW indicate a tendency for bands to enter contests during the last few days before entries are closed off. Most contest promoters will have experienced bands wanting to enter after the closing date. Liaison with PBNSW should help identify the bands that are likely to enter particular events and a ‘phone around’ can help shore this up well before the closing date.

### HERE IS A SAMPLE TIMELINE

JANUARY	Date proposal to PBNSW
FEBRUARY	Branch Council meeting to consider/approve
MARCH	Syllabus proposal to PBNSW
APRIL	Branch Council meeting to consider/approve
MAY	Start of Contest Advertising/Promotion
AUGUST	Entries Open
EARLY-MID OCTOBER	Entries Close
MID OCTOBER	Publication of Contest Draw
EARLY NOVEMBER	Contest Day(s)

## ENTRY PROCESSING ARRANGEMENTS (3-4 MONTHS OUT)

- What mechanism will you use to receive entries and payments?
  - online with immediate payment is clearly the best way
  - PB NSW has successfully used (free) online platforms including Jotform and TryBooking” to facilitate on-line entry and payment. Ask us about them.
- Where and by whom will entry monies be held ?
- Who will deal with phone and email enquiries ? You will get them.
- Entries for smaller events typically close 2 or 3 weeks out. This allows adequate time to compile a contest draw. Championship event entries close earlier.
- After entries close, decide on how many solos platforms and band judging circles are appropriate.

## **APPOINTMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF CONTEST OFFICIALS** (2-3 MONTHS OUT)

- Decide how many judges/officials/marshals are needed. Be aware that this early work may require subsequent change in light of greater or smaller than expected entry levels.
- PBNSW will appoint adjudicators and supply you with their names and contact details.
- Liaise with, organize and book necessary transport and accom for 'non local' contest officials
  - Airfares and hotel accommodation are normally cheaper if booked well in advance. Obvious really-but don't leave it till last.
  - The current fee for adjudicators is \$100 each/day plus \$45 travel allowance (which includes the first 90km of their round trip travel distance). PBNSW will subsidize part of this cost and also meet the entire cost of interstate travel, local ground travel and accommodation where no local official is available.
  - Remember, well-trodden pathways exist for all of these tasks. Help is at hand.
- Where will the cash come from to do that?
- What is the mechanism for effecting those payments?

## **THE CONTEST DRAW (2-3 WEEKS OUT)**

- How will the contest 'draw' be done? Consult with your NSW Branch contact.
- Proof read, then compile the draw into a document suitable for publication.
- Deal with late withdrawals, additions, requests for changes to the draw (especially important in solo events) and amend the published draw as necessary. Institute strict version control.

## **PLAN MASSED BANDS & PRESENTATION CEREMONY(S) (2-3 WEEKS OUT)**

- The event finale provides the opportunity to bring your contest day to a fitting and memorable conclusion. Try to make it spectacular and remember that public attendees simply love this part of the day.
- Where and when are massed bands to assemble?
- Who is to be in overall charge of the staging of the massed bands display and parade. . Tradition would suggest the winner of the Drum Majors' contest be accorded the honour of taking charge of the massed bands.
- If there has been no DM contest, consider appointing an experienced Senior Drum Major with a loud voice and authoritative manner.
- Somebody MUST be in clear and undisputed control of this activity
- In what formation will the bands assemble? Where?
- What tunes are to be played March in | Display | March out. PBNSW music VP's can assist with this.
- The Pipe Major of the senior graded band on parade (or Senior Military or Police Band) would traditionally take the right flank of the parade and be charged with musical leadership.
- How are you going to ensure that all parade participants understand exactly what is expected of them?
- Will clan representatives or others participate?
- Who will liaise with the Clans in this regard?
- What PA announcements are needed to get all of this underway?
- Who are your special guests/dignitaries and what are you asking them to do.
  - Will they speak? What about? For how long?
  - Do they need mics or PA facilities?
  - Who are the supporters and sponsors whose assistance helped make the event a success?
  - Who will award the prizes?

- If the contest has been conducted with the support financial or otherwise, of the NSW Branch then it is customary to invite a PBNSW representative to take part in the Prize giving Ceremony.
- In the case of a NSW State Championship event, PBNSW representation is mandatory.
- Are there any 'special' awards/raffle winners/lucky gate prizes to award?
- Subject to time of day constraints and the reality that many participants will be keen to depart on their homeward journeys, you may wish to consider additional brief activities. Perhaps a flag ceremony, National Anthem, Drum Salute, Solo Piper etc
- Is prize money to be awarded as cash or cheque?
  - At least one week out, obtain the necessary cheques. Where do they come from? Who needs to sign them?
  - If it's to be cash, make a list of the exact note denominations needed and get it from the bank. Which bank? Who is responsible for that?
  - Put each prize into a small envelope marked clearly with the name of the event, the place number (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> etc) and the amount of money enclosed.
  - Do a final reconciliation check to ensure that the total of cash amounts written on all of your envelopes tallies with the total amount of any cash obtained from the bank.
  - Sometimes, prize money is 'left over' after event day. Maybe the recipient did not claim their prize. Maybe only two prizes were awarded out of a possible three. How are you going to account for and treat any cash left over in this way?
- Compile a detailed list of all the Trophies/Cash Prizes etc to be awarded for each event. This list needs to be set out in a format that is easy for the Presentation MC to follow and read out. At least 14pt font double spaced for clarity.
- Supervision and organization of Medals/Trophies, Prize envelopes etc becomes the responsibility of your Trophy Steward on Event Day. Their task amongst other things, is to ensure everything is laid out logically in readiness for the Presentation Ceremony and to support the Presentation MC in ensuring all runs smoothly and without unnecessary delays.
- This is the time to bestow generous public recognition upon the participants who have worked long and hard to put on their best performance. Don't be stingy.
- All of the above and more needs to be incorporated into a "Run Sheet"/Script for the Presentation MC.

## CONTEST DAY FACILITIES

- Develop plans for public and participant vehicle movement and parking.
- What signage is needed?
  - Develop a list.
  - Who is making these signs?
  - Where are they being stored prior to event day?
  - Who is responsible for transporting, erecting and then packing them away?
- The band 'encampment' area if any, needs to be sensibly located with respect to the Contest Circle and venue facilities.
- What covered areas are required ?
  - Marquees?
  - 3x3 Marquee, 60cm x 180cm table, 2 chairs are needed for each solo judging platform area.

- Minimum 9m x3m (bigger if possible) total marquee area needed for Announcer, Adjudicators, Supervisor, Scorers, Timekeepers, Marshals.
    - Plus adequate (12+) chairs, tables, power, rubbish bin, drinking water, tissues. (Sunscreen, insect repellent dependent on weather conditions).
  - Who is responsible for sourcing the above items, storing them, transporting them, erecting them, taking them down, possibly drying them, packing them up, reporting on any losses/breakages, and taking them away at day's end?
  - If the event venue is big or 'spread out', two way radio comms can be a big help in keeping the day running smoothly. They are not expensive. They need to be signed in and out to retain control over their whereabouts.
- Arrange and effect the marking out of contest area/circle(s), fine tuning and quiet areas to accord with current rules. Signpost them if appropriate or desirable.
  - Drum Majors' Flourish, and quickstep courses if required
  - Provide pennants/flags for lines AA and BB, DM Flourish and Quickstep courses
  - Provide labelled folders for each adjudicator
    - pen, liquid paper, stapler
    - copy of contest draw
    - adjudication sheets prefilled with (consider computer generated labels)
      - contest location, name and date
      - band name
      - event grade and name
      - adjudicator's name
    - paper weights (it's windy out there)
    - Master sheet template for the Contest Supervisor
  - Appoint, brief, coordinate and collaborate with MC/Announcer who is to be provided with
    - copy of the draw
    - information about each band as a minimum
      - tartan
      - year of formation
      - names of Pipe Major, Drum Major (if any) Drum Sgt
      - names of tunes
    - who will obtain and collate this information?
    - copy of event run sheet
    - full names of special guests/dignitaries etc
    - names of major sponsors/supporters
    - list of acknowledgements and thanks
    - copy of script/run sheet for the Presentation Ceremony
  - Appoint, brief and coordinate Timekeeper(s)
    - customized blank template
    - stop Watch(es)
    - pens/liquid paper
  - Appoint, brief and coordinate band Marshal(s) and Photographer/Videographer (if used)
    - copy of contest draw
    - note book and pen
    - accurate watch
  - Appoint, brief and coordinate Penciller/Runner for each solo platform
  - Appoint, brief and coordinate Scorer(s)
  - Appoint, brief and coordinate Trophy and Awards Steward(s)
    - Table(s)
    - Cloths
    - Flowers if desired
  - Provide Refreshments for Officials (consult with Branch Liaison re specifics)

## PIPE BANDS AUSTRALIA CONTEST REGULATIONS

The contest regulations are a constant 'work in progress'. They are subject to more or less ongoing amendment in line with PBA efforts to ensure our contest scene continues to reflect both the wishes of members and changing circumstances. A good understanding of current Contest Regulations is of incalculable value to every Contest Promoter or Organizer.

Current Contest Regulation (July 2022) is at

[PBA Contest Regulation](#)