Tips for hosting a successful Be Connected community event

Holding a community event is a great way to get your community interested in your Be Connected program. Asking yourself the simple questions:

Who? What? When? Where? And Why?

Can help you to plan a successful event. The following are some of our top tips to help you prepare for holding a Be Connected digital skills event.

Create an event that works for your community

Think about your community and organisation. Think about the people you would like to attend and your own organisation's circumstances, and make decisions with both in mind when planning your event.

Consider:

- Who would you like to come to your event? Is it your existing members, new people or both?

- What time and day of the week would your community most likely be able to attend?

- Where will you hold it that works for your community? Do you need to hire a space or can you use what you already have?

- Is your event idea something you think your community need or would like to come to? You could run your idea past a few people who you would like to come to the event and see if they are interested in it.

- Who needs to be involved to organise and run the event? Do you need extra volunteer support or need to get your management team involved?

- What equipment or event materials do I need to organise or purchase in advance?

- How can I make a digital skills event fun for people attending?

Plan your budget

How much will your event cost? Get several quotes in advance to help you to work out what costs will be involved to hold your event.

Think about if these costs are realistic for your organisation and what can be covered by a $1,500 **Community Engagement grant.**

Consider risks and safety

Complete a risk assessment for your event and implement any mitigation strategies you may need to keep everyone safe and the event running smoothly. Many organisations already have a risk assessment template that you can use for your event - if not, free event risk assessment templates are available online.

Some things to look out for include trip hazards from cables, preventing injuries from moving event materials or equipment, that catering is stored and served safely, and the event space is accessible.

📢 Promote you event

Spread the word to make sure as many potential learners as possible know about your event before the day. Allow 4 weeks to market your event to leave time for word-of-mouth promotion, postal invites and event listings to be created, and for attendees to make time in their diaries.

Letterbox drop leaflets to houses in the local area, post information on social media, put posters up near to the venue, invite your existing learners/members and ask staff to promote your session to their customers or clients. As you are trying to reach people who have no or low digital skills, make sure to include 'offline' promotional activities such as an event listing in your local newspaper or local radio station.

In any promotional activity, it is good to include:

- Event name

- Event date and time

- Event location

- What people will get from attending (boil it down to one or two sentences)

- How to RSVP to the event (phone number and email address)

- Contact details for more information

Downloadable and editable event promotional resources are available for you to use on the Be Connected Network Partner website: **www.beconnectednetwork.org.au/training-resources**

Ready to go printed marketing materials are available to order by emailing: **connect@goodthingsfoundation.org**

These include printed Be Connected posters, Flyers, Appointment Cards, and translated marketing materials in 12 community languages.

NOTE: these may take 4-6 weeks to arrive, so order these in advance.

Create an event checklist

Think about what you will need to organise in advance and check it off as you go.
Here are a couple of check boxes to get you started:

- [ ] Applied for a Be Connected Community Engagement grant

- [ ] Event space booked

- [ ] Catering organised

- [ ] Risk assessment completed

- [ ] Public liability insurance checked to make sure it covers events

- [ ] Digital skills activity planned

- [ ] RSVP list created ready to accept bookings

- [ ] Printed marketing materials ordered

- [ ] Invitations sent (post, email, phone calls, in person conversations)

- [ ] Event promoted on social media and on your organisation's website and newsletters

- [ ] Posters printed and put up (with permission) and flyers handed out

- [ ] VIPs/Management team invited

- [ ] Media release template edited and sent to local paper

- [ ] Internet connection available in event space

- [ ] Mobile device/s available for participants to use

- [ ] Event materials printed and organised including event sign-in sheet, follow-up appointment cards, any printed activity sheets or support resources

- [ ] Volunteer support organised

- [ ] Event volunteers/staff briefed on what they need to do

- [ ] Invoice for Be Connected Community Engagement grant sent to Good Things Foundation and grant accepted online (if applicable)

- [ ] Reminders sent to participants or reminder phone calls made

- [ ] Event space set-up and safe for participants (in advance eg. on the day prior if possible)

- [ ] Catering picked-up

- [ ] Camera organised and photo permission slips printed (if needed, **example available here**)

- [ ] Be Connected social media hashtags (see below) and URL (**beconnected.esafety.gov.au**) prominently displayed in the event space

Use this list or edit it to suit your event

Keep the conversation going

A Be Connected community event can be a great way to connect new people with your digital skills programs. Use your event as an opportunity to register participants on the Be Connected Learning Portal here: **https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/login**. Make sure they select your organisation name from the drop-down list under 'Name of support centre'. You can then work with the participants after the event to support their progress working through the learning modules.

Make a follow up appointment with participants so they can carry on the journey with you after the event. Schedule any follow up group sessions in advance so you can book people in on the day. The Be Connected appointment cards (available in the printed marketing packs) are a great way to help people remember when they are next due to come in.

Use the contact details entered in your event sign-in sheet or RSVP list to send the people who came a thank you by email or over the phone. This is also a great way to keep them engaged with your organisation and programs and remind them of follow-up sessions they can join or are booked in to.

Share how your event went

Sharing how the event went and how fun it was with your community may inspire new people to get in touch about joining your digital literacy programs.

Describe how the event went with your community through your organisation's newsletters (email and print) and post a story about it on your website. Make sure to include in your story how many people came, what activities you held, what new thing attendees learnt and how they improved their digital skills, and a quote and photo from a participant who enjoyed the day (with their permission, of course!)

You will also be asked to send us a photo in your post-event report if you are Community Engagement grant holder. Use the simple template we provide to report back on your event and acquit your grant.

Post photos of your event to your organisation's social media accounts using the hashtag **#BeConnectedAU** and tag us so we can see the great work you are doing:

@BeConnectedAU (Twitter)
Good Things Foundation Australia (Facebook)

You can also share how your event went with our community in our **Facebook group.**
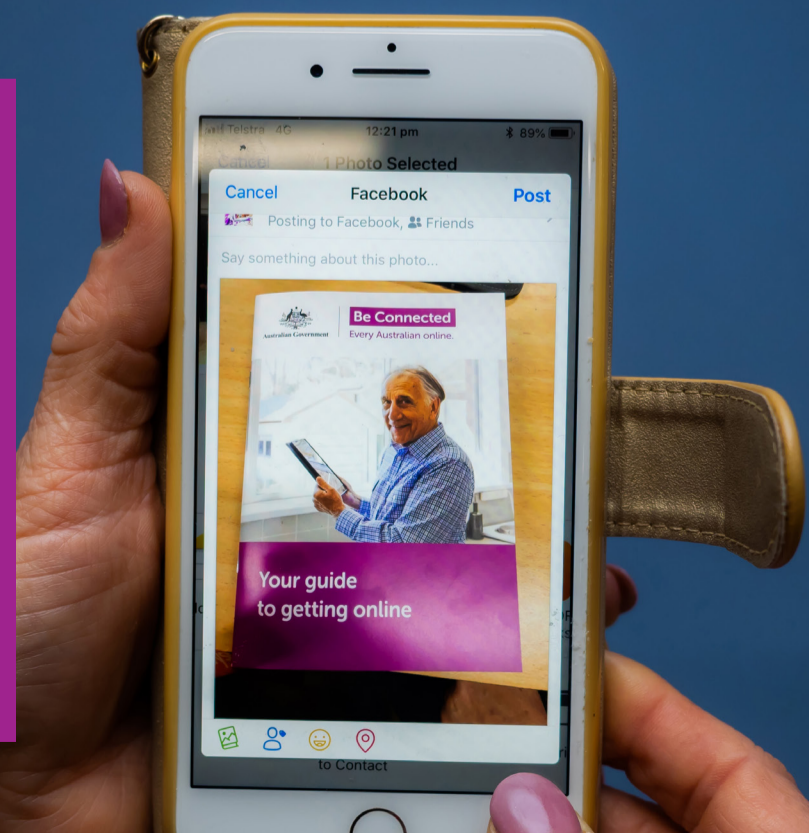
More support for your Be Connected event

For more support on engaging your community in the Be Connected program, check out our:

Training and support webinars

Downloadable marketing and support resources

Guest blog on creating engaging Be Connected events

Good Things Foundation

Or contact the Good Things Foundation team on:

@ **connect@goodthingsfoundation.org**

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