

Community Consultation – Opportunities for future National Multicultural Festivals

1. The Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF) Inc, in association with the ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), sought new ideas on how to continue to improve the 2014 National Multicultural Festival (the Festival). The views of stakeholders were sought via an online survey and a face-to-face consultation session. The consultation session was held on Monday 24 June 2013 at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre in Civic. A list of attendees is at [Appendix A](#). The online survey commenced at the end of May, with responses closed on 29 June 2013. The full online survey results are at [Appendix B](#). Overall, participants and respondents were positive about the Festival, with feedback predominately focused on the layout across the three days, promotion, stage signage, programming and opportunities to improve the Festival by moving activities from Saturday to Sunday.

Survey Results

2. There were 23 respondents to the online survey, with the majority involved in the Festival as volunteers, stallholders, and attendees, as a result of their role with not-for-profit organisations. Overall, about half the respondents felt that that Festival is well planned and well run across each day of the Festival. Respondents felt there were further opportunities with regards to utilising sponsorship opportunities and building on the lessons learned from previous Festivals, but felt that the role of volunteers was appropriately acknowledged.
3. Respondents commented in detail about preferences for specific days of the Festival, for example, about 60 per cent of people surveyed felt that they would like to see more international performers on Friday night. About half of respondents felt there should be less commercial food stalls on Saturday and over 60 per cent felt there should be more community food stalls on Sunday. Across the three days, between 55 and 65 per cent felt that signage should be improved.
4. Extensive written comments were provided about the key success factors for the Festival and opportunities for improvement. For example, there was extensive feedback about the need to plan the layout, pedestrian traffic flow and change room arrangements better. There was positive feedback about: engagement with the community; use of volunteers; the role of the Festival in promoting diversity and harmony; and the involvement of international performers. On some of the more technical issues, such as the food preparation requirements, there was contradictory feedback, with some participants suggesting the introduction of stricter requirements and others requesting a relaxation of current requirements.

Face-to-Face Consultation

5. The Chair of the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF), Sam Wong, welcomed participants and said that CMCF would host the event in association with the ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA). The Vice Chair of CMCF, Kerry Markoulli, facilitated the workshop and outlined its purpose.

OMA Update on 2014 Festival

6. The Senior Manager of OMA, Jancye Winter, outlined the OMA's view of the 2013 Centenary Festival and plans for the 2014 and future Festivals:
 - the Australian Federal Police (AFP) estimated the attendance at the 2013 Festival at 260,000
 - a survey among visitors showed a 96 per cent satisfaction rate
 - OMA is undertaking a three-year procurement to operate for major infrastructure providers to provide more certainty.
 - the 2014 Festival to be smaller, with Akuna Street not part of the Festival and the 440 stalls for 2013 to be reduced by about 100.
 - there will be increased rates for stalls run by licenced clubs selling alcohol and for commercial stall holders
 - electrical costs to be incorporated into stall fees so there will be no need for stallholders to notify the number of appliances used
 - the number of stages will be reduced
 - volunteers will not be used for traffic management and security duties.

Key Issues

Purpose of Festival

7. One stallholder disliked the emphasis being placed on making money. The Festival should primarily be an opportunity for communities to show off their language, culture, food and traditions to the rest of the world. One participant suggested that there should also be greater use of the Festival for community participation, through workshop activities, rather than just performances, similar to the Folk Festival. There was also a positive discussion about the benefits for community harmony, given the high level engagement of a broad range of community organisations.

Design of the Festival

8. A more open environment was suggested. There should be fewer stalls in narrow areas. A small stallholder said because of the way the Festival was designed people got lost. One person spent most of his time at the Festival looking for his stall. He suggested that countries that had some relationship with each other be placed together, for instance, a Sub-Continent area, which would be much easier to find. A participant said the African stage, with its village concept had been a success, promoting a market atmosphere. This

concept could also be used to draw people from the centre of the Festival to its perimeters, relieving congestion

9. A request was made that some of the quieter, information-providing stalls be co-located in areas away from stages where loud music was being played, as the noise made it difficult to communicate with the public. A suggestion that there be three zones for food, sound, and information providers. A counter view was put forward by a regular stallholder who said that his information- stall had received 350 inquiries when it was located next to a popular food stall, but only 25 when it had been situated in a quiet spot on Ainslie Avenue.
10. One stallholder believed information and ‘talk’ stalls should have their own area. Another stallholder believed that the larger stalls could be used as anchors to attract people to the smaller stalls. He did not want to see the large stalls clustered together as this caused congestion. This view about collocation and diversity was supported by another stallholder who said her position at one end of London Circuit away from larger stalls meant that she had just managed to cover expenses without making any profit.
11. A small stallholder said congestion was becoming a problem and was deterring people from attending. Another said he thought a smaller Festival would be a good thing. A counter view was put by another stallholder who feared that a downsized Festival would damage its reputation.
12. Another stallholder’s view was that the commercial stalls had been given favourable position near the centre of the Festival, at the expense of community stalls and that stalls representing clubs should be grouped together. Another stallholder suggested that stalls be clustered in a series of hubs, rather than long lines. A further participant thought there were too many commercial stalls and that more priority should be given to local organisations.
13. A stallholder representing one of the bigger clubs said their 2013 position, near the main stage, resulted in congestion, as people queued to buy food and drink. There was also a big problem transporting beer kegs from cool rooms situated elsewhere to the stalls. He wondered whether cool rooms could be situated beside stalls.
14. **OMA response:** Jancye said the Office of regulatory Services had requested that the alcohol-selling stalls should be spaced out to prevent a “drinkers' area” developing. Commercial stalls paid significant amounts for their positions and felt they should have some say in where they went. It should be remembered that their payments subsidised other stalls. Without the commercial groups there would not be a Festival. If smaller, under-resourced groups could make a case for not paying a stall fee this would be considered. This had been the case with a couple of emerging communities in 2013. In the past there had been complaints about the noise generated by cool rooms situated on the Festival footprint.

15. The OMA survey directly after the Festival had also found that people thought the price of food was too high and the portions too large. People wanted to go from stall to stall sampling different foods. There were also requests for more chairs, more shade and more room for strollers and wheelchairs. These views were endorsed by participants.

Volunteers

16. A suggestion was made that volunteers could be better utilised, such as using them over a longer period, both before and after the Festival itself. This might take some of the stress away from the paid organisers and community organisations.

Festival Promotion and Information

17. A suggestion that the Festival could be better promoted through free lunchtime concerts by music groups and other participants in the lead-up to the event. A further suggestion was that posters advertising the Festival be placed on the sides of tents and marquees erected in the days before the event.
18. A participant said the Festival could make better use of local radio with outside broadcasts featuring information, interviews and music from various performers. He thought this would also be of benefit to community radio. A further suggestion was for a competition, possibly a talent quest, the announcement of a Multicultural Person of the Year, or some form of recognition for the performers.
19. **OMA response:** Jancye said a children's art competition, with a Festival theme, was under consideration. A new Festival website had been commissioned with a map that could be downloaded.
20. One suggestion that the Festival map, which was difficult to manage in its present form, be redesigned into a booklet with various pages showing maps of different areas of the Festival. The maps could then be larger, making it easier to consult and find favourite stalls. If there were to be fewer stages then the ones remaining should be heavily promoted, perhaps with each one having a particular theme and better signage.

Sponsorship

21. A suggestion that sponsorship be encouraged to support the further international performers participation, which would add to the quality of the Festival and could be used as publicity in the lead-up to the Festival. High-profile international groups could book into commercial venues in the lead-up period. This would be a more attractive proposition for sponsors.
22. Another participant said that the Festival was not truly national unless it attracted a major national sponsor. There were limited outlets for major sponsorship in Canberra and the Festival should be promoted as a unique opportunity. Taking up this comment, another

participant suggested that the Festival could copy the National Folk Festival by inviting an Australian State to make a commercial presentation, possibly on the Sunday.

23. One large stallholder said he had tried to keep costs down by attracting sponsors. He believed sign companies could be persuaded to become sponsors with the result that signage could be improved without raising costs.

Funding Cycle

24. A suggestion was made that the announcement of grants for multicultural organisations should be made at a more appropriate time to allow planning for the Festival. Less resourced organisations depend on the grants for their participation and had little time to prepare costumes, instruments and travel, which were all major items of expenditure. There was also a call for faster feedback from the Festival organisers each year.

25. **OMA response:** Jancye said multicultural participation grants would open on 1 July with announcements of funding in September.

Performers and MCs

26. A stallholder complained about the standard of some of the MCs, saying many were 'ponderous and boring'. There was often a problem with a lack of timely information, but this could be glossed over if the presenter was enthusiastic, articulate, and experienced. This was supported by other participants whom stated it was crucial that an MC hold the crowd. They should gather information from the performers and continually remind the audience of forthcoming acts.

27. A suggestion that each stage have a board - there was one suggestion for an electronic board others said a simple whiteboard would suffice – on which upcoming acts could be listed. Another participant said this would help people to plan what they wanted to see instead of wandering aimlessly from stage to stage. This proposal to improve stage signage was strongly endorsed by all participants.

Opportunities to Improve Sunday

28. There were several suggestions for improving the Festival on the Sunday. One participant pointed out that as congestion was a problem on the Saturday while there were empty stalls on the Sunday. The possibility of encouraging some or certain groups of performances moving to the Sunday should be investigated. Another suggestion was for Sunday to be promoted as a family day as families could be put off by the crowds and boisterous nature of the Saturday. This could involve the children's sanctuary, with food and performances targeting a family atmosphere, without alcohol. A further suggestion, after the formal meeting ended, was to invite the AFP or PCYC to run a drug-free youth disco on the Sunday afternoon, to compliment the family theme.

Summary

29. There was broad concern about layout and congestion at the Festival, but varying and sometimes conflicting views about how this could be addressed. One view was that ‘information’ stalls should be situated away from the noise of the stages, other views were that this would lead to less visibility and fewer people visiting the stalls. It was agreed that the more popular stalls should be carefully positioned, for example away from stages and thoroughfares, in order to spread the congestion. It was also generally supported that larger stalls should be used as ‘anchors’ for smaller ones, possibly in a series of hubs. Overall, there was strong feedback that further work needs to be done on the planning, layout and distribution of stalls, performances and activities. One positive and well regarded suggestion was that congestion could be significantly relieved by moving some of the stalls and acts to the Sunday, particularly with a focus on Sunday being themed as a ‘family day’. This suggestion was identified as providing a broad range of opportunities.
30. Given this feedback, CMCF suggests that in 2014 the Sunday should be trialled as a ‘family day’, with a number of activities moved from other days of the Festival, the opportunity to undertake new events, and the potential for specific family-focused sponsorship. CMCF, together with the ACT Community Language Schools Association, the AFP, Multicultural Youth Services ACT and local schools would be well placed to assist with the planning of the day.
31. There was a view, also reflective of feedback on past Festivals, that the price of food was too high and the portions too large. This theme, that participants attend the Festival to sample a variety of cultures, activities, and sensations, was also reflected in discussions about performers, MCs, stallholders and layout. CMCF recommends that OMA continue to work with community organisations, commercial participants, embassies, sponsors and performers to ensure the best clustering of stalls, stages and performers.
32. There was considerable feedback on opportunities to improve communication relating to the program, performers, stages, stallholders, sponsors, other activities, and the Festival overall. As it is billed as the National Multicultural Festival there may be the prospect of additional major sponsors, in particular, given the revised focus for Sunday provides an opportunity for sponsors who are seeking to promote family-friendly products. It was also suggested that there should be better promotion in the lead up to the Festival, for example, by utilising opportunities to use major acts or even local performers in a series of free lunchtime concerts in Civic or at local schools. During the Festival, there continue to be opportunities to improve information in the program, the Festival map, stage signage, details of future performers and the MCs. Consistent with this feedback, CMCF suggests that these issues are incorporated into the Festival sponsorship and communications plans and that further community consultation occurs on these issues, for example by focus testing new communication products.

Appendix A

Consultation Participants

Alwast – Barbara (Polish White Eagles Club)

Billbrough – Mark (Canberra Brewers)

Chen – Nuomi (unattached)

Gill – Kevin (Asthma ACT)

Gunn – John (Multicultural Youth Service)

Hale – Cate (Citizens Advice Bureau)

Hoque – Ziaul (Let's Work for Bangladesh)

Howarth – Liz (Citizens Advice Bureau)

Jenkins – David (Canberra Interfaith Forum)

Katauskas – Ben (Lithuanian Community)

Keil – Carol (Australia-China Friendship Society)

Khan – Kammal (Bangladesh Seniors Club)

Marillanca – Victor (ACIA)

Olmos – Gonzalo (Latin American Community)

Rahman – Diana (CMCF)

Sharoon – Dhyoa (Embassy of Iraq)

Small – Brooke (Centenary of Canberra)

Stoehr – Hans (Harmonie German Club)

Wong – Chin (ACT Chinese Australian Association)

Appendix B

CMCF - National Multicultural Festival Online Survey Results

Results based on 23 participants.

1. How have you been involved in the National Multicultural Festival in the past?		
sponsor	4.3%	1
organiser	21.7%	5
stallholder	43.5%	10
volunteer	43.5%	10
announcer	8.7%	2
performer	4.3%	1
showcase coordinator	8.7%	2
attendee	43.5%	10

2. Has your involvement in the Festival been as a result of your role in any of the following organisations?		
corporate sponsor	0	0
not-for-profit multicultural or ethnic organisation	55%	11
other not-for-profit community organisation	50%	10
performing group	0%	0
ACT government	10%	2
Commonwealth government	5%	1
Other	15%	3

3. What is your age?		
18 to 24	4.3%	1
25 to 34	8.7%	2
35 to 44	30.4%	7
45 to 54	26.1%	6
55 to 64	26.1%	6
65 to 74	4.3%	1

4. What would you like to see more of on Friday?					
	significantly more	slightly more	the same	slightly less	significantly less
community food stalls	22.7% (5)	27.3% (6)	36.4% (8)	4.5% (1)	9.1% (2)
community information stalls	14.3% (3)	14.3% (3)	52.4% (11)	9.5% (2)	9.5% (2)
commercial food stalls	8.7% (2)	21.7% (5)	43.5% (10)	17.4% (4)	8.7% (2)
community performers	13.6% (3)	45.5% (10)	31.8% (7)	4.5% (1)	4.5% (1)
international performers	13% (3)	47.8% (11)	30.4% (7)	8.7% (2)	0
volunteers	14.3% (3)	38.1% (8)	47.6% (10)	0	0
stages	13% (3)	17.4% (4)	60.9% (14)	8.7% (2)	0
signage	21.7% (5)	34.8% (8)	43.5% (10)	0	0
promotion of the Festival	34.8% (8)	17.4% (4)	47.8% (11)	0	0
general information, such the program	34.8% (8)	17.4% (4)	47.8% (11)	0	0
layout information, such as maps	21.7% (5)	43.5% (10)	34.8% (8)	0	0
specific information, such as performer's details	26.1% (6)	30.4% (7)	43.5% (10)	0	0
seniors' activities	9.1% (2)	22.7% (5)	59.1% (13)	4.5% (1)	4.5% (1)

4. What would you like to see more of on Friday?					
youth activities	18.2% (4)	31.8% (7)	45.5% (10)	0	4.5% (1)
children's activities	18.2% (4)	27.3% (6)	50% (11)	0	4.5% (1)
offsite events	13.6% (3)	18.2% (4)	63.6% (14)	0	4.5% (1)
road closures	9.1% (2)	9.1% (2)	72.7% (16)	4.5% (1)	4.5% (1)
rubbish removal	26.1% (6)	26.1% (6)	47.8% (11)	0	0
toilet facilities	22.7% (5)	18.2% (4)	59.1% (13)	0	0
parking	28.6% (6)	19% (4)	47.6% (10)	4.8% (1)	0

5. What would you like to see more of on Saturday?					
	significantly more	slightly more	the same	slightly less	significantly less
community food stalls	18.2% (4)	27.3% (6)	45.5% (10)	4.5% (1)	4.5% (1)
community information stalls	18.2% (4)	22.7% (5)	50% (11)	0	9.1% (2)
commercial food stalls	4.5% (1)	4.5% (1)	45.5% (10)	22.7% (5)	22.7% (5)
community performers	26.1% (6)	39.1% (9)	34.8% (8)	0	0
international performers	13.6% (3)	40.9% (9)	27.3% (6)	9.1% (2)	9.1% (2)
volunteers	23.8% (5)	33.3% (7)	42.9% (9)	0	0
stages	8.7% (2)	39.1% (9)	47.8% (11)	4.3% (1)	0
signage	31.8% (7)	31.8% (7)	36.4% (8)	0	0
promotion of the Festival	31.8% (7)	18.2% (4)	50% (11)	0	0
general information, such as the program	31.8% (7)	36.4% (8)	31.8% (7)	0	0
layout information, such as maps	28.6% (6)	47.6% (10)	23.8% (5)	0	0
specific information, such as performer's details	22.7% (5)	40.9% (9)	31.8% (7)	4.5% (1)	0

5. What would you like to see more of on Saturday?

seniors' activities	5% (1)	25% (5)	65% (13)	5% (1)	0
youth activities	14.3% (3)	33.3% (7)	52.4% (11)	0	0
children's activities	20% (4)	20% (4)	55% (11)	5% (1)	0
offsite events	13.6% (3)	22.7% (5)	59.1% (13)	0	4.5% (1)
road closures	9.1% (2)	4.5% (1)	77.3% (17)	9.1% (2)	0
rubbish removal	31.8% (7)	22.7% (5)	45.5% (10)	0	0
toilet facilities	30.4% (7)	13% (3)	56.5% (13)	0	0
parking	27.3% (6)	18.2% (4)	50% (11)	4.5% (1)	0

6. What would you like to see more of on Sunday?

	significantly more	slightly more	the same	slightly less	significantly less
community food stalls	30.4% (7)	34.8% (8)	26.1% (6)	8.7% (2)	0
community information stalls	31.8% (7)	18.2% (4)	40.9% (9)	9.1% (2)	0
commercial food stalls	4.5% (1)	22.7% (5)	40.9% (9)	13.6% (3)	18.2% (4)
community performers	30.4% (7)	39.1% (9)	30.4% (7)	0	0
international performers	21.7% (5)	30.4% (7)	39.1% (9)	4.3% (1)	4.3% (1)
volunteers	23.8% (5)	38.1% (8)	38.1% (8)	0	0
stages	17.4% (4)	21.7% (5)	52.2% (12)	8.7% (2)	0
signage	18.2% (4)	45.5% (10)	36.4% (8)	0	0
promotion of the Festival	18.2% (4)	31.8% (7)	50% (11)	0	0
general information, such the program	18.2% (4)	45.5% (10)	36.4% (8)	0	0
layout information, such as maps	13.6% (3)	50% (11)	36.4% (8)	0	0
specific information, such	9.1% (2)	45.5% (10)	45.5% (10)	0	0

6. What would you like to see more of on Sunday?					
as performer's details					
seniors' activities	23.8% (5)	28.6% (6)	38.1% (8)	9.5% (2)	0
youth activities	27.3% (6)	22.7% (5)	50% (11)	0	0
children's activities	28.6% (6)	19% (4)	52.4% (11)	0	0
offsite events	13.6% (3)	22.7% (5)	63.6% (14)	0	0
road closures	9.1% (2)	13.6% (3)	72.7% (16)	0	4.5% (1)
rubbish removal	21.7% (5)	21.7% (5)	56.5% (13)	0	0
toilet facilities	21.7% (5)	17.4% (4)	60.9% (14)	0	0
parking	21.7% (5)	17.4% (4)	60.9% (14)	0	0

7. How well do you think the National Multicultural Festival:					
	extremely well	moderately well	somewhat well	not so well	poorly
is planned in advance?	17.4% (4)	30.4% (7)	30.4% (7)	17.4% (4)	4.3% (1)
takes advantage of sponsorship opportunities?	4.3% (1)	39.1% (9)	26.1% (6)	26.1% (6)	4.3% (1)
works with the community?	13% (3)	43.5% (10)	26.1% (6)	13% (3)	4.3% (1)
builds on lessons learned from previous Festivals?	4.3% (1)	34.8% (8)	30.4% (7)	21.7% (5)	8.7% (2)
is publicised?	17.4% (4)	34.8% (8)	21.7% (5)	17.4% (4)	8.7% (2)
acknowledges the contribution of volunteers?	26.1% (6)	43.5% (10)	21.7% (5)	8.7% (2)	0
is run on Friday?	17.4% (4)	39.1% (9)	21.7% (5)	17.4% (4)	4.3% (1)
is run on Saturday?	26.1% (6)	34.8% (8)	21.7% (5)	13% (3)	4.3% (1)
is run on Sunday?	17.4% (4)	26.1% (6)	30.4% (7)	17.4% (4)	8.7% (2)

Q7. Comments

I went on the Sunday to help on a community services stall, and also went around the Festival before and after. I enjoyed the performances I saw, though would have liked more information on what was happening. I had heard a lot about the festival, so the publicity was good. I also enjoyed the community food stalls. Was a lovely day.

Saturday's "spectacular" has been good almost always. Saturday this year (2013) was actually much better than in the previous couple of years as the main areas in the City Walk were not too crowded as was the case at least in 2012. This year it was easy to move around, and there was enough audience and "buying public" in all areas of the festival. Friday and Saturday are still somewhat under-utilised. Any near-future efforts to grow and develop the festival should be aimed at increasing the profile and public awareness of Friday and Sunday.

It should be run 4 times a year (every season)

Too big, too crowded, stage PA systems often too loud

Lack of adequate space and funding...more volunteers or paid staff, poor publicity and more stages, less cost for stall holders to participate and use of Canberra theatre and the Legislative Assembly buildings and other buildings where possible.

As a performer, the facilities for changing and storing our costumes and equipment can be very hit and miss. Over the years we have had to rely on the good will of the city's shop owners and staff to allow access to their toilet / storage facilities for changing into and out of our costumes. This is especially challenging when we perform with children. It is also somewhat difficult where there are both males and females in our groups. In the past, we have been asked to send through, in advance, copies of introduction notes and music. When we have arrived on the day, these have not always been at the stage / music tents. We always prepare back up material and take that along with us but it may perhaps be worth considering if performers will be asked to supply their notes and music in future festivals if it cannot be guaranteed that these will be available when needed. Another consideration may be to think about the placement of groups in the program. It can be monotonous for the audience to view groups from similar countries back to back. Perhaps it would be worth mixing the repertoire of performances where this is possible. On a positive note, we have appreciated the bottled water available for performers, especially when performing in high temperatures. It is always great to be able to have our music played through quality sound systems and be able to count on the quality work carried out by the sound and lighting teams. Overall, there is a lot of goodwill evident among performers on the day and this adds to the positive effect the festival has on those who participate.

8. What do you see as the key success factors for the National Multicultural Festival?

Location and volunteers

Attendance and enjoyment

People expressing their culture through food, arts and dance. Others learning and appreciating these cultures and traditions.

Community involvement and investment in participating (groups performing, food stalls etc)
Publicity

Highlight the success of multiculturalism - Wider community participation in the Multicultural Festival - Raise the community awareness of diverse cultural and spiritual faith traditions of the Canberra multicultural community.

community engagement

Participation of the community, highlighting the wide range of cultures and understanding of others.

International performers

Increasing international exposure. Balancing the program between Friday - Saturday - Sunday even further, or possibly even (once again) expanding the festival to cover more time. Enhancing the profile of the Aboriginal part of the festival. Reconsider bringing back Fringe Festival.

communities working together

Civic opens up to its own population (we are all from CALD background!)

Community organisations work together

Bring so many people from Canberra and other states together and have a good fun and celebration multicultural festival.

International performances and representation

I think it's on a downward slide, it has good too big people attending and volunteers

It's prominence as an event in Canberra The enthusiastic engagement of many different multicultural organisations.

The opportunity the festival provides to showcase the multicultural richness of the local Canberra community. The exposure to the arts as interpreted by different cultural groups. The opportunities for communities to work together for a common goal. The fact that the event is largely free means that most Canberrans have potential access to the festival over the course of its duration.

Participation of community groups

Community Food Stalls Stage shows from different communities/cultures and international performers Presence of Police and Security officers Contribution of Volunteers Children's activities

The diversity of cultural events and foods

Community participation, advanced planning, use of volunteers, well coordinated logistics.

9. If you could change just one thing about the National Multicultural Festival, what would you change?

Less food stalls

Ensure food safety

More learning activities and interactive spaces where you can learn - eg. hula dancing or bollywood dancing, learn how to weave baskets or join in and learn how to play African drums in a drumming circle, make friends and have fun together. Performances are great, but it would be nicer to learn a skill or join in a traditional art form to become a part of the sharing. Not just an observer.

More space - it can get really crowded

Extend the duration of the Multicultural Festival from the current arrangement (Friday evening, Saturday & Sunday) to a 5 day event (evenings on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and the weekend). This will enable more community activities to be included in the Festival program.

would like more of a village type grouping instead of so sporadic
Can be very crowded, though some bits less frequented - the challenge is to spread the crowd around.

Balance the program so that the crowd will come to the festival in equal numbers on all days of the festival.

Get rid of different stages for specific ethnic groups, monopoly of certain stalls and stages by certain people/groups

Set prices in food/drinks

Just make sure the food is not close to the other stalls which are not selling the food. I suggest food should be in one row not in different places. In other words food stall must be far from the normal stall such as language or other stall which is not involved to sell the food.

Performances spread throughout the three days. For example giving performers the choice and chance to show their act perhaps twice over the festival to a larger audience particularly those acts from countries are geographically far from Australia e.g Latin American countries/middle east etc.

It has grown far too big, it is noisy, crowded and airless. In years past, there was space between stalls with some tables and chairs, now they are so crammed in one can hardly move or breathe. I don't think standing or walking while eating is something to aim for. Apart from a few tables and chairs in Garema Place there is nothing and it is uncomfortably crowded. Apart from moving it out of the city, the only option is to limit the number of stall holders, eg perhaps just one from each nationality, we don't need 10 different Chinese or Thai for example the whole weekend. You could always rotate them over the weekend or over

different years. I haven't enjoyed it at all the last few years because it has become too big. Bigger is NOT better and you don't have to give everybody a stall.

More space and use of buildings and surrounds to avoid crowding and become a safety issue.

I would consider aspects related to planning for performers prior to the event. As mentioned earlier, if groups need to submit things prior to the day, it would be useful to ensure these will meet their intended purpose. Otherwise, being asked to do additional tasks adds to the workload of the hardworking members of not-for-profit community groups.

The time of year that it is held.

Make it a real Multicultural Festival by mixing up community stalls from different continents/regions - not have community stalls from the same country or continent/region such as Asian Food Stalls next to each other.

The location!!! Why is it held in the tiny area of Garema Place?? It should be held on the Parliamentary Lawns like all other events.

Clear guidelines for the service of kava

Better information, from the planning and promotion stage, through to maps and programs on the day.

10. Other suggestions

More interactive stalls

Invest in branding and re-usable signage. Keep the event footprint manageable. Group similar/complimentary activities together. Consider appropriate road closures that would allow use of Glebe Park.

Have a very very large map of the world displayed, so we can see what countries are represented at the Festival.

Plan better and involve smaller groups, do not rely only on those that project themselves

More contribution from CMCF

Relax the conditions for food preparation. Enable food preparation to be done at home and brought for cooking on site in clean containers. The lack of running water and open environment is not very sanitary for food preparation.

Make it more environmentally friendly and sustainable, for example use bio-degradable/compostable plates and cutlery and ensure that they are disposed off appropriately. Have more healthy food options rather than a lot of soft drinks and fried food.

1. NMF organisers should learn lessons from the past, listen to the community organisations and work better with them. 2. Should mix the community stalls from different continents/regions. Do not put community stalls from same or neighbouring countries together. 3. Information stalls should not be placed on the main city walk. As more people are interested in community food stalls than information stalls and other commercial food stalls, community food stalls should be placed in prominent locations. 4. Should improve the publicity of the Festival. Last time there were many people who couldn't find information about the events on Saturday. The distribution of information and maps should be done at each entrance to the Festival in an orderly manner. 5. Should improve the facilities such as running water supply, toilets, rubbish removal etc.

Maybe, need to ensure that there is more community and less commercial involvement.