

BBQ raises most fete funds



The school fete has become a major source of fundraising for many schools and it looks like the barbeque is the leading profit centre.

There is significant money in fetes with an average of \$26,000 profit for a large school (more than 700 students) with schools of fewer than 300 students generating \$10,000. The largest profit from a single fete was measured at \$93,000.

According to research by QUT's Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies which surveyed 500 schools the humble barbeque beating out amusement rides and cake stalls to rake in the most fundraising dollars.

The first National Fete Research Project reveals fetes are critical to school income and community engagement, but more can be done to increase their success

The most profitable fete stall or activity was a barbeque, followed by amusement rides, with a cake stall coming in fifth

QUT Researcher Marie Balczun said the study showed that schools should not rule out traditional fundraising activities, or be put off from running a fete due to the size of their school community.

"Fetes are often the major fundraiser for a school, with the average fete profit reported to be just under \$18,000. While larger schools naturally had higher average profits, smaller schools actually did better on a per student basis, raising more than \$70 per student, compared with \$30 per student for larger schools," Ms Balczun said.

"It was interesting to see that while amusement rides were the most popular activity to include in a fete line up, they can't beat

throwing a snag on the barbie, when it comes to the final fundraising tally. After a barbeque, rides come in as the second most profitable, followed by raffles, auctions and cake stalls," she said.

If you want a fete to run well and profitably there are a few things you can do:

- 1 Start early – a year out if possible, straight after the previous fete.
- 2 Use online signup for volunteers – this will help with recruitment.
- 3 Prioritise safety – have someone responsible for Occupational Health and Safety matters.
- 4 Hire a portable ATM – more cash means more sales.
- 5 Have a wet weather plan – especially for the rides.

QUT Associate Professor Wendy Scaife, director of The Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies, said men needed to step it up in the running of fetes.

"Apart from security roles, females made up most of the volunteers," Professor Scaife said.

"In fact, more than three-quarters of volunteers are female and, when it comes to the organising committee, that number jumps to almost 90%."

Research partner Mandy Weidmann from the Fundraising Directory said the research aimed to give fete organisers access to benchmarks and guidance that have not previously existed.

"For example, only 40% of state and private schools in the study received a handover report from the previous fete," Ms Weidmann said.