



9–18 July 2027 | Ōtepoti Dunedin

A Guide to Getting Involved

Thank you for taking an interest in the 2027 New Zealand International Science Festival (NZISF). We look forward to working with you to create an engaging and dynamic festival. This guide will help you submit your event ideas and outlines festival benefits and expectations.

A Bit About Us...

WE ARE CREATIVE SCIENCE OUTREACH...

The New Zealand International Science Festival (NZISF) is the largest science celebration in New Zealand and has been growing from strength to strength as science becomes ever more important in our daily lives.

Established in 1997, we are a not-for-profit organisation with the mission to celebrate, promote and raise awareness of science, technology and the environment. We encourage people from all backgrounds and ages to explore, engage with and gain knowledge about the world around them through science.

Our aim is to cultivate a wider awareness of science; inspiring festival attendees with its wonder and engaging them with its implications for the future. We celebrate excellence in scientific research, cutting-edge breakthroughs, and the people who strive to achieve a positive difference for a sustainable world.

A CITY TAKEOVER!

Every year during the first week of the July school holidays, the NZISF presents an elaborate programme of events: talks and debates, workshops and shows, demonstrations and interactive activities across the entire city of Ōtepoti Dunedin. Many individuals, organisations and businesses come together during the festival period to present and share the wonders of science.

The Festival attracts thousands of people from around the country and beyond to enjoy the creativity and learning. While the festival creates several of its own key events, we also work with a diverse array of event organisers who see an opportunity to collaborate.

1. Ways to get involved

There are several different ways to get involved in the science festival!

We welcome individuals, scientists, artists, educators, community groups, businesses and organisations who are passionate about sharing ideas with the public. **You don't have to be a scientist** - we're looking for engaging experiences that help people explore and understand the world around them. If you have a good idea or an interesting concept related to science and want to communicate it, this is the place to be!

A. CREATE YOUR OWN EVENT

We are on the lookout for events that engage the public (children, families and/or adults) in a variety of formats – our events come in many different shapes and sizes. Some of these options include:

- **Workshops:** Hands-on and interactive, workshops engage participants with often specialised topics that aim to inspire and challenge.
- **Presentations/Talks:** This type of event requires a passionate presenter that is knowledgeable on a particularly interesting subject.
- **Panel Discussions/Debates:** These events bring multiple people together to discuss a specific, engaging topic. Panels should include a diverse range of both scientists and viewpoints, and work well when matched with an experienced host or moderator.
- **Performances/Shows:** Music, theatre and comedy performances can be a very effective medium for engaging audiences on complex scientific issues, often providing both information and inspiration.
- **Walks/Tours:** Showcase the science behind your business with a behind-the-scenes tour or take visitors on a walk to experience the scientific wonders of a particular destination.

B. JOIN OUR FESTIVAL HUB

A growing highlight of our Festival is the free drop-in Festival Hub. In 2026 we had more than 5000 people visit the space over 5 days! If you or your organisation don't have the capacity to run your own event, this is a great way to be involved and connect with the public. We provide the venue, power and tables and you bring your knowledge, engagement skills and some cool activities or experiments.

C. CONNECT YOUR BUSINESS

Do you have an interesting venue that would be perfect for one of our events, or amazing accommodation for event hosts and festival visitors? Perhaps you would like to offer discounts for festival attendees, science-related food or drink offerings, or in-store displays. Get in touch to talk about how you can be a part of the science celebrations in a way that works for you. We often connect event hosts with suitable event venues and would be happy to add yours to the list.

D. SPONSOR AN EVENT OR FESTIVAL GUEST

Festival sponsorship happens in many ways including sponsoring specific events or festival guests. If you have an idea for an event or guest you'd like to sponsor, or if you want to hear about events and guests that require additional sponsorship, we'd love to hear from you!

2. Why get involved?

The Festival is an excellent opportunity to reach a wide and varied audience and we have many event hosts that come back year after year. In our post-festival survey in 2026, 100% of hosts said they would come back next year and they gave the experience a 9.7/10! The Festival attracts over 15,000 people each year

“Thanks so much for creating a fantastic opportunity for science outreach in the community!” – 2026 Event Host

Some of the outcomes our event hosts recognise include:

- Brand Awareness
- Networking
- Educational Outreach
- Community Engagement
- Sharing Research Outcomes
- Testing and Developing Outreach

3. How we Support You

We do all the stuff around the event so that you can concentrate on what you do best – communicating engaging science!

“The festival team make it so easy to be involved, thank you!” – 2026 Event Host

Depending on your event and requirements, the Festival team can help with:

- Developing and refining your event idea
- Finding or coordinating a suitable venue
- Ticketing and ticket administration
- Festival marketing and promotional resources
- Event logistics and, where available, volunteers

EVENT ORGANISER WEBINARS

As part of our support to event organisers, we offer two free webinars in the lead-up to our festival. Webinar attendance is optional and may be particularly useful to those participating in the festival for the first time. In the first webinar we will introduce NZISF 2026, discuss what makes a good event, give tips on how to engage your audience, and share effective co-advertising methods. This webinar will be hosted in March.

VENUE AND EQUIPMENT

If you need a venue, indicate this in your application. The Festival will endeavour to match events with suitable venues. Basic equipment may be available, but you must identify requirements early. Anything the Festival or venue cannot supply will need to be arranged separately, potentially at your own cost. Support varies by event and availability, so discuss your needs with the team early.

4. Your Responsibilities

We ask event organisers to:

- Develop and deliver your own event
- Cover all event costs, including travel and accommodation of event participants where required. In some cases, the Festival may be able to provide some support, please talk to us if costs are a barrier to your participation.
- Provide all information required by the festival by the requested dates, including promotional material and health and safety and accessibility information
- Agree to co-market your event
- Use the Festival's ticketing system
- Ensure that you have adequate insurance **The Festival's public liability insurance does not automatically cover events run by independent organisers.** Organisers remain responsible for the risks associated with their own events, including potential injury, damage to venues and loss or damage to equipment.

5. Tips for developing a great event

We're looking for thought-provoking experiences, engaging talks, hands-on workshops and inspiring presenters. When planning your proposal, consider:

- **Audience:** Who do you want to reach, and why will they want to attend?
- **Engagement:** How will you involve people and spark their curiosity?
- **Take-home message:** What do you want people to learn, experience or remember?
- **Quality and originality:** Is your event interesting, imaginative and distinctive?
- **Accessibility:** Will it welcome people with different backgrounds and levels of scientific knowledge?
- **Festival fit:** Does it complement the programme and offer something designed specifically for festival audiences?

MESSAGING NOTES

When creating your event, we recommend you think about an effective take-home message for your audience. For example, practical steps to reduce your plastic waste, ways to identify different bird species, or even simply that science is fun and for everyone. Identifying your take-home message early on will help you develop an event that meets your goals and make writing copy for the programme a lot easier!

EVENT LENGTH GUIDANCE

Recommended length for most adult events is 60 - 90 minutes including a Q & A session at the end. Performances generally run for 45 - 90 minutes. Drop-in activities should aim to have enough material to entertain for 5 - 10 minutes, with additional options for the highly engaged.

OUR AUDIENCE

The festival audience is generally made up of science-interested members of the public who may or may not have in-depth knowledge about science, technology or the environment. When designing an

event, think about the specific audience you want to reach and what they might like to engage with. Also give thought to why your audience will want to come to your event, which may include interest in a particular speaker or topic, to hear an engaging discussion, or entertainment for the kids. Reasons for attending are often as simple as wanting to have fun or to learn more about the world around us.

We always welcome ideas that have the potential to engage harder-to-reach audiences and underrepresented communities.

A NOTE ON PRESENTERS

Not all scientists and science enthusiasts are good communicators, and good communication is the key to a successful public event. If you are having a speaker at your event, it is important to choose someone that is experienced and effective at communicating. If bringing in a speaker from elsewhere, we recommend that you research them prior to confirming them as a guest. Choose presenters who can communicate effectively with your intended audience. Scientific expertise is valuable, but good communication is essential.

Topics for inspiration

We don't set an overarching theme but offer ideas each year to inspire event organisers. We welcome proposals across all areas of science, technology and the environment.

Topics we aim to champion every year:

- Sustainability and Climate Science
- Mātauranga and Indigenous Science
- Interdisciplinary Collaborations, including Art and Literature
- Everyday Science

Extra ideas for 2027:

- What is the importance of play in science and learning?
- What does science mean to you?
- How do we make science more accessible?
- How have innovations in technology assisted or changed your work?
- How do science and policy interact?

These are suggestions, not requirements. We welcome creative ideas that spark curiosity and offer fresh perspectives.

Not sure.. get in touch

Have an idea but aren't sure whether it fits? Get in touch — the team welcomes an early conversation.

Email: programmes@scifest.org.nz

Phone: 021 205 6528

Website: scifest.org.nz

Apply: <https://eventotron.com/seasons/new-zealand-international-science-festival-2027>

We look forward to working with you to make science accessible, relevant and exciting for everyone.

6. Ready to Join us? Here's How

We use **Eventotron**, for all our events from application through to publishing the programme. You'll use it to submit your initial idea and, if accepted, provide further details as your event develops. Contact programmes@scifest.org.nz if you have trouble accessing or using the system.

Step 1 - Submit your initial idea – before 9th Feb 2027

1. Go to <https://eventotron.com/seasons/new-zealand-international-science-festival-2027/profile>
2. Create an account or log in.
3. Make sure you are in our season – **NZ International Science Festival 2027** - then click Apply and create an event.
4. Follow the prompts to submit your draft event proposal.

You don't need to have every detail finalised at this stage; the purpose is to communicate your idea clearly enough for the Festival team to assess it.

A NOTE ON THE REVIEW PROCESS

We cannot guarantee your event will be accepted. Preference will be given to events that show a high level of commitment to advancing an understanding of science, technology or the environment, as well as events that fit within our festival topics. During our selection process, we might get in touch to discuss your idea in more detail. Once the selection process is complete, **we will notify you of the outcome via email, before Feb 15th 2027.**

As part of the submission review process, we will be asking questions such as:

- Is the proposed event interesting, relevant, innovative, imaginative and inspiring?
- Does the event complement our existing programme and festival topics?
- Is the event likely to be popular and attract a good audience?
- Does the event provide a high-quality experience to audiences?
- Does the event provide an accessible and inclusive experience?
- Will the event help audiences understand that science is a part of their everyday life and something that is “for them”?
- Has this event been designed with the festival in mind? Local visitor attractions should demonstrate that their proposed festival activities have a unique element added specifically for the Festival

Step 2 - Develop and finalise your event – before 1st Apr 2027

If your proposal is accepted, we'll let you now by 15th Feb 2027 so you'll have plenty of time to develop the idea and finalise details.

You'll confirm information such as:

- Final Event title
- Short and long descriptions for the printed and online programme
- Speaker, presenter or host details
- Session times and prices

- Venue confirmation
- Images and promotional material
- Health and safety information

Step 3 – Share the Programme and sell tickets!

The programme launches on **12 May 2027**, and this is when tickets go on sale. We work together to promote your event and the wider festival.

Step 4 – Deliver your event!

The festival runs **9–18 July 2027**.

7. Other Practical Considerations

A. Timeline

Date	What happens
Before 9 February 2027	Submit your event idea
Before 15 February 2027	Applicants notified
Before 1 April 2027	Confirm final event details
12 May 2027	Festival programme launch and tickets on sale
9–18 July 2027	Festival takes place

B. Costs, ticketing and payment

There is **no general participation fee**, but you are responsible for all your travel, accommodation and other expenses.

Ticketing information

- The Festival sets up and manages ticketing through Eventotron, including free events requiring registration, unless an exception is agreed for a venue with an exclusive ticketing arrangement.
- Free events incur no ticketing fee. If you charge for tickets, the Festival charges a fee of **10% of gross ticket revenue, including GST, booking fees and card costs**. You can read the [full terms and conditions here](#)
- The Festival collects ticket income and provides a sales statement and payment after the event, less applicable fees and refunds.
- A minimum of two tickets per one-off ticketed event, or four tickets in total for repeating events, are reserved for media, sponsors or promotional purposes. Unused tickets are released for public sale if not needed.
- You choose an appropriate ticketing model and set your own price.

Ticket type	How it works	When to use it
Unticketed Free	No booking or ticket required. People can drop in freely.	Drop-in activities where attendance does not need to be managed and there are no capacity or resource restrictions.
Ticketed Free	Tickets are free but attendees register in advance. This allows you to manage numbers and attendance.	Events with a set start time, limited capacity or resources that need to be planned for in advance.
Pay What You Can	Attendees choose how much to pay from the options offered. You can set a minimum, recommended and maximum amount.	Events where you want to make attendance more accessible while allowing people to contribute according to their means.
General Admission	All attendees pay the same ticket price.	Events where a single price is appropriate for everyone attending.
Multiple Prices	Different ticket prices are offered for different groups, such as adults, children and concession holders.	Events where different audience groups are charged different rates.

Donating to the Festival

This year, we are introducing an option where you may choose to have a 'Pay What You Can' or other paid ticket, but to donate some or all of that income to the Festival!

As the Festival is a registered non-profit, this can be a tax-deductible donation. Let us know if you're interested in this option, and we'll be in touch to discuss the process and to confirm. Thank you!

Budget carefully: Event organisers are responsible for developing and delivering their events and covering their costs, including presenter travel, accommodation and expenses where required. The Festival may be able to assist with some travel or accommodation costs in exceptional cases, but this must be discussed well in advance and is not guaranteed. If your event has significant delivery costs, talk to the Festival before proceeding. You may also wish to discuss sponsorship or other funding.

C. Marketing your event

The Festival promotes its programme through its website, printed programme and social media. However, it cannot guarantee individual promotion for every event.

Event organisers are expected to help promote their own events through their networks, social media, posters or other suitable channels. Use the Festival logo and branding resources available at <https://scifest.org.nz/assets/logo-assets/logos-for-event-hosts.zip>

Please follow the Festival's instructions about when event details can be made public. Contact the team if you have a potential media story, need promotional materials or want to discuss additional advertising.