



TOOWOOMBA  
**CARNIVAL**  
of FLOWERS

GRAND CENTRAL

*Floral Parade*

**ENTRANT GUIDE 2026**

# Welcome Entrants!

Now celebrating its 77th year, the Grand Central Floral Parade continues to grow in vibrancy and acclaim, delighting both locals and visitors as it blooms to life each spring. As a signature highlight of Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers, the Parade, proudly sponsored by Grand Central, brings together dazzling floral floats, colourful characters, lively entertainers, talented local and visiting bands and an array of spectacular visual displays. It's truly a street celebration not to be missed!

This guide has been created to help you navigate the Parade entry process and support your participation in this iconic Toowoomba event.

Please take the time to read through all the information carefully and share it with all members of your participating group or community organisation to ensure everyone understands the requirements and regulations for our Grand Central Floral Parade

## Key Information

### CONTACTS

#### Parade Creative Advisors

Anna Battle & Mary-Kate Thomson  
[carnival@shinyhappyart.com](mailto:carnival@shinyhappyart.com)

Contact for support regarding the design and creative components of your Parade entry.

#### Entrant Assistance

Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers  
 Events Team - Toowoomba Regional Council  
 4688 6661 | [info@tcof.com.au](mailto:info@tcof.com.au)

Key contact for support with your application and for any queries you have about your participation in the Grand Central Floral Parade.

#### Event Manager

Wendy Green, Coordinator - Events Toowoomba Regional Council  
 4688 6661 | [info@tcof.com.au](mailto:info@tcof.com.au)

#### Entrant Facebook Group

Make sure you join our [entrant Facebook group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/tcof.com.au) (https://www.facebook.com/groups/tcof.com.au or search for Grand Central Floral Parade - Participants Community). That's where you'll get to know other participants, share ideas and resources, and keep in touch with us.

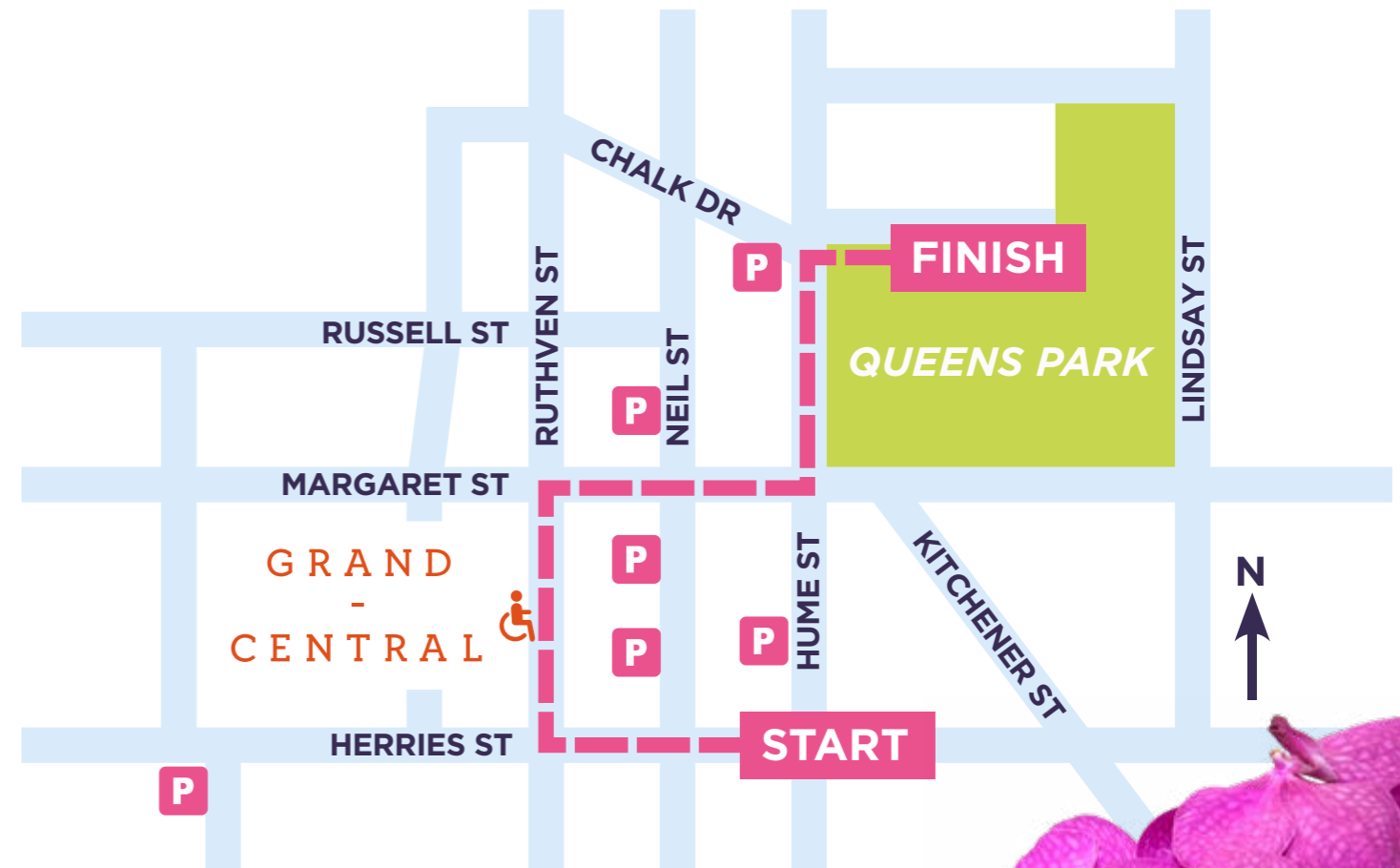
### ENTRANT FEES

CATEGORY	ENTRY FEE
Corporate Float	\$75
Corporate Walking Group	\$30
Community Float	\$55
Community Walking Group	\$30
Visiting Float	\$55
Multicultural Celebration	\$55
Creative Expression Entry	\$30

### IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

	DATE	TIME
Applications open	23 April 2026	
Creative Advisor meetings	April/May 2026	Various - check online bookings for available times
Phone or video call available - book your session here		
Applications close	21 May 2026	2pm
Successful applicants notified	4 June 2026	
Unregistered vehicle / trailer / float VIN details due to Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers office	24 July 2026	4pm
Entry payment due	30 Jun 2026	
Float and motorised apparatus driver's licence details due to Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers office	24 July 2026	4pm
Final and mandatory Parade meeting	15 September 2026	5.30pm
Grand Central Floral Parade Day!	19 September 2026	10am

### PARADE ROUTE



## The Theme

The Grand Central Floral Parade 2026 theme is:

### SPRING ADVENTURES

A message from your Creative Advisors: Anna & Mary-Kate

#### How is your group going to interpret "Spring Adventures"?

This has always been a FLORAL parade, and Spring Adventures is your invitation to step right inside the season and see it with fresh eyes! We're talking towering tulips, swaying foxgloves, cheerful ranunculus and golden daffodils, creating a world of colour, wonder and imagination rolling through the streets.

Spring Adventures celebrates playful discovery, enchantment and the simple magic of flowers. This is your chance to transport your audience somewhere truly special. We want to see entries that feel like you've tumbled headfirst into a spring garden and loved every second of it!

#### Think:

- flowing petal-inspired fabrics, garden boots wrapped in vines, hats crowned with blossoms
- costumes that blur the line between gardener, dreamer and springtime storyteller
- movement, choreography, streamers and bubbles that bring your adventure to life
- happy music, acrobats and entertainers who invite the crowd along for the ride
- the abundant annuals of spring, front, centre and absolutely everywhere!

And think BIG for impact, because Parade entries are seen from a distance!

**Floats or walking groups, both are wonderfully welcome!** If you've marched with us before, this is the perfect moment to reimagine your entry. Build a new float in a way that's achievable for your group or strip it back and come as a beautifully costumed walking group. Sometimes the simplest approach makes the biggest impression.

You will need **lots and lots of flowers**. At least 50% of your entry needs to be flowers and plants. You can grow your own or order from a local supplier. If you're planning to grow, get those seeds in the ground soon!

Floral content can also be crafted from paper, synthetic or recycled materials. Just remember, no glass and no single-use balloons.

We always encourage you to choose local wherever possible and to recycle and repurpose what you can.

Remember, every single person in the Parade **MUST** be in costume or a themed outfit. It's easy to dress a driver or support person in bright, floral colours. A floral shirt, a hat, a wave and a big smile make a huge difference!

Every group is required to meet with us for either a 30 or 60 minute consultation, and we genuinely love these sessions! This is your dedicated time to develop your ideas, talk through your concept and get inspired to think outside the box. Appointments are available across three weeks from late April through to early May. Look for the link to book your time for an online meeting with us and we'll look forward to seeing you then!

We can't wait to hear how your group is going to embark on your Spring Adventures and to work together to make this year's Grand Central Floral Parade a breathtaking celebration of renewal, imagination and the magic of flowers in bloom!

## How to Enter

### WHO CAN ENTER?

Everyone is invited to enter the iconic Grand Central Floral Parade! Almost anyone can get involved including workplaces, social and community groups, local performers, artists and musical groups.

There are two ways you can participate:

1. Grand Central Floral Parade (street parade at 10am on Sat 19 Sept 2026)
2. Grand Central Itty Bitty Floral Parade (available only to educational facilities, disability/inclusion support organisations, not-for-profit organisations and aged care facilities/homes, displayed in Grand Central from 11 Sept - 5 Oct 2026)

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

**Step 1:** Read through this information booklet!

Outlined are the entry requirements and how you can access support available from our Creative Advisors, Anna Battle and Mary-Kate Thomson, to help you achieve a high-quality entry to showcase your business or community group.

**Step 2:** Make an appointment with the Creative Team and attend.

They'll help you plan your entry and offer advice on how you can best represent your brand, mission and purpose while addressing the 2026 theme.

[Book your session with the Creative Team here](#)

Appointments can be a phone call or video call. If you entered last year, you may elect to have a 30 minute appointment. If your group is new to Parade, you'll need to make a 1 hour appointment.

**These appointments are a compulsory requirement of entry into the Parade.**

**Step 3:** Fill in the [online entrant application here](#) before entries close at 2pm on Thu 21 May.

**Step 4:** All applications will be assessed, and successful applicants notified no later than Thursday 4 June 2026. The Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers and Grand Central Floral Parade Coordination Team's decision will be final, and no correspondence will be entered into.

**Step 5:** Successful applicants will be provided with additional information regarding permits and regulations specific to your entry. This is dependent the vehicles and structures included in your entry.

**Step 6:** The Creative Advisors will touch base with you again to check that you are fulfilling the Parade creative requirements.

**Step 7:** Purchase your materials and resources and commence building your float.

**Step 8:** Participate in the Grand Central Floral Parade!

## Choosing a Category

When submitting your application, you must choose which category you are entering under.

### ENTRY CATEGORIES

- Corporate Float: self-propelled vehicle/trailers
- Corporate Walking Group
- Community Float: self-propelled vehicle/trailers
- Community Walking Group
- Visiting Float: self-propelled vehicle/trailer
- Multicultural Celebration: self-propelled vehicle/trailers and walking groups
- Creative Expression: puppetry, marionette, costume character and bicycles

#### CORPORATE FLOAT

A visual display on a self-propelled float or trailer towed by a decorated vehicle entered by any commercial business, decorated with a minimum of 50% floral and living matter. Corporate floats are limited to one (1) sign for advertising and need to rely on visual communication of their brand created in consultation with the Creative Advisor.

#### COMMUNITY FLOAT

A visual display on a self-propelled float or trailer towed by a decorated vehicle entered by a community-based club, association or group, decorated with a minimum of 50% floral and living matter. Evidence of group's charitable status or incorporation must be included with the application.

#### VISITING FLOAT

A float entry from outside the immediate Toowoomba Regional Council area. A strong element of floral theming must be added to the float.

#### MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATION

A visual display representing and celebrating Australia's cultural diversity. This category must include floral elements in costumes and props.

#### WALKING GROUP

This category is open to all walking groups and marching bands and must address the Parade theme. The maximum number of walkers is 50, and all must be in fully themed costumes with floral elements. Marching and walking groups are permitted forward manoeuvres only.

#### CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Encompassing puppetry, marionettes, costumed characters and/or visually delightful bicycle entries, the entry must present a fantastic floral display. Creativity in interpreting and expressing the theme is essential.



# Designing and Building your Float

Help is always on hand to assist in developing your ideas into practical application. Creative Advisor appointments are compulsory to attend prior to applying. Follow up is available with the Creative Advisors from now until Parade Day.

If you don't have the capacity to build a float but would like to be involved, there is an option to collaborate with community groups. Please discuss this option with the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers team.

## Step 1: Devise a Concept

Utilise a mind map to develop visual communication of your brand/organisation. Consider a concept that will translate well with the use of floral elements, addresses the theme and reflects your organisation.

Remember, you are entering a floral parade!

## Step 2: Develop Your Design

During your session with the Creative Advisors your entry will be discussed, and ideas developed (sometimes into a sketch). Providing a sketch of your proposal is part of the criteria for entry. The sketch, along with notes on how you propose to construct your float, will help us (and you) to visualise what your float will look like.

## Step 3: Choose Your Float Base:

Potential float bases:

- Bus
- Car
- Earthmoving vehicle
- Golf buggy
- Horse and cart
- Quad bike
- Scooter
- Tractor
- Trailer
- Truck
- Van

## Self-Propelled Floats

You can convert older vehicles (e.g. car, bus, ute) into self-propelled floats by cutting the vehicle down to the chassis and then securing MDF board over the chassis to create the floor of your float. Before you consider cutting down a vehicle, please check that it has a chassis as some newer vehicles do not. Please utilise accredited or experienced engineering personnel for this.

## Towed Floats

If you are creating a towed float (i.e. utilising a trailer) it is important that the tow vehicle is also decorated to complement the float and includes floral elements. At a minimum, the tow vehicle must include a fresh floral bonnet display.

## Decorated Vehicles

Vehicles such as trucks, vans and utes can be the basis for your float entry. When designing your float, consider that the front of the vehicle will be very prominent and will need to be decorated. Also consider the skirting of your vehicle as this will create the illusion of a 'float' and will help to disguise often unsightly elements of the vehicle.

## Step 4: Put Together a List of Materials You Require

Listed below are some of the materials used to make floats:

- Acrylic paint
- Artificial turf (Astro-turf)
- Cardboard
- Chicken mesh
- Concrete
- Corrugated iron
- Crepe paper
- Fabric
- Floral sheeting
- Foam (expanding foam)
- Fringing
- Fur
- Gyprock joint compound (creates weatherproof layer)
- Lattice
- Liquid nails
- Masking tape
- MDF panels
- Mesh sheets / Rio mesh
- Nails
- Netting
- Paint brushes, rollers and trays
- Pallets
- Pipe
- PVA glue
- Rope
- Screws (self-tapping)
- Sponges
- Streamers
- Weather sealer
- Wheels
- Wire
- Wood

**Your float must be decorated with at least 50% floral themed matter!**

**PLEASE NOTE: NO balloons (single use plastic/latex), glass, ceramics or any materials that can break into sharp or dangerous pieces are allowed on entries.**

## Step 5: Ensure That Your Float Meets the Floral Criteria

The required minimum 50% or more floral and greenery/living matter on your float can comprise of cut flowers, floral arrangements, potted flowers, seeds, fresh fruit, paper flowers and vegetables.

## Step 6: Getting Quotes

Get a quote on the specific materials you require. If you are a community group applying for funding, you will need to submit this with your application form to meet the funding criteria.

## Step 7: Float Assembly

- Assemble your float team and get started!
- Assign tasks to team members.
- Create a schedule to work on the float – weekly, daily or specific days.
- Use a licensed builder for any construction work.
- Ensure platforms/stages are sturdy and secure.
- Use a licensed electrician for all lights/sound systems.



## Keeping Informed

Once your application has been received and accepted, you will be contacted to confirm your participation in the Parade. At this time, you will also be provided with further detailed information relating to Parade Day, marshalling times, locations etc.

### FLORAL PARADE PARTICIPANTS MEETING

A final and MANDATORY Parade participants meeting will be held at 5.30pm on **Tuesday 15 September 2026**.

A nominated person (who will be with your entry on Parade Day) from each entry **MUST** attend this meeting as important information will be distributed in relation to road closures, access and marshalling times and locations.

You'll also receive useful tips to help ensure that your entry looks its best on Parade Day.

### GETTING YOUR ENTRY TO THE FORM-UP AREA

To move your unregistered vehicle, trailer or float to the Parade form up area, you will need a day permit from Queensland's Department of Transport and Main Roads.

Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers will be applying for a bulk permit and you will be required to provide Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers with your unregistered vehicle details (e.g., VIN number), insurance and drivers licence details by **Friday 24 July 2026**.

## Judging and Prizes

Judging of your entry will take place while the Parade is in progress. Grand Central Floral Parade winners will be announced at the conclusion of the Parade on the final PA staging located within Godsall Street Oval.

CATEGORY	1ST PRIZE	2ND PRIZE	3RD PRIZE
2026 Grand Champion	\$500		
Corporate Float	\$250	\$100	\$50
Corporate Walking Group	\$250	\$100	\$50
Community Float	\$250	\$100	\$50
Community Walking Group	\$250	\$100	\$50
Visiting Float	\$250	\$100	\$50
Multicultural Celebration	\$250	\$100	\$50
Creative Expression	\$250	\$100	\$50

## The Judging Criteria

All entries will be judged according to the following criteria (as applicable).

### FLORAL FLOATS (SELF-PROPELLED AND TRAILER ENTRIES)

#### TECHNICAL EXECUTION

- Has the entry been well constructed and neatly presented?
- Are all flowerpots concealed?
- Is the front of the float well decorated?
- Are all towing devices decorated and concealed?
- Are the vehicle's wheel arches concealed?
- Is all signage neatly and professionally presented?
- Does the entry comply with the Grand Central Floral Parade Conditions of Entry?
- Is the float skirted to give the appearance of 'floating' down the Parade route?
- Are all props including trolleys, prams, bikes etc. decorated?

#### FLORAL CONTENT

- Does the entry meet the floral/living matter coverage (a minimum of 50%) criteria?
- Has the entry tried to utilise different materials e.g. seeds, grasses, fruits, vegetables and other regional produce?
- Has living matter been presented in an interesting and innovative way?

#### THEME AND DESIGN

- Is the entry concept creative and/or innovative in design?
- Is the theme recognisable to the public?
- Does the entry address the Parade theme?
- How well has the theme been interpreted and executed?
- Are the participants and driver (if visible) appropriately costumed to reflect the theme?
- Has the entry considered good use of colour in the design?

#### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE

- Is the entry fun?
- Are the participants animated and showing that they are enjoying their Parade experience?
- Are the participants using choreography and acting to present a professional performance?
- Are the participants engaging with the audience to enhance their Parade experience? (No physical contact with the audience is allowed).



## MARCHING AND WALKING ENTRIES

### FLORAL CONTENT

- Does the entry meet the corresponding floral (a minimum of 50%) entry criteria?
- Has the entry tried to utilise different material e.g. seeds, grasses, fruits, vegetables and other regional produce?
- Has living matter been presented in an interesting and innovative way?

### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE

- Is the entry fun?
- Are the participants animated and showing that they are enjoying their Parade experience?
- Are the participants using choreography and acting to present a professional performance?
- Are the participants engaging the interest of the audience to enhance their Parade experience?

### THEME AND DESIGN

- Is the entry concept creative and/or innovative in design?
- Is the theme recognisable by the public?
- Does this entry relate back to the Parade theme and/or is it relevant to the organisation presenting the entry?
- How well has this theme been interpreted and executed?
- Are the participants appropriately costumed to reflect this theme?
- Does the entry utilise good use of colour in their design?

### OVERALL

- Is the entry fun and entertaining?
- Is the entry engaging and interesting for the audience, to enhance their Parade experience?
- For individuals, is the costume well-presented and maintained?
- Has the entry acknowledged the floral theme?
- For costumed characters, is the character's minder dressed to complement the theme of the character and the floral theme?
- Does the entry comply with the Grand Central Floral Parade Conditions of Entry?

*But wait... there's more info*

## ADOPT A FLOAT

If you're a community organisation needing a trailer for your Parade entry, or a business keen to be involved in the Parade but lacking the time or resources to build a float, the Adopt A Float program offers a great solution.

By registering your interest, community groups will be partnered with a business through an "adoption" process, where the business provides a trailer for the community float. In return, adopting businesses receive valuable exposure and recognition, including signage on the adopted float and verbal acknowledgement at commentary points along the Parade route.

It's a fantastic opportunity to support Toowoomba's most iconic event while gaining exposure to 60,000+ spectators along the Parade route.

For more information or to register your interest, please contact the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers team.

## PAPER FLOWERS

While we encourage the inclusion of real flowers and plant material in Parade entries, paper flowers (and flowers made from other materials) can provide a cost-effective way to fill in the gaps. A paper flower making video (along with the other helpful videos, including the use of polystyrene to make props), can be accessed on entrant Facebook group.

## POTTED FLOWERS

You can grow your own flowers or chat to the Creative Advisors for preferred suppliers if you would like to order potted colour. Orders must be in by mid-May if you have specific flower or colour requirements.

## PROMOTING & MARKETING YOUR ENTRY

Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers encourages everyone to promote and market their entry in the Grand Central Floral Parade through social media such as Facebook or Instagram, or in printed material.

Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers and Grand Central Floral Parade are trademarked and all entrants must ensure they use the correct wording when referencing the event. Please ensure the following terms / events are quoted as follows:

- Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers
- Grand Central Floral Parade
- #GrandCentralFloralParade
- #TCOF
- @CarnivalFlowers (Facebook)
- @toowoombacarnivalflowers (Instagram)

For more information on the correct terminology or promoting your entry, please contact the Carnival team.

## PARADE FLORAL MARKET

Should you have fresh floral on your float that you would like to sell to the public, this can be done when the Grand Central Floral Parade finishes at Queens Park, on Godsall Street Oval until around 12 noon. Please advise the Creative Advisors if you would like to do this.



# GRAND CENTRAL FLORAL PARADE

## DO'S AND DON'TS



# GRAND CENTRAL FLORAL PARADE

## TIPS & TRICKS

### Front Banner



### DON'T

- Use loose canvas signs or vertical side poles (unless the sign is framed), otherwise the sign will flop in the middle and your message will illegible.

### DO...

- Use dowels as horizontal handles and weights
- Use corflute or sturdy canvas material
- Consider unusual shapes for your signage
- Put your sign on a frame and add chunky wheels
- Consider concealing a speaker behind the sign, if you have music
- Decorate your frame with flowers
- Include smiling florally themed ambassadors to carry your signage!
- Remember, signage with walkers = 3m max. width



# GRAND CENTRAL

## FLORAL PARADE

### TIPS & TRICKS

### Big Ticket Items

#### DON'T

- Sweat the details, you'll be seen from a distance.

#### DO...

- think BIG & BRIGHT!
- SCALE it UP!  
A big ticket item – a character or logo instantly identifies your brand and can be reused or redecorated from year to year. It's worth investing in something spectacular!
- Utilise the height you have available (keep in mind that your float must not exceed 4m in height).



# GRAND CENTRAL

## FLORAL PARADE

### TIPS & TRICKS

### Parade Momentum

#### DON'T

- Let the gap between your entry and the previous entry exceed 20 metres!
- Include any BACKWARD manoeuvres.
- DEFINITELY DO NOT STOP!

#### DO...

- Maintain a consistent gap between your entry and the previous entry. It should be no more than 20 metres!
- Keep moving (even if there is an unexpected delay - keep the energy level high). We don't want the audience to think the Parade has ended mid-way through, so keep up the pace!



# GRAND CENTRAL

## FLORAL PARADE

### TIPS & TRICKS

### Decorating Vehicles

#### DON'T

- Neglect to decorate your tow vehicle as first impressions count!
- Use a tow vehicle that is larger than the float you are towing or your float will be overshadowed/lost.

#### DO...

- Florally dress your happy (smiling and waving) driver and passengers. **EVERYONE IN PARADE MUST BE IN COSTUME!**
- Choose a brightly coloured vehicle that complements your colour scheme.
- Decorate your whole vehicle or as many parts of it as possible (wheels, window frames, bonnet, roof bumper, tow area etc.).
- Consider a mesh frame overlay in an unusual shape.
- Include real floral arrangements on the bonnet/roof.
- Consider a vehicle wrap.
- Consider the safety of your driver and passengers.
- Fuel up before parade!



#### DON'T

- get caught up in small details & remember - this is a **FLORAL FESTIVAL!!!**

#### DO...

- Think **BIG, BRIGHT** and **COLOURFUL**.
- Grow your own potted colour or order potted colour from a local supplier (e.g. Pohlmanns). Get your order in early!
- Dress every member in your group in as many flowers as you can - including floral hats/headbands.
- Choose coloured flowers to complement your design.
- Include real, paper and synthetic flowers or make flowers from foam sheets (Clark Rubber), or from recycled materials from the Reviva dump shops.
- Use floral fabric and brightly coloured fabric for costumes and backdrops to complement your floral content.



# GRAND CENTRAL

## FLORAL PARADE

### TIPS & TRICKS

Watch Past Parades!



### DON'T

- let your ideas get stale!

#### DID YOU KNOW?...

You can watch YouTube & Vimeo videos of past parades?... (& other parades all 'round the world!)

### DO...

- Relive the fun and excitement and see your entry from the perspective of the audience.
- Critique what worked and what you think could be improved on with your float/entry.
- Challenge yourself - be inspired by other entries (look for visual impact, materials, techniques, colour schemes, costumes, animatronics).
- Appreciate the beautiful work of other groups.
- Join our Facebook group for more useful ideas and videos.



# GRAND CENTRAL

## FLORAL PARADE

### TIPS & TRICKS

Float Tips

### DON'T

- Forget WHY we get involved in Carnival - we love our city and want to share our joy with visitors!

### DO...

- Ask for advice from your Creative Advisors Anna and Mary-Kate!
- Make a maquette/scale model and plan your float.
- Use a colour scheme and PLENTY of FLOWERS.
- Choose an achievable float size and apply (if eligible) for a grant to buy flowers and materials.
- Make sure your float is SAFE.
- Include a float skirt.
- Ensure EVERYONE IS IN COSTUME & HAS FUN!



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