



**PING PONG-A-THON**  
EVENT ORGANISER MANUAL  
Planning a Ping Pong-a-thon

## CONTENTS

<b>PLANNING A PING PONG-A-THON</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>YOU AND YOUR TEAM</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>VENUE</b>	<b>4</b>
ACCESSIBLE/CENTRAL	
SIZE	
EQUIPMENT	
INSURANCE	
AVAILABILITY	
VENUE HIRE	
<b>TOOLS/RESOURCES</b>	<b>6</b>
GOOGLE DRIVE & PRINT PROMOTIONS	
ORGANISER FACEBOOK GROUP	
<b>RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>6</b>
GROUPS	
INDIVIDUALS	
MOTIVATIONS	
ENGAGING PARTICIPANTS	
<b>REGISTRATION</b>	<b>8</b>
FUNDRAISING PAGE	
TEAM PONG EMAILS	
<b>TIME SLOTS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>RECRUITMENT STRATEGY</b>	<b>9</b>
PERSONAL IS BEST	
GROUP PRESENTATIONS	
RECRUITING THROUGH OTHERS	
<b>PROMOTING THE PPAT</b>	<b>10</b>
SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT	
PRESS RELEASE	
<b>FUNDRAISING</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>GIVING OPTIONS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SAFETY</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>13</b>
PING PONG-A-THON TIMELINE	

## PLANNING A PING PONG-A-THON

A Ping Pong-A-Thon (PPAT) event requires a local organiser or organising team to prepare for and run the event. The Pong HQ team provides support and resources to make that as easy as possible. Resources supplied include this manual, promotional material and social media engagement, secure online donation facilities and personal support via, email, phone or Skype where required. The Pong HQ team also ensure each PPAT participant receive a weekly email from Pong HQ once registered online that inspires and encourages their participation.

A Ping Pong-A-Thon event has four simple key ingredients:

- A **group of people** of any age willing to collectively play table tennis for a period of time — most often 24 hours
- A **suitable venue** equipped with table tennis / ping pong equipment
- **Participants gathering sponsorship** from their family and friends
- A **passionate individual or team** who take responsibility to organise/run the event.

There are two key challenges that most PPAT venue organisers face.

1. **LENGTH:** A standard event runs 24 hours so requires sleep deprivation or a team approach, (we strongly encourage the latter). Please note: It is possible to run a shorter event if your community does not have the capacity to run for 24 hours..
2. **ENGAGING PARTICIPANTS:** Encouraging/motivating people to participate in the event with enough lead-time for them to raise sponsors can require some significant effort.

We outline some strategies for overcoming both challenges later in the manual.

## YOU AND YOUR TEAM

We believe an event organiser can be any person with passion and dedication to see a PPAT event run in their community. An event organiser with strong local networks will typically find it easier to host a PPAT.

While many of our strongest events are run by individuals we encourage the building of a small team of organisers with a range of talents/experience including:

- Event-management and organisational skills,
- A passion for justice or community,
- Strong networking and promotion skills,
- Perseverance and creativity (for when things don't go to plan).

As well as a small team we encourage you to reach into your networks for support, encouragement and fundraising. PPAT organisers rely on groups they are closely aligned with including schools, universities, churches, Men's Sheds, sporting clubs, workplaces and other community groups, to help them recruit participants and offer practical support including facilities/venue, equipment, participants or promotional opportunities.





## VENUE

Venue selection is central to the PPAT event. A PPAT is adaptable to almost any venue, however when booking your venue we urge you to consider six key things:

### ACCESSIBLE/CENTRAL

Access for more than 24 hours (set-up, pack-down), security and overnight noise may be factors you need to consider with a 24-hour event. A central and easy to find venue is a big plus. Churches, schools, sporting clubs, workplaces, outdoor community spaces and the local pub have been venues for the event.

When choosing a venue, consider if a local group will naturally participate more if you host it at 'their' venue. A local community hall might be seen as a neutral venue that is more accessible than say a church but if that venue is not 'home' to anyone, people may be less likely to commit to participate.

### SIZE

Each PPAT event varies in size depending on the number of participants. A 24 hour PPAT event is broken down in eight consecutive three hour playing timeslots. A minimum of three participants are recruited to play for each three-hour period (two playing, one resting). Therefore, to cover one table for 24 hours requires 24 participants to play for three hours each. Some participants commit to playing for two or more timeslots so you can cover one table with fewer participants in this case.

Many first-time PPAT events aim to simply run one table for 24 hours. Such an event doesn't require a huge auditorium or a lot of table tennis equipment. Adding additional tables (dependent on having more participants) can add to the excitement of the event. The PPAT is about keeping at least one table running for the whole event. You may find that you have certain timeslots that attract more participants (e.g. church youth groups often gravitate to Friday night 6pm–9pm), at which times you can add additional tables. For the quiet periods you may simply have one table running with three people participating.

Look for a venue with flexibility, including a small space for times with fewer participants and a larger space to accommodate busy times. It is easier to create a great 'vibe' in a smaller space than one that is too large and has too many tables for the number of participants.

As event registrations come in, keep an eye on registrations for time slots as players may sign up at any time in the lead up to their event and plan to access more tables accordingly. A first-year event is likely to need one or two tables, growing in subsequent years. As a rough guide you will need around one table for every 20 participants. Organisers will have access to view all players registered time slots in their event from their Dashboard.

## EQUIPMENT

The basic equipment you will need at the venue to run the event includes:

- Large TV or projector
- Computer that can be linked to the projector/TV (with audio)
- PA/Sound system with microphone
- Kitchen or access to basic tea/coffee making facilities
- Toilet facilities
- Whiteboard
- Comfortable chairs/couch/bean bags where participants can rest
- A first aid kit and someone with relevant first aid qualification available to treat any injuries
- Registration table and chairs
- Table tennis tables, nets, paddles and balls
- Someone with the ability to capture high quality photos (and/or video).

## INSURANCE

Ensure your PPAT event venue has appropriate insurance and public liability coverage for all participants in the unlikely possibility of an injury or incident occurring at a PPAT event.

## AVAILABILITY

When booking your venue please factor in a minimum of 2–3 hours for set up and 1–2 hours for pack up/cleaning at the end of the event. We also recommend your local team has time to rest between set up and the first serve. Plan to have lots of helpers available for set-up and clean up. Have a plan as to how your venue will look before you arrive for set-up.

## VENUE HIRE

Please find a venue that is free of charge or is willing to waive any hire fees. Venue hire fees reduce the ability for your PPAT to raise funds to impact young lives through PPAT Partners. Please contact the Pong HQ team if you have any issues sourcing a suitable venue.

## TOOLS/RESOURCES

Our aim is to provide event organisers with everything they need to run a successful event. After registering an event at [www.pingpongathon.com](http://www.pingpongathon.com), you will be provided with access to the PPAT Event Organiser Resources Folder on Google Drive. You will also be sent print promo materials via mail/post and given access to resources in our Event Organiser Resources Folder on Google Drive.

### GOOGLE DRIVE & PRINT PROMOTIONS

The Google Drive resources and print promo materials will assist you in planning, promotion and execution of your event.

### ORGANISER FACEBOOK GROUP

We also invite you to request permission to join the PPAT event organiser group on Facebook, (search for 'Ping Pong-A-Thon Event Organisers' or email us with your Facebook address to be added). This is an informal community where the team at Pong HQ and our event organisers encourage each other, ask questions and share ideas in the lead up to and during the campaign.

## RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

PPAT place an emphasis on engaging boys and men as a key target group for event participation (because men are often absent as part of the solution on issues of trafficking and exploitation). Some event organisers have decided to keep their event focused solely on boys and men. However, most PPAT venues provide options for the participation of girls and women or are completely mixed gender events. This is left largely to the discretion of the local event organiser.

While churches have hosted the majority of past PPAT venues, the event is not religious in nature/content and has been designed to encourage the participation of all Australians.

Previous Pong participants have ranged in age from seven to 85 years. Due to the subject nature of the event we advise parental discretion for young participants. Participants 18 years or under should have the consent of a parent/guardian in order to participate and should be accompanied and supervised by responsible adults (such as a parent or an adult youth leader) at all events. Where appropriate supervision is provided, PPAT is a great event for young people to be a part of and we particularly encourage father/son or mother/daughter participation.

### GROUPS

To streamline and simplify the online registration process, we no longer provide small groups of participants the option to create a team registration. However, many playing time slots are filled with participants from a small group of friends or family from within the wider community who simply register to play in the same playing timeslot. Group participation is an excellent way for event organisers to fill time slots, (a group of three people can cover one table for three hours) and helps reduce some of the burden of recruiting individual participants.

Group leaders encourage participation, engagement and competition throughout the event and can increase the effectiveness of fundraising efforts.

A typical PPAT time slot is three hours long and some are harder to fill than others. Many groups are willing to register at a time that suits the event organiser or fills a gap in registrations. A group leader can undertake the responsibility to recruit participants for one timeslot (across one or more tables).

## INDIVIDUALS

When an individual registers online, they nominate their preferred playing timeslot/s. Most people sign up for one playing timeslot, but many will consider staying longer if there is a need for timeslots to be filled as the event unfolds. You can see who has registered to play at which times on your online event page.

## MOTIVATIONS

Participants are drawn to the PPAT for many different reasons. We encourage you to try to tap into several of these motivations when promoting your event.

- A passion for social justice
- A passion for issues of human trafficking/exploitation
- For a fun activity with their mates
- For the love of table tennis
- To make a difference in the world
- To build friendships or strengthen relationships between family members (e.g. fathers and sons)
- For local community experience
- They want to be part of something that changes lives
- Peer pressure — everyone else is registering to play

## ENGAGING PARTICIPANTS

**A typical Pong event has a varied age range of participants.** Stats from our recent campaigns show that there are more 14-24 year olds participating in the event than any other age group, however this group raise the lowest amount of funds of any age group, (averaging \$100-\$150 each). On the other hand, 50+ year olds are the least represented as participants but are by far and away the most successful fund-raisers, (averaging \$400-\$470 each).

For this reason, we strongly encourage all event organisers to make a special effort to invite and assist more older participants to sign-up as participants. We also recommend being pro-active with younger participants, encouraging them in their sponsor-gathering efforts. Our most successful events have a space at the venue where participants who haven't gathered sponsors can be assisted in using social media, email or their phone to invite their network to sponsor them, (more on this in the PPAT Venue Set-Up Manual).



Credit: Adam Dean



## REGISTRATION

The registration process for participants is relatively simple. We provide a secure online registration portal allowing people to sign up, select their playing venue and playing time slot/s and start fundraising. Your online event page also allows you to monitor fundraising and rostering for each event. Sponsors can also make secure credit card donations directly to PPAT through the online portal.

## FUNDRAISING PAGE

An online fundraising page will be automatically created for every PPAT participant upon registration.

Participants can personalise their fundraising pages with a photo and sponsorship message and a fundraising target. The secure online donation facilities allow participants to use their social media networks to seek sponsorship from their family and friends.

## TEAM PONG EMAILS

All participants will receive a welcome email from Pong HQ and a weekly email in the lead up to the event which provides inspiration and resources to encourage participants in their fundraising efforts.

## TIME SLOTS

As a participant registers, their preferred playing time will be recorded on your event page. This allows you to see names of people registered for each playing slot. Time slots are automatically updated as players register, so keep an eye on your event page in the campaign period to remain updated on time slot availability.

Event organisers should use time slots to keep an understanding of the likely busy/quiet times of their event and to direct participants to the most suitable times to sign up. Often participants are willing to fill gaps in the event as there is need or even throughout the course of the event.

Participants need to know what time they will play when registering online. Event organisers can make it easier for people to register by having a tablet computer or laptop available when approaching participants.

Occasionally it is just not possible to cover a timeslot for the event despite best efforts. Unfilled time slots often get filled in the last days before the event but if a timeslot cannot be covered the event should still go ahead. Keep in mind that during quiet periods a number of tables can be closed and these can then be reopened at busy periods.

The 'graveyard shift' (overnight period) may seem like the most challenging period to find participants but many event organisers have successfully overcome this by inviting a group of late teen/early young adult aged participants to cover an overnight six-hour period, (two playing timeslots). Promoting the challenge of this feat tends to get young people to respond rise to the occasion, especially with a couple of key leaders primed to encourage others!



## RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

### PERSONAL IS BEST

We cannot stress this enough: the most effective way to get a participant to commit to signing up is to ask face-to-face. Even better if the asker is someone the potential participant knows and trusts.

With this in mind, identify key people of varying ages in your community group, school, sporting club or church who others naturally follow I.E. people of influence. Invite them to join you for a coffee or meal. Share the vision of the PPAT with them by utilising the promo clip or other resources on the PPAT website. Get them registered to play and invite them to be part of the core team to get others in their networks signed up.

Brainstorm together how you as a team could get others involved. Place the PPAT promotional material in the hands of your team. Don't try to do it all yourself!

With a handful of key people signed up and pumped about the event, encourage them to gather others from their circles of influence and repeat the process you have undertaken with them. Encourage them to utilise promo material, website and social media as well as directly asking those in their networks to participate.

### GROUP PRESENTATIONS

While the personal approach is always best more public promotions are a good way to reach a wide audience and spark interest. Here are some ideas for what to do with a five-minute spot at your community organisation, sporting club, school or church:

- Show the PPAT promo clip, (available on the PPAT website)
- Have a handful of influential people of varying ages who you've already signed up share with the group why they are getting involved
- Invite participants to register on the spot
- Set up a sign-up booth where people can register on the spot on a tablet or laptop via the PPAT website.

Build momentum by repeating the invitation and don't forget that personal is always best. Some people need a push to get committed. With momentum building encourage registered participants to invite their friends, relatives and work colleagues to play in the event with them. Refer to the PPAT Timeline (Appendix) for an indication of the best time to start recruiting direct to participants.

### RECRUITING THROUGH OTHERS

Going to leaders within other community groups is a very effective way to grow your event and your fundraising while building your own networks. Check in regularly with these leaders in the lead up to your PPAT event. Encourage their participation and find out how you can help them to engage others in their networks. Consider leaders within groups like:

- Table Tennis clubs
- Chaplains and teachers from local schools and universities
- Sporting clubs



- Men's Sheds and similar groups
- Rotary, Lions and other community groups
- Youth, youth adult or men's ministry leaders in a church

Sometimes a senior leader of an organisation shows a lack of interest. Don't be afraid to ask them, 'Are there some people in your church/club/group who might be interested in this event?' Sometimes finding the right person who is passionate about justice or building community will be more valuable than persuading a senior leader to promote the event.

## PROMOTING THE PPAT

Local event organisers should make contact with media in their area to pursue promotional opportunities **only when** they have the capacity to do so. This is not a vital part of running a successful event. Priority should be given to social media over and above radio or print media. If social media is not your strength, please invite someone to join your team to assist in this area..

## SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

PPAT social media (Facebook & Instagram) is regularly updated for you and your participants. Please 'share' and 'like' content on this page when it is relevant to your community. We also use social media engagement to provide fundraising updates. Event organisers are encouraged to utilise social media wherever possible to promote the event. Online 'buzz' plays a large role in fundraising around the 24 hours of each PPAT event.

A number of event organisers create a local Facebook event page for their PPAT event and encourage participants to invite others from their networks to the page. We encourage this if you will find it helpful but ask that you link back to and encourage your community to connect with our main Facebook page also.

## PRESS RELEASE

If you have capacity to do so, you may engage local media to promote your event. A written press release is available from Pong HQ for this purpose. It can be edited by a local Event Organiser to include local event details.

Local papers are looking for 'feel good' stories and may print the press release, want further information for a feature story and will often request a photo opportunity. We encourage you to respond to such requests and participate in interviews and to assist with photo requests. A photo with two or three participants with a couple of table tennis paddles, balls and headbands makes an excellent image to stir interest.

We suggest contacting your local newspaper approximately 2–3 weeks prior to the event date.

## FUNDRAISING

The PPAT raises funds for several partner organisations in Thailand, Cambodia, The Philippines and India engaged in the prevention and aftercare of young people who have been significantly impacted by human trafficking and/or exploitation. The PPAT event is heaps of fun, however, one of our key aims is to: empower our partners to bring freedom and justice to the most exploited in our world by empowering people to take a stand against this injustice. This is the heart of the Pong!

As the PPAT event draws closer, the event organiser continues promoting and recruiting participants but their focus also shifts towards encouraging participants to fundraise and advocate. Early registration will help you and your participants to focus on fundraising over a longer period and maximise your efforts. Some people will make a last-minute decision to participate and have limited opportunity to raise funds but they can still register at the event and make an effort to gather sponsors during their playing slot!

Participants will find that different sponsor-gathering methods work best for their individual personalities. Some charismatic 'people-person' types are confident in asking everyone they know to sponsor them, others are too shy to make a direct ask face-to-face and so prefer to do all of their asking via email/ social media. Encourage people to try different approaches that work for them, including:

- Talking to their family, friends and work colleagues about why they are participating using the sponsor cards and promo material
- Linking family, friends and work colleagues to their personal fundraising page via a direct email or Facebook message
- Engaging social media networks with their motivations and a link to their sponsor page
- Seeking another creative way to spread the PPAT message with friends or colleagues. One event organiser last year put out the challenge to his network that he would shave his head if he reached \$1,000 in sponsors as a way to motivate people to give. Often our event organisers set the standard and are typically among our largest fundraisers!

**Please encourage participants to engage with the Participant Fundraising Guide which participants will be able to access at the PPAT website's Resources page.**

## GIVING OPTIONS

Payments to PPAT can be made via Cheque (made out to 'P4T Inc'), cash handed in by participants at the event, direct deposit (bank account details are listed on sponsor cards you will receive in your print promo material) and credit card, (made via the website).

Please note: Donations to the PPAT are tax deductible in Australia and the USA. This means that we are legally required to provide a receipt to anyone who sponsors a participant. We can only do this when we

are provided with the details of the donor, (name, email address, amount of donation, etc). Receipting is a HUGE task for our team and requires a large team of volunteers and hours in the October/November period. With this in mind we strongly encourage online donations to be promoted as the primary method for donating (receipts are automated with this method). Online fundraising is by far and away the most effective method for most participants anyway! Cash, cheque and direct debit options should only be used where an online credit card option is not available.

## SAFETY

Ping Pong-A-Thon is committed to being a safe organisation for children. To protect young people engaging in our events as well as our Event Organisers, venues should be supervised at all times and all reasonable measures taken to reduce risk at your events.

In light of this, all event organisers should complete the PPAT Risk Assessment Form in the weeks leading into their event running. This form will help you to consider how you can make your event safe and enjoyable for all participants.

Ping Pong-A-Thon strives for best practice in all aspects of its operation and highly encourages all organisers to hold a valid Working with Children card (or state equivalent) and advises all events to have a sign-in/out sheet at the venue for all persons in the case of an emergency or incident of any nature.



### PING PONG-A-THON TIMELINE

You may find it helpful to print out and cross off things as you complete them.



#### 5–6 MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

Engage in initial discussions with PPAT Team about the possibility of hosting an event.

Communicate with key people in the local community about the event and gauge level of interest for a PPAT event in your area.



#### 3–4 MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

Read PPAT Manual. Learn what is involved in running the event. In communication with PPAT HQ, commit to running a PPAT.

Finalise the date, venue and time of your event, book the venue and register your venue online at the Ping Pong-A-Thon website. When booking the venue – allow for set up time and clean up time (2-3 hours set up, 1-2 hours clear up).

Using the Recruitment strategy outlined in this document, share the vision for the event with key people who will help recruit participants and promote the event in their networks. Get the event date in their diaries and encourage them to start discussing the event with their respective communities. As you have conversations with key leaders, ask, 'Is there someone else you think might be interested in the PPAT event that I should get in touch with?'. Your contact list will grow.



#### 2–3 MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

Distribute PPAT promotional material (received from Pong HQ) to key leaders/contacts in your region.

Encourage leaders to begin general promotion of the event in their networks. Send them the relevant information from this manual to assist their recruitment efforts.

Seek permission for initial promo spots to be held next month.

Invite a well organised/admin savvy person to assist you in your organising of the event.



#### 2 MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

Begin sourcing table tennis equipment for the event. Invite your local sporting goods retailer to consider sponsoring the event with the provision of nets, paddles, and balls.

Begin direct promo spots (both internally and externally) in churches, sporting clubs, schools, and community groups. Set up a Facebook page for your PPAT event.

If you have the capacity to do so, use the media resources provided by Pong HQ to contact local print media and/or radio stations to get behind the event.



## 4–6 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

Begin face-to-face recruitment direct to potential participants. Follow the relevant info in the Recruitment section of this manual.

Key focus is on getting people registered to participate and encouraging them to gather sponsors.

Contact each of your key contacts and see how they're going with promotion. Encourage them to keep at it. Emphasize that the easiest and most effective way to get people to commit to the event is to invite them face-to-face and/or have a sign-up booth at church services or community events, where those who are passionate about the event directly ask others to sign up and participate in the event.

Encourage participants to gather sponsors.

Continue promotion to community groups and gain permission for another round of promo spots at your local church, school, sporting club, etc.

Re-read the 'PPAT Venue Set-Up & Execution' PDF.

Make a list of any equipment you need to source or people you need to help you organise/run different aspects of the actual event.

## 2–3 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

Promote, Promote, Promote! Continue to recruit participants and encourage their fundraising efforts. Refer to the PPAT Promotion /Fundraising/Recruitment information in the manual.

Keep checking in with key leaders to encourage their recruitment efforts.

Continue promo spots with a dual emphasis on recruiting participants and inviting people to sponsor participants at a booth/table at the end of the meeting. Ask participants who are doing well in sponsor gathering to share with others how they're going about it — what is working for them. This will encourage those who've not yet started gathering sponsors. Keep an eye on the PPAT Facebook page for stories like this that you can share with your community.

Follow up with people who have agreed to loan table tennis equipment and organise a suitable time to pick up the equipment

Invite some people who are participating in the event to assist you with any aspects of setting up or running the event.





## 1–2 WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT

Many people will sign up this week and do the bulk of their sponsor gathering from this point. Keep promoting the event, recruiting and encouraging participants to gather sponsors.

Do one last promo spot the weekend prior to the event with an emphasis on sponsorship. Play a clip from the PPAT website that moves people's hearts and invite them to donate on the spot.

Re-read the 'PPAT Venue Set-Up & Execution' PDF. Make a shopping list that might include:

- Table tennis nets, paddles and balls
- Tea, coffee, milk, drinks and basic snacks
- Food for meals, (if you decide to provide any meals)
- Garbage bags, bluetack, whiteboard markers (source whatever you can without cost where possible).

Check with the event venue to ensure there are no issues with the booking. Arrange a time to access the venue, (pick up keys, etc).

Ensure you have a well-stocked first aid kit and someone qualified available to provide medical attention during the event.

Print the relevant Event PDFs from your organiser Google Drive folder (i.e. Hall of Fame records, Pong Stories, Social Media Messages, Cash Record Master Sheet, Minors Participation Policy/Sign-in, etc).

**Test-run the 'Welcome to Venue' clip that you will play to participants at the start of each new timeslot. This will be made available to you in the weeks leading into the campaign.**



## 1–2 DAYS BEFORE THE EVENT

Shop for everything on your shopping list.

Ensure the table tennis tables and equipment have been moved to the venue.

Contact your event helpers to confirm what time they are needed and what they are responsible for.

If you have access to the venue, set up the space, (you never know what emergencies might crop up on the day of the event that might require your attention!). Test the PA and computer to ensure the film that will be played to participants can be seen and heard!

Please refer to the 'Ping Pong-A-Thon Venue Set Up Manual' (available in your Event Organiser Kit on Google Drive) for instructions on set-up and running of the event.

Get some rest!



## THE DAY OF THE EVENT

Refer to 'Ping Pong-A-Thon Venue Set Up Manual' document



## POST-EVENT

Refer to 'Ping Pong-A-Thon Venue Set Up Manual' document



[www.pingpongathon.com](http://www.pingpongathon.com)

serve up some justice

Facebook: PingPongAThon