

QLD MUSIC TRAILS

TROPICS TRAIL
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
2026 & 2027

PROSPECTUS



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

QMF respectfully acknowledges the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji, the Gunggandj and Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land, waters and skies where the Tropics Trail unfolds.

We extend our respects for their enduring connection to the remarkable terrain, where creative works take place, performances resonate, and celebrations come to life.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders of all communities who also work and live on this land. We recognise the importance of First Nations leadership and collaboration, and QMF commits to walking together on a journey of shared learning and culture.

WELCOME TO THE TROPICS TRAIL

A message from Queensland Music Festival CEO Daryl Raven

QMF are excited to launch an Expression of Interest for councils, venues, Traditional Owners, community organisations and other partners alike to join us for QLD Music Trails - The Tropics in October 2026 & 2027. This is your chance to host/get involved in a unique music event that will celebrate culture, boost local tourism, engage your community, and leave a lasting cultural impact.



QLD Music Trails is a cultural tourism adventure offering audiences itineraries that celebrate Queensland's people, places, and culture through the lens of music.

Unlike commercial promoters who take a 'band on the road', QLD Music Trails takes the 'audience on the road', programming content and talent that is unique and unrepeatable to each destination.

As we embark on planning for the 2026 and 2027 Trails, we are thrilled to explore new regions, discover fresh destinations, and forge collaborations with regions not yet featured on the Queensland Music Trails map.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM QLD MUSIC TRAILS THE TROPICS 2024

549+K

Total Economic Impact of The Tropics Trail

2717

Total Attendance

1033

Direct Visitor Nights

24%

Out of Region
Attendees

92%

Attendees who rated
the event as good or
excellent

KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE TROPICS TRAIL

QLD Music Trails - The Tropics invites audiences on a one-of-a-kind, self-drive musical adventure through the ravishingly rugged terrain of Far North Queensland.

Driven by music, the Trail guides the audience through the Tropics most wildly wonderful destinations, with each stop inviting a celebration of iconic music moments, enriching cultural experiences and heartfelt local hospitality.

Historically the Trail has been held in October while the weather is still mild enough for the audience to enjoy and explore all the Tropics has to offer by customising their itinerary to include the events, destinations and attractions that resonate and meet their individual needs.

Originating as a partnership with the Yarrabah Music and Culture Festival in 2023, the Tropics Trail has grown in the past two years to feature the flagship event, Dream Aloud, a concert led by and featuring First Nations artists, culture and history.

With backing from the Queensland Government, QMF's proven combination of musical excellence and community engagement remains at the heart of all our Trails, while the range of cultural, economic, and social outcomes for Queensland communities increases.



KEY OBJECTIVES AND TRAIL PERSONALITY

QLD Music Trails - The Tropics is designed as a platform for connecting audiences to the world's oldest living culture and is the most distinctive voice that forms the bedrock of Australia's Cultural History.

Grounded in the songlines and the rich oral histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the Tropics Trail offers a contemporary experience of ancient knowledge as well as the power of the next generation of voices, shared through music, performance, and art.

Through The Tropics, QLD Music Trails seeks to:

- Engage local and national audiences in meaningful cultural exchange
- Embed cultural respect and Indigenous agency across all aspects of programming
- Create opportunities for intergenerational knowledge-sharing
- Foster long-term economic and cultural benefits for the Gimuy region and its community



OVERVIEW OF HISTORIC TRAILS

Over the past three years, the Queensland Music Trails have developed to feature a diverse mix of Trail events that showcase the spirit of each region. Each Trail and event is carefully curated to reflect community feedback and respond to key local priorities.

QMF works closely with destinations to scale events in line with venue capacity and the aspirations of the community. Above all, we seek to ensure every event aligns with the destination's unique personality and celebrates its local stories.

Below are examples of our Trails, and the variety of events they feature

The Tropics Trail

Anchor Event: Yarrabah Music & Cultural Festival

A key event that anchors the trail, attracting diverse mid-size audiences, these event types encourage audiences to travel.

The Reef Trail

Connector Event: The Reef Sundowner

Approximately 500 pax out of region and local audience that enhances the trail journey and promotes extended stay.
Late afternoon/evening event featuring the best Australian talent

The Scenic Rim Trail

Signature Event: The Long Sunset
Over 1,000 pax

Out of region and local audience
Whole day event
Features multiple acts including major national headline talent

The Outback Trail

Existing Event: Easter in the Country

Existing events can form part of the Trail
Benefits from additional marketing exposure and the potential of new audiences

WHY PARTNER WITH QMF?

Since transforming from a biennial festival organisation to a cultural tourism business in 2023, QMF seeks to proactively create a platform through the Qld Music Trails product to attract new audiences, disperse travelers across the state and articulate the story of Queensland.

By partnering with QMF to bring QLD Music Trails to Queensland communities, you will help drive:



Economic Benefits: Boost local business, increase tourism, and create jobs.

Cultural Value: Showcase local talent and create pathways for emerging talent to grow



Social Impact: Create memorable experiences by promoting community pride, increasing livability and fostering stronger connections among residents

Diversified Tourism Offering: Diversify and extend existing event calendars by attracting out-of-region audiences into communities, stimulating increased stay and spend



WHAT QMF CAN PROVIDE

QMF's support and resources seek to ensure that a premium and high-calibre event is delivered in each destination. With a 25+ year track record, and leading a team of music and event experts, QMF will ensure:

- **Artist Curation and Programming:** Curation of a high-quality event that showcases the uniqueness of each destination. QMF will identify and negotiate with leading Australian artists and provide the opportunity for local emerging talent to be showcased, delivering a unique and authentic place-based event.
- **Marketing and PR Support:** Full promotional backing by QMF through targeted campaigns that drives audiences. QMF will lead and provide support with brand, media, social media development and more.
- **Event Management and Technical Support:** QMF has expertise in production, staging, and all technical aspects of the event delivery. Each event will be seamlessly delivered to QMF's sustainability and accessibility targets.
- **Funding and Sponsorships:** QMF aims for each partnership to be co-beneficial. Dependent on the partnerships requirements QMF can work to provide a mix of financial and in-kind support to enable successful event delivery.



PARTICIPATION DETAILS AND CRITERIA

From large-scale regional festivals to intimate community events, find a format that fits your community.

QLD Music Trails - The Tropics is made up of five types of events:

SIGNATURE EVENT

Seeking to attract over 1,000pax with audiences from out of region and the local community, this event type features multiple acts including major national headline talent.

TRAIL ANCHOR EVENT

This type of event anchors the Trail, attracting diverse mid-size audiences & must be able to encourage audiences to travel.

CONNECTOR EVENT

These enhance the Trail journey for audiences.
The events promote extended stay throughout the Trail schedule.

SATELLIETE EVENT

Often a smaller activation which falls within a Trail time period, but is slightly off the beaten path of the Trail.
These type of events/activations are visitor experience based.

EXISTING EVENT

Existing events can form part of the Trail and benefit from additional marketing exposure and the potential of new audiences.

ROLE OF PARTNER

The following is an overview of the events what type of partnerships are available for organisations alike Council, Commercial Partners & Event venues/producers.

	ROLE OF PARTNER^				
EVENT TYPE	Host & Support	Co-Produce	Produce	Investment (\$ and in-kind)	Ideation/ Co-Curation
SIGNATURE EVENT	Delivered and produced by QMF, and/or co-produced with Partner.			Supported by Partner through combination of in-kind and financial support	QMF is lead producer/ curator. Partner supports the curation of event.
ANCHOR EVENT					
CONNECTOR EVENT		Delivered and co-produced by QMF with Partner.		Supported by Partner through combination of in-kind and/or financial support	Partner is the lead producer/ curator. QMF supports the curation of event.
SATELLITE EVENT			Delivered and produced by Partner with support from QMF.		
EXISTING EVENT					

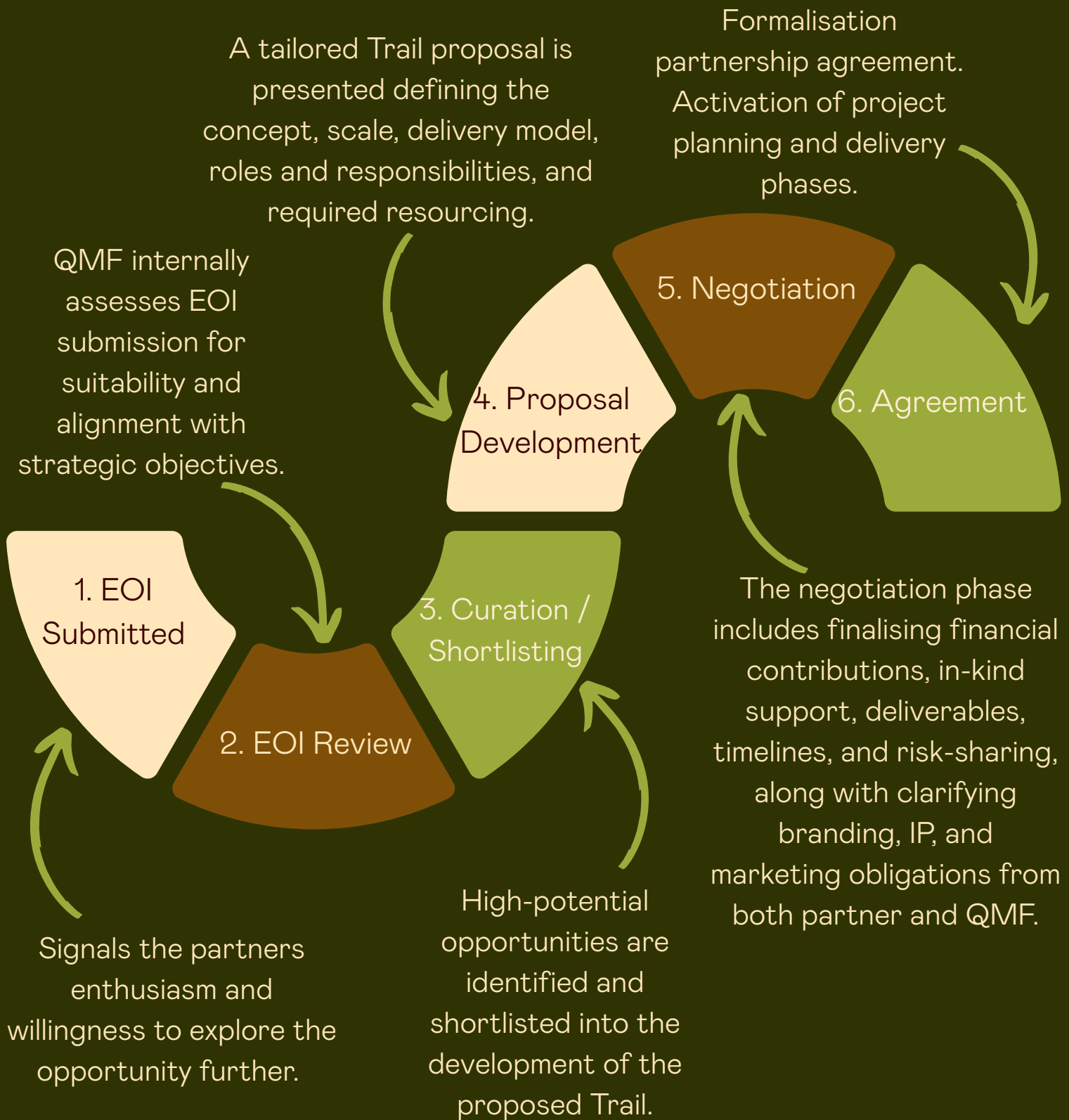
^ Role of Partner Key:

Host & Support - Support an event delivered by QMF, which forms part of the QLD Music Trail, in your community

Co-Produce - Suggest an event to be delivered by QMF, which forms part of the QLD Music Trail, in your community

Produce - Deliver an event in your community that forms part of the QLD Music Trail

PROCESS MAP - NEXT STEPS



KEY CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION



HOW TO APPLY

Submit an EOI form via the link that is relevant to your partnership type.

 FN OR COMMUNITY GROUP	 STALLHOLDER/ VENDOR
 COUNCIL	 MEDIA / COMMERCIAL PARTNER
 ARTIST	 VENUE
 MASTER OF CEREMONIES	 VISUAL ARTIST



TIMELINE

Expression of interest submissions close at 5:00pm AEST on 29 August 2025.



CONTACT

For more information, contact
eoimqmfmf.org.au

AUDIENCE AND PARTNER TESTIMONIALS

"We are in a time when First Nations artists are telling their vital, important stories like never before and I only think there could be more of this. This, music, brings people together like few other mediums."

Dream Aloud attendee 2024



'Having only travelled to Cairns once before to scuba on the GBF, my perception of Cairns was as a tourist town. Dream Aloud, while similarly a great touristic attraction, celebrated its first nations people and was strongly attended and enjoyed by them. This is ultimately a much richer and deeper experience to have with a place and its people. Rather than just 'do the reef', events like Dream Aloud allow the chance be immersed in the culture and long history of Cairns and its surrounds.'

Dream Aloud attendee 2024



"I'm so grateful to have attended and been welcome on the lands of the traditional owners and historical peoples. I'm looking forward to returning in the future but driving there instead of plane."

Yarrabah Music and Cultural Festival attendee 2024



Partnering with QMF on the Tropics Trail has enabled QUT to engage meaningfully with discrete Aboriginal communities, fostering strong relationships built on respect and cultural exchange. This collaboration has deepened cultural awareness among staff, enriched student experiences, and opened valuable pathways into community-led initiatives.

QUT - Corporate sponsor Yarrabah Music and Cultural Festival



TERMS AND CONDITIONS



1. No Guarantee of Selection and Purpose of EOI

By submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI), the applicant acknowledges and agrees that submission of the EOI does not guarantee selection.

The selection of potential partners will be based on a comprehensive evaluation of the criteria, as well as the outcome of further dialogue, discussions and site visits with the applicant.

The purpose of the EOI is solely to enable QMF to identify possible partners for consideration and does not imply any commitment or obligation on the part of QMF to enter into any partnership or agreement with the applicant.



2. Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must be a Local Government Authority (Council), private establishment or venue, community group or organisation (including Traditional Owners) or business based within the following regions:

Local Government Authority (LGA)
Cairns Regional Council
Cassowary Coast Regional Council
Cook Shire Council
Douglas Shire Council
Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
Mareeba Shire Council
Tablelands Regional Council
Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council

EVALUATION CRITERIA

EOs will be reviewed holistically, and will consider the following criteria:

Summary	Evaluation Overview	Venues	Artists, Visual & MCs	Stallholders & Vendors	Council	FN & Community Orgs	Marketing	Commercial Partners
Positive Impact	a) <u>Cultural/Creative Impact</u> : Does the concept/event reflect a distinct cultural or creative personality of the community or location it is in?	10	10	10	5	15	5	5
	b) <u>Uniqueness</u> : Is the concept or event unique/new to the region/location?	10	10	10	0	5	10	5
	c) <u>Sustainability</u> : Overview of practices, initiatives and/or considerations that minimize environmental impact	5	10	10	5	5	5	5
	d) <u>QMF Values</u> : Does the application align with QMF strategic principles.	5	10	10	5	5	5	5
Total		35	40	35	15	35	25	20
Community Engagement and Local Support	e) <u>Community Engagement</u> : How the local partner will support engagement with the local community.	5	10	5	5	15	5	5
	f) <u>Landscape Information</u> : Overview of other community and major events that occur in the community, including dates and programming information.	5	5	5	5	5	0	0
	g) <u>Local Partnerships</u> : Information on any existing partnerships with local businesses, tourism operators, Indigenous communities, or arts organisations that could enhance the event.	5	5	5	5	5	0	5
Total		15	20	15	15	25	5	10
Logistical Capabilities	h) <u>Event Management</u> : Capacity for on-the-ground event coordination, including crowd control, safety protocols, and emergency services support.	5	0	0	5	0	0	0
	i) <u>Permits and Approvals</u> : Details on any necessary permits or approvals required to host the event in their community.	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Total		5	0	5	5	0	0	0
Marketing & Partnerships	j) <u>Marketing Capabilities</u> : How the potential partner plans to promote the event to national, regional and local audiences, including any existing channels for marketing (e.g., social media, local media outlets, billboards). And the anticipated reach and influence of the partner's audience and promotional strategy.	5	10	10	5	5	20	5
	k) <u>Media Partnerships</u> : Existing relationships with local media outlets or local influencers that could help amplify the event's profile.	5	10	5	5	0	10	5
	l) <u>Audience Alignment</u> - Is your audience akin to QLD Music Trails audience or present an opportunity to expand into a new strategic demographic for QMF	4	10	5	0	0	10	10
Total		14	30	20	10	5	40	20

EVALUATION CRITERIA..

EOs will be reviewed holistically, and will consider the following criteria:

Summary	Evaluation Overview	Venues	Artists, Visual & MCs	Stallholders & Vendors	Council	FN & Community Orgs	Marketing	Commercial Partners
Venue and Infrastructure Details	m) <u>Community</u> : Information about target community and key objectives of destination (drive liveability, support visitor economy).	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
	n) Available Venues & Locations: Information about potential venues/ sites that Councils/ venues / community organisations can provide, including size, capacity, indoor/outdoor options.	4	0	5	5	5	0	0
	o) Accessibility: Details on accessibility for attendees, including parking availability at proposed event location/town etc.	4	0	0	0	5	0	0
	p) Accommodation: Information on local accommodation options for performers, crew, and audiences, camping options.	4	0	0	10	5	0	0
	q) Infrastructure availability: Availability of any lighting, sound equipment, generators, marquees, stages and other technical resources required for event/activation.	5	5	5	5	0	0	5
Total		21	10	15	25	20	5	10
Resource Commitment	r) Financial Contribution: Information on any financial support the potential partner is willing to provide to cover event costs, including venue hire, technical setup, and marketing.	5	0	5	15		10	25
	s) In-Kind Support: Details on in-kind contributions, such as the provision of staff, equipment, marketing, or logistical support.	5	0	5	10	10	10	10
	t) Funding Opportunities: Information on any local or regional funding opportunities that could help subsidize costs and contribute to the success of the event.	0	0	0	5	5	5	5
Total		10	0	10	30	15	25	40
Sumtotal		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TERMS AND CONDITIONS



4. Commitment

Successful partners will enter into a partnership agreement with QMF, outlining responsibilities and obligations of each party.



5. Timeline

- Expression of interest submissions close at 5:00pm AEST on 29 August 2025.



6. Confidentiality

All submitted information will be treated as confidential and used exclusively for the purpose of evaluating the EOI submissions. QMF may disclose certain information, including the Applicant's interest, to key stakeholders, including:

- Department of Environment and Tourism, and Science and Innovation
- Arts Queensland, through the Department of Education
- Tourism & Events Queensland
- Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) as appropriate

QMF will ensure that all data and information provided is securely stored and will not be shared with any third parties, except as outlined above, without the Applicant's prior written consent.

Definitions:

Local Government Authority (Council) - A Local Government Authority (LGA) is defined as an elected body operating under the Local Government Act 2009, responsible for the administration and governance of a defined local area within the state of Queensland.

Private Establishment or Venue - A Private Establishment or Venue refers to a facility or business that is privately owned and operated for commercial purposes. This includes entertainment venues, event spaces, hospitality businesses, or other locations that can host gatherings or events.

Community Group or Organisation - A Community Organisation is a not-for-profit group formed by local individuals or stakeholders with the aim of improving the social, cultural, economic, or environmental well-being of a specific community. These organisations often focus on providing services, promoting engagement, and fostering a sense of belonging among community members. Examples include cultural groups, charity organisations, and local clubs.

Traditional Owner - An Aboriginal person or group who has a recognised and deep connection to a specific area of land and sea, grounded in their ancestral and cultural heritage. Traditional Owners hold cultural authority to speak for and make decisions about their Country, and carry a responsibility to protect, preserve, and maintain their cultural sites, stories, and practices, which have been passed down through generations.

Artist - A person or group or individual who performs a musical set. This can constitute of a DJ, individual musician or band.

Visual Artist - A creative professional who uses various visual mediums to express ideas, emotions, and narratives.

MC- The first person to take the stage and the last one to leave it. They assist to make sure the agenda is followed, nothing is forgotten, all transitions go smoothly, and the event starts and ends on time.

Media Partner - A media organisation or platform, that collaborates with QMF; QLD Music Trails to achieve shared goals, typically involving promotion, content sharing, or audience reach.

Commercial Partner - An individual or entity that collaborates with QMF; QLD Music Trails often involving a shared goal, profit, and risk.

Stall Holder / Vendor - A business that is interested in selling their product (food, beverage, merchandise or promote product) at a QLD Music Trails event/s. Food and Beverage business' who are also interested in assisting in providing their business for crew catering also come under this definition.