

So you've not been to one of our Balls before....

Let me give you an idea of what it's all about. The main focus of the event is the Costume Parade Competition and this is usually the first thing happening in the evening. Then there will be a photo opportunity with the parade entrants. After that we announce the winners and hand out the prizes (this is for the Parade and the Workmanship competition which is judged earlier in the day). Supper follows the prize giving and the evening finishes with some dancing.

Let's start with the Parade. Competitors are divided into 3 sections depending on their skill level. 'Novices' are those with very little experience – those who are new to sewing and costuming. 'Journeymen' have usually been costuming for a while, but still have things to learn. 'Master' level is where you see the really spectacular costumes – they're usually people who have been costuming for many years and are very skilled in what they do.

The Parade works a little like a fashion parade. An entrant will come out on to the stage (to music they have chosen), show their costume to the judges (in a manner they choose), and then go off the stage. Then the next competitor will come out on the stage etc, until all the entrants have shown their costumes. The costumer can choose to simply to a walk around the stage to show their costume (much like a fashion model) or they can do a more elaborate skit, or even a dance routine. There is a 'Best of' awarded for each level, as well as a 'Best in Show'.

Flash photography is not allowed during the parade, since it can distract the entrant or possibly temporarily blind them. This could be dangerous, especially in some costumes that have limited vision already. However, what follows the parade is the 'photo shoot', where each entrant will individually come out onto the stage so members of the audience can take pictures. It is during this time the judges will tally up their scores and determine the winners.

There will also be a professional photographer there if you would like to have a photo of your own costume – or maybe a photo with your friends! There will also be our own photographer, taking snaps for our records, and we hope to have someone taking a video of the parade and the event too.

After all the prizes are given out it's time for supper, but please bear in mind that this won't be until around 10pm so you might want to have dinner before you come to the Ball.

We finish off the evening with some dancing. Last year it was all modern music (well, post-1950's music), but this year we've had a few enquiries about old-style dancing, so there may be a couple of sets of foxtrot, quickstep and waltz for those so inclined. (Please let us know if this is something you would like to happen.)

The event ends at midnight, so we hope you will have had a great evening, seen some wonderful costumes, and maybe even made a new friend or two.

The Basic Rules include guidelines for what you *can't* wear, but remember you **must wear a costume** to gain entry to our Ball. This can be historical, TV or film reproductions; science fiction or fantasy creations; Steampunk, fursuits; superheroes; Lolita or anime characters; Goths or Ghouls; Military, be it modern, historical or futuristic – or anything else you can think of. You don't need to have made your costume either – if your time or your skills are limited you could borrow a costume, have someone else make your costume, or even hire one.

All kinds of costuming are welcome at our Ball.

The National Ball is an event run by the Australian Costumers' Guild
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