

AFRIKABURN

THEME CAMP

HANDBOOK

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

or, How to Make the Best Bloody Theme Camp Ever

Here for your reading pleasure is the collective wisdom of all things Theme Camp. We hope that this information is useful to old timers and young guns alike. Enjoy the read – and please feel free to pass this on to anyone who you feel could use the info.

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INTRO

Theme Camps put the color and texture onto and into Tankwa Town. They are spaces where Collectives have dreamed up an idea for a gift, where the good citizens of Tankwa Town are invited to interact and engage in all manner of creative endeavour.

From dance floors to spaces that offer pancakes and coffee, to tea and sympathy, body painting, libraries, post office services, roller discos, movie houses... mostly all with a twist, the sky is the limit really. Any kind of offering that you can think of, the good people of Tankwa Town will love.

The process we follow

- You submit the registration questionnaire online.
- The volunteer Theme Camp Committee meets every two weeks to assess the proposals that have come in and decide if what is on offer constitutes an actual Theme Camp.
- If you register a Theme Camp which has enough interactive activities to be accepted as such, you will be allocated a space in our city.
- At the event the theme Camp Committee does the rounds to check that you have delivered on your promises and to spread the love in general.

Assessment criteria

- Visually stimulating
- Interactive/what is the actual gift?
- Have a good previous MOOP record
- Follow safety protocols
- No suspicion of being a Plug and Play camp



The Theme Camp Communications Timeline

This shows you what communications to expect from us and the
red is what should be happening from your side:

1. Registrations for Theme Camps open.
You register your Theme Camp.
2. You'll receive a mail acknowledging your application.
3. Your Camp will be evaluated by the Theme Camp Committee.
4. Community and Low Income Tickets notice.
You need to apply for Low Income and Community Tickets.
5. Theme Camp Directory goes live. This makes your information public if you ticked the box on your Registration form.
Supplier Registration.
6. Call for Public Service Announcements or PSA's on Radio Free Tankwa. Reminder of how to inform communications about fundraisers.
Start preparing final camp numbers, layout, plans and sizes.
7. Finalised layout form: At this point you will receive a link to the Registration form where you will be providing us with all the details we need for the very laborious task of camp placement, such as size, size of sound rigs. It's very important for this information to be as accurate as possible!
8. Sound policy meetings
Start preparing your updated camp activities and schedules now.
9. Fill in final content and schedule forms for the WTF Guide.
10. We will send you the notice of placement and introduce you to your amazing neighbours.
11. Safety documents
12. MOOP guidelines
13. Work Access Pass and Vehicle Passes applications on Collective Registration
14. Welcome home!

Registering a Collective

All Creative Crews are asked to create a Collective. Registering a Collective is the first step. This helps in the allocations of Work Access and Vehicle Passes.

Creating a Collective does not ensure you a Theme Camp placement – you still need to register your Theme Camp.



(Love All - photo by Jonx Pillemer, 2017)

Work Access Passes

Every year people want to extend their burn by coming earlier. BUT WAIT! Why? Because this is only possible if you have an Work Access Pass. As Theme Camps need to be set up and operational from the start of the event, you and your set up team (this does not include the entire camp, only those who will be setting up the space) will be eligible for Work Access Passes. Be sure to print them out with your ticket. If you get to the gate without one, Die Hek will put you in Camp Ja But No But situated at the gate (basically denying you entry to the event till Monday morning). Nobody wants to set up twice, or camp outside the event, right? Right – so plan ahead by getting WAP's for your essential setup crew.

REALLY IMPORTANT: if you have crew headed to site with WAP's, remind them that they can't get a lift with friends who do not have WAP's. The only people able to get onto the event site before gates open on the Monday are those in possession of WAP's.

Vehicle Passes

All Creative crews are eligible to free Vehicle Passes for 50% of your registered collective members. This is done on your Collective page. You need one VP per vehicle. Please print them out and present to our lovely gate volunteers. You can also buy VPs at the gate.

Getting There

You're taking your camp infrastructure a long way to an outdoor event, at the end of a long stretch of dirt road, in the desert. Keep this in mind when you're doing your planning! You'll need the right transport. Think about weight, size, and a suitable vehicle. Remember the weighbridges and don't forget those dirt roads.

Take it easy on the roads. There's no rush - you'll get there. Watch out for riverine rabbits on the dirt road from dusk - they're critically endangered and don't have the best road sense. Drive slowly and safely - especially if you have a heavily-loaded vehicle and/or trailer.

Top Tip: Pack your spare tyre and tools in a highly accessible space. The slower you go, the less chance you have of a blow out.

Conditions

First things first: camping in the Tankwa Karoo is NOT like camping at your favourite holiday spot or music festival.

AfrikaBurn's site is located on a flat gravel plain, which means your structures better be ready for very high winds, and a chance of a flash flood. The ground is rock, not grassy lawn. Plan for that - and expect extremes of temperature and weather - hot & cold, dry & wet, still and windy - and plan your structures accordingly.

Prepare for the beach and the snow, as you never know what the beloved Tankwa is going to throw at you. Prepare for wind...always prepare for wind.



(Photo by Jonx Pillemer)

Camp Structure

Although it's not mandatory, typically, Theme Camps feature some kind of shade structure that serves as a public space. This is where it all goes down and crowds gather to join in with whatever your amazing Theme Camp offers.

Make it Inviting

Think about your frontage – the area that opens onto the road – and make it inviting and welcoming. After all, the reason you’re asking for placement on a main thoroughfare is to offer something interactive that invites others in.

Decorate it in line with your theme, dress it up, make it interesting – and think about creating some signage that explains what your camp is, and what’s on offer. Think about the furniture you’ll need to make it a great space – will you need seating, carpets or a stage?

Think About Space

No, not “space, the final frontier”, but spatially – when working out the space that you’ll need, please factor in all the tents and cars that your crew will have. Something to consider: if you have too many vehicles on your allocated patch, you can move some of your camp’s vehicles to the designated parking lot opposite Greeters on Welcome Rd. to free up space.

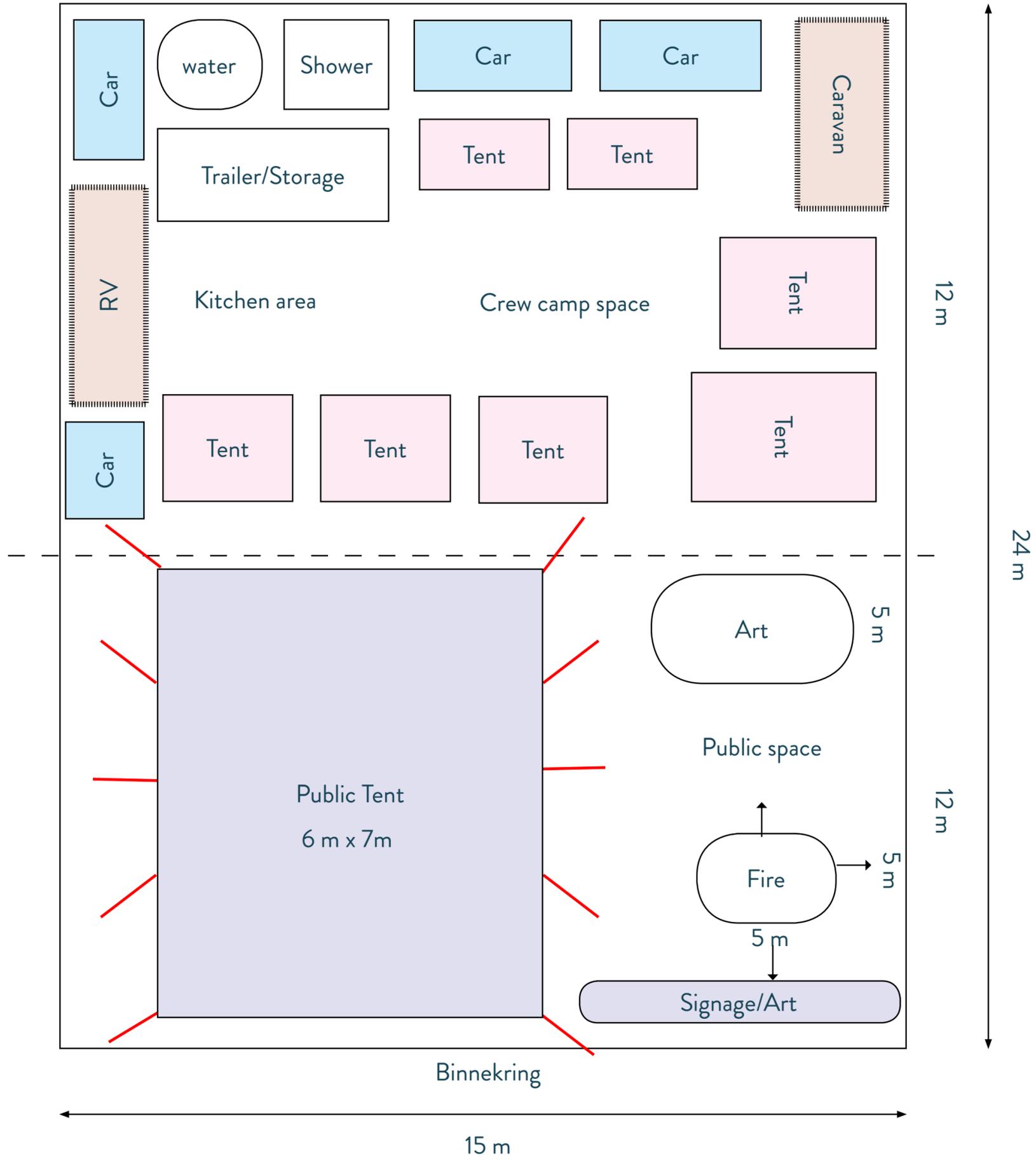
All your needs must be thoroughly thought through to make your camp completely autonomous. This includes power, fuel, water and building equipment.

Remember: you must plan well to ensure everything you hauled in is hauled out: don’t let campmates depart without carrying their share of the load (and this includes bags of trash or recycling).

Schedule

Got a bunch of activities planned? Fantastic – but remember to choose when you have activities, and when not. You don’t need to have something on offer 24 / 7 – and after all, you’ll definitely want a chance to get out there and explore other camps and experiences. Consider creating an info board on which you can feature your schedule, to alert participants to when your camp is in full swing and they can come by. A chalkboard is a good idea.

Remember you can make your own PSA (Public Service Announcement) on Radio Free Tankwa – [check out this tutorial on how to make these](#). Or pop in at the radio booth during the event and come announce your schedule!



Layout & Position

Theme Camps are located throughout Tankwa Town – mostly around the Binnekring, Buitekring and 9:30ish Boulevard – but they can be anywhere. The only place they can't be is inside the Binnekring open space, which is reserved for art. When planning your camp layout, remember that you'll want private space as well as public space. A public, interactive space up front to welcome people and a private, separate area behind this – where your gear, personal tents, private space and kitchen & ablution area can be enclosed, and where you have easy access to your vehicles and/or trailers – is a good idea.



(Greasemonkeys Theme Camp - Photo by Jonx Pillemer)

Deliveries and Tent Erection Companies

Radical self-reliance is strongly encouraged – and learning to erect a stretch tent never killed anyone! However, if you're using a tent hire company to erect your tent for you, there are 3 very important things to bear in mind:

- 1 At least three of your creative crew must be on site to ensure you meet the tent company. AfrikaBurn will not allow your tent erection without someone present.
- 2 Tents larger than 100msq need to be signed off by structural engineer. Please report to the Arteria if we don't get to you before the start of the event.
- 3 All suppliers will be camped in the Supplier Depot close to the gate.

If you have anything else delivered to Tankwa Town for your camp, organise the logistics of these supplies before arriving as well as a person from your crew to receive them. Remember – there's no cellphone reception on site, and deliveries cannot arrive and assume that they will be able to call the relevant person.

PLEASE NOTE: Suppliers or deliveries are not allowed on site without a valid ticket. Ensure the company has the correct contact and Tankwa Town address for your Theme Camp. And make sure you have theirs.



(Photo by Jonx Pillemer)

MOOP (Matter Out Of Place)

So, how does a city of several thousand people rise and vanish without a trace? The answer is YOU.

You make that happen.

We ask that you have a dedicated MOOP representative in place for your camp. They are there to ensure that your camp gets signed off by our MOOP team prior to you leaving site so that your MOOP score is fair and correct and any squatters that leave debris after your camp has camped up and left will not affect your MOOP score in the future.

We've found that the amount of debris deposited on site is directly proportional to length of stay. Densely settled areas such as large Theme Camps can and do leave a greater trace. Debris includes many smaller items, such as nutshells, bottle caps, cigarette butts, cable ties -- the list goes on and on. It is easy to ignore such items on so small a scale, but ALL of these things must be cleaned up.



This includes removing all trace of coal, ash and wood from your fires – and by ‘fires’ we mean burn barrels, braais and braziers. Why? Because open fires (i.e: fires on the ground) are not permitted, because they leave burn scars that last for many years afterward. Don't have a braai, burn barrel or brazier? Radical self-reliance alert: make one.

Organic material does not decompose in the desert. Your lemon rind will be there to greet you next year (if our MOOP team did not clean it up after you and give you hell in the MOOP Report). If you get a red on the Moop Map, you will not be given preferential placement, or any placement, the following year.

Responsibility is not transferable. If somebody offers to clean your site for you, and they don't, the responsibility is still yours.

Safety

Think carefully about all the safety aspects when designing your camp. After all, there are no natural features in the Tankwa that can block the force of hectic gusting winds, or heavy showers of rain (it happens). The heat is oppressive, intense storms can happen suddenly, and dust storms can trash sensitive equipment. Rain can turn any camp into a swamp, and anything on wheels becomes a stationary art installation if it's too heavy to push through thick paste. If you have a fire, make sure it's off the ground - burn scars are permanent - and that there's a clear space around it. All fuel, generators and vehicles should be safely apart from each other. Like a good Scout, be prepared – and that means planning well, in advance.

Fireworks? None of that please. They're beautiful, but they're also a very real fire hazard, as they can spark fires far from where they're lit – and a runaway fire is not an option in our densely-camped city.

The same applies to flares and fire lanterns – they are amongst the very few items completely banned at our event. We love fire – not arson.

Check all ropes and remember to cap all your rebar: tennis balls work very well, but just about anything will do as long as it covers the sharp ends.

NOTE: no matter how big or small your camp, you must have fire extinguishers!

Never leave fires unattended. If you do your friendly Ranger patrol will extinguish it.

Fuel Dump

If you have more than 20l of any type of fuel or more than 19kg of butane gas you need to store the excess at the Fuel Dump. Please go to the Arteria at Off-Centre Camp and have the friendly Arteria volunteer radio Fire Rob for collection and drop off.



Lighting

Even if your camp is a strictly daytime operation, lighting's essential. Not only for safety but also for to you to see it from far away as a beacon that can help you navigate. Put up a tall mast with a distinctive marking (flag's, a giant strawberry, a soccer ball, a flashing LED... anything that you know is your marker) if you're camped in a densely populated area. If you have guy ropes and rebar, use strings of fairy lights or EL wire to light these up so passing bikes or MV's can clearly see where your camp ends and the road begins.

Power

Chances are you're going to need some form of power source – but don't think generators and fuel are the only route to go. Many large camps make use of solar and wind to charge batteries, so consider your options. If you choose to go green, your neighbours will love you – but if you decide a generator is the only way it can be done, then seriously consider soundproofed generators or make your own sound baffle.

Guidelines for Generators

You're having the perfect evening, music is not too loud, vibes in the camp site is great, when your neighbour fires up his earth shatteringly noisy generator. Generator noise pollution can be more disturbing and intrusive than a loud sound system.

Let's all agree to some guidelines to make our camping experience better.



Guidelines:

Generator hours for Theme Camps and artworks can't be regulated, but we ask that you be as considerate as possible to your neighbours.

Build a sound and fire resistant baffle for your generator. Baffles can reduce the noise of your generator tremendously.

Generator hours for campsites 11am - 4pm.

Make sure your cables are handled in a safe way.

If you're in a campsite and you want to run a sound system it should be battery operated. Sound systems in camping areas should be shut off after 11pm. A 12 volt battery will be ample.

Consider investing in a blimped or silent generator or solar panels and batteries.

There is a limit to how much fuel and gas you can have on your campsite.

Mandatory switch off times: 7am - 11am Monday - Thursday. This includes generators unless it's critical to your Theme Camp operations.

Useful links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DH4L1rTraI4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGt97K2Bobw>

Sound Zones

Not everyone will want to rock out when you do, and not everyone will want to sleep when you do, so be considerate – and most importantly, be very specific when describing your sound plans in your Theme Camp application. This will enable our team to place you appropriately. If you're a big party camp, you'll be located in the Loud Zone. If you're a meditation camp, you'll be placed in the Quiet Zone. And if you state you're a quiet camp, but a friend brings a sound system along, you'll need to consider moving if you want to make some noise. We're a community, so think carefully about your choice of neighbourhood.

Quiet Times

After a lot of feedback for our community we experimented with the mandatory quiet times from 7am -11am in 2018. This was met with a lot of quiet applause from everyone and was a overwhelming success. Be nice to your sleepy neighbours and switch off the tunes from Monday - Thursday 7am - 11am.

And on Sunday midnight all music must die as the event officially closes. Please respect our crews that need to leave on Monday morning. Expect a visit from the site manager if you don't comply...

Bikes

As a Theme Camp organiser, our community looks to you to help avoid unnecessary and potentially hazardous bike parking clutter by providing bike racks for folks to use. If you're planning a Theme Camp and figure on attracting a crowd, plan to make a bike rack as a courtesy to your neighbors and passers-by. Randomly strewn bikes in a concentrated area make for tricky, ankle-twisting avenues and a broken ankle is no fun at a burn.

Top Tip: LOCK YOUR BIKE!!



Activities and Promotion

Don't forget that you can inform our community about who you are and what you do by creating Public Service Announcements (PSA's) and sending those in to Radio Free Tankwa, who would be very happy to broadcast those prior to, and during, the event. To create your camp's PSA, you could simply create a voice note on your phone - or you could go full bells & whistles and use audio software to add effects. Once you've created your (30-60 sec) PSA, send it in to rft@afrikaburn.com

If you're completely unable to do so, you could always send one or two of your crew along (with sweet & husky voices) to chat on air in the RFT caravan studio - or record one with their crew. Either way, RFT is a great way to get word out. Listen in on radiofreetankwa.com to hear past PSA's and get a sense of what the station's like.

Another good way to inform people about your activities is a black board which you can update daily and inform people of any changes in your schedule as published in the WTF Guide.

Medics

There is a medical team in Tankwa Town – but they're there to deal with emergencies, not headaches, cracked heels and hangovers. Radical self reliance means you must bring a medical kit with you to deal with any small medical incidents that happen, because rebar injuries, scrapes and cuts do happen out there.

What Do You Do When You Arrive?

Exhale, and then breathe in the clear air of Tankwa Town – you've made it! Then, please check in at the Arteria at Off-Centre Camp when you arrive - we'd like to know that you've arrived so we can welcome you!



(Photo by Jonx Pillemer)

FAQs

Why should I register my Theme Camp?

If you register your Theme Camp, you will receive allocated placement in Tankwa Town, be included in the map, and have a blurb in the WTF Guide.

Can I still do a Theme Camp if I don't register?

YES, we love unexpected gifts! You do not need to be registered to offer the gift of an interactive space. You will not be given placement though and will have to take the space that is available when you arrive.

Why do you have to assess whether we are a Theme Camp or not?

We have had chancers popping up here and there that register a Theme Camp and then don't deliver on their promises, but have had the advantage of space allocated.

Got Squatters?

If there are free campers who have squatted on your allocated Theme Camp space (it happens) and you feel you don't have room to accommodate them, ask them nicely to move on and explain to them that registered Theme Camps are allocated space – as would be evident from the placement sign with your camp name on it. It's your spot and you don't need to share it if you're unable to. If you're not able to resolve the issue to your satisfaction, please come to the Arteria at Off-Centre Camp and ask them to let the Wranglers and Rangers know.



(Photo by Jonx Pillemer)

Got Questions?

Get in touch with our Theme Camp team: there's not much they don't know or can't answer. Contact us on themecamps@afrikaburn.com.

Thanks for bringing your camp and adding to the magic that is Tankwa Town – it couldn't happen without you!