



Deadly Fringe Commissions 2025

Information Pack

Background

Established in 1982, the identity and reputation of Melbourne Fringe is synonymous with the representation and elevation of independent artists across all forms and mediums throughout Victoria and nationally. Year-round programming culminates in an annual festival showcasing more than 450 events and performances which push the boundaries of mainstream creativity and engages with audiences and communities in meaningful ways while keeping the artist at the forefront of the experience.

About Deadly Fringe

The Deadly Fringe program invites both emerging and established First Nations Artists to create, develop and showcase new work in the 2025 iteration of the Melbourne Fringe Festival. Debuting in 2017, Deadly Fringe is an annual performance and development program for First Nations artists and creatives to explore and showcase their stories, knowledge, and culture. Sitting within the sphere of Melbourne Fringe, Deadly Fringe aims to unearth and develop conceptual artwork from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, enabling them to create works that channel strength and connection to culture and history, shifting the creative landscape of Australia's identity.

With eight successful years of operation, Deadly Fringe is an artist development program that continues to expand and support innovative new works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. By being part of the program, successful applicants receive financial support, as well as broader production and artistic support where needed. They will also access industry mentorship opportunities, community engagement initiatives, and dedicated assistance from the Deadly Fringe Program Coordinator.

Why?

Deadly Fringe aims to platform the ideas and artistic exploration of First Nations voices by providing the opportunity to develop and share artistic works through funded commissions. At Melbourne Fringe we believe that programs such as Deadly Fringe are integral for breaking down barriers to artistic expression and creating access. This is integral to the cultural fabric of the arts industry.

Commission Funding

The **Deadly Fringe Commissions** will support new projects selected for development and presentation in the 2025 Festival, with each selected participant **receiving \$3,000 – \$15,000** in project funds to make it all happen! This year Melbourne Fringe is offering FIVE opportunities of Deadly Fringe funding, with three available for application now:

- ONE \$15,000 commission
- TWO \$10,000 commission

THREE \$3,000 commissions will be available to apply for in April, but the details in this information pack relate to the three larger commissions (1x \$15k and 2x \$10k).

These opportunities are funded by the Australian Government Indigenous Languages and Arts, the Crainey Quinn Foundation and MECCA Cosmetics.

Key Information

These opportunities are for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people only. Successful applicants must self-produce the work however, Melbourne Fringe will share skills and resources to help you present your work / event in the 2025 Melbourne Fringe Festival.

Applications open: 4th of January 2025

Applications close: 28th of February 2025

Important Information

All applications are due by **11:59pm on Sunday 2 March**.

All shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview about their project, to give us a chance to learn a bit more about you and your work. These will be held during the day, on the **week commencing Monday 10th of March**.

Have a read of the full information in the rest of this Information Pack, but if you have any questions please get in touch!

For any questions you can email us, give us a call during office hours, or make a time to chat with us over Zoom:

- Email Peta and Danny by sending to peta@melbournefringe.com.au and cc'ing in danny@melbournefringe.com.au (Peta works part time, so make sure you include Danny in the email!)
- Call the office on (03) 9660 9600 and ask for Peta or Danny.
- Make a time to have a yarn: email, call or we'll sort out a Zoom time for you.

How to apply

Read all of the information in this document, including the information on following pages and if you decide to apply, visit <https://airtable.com/appjhuM19leA9MD0z/pag0RFZ9UoDbBqGSX/form> to start your application.

To complete the online expression of interest application, you will need to:

- Identify which funding amount you think would work best for your project (\$15k or \$10k)
- Outline your vision of the project you want to create
- Tell us a bit about yourself as an artist, and explain your artistic goals and ambitions
- Include biographies for yourself and any other key artists in your team (as an attachment)
- Attach supporting information like photos, sound or videos as examples of previous work
- A brief budget outline (as an attachment) is ideal but not necessary

Is writing not your strong suit? We also accept video entries of up to 7 minutes, where you need to answer the same questions, but can do it as you instead of writing it down. Just follow the instructions in the online EOI form linked to above.

Frequently Asked Questions

Has Deadly Fringe been run before?

Yes, this will be the ninth year of the program! The program has previously and continues to support various contemporary visual and performance art commissions with wonderful success.

Last year (2024) Deadly Fringe supported 4 artists in realising their works:

Na Djinang Circus - *'In Place'*

A contemporary circus work that delves into connections with humanity, culture and place.

Aaron Wyatt – *'Digital Echos'*

A concert for viola, percussion and electronics exploring sound that travels.

James Howard - *'Gikilangangu Wergia'*

An exploration of personal and community history through language and improvised music performance.

The Motherless Collective - *'Creatures of the Blak Lagoon'*

A Deadly Fringe club night to get the season started. Taking place in the swampy marsh, audiences are invited to join the murky mob for a night of freaky festive frivolities.

What kind of work are will be selected for Deadly Fringe?

We welcome creative projects across all forms, or style including visual, dance, theatre, storytelling, 2D/3D artwork, text-based theatre, devised performance, cabaret, physical theatre, circus, live art, and anything else you can think of – if it has a performance or exhibition outcome, we want to hear about it!

Who can apply to Deadly Fringe?

Deadly Fringe is for people who identify as **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander** who reside in Melbourne and the neighbouring lands of the Kulin Nation. We particularly would love to hear from Boon Wurrung and/or Wurundjeri artists.

Deadly Fringe is also for people who identify as **emerging or mid-career Artists**, which is often people who are in the first 10 years of their professional experience as artists, but you could be considered “emerging or mid-career” and be very experienced, such as:

- You may be using Deadly Fringe to try something new, such as an Actor who now wants to be a Director or a Painter who wants to become a Storyteller.
- Deadly Fringe also encompasses the opportunity for leadership and initiative, you may be an experienced artist wanting to lead a new creative team/project that includes many emerging Artists.

You can apply as a **solo practitioner** or as **part of a group**.

If you're applying as a solo artist, we'd also like to know what kinds of expertise you think you will need to develop and present your new project. If you know specific people you might approach then tell us who, but you can also just let us know the roles that you would need to support you in your project development, and we can help you find the right people.

If you are part of a group, you'll need to decide on a lead applicant to make the application on behalf of the team. During the application process you can include all your bios. Your whole team doesn't need to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, but at the very least the lead applicant must be.

What support will the selected Deadly Fringe Artists receive?

Each participant will receive personalised support from the staff Melbourne Fringe through the Deadly Fringe Program and the broader Melbourne Fringe Programs and Projects Team, as well as bespoke mentorship from a senior First Nations arts producer or artist. We will work with you to make a tailored plan based on the nature of your project and your stage of career.

You will also be guided in how best to participate in Melbourne Fringe's Artist Development Program including FAQs, Info Sessions, and other professional and creative development opportunities that are designed to support and equip artists with the tools and skills needed to excel in the festival and beyond.

The Melbourne Fringe Artist Development series includes:

- **Melbourne Fringe Resource Hub** our library of helpful info to guide you on your Fringe journey, found [here](#).
- **Let's Talk Program** includes talks, workshops and sessions for up-skilling emerging artists across disciplines and career trajectories, exploring a range of skills such as accessibility, touring, marketing and producing. You find out more about our resources as well as pre-recorded talks [here!](#)
- **Rego FAQs** are group sessions that help artists register events in the Melbourne Fringe Festival.

What is the Project Fee intended for?

- Pay fees for yourself and your creative team to find time to participate in the Artist Development Program sessions, as well as artist fees for the development of your project.
- Production requirement costs during the creative development and presentation of your project at the 2025 Melbourne Fringe Festival (i.e. the cost of putting on your show!)
- Paying for your venue (although Melbourne Fringe can help a little bit extra on occasion – please chat to us if you'd like a subsidised venue hire at the Festival Hub!)
- All the regular costs of putting on a show: registration fee, ticket fees, public liability insurance (and we'll be here to help you navigate all these admin steps when the time comes).

What's my commitment if I get involved in Deadly Fringe?

As with all our past participants, we want you to come out of the Deadly Fringe program as a better and more confident performance / art maker, ready to take on the arts world in a big way. To get to that end point, you must be able to attend some key development sessions throughout the program, including:

- Maintain contact and frequent project updates with the Deadly Fringe Program Coordinator, Peta Duncan.
- Attend the festival opening night as well as closing awards ceremony.
- Credit Melbourne Fringe and all funders across all marketing materials.
- Complete a post festival survey or interview about your experience of the Deadly Fringe program and more broadly Melbourne Fringe Festival as a whole.
- Getting involved in the mentorship program to develop and grow your practice.

Once you're in the program we will work with you to create a tailored plan that will develop the skills you require for your project or to advance your career.

A bit about us

Melbourne Fringe is a celebration of cultural democracy and art for everyone. By embracing diversity and a spirit of independence, we create a unique space for artistic self-expression linked to the life of our great city. That's why Melbourne Fringe is the most adventurous, inclusive, all-encompassing multi-artform festival in Australia. Every year we feature thousands of artists from every discipline you can name (and a few others besides) performing 450+ events in over 160 venues to an audience of 350,000 people. We find ideas from the margins and shout them to the world. We love the weird and strange, the different and queer, the misfits and the freaks. We're here to challenge perceptions and shake up the hierarchy, to be brave and unafraid, to explore the boundaries of art and to change the way you see the world.

For more info please visit www.melbournefringe.com.au

In 2025 Deadly Fringe is proudly supported by the Beeton Family Fund, Craige Semple and our program partners:



Australian Government
Indigenous Languages and Arts

Canny Quine
FOUNDATION

MECCA

Melbourne Fringe respectfully acknowledges the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri people of the Eastern Kulin nation. We recognise that our interactive venues, performance spaces, theatres and offices are firmly enrooted into the soil of Australia's First Nations peoples, and with that we pay our respect to the custodians of this city; the Elders, past, present and future.