



RADICAL ACCESS COMMISSION

Melbourne Fringe is thrilled to be offering a **\$40,000 commission** to an experienced Deaf, Disabled or Neurodivergent artist to create a new work for the 2025 Melbourne Fringe Festival.

About the opportunity:

This commission is for the development and presentation of a new work to be presented as part of the Radical Access program during the 2025 Melbourne Fringe Festival.

This is a unique opportunity for an experienced artist to develop and present a fully realised work during this year's festival (30 September until 19 October 2025). The work will be produced by the successful artist (or a producer they hire!) and will form an important part of the Melbourne Fringe Curated Program for this year.

The proposed work can be in any form or genre but **must be ambitious and innovative in the way it engages with accessibility, inclusivity and cultural equity**. The successful work will provide excellent access services to engage with and support the experiences of a broad representation of Disabled people. But it will also be radical in the way it thinks about inclusivity: accessibility will be integrated into the foundation of the work, and the access services provided will move beyond what is being done elsewhere to provide something unique, bold and future-focused.

The commission is specifically for an artist who has created and self-produced a significant body of work already, and now feels ready to take on a mid-sized commission. The recipient will be able to refer to several successful seasons of high-quality work as part of their application.

This commission is not for an emerging artist, or for a work in progress or a "showing". Melbourne Fringe will have other opportunities throughout 2025 for emerging artists and for creative developments.

The successful artist will receive:

- \$40,000 in commissioning funds;
- Support from Melbourne Fringe staff to consult and guide your team – this includes staff who can provide expert advice relating to production management, marketing, administration, and creative producing as well as a bespoke mentorship opportunity;
- Up to \$3,000 to assist you with your own access costs relating to the project; and
- Dedicated marketing and publicity support from our staff that will sit alongside your own marketing and publicity activities to help get the word out about your show.

About Radical Access:

Radical Access launched in full in 2022, beginning a ten-year social change project in partnership with Arts Access Victoria. This program imagines a radical version of best practice accessibility for the independent arts sector and moves the conversation beyond the provision of access services and into cultural equity.

Radical Access is a provocation for change and a call for accelerated action. We commission bold new work by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artists, provide creative development opportunities, run workshops, masterclasses, and mentorships, and provide employment opportunities for d/Deaf and Disabled arts workers. All of this is with the aim to significantly increase access and inclusion for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artists across the independent arts sector.

DETAILS OF THE COMMISSION OPPORTUNITY

This is a self-produced commission.

That means we will pay the successful applicant the full \$40,000 commission fee, and they will be responsible to produce and deliver the event as part of the 2025 Melbourne Fringe Festival. That includes finding and confirming an appropriate venue. But we are also here to help with advice and guidance, every step of the way!

Full details of how this commission works can be found in the appendix of this information pack.

The commission is for an artist making any artform or genre.

There is only one commission available, but it could go to an artist presenting any kind of work – theatre, dance, visual art, cabaret, circus – whatever your form, we'd welcome you to apply.

This opportunity is for an experienced artist.

We welcome you to define whether you are “emerging” or “experienced” – how we look at it is: if you're confident in the art you create, have a few works under your belt with great reviews and/or awards, and have the proven ability to pull together a team to help make your work a success, then you are an experienced artist!

Applications are only open to a lead artist who is d/Deaf, Disabled or Neurodivergent.

Amplifying the art of Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artists is a core aim of the Radical Access program. This commission is for an artist who identifies openly as being d/Deaf, Disabled or Neurodivergent (which may include visible and invisible disability, chronic illness, mental illness, neurodiversity, and any other barriers or identifiers experienced by people in disability communities).

Melbourne Fringe is here to assist.

Our core staff will be available to consult and guide your team through the development, promotion and presentation of your work. We won't be taking over the producing or creation of the work for you, but we will meet with you regularly to get updates on the project and provide guidance. Your key support will be our Program Manager (Access Fringe), Milly Cooper, who will provide support throughout the year as you create your ambitious work for this commission.

In addition to this, you will have a formal mentorship plan with our Access Fringe Cultural Equity Consultant, Caroline Bowditch. Caroline will work with you to develop a plan which may include up to ten hours of direct support in areas of her expertise.

Your budget needs to consider the cost of all artist fees and presentation costs.

This includes artist fees for yourself, your artistic collaborators, and any other team members (for example, a producer, a stage manager, designer, or lighting/sound operator depending on the venue you book). Your budget also needs to consider all production expenses, such as venue hire, set and costume costs or equipment hire, as well as administration costs such as public liability insurance, music licensing, ticket fees, and Fringe registration fees.

In summary: you will need to be confident that you have a budget that can cover all the costs of presenting your event. Your income would be the \$40,000 commission fee, plus a reasonable projection of income from ticket sales, plus any other funds already confirmed as available at the time of application.

The income in your budget may not include "prospective fundraising" (e.g. grants that you plan to apply for in the future). This commission will only go to an artist who is confident that they can present the proposed work with funds that would be available to them at the time of receiving the commission. We will support future fundraising activities where requested, but these must be to make your event idea even better – we cannot select an idea for this commission that could only proceed if other funding applications are also successful.

We can also provide some additional support for you and your team.

On top of your commissioning fee we can also provide additional support of \$3,000 in contribution towards the access costs for yourself or your team.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The 2025 Radical Access Commission is a two-stage application process. This first stage is open **until 2 March 2025** and is a very easy process. We will ask you questions about your past work, and your idea for a commission. We will also ask about your ambition for how your work will be "radically accessible"). It is a relatively easy process where we want to open the door and ask you to let us know what you would like to do.

Up to three applicants will then proceed to the second round. This is where we will ask you to provide a draft budget, and ask you to attend an interview to discuss your proposal in more detail.

To start your application and look at the questions, [please click here to go to the EOI Form](#).

Video or Audio Applications

We expect most applications to be submitted in writing using the EOI form. However, we are also accepting applications submitted as a video or audio file. If you submit a video or audio application you will still need to fill out some of the applicant details in the form linked to above. But you will submit your answers to all assessable questions by uploading a video or audio file. If your video is in another language, such as Auslan, you are welcome to suggest a preferred interpreter for us to engage.

Please note, this option to submit by video or audio is not about creating something with high production values. It is an option provided for access purposes. The following formats will be accepted: MP4, MOV, WMV, AVI, MKV, M4A, MP3, WAV or AAC. You may submit a single file for each of the questions, or one file per question. If you submit multiple files please ensure each file is clearly named. The Dropbox link to submit your file(s) is in the EOI form linked above.

Applications in Other Formats

If the Airtable form is not accessible for you, or if there is another way you would prefer to submit an application, please get in touch to let us know. You can call our office or email Milly Cooper at milly@melbournefringe.com.au. Please let us know how you would prefer to submit your answers to the questions. We are open to your ideas around process. However, we cannot change the timeframes unfortunately – you'll still need to get your proposal in by 2 March, 2025.

Questions you will be asked

Whether you are providing written answers on the EOI form or submitted them by video or audio response, you will need to provide us with answers to the following questions:

1. Tell us a bit about your idea - what do you want to do? How do you imagine the audience would experience your event? What do you hope to change or achieve with this work?
2. How does your idea engage with the idea of 'Radical Access'? How will your idea stimulate conversation or provoke a shift towards cultural equity for people who are Deaf, Disabled or Neurodivergent?
3. Please provide a brief artist biography to let us know who you are and what you've done. By "you" we mean you personally, as well as any other people that you consider as a "lead artist" on this work. As part of this you can share some highlights of your past work with us, and you may also provide links to up to three reviews. Please also give us a sense for your level of experience in making art: do you feel at the beginning of your career, or well established in your practice?

4. Please provide a brief list of any other key people who are involved with you on this project. Are there other creatives involved? Do you have a producer yet? Who else is helping you make this happen? As part of this: also let us know if you have a venue presentation partner in mind, or if you need our help to find one. And please make it clear whether your proposed team members and presentation partner have been approached already, or if they are just ideas for now.
5. Anything else you want to tell us? This is a chance to mention anything you think is important that these questions haven't asked you.
6. Do you have any access requirements?

Each answer will be limited to 200 words if written (two minutes if video or audio), except for Question #6 which has no word limit. The best answers will be honest and engage with the heart of your work; the less good answers will be drafted by ChatGPT and will be well-written but quite generic in content and lacking in your personality!

SELECTION CRITERIA

We will be selecting up to three applicants to proceed to the second round of applications. The successful works will reflect core elements of what the Radical Access program aims to support, and will be assessed with reference to the following selection criteria:

1. **Concept:** is your idea exciting, innovative, and creative?
2. **Provocation for change:** How does the work contribute towards cultural equity for Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people?
3. **Viability:** do you and your team have sufficient experience and skills to deliver a successful project?

APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE

3 February 2025: Applications open.

2 March 2025: Stage 1 applications close (by 11.59pm).

7 March 2025: Applicants notified if they have proceeded to Stage 2 or not.

14 March 2025: Stage 2 Applicants submit draft budgets.

17 – 18 March 2025: Stage 2 interviews held.

21 March 2025: Stage 2 applicants notified of outcome.

QUESTIONS OR ENQUIRIES

If you want to discuss other ways to submit your application or have questions about this info pack, please contact us. Send your email to Milly Cooper at milly@melbournefringe.com.au and cc Danny Delahunty at danny@melbournefringe.com.au.

Alternatively, you may phone our office: Melbourne Fringe on (03) 9660 9600 and ask to speak to Milly or Danny. [You may contact us through the National Relay Service, and the link is available if you click on this sentence.](#)

If you would like to discuss access provisions at Melbourne Fringe more broadly, or would like to discuss how Melbourne Fringe holds safe cultural spaces for Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artists please email our Access Advisor, Carly Findlay: carly@melbournefringe.com.au or call our office on a Monday or Tuesday and ask for Carly.

SUBMISSION DUE DATE

Stage 1 applications close at 11.59pm on **Sunday 2 March, 2025**.

And just so you don't need to go looking for it, here is the link to the application form again: <https://airtable.com/app4kl2dwKr2Wg8zg/pagzCg4yD5m36Mq8b/form>

Radical Access is proudly supported by:



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