



Venue Commissions: Fringe Programmed Venues \$2,500

About the opportunity

This year Melbourne Fringe is offering a select number of **\$2,500 commissions** for artists who are **First Nations, d/Deaf, Disabled, People of Colour, and/or transgender** to create new works for our Fringe Programmed Venues (Festival Hub at Trades Hall, or Meat Market). This opportunity is open to any artist or collective based in Victoria, working in any artform.

This application process aims to be easy and artist-friendly with minimal requirements – we just want to get excited about your idea and hear about your plans to make it happen.

KEY INFORMATION

Funding details

If successful, you will receive:

- **\$2,500** in commissioning funds;
- **Guaranteed programming** in either Festival Hub, or Meat Market (subject to our usual programming process)

Not included in the funding offer (i.e. there is no additional funding on top of the awarded amount, you will need to budget the following items):

- Your Melbourne Fringe Festival registration fee, ticketing charges, insurance and any other costs associated with producing your work;
- Access costs; and
- Presentation costs such as venue hire, artist fees, support staff, marketing and promotion costs, permits, licences, etc.

Eligibility

This opportunity is for **artist** based in **Victoria**.

It is for a work that can be presented as part of a shared room programming structure a Fringe Programmed Venue - Festival Hub or Meat Market (i.e. your production must be light on infrastructure, as there will be other productions in this room on the same nights)

It must be a **new work** and must be **premiered** during the 2025 Festival.

How to apply: Please click on [THIS LINK](#) to access the application form.

Applications close at midnight **on Sunday 30th March 2025**.

If using Airtable isn't accessible for you, please get in touch so we can better understand how to best accommodate your access needs. We can accept applications submitted as text documents, video or audio files and are also happy to work with you on other accessible application processes. Please email both olly@melbournefringe.com.au and milly@melbournefringe.com.au to start a conversation.

You can find more details on the application process and format below.

CONTEXT AND EXPECTATIONS FOR FUNDED ARTISTS

Receiving support through the Fringe Fund isn't quite the same as a grant, but it isn't quite the same as having your work bought by a curated Festival – it falls somewhere in-between. That's because we've raised money from trusts, foundations, government bodies and private donors, and we'll need your help to ensure certain deliverables are met so we can acquit those funds. It's the circle of (funding) life.

There are a couple of key features of these commission opportunities to understand:

1. These commissions are only open to our communities of focus (First Nations, d/Deaf, Disabled, People of Colour, and/or transgender or gender diverse people)

As an organisation focused on democratising the arts, we are seeking to engage in meaningful investment in communities who have historically faced marginalisation and inequity. We are opening these commissions to specific communities of focus under our [Ethic, Diversity and Equality program](#) to reduce barriers to access, and ensure that our Fringe Programmed Venues reflect the diversity of our arts community.

2. This is a self-produced commission.

That means we will pay successful applicants the full \$2,500 commission fee, and they will be responsible to produce and deliver the event as part of the 2025 Melbourne Fringe Festival. We are also here to help with advice and guidance every step of the way, but this event will be produced by you and not our in-house team. You will be responsible for registering the event and undertaking all administration, planning, marketing and delivery. But you will also retain all profits!

3. The commission can be any genre or form.

You should not feel limited by genre, form, number of performers, or anything besides the limitations of Festival Hub programming. Which is to say, this work must be a ticketed performance that can fit within the shared programming model where one room hosts multiples shows per night, often with a tight turn

around (~15 minutes) and limited storage space. Run times are typically <60 minutes but we will also consider longer and shorter works. As the building is heritage listed we also can't accommodate anything with high degrees of mess or risk (such as fire).

4. The commission involves guaranteed programming in a Fringe Programmed Venue, but is still subject to our programming process

The successful applicants will be ensured a spot within either the Festival Hub program at Trades Hall, Carlton, or a space at Meat Market in North Melbourne. You will be asked to submit your venue, time date, and season preferences much like the standard Fringe Programmed Venue's EOI, and our programming team will work to place you in your first or second preference. This means you will be asked for some amount of flexibility in your programming preferences, and we will work with you to make sure your venue offer makes you happy. But it doesn't mean you get to select your own venue or timeslot without our input.

5. You will work collaboratively with Melbourne Fringe.

This means: Melbourne Fringe is a key stakeholder in your event, unlike a grant where the funder just wants an acquittal report at the end. Because we have a vested interest in the success of your work, we may ask you to **collaborate with Melbourne Fringe** in certain ways while working on your project. We won't encroach on your artistic vision, but we might offer support including:

- dramaturgical advice to help you position the work for a Melbourne Fringe audience;
- advice or feedback for your budget, to help you work towards financial success; or
- inclusion in marketing or publicity opportunities; or
- suggesting the scale of your project might require you to allocate funds towards a producer, production manager or designer to help you achieve your creative vision.

To support you in this way, we will ask that you:

- update us on the creative development of the project, and share your project timeline, budget and marketing plan (once they're ready to share of course!);
- attend occasional meetings to discuss the work's progress and how we can better support you;
- be open and available to listen to our feedback, built on many years of experience.

We don't require a share of the work's intellectual property, but we do ask for permission to film or photograph the event for marketing, promotional and archival purposes. We also ask that you keep us updated on any future seasons of the work, and always credit Melbourne Fringe as an original funder.

APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS

We endeavour to make the application process easy and quick. You will be asked 6 required questions and 3 optional questions about yourself, your past work, and your idea. Successful applicants will be contacted by email to discuss their programming needs and proceed to event registration.

In selecting the successful project(s) we will consider the following criteria:

- **Concept:** does your project put forward exciting ideas and creative thinking? Is it something new that we might not have funded before? Does it add something unique and exciting to what is currently being presented in the independent sector?
- **Capacity:** do you have the skills and the team to present what you want to achieve? Will you be able to deliver a high-quality outcome for your project? Are you aiming for best practice accessibility and inclusivity?

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 30th 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. **How would you describe your show?** *Please provide a practical description of what your work is and does (eg. tell us about the format, style, amount of collaborators, major topics and themes)*
2. **Who are the cast, crew, and creative collaborators?** *The people involved in the work and their roles - please indicate whether these people are confirmed or proposed*
3. **What is your previous experience?** *What have you and your team done in the past? We want to know about your past work, your skills, your inspirations, and what is most important to you in creating art. 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.*
4. **What do you think is exciting about your idea and why does it fit in a Festival Programmed Venue specifically?** *What is it about your project that is unique, boundary pushing, or exciting? And why do you think it would work best in either Festival Hub at Trades Hall or Meat Market?*
5. **How would you use these funds to make your idea a reality?** *What impact would \$2,500 make on your project and what would you be allocating the money towards?*
6. **Please provide a draft timeline for the development of your project, if you are successful in receiving the funding.** *We're looking for an outline of your key dates. you can also link to a shareable document (please make sure you've turned on link sharing) E.g. 2 weeks of creative development with full cast (3-14 April). 4 weeks of full time rehearsal with full cast (1-26 May). etc.*
7. **Do you have a particular Fringe Programmed Venue in mind? (optional)** *Is there a particular room at either Festival Hub or Meat Market that you are interested in, or are you applying generally? This is an optional question, successful applicants will be asked to fill out a separate EOI with more programming specific information. [See venue information HERE on resource Hub](#)*
8. **Anything else you want to tell us? (optional)** *This is a chance to mention anything you think is important that these questions haven't asked you.*
9. **Do you have any access requirements for us to be aware of at this stage? (optional)**

Each answer will be limited to 250-300 words if written (two to two-and-a-half minutes if video or audio). 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!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the Festival Dates this year?

Your project must take place at some point during, and as part of, the 2025 Melbourne Fringe Festival, which will be **30th September – 19th October 2025**.

Who owns the work?

The artist owns the work. Melbourne Fringe just has the right to premiere the work as part of the 2025 Melbourne Fringe Festival, and to capture images and/or video of the work for documentation, acquittal and marketing purposes; but the work belongs to the artist.

Can I apply to tour or remount an existing work?

Unfortunately not, as the funds for this stream are committed to commissioning new works – however, we're definitely open to ideas if how you might redevelop an existing work in a new or exciting way. If you have done a development before, or perhaps a work-in-progress showing or season – that's OK! As long as, hand on heart, you can say this is the premiere first season, it'll probably be fine. If you're unsure of whether your new ideas would make it a "new work" or not, please just get in touch!

What do you mean by "best practice accessibility and inclusivity"?

We mean that we will be prioritising projects that consider access and inclusion as central to the concept. If you haven't already had a chance to read it, please make sure you check out our [Accessibility Zone](#) for ideas of how to embed access into your early planning.

Why do you ask demographic questions as part of the application process?

We have a commitment to ensuring that events Melbourne Fringe funds collectively represent the breadth of Melbourne's diverse communities, and we have specific quotas and targets of funding allocations towards our communities of focus, which include artists who are: First Nations, People of Colour, culturally and linguistically diverse people, Deaf, Disabled, and LGBTQIA+ people with a separate quota to specifically support transgender artists. Assigning quotas to our funding allocations ensures that we are properly representing lead artists from these communities.

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 Olly Lawrence at olly@melbournefringe.com.au. Alternatively,

you may phone our office: Melbourne Fringe on (03) 9660 9600 and ask to speak to Olly:
olly@melbournefringe.com.au.

[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, 30th 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/pag5GJrfqTtibt2iR/form>

Venues Commissions are part of the Fringe Fund, which is proudly supported by:



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.