



Club Fringe Commissions

ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY

For over a decade, we have been building a community gathering space at the Hub by programming a great Club Fringe events on key nights. Over the past few years we've opened the door and invited Fringe artists to run their own Club Fringe events as part of the Festival (with some funding assistance from us of course!). From electrifying parties to groundbreaking performances, these unforgettable late-night events have brought the Festival Hub to life.

Now, we're on the lookout for even more wildly original and avant-garde ideas for 2025. Whether it's a high-concept art party, or a slick dance-floor filling event, we want to hear from you!

We can't wait to see what \$3k ideas you've got up your sleeves.

KEY INFORMATION

Funding details

If successful, you will receive:

- **\$3,000 cash** from the Fringe Fund to produce, present and market your Club Fringe event; and
- **Free venue hire** in Common Rooms, inclusive of a single lighting and sound technician, front of house staff, security, ticketing, and bar; and
- **100% of ticket profits** from the 100 tickets available for pre-sale, and any door sales that occur on the night. Please note, passholders (and guests) receive free entry but must pay if they want to pre-book. Fringe may paper events (on the day) if pre-sales are low, and all entry after midnight is free; and
- **Promotion** as part of the Club Fringe program; and
- An additional budget to assist with **audience access services**.

Not included in the funding offer (i.e. there is no additional funding, you will need to budget the following items as part of your \$3k / project budget):

- Your Melbourne Fringe Festival participation fees, insurance and any other costs associated with producing your event; and
- Marketing and promotion costs needed to supplement the Melbourne Fringe promotional activities; and

- All other presentation costs such as artist fees, support staff, stage management, and additional technical staff beyond the room technician (e.g. if you need AV or a specialised audio engineer), etc.

Eligibility

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

It must be a **new Club Fringe idea** that will be premiered during the 2025 Festival.

The event must take place **from 10pm till late**, with draft programming having these commissions programmed for **Friday 3rd October, Saturday 4th October, Sunday 5th October, Saturday 11th October, Sunday 12th October, and Saturday 18th October**.

How to apply:

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

Applications close **18 May 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.

APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS

We endeavour to make the application process easy and quick. You will be asked 6 required questions and 2 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 Melbourne? We're not just looking for a great party night—Melbourne has plenty of those throughout the year—we're looking for something *unique* that is specific to the Club Fringe program of events.
- **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? Do you have an existing audience that will be keen to attend?

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

Some Tips

Please make sure you have a read of the **Club Fringe Programming Manifesto in Appendix 2** (*at the end of this document*) to understand how we make our programming decisions, but in addition to the general guidance, here's some specific guidance on what sort of events we're likely to program on different nights:

- Our opening **Friday 3rd Oct** and **Saturday 4th Oct** nights will always be programmed with killer concepts with a strong general appeal – ideas that will kick off Fringe with a bang, and have an easy marketable pitch. These events will be Parties with a capital P! They will still be unique and art-driven though, with roving performances or carefully curated stage programming that engages the audience without drawing away from the dancefloor fun.
- The first **Sunday 5th Oct** is going to be an artist-focused night for all the Fringe participants to let loose. This is the night where a lot of the “Club Fringe Manifesto” guidelines are the most flexible, and we've often been able to program more ‘performance heavy’ concepts on a Sunday.
- The middle **Saturday 11th Oct** is our chance to take a risk on some kind of beautiful and super high-concept party. This is the most popular weekend, and historically is where the weird and wonderful overly arty events live. If you've been to a Huxley's Club Fringe night, chances are it was on the middle Saturday.
- The middle **Sunday 12th Oct** is a very specific brief: we are looking for a lower sensory club event for our neurodivergent community. Come at us with some ideas! Something that creates a party space just as successfully as our other nights, but in context that is welcoming to folks who experience sensory overload in more common club environments.
- The final **Saturday 18th Oct** is a big one: because so many of our artists are planning a big night for our closing party on the Sunday, we want to make sure we're programming someone on the final Saturday that can stimulate a really strong audience from the general public or through their own existing audiences.

We are open to pitches outside of these formats, but following these guidelines will help your application meet our assessment criteria more directly.

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 18 May 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 idea?** *How would you describe the audience's experience at your event – from arrival to when the lights go on at the end of the night? Please provide a practical description of what your idea is (e.g. tell us about the working title, format, style). (1,850 character limit - approximately 300 words)*
2. **Who are you planning to work with?** *Please tell us about your team. What DJs and performers you will be working with? Please indicate whether these people are confirmed or proposed (1,500 character limit - approximately 250 words)*
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. (1,500 character limit - approximately 250 words)*
4. **What do you think is exciting about your idea and why is it suited to Club Fringe specifically?** *How is your event unique or different to a normal party? How will this particular event appeal to a broad audience? (2,000 character limit - approximately 350 words)*
5. **How would you use these funds to program and market a successful Club Fringe event?** *Please give us a top-level breakdown of how you plan to make your Club night come to life with the \$3,000 funding. We want to know you're accounted for all elements of artist fees, crew, marketing, and any special elements like costume, props or equipment needed. (1,500 character limit - approximately 250 words)*

6. **What night(s) will you be able to put on your Club Fringe event?** *Select all that apply out of the following: Friday 3rd October, Saturday 4th October, Sunday 5th October, Saturday 11th October, Sunday 12th October, Saturday 18th October.*
7. **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. (1,500 character limit - approximately 250 words)*
8. **Do you have any access requirements for us to be aware of at this stage?**
(optional)*(1,500 character limit - approximately 250 words)*

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!

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.

[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

Applications close at 11.59pm on **Sunday, 18th May, 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>

Club Fringe <https://airtable.com/app4kl2dwKr2Wg8zg/pagsexJqceXHswy7K/form>

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.

APPENDIX 1: 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. This is a self-produced commission.

That means we will pay you the full \$3,000 commission fee, but **you (or your team!) will be responsible for all elements of the production**, including:

- managing a creative project plan and schedule that will ensure your Club Fringe night is delivered as a fully realised work;
- budgeting for costs responsibly, ensuring you have put aside funds for the Fringe participation fee, per-ticket participation charges, paying all artists/DJs and stage managers involved a fair rate, and access service costs;
- producing the event to a high standard of delivery, and completing administration tasks such as registering the event, securing appropriate insurance and music licences, etc.;
- marketing your event; and
- sourcing any additional funding required through sponsorship, partnerships or grants.

You will be presenting your work as an independent event, which means if you decide to charge for tickets (a decision up to you and how you market your event) you will retain all profits!

2. 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
- guidance in best practice accessibility and inclusivity; 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 event, and share your project timeline, budget and marketing plan (once they're ready to share of course!);
- attend occasional meetings to discuss the event's progress and how we can better support you;
- provide all relevant operational documents such as risk assessments, running schedule, and contact details;
- 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.

APPENDIX 2: CLUB FRINGE PROGRAMMING MANIFESTO

About Club Fringe

Club Fringe is the beating heart of the Melbourne Fringe Festival. It's the physical manifestation of everything Melbourne Fringe stands for: it's a welcoming, inclusive, brave, creative, celebratory space where surprising things happen, and where everyone is celebrated for their individuality. It's uniquely Fringe – with high concept themes, self-expression, wild costumes made from found materials, weird performances that could never happen anywhere else and participatory experiences that you'll be recalling for years. It's not trying to be cool. Instead it's an inclusive, a safe space and a political space: it's a feminist, queer space charged with the radical energy that celebrates Melbourne's creative community and all the people of the Fringe. It's also a party space, where you can celebrate after a show, dance to let off steam and enjoy a drink with friends, fellow artists and Fringe staff, volunteers, arts industry and Melbourne Fringe's most dedicated and passionate audience members. Club Fringe builds and celebrates the Fringe community.

About the art at Club Fringe

Melbourne Fringe audiences are up for anything. Nothing shocks us. We want to be constantly surprised and inspired and delighted. We also want to participate – the best Club Fringe nights have at least one big moment where everyone sings together, or dances together, or bounces a giant beach ball together while singing We Are The World. We want people to know that they have to be there because a Club Fringe event is a one-off event – they are never, ever repeated.

The Club should celebrate the artists of Melbourne Fringe, but not be simply a line-up night where performers do excerpts from their shows. That happens at other festivals, but Melbourne Fringe is higher concept than that. Performers – both from this year's Festival's artists, from past Fringe Festivals, and from Melbourne's independent arts scenes more broadly – respond to themes with bite-sized bits of their artistic practice. Sometimes, performers will create short pieces especially for the event. Opportunities to showcase artists in the festival are encouraged, but excerpts from performers' shows must fit the theme of the night, and not feel shoehorned in. Each night at Club Fringe should feel unique.

About the commerce

Reality check: we pay for the Club predominantly via bar sales. We also want people to want to do this in a celebratory club space. (And we also have a great selection of delicious, non-alcoholic beverages!). So it's important to design a night that has the right vibes and allows breaks in performances for people to be able to get a drink, otherwise people won't have fun, and Fringe will go broke. Neither are outcomes we want!

What are the programming guidelines?

There are a bunch of things we know that, if followed, will make a great Club Fringe event. These are not all required all the time, so they're open to discussion and we often break them for very good reasons, but our starting point in selecting the successful Club Fringe events looks at:

- Don't try to create a narrative show with dialogue – the Club is an arty party, not a show per se.
- In general, we recommend there's barely any talking at all. Talking just doesn't work in a Club context – people aren't listening. They're talking to each other, getting a drink, coming late and leaving early – it's a transient space and a club act should celebrate this context, and not try to compete with it.
- Assume people are holding a drink while watching the stage (but also that people can both hold a drink and dance at the same time!) and that they may not be giving you their full attention.
- Don't go for more than half an hour without a break – even with all of the above being true, some people will still pay close attention, but they'll want a break.
- Performances should start before 10.30pm (9.30pm on a Sunday), even if the room isn't yet completely full. Having performances in the room makes the room feel great and will encourage more people to join.
- Staged performances should be finished by midnight. After midnight, people just want to dance. Short pop up acts after this time can work well as fun surprises, but otherwise – when the clock strikes midnight, it's DJ dancefloor time.
- Do the maths: if you start around 10.30 and finish by midnight, with no more than 30 minute sets and allow decent breaks in between, then the amount of programming needs to be carefully considered and timed. You've got about 45 to 60 minutes max of programming in that period when you include (short) breaks.
- Don't assume complete attention - people will be talking and singing and arriving halfway through your act.
- Silence is never the right vibe in the Club. If people sit down on the floor to quietly watch your act, you've got it wrong. This is a party!
- Singing works extremely well in the Club.
- Club Fringe attendees have seen a lot of drag. If there's going to be drag, it needs to be interesting and subversive.
- Programming should be in line with Fringe's values – this means diversity is a non-negotiable.
- Like the best three-minute pop songs, you should always leave people wanting more.
- DJs should play fun, danceable, popular music. Even if the theme of the event is experimental, trust us, people just want to dance afterwards to fun songs.

- We definitely want people to feel like they can come and go (or go to the bar!) at any time without being rude or disrespectful or like they're disturbing the performance. (But we also want them to be engrossed by amazing art!).
- Things happening in places other than the stage also works extremely well – pop up acts in the middle of the floor or on a floating stage, roving performances through the crowd, an entrance from the back of the room, an installation or performer in the Lounge...
- We love a big finale!

Last year we had some wildly successful events that did change things up a bit from the above – for example there were a couple of events that had really strong plans to schedule their carefully curated staged programming all the way through until 3am. So take the above ideas with a grain of salt – but also know they're learnings we've made over many years of doing this!

Information For Producers – how and why are we doing it?

- Club Fringe will run Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.
- Sunday nights will be the nights that can often break a lot of the above guidelines, and we love pitches that are going to really engage our artist community (a lot of whom will have Monday off from performing).
- The Club is ticketed, but passholders get in for free (Plus they can bring two non-pass holding friends with them).
- Free Club entry passes may be used as “exit flyering” at late shows coming out in the Hub if the room hasn't filled up by the time programming commences (pre-purchased ticket holders will be given priority entry at all times though).
- At midnight (after your core programming), the Club is free entry for everyone (subject to capacity). We don't advertise this.

APPENDIX 3: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the Festival Dates this year?

The 2025 Melbourne Fringe Festival will be **30th September – 19th October 2025**.

When is Club Fringe?

Club Fringe takes place in Common Rooms at Trades Hall on Fridays, Saturdays and Sunday nights and start between 9-10pm and finish after 1am.

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.

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.