

ArtPlay New Ideas Lab 2025-2026

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Guidelines

The Program

ArtPlay New Ideas Lab supports proposals of new work to be developed as part of our ongoing creative program. Artists and children are supported to work together to develop new arts experiences for children and families.

We encourage new ideas from artists of all disciplines for creative projects where children and/or families will be the co-creators of work. A new idea means a new creative work.

Artists do not need experience working with children, but a passion and enthusiasm for involving children in the creative process is essential. All successful projects will receive upskilling in co-creating with children.

ArtPlay has an express commitment to the following artists, audiences and communities: First Nations, People of Colour, d/Deaf, Disabled, and neurodivergent, LGBTQIA+ and people from lower income or marginalised backgrounds. We strongly encourage applications from these communities.

Up to four projects will be supported.

Accessibility

We acknowledge the online application process may be inaccessible for some artists. To increase accessibility and support your application you can choose to:

- Submit your project description via video or audio link. The link must be added in your [SmartyGrants](#) application. Please keep video/audio to a maximum of 3 minutes.
- Submit your project budget via Excel spreadsheet. You can view and [download](#) the New Ideas Lab Budget excel template on our website. Complete your budget spreadsheet and add the link to it in your SmartyGrants application.

The ArtPlay Disability and Inclusion Action Plan is available online to view and [download](#) in a range of formats including:

- PDF and Word

- Plain Language version in PDF and Word
- Easy English version in PDF and Word
- Auslan video

Please feel free to contact us via email us at artplayideaslab@melbourne.vic.gov.au or call ArtPlay on (03) 9658 7880, and we are happy to discuss ways in which we can assist.

The Space

Your proposed development workshops and project outcome must take place at ArtPlay in either one or a combination of the ArtPlay spaces.

Please specify where you imagine your project taking place in your application.

Space	Specs	Description
Multi-purpose space on ground level	16,000 mm x 8500mm Floorplan	Ideal for interactive performances, exhibitions and workshops
Mezzanine	21,640 mm x 6420 mm Floorplan	Situated upstairs overlooking the multi-purpose space. Please note, lift access is available to this space.
ArtPlay's outdoor precinct	Please contact ArtPlay for more information.	Gravel area directly in front of entrance; lawn to the east and lawn to the rear of venue; forested area to the rear. Additionally adjacent grassy hill and playground in negotiation with City of Melbourne Parks and Events.

View the [virtual tour](#) of ArtPlay online. Please note the virtual tour does not include the outdoor precinct.

How to Apply

Read the Guidelines and the Frequently Asked Questions in this document.

Applications are submitted via [SmartyGrants](#).

The Project Description

In the project description tell us about your idea and complete a budget outlining fees, equipment and materials required. If you have limited to no experience in working with children, and/or if you are an emerging artist, you must budget for a mentor.

Please note, while you may work towards expected outcomes, ArtPlay acknowledges and encourages that the creative process may lead you to an unexpected outcome.

Selection Criteria and Process

Your proposal will be assessed on the following criteria:

- A new work actively engaging children and/or families as co-creators
- Well-articulated concept (including envisaged outcomes)
- A clear plan of how the project will move through [the Dream, Make, Show development process](#), including self-reflection and evaluation time.
- Original and high quality with potential for future presentation
- A feasible budget (please consider from the start if your work needs a stage manager/producer/lighting designer/ etc.)

Artistic Support Material

You should provide recent examples that best demonstrate the quality of your past or present work, and is relevant to your proposed project.

Please provide a maximum of three links (e.g. Dropbox, YouTube, website). And / or upload x3 documents - each 5MB or less - (e.g. concept images, support letters, artist biographies).

- Please do not exceed 1 page of written material (for example, excerpts of a play)
- Please do not include more than 5 images

- Please do not include video and/or audio recordings that are more than 2 minutes. *If you do, they will not be assessed past 2 minutes.*

No hard copies of support material will be accepted.

If you are short-listed you will have the opportunity to 'pitch' the idea straight to a panel that includes children, artists and ArtPlay staff. The panel's job is to assess the idea based on the criteria detailed above and, if you are successful, the ArtPlay team will partner with you to realise your project as a part of ArtPlay's public program between August 2025 and June 2026. Being part of ArtPlay's public program means you will be developing your project with ArtPlay audiences.

New Ideas Lab development model: Dream, Make, Show

ArtPlay's New Ideas Lab program supports artists and children to work together to develop new arts experiences for children and families. To facilitate and focus on this, each project will go through three stages of development: **Dream**, **Make** and **Show**.

An example of how you may work via the **Dream, Make, Show** process -

1. **Dream** = 1 week development at ArtPlay including x 2-3 days of workshops co-creating with children
(Planning and development between **Dream** and **Make** stages)
2. **Make** = 1- 2 weeks of making/rehearsing/developing at ArtPlay including 2-4 days of workshops co-creating with children
(Planning and development between **Make** and **Show** stages)
3. **Show** = 2 weeks at ArtPlay including a showing of the project for 2-6 days to children and families (this could be a workshop series, an event, an interactive installation/exhibition or a performance etc.)

Please refer to [New Ideas Lab past projects](#) to see examples of the type of work ArtPlay has previously supported.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Expressions of Interest submission

When and how do I submit a proposal?

Expressions of Interest will open on Monday 10 February 2025 at 10am and close on Monday 17 March at 5pm, using online platform [SmartyGrants](#).

2. Information Session

What happens at the information session?

The information sessions provide you with an opportunity to hear about the program and the Expression of Interest process, see the ArtPlay spaces and find out about the equipment and materials available at ArtPlay. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions regarding the Expression of Interest process.

Staff present will include:

- Tanya Dickson, Creative Producer – Children and Families
- Myles Roxas – Acting Operations Coordinator – Children Family and Young People
- Eelin Cheah, Venue Manager – Children, Families and Young People

The information session will be held on Tuesday 25 February 5.30pm to 6.30pm as a hybrid session at ArtPlay and on Zoom.

The Information session will have an Auslan Interpreter.

Do I need to book for the information session?

Yes. Please book [here](#) so we can prepare accordingly.

If you have any questions about accessibility or want to share anything about your access needs beforehand, please email artplayideaslab@melbourne.vic.gov.au or call 03 9658 7880.

3. General questions

How do I know if I'm eligible?

Projects are eligible to apply if they are:

- A new work that has not received prior development or funding.
- The project developed must be for children in the age range of 0 to 13 years.
- The Lead Artist/s are an Australian-based artist, collective or company.
- The Lead Artist/s (up to two) for each project **must** be available to attend the two-day induction at ArtPlay on Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 June 2025, 9.30am to 5pm. Artists will be paid an attendance fee of \$693.7 + Superannuation and Workcover to attend the two-day induction (calculated at \$49.55 per hour). You do not need to include this fee in your application budget.

The development stages must take place between 1 August 2025 and 30 June 2026.

Are there any other reasons I might not be able to submit an Expression of Interest?

You cannot submit an ArtPlay Expression of Interest if you are a current City of Melbourne employee, contractor or volunteer.

Can I submit more than one ArtPlay New Ideas Lab Expression of Interest?

No.

Can I submit an Expression of Interest to ArtPlay, Signal and Arts House?

Yes, as long as each Expression of Interest is for a different project. Please note different information sessions, criteria and closing dates.

Can I submit the same project for a City of Melbourne Arts Grant and for a City Of Melbourne Expression of Interest?

No.

Will I own my IP, and what about Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property?

Artists that work with ArtPlay retain all intellectual property of their work. Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property is owned by the artist for any words, works or research

developed as part of New Ideas Lab and these remain at all times solely owned by the artist (or any 3rd party who holds rights) and are not assigned to ArtPlay in any way.

4 . Project Idea

What do you mean by “new idea” and “new work”?

A new idea or work is a creative proposal that has not received prior development or funding.

How formed does my project idea need to be?

Your proposal must be well articulated and include envisaged outcomes. Please outline what you plan to do, why you want to do it, and how you will engage children as co-creators across the Dream, Make and Show stages. Please note, while you may work towards expected outcomes, ArtPlay acknowledges and encourages that the creative process may lead you to an unexpected outcome.

Include details of the scope of the project i.e. how many participants, workshops, events etc. and the duration of each - in order to submit a feasible budget of artist fees, materials and equipment costs.

As part of your proposed budget you should also include both development and planning time and evaluation and reflection time for your project.

Please note that if you are successful, the scope/format and timing of your project may need to be flexible in order to fit into the ArtPlay program. ArtPlay will negotiate this with you if you are successful.

Do I have to have a target participant group in mind?

ArtPlay has an express commitment to the following communities: First Nations, People of Colour, d/Deaf, Disabled, and neurodivergent, LGBTQIA+ and people from lower income or marginalised backgrounds. We strongly encourage applications that engage with these communities.

Please consider which approximate age group of children - from babies to 13 years - would best suit your project. The exact age group will be negotiated with ArtPlay if you are successful.

Otherwise, you do not need to have a target participant group in mind. However, if this is part of your plan, please mention this in your proposal. Please articulate how you will

work with ArtPlay to engage participants from these communities and how you will work in an accessible and culturally safe way.

Do the artists named in my proposal need to be confirmed?

Yes.

5. Budget

Do I need to consider marketing, or venue costs for my project?

No. ArtPlay will manage all the marketing and venue costs.

What makes a feasible budget?

A feasible budget is a viable one that pays artists in line with their level of experience and level of contribution to the project. It includes all necessary creatives and crew to deliver to concept. E.g. Producer, Maker, Production Manager, Mentor, Stage Manager, Installer, Dramaturge, Technicians.

Your budget must cover:

- Artists / mentor / production crew fees
- Materials / equipment costs and consumables
- If ArtPlay has equipment that you need for your project, please specify the item in the budget and indicate as an in kind / zero amount

What do I need to include in my material / equipment costs?

Materials:

ArtPlay provides a basic range of arts and craft making tools and materials (e.g. pencils, scissors, paper, hot glue guns and rulers etc.) These do not need to be included in your budget. However, you do need to include specialist materials (e.g. specialised paper, paint, film equipment, clay or acro-mats).

Equipment:

Please check the [ArtPlay Equipment list](#) to see what equipment and infrastructure ArtPlay can contribute. (If ArtPlay has equipment that you need for your project, please

specify the item in the budget and indicate as an in kind / zero amount). Anything not on this list will need to be included in your equipment costs.

Please note, if successful:

- ArtPlay may renegotiate your budget based on the project needs after initial discussions

How should I calculate artist fees?

ArtPlay does not have standard artist rates for the ArtPlay New Ideas Lab.

Artists' rates could be between \$30 and \$100 per hour depending on role, task and experience – ranging from emerging, mid-career to established artists.

If you are working in blocks of time, we suggest you propose a weekly rate for your artists, for example \$1,250 to \$1,750 per week per artist.

Please note: your budget must include 15 per cent on-costs, additional to all artist fees, to cover superannuation and WorkCover. The budget form within the application or the budget excel template will calculate this for you. You do not need to add this costing manually.

For performing arts projects, you may use the [Live Performance Award](#) as a guide. For visual arts projects, the [National Association for the Visual Arts \(NAVA\)](#) has its own guide to fees and wages.

Please note that you are **not** required to include an auspice fee in your budget.

Do I receive the box office for the project?

No, ArtPlay will retain box office takings.

Can I include travel, accommodation and living expenses in the budget?

ArtPlay welcomes local, regional and interstate artists. You may include your travel, accommodation and living expenses as part of your budget if you are not a local artist.

[The Live Performance Award](#) and [NAVA](#) also include rates for per diems and accommodation allowances.

6. Proposal Process

What is the process?

You must submit your proposal online by 5pm Monday 17 March 2025.

All proposals will be reviewed by ArtPlay staff and assessed against the following Selection Criteria:

- A new work actively engaging children and/or families as co-creators
- Well-articulated concept (including envisaged outcomes)
- A clear plan of how the project will move through the [Dream, Make, Show development process](#), including self-reflection and evaluation time.
- Original and high quality with potential for future presentation
- A feasible budget (please consider from the start if your work needs a stage manager/producer/lighting designer/ etc.)

What is the proposal timeline?

Key program dates are:

- Expressions of Interest open: Monday 10 February 2025, 10am
- Information session (online and in-person): Tuesday 25 February 2025, 5.30pm to 6.30pm
- Expressions of interest close: Monday 17 March 2025, 5pm
- Notification of unsuccessful applicants and selected projects for pitch day: Early April
- Shortlisted projects pitch to panel: Wednesday 23 April 2025, 10am to 4pm
- Notification of successful projects for New Ideas Lab program: May 2025
- Successful Projects two-day induction at ArtPlay: Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 June 2025, 9.30am to 5pm.
 - Day 1: Induction at ArtPlay including Co-Creating with Children workshop with Dr. Sarah Austin
 - Day 2: Photoshoot for New Ideas Lab hero images

Who makes up the pitch panel?

The panel will include children along with ArtPlay staff and artists with experience in working with children in the arts. There will be approximately 8 people on the panel including approximately four children aged 8 to 13 years.

Can I send a representative to do the pitch on my behalf?

You can send a representative if they are a member of your creative team.

7. If I am successful

When will I be paid?

As this is not a grant, you will not receive total payment for your project upfront.

If successful, a payment plan will be negotiated based on your project's needs and implementation requirements.

This may include being paid in instalments (e.g. material costs before implementation and final artist fees after implementation).

Please note: if you are an organisation, you will be paid by the City of Melbourne which operates on a 30 day from date of invoice payment policy; and if you are an individual, you will be contracted and paid via Auspicious Arts (you are not required to include an auspice fee in your budget).

Do I need an ABN?

If you are successful, and you are an Australian citizen, you will need an ABN. If you are not an Australian citizen and you have a valid working visa, please contact us to discuss.

Do I need to be GST registered?

No, you do not need to be GST registered to apply.

Please refer to the Australian Taxation website regarding GST registration.

Do I need a Working With Children Check (WWCC)?

If you are invited to work with ArtPlay after the pitch session, all your team members will be required to hold a valid WWCC and provide a copy of their card to ArtPlay.

You do not need a WWCC to apply for an Expression of Interest.

Do I need my own public liability insurance?

If you are an organisation, you are required to hold public liability insurance of 20 million dollars. If you are an individual, your public liability insurance will be covered through Auspicious Arts.

8. If my application is unsuccessful

If my application is unsuccessful, when will I be notified?

Notification of unsuccessful applicants will take place in early April 2025.

If my application is unsuccessful, can I request feedback on my application?

No. We are unable to share feedback on specific applications, however we are able to share general round feedback.

9. Artist Resources

ArtPlay has developed a range of [Artist Resources](#) for co-creating with children you may find useful when considering your ArtPlay New Ideas Lab application.

These are available to read and download on [our website](#).

10. Contact ArtPlay

If you have read our guidelines and FAQ's and/or attended the Info Session but still have questions you can email us at artplayideaslab@melbourne.vic.gov.au or call ArtPlay on (03) 9658 7880, Wednesday to Friday 10am – 4pm.