



# Annual Arts Grants Guidelines 2027

## Key dates

<b>Applications open</b>	1 April 2026
<a href="#"><u>Online information session</u></a>	14 April 2026 4 – 5pm
<b>Applications close</b>	6 May 2026 11:59pm
<b>Notification to applicants</b>	August 2026

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we govern, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong / Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and honour the unbroken spiritual, cultural and political connection they have maintained to this unique place for more than 2000 generations.

We accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and are committed to walking together to build a better future.

# 1. Introduction

Council's vision for Melbourne, is a city alive with experiences, where creativity and curiosity support connection, innovation and vibrancy. The City of Melbourne [Council Plan 2025-29](#)<sup>1</sup> establishes six strategic priorities that guide the direction and desired outcomes of the Annual Arts Grant program including a Vibrant and Creative City.

The [Grants and Sponsorship Policy](#)<sup>2</sup> provides a clear and consistent framework for the governance, administration, and delivery of City of Melbourne's competitive grants and sponsorship programs.

Council will prioritise applications that activate Melbourne's city precincts, streets, squares, community spaces and underutilised venues with vibrant experiences. Priority will be given to projects that foster a strong sense of belonging. Council seeks to create welcoming environments where people of all ages, identities and abilities feel encouraged to meet, connect and participate in the arts, with consideration given to enhancing city safety.

## 2. About the program

The Annual Arts Grants support artists and small to medium arts organisations. Applications are open to artists from all backgrounds and career stages working in any art form or practice.

Funding is available for the public presentation of one-off projects or a specific part of an annual program in 2027 presented at a venue/location that is within the City of Melbourne [boundaries](#)<sup>3</sup>. Examples of a public presentation could be, but is not limited to, a performance, exhibition, installation and public realm activation.

The focus of funding is on the presentation of project outcomes that contribute to increased audience access and the creative invigoration of Melbourne.

## 3. Funding available

Grants up to \$25,000 to present a project to the public.

### Access Costs

Up to \$2,000 is available for access costs to help reduce barriers for d/Deaf, disabled, neurodiverse and chronically ill artists involved in the project. Access costs must specifically support artists to create and present the work (for example artist transport, support worker, carer, Auslan).

## 4. General eligibility

Applicants must:

- be an artist or small to medium arts organisation
- submit only one application
- present the project to the public between 1 January and 31 December 2027
- present the project to the public at a venue or outdoor space located within the City of Melbourne local council boundary
- comply with additional grant eligibility and terms and conditions

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/council-plan-vision>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/grants-sponsorship-policy>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/city-maps>

## Eligibility for projects presented at a venue or outdoor space

Contact the Arts Grants team before you submit an application if you plan to present a project in an outdoor space that is managed by the City of Melbourne (such as a park or laneway).

## 5. Ineligibility

The program does not support:

- projects currently supported by another City of Melbourne funding program
- multiple applicants submitting for the same project
- activities that have already commenced or occurred
- organisations funded through our Multi-year grant program
- projects that are curated and presented by other Council programs including Arts House, ArtPlay, Signal and Yirramboi commissions
- professional development including attendance or speaking at conferences
- podcasts and online projects
- permanent works in outdoor spaces
- feature length and short narrative films
- commercially focused projects where the priority is making work to sell at retail
- ongoing classes and workshops
- courses, education programs or activities that are required for an accredited course of study
- activities that have a primary focus on fundraising
- competitions, prizes or awards
- political lobbying or advocacy activities

The program does not support an applicant that:

- is a Commonwealth or State Government department
- is a political party or the primary purpose of the project is considered to be political
- has failed to provide satisfactory acquittal reporting or conditions of previous grants
- has outstanding debt to Council
- is insolvent
- is in legal conflict with Council
- is an employee, contractor, elected member of Council, or their immediate family, however this does not include an application from an organisation that an employee, contractor, elected member or their immediate family member may be part of
- has conducted, themselves in a way that the City of Melbourne considers to be injurious or prejudicial to the character or interests of the City of Melbourne
- requests a grant for reimbursement of funds already spent
- requests funds for debt reduction or operational deficits
- the City of Melbourne considers having denigrated or excluded parts of the community or that has an adverse effect on public health, safety, the environment or heritage

## 6. Assessment criteria

Applicants must address all four criteria. The bullet points under each criteria indicate what assessors may consider when assessing your application.

### Criteria 1: Activation, Vibrancy and Impact

- Project occurs in an underutilised, new or unexpected location, or at different times of the day or night, maximising seasonal opportunities (e.g., winter), and driving visitation to city precincts.
- Project activates the public realm, enlivens the city with vibrant activity, unique and engaging experiences, and encourages people to increase time spent in city precincts.
- Creative collaborations with City of Melbourne places and partners, including businesses, City Precinct Business Associations, and creative organisations that create impact.

### Criteria 2: Creative Strength

- Project presents a well-developed concept and is backed by a strong artistic vision with clearly articulated creative impacts.
- Project explores innovative or imaginative approaches to artistic practice and pushes boundaries.
- Project is enriched by bold and exciting creative collaborations that elevate the artistic outcomes.
- Project is positioned to deliver unique and memorable artistic experiences for audiences or participants.

### Criteria 3: Project Viability

- Project is achievable and the budget, including artist fees, is realistic and presents value for money.
- Key artists are identified and the applicant has the capacity to manage the project.
- Applicant has provided relevant, high-quality artistic support material and evidence of appropriate cultural permissions for the use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories or content that is not your own.

### Criteria 4: Access and Inclusion

- Project offers programming that is inclusive, culturally aware, and safe.
- Project offers affordable access and is low cost or free to attend.
- Project invites people to connect with, participate in, and experience the arts.

## 7. What you need to include in your application

Tell us:

- about the project and the ideas behind the work
- where and when the project presentation will occur and what you intend to spend the grant funds on (support will be considered for creative costs such as artist fees, materials, venue hire, presentation costs)

### Support material

Artistic support material is an important part of an application and assists the assessment panel in understanding your project and creative practice. Applicants must submit quality support material that relates to the project proposal.

Support material you must include:

- artistic CV summaries for key artists
- examples of current, past or proposed works

- tentative venue booking quote or communication with a venue manager or relevant staff (for use of an outdoor space)

Optional support material:

- project timeline
- peer/industry support letter

## Where can the project presentation take place?

Venues and outdoor spaces for project presentations must be located within the City of Melbourne Council boundary. If in doubt about the suburb boundary, check our interactive [maps](#)<sup>4</sup>.

For affordable spaces, consider [City Library Gallery](#)<sup>5</sup> [Library at the Dock Gallery](#)<sup>6</sup> , [Meat Market and Kensington Town Hall](#)<sup>7</sup>.

**Applicants are required to include venue costs in their budget and a tentative email quote or communication from the venue manager.**

## Outdoor spaces

Outdoor projects in spaces managed by the City of Melbourne are required to discuss their idea with the arts grant team as it may require a permit. For further information, go to the [event permits](#)<sup>8</sup> page.

The City of Melbourne does not manage Federation Square, State Library forecourt, Arts Centre forecourt and the Royal Botanic Gardens. Applicants proposing the use of these spaces should contact them directly.

## Project costs

The grant must be used for artist fees and can also be used to cover other project costs such as materials, production, venue and equipment hire, installation, promotion and marketing, public liability insurance and access costs such as Auslan. Grants cannot be used for international travel, accommodation or touring, capital works, facility maintenance or improvements.

## 8. How to apply

- Read the guidelines thoroughly and check your eligibility.
- Watch the applicant top tips video on our [website](#)<sup>9</sup>.
- Go to the FAQs for answers to frequently asked questions, call us with any questions or attend our [online briefing session](#).
- You can submit a written application or tell us about your idea by video or audio. Contact us to find out more about our accessible application formats.
- Apply via our website and submit one application **by 11:59pm Wednesday 6 May 2026**. Late applications are not accepted.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/city-maps>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/facility/city-library-gallery>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/facility/library-at-the-dock-gallery>

<sup>7</sup> <https://meatmarket.org.au/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/event-permits-and-planning>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/annual-arts-grants-and-residencies>

## 9. Need help with your application?

If you would like to talk to someone about your application, contact us on 03 9658 9658 or email [artsgrants@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:artsgrants@melbourne.vic.gov.au).

Our multilingual information telephone services offers assistance to people from a non-English speaking background. Visit [interpreting services](#)<sup>10</sup> for information in different languages.

### Online information session

We are running an online information session followed by a Q&A on 14 April from 4 to 5pm. Register your interest [here](#)<sup>11</sup>.

### Technical assistance

Refer to the SmartyGrants [Help Guide](#)<sup>12</sup> or contact the support desk 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday on 03 9320 6888 or email [service@smartygrants.com.au](mailto:service@smartygrants.com.au).

## 10. Assessment process

- Applications will be reviewed by the Creative Arts Grants team against the eligibility and assessment criteria and then assessed by the [external arts panel](#)<sup>13</sup>.
- Applications are treated as confidential and contents are not disclosed outside the assessment process. A summary of your proposal may be used in reports to Council.
- Canvassing or lobbying in relation to an application is prohibited. No consideration will be given to an applicant or their representatives who attempt to influence the Lord Mayor, Councillors, employees or assessors.
- Assessment panels may recommend part funding.
- Priority may be given to applicants who did not receive funding to deliver a project in 2026.

## 11. Approval process

- Assessment recommendations are considered and determined by Council. All decisions are final, and there will be no review or appeal process.
- The City of Melbourne reserves the right to reject any application that is ineligible or does not meet the criteria and has the right to request further information.
- Council has authority to approve grants and sponsorship applications.
- Unsuccessful applicants may apply to other funding programs.

## 12. Terms and conditions

- Grants may be considered taxable income by the Australian Taxation office and artists must determine their own taxation responsibilities.
- The City of Melbourne reserves the right to invite artists to apply.
- The City of Melbourne reserves the right to close the program before the advertised closing date.
- The list of successful applicants will be published on the City of Melbourne's website.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/interpreting-services>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/2027-annual-arts-grant-online-information-session-tickets-1985032913881?aff=oddtcreator>

<sup>12</sup> <https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/grants-and-sponsorships>

- Successful applicants must sign a funding agreement with City of Melbourne and comply with the grant obligations and acquittal requirements.
- Grant payments are subject to receipt of a tax invoice and any other information requested by City of Melbourne (for example a revised budget, project details and venue confirmation).
- The City of Melbourne will not be responsible for shortfalls in project budgets if the grant recipient is unable to meet project costs.
- The City of Melbourne is committed to being a [child safe organisation](#)<sup>14</sup>. Grant recipients must comply with all applicable child safety laws and adhere to their responsibilities according to Council's Child Safety Policy.

### 13. Other opportunities

The City of Melbourne offers a wide range of [opportunities](#)<sup>15</sup> to support artists and the broader Melbourne community to deliver a range of quality programs and activities. There are also specific opportunities through [Arts House](#)<sup>16</sup>, [Signal](#)<sup>17</sup>, [ArtPlay](#)<sup>18</sup> and [Yirramboi Festival](#)<sup>19</sup>.

Stay up to date on the latest City of Melbourne arts grant opportunities by subscribing to our [e-newsletter](#)<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/child-safety>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/grants-and-sponsorships>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/arts-house>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/signal>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/artplay>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/yirramboi-festival>

<sup>20</sup> <https://confirmsubscription.com/h/j/11D9BBC44E3F1E3A>