2026-27 Bowery Theatre Residency
GUIDELINES

A creative performance space where artists and the local Brimbank community connect and experiment with bold ideas.

To apply, visit: https://brimbank.smartygrants.com.au/BTR2026

What are the Bowery Theatre Residencies?

Artists and Creative Producers are invited by the Bowery Theatre to submit an application for the 2026-27 Bowery Theatre Residencies.

A Bowery Theatre Residency provides a professional development, creative development and performance space for artists to make and present new work in the Bowery Theatre and at St Albans Community Centre (STACC) with and for the Brimbank community.

A Bowery Theatre Residency supports:

1) **Creative Practice** in the presentation of a bold vision, strong rationale, creative skills, concepts and ideas;
2) Meaningful community engagement;
3) Process-driven arts practice to make a new, contemporary performance work;
4) Artistic and professional development for artists;
5) Development of new, local audiences; and
6) Work that is reflective of the cultural identity of Brimbank.

Two Residency Categories

In 2026-27, we have two residency categories:

1. **Mid-career or Established Performing Artist/s**
2. **Young and Emerging Artist/s** (Artists aged under 30 years or emerging, which is usually considered within the first five years of their arts practice or establishment)

What's on offer?

Cash Contribution:
For the Mid-career or Established Artists **up to $10,000 cash contribution** will be awarded per residency.
For the Young and Emerging Artist category, **up to $5,000 cash contribution** will be awarded per residency.
This is to cover artists' fees, trainer/mentor fees, production costs, marketing and administration costs (no more than 10% of the cash contribution for administration).

Other support:
In addition, the following support will be available to successful applicants, with agreement of the Theatre Programming Senior Officer:

- Co-presentation of the residency's performance outcome
- 50/50 box office split on ticketed presentations
- Up to $5,500 in kind technical and front of house staff support (see example budget breakdown)
- Up to total 6 x full days access to the Bowery Theatre – days must be as close to consecutive as possible, and include:
    - Up to 2 x full days access to the Bowery Theatre for performance outcome
    - Up to 4 x full days access to the Bowery Theatre for bump in, tech design and plotting, rehearsals and bump out
- Up to 20 hours in St Albans Community Centre (STACC) spaces – these are subject to availability
- Bowery tech staff / producer / marketing support for limited design consultation, producing and planning
- Print and online marketing commensurate with Bowery mainstage programming
- Box office setup and management of ticketing commensurate with Bowery mainstage programming

Key Dates:

Applications open: Friday 30 January 2026
Application support: Friday 30 January to Wednesday 15 April 2026
Venue tour and support for budgets: Available in February and March upon request **sienab@brimbank.vic.gov.au**
Applications close: By 5pm on Wednesday 15 April 2026
Decisions announced (embargo until public announcement): June 2026
Agreements finalised and public announcement: August 2026
Residency activity: Between 1 October 2026 and 31 May 2027
Acquittal Due: 30 June 2027

Who is eligible to apply?

To apply for funding you must:

1) Be incorporated OR be an individual artist with an ABN OR have an Auspice*
2) Have Public Liability Insurance cover for the duration of the project
3) Have acquitted or be compliant with all grants previously awarded by Council (if applicable)
4) Have a NEW project or be entering/developing a NEW stage of a project
5) Have a performance-based project with a performance outcome in the Bowery Theatre
6) Have a project that commences after 1 October 2026 and is completed by 31 May 2027
7) Meet with the Community and Performing Arts Senior Officer to discuss your concept and resourcing

The program is complementary to our Visual Arts and STACC Residency Programs, and to our Community Grants Programs, however applicants can **not** apply to these opportunities for the same project.

**The applicant or their auspice must have public liability insurance that covers the activity. Applicants can include auspice and insurance costs in their budget.*

Applicants must complete an application form using the Bowery online system via Smartygrants, and submit the application by the due date in order to be considered by a panel. **To apply, visit:**
https://brimbank.smartygrants.com.au/BTR2026

What is the timing for the residency and how do I plan?

You will be notified of the residency outcome in June 2026. We are happy to support co-funding applications for your residency. All residencies will be undertaken between 1 October 2026 and by 31 May 2027.

You should check availability of spaces prior to applying if your project is heavily dependent on a particular date. The Bowery Theatre and STACC Community spaces can be heavily booked. It is recommended that you plan time in these spaces in consultation with the Community and Performing Arts Senior Officer who can check availability and the staffing requirements so you remain within the in-kind budget.

Once successful, bookings of the Bowery Theatre and STACC community spaces should be done with at least three months notice and a production schedule is required with:

1) Date (include day of week)
2) Start and finish times
3) Type of space (flexi, small studio, office)
4) Activity undertaken (meeting, writing, development, rehearsal, plotting, design, tech rehearsal, bump in, performance, bump out etc.)
5) Technical staff requirements – only required for theatre.

It is favourable if you have these timings clearly articulated in you application and at that early stage. This helps to quickly lock in artists, community engagement and spaces should you be successful.

What role can the Brimbank community play?

A key part of the Be Bold Residencies is **working with the Brimbank community** and applications are assessed on the strengths of this. Applicants should state that they or their key creative team are either from Brimbank, or have demonstrated partnerships with communities/organisations within Brimbank.

Partnering means the community is **already** central to the project and co-design, it is not a fee for service structure, and as a result there will be a collaboration between artists and community. The existing relationship with the selected individuals, community group / organisation should be based on trust, reciprocity and principles of community strengthening.

How do I apply?

To apply, you must complete the Be Bold Residency Application Form on SmartyGrants, **visit:** **https://brimbank.smartygrants.com.au/BTR2026**

As a part of the application form, you **must** also attach:

1. Information about you and your eligibility;
2. Information about your residency / project – skills and experience of the artistic concept and team;
3. A residency budget, that has equal income and expenditure totals, and clearly shows how your cash contribution will be spent (note the rule around admin being only 10%)
4. Artistic support material;
5. Letter/s of support relating to your arts practice; and
6. Letter/s of support from community partnerships

You will need an email account to apply online. Please ensure you receive a confirmation of your online application via an automatic email from SmartyGrants. It is advised to type out your answers first, then copy and paste into SmartyGrants. Do not leave your application idle for more than 60 minutes, as you will lose unsaved data. Always press 'save' as you go.

How will the applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed by an arts practitioner assessment panel comprised of staff from the Arts and Culture team, and at least one arts industry panel member. If required, a further informal conversation may be built into the assessment before finalising the residencies. The arts industry panel member/s will be appointed by Council. All decisions made by the panel are final.

The panel will consider the following three **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**:

1. ***Creative Practice – 40%:***
   - Bold artistic vision
   - Strong rationale for the program of activities
   - Expression of contemporary, creative concepts and ideas
   - Artistic skills, rigor and ability of the key people involved

   Note: Links strongly to Section 1 (Artist Contacts and Background) questions 6, 7 and 8 AND Section 4 (Project Information) questions 4 and 5 in the application form.

2. ***Viability – 30%:***
   - A suitable team with the skills to support the proposed activity
   - The relevance and timeliness of the proposed activity
   - Demonstrated cultural competencies involved with working with the identified community
   - Realistic and achievable planning, resource use and evaluation eg. Professional fees payable to artists involved and a realistic timetable and budget

   Note: Links strongly to Section 1 (Artist Contacts and Background) AND Section 4 (Project Information) questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 AND the BUDGET in the application form.

3. ***Impact on the artist and local community – 30%:***

- How the proposed activity strengthens the artist's practice
- The role of any community partners involved, including confirmation of their involvement
- How the proposed activity enables the artists to connect with community including audiences
- The social and artistic impact on the community including audiences

Note: Links strongly to Section 5 (Project Objectives and Outcome)

Budget Guidelines

Applicants are required to provide a detailed budget for their project. A budget can be attached to the Smartygrants platform.

Your project **INCOME** may comprise of the following:

1. Be Bold Cash Contribution
    - The amount provided as a cash contribution is either up to $10,000 for Mid Career or Established Artist/s category or $5,000 for Young and Emerging Artist/s category
2. Be Bold Residency In-kind Support for venue hire, front of house and technical staff for up to $5,500
    - You can request a schedule and quote from the Community and Performing Arts Senior Officer or use the pro forma as a guide
3. Your own / organisational cash contributions
    - These include the funds raised by you / your organisation via fundraising, members' fees, donations or sponsorships
4. Other funding
    - Please specify details of other funding, if any, including names of funding agencies and the amount funded for this Project/Event and if the funding is confirmed or not
5. Ticket sales
    - All residency performances are to be held at the Bowery Theatre and will be ticketed using the house ticketing system, whereby a 50/50 box office split will be the arrangement
6. In-kind Contributions
    - These are non-monetary supports and services that come from your group, volunteers and your partner organisations that would otherwise have to be paid for. These may include labour, catering or transport
7. We encourage and support artists to diversify their funding streams and have co-contributors to fund their projects. Having other funders, partners, in kind contributions can often ensure the viability of projects and can even fund additional time in the theatre with tech and FOH staff.

Your project **EXPENDITURE** may include:

1. Budget items that you will cover with your Be Bold Residency cash contribution, eg. Artist/s fees, marketing costs, sets, costumes and props.
2. Budget items that you intend to cover with the Be Bold residency's in-kind contribution, eg. $5,500 for venue hire, technical and front of house, and box office set up.
3. Budget items that will be covered by your organisational cash contribution, or other funding and ticket sales.
4. Budget items that are provided in-kind (by volunteers or project partners). See above for calculations.

Please note: If you require additional time in the theatre and/or additional staffing, please contact us to discuss costs. These additional costs can be included as expenditure in your budget.

Notes to using the theatre:

- Overtime - after a 10 hour shift or from 1pm Saturday to Monday 8am. Public Holidays incur additional penalties. A staffing shift over 5hrs requires a 30 min unpaid break, if not taken, the time after 5hrs is charged at the overtime rate
- Our venue hire information sheet has information on costs and staffing levels as preliminary information: **https://creativebrimbank.com.au/venue-hire/the-bowery-theatre**

What will not be funded?

- Applications from commercial entities
- Incomplete applications
- Project expenditures that relate to projects that have already been delivered
- Interstate or overseas travel costs
- More than 10% of the cash contribution, for administration
- On-going operational, capital works or facilities maintenance costs
- Purchase of equipment
- Ineligible applications

Please check that your application as this will all effect your eligibility:

1) Addresses the selection criteria
2) Includes letters of support from community
3) Includes examples of your artistic work via weblinks or images
4) Has a sound and balanced budget

Requirements and Reporting

- Successful applicants need to sign an Agreement with Council. This must be returned to Council by the due date. Please note if Council has not received the signed residency agreement by the due date, the grant will be forfeited and offered to another project.
- Successful applicants must provide a valid Public Liability Certificate of Currency for the duration of their residency to the value of $20,000,000
- Payment Schedule for cash contributions: 50% upon signing of agreement and 50% on completion of the residency. Residency artist / organisations to provide tax invoice for payment.
- Any change to a successful project must be discussed with the Community and Performing Arts Senior Officer and confirmed in writing.
- Evaluation and documentation of the project is required. Images, video and a completed artist survey (takes up to 5 minutes) via Survey Monkey is required.

What applicant support is available?

It is really important that applicants contact officers for advice and/or guidance on applications and the projects in which they are being assessed. Please contact:

Siena Balakrishnan (Community and Performing Arts Senior Officer)
SienaB@brimbank.vic.gov.au
M: 0438 056 587

If you are a young or emerging artist and require some extra support with your application, please get in touch with our Youth Arts and Events Officer, please contact Siena to link up with them.

Council officers will support applicants to develop their project concept in line with the guidelines, plan around venue availability, and identify additional or alternative funding sources.

To apply, visit: https://brimbank.smartygrants.com.au/BTR2026