Showcase Victoria Circus and Physical Theatre Initiative
Guidelines for Applicants 2025

1. About Showcase Victoria

Showcase Victoria is Australia's leading state-based performing arts market, presented annually by the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC), in association with supporting partner Regional Arts Victoria (RAV) and funding partner Creative Victoria. Attended by over 250 industry delegates, the event brings together artists, producers, venues, programmers, and peak body representatives to discover a program of outstanding contemporary work, forming touring opportunities and new collaborations. In 2025, Showcase Victoria was presented over two days on May 20th and 21st at the Round.

Each year a program of 50 tour-ready productions is selected through an open EOI process; and is curated to meet the needs of the sector and promote a diverse and vibrant range of programming across VAPAC's network of 75 professional venues, with additional programming occurring in a range of community run spaces through the RAV network. The event results in dozens of tours over subsequent years, providing artists with substantial paid work, and audiences around the state with the opportunity to experience work they would not otherwise encounter. The program also features a number of professional development sessions for artists and presenters to build their understanding of touring, programming, pitching, contracting, and other skills important for creating positive outcomes.

2. About This Initiative

Following changes to the circus and physical theatre (CaPT) landscape in Victoria in recent years, Creative Australia and Creative Victoria are jointly managing strategic investments for the period 2022-2024 to support the Victorian circus and physical theatre sector.

The Showcase Victoria CaPT Initiative will build capacity, skills, and experience in the touring and presentation of CaPT work across the Victorian market. Through directly subsidising presenter-venues to program Victorian CaPT works from Showcase Victoria across 2024 and 2025, this project will result in a substantially increased number of performances in venues across the state, growing new audiences and building confidence amongst producers and presenters.

VAPAC and RAV work closely on the programming and delivery of Showcase Victoria each year. Collectively, the organisations venue members reach across professional and community-led contexts, with geographic coverage across the entire state. VAPAC and RAV will collaborate on the assessment of works for inclusion in Showcase Victoria 2024 and 2025, and on the delivery of funding opportunities as part of this initiative. Both organisations have strong relationships into industry and community and will leverage these

to promote the initiative with an aim to maximise participation in the project and ensure a diversity of applicants.

2.1 Programming Subsidy

Delivered across two years of Showcase Victoria in 2024 and 2025 (with some projects touring into 2026), the initiative will provide grants to presenter-venues valued between $2,500 - $10,000, dependent on the scale and cost of the work they are programming. All funds must go towards the presentation of Victorian CaPT works from Showcase Victoria, and venues will contribute additional funds and/or resources to the presentation of the work. Further details can be found below.

2.2 Professional Development Program

Programming outcomes from Showcase Victoria will be supported by a series of professional development opportunities for the sector, focussed on strengthening CaPT specific practices to support the successful touring and presentation of these projects. This upskilling will have a lasting impact beyond the two years of this initiative, enabling the industry to build stronger and lasting collaborative relationships.

All VAPAC and RAV member venues will have access to online workshops with expert presenters from across the industry, built around the following topics:

- Understanding CaPT creative practice.
- Marketing CaPT work and building new audiences.
- Technical considerations in the presentation of CaPT work.
- Collaborating with artists and producers to create successful outcomes.

CaPT artists will also receive additional professional development sessions covering:

- Pitching your work to venues and understanding what they need.
- Developing strong marketing and promotional materials.
- Budgeting, contracting, and scheduling.
- Applying for additional touring funding.

3. Funding Eligibility

3.1 Eligible Applicants

Funding through the Showcase Victoria CaPT Initiative is open to:

- Venues based in Victoria with an established practice of presenting a program of professional performing arts work.
- Partnerships between Victorian-based venues and appropriately aligned Victorian organisations such as festivals, community circus groups, etc.

Applicants applying in 2025 must be intending to program a CaPT project from the 2025 Showcase Victoria program, and the work must be presented in 2026. Only CaPT projects by Victorian based companies and artists will be eligible for subsidy (acknowledging Victorian led projects may include some interstate artists).

3.2 Ineligible Applicants

The following are not eligible to apply:

- Individuals
- Producing organisations. Whilst this funding will go towards the presentation of work by producing organisations and artists, applications for subsidy must be received by the presenting venue.

Questions regarding eligibility should be directed to the Showcase Victoria team.

4. Available Funding

The minimum grant amount is $2,500 (excluding GST) and the maximum grant amount is $10,000 (excluding GST). The amount requested must be proportionate to the scale and cost of the work chosen. Proposals will be considered favourably if the applicant can demonstrate strong financial viability to deliver the project.

Applicants who can contribute cash contributions up to 50% towards the total cost of presenting their project will be considered favourably. Other levels of contribution including in-kind support will be considered.

5. Application Process

Applicants are encouraged to carefully consider the eligibility and assessment criteria with their organisation before submitting their applications. All details of key dates will be published on the Showcase Victoria website including key dates below:

- VAPAC held a webinar information session for interested presenter-venues, please check it out HERE.
- Funding opens: Friday, 27th June.
- Funding closes: Friday, 18th July 3pm.

5.1 How to apply

An electronic application form will be made available on the Showcase Victoria website from 2025.

- Which Victorian CaPT project from Showcase Victoria they are intending to program, and planned presentation dates.
- Their history (if any) of presenting CaPT work, and how this will form part of your ongoing programming strategy.
- Why they are interested in programming the selected production.
- Details on strategy for community engagement, marketing/audience development, and evaluation.

For further information please contact VAPACs Communication & Events Manager Amy Veale via email at aveale@vapac.org.au

6. Assessment

VAPAC & RAV will determine application eligibility against these guidelines and review applications to ensure all mandatory documentation is included. Eligible applications will be considered by an externally appointed panel and assessed against the assessment criteria and a list of recommended projects identified.

VAPAC & RAV will recommend projects to Creative Australia for final approval.

6.1 Assessment Criteria

Applicants will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. How the intended programming of Victorian CaPT works from Showcase Victoria by the venue grows upon their previous level of commitment, particularly if the audience and community connected to the venue do not currently have consistent access to experiencing CaPT work.
2. How participation of the presenter in the initiative contributes meaningfully to the building of capacity within the Victorian CaPT sector.
3. How the level of contribution by the venue towards the costs of presentation is appropriate, and the viability of the proposed activity is sound.
4. How the proposed programming may contribute to increased outcomes for projects by artists from historically marginalised communities.

7. Funding Outcomes

All applicants will be notified in writing at the conclusion of the assessment process. Successful applicants will enter into an agreement with VAPAC outlining all financial, reporting, and acquittal requirements.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its arts funding and advisory body.