

First Nations Creative Exchange with Na Djinang Circus



Arts & Culture

NA DJINANG CIRCUS



Expressions of Interest Guidelines First Nations Creative Exchange with Na Djinang

Maribyrnong City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work. We celebrate the world's oldest living culture and recognise their creativity and enduring relationship with the land, sky, water and sea. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait people.

About the Program

Culture and storytelling has been at the heart of First Nations people's connection to this landscape for more than 60,000 years. Arts and Culture Maribyrnong are committed to supporting and celebrating First Nations knowledge, leadership and creativity. In 2025/2026 we are partnering with **Na Djinang Circus** to **develop and profile First Nations performing arts leaders of the future.**

The First Nations Creative Exchange provides an opportunity for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artists to explore the creation of a new physical performance (dance, circus, physical theatre, parkour, puppetry, Buto or anything that utilises the body) through research and development, and then explore their concepts in a week-long creative development guided by Na Djinang Circus. Through the program, **three (3) selected First Nations artists** will be provided with a fee and venue **to test and advance a new idea or show concept**, working directly with Artistic Custodian, Harley Mann and the Na Djinang Ensemble.

The week will follow the structure of:

- Days 1–2: Exploration of ideas, conversations, research, and yarning.
- Days 3–4: Physical rehearsals / exploration with guest artists from Na Djinang.
- Day 5: A short public showing/sharing (around 10 minutes) and an evaluation/next step process.

The programs aims to support the creative development of future First Nations creative leaders in the performing arts, whether as directors, choreographers, designers or other creative-making roles and hopes to enable one (or more) creatives to develop a future new work with Na Djinang Circus in the following years. Specific experience in circus or physical theatre is not required – your willingness to creatively develop your performing arts practice alongside Na Djinang Circus is all that is required.

An amount of **\$5,000 (ex GST)** can be used towards artist fees plus consultants, materials, equipment hire (such as screens, staging, projector, etc), access or other costs to facilitate the week's creative exchange.

First Nations Creative Exchange with Na Djinang Circus



Arts & Culture



Maribyrnong Council will provide a fee and access to the Bluestone Church Arts Space and its technical equipment. Na Djinang Circus will provide networks to artist, mats and other circus gear (as required) along with a creative leadership and producing support.

Key Dates

Expressions of Interest Open	Monday 5 May 2025
Proposals Close	11:59pm, Sunday 15 June 2025
Outcomes advised	Within 2-3 weeks
Initial Project Meeting	Week of 17 November 2025
Creative Exchange timing (one week per artist)	16 February to 7 March 2026

Who Can Apply?

- Expressions of Interest are welcome from artists who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and reside, work or study in Melbourne's West (City of Maribyrnong, Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Moonee Valley, Melton or Wyndham) or can show a deep connection to the West (for example, this is your Country or family have lived here a long time, etc.);
- Artists must have an active ABN, work cover and public liability insurance – this can be through Na Djinang Circus.

Factors that make applications ineligible:

- Projects that are part of a course of study or assessment;
- Projects that contribute to competitions, prizes, awards or fundraising events;
- Applicants who have not fully met previous Council funding or acquittal obligations.

Assessment Criteria

Expressions of Interest will be assessed by representatives from Na Djinang Circus and Arts and Culture Maribyrnong against the following criteria:

1. Artistic practice - demonstrated skills to successfully undertake the proposed project;
2. A commitment to Indigenous people, knowledge and stories;
3. A collaborative approach that nurtures existing and/or develops new audiences for circus or physical theatre works;

First Nations Creative Exchange with Na Djinang Circus



Arts &
Culture

NA DJINANG
CIRCUS



How to Apply

To submit an expression of interest to participate in the creative exchange, please email:

- Your CV / Artist biography and an example of past work (images, reviews, web/social links)
- A one-page outline of your idea/s for a project or design ideas that you'd like to explore with circus or physical theatre artists. Alternatively, you can submit a 2-3 minute video outlining your idea instead of a written proposal.
- Please indicate which of the Creative Exchange weeks you are available, if selected.
- Shortlisted artists may be invited for a 15 minute interview with the assessment panel.

We encourage you to have a chat about your project idea with Harley Mann, Artistic Custodian, Na Djinang Circus, before submitting. Arts & Culture Maribyrnong can put you in contact. For any questions or for application support, please contact us via arts@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au or (03) 9688 0233.

Expressions of interest are due via email to: arts@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au by Sunday 15 June 2025. If you would like to submit a video file, please reach out to Arts & Culture Maribyrnong.