

Melbourne Fringe Producer Pack

Part 2: Preparing for the Festival



Immaculate, Melbourne Fringe 2016.
Photo by Theresa Harrison.

MELBOURNE
FRINGE
FESTIVAL

13 L-30 SEPT 2018

Contents

**So, you've registered an event.
Now, to the nuts and bolts of what's next.**

03

The Essentials

09

Developing a Killer Campaign

15

Make Some Art

17

Festival Checklist

21

Key Dates & Contacts



Selfie Factory, Melbourne Fringe 2017.
Photo by Theresa Harrison.

The Essentials

We know it can seem like there are 20 million important things to take care of. Don't worry, we feel you. But we also know that if you are aware of all the steps early on then you'll be primed to tackle any 'creative challenges' that may come your way.

Accessibility

These are considerations that should flow into your creative processes, audience development, even your marketing campaigns. Get on it from the get-go and avoid having to make costly decisions down the line, when it's too late.

Key phrases:

- **Disability, not disabled** – As best practice, Arts Access Victoria recommends using the term 'people with disability'. Other terms commonly used include: 'people living with disability' and 'people with lived experience of disability'.
- **Physically accessible** – A venue or event with adequate physical mobility access would indicate a space free of physical obstacles for all involved persons including artists and patrons, allowing everyone to utilise the space equally. This would involve no steps without an alternative flat pathway for patrons in wheelchairs or those with limited mobility and a mobility accessible bathroom.
- **Audio Description** enhances the live theatre experience for people who are blind or have low vision. Through the use of a small radio receiver and a free, easy-to-use headset, audiences can listen to a description of the visual aspects of the performance during appropriate breaks in the dialogue.

- **Relaxed performances** are designed to create a safe and welcoming environment for patrons with learning difficulties and/or sensory and communication challenges. There is a relaxed attitude to noise and movement, often small changes are made to the lighting and sound effects, and audience members can be invited to enter and exit the venue throughout the show.
- **Auslan interpreting** – The term Auslan is an acronym of “Australian Sign Language” and is the language of the Australian Deaf community. Check out this great [factsheet](#) for more information. If you are interested in booking an interpreter for your event, get in touch with Melbourne Fringe or Arts Access Victoria, and we can put you in contact with a range of Auslan service providers.

If you are planning on having accessible performances, remember to jump onto our registration site Eventotron to update the details in Step 6 – Access. We can’t direct audiences to your accessible performances if we don’t know about them. It’s also important to advertise access provisions to the appropriate communities – get in touch with us to find out how.

Want to know more? Our friends at [Arts Access Victoria](#) have all the info.

Money

Before you start making it rain, have a good think about what you have to spend and what you can’t afford to lose. Have a read of our [How to Budget for your Fringe Event](#) resource, and consider:

Your team

Are you working on a profit share model, or to a fixed fee? Be clear and ensure everyone you’re working with is on the same page. Have chats early and don’t be afraid to get clear on expectations from the start.

Your budget

Keep track of everything. Hold on to all receipts, and make sure you get invoices from any collaborators if you plan to pay them out of your box office takings. Check out our basic [budgeting template](#) if you need a hand.

Your income

It’s best to budget your income based on 30% of your venue capacity.

Crowdfunding

Tapping into your own support networks can be a great way to help finance your event. Get the know-how from the experts over at [Pozible](#) and [Creative Partnerships Australia](#).

Funding

Grants and other funding opportunities often follow annual cycles so it can be a little tricky if you haven’t got the money at this stage. It still may be worth joining the [Auspicious Arts eNews](#) for a good digest of funding opportunities as they arise.

A lot of these topics are covered in depth in our free Info Sessions.

See p8 for more deets.

Sustainability

It's important to think about the impact of your event – on the environment, on the health and happiness of you and your crew, and on your bank balance.

Environmental Sustainability

There are no climate change sceptics at Melbourne Fringe. It's everyone's responsibility to be mindful of the impact their Fringe event may have on the environment. A lot can be done simply by choosing appropriate materials for your production, limiting the amount of printing you do and by working with your venue to use low power equipment.

For some more in depth guides take a look at the resources from the green beans:

- [Sustainable Production Guide](#) from stellar UK based organisation Julie's Bicycle
- [Live Performance Australia's Greener Live Performances](#) through Energy Efficiency.
- [Greening The Arts policy report](#) from Greenie-in-Residence program at Arts House.
- [Melbourne Fringe's Sustainability Checklist](#)

Financial Sustainability

We bet your funds are limited so plan your expenses and spend your pennies wisely. Get in early and you can save cash and avoid surprises that usually hurt the hip pocket.

Some tips from Fringe Festival veterans:

- Talk with your team early about how you plan to run your budgets i.e. profit share.
- Be strategic about spending money – the later you do things the more expensive they tend to be.
- Have some contingency for an emergency (it can always be re-allocated to your budget for the nicer things like thank you gifts for your team or a celebratory dinner when you finish your run).
- Don't forget the costs that may come out of your box office takings i.e. inside charges on your tickets, extra tech you ordered with your venue, etc

Health & Emotional Sustainability

There's no point in getting to the end of Fringe and feeling like you never want to do it again. You and your team are likely to go through some high's and low's so it's important to keep perspective on your journey. It's a good idea to have a check-in conversation about how you and your team are going – you might even find that this is best done with a trusted person outside of the project to give you some wider perspective.

- Last year our friends at [Arts Centre Melbourne](#) started the [Arts Wellbeing Collective](#), an initiative delivered in partnership with Entertainment Assist. The Collective comprises a consortium of Victorian arts and cultural organisations whose shared vision is to effect better mental health and wellbeing for Victorian arts workers. We recommend checking out their resources ahead of your run.

Risk Management

Without being Captain Killjoy, effective risk management is about much more than just 'doing the right thing'. If this is the beginning of your big break, make it a clean one and ensure your show is above board.

Safety

Audiences can often recognise when something is unsafe, which will change the way they view your work. Creating a safe and well managed environment will allow audiences to feel comfortable, free to relax and enjoy the experience.

- **OH&S** This is about making sure no box is left unticked. It's much easier to create an event when you are aware of the legalities up front – these can be murky waters to wade if discovered later down the track. Check out these [Safety Guidelines for the Entertainment Industry](#) from Live Performance Australia and the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance for all the need-to-knows.
- **Public Liability Insurance**
Public Liability Insurance can help protect you if you're found to be legally responsible for personal injury of others or property damage during the running of your event.

Join the group policy with Fringe for \$120-\$300 (prices vary depending on the nature of your event), or for year-round coverage you can go it alone with [Duck for Cover](#), [NAVA](#) or [AON Performers Insurance](#), among others. Public Liability Insurance does not cover you (or your cast) for injuries during rehearsals or performance, for cancelled performances, loss of income, damage to equipment for example. It's purely to cover the public during your event. There are other types of insurance which cover these aspects (things like Personal Accident Cover, Performing Equipment Cover, Professional Indemnity Cover). These can often be bought as a package or as add ons to your PLI policy if purchased directly through places like Duck for Cover. Pretty much all venues will require you to have PLI, however these other types of cover are optional so decide for yourself got thousands of dollars of expensive sound equipment you might want some equipment cover.



**Take a risk,
but do it
safely.**

Remember: PLI only covers the public, it's required by nearly all venues but check with them first as they may cover you. Melbourne Fringe Umbrella cover is only for PLI and only for the course of the Festival.

Music

Planning on using recorded music for your event? You may have to pay a fee to use it. APRA is the governing body that collects funds on behalf of recording artists. By going through APRA, music artists get paid for their work and you'll get legal approval to press play.

Big acts (say MJ or Midge) can sometimes be tough to get approvals for. Think about checking with APRA as soon as your heart is set on a particular track. You don't need to pay APRA if you're using your own original music or sound.

All the details are available on the [APRA website](#).



**You don't
need to pay
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using your
own original
music or
sound**

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is significant protocol for First Nations people. It is a way for everyone to practice cultural awareness and respect for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their ongoing practice of culture and connection to country.

It's important to consider how you'll make an Acknowledgement of Country at your Fringe event, so here are some useful resources to help you out. Check out [this website](#) from Aboriginal Victoria and [this article](#) from Creative Spirits for more information, including some great example Acknowledgements of Country you can use as a starting point.

Producer Updates

You'll be receiving regular Producer Update emails from Team Fringe. This is our primary method for keeping you in the loop, so be sure to keep your eyes on your inbox.

Featuring:

- Timely reminders about what you should be on top of throughout all stages
- Opportunities that will help feed your art
- Exciting ways to further develop your skills
- More incredibly important, un-spammy information

Truly, you won't want to miss them.

Info Sessions

We host regular face-to-face sessions to assist artists and producers every step of the way. The program includes a wide scope for up-skilling emerging artists across disciplines and career trajectories, exploring 'hard' presentation skills such as partnership development, accessibility, writing skills, media liaising, touring and network building.

Meet other artists, glean quality advice from experienced professionals, and learn all there is to know about putting on a damn good event!

Fringe is as much about creating a community as it is about creating art, so set that calendar to busy and join us.

[RSVP here:](#)

- Info Session 1: Self Care and the Festival Journey
Monday 4 June
- Info Session 2: Money
Monday 18 June
- Info Session 3: Marketing Campaign
Monday 2 July
- Info Session 4: Social Media
Monday 16 July
- Info Session 5: Facebook Advertising
Monday 30 July
- Info Session 6: Tour Ready
Monday 3 September



**Free and open
to all, the
sessions are
about taking
your artistic
practise to the
next level.**



Benjamin Hancock, *Post-Apocalyptic Body Slam*, Melbourne Fringe 2017. Photo by Theresa Harrison.

Developing a killer campaign

Why is it important to launch a solid marketing campaign for your show? Here is a carefully curated set of dot-points to convince you.

- To increase your ticket sales
- To get your work noticed by the independent arts community
- To raise awareness among potential funders
- To gather evidence of your work and its reception

Now that you're on board, here are some basic marketing principles to help you get it right.

A. Define your Audience

First and foremost: who is your event for? Think about who already engages with your work – the people who come to your events or openings, the people that currently buy and support your art. Then think about the types of audiences and supporters you would like to expose to your work that aren't yet engaged. These are your **current** and **prospective** audiences.

Remember to think outside the four-sided figure when it comes to considering prospective audiences. Potential funding partners, media partners and venues can be just as valuable for marketing and developing your work.

Once you have determined your audience, outline the key demographic and behavioural information you know about them.

Demographic information includes details such as: age, occupation, education, and location.

Behavioural information can include: how they receive information (print, online, radio, etc.), how many times they have viewed your work, what other work they regularly see, how they spend their leisure time, modes of transport they use, etc.

So, now you have it: your **target audience**. The more you know about who you are targeting, the better chance you have of reaching them – especially when it comes to creating publicity materials and deciding what media outlets to send them to.

Don't forget to be specific, no show is for everybody!

Don't forget to be specific, no show is for everybody!

B. Define your Message

Take some time to reflect on what makes your show different. Why does it stand out from the pack?

- Is there a great story behind your production?
- Is there a relevant social aspect to your work?
- Why are you the best person to tell this story?

It's important to have a think about the kind of language that best communicates your work. This takes time, but you can start by talking about your event with those close to you – how are you describing your work? How are other people interpreting what you are trying to do? It can help to make note of terms and phrases that you like as you go. This way you can start to craft how you – and others – talk about your production.

Images and Videos

Your message includes any visual content you use in your communications. Great imagery is a crucial part of any successful campaign, feeding into your marketing, social media, fundraising, and press opportunities. Consider this an extension of your creative process – produce quality imagery that speaks to the integrity of your work and makes you proud.

Tips for Top Images:

- Use high contrast, striking imagery that grabs attention and clearly communicates the nature of your event.
- Having a think about the kinds of photos that catch your eye in other festival programs, in newspapers and/or online always helps.
- Consider a combination of images, such as headshots and live production shots.
- Colour photos are best for grabbing the eye and are able to be used in more contexts.
- Try to have images with no text on them – they don't look great in the Fringe guide picture and press outlets won't use them.
- Go for images that are landscape (horizontal) - they work better for media.
- Make sure your images are at least 300dpi, 1MB-3MB and approximately 10cm square so they work well for print but aren't too big to email.
- Consider sending thumbnails or lower resolution images by email, with links to full resolution versions available for download online (so journalists can easily access them but you don't clog up their inbox).
- Label your JPG files clearly with your show and contact name. Journalists receive hundreds of pictures per day and they will not be able to work out which show your picture relates to just by looking at it.

Tips for Top Videos:

- While you don't need to aim for Hollywood production value, it's important to ensure your video quality is in keeping with the rest of your campaign materials.
- Take opportunities for capturing footage while you're rehearsing or early on in your season. This will be important if you hope to tour your work after Fringe.
- If you have the means, consider creating some short videos as promotional tools.

A decent phone camera and a free app can be all you need to get crackling.

Remember:

- **Style and professionalism:** If you are targeting a design-savvy audience then let's maybe not assume your graphic design skills are good enough for your poster design. It can make your show seem unprofessional and amateur.
- **Consistency:** You want people to not just see or hear about your show once, you need them to see, hear and read about it loads. That's why your imagery, messages, tone and style must be consistent across all marketing materials.
- **Give insight:** Simply getting on the megaphone with your "BOOK TICKETS NOW!" war cry is unlikely to gain you much attention. Think about the interesting things you're working through – what kinds of compelling research are you discovering? What small wins are you having sourcing materials or costumes? What can you share about your process that makes potential audiences even more intrigued about what's to come?

C. Action!

Do: Social Media

- Building a Facebook page for your show and regularly updating it is still one of the best free-to-low-cost marketing strategies you can employ. Create a page (not a group) and focus on timely, engaging posts. This way your content will be published in your fans' news feeds, keeping you on their radars and increasing the chances of attracting more followers. Also, be strategic with Facebook's low-cost boosting options. For example, if you get a good online review, consider throwing a bit of coin at promoting it in a linked post.
- Take it to the Twitterverse! Create a Twitter profile and invite people to follow you. Be creative and informative, join in on conversations that are aligned with your work, be someone worth listening to. Post Twitpics and videos – anything goes.
- Consider other social media channels to supplement your activity. If you're a keen Instagram or Pinterest user, factor that into your campaign. Sharing interesting visual content by any means will only help generate interest in your show.



**Play it cool.
Constant,
repetitive or
irrelevant posts
can be annoying.**

- Wherever applicable, tag posts with the Melbourne Fringe hashtag (#melbfringe) to get amongst the online buzz that builds around the festival. Anyone searching for Melbourne Fringe mentions via the hashtag will have a much greater chance of coming across your show.
- Consider budgeting for some social media advertising. It's a cheap, simple, and effective way to speak directly to your target audience.
- Remember what we said about short promotional videos? Simple YouTube clips can be quick, high-impact and easily sharable 'trailers' for your work. Give it a shot!

**Like grandma
always says,
remember to
hashtag
#melbfringe**

Do: Online Marketing

- Your email address book is your mailing list – don't be afraid to use it. Send the details of your show to all your friends and family a few weeks before it opens, and again during the season. If you explicitly ask them to forward it onto their networks, you'll be increasing your reach enormously. People are much more likely to buy tickets to a show recommended by someone they know rather than a show they know nothing about.
- Maintaining an email database is key. Not just of friends and family, but of interested audience members and industry folk, too. Ask people to sign up to your mailing list when they arrive at your show. This will help you build an engaged network of people likely to follow your work and spread the word about any future shows.
- Try making yourself an online home. There are loads of free and low-cost platforms for building simple, professional blogs and/or websites – Wordpress or Squarespace are good places to start. Update it frequently, and make sure it looks good – your online presence should be as polished and accessible as your event.

Find your groove by linking all of these online actions and streamlining the way you update content. Coming up with a reliable, practical system for coordinating your messaging will make things easier for you, and for those keeping up with you. It's supposed to be fun, remember?

D. Publicity

Once you've figured out the best way to talk about yourself, you're ready to get everyone else talking about you!

Check out our [How to Write a Media Release](#) cheat sheet for handy tips.

You've had a think about how your target audience keeps up with what's what, so it's a good idea to start collecting some relevant contacts to reach out to when the time is right.

Fringe Program Launch

Now for the big crescendo: the day your campaign goes live and you start selling tickets!

If there's a day to be ready for, it's this one. Every Fringe event starts to promote its show/s, and the festival itself generates heaps of buzz as Melbourne gears up to get Fringed. There's strength in numbers – you'll want to be set to go.

The Melbourne Fringe Festival will launch its 2018 Program on Wednesday 15 August. That means that until this point, there is an embargo on all events (i.e. keep it a secret!). You can still pitch your work to the press, just make sure to put this message on the header of all of your communications:

**Embargoed until
Wednesday 15 August 2018**



**Don't sweat it,
you can still
crowdfund your
work**



Anna GoGo, *Grrrl Power*, Melbourne Fringe 2017.
Photo by Theresa Harrison.

Make Some Art

Could it be time to paint Melbourne town a deep shade of metaphorical red? Nearly. When you're getting down to your creative business, there are a few things worth considering.

Your Team

You can revisit the ideas in Part 1 (pg. 9) of this pack.

- Creative
- Producing
- Fringe can help!

Showings & Previews

As you work through your process, keep in mind that performing in front of an audience is the best way to test your ideas. You may have a small element of your show that you can share with your support networks – maybe just one song from your set, a small selection of your paintings, even just a chat about your costume choices can be really revealing.

**Don't leave it until
opening night to
test your work
in front of other
humans.**



Travelling Sisters, *Grrrl Power*, Melbourne Fringe 2017.
Photo by Theresa Harrison.

Festival Checklist

It's unlikely you're going to need to do all of this, but checklists are fun, so let's do one. These are also the kinds of things that can really sting if you miss them, so take this as a guide for what's best to do when.

The big Stuff

- Venue Hire Agreement
- Public Liability Insurance
- Risk Management
- APRA Music Licence
- Liquor Licence

**Talk to us ASAP
if you think any
of these things
could trip you up
- advise is what
we're here for.**

The Little Stuff that amounts to other big stuff

Opening
night

Season

Invitations

- The press
- Industry folk
- VIPs
- Presenters (check out our Tour Ready Delegate list)

Make sure the opening night is full, and that you're set for a busy season

Registering your show

- for the Green Room awards (performances only)
- for Melbourne Fringe awards (all art forms)

Promotion

- TELL EVERYONE YOU KNOW
- Make a Facebook event
- Send a group email/text/share with email database
- Upload your media release to the registration site

Printing

- Posters/flyers etc. Do you want them? How many?
- Include Melbourne Fringe logo/any supporter logos on all collateral

Documentation

- Arrange a photographer or videographer to capture your event

Getting out your diary

- Schedule in rehearsals, bump in/bump out, Awards night, etc.
- Check in with team and ensure you're all across the schedule

The slightly before last minute stuff

Artist Passes

- Sign up via Eventotron (deadline is August 24)

Artist Agreements

- Outline key expectations with your collaborators
- Talk about payment agreements/fees
- Get written agreements sent, signed and back to you (email is fine)
- Keep track of budget and collect all relevant receipts for safe keeping

Box Office

- Log into your Producer Ticketing site
- Learn how to allocate tickets and see your daily booking list
- Ask your venue if they manage your Box Office, otherwise tee up someone to manage this for you
- Sort a cash float for any door sales
- Keep track of said door sales (for Fringe stats)

Venue Prep

- Need signs or pavement chalk to show audiences the way?
- Need extra hands for Front of House or Box Office?
- Make an opening night drinks/food plan

For Opening Night

- Write out your guest list and have it at the door
- EAT SOMETHING
- Thank your supporters, sponsors, etc.
- Consider how you'll make an Acknowledgement of Country prior to your event (see pg.7)

The Extra Stuff

Are you setting up your own box office?

Your door sales are run independently from Melbourne Fringe Ticketing (unless you are performing at a Fringe Hub venue).

- Organise a cash float (so you can give change)
- Have something to use as tickets (e.g. raffle tickets or a stamp)
- Organise someone to staff your door
- Download a Sales Report beforehand (so you know numbers and names of any pre-bookings. Note: Fringe stops selling tickets exactly 1 hour before showtime)
- Make sure you are ready to sell tix at least 30 mins before start time
- Remember to count attendants/keep track of your door sales (you'll need to report this info in our Artist Survey once the festival has wrapped)

Are you setting up your own bar?

- Have you got your Liquor Licence? Do you need one? Your venue might have this covered. If not, you can still sell soft drinks and snacks.
- Get someone to help you
- Do your bar staff need an RSA (Responsible Service of Alcohol) certificate?
- Get your bar stock organised (Costco or ALDI are good for bulk buying)
- Prepare all your bar bits (like electricity, refrigeration, cups, rubbish bin, etc.)
- Organise a cash float (so you can give change)
- Are food and drinks allowed into the performance space?
- Will the bar stay open after the show/event?
- Set up any signage you need (official Liquor Licence stuff, a price list, etc.)

The future stuff

Want your show to have a life after Melbourne Fringe? Attend a Tour Ready networking event teeming with local and interstate programmers and presenters.



Glitter and Snatch, *Post-Apocalyptic Body Slam*, Melbourne Fringe 2017. Photo by Theresa Harrison.

Key Dates & Contacts

Advertising booking deadline (for digital advertising, please provide 2 weeks notice)	4 June
Fringe logos available for your collateral	26 June
Upload media kit to registration site	6 July
Provide visa information (international artists only)	10 July
Submit event licence application to APRA	20 July
Melbourne Fringe Program Launch	15 August
Artist passes (enter names into registration site)	24 August
Supply marketing collateral to Fringe office	7 September
2018 Melbourne Fringe Festival opens	13 September
Artist Party	13 September
Melbourne Fringe Awards	29 September
2018 Melbourne Fringe Festival closes	30 September

Please use this as a reference in the lead up to and throughout the Festival. We'll send you regular Producer Updates via email with plenty more detail on all of the dates and events above.

Questions? Contact **Participant Services** at artists@melbournefringe.com.au or on 9660 9600. Or reach out to **Danny Delahunty**, Festival Producer on 9660 9600 or at danny@melbournefringe.com.au