

Creative Programming Framework



Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. Wurundjeri connection to this land dates back more than 40,000 years, and evidence of this connection still exists today.

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2. Definitions

Creative Program	Refers to those productions/events which have been purchased/presented by The Round under the curation of the Programming team, as part of Council's annual season offering.
Venue Hire:	Refers to programs which are presented by a commercial or community producer/artist/organisation which pays for the use of the venue and retains the net box office takings.
Co-Presentations	Refers to those productions/events which are presented jointly by The Round and a commercial/community presenter or artist in which the financial risk is shared between The Round and the producer
Artist	Refers to a person engaged in an activity related to creating art, practicing the arts, or demonstrating an art. Art forms include but are not limited to literature, visual arts, community arts, performing arts, digital arts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, music, film and moveable cultural heritage.
Programmable Spaces	Refers to spaces that are activated by The Round Programming Team.
Creative Investment	Refers to the development of a performing arts product which may or may not result in an immediate performance or production.
Overall Offering	Refers to all of the product offerings available in The Round for the general public to attend.
Producer	Refers to the individual or organisation responsible for the creation, distribution, sale and administration of a theatre product/work.
Presenter	Refers to the purchaser of the theatre product/work, in this case; The Round.
Stakeholder	Refers to a person or a group with an interest or concern in The Round's programming.

3. Purpose

The Round will be home to an annual calendar of events that strive for a robust balance from local, community-based venue hire organisations, commercial producers and Council's own Creative Program.

The *Creative Programming Framework* is designed to provide clarity and transparency around the process by which curated choices are made for Council's Creative Program, these choices will take into account the full complement of offering at The Round, which includes its venue hire stream.

The Creative Program will aim to deliver a season of diverse, artistic, vibrant and world class professional works that respond to the local community and are an attractor to greater Melbourne to visit The Round.

The *Creative Programming Framework* will clarify the process by which the Round's theatres and creative spaces are programmed and by which performances, workshops and exhibitions are selected for presentation. The framework provides stakeholders a clear statement of the overall creative objectives for The Round's programming in all its forms, as well as a set of guiding principles against which programming decisions will be made and potential programs will be assessed.

Adherence to this framework will ensure that all decision making undertaken in programming is done in a fair, transparent and equitable way for all stakeholders with the aim of delivering the highest quality and most appropriate/ viable offering for the Whitehorse community.



4. Scope

The former Whitehorse Centre, which has recently reopened as The Round, has a long and rich history of programmed performances. The addition of a black box theatre, the increased capacity of the proscenium theatre and the offering of two contemporary rehearsal/creative spaces presents an exciting opportunity to further develop the creative offering and expand upon this rich history of arts programming in Whitehorse.

The overall offering is comprised of two main streams;

- Creative Programs; theatre, music, dance, circus, cabaret, children's, film, spoken word, creative investments, festivals
- Venue Hires; commercial, community and schools

The framework applies to the following spaces at
The Round:

- Theatre
 - Studio Theatre/Soundshell
- Foyer
 - Creative Space One
 - Creative Space Two
- Forecourt
 - The Round Function Spaces
 - Gallery Room

The framework does not apply to the following spaces:

- Whitehorse City Council civic and meeting rooms
- Whitehorse Library spaces



5. The Whitehorse Community

The Whitehorse community is made up of a population of 171,167 (2021) people over an area of 64.24 square kilometres. The population of Whitehorse has been steadily increasing over the past 20 years and is projected to continue increasing into the future. The age demographic of Whitehorse sits higher than both the greater Melbourne and Australian averages, with a median age of 39.

While 33% of residents are couples with children, the Whitehorse community is also comprised of a significant number of lone person households.

Whitehorse is a vibrant and diverse community comprised of people from a range of backgrounds, with over 42% of residents born overseas, and 42% of residents speaking a language other than English at home. Of particular note are the significant Chinese and South Asian populations which comprise more than 30% of the Whitehorse community.

6. Reconciliation and Cultural Commitments

Through its creative endeavours, The Round strives to develop and sustain a vibrant and inclusive program.

Whitehorse City Council has a long-standing commitment to reconciliation and encouraging respectful relationships between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians. The Round is committed to creating a program where First Nations People's stories and cultures are valued and celebrated as a central part of our national identity. A reconciliation action plan is currently being developed by Whitehorse City Council which will support The Round's commitment to supporting, nurturing and amplifying First Nations voices and theatre-makers.

The Round is committed to honouring and reflecting the diversity of our community through the stories we tell and the artists who tell them. The Round program will strive to advocate for artists of Colour, artists with disabilities, artists from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds and LGBTQIA+ artists.

7. Strategic Goals and Objectives

Council's Arts and Cultural Services Vision is:

We aspire to be a creative community that is vibrant, diverse and engaged in our arts, cultural and heritage.

The creative objectives of The Round are:

- To build the creativity, health and wellbeing of the Whitehorse community
- To increase local access to diverse, inclusive and creative programs
- To present high-quality and diverse offerings that engage, entertain, educate and reflect Whitehorse's unique community, culture and heritage
- To create, develop and maintain a strong and widely recognised brand for The Round as a leading creative venue in Melbourne's East
- To drive engagement with The Round's creative program, reflected in both increased attendance and diversity of audiences ([see 7](#))
- To support participation by local artists, career professionals and local businesses in the creative life of the city
- To forge strong relationships with producers, artists, festivals and other performing arts centres
- To provide access to people of all abilities and backgrounds
- To maintain a balance between accessible service provision and financial sustainability



The creative objectives of The Round program are aligned to both the Whitehorse City Council Plan and the Whitehorse Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, particularly the points listed below:

Whitehorse City Council Plan 2021-2025:

- 1.3 - Facilitate and encourage creativity and innovation within the community (maximise return on investment of Whitehorse PAC)
- 2.1.1 - Work with businesses and local communities to support and promote the growth of local businesses in the municipality
- 2.3.1 - Partner with the education sector to engage, promote and advocate for improved learning and educational opportunities for individuals and local businesses
- 3.1.1 Maximise return on investment of Whitehorse Performing Arts Centre (Year 4).
- 3.1.6 - Develop and deliver Council festival and events that encourage community participation and connection.
- 3.2.1 - Support community groups to celebrate and to host events that promote cultural background, faith and gender diversity.
- 4.3.1 - Work with community organisations to promote and encourage social connections and support community participation for isolated members of the community.
- 7.1.1 - Provide accessible services and programs.
- 7.1.2 - Advocate on behalf of the community and respond where appropriate to health and wellbeing needs (in response to the MPHWP).
- 8.2.2 - Ensure responsible financial and resource management to maintain Council's long term financial sustainability within a rate capping environment.

Whitehorse Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025:

- Connect community members to social support, health and wellbeing services and programs in their local area.
- Bring people together from across the municipality to reconnect with Council arts, cultural, recreation and leisure programs and services.

- Ensure public spaces, recreation and play spaces are safe and accessible to all.
- Design arts, cultural, heritage, leisure and recreation programs that are enjoyable for and meet the needs of the diverse population of older people in Whitehorse.
- Embed the stories of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, new migrants, asylum seekers and international students within the narrative of Whitehorse.
- Promote themes around healthy and respectful relationships at all ages through arts, cultural, recreation and community programs.

8. Audience Development

One of the central objectives of The Round program is to develop its audience in size and diversity. Some of the key demographics identified for audience development are;

- First Nations peoples
- People between the ages of 16 and 50
- People from diverse Cultural and Linguistic backgrounds with a particular focus on the Chinese and South Asian communities
- People living with disability
- LGBTQIA+ peoples



9. Guiding Principles

Guiding principles have been developed to assist the Programming team to translate the goals and objectives into either essential or desirable criteria by which each potential creative program to be presented at The Round can be considered.

Essential

- a) Content/quality of the offering
 - Is the production/marketing materials of high quality?
 - Is it a new work? Has it been performed anywhere else?
 - What has been the reception to the work previously?
 - What creatives are attached to the work?
 - Is the content contained in the production appropriate/suitable?
 - Is the production logistically/artistically appropriate for any of the physical spaces within the centre?
- b) Audience Sustainability and Development
 - Will the production assist to sustain the existing audience?
 - Is the production capable of attracting a new audience to the centre?
 - Does the production reflect the Whitehorse community?
 - Does the production feature artists or subject matter that is likely to appeal to the local community
 - Does this production have potential to develop an audience over multiples seasons?
- c) Program balance
 - Does this production address a need that is not covered elsewhere in the overall offering?
 - Does the production address an identified gap in the creative program for a season?
 - Does the production provide a positive financial return to Council within the balance of the season offering?
 - Is the production similar to the other offerings within a similar timeframe?
 - Is the production likely to detract from audience participation and engagement in existing/other programs?

- Will this program limit availability for hirers or other community programs to the detriment of the overall offering?
- Has the production already been presented at the venue in the immediately preceding years?

d) Producer/Reputation

- What has the quality of other works by the producer/artist/company been?
- Has the producer/artist/company demonstrated cooperative and effective professional work practices including; administration, organisation, time management, communication, compliance and financial management?
- Will this production strengthen the professional relationship/links between The Round and the Producer?
- Is association with the producer likely to affect the reputation or brand of The Round?

e) Venue Brand

- Does the production align with the brand of The Round?
- Is the production likely to strengthen or increase the reputation of The Round as a leader of quality and excellence amongst performing arts centres?

f) Financial Viability

- Is the production cost-effective and reasonably priced in consideration of the scale and content of the production?
- Will the box office return be considered as reasonable in context of the Creative Program Framework?
- Is the production likely to recoup costs and/or generate revenue?
- Is the financial viability of a single production considered in the context of the overall season and creative program budget/income expectations?
- Will the production have a broad appeal to one or more market segments within the local and broader community?
- Are the artists based in Melbourne, or will there be considerable costs associated with touring?

Desirable

- g) Relevance to the local community
 - Does the production contribute to the community and civic pride
 - Was the production/event created locally?
 - Does the production feature local artists or stories?
 - Does the production reflect the lived experiences of local communities?
- h) Accessibility/Cultural Sensitivity
 - Is the production accessible to audiences of diverse abilities?
 - Does the production represent and promote diversity?
 - Is the production sensitive to different cultures, languages, religions, minorities?
 - Does the production help to build social cohesion and cross-cultural understanding?
- i) Economic Impact
 - Is the producer living/operating within the City of Whitehorse?
 - Is the production likely to attract patrons to the Whitehorse area?
 - In what ways is the production likely to impact local businesses?
- j) Environmental Impact
 - Does the production employ environmentally sustainable practices?
 - Does the production pose any risk to the environment?
 - Does the production promote sustainability more broadly?

10. Process for Programming

The creative program development and all associated decision-making for The Round will be the responsibility of the Programming Team Leader in conjunction with the Coordinator of the Round and the Manager of Arts and Cultural Services.

The Programming Team Leader will undertake to develop the creative program in a number of ways, including;

- Receiving expressions of interest from producers/artists/companies
- Reaching out to producers/artists/agencies
- Attending performances, previews and readings

- Attending pitch programs/networking events
- Industry research and collaboration through industry events
- Collaborating with other performing arts venues and festivals as well as with other departments within Whitehorse City Council
- Offering developmental opportunities such as residencies, in-kind venue arrangements and co-presentations

The purchase of productions and programs will be a negotiation between the Producer and Programming Team Leader with the aim of meeting the needs of both to the best possible advantage.

The program for the following calendar year will be developed and finalised by November of the previous calendar year. The program will be developed in line with the Goals and Objectives ([see 6.](#)) and decision making/assessments will take into consideration the guiding principles ([see 8.](#))

11. Financial Negotiations

Where appropriate, the programming team will undertake negotiations with the producer/artist/company to find a fee structure/financial model that will work for both the producer and presenter. Payment plans, royalty fees, co-productions and up-front payments will all be at the discretion of the programming team in consideration of the Goals and Objectives and aligning with the Guiding Principles.

12. Touring and Other Costs

Where appropriate, the programming team may agree to cover some or all of the costs associated with touring a production. These include such fees as accommodation, airfares, per-diems and ground transport. It is recognised that show fees and touring costs are often based on funding applications which may or may not be successful. The programming team will provide venue confirmations and support to the producer as required by state and federal touring funding programs, to ensure productions can be brought to Whitehorse in a cost-effective way. Tours that are

unsuccessful for funding applications may require a greater financial outlay from the programming team.

13. Change of Circumstances

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively.

Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact.

14. Review

The next review of this document is scheduled for completion by 30th June 2024.

