CrossCurrents: National Jazz Commission

2027 Funding Guidelines

Program Overview

CrossCurrents: National Jazz Commission is a commissioning, creative development and presentation opportunity of up to $40,000, presented by Melbourne International Jazz Festival (MIJF) and Bunjil Place in the City of Casey. It supports the creation of bold new Australian-led jazz, improvised and contemporary music works developed in meaningful collaboration with international artists.

Through creative exchange between local and international artists, the program aims to strengthen local artistic practice and build lasting connections with the global jazz community. The commission must be Australian-led and feature a clear international collaboration component.

The selected artist or ensemble will receive financial support and fit-for-purpose development time and resources to bring their work to life. The commission will culminate in two public outcomes: a development showing at Bunjil Place, followed by the premiere of the commissioned work as part of the 2027 Melbourne International Jazz Festival.

The successful applicant will receive:

- Up to $40,000 in project support.
- Access to in-kind rehearsal and development space, venue and operational support at Bunjil Place (optional).
- A public development showing at Bunjil Place.
- A premiere performance as part of the 2027 Melbourne International Jazz Festival (15–24 October 2027).
- Visas, accommodation and ground transfers for your international collaborator(s), arranged by MIJF.
- Marketing, technical production, ticketing and producing support for your festival presentation at MIJF and your development activity at Bunjil Place.

Eligibility Criteria

Who can apply?

CrossCurrents is open to individuals, ensembles, collectives and organisations. To be eligible, the lead artist must be:

- an Australian citizen or permanent resident; and
- 18 years of age or older.

Applicants can be based in any state or territory of Australia or currently living abroad.

CrossCurrents welcomes applications from across the full breadth of jazz and improvised music, embracing all genres and styles. While international collaboration is central to the program, it is not a requirement that projects include cross-cultural themes or content.

Project requirements

Proposed projects must:

- Be led by an Australian artist, ensemble, collective or organisation (minimum of 50% Australian artists involved);
- Involve at least one identified international collaborator, who will perform as part of the work;
- Result in the creation of a new work or substantial new body of work;
- Present a public development showing at Bunjil Place ahead of the MIJF premiere; and
- Premiere at the 2027 Melbourne International Jazz Festival (15-24 October).

  The festival premiere must run for a minimum of 75 minutes, of which at least 50% must be the commissioned new material.

International collaborators

You must identify all proposed international collaborators at the time of application. You will also be required to provide evidence (see Support Material) that each proposed collaborator:

- Has been consulted before the application is submitted;
- Has expressed genuine interest in participating in the project;
- Is available to undertake the project during the proposed project timeframe; and
- Has agreed to the proposed budget and fees related to their participation.

Commitments of the successful applicant

The successful applicant must:

- Be available, together with your international collaborator(s), to perform at MIJF between 15–24 October 2027, on a date, time and at a venue mutually agreed with MIJF;
- Be available for media and promotional opportunities as reasonably requested by MIJF and Bunjil Place from time to time; and
- Be willing to adhere to all relevant MIJF policies and procedures.

Program Detail

Funding

The successful applicant will receive up to $40,000 in project support, jointly funded by MIJF and Bunjil Place. MIJF will contract and pay the commissioned artist(s) in accordance with the approved project budget.

Your project budget should allocate the CrossCurrents funding to the following expenses:

- Artist commission fee
- Creative development and rehearsal costs
- All artist fees for local and international artists, covering both development and performance
- All flights associated with the project

The following expenses will be covered separately by MIJF and do not need to be included in your project budget:

- Visas for international collaborator(s)
- Foreign resident withholding tax arrangements
- Accommodation in Melbourne for the MIJF performance
- Performance venue hire
- Performance production expenses
- Ground transfers in Melbourne for the MIJF performance

Scale, ambition and budget

There are no limits on scale or ensemble size. We encourage you to think ambitiously, while making sure your project is achievable within the timeline and available resources. If your project requires additional resources to be realised (financial or in-kind), please ensure this is listed clearly in your budget, alongside whether this additional support is confirmed.

The assessment panel may award the full amount requested or a lesser amount. The approved budget will form the basis of the final funding agreement. Please note that significant changes to project scope, collaborators or budget items following selection will require approval from MIJF and Bunjil Place.

Development at Bunjil Place (optional)

Bunjil Place can provide access to rehearsal and development spaces, along with venue, operational and technical support, to assist in the creation and development of your work. Use of these spaces is optional and should align with your project needs and creative process. The scope and duration of support will be determined in consultation with the successful applicant, subject to venue availability and project requirements. Support can be tailored to accommodate different approaches to creative development. If you wish to access Bunjil Place's rehearsal and development spaces, please indicate this in your application.

Public development showing (required)

A public development showing at Bunjil Place is a requirement of the commission. This will take place ahead of your festival premiere and provides an opportunity to share your work in progress, test material in front of an audience and invite the community into your creative process. The format will be agreed in consultation with the successful applicant and could take the form of an open rehearsal, work-in-progress showing or another format appropriate to the work.

Bunjil Place will provide in-kind venue, production and operational support for the development showing, as well as marketing and audience engagement.

Premiere at MIJF 2027 (required)

Your new work will premiere during the 2027 Melbourne International Jazz Festival, 15–24 October 2027. The date, time and venue of the premiere performance will be mutually agreed between the successful applicant and MIJF.

MIJF will manage ticketing, marketing and production of the festival presentation.

Rights and credit

- The applicant will retain all rights to the work.
- Any proposed project involving First Nations cultural material, stories, language or collaborators must follow established Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocols, including

Creative Australia's *Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts.*

- MIJF and Bunjil Place retain the right to use project information, images and excerpts for marketing, publicity, archival and reporting purposes.
- Any additional commercial use or recording of the work will be subject to a separate agreement with the artists.
- MIJF and Bunjil Place will be credited as co-commissioning partners in all future presentations of the work, where reasonably practicable.

Timeline

Friday 27 November 2026	Applications open
Sunday 20 December 2026, 11:59pm AEDT	Applications close
January 2027	Successful applicant notified and commission announced publicly
February–October 2027	Project development and Public development showing at Bunjil Place (dates to be mutually agreed between applicant and Bunjil Place)
15–24 October 2027	Premiere performance at the Melbourne International Jazz Festival (date, time and venue to be mutually agreed between applicant and MIJF)

Application Process

How to apply

Please submit your application through our online form by **11:59pm AEDT on Sunday 20 December 2026.**

APPLICATION FORM

Your application must include:

- Written responses to the questions below; and
- The support material listed below.

Please make sure you include all required material – incomplete applications will not be considered.

Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Artistic merit:** the quality, originality and ambition of your proposed work and the artists involved.
- **Feasibility:** whether your project, budget and timeline are realistic and achievable.

- **Strength of international collaboration:** including evidence that your collaborator(s) are committed to the project.
- **Audience impact:** how the work will connect with audiences, including at the public development showing and the festival premiere.

Written responses

Please respond to the following questions.

1. **Your project.** Describe the new work you propose to create. Outline the artistic concept or direction, including the proposed ensemble size and instrumentation. *(Max. 150 words)*
2. **Your career and practice.** Tell us about your career and artistic practice, highlighting the experience most relevant to this project. *(Max. 150 words)*
3. **Your international collaboration.** Tell us who your proposed international collaborator(s) are and why they are integral to realising this commission. Please include:
   - what each will bring to the project, including their role in the performance;
   - whether you have an existing creative relationship; and
   - how the collaboration will shape the work.

   (Max. 250 words)
4. **Other key creative personnel (optional).** Who else will be involved in the project, and what will their role be? Describe their contribution and what they will bring to the creation or presentation of the work. *(Max. 150 words)*
5. **Your creative process.** Describe your approach to the creative development and creation of the work. How do you envision the process unfolding, and how will you work with your collaborator(s) to realise the project? You might consider whether you plan to undertake in-person sessions or travel to work together; whether the work will be developed collaboratively, composed and arranged, or through an ensemble-led process; and whether it will involve written notation, improvisation or a combination of approaches. *(Max. 250 words)*
6. **Presentation context.** What do you envision as the ideal context for presenting this work? Describe the type of venue or setting that would best suit the work, and why you feel it is the right fit for the project. *(Max. 150 words)*
7. **In-kind support from Bunjil Place (optional).** Bunjil Place can offer access to rehearsal and development spaces, along with other resources and support, to assist with the development of your work. Would you like to make use of these facilities and resources? If so, outline what you would need and how this support would benefit your creative process. *(Max. 150 words)*

Support material

Please submit the following materials with your application:

1. **A letter of confirmation from each proposed international collaborator**, confirming that they:
   - have been consulted about your application;
   - are genuinely interested in taking part;
   - are available during the proposed timeframe; and
   - have agreed to the proposed fees and travel costs associated with their participation.

2. **Biographies** of the key artists involved in the project (including yourself).
3. **Detailed project budget**

   Please use the budget template provided here and clearly outline:

   – The amount of funding requested through CrossCurrents;
   – Any additional project income or funding sources; and
   – Project expenditure, including the proposed fee arrangements.
4. **Project timeline**

   A proposed timeline outlining the key stages of project development, delivery and presentation.
5. **Audio and video samples**

   Provide links to up to three audio or video samples of your performance and/or composition work (e.g. YouTube, SoundCloud, Bandcamp or Dropbox). Please select material that best reflects the proposed project and ensure that passwords are provided where required.
6. **Optional additional material** (up to 3 items)

   You may also include up to three additional items of support material, if relevant to your application. For example, letters of support, an expanded budget with additional notes, or confirmation of interest from other presenters.

Questions and support

If you have any questions, would like to talk through your idea before applying, or would like to discuss access requirements or alternative ways to apply, please get in touch:

– **Tom Browne, Executive Producer, MIJF:** tom@melbournejazz.com or (03) 9001 1388
– **Hadley Agrez, Festival Director & CEO, MIJF:** hadley@melbournejazz.com or (03) 9001 1388
– **Matt Hoy, Acting Head of Performing Arts Programming, Bunjil Place:** mhoy@casey.vic.gov.au or (03) 9705 5200