

A comedian with short brown hair and glasses is performing on stage. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a black shirt with white polka dots. He is holding a microphone in his right hand and looking upwards with a smile. The background is a large, stylized red rose pattern on a dark stage. In the bottom right corner, there is a small panel with several glowing orange lights.

PARTICIPATION IN THE FESTIVAL

October 2025

MELBOURNE
INTERNATIONAL
**COMEDY
FESTIVAL**
COMEDYFESTIVAL.COM.AU

INTRODUCTION

Melbourne International Comedy Festival aims to discover, develop and showcase great talent for the entertainment and inspiration of a broad audience. The Festival values irreverence, inventiveness and creativity, inclusiveness and accessibility, freedom of speech and respect for all.

Melbourne International Comedy Festival is the largest dedicated comedy festival in the world. The Festival takes place over four weeks in Melbourne every autumn with an enormous program of stand-up comedy, cabaret, theatre, street performance, film, television, radio, digital content and visual arts.

WE DELIVER:

- an open access festival for Australian and NZ resident artists
- a curated program of international artists
- live and broadcast (TV and online) series and special events
- development and education programs, including RAW Comedy, Class Clowns and Deadly Funny
- national and international tours of Australian and international artists

FESTIVAL SNAPSHOT

2025 Festival

- 696 shows, 7,804 individual performances, including 44 free performances
- 2,008 artists, 182 performance spaces (133 venues)
- 707,388 attendance, \$22.9 million box office

AUDIENCE

- 58% female, 41% male, 2% non-binary/gender fluid
- 82% Melburnians



PARTICIPATION

FINANCIAL

Festival registration fees apply.

Staging a show in the open access program requires being able to cash-flow the season expenses and carry the financial risk.

Expenses may include:

- Festival registration
- artist fees
- technical support wages
- venue rental
- box office and/or ticketing staff
- front of house staff
- equipment hires
- travel and accommodation
- marketing and advertising (print/digital)
- publicity
- insurances (Public Liability Insurance is compulsory)
- risk management
- ticketing services: individual shows set their own ticket prices; the Festival reviews these and provides guidance

Income may include:

- Box Office, minus applicable ticketing fees and agreed deductions. (NB: ticketing suppliers who comply with the LPA Ticketing Code of Conduct do not release box office income until after the performance or season).
- Government funding, philanthropic support or cash sponsorship.

The Festival's trusted ticketing platform is Red61, it is available and highly recommended to all participating shows. While use of the Festival's Red61 system is not yet mandatory, it's expected to become standard in future years. For more info see the [Festival's Ticketing Handbook](#).

NB: some ticketing promotions the Festival runs are only available for shows using Red61.

Financial result:

Ideally, the income from your show will exceed your expenses and generate a profit. In reality, this may not always be the case, especially for early-career artists still building their audience.

It is critical that artists and producers understand the financial risk involved, keep budgets conservative and have resources available should the season result in a deficit.

[A budget template example is here.](#)



PARTICIPATION

THE FESTIVAL ENVIRONMENT

The Festival's environment is packed with opportunities beyond stage time.

As a participant, you have access to:

- Professional development opportunities, e.g. info and panel sessions (digital/live).
- Festival Club.
- Seeing shows with your Festival Pass (space permitting).
- The opportunity to be considered for awards. The Festival coordinates awards, including Best Newcomer, which is awarded to the most outstanding artist/s presenting their first show.
- The opportunity to gather media reviews. At festival time more journalists are keen to see shows.
- The opportunity to meet with and show your work to festival directors, producers, bookers and agents who visit the Festival from across Australia and internationally.
- Invaluable networking opportunities, and the chance to make lifelong friends and colleagues.

WHERE YOUR REGISTRATION FEES GO

As a not-for-profit organisation, the Festival doesn't generate profit from your registration fees. Instead, these funds are reinvested directly into running the Festival and supporting artists and audiences.

Your registration fees contribute to::

- **Printed Guide** – a key marketing tool that gets your show into the hands of audiences.
- **Website & Registration Portal** – our custom online system is core business, making it easy and inviting for audiences to find and book shows.
- **Marketing & Promotion** – both digital and physical campaigns that lift and generate audience awareness and ticket sales for the whole festival.
- **Artist Services** – our professional and dedicated team who support artists at every stage of their career.

Like everyone in the sector, we are not immune to rising costs. But every dollar of your registration fee is working to reduce your workload, boost your visibility and support you and your audience's Festival experience.



GUIDELINES FOR MATERIAL TO BE PERFORMED UNDER THE BANNER OF THE MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL

Melbourne International Comedy Festival values freedom of expression and the artist's right to be the creator and arbiter of both their subject matter and the ideas they wish to convey in their performances.

Melbourne International Comedy Festival also values challenging and thought-provoking work and endorses the artist's freedom to push social, political and creative boundaries. However, no-one participating in the Comedy Festival as audience member, staff member or fellow artist should ever feel victimised or threatened, or indeed get the impression that we think certain unacceptable behaviour is okay. So, any material that promotes or normalises: domestic violence, violence against women, assault or violence of any kind, racism, misogyny, ableism or homophobia, is not encouraged and will not be supported.

If your work includes material of this nature Melbourne International Comedy Festival is likely not the right environment for you.

For queries regarding performing at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival contact us at registration@comedyfestival.com.au.

