



Merri-bek
City Council

Coburg Courthouse Residency Program Guidelines 2026



Image: Aviva Endean at Coburg Courthouse in 2024. Image by Mia Mala McDonald.

About the space

The Coburg Court House is a dedicated arts space located at 1A Main St, Coburg (next to the old Coburg Police Station) and is managed by Arts Merri-bek. Originally built in 1929 the building has long served as a courthouse before becoming a community facility and in 2024 began its legacy as a venue for creative development.

It is a highly versatile rehearsal space for professional artists. The space features high ceilings, heating/cooling system, accessible entrance, large windows with curtains and 1 accessible unisex bathroom. It is centrally located within close distance of Coburg Station. You can see photos of the space [here](#).

About the Residency Program

Arts Merri-bek is opening expression of interests to performing artists and producers. Arts Merri-bek will provide the space for free for up to three-months to develop a new or existing work.

Applications are now open for the 2026 residency program. Applications close 28 October, 5pm. Please indicate your preferred time of year in the application form.

- Residency 1: 27 Jan - 19 April 2026
- Residency 2: 5 May - 28 July 2026
- Residency 3: 7 Aug - 25 Oct 2026
- Residency 4: 3 Nov 2026 - 24 Jan 2027

Artists offered a Coburg Court House Residency will:

- Provide a written evaluation and summary of the residency within 30 days of the residency ending. This evaluation will include images of their creative development which Arts Merri-bek can use for marketing and reporting purposes.
- Any future performances following the residency are required to acknowledge Merri-bek City Council.
- Pay a refundable \$328 security bond for the Coburg Court House, prior to the start of the residency.
- Provide evidence of Public Liability insurance to the value of no less than \$10 million or alternatively purchase public liability insurance from Council.
- Follow all relevant policies and legislation including, but not limited to, MCC Local Laws, MCC Plastic Waste Policy, Liquor Licensing and EPA Regulations.
- Ensure there is no damage to the Coburg Court House and accept responsibility to repair any damage at the cost of the artist.
- Provide a complete list of artists occupying the space and ensure there is no on-hiring to other parties. We welcome showings or performances as part of your residency but please consult with the Arts Merri-bek Team in advance.

Eligibility & Selection Criteria:

Who can apply?

The Coburg Courthouse Residency Program is suitable for performing artists and producers. This can include dancers, theatre-makers, actors, sound artists, spoken word performers, stand-up/improv comedians, and physical theatre/circus performers.

The residency is a valuable opportunity which is open to performers or producers who need a rehearsal space to develop a performance work over a three-month period.

To be eligible applicants need live or work in the Merri-bek City Council municipality. The program encourages applications from [Merri-bek's Human Rights Priority Groups](#).

In line with [Merri-bek's Arts and Culture Strategy](#), to increase self-determined programming and participation opportunities for First Peoples (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People), Arts Merri-bek will award at least one residency to this priority group.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed and selected based on the following criteria:

- Performing artists who live or work in Merri-bek.
- A clearly articulated creative brief demonstrating strong artistic practice.
- Demonstrated need for the rehearsal space.
- Priority will be given to artists who identify as a member of [Merri-bek's Human Rights Priority groups](#).
- In line with [Merri-bek's Arts and Culture Strategy](#), to increase self-determined programming and participation opportunities for First Peoples (Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People), Arts Merri-bek will award at least one residency to this priority group.

Eligibility

- The application is received no later than 5pm Tuesday 28 October 2025.
- Applicant must have acquitted any overdue Council grants or programs
- Applicant must have public liability insurance to the value of no less than \$10 million or alternatively, purchase public liability insurance from Council.
- Provide working with children checks (if the project involves young people) during the creative development and comply with Merri-bek Child Safe Standards.
- Applicants must live or work in Merri-bek.

To Apply

- Complete the application via Snapforms available [here](#)
- Applicants must provide support material that highlights their work. At least one attachment (image/video) and up to 3 links (website/social media).
- Applications close at 5pm on Tuesday 28 October 2025.
- We will endeavour to notify artists of their application outcome within two weeks of submission.
- For further information or to discuss your application in more detail, contact the Arts Development Officer at arts@merri-bek.vic.gov.au.

Floor Plan

