

guidelines

The **Queer Playwriting Award** is an exciting initiative presented by Gasworks Arts Park and Midsumma Festival that encourages the creation and development of original Australian theatre with a queer focus.



Background

The **Queer Playwriting Award** is a partnership between Gasworks Arts Park and Midsumma Festival, which cements many years of Midsumma arts events every summer at Gasworks. We frequently attend performing arts markets and showcases, and have noticed that the plays presented for touring to mainstream audiences seldom deal with queer themes. **It is time to change that!**

Image: Suzanne Balding (*Waterfowl* by Callum Mackay, QPAS Winner 2023)

The **Queer Playwriting Award** aims to identify, support and develop new talent and get queer issues out there for mainstream audiences to consider and enjoy. The LGBTQIA+ community is

diverse, exciting and has stories and ideas that deserve to be heard on the stages of performing arts venues throughout the country. This is the chance you have been waiting for to tell a bold, funny, new, important, or exciting story to Australian theatre audiences.

The Opportunity

Creators of new or developing works of theatre are invited to submit their proposals for consideration by a panel of supportive industry professionals. If you have an idea for a show, a completed script, or anything in between, we want to hear from you. **4 works** shortlisted by the industry panel will present a 15-minute staged reading on **Monday 19 January 2026** at Gasworks Arts Park as part of Midsumma Festival. One work will be selected to receive ongoing support and development with a view to becoming a full-scale work to be presented in Midsumma Festival 2026 or beyond. The ultimate aim of the **Queer Playwriting Award** is to tour the work nationally to expose it to a wide range of metropolitan, regional and rural audiences.

Get Involved

Read through the eligibility requirements and selection criteria on the following pages and then submit your application online at <https://www.gasworks.org.au/artist-opportunities/queer-playwriting-award>

If you have any queries, contact Josephine Mead (Programming Administrator) at Gasworks Arts Park on 03 8606 4200 or email programming@gasworks.org.au

Applications close **Friday 4 July 2025**, and applicants will be notified of the outcome by late July.

Tickets for the **Queer Playwriting Award Showcase** on **Monday 19 January 2026** at Gasworks Arts Park will be on sale from late 2025 in line with the official Midsumma Festival 2026 program launch.

For updates and more information, keep an eye on the Gasworks and Midsumma websites, and follow us on social media.



selection criteria

Queer themes

It is important that your work incorporates an exploration of queer themes in some way. Obviously how you achieve this is up to you. The panel will be looking for works that progress audience understanding of queer issues.

Audience appeal

While you are welcome to tell your personal story, remember to transcend personal expression in order to create work that is of interest to an audience. To ensure the longevity of your work, it is vital that it appeals to a range of audiences. Think about why a general audience might buy a ticket to a full length version of your show. This doesn't mean that everyone has to love it, but consider where this show may be seen in the long-term - for example, your show may end up touring regional Australia, it may end up playing to a variety of age groups, and so on. If your work only appeals to a very specific market segment, it will be challenging to expose it to a broad audience. The panel will be looking for works that have a broad appeal, and that can be experienced by a range of audiences.

Authenticity

We are eager to uncover original, unique and authentic stories. The panel will be looking for works that clearly communicate engaging stories or captivating commentary upon current or historical events.

Style

While your work may not have a design concept in mind, it is important to consider the look of your work. The panel will be looking for works that aim for arresting style in design and/or visual presentation. Remember that a dynamic visual presentation and design does not necessarily mean a huge budget! The panel is looking for creative ways of creating dynamic productions. Design elements are not expected to be realised. If your work is selected for the showcase, as this takes the format of rehearsed readings. Think about style in terms of how the work might look if it were to go on to a creative development and full-scale production.

Excellence

The panel will be looking for dedication to excellence in craft. Consider how you can demonstrate dedication to your idea, passion about the arts and queer issues, and commitment to creative development.

Creative team

The panel will be looking for a creative team which radiates energy and passion. A proven track record (evidence of having presented work in a theatrical context) will bolster your application so please mention previous credits or experience.

Capacity to tour

The long-term aim for this program is to tour your work, so keep this in mind from the very beginning. If your show features a cast of ten people and takes three days to bump in, it will be difficult to create an efficient and affordable tour. Be conscious of the logistics of your show; particularly complicated tech requirements, large scale casts and set/design requirements.



eligibility

Conditions of Entry

- Entries are welcome from people who identify as GSD (gender and sexually diverse) as well as allies (provided there is sufficient evidence of collaboration with and representation of people with lived experience of queer issues and from the queer community).
- The key contact and ideally, the cast and creative team must be based in Victoria and generally available during January to develop and rehearse in readiness for the public showing on Monday 19 January 2026. As the super objective of QPAS is to develop a work further and initially present it in Melbourne, a Victorian-based team is preferred in the interest of the project's viability.
- Your submission must be an original Australian work that has yet to be professionally produced.
- If your application is successful, you will be required to sign a document outlining the Terms and Conditions of the opportunity on offer. You will also be required to confirm that if any music or script rights clearances are required for public presentation of your work, those licenses have been obtained.
- If your work is selected for the showcase, Midsumma Festival and Gasworks Arts Park will provide the venue, MC, Front of House staff and operating technician free of charge. While the event will be promoted in the Midsumma Guide and on the Midsumma and Gasworks Arts Park websites, selected artists are encouraged to contribute to event promotion through their own networks.
- Applications are accepted via the online portal only.
- The panel's decision is final and no communication or correspondence will be entered into regarding the selection or judging of the selected applications.



future development

What happens after the Showcase event?

Audience votes & feedback collected on the night will be taken into account by a selection panel, who will select one Award recipient.

This work will be selected to receive ongoing support and development with a view to becoming a full-scale work to be presented in Midsumma Festival 2026 or beyond. The ultimate aim of the Queer Playwriting Award is to tour the work nationally to expose it to a wide range of metropolitan, regional and rural audiences.

If you are a playwright, please think about confirmed collaborators - you will ideally need a producer and a director attached to your work (not necessarily at application stage but down the track) to support you in bringing it to fruition and ultimately, to live audiences.

The key contact for your work needs to be Victorian based, as there is an expectation to attend regular development-focused meetings at Gasworks. Meetings will be staggered over the course of the development and structured to focus on: script development, marketing, budget, contracting, and technical production.

The following support will be offered:

- in-kind space for auditions & rehearsals at Gasworks
- mentorship & administrative support through regular meetings and communication with Gasworks staff
- some support may be given with applying for external grants/funding towards your work's development, by negotiation (e.g. letters of support)
- an opportunity for a facilitated work-in-progress showing with invited guests at Gasworks
- an opportunity for your premiere performance season at Gasworks, ideally in line with the 2026 Midsumma Festival (subject to the progress of the work's development and the fit with Gasworks' programming rationale & audience appeal)
- your event registration fee covered by Midsumma Festival

Key financial info for your premiere performance season:

- A shared risk scenario/negotiation will be entered into.
- The artist will bear the risk for costs associated with cast, creatives, and design materials.
- Gasworks will bear the risk for the venue, technical & operation support (up to an agreed cap of hours), and FOH staff.
- The expectation is that there will be a joint and collaborative commitment to marketing.

