



The George Fairfax New Theatre Award

The Castlemaine State Festival is thrilled to announce the expansion of the George Fairfax Playwrights Competition. The Festival extends an invitation to Victorian-based playwrights and theatre makers, individuals, collectives and companies to apply.

Background and history

The Castlemaine State Festival (founded in 1974) is a 10-day biennial multi-arts celebration that draws on the distinctive culture of the central Victorian goldfields region — of old and new, of the artistic and the agricultural — and its dynamic community strengths. The festival showcases works from the region's finest artists and performing arts companies, alongside national and international artists.

George Fairfax (1928–1996), a widely respected and lifelong advocate and practitioner of theatre, particularly in Victoria, had a long association with the Castlemaine State Festival. He served on the Festival's Melbourne Committee (1984–1994) and during that time contributed enormously to the Festival's artistic program. His presence and support was sadly missed following his death, and the Festival Board committed to an ongoing project to acknowledge his contribution to theatre in Australia: the National George Fairfax Play Competition.

George grew up in Nangiloc, a small town in the mallee district of Victoria. His career spanned acting, directing, design, music, choreography and writing. He was a champion of new work; both making it and sharing it with audiences.

Since its inception, the competition has been generously supported by the Besen Family Foundation.

Castlemaine is 90 minutes by car from the Melbourne CBD, and is serviced by the V/Line Bendigo line, also 90-minutes.

A new direction

Castlemaine State Festival is proudly and explicitly a state-based festival in a regional location. We aim to create the best possible event in this context and it is our artistic vision to:

- present an inspiring multi-arts biennial program within the distinctive and creative culture of Castlemaine and the surrounding region
- lead, in the region and the state, in building innovative arts practice and positive cultural connections with audiences and communities.

We want to:

- present outstanding works by regional, national and international artists and companies
- support artists to develop and best realise their ideas
- lead and drive innovative partnerships between artists, arts and community organisations, and businesses.

(CSF Business Plan 2012–2015)

The Festival has redefined the George Fairfax Play Competition by combining our sharpened focus of identity and mission with the legacy of George Fairfax. We are now excited to offer The George Fairfax New Theatre Award.

We believe these new developments will honour George's regional roots, his passion for the broad range of skills that make theatre and his enthusiastic support for new work. At the same time, it will specifically support artists who are based in Victoria (who may also be working in a national or international context), while creating a new work of undeniable regional significance. It will encourage collaborations and partnerships, as well as individual artists who were the Award's previous target.

The Award

The Castlemaine State Festival will present the Award in 2011/12 to a proposed new theatre performance project or new theatre script to be produced by the applicant/s and presented at the 2013 Festival.

We are looking forward to experiencing exciting new theatre work within the unique parameters of our vibrant Festival. Making work in and for the regions offers unique opportunities and may also have particular challenges and limitations. Be bold and inventive, be thoughtful and sensitive, and be driven by the nature of regionality to reimagine the theatre in content, form and process. Perhaps you have a rollickingly good story for our stage, shaped and performed in a way that audiences won't be able to forget.

The work must have direct significance for and appropriateness to its regional location. This is not necessarily in terms of its content; it must show logistical

awareness of the particular conditions of our regional Festival setting. These include:

- the scope of available venues
- our audience
 - approximately 50 per cent local, 30 per cent other Victorian regions and 20 per cent Melbourne
 - some experienced, but many new to the arts/festivals
 - cultivating positive cultural connections with audiences and communities is just as much a priority goal as supporting innovative arts practice — we program works very carefully to respect this
- limited budget and resources
- short performance season
- challenges for transport/time if bringing in outside resources.

The work must not have been previously professionally produced.

Who can apply?

Individual playwrights and theatre making artists, collectives or companies based in Victoria, Australia. Applicants may be working or collaborating nationally or internationally, but must be based in Victoria to be eligible.

We are aware that some individual artists may not have the skills or relationships with other theatre practitioners that are required to manage and produce a performance project in its entirety. In an effort to avoid discouraging or disadvantaging artists in this situation, the Festival offers to provide contacts with a range of local theatre professionals who may be able to join and work with the applicant to produce the work. Please contact Festival Director Martin Paten for introductions, if you require.

The money question

The Award consists of up to a total of \$15,000 over the two years of development and production, including:

- \$5,000 awarded in 2011/12 for project development
- up to \$10,000 presentation fee awarded in 2012/13.

The Festival recognises that some artists/companies may already bring other funds and attachments to their projects, or may wish to source other funds from elsewhere to achieve their vision. For the winning project, any extra funding or relationships must be acknowledged according to the Festival's sponsorship protocols.

If any extra funding is not confirmed at the time of application, the applicant must show that the project can be successfully delivered, should their other

applications be unsuccessful. In these cases, any extra funding would be to extend an already coherent and exciting project that meets all the criteria.

The Festival offers to auspice applicants who wish to seek further money to enhance their projects, but may not meet certain governance or organisational criteria for particular funds.

All Box Office receipts return to the Festival, so projections should not be included in the budget.

The Castlemaine State Festival is striving to achieve industry standards and best practice across all areas. The onus is on the winning artist/s to also ensure that these standards are met throughout the project.

What the Festival can provide to the winning project

- Budget as outlined above
- Production and technical advice
- Venue feasibility advice
- Marketing and promotion — in the print and online Festival Program, media and publicity
- Ticketing/sales
- Access to other artists living and working in the region
- Access to local community organisations and primary and secondary schools (Artists' Working With Children Checks required, if relevant)
- Office space
- Local knowledge
- Stills photographic documentation
- Billed accommodation
- Performance front of house staff
- Performance risk management and OHS advice

What the Festival cannot provide

The Festival is the Presenter of the winning project, not the producer or production manager. Applicants therefore need to ensure that they are responsible for:

- any technical and production equipment and Infrastructure (unless provided by the Festival venue)
- set, props, wardrobe and makeup
- seating and front of house infrastructure (unless provided by Festival venue)
- provision of power to the site if needed and if not using a powered venue
- risk management/OHS (outside Festival performance period)
- production management
- project/administrative management
- public liability Insurance (outside Festival performance period)
- WorkCover insurance.

What you need to submit

When assessing applications, we will consider the strength of the idea or script, and your ability to deliver the Festival a professional theatre production that fulfils our artistic goals and visions.

1. If you are an individual playwright

- Your script
- A synopsis including cast list (max 1 page)
- Your CV
- Your production pitch — tell us why your script is right for us, how you see it being realised within our logistical parameters, and how it responds to the Festival's artistic vision and goals (max 1 page)
- A signed undertaking to meet your responsibilities as identified above, including your commitment to actively engage in managing the development of the production, working cooperatively with the Festival, and your project's practitioners, to bring the work to fruition
- CVs of other members of your project team, if you already have these in place, or, if you don't have other practitioners on board, tell us how you plan to secure your team.

If you will be taking the role of project producer:

- a project budget, with balanced income and expenditure columns.

2. If you are an individual theatre maker

- Your project idea — a description of what you plan to make, how you plan to make it, which (if any) other practitioners you will need to work with and how you will work together. Tell us about how an audience will experience the work as you are dreaming it, what they might see, hear and feel, and where they might journey.
- Your production pitch — tell us specifically why your project is right for us, how you see it being realised within our logistical parameters, and how it responds to the Festival's artistic vision and goals (max 1 page).
- Your CV — making sure to include details of any past projects that you think might be relevant in supporting your application.
- CVs of other members of your Project Team, if you already have these in place, or, if you don't have other practitioners on board, tell us how you plan to secure your team.
- Documentation of past projects that you think might be relevant to support your application.
- Contact details for up to three referees

If you will be taking the role of project producer:

- a project budget, with balanced income and expenditure columns.

3. If you are a collective or company

Either

- your script
- a synopsis including cast list (max 1 page)

Or

- your project idea — including a description of what you plan to make, how you plan to make it, who each of you are, and how you will work together. Tell us about how an audience will experience the work as you are dreaming it, what they might see, hear and feel, and where they might journey.

Then also include

- Your production pitch — tell us specifically why your script/project is right for us, how you see it being realised within our logistical parameters, and how it responds to the Festival's artistic vision and goals (max 1 page).
- Artist CVs — making sure to include details of any past projects that you think might be relevant in supporting your application.
- Documentation of past projects that you think might be relevant to support your application.
- Contact details for up to three referees
- A project budget, with balanced income and expenditure columns.

Closing date

Applications are to be received by 4.00pm Tuesday 6 March 2012, mailed to:

The George Fairfax New Theatre Award
Castlemaine State Festival
PO Box 230
Castlemaine
VIC 3450