

BRISBANE

**COMMUNITIES PROGRAM 2026
INFORMATION PACK**

FESTIVAL

Brisbane Festival Communities Program 2026



Art is for everyone!

Brisbane Festival, with the sustained support of the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, has spent the past five years establishing what is now widely recognised as one of Australia's most effective and impactful festival-led community engagement programs. Since 2021 the festival has delivered bespoke, co-designed programs in Neighbourhood and Community Centres that are accessible and inclusive. These programs have broadened the reach and impact of Brisbane Festival for the greater community.

Highlights include Street Serenades program delivering across 190 suburbs in 2021, Common People Dance Parties with artist Neridah Waters and community led concert Meanjin Recovered, written and performed by First Nations elders from West End Community House both in 2023.

Over the past two years, we have piloted an Artist in Residence workshop series, working across multiple artforms with brilliant artists including visual artists Sue Loveday and Sam Harrison, singer songwriter Jungaji, choir master Emma Dean, inclusive dance company Bring a Plate and many more local artists. Workshops offered participants the opportunity to take part in a performative outcome, including Community Choir participants forming a flash mob at the Thomas Dixon Centre whilst workshops with Topology gathered 100 community members to take over 3 levels at Brisbane Powerhouse to play guitar together.

Each year our evaluations have demonstrated significant impact on participant's experiences of social isolation and loneliness — building a stronger sense of community connection. Now going into its sixth year, the Brisbane Festival team will continue to deliver a program of workshops with incredible artists across a variety of artforms that will creatively engage community members in partnership with Neighbourhood Centres, creating pop-up creative hubs across Brisbane.

Under the leadership of new Artistic Director Ebony Bott, Brisbane Festival remains committed to building on the success of the Communities Program by expanding innovative approaches, piloting new artistic formats, and creating pathways to larger-scale outcomes. Now in its sixth year, the

program will continue to deliver artist-led workshops across a range of artforms, partnering with Neighbourhood Centres to creatively engage communities and establish pop-up creative hubs across Brisbane.

In 2026, we will be focusing on the following artforms:

- Dance and movement
- Choir and singing
- Visual Arts
- Fashion and textiles

Brisbane Festival is seeking expressions of interest from Neighbourhood Centres based in the Brisbane City Council area to get involved and host a series of arts workshops designed to deeply connect with your local artists and community members.

Neighbourhood Centres will be selected based on:

- Ability to promote the workshops and events to the local community.
- Work with Brisbane Festival to drive recruitment of participants for workshops.
- Provide appropriate workshop spaces as outlined below in the Neighbourhood Centres' role section.
- Capacity to work within the key timeframes outlined below and work with the Festival team to create the best outcome for each community.

Centres will also be selected to reflect the geographic spread and diversity of our city.

The selected Neighbourhood Centres will be promoted as part of Brisbane Festival's program.

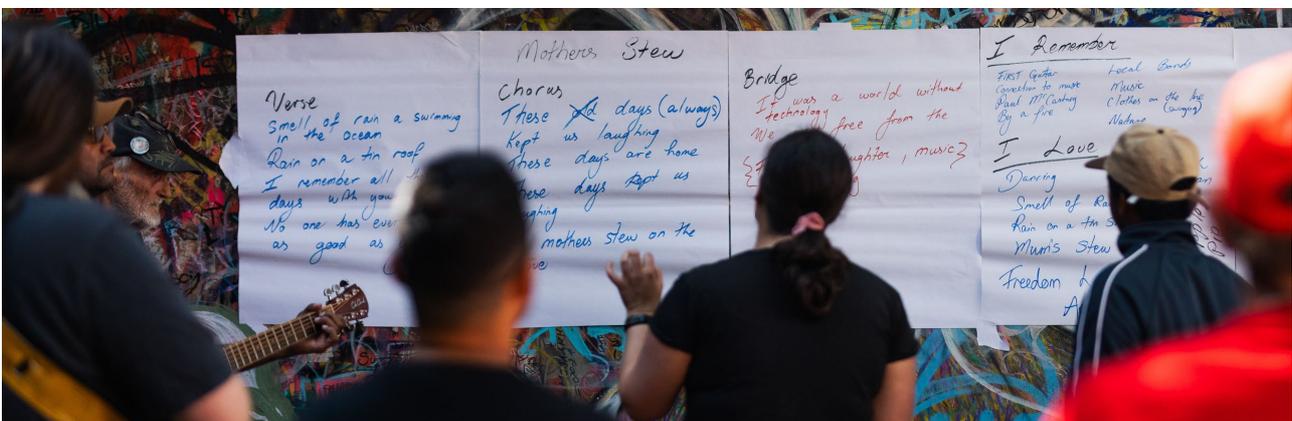


Program Details

At the heart of the Brisbane Festival Communities Program is connecting communities with artists and creative practice. Through an Artist in Residence model, we partner with Neighbourhood Centres to deliver high-quality arts experiences across a range of artforms, supporting engagement and wellbeing. This includes Festival-linked workshops and co-designed projects that respond to each community's interests.

Brisbane Festival will work in partnership with Neighbourhood Centres to foster innovative artistic and cultural expression through the following approach:

- **Identify the appropriate artist and artform for your local community from our list of highly skilled artists.**
- **Deliver 6–8 creative arts workshops by leading artists which usually take place between July and September 2026.** One workshop per week will be held in each Neighbourhood Centre over an 8-week period. Each workshop may have a capacity of between 20–30 participants (depending on the artform) with no minimum number of participants to proceed. Arts forms on offer will include visual arts, dance, fashion design and singing.
- **Workshop Outcome.** The Brisbane Festival team will work with Neighbourhood Centres to determine appropriate performance/exhibition or community outcome for each workshop series. Where appropriate they will be aligned with other Brisbane Festival outcomes.
- **Provide new connections** to artists and open a new world of connection and opportunity. Community Participants will be invited to attend the festival series of artists talks and other professional opportunities.
- **Part of something bigger.** Each participant in the creative arts workshops will be invited to be part of our Community Champions program and receive ticket deals to key Festival shows as well as opportunities to connect with other artists and communities.
- **Provide opportunities** for community participants to also engage with the Festival through volunteer opportunities.



Neighbourhood Centres' Role

- The most important role of Neighbourhood Centres is to support local community members to get involved in the workshops and events.
- Brisbane Festival and Neighbourhood Centres will work together to develop relevant marketing material. Neighbourhood Centres will distribute this and engage your local community i.e., as part of your e-news and putting up posters etc.
- Engage with Brisbane Festival to plan the workshops and share your local community intel to achieve the best program 'fit' for your community.
- Provide access to an appropriate space for the workshops. The workshop might take place in your centre, the park next door, or a nearby hall we can work through the details once the workshops have been confirmed. Note: space for workshops is required 1-2 times a week over a 4–8-week period in July-September and spaces need to accommodate a minimum number of 20-30 participants.
- Participate in an evaluation process (Brisbane Festival will provide the evaluator) – this will involve surveys of participants and audiences and participation in an interview with the evaluator.

Brisbane Festival's Role

- We will cover all the costs associated with the artists and arts workshops.
- We provide all production/technical equipment for the workshops and any potential outcome.
- We will work with you to develop the marketing materials you require i.e., posters, letters, social media posts. Any costs associated with printing will be covered by Brisbane Festival.
- We will have an experienced team including a Producer and Technical Manager to guide each Centre through the program.
- We work with an Independent Evaluator who will capture the key outcomes of the program.
- We will have a professional photographer and/or videographer capturing the workshops and events for use by Brisbane Festival and Neighbourhood Centres.
- We will manage all the details and approvals required for the events, including Brisbane City Council approvals for locations/venues and provide a risk-assessment event plan approved by the Chief Health Officer.

- We can provide additional financial support for Neighbourhood Centres to support the program including translating, or interpreting services or costs associated with Neighbourhood Centre staff.

Key Dates

Date	Key Actions
Mid-Apr 2026	Neighbourhood Centre Applicants are notified on the outcome of their application.
Apr/ Early May 2026	Initial meetings with Brisbane Festival, Neighbourhood Centres and Artists to discuss the workshops and outcomes as well as see the space.
May 2026	Program finalised. Confirmation of workshop facilitators, workshop and performance schedules. Promotion of community workshops begin in partnership with each Neighbourhood Centre.
1 Jun 2026	Broader marketing and launch of Brisbane Festival Communities Program. Outreach to communities and registration of participants begins.
Jul–Sep 2026	Community workshops delivered.
Fri 4 Sep – Sat 26 Sep 2026	Final Workshop Sharing or Community Performance outcomes (during the Festival period).
Oct–Nov 2026	Evaluation and debriefs for each project with partners and participants.

Please note that these dates are subject to change depending on Brisbane Festival's Program.

More Information and How to Apply

- If you have any questions, please email francesca@brisbanefestival.com.au or call 3833 5400.
- If you are interested, please complete the online application form [here](#). Applications close 30 March.

Participant Testimonials

"Absolutely blessed, so heart opening, welcoming, and appreciated...more of this is needed ... truly grateful ... pure community and connection." – Workshop Participant at Jungaji's workshops

"Loved the Dance teachers, they were upbeat and engaging, and very inclusive of all ages and disabilities!" – Workshop Participant at Bring a Plate workshops

"What a lovely opportunity to explore painting with Sam Harrison, who was a wonderful help and offered the best guidance. Totally enjoyed my time painting and found it very relaxing to participate in. It was inspiring to see what everyone was painting whilst chatting to people from our community. It's always wonderful to meet new people and try new things and this was a perfect friendly way to do just that." – Workshop Participant at Sam Harrison's Workshops