

HOMEGROWN PROGRAM 2026

THE EMPIRE

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

2026

HOMEGROWN

INDEPENDENTS PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

Expressions of Interest and Application Information

EMPIRETHEATRE.COM.AU

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THEATRES

54-56 NEIL ST, TOOWOOMBA

ABOUT HOMEGROWN

Homegrown is The Empire's independents performance program encouraging the development and production of new and exciting works, allowing them space to be seen and presented. Independent producers are afforded expert advice and assistance to produce their performance, and the program is flexible and responsive to the individual needs of the producer and the creative activity. Homegrown is designed to provide access, develop community capacity, support local emerging artists, and develop audiences by introducing them to new and local adventurous work.

Homegrown allows for experimentation, collaboration and creative freedom and has produced high quality results. Past independent producers have gone on to show their work elsewhere and have their work published.

We encourage applications from all disciplines, including cross discipline work. We want to hear your idea and help you share it with the wider community. We are also open to flexible presentation models but offer a standard structure as a starting point.

OUR SPACE

The Studio is both a presentation and a workshop space. In theatre style it seats approx. 130. Homegrowns also utilise the Church Theatre on occasion. This space is suitable for shows that don't need a full blackout and can seat up to 220 depending on your needs.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

We are interested in hearing from all types of performing artists including collaborators and cross discipline artists. If you have an idea, a show, or a work you want an audience to see, come and have a chat. We want to show our audiences that locally made work has value and we want to give our local artists the opportunity to showcase what they can do. We want artists to grow and develop their skills to ensure the vibrancy of the cultural sector in our region for the future.

APPLICATIONS & SELECTIONS

The current call is for an expression of interest in developing or presenting a work for the 2026 Homegrown Season. You must submit the Show Details Form by **Thursday 4 December** in order to be considered as part of the 2026 season of events. Inclusion in the season will depend on the following factors.

- Priority will be given to new work and new producers to the program to build skills in the community.
- Marketability/commercial appeal of the product
- Artistic integrity of the product
- Technical requirements of the product
- Suitability of genre in accordance with The Empire's programming goals and timing.

In the first instance – you only need to fill out the attached Show Details form detailing who you and your team are and your idea/production/work. Once this is received you will meet with The Empire staff to discuss your project, the options available and the direction you would like to take. In this meeting you will discuss timing, room requirements and general production requirements. Further information may be requested following this meeting.

After 4 December, The Empire will assess all applications on the above criteria and decide on the inclusions in the season.

NB Children's product will be highly considered in the holiday periods.

PRESENTATION FRAMEWORK

Seasons of work in The Studio includes:

- 2-day bump-in, up to 2 performances – 4 days in total (changes by negotiation). The days may or may not be consecutive depending on availability and will most often be Monday-Thursday
- Performance venue and standard venue equipment including seating
- Reasonable venue costs including electricity and cleaning costs, venue and Front of House supervision of up to 2 performances
- Up to 15 hours of technical labour – your choice to use this for bump-in or operation
- In-kind ticketing, box office event build and staff
- Up to 3 hours marketing support
- Printing of up to 30 posters
- Printing of up to 200 programs (you need to provide copy and images) Please note: programs are printed on a single sheet of A4 paper and folded to A5 and printed in colour. You will need to leave agreed space to promote the next event in the Homegrown series
- Program fee of \$3,250 for the Studio plus booking fees and credit card fees is payable by the artist (\$450 deposit on contract with remainder payable from box office takings). If you need an additional day and performance, there will be an additional \$450 fee to cover venue and Front of House.

Additional time, equipment and expertise will be charged at community rate to the hirer and net box office income will go to the presenting 'Independent' after program fees are recovered. 'Independents' have the opportunity to apply for the Toowoomba Regional Council's Community Access Fund (maximum funding support currently \$2,000) as well as other funds such as cultural support grants to help offset costs. Further funding opportunities are referred to below.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO PROVIDE? WHAT WILL I BE RESPONSIBLE FOR?

If selected, you will be required to liaise with The Empire staff on a regular basis throughout the year and provide information to assist in the marketing, administration and technical delivery of the product including providing images, biographies and synopsis of your product and creative team.

You will need to organise your own rehearsal space, cast, creative team, costumes, set, rights/royalties (where applicable) and rehearsal schedule. The Empire staff will provide a level of mentorship to assist you with your production, but you will be required to drive the creative and marketing process. You will be required to:

- Sign a contract with The Empire for the use of the venue and equipment
- Manage your time effectively in the venue to ensure an efficient use of time and personnel
- Adhere to the rules and policies specified in the contract and follow the direction of The Empire staff with respect to venue management and use
- Ensure credit to Homegrown on any marketing and promotional material where appropriate
- Take care of all insurance requirements including public liability
- Provide a written evaluation of the project within one month of the project's conclusion
- Take care of all APRA licencing requirements and fees for your production
- Be proactive in the marketing and promotion of your event

WHEN IS THE ROOM AVAILABLE?

We are open to independents presenting at any time of the year dependent on availability. Timing will be discussed as part of your first meeting with staff. Please note: in some cases there are main stage shows on during the week that will have priority over the space for a portion of the time. It is unlikely that Friday and Saturday night shows will be possible for these events but if the dates become available 'Independents' will certainly be offered them. All show dates and times will be confirmed 8 weeks before opening.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED? AM I ELIGIBLE?

Inclusion in the independents season is by an application due on **4 December 2025**. This process will ensure the applicants eligibility and the viability of the product offered. In order to be eligible, Independents (either an individual or group) will need to reside in Queensland, however, please note: to be eligible for the Toowoomba Regional Council's Community Access Fund, you must reside in the Toowoomba Regional Council area.

HOW DO I APPLY? WHAT ARE THE TIMELINES?

To apply, please fill out the attached Show Details Form and return it to the Ticket Office or by emailing engagement@empiretheatre.com.au by COB Thursday 4 December 2025 together with any relevant support material.

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IN DECEMBER 2025

REQUIRED SUPPORT MATERIAL:

- Marketing image for your work
- Detailed synopsis/philosophy/ description of your work

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIAL (IF APPLICABLE):

- Up to 10 pages of sample script or work treatment
- Pre-edited 5 minute video extract from the work or creative development

For further information please contact Program and Engagement Manager Jeanette Wedmaier on 07 4698 9925 or email engagement@empiretheatre.com.au

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

As an extension to this program The Empire is willing to discuss providing space for short term creative development projects at minimal cost. Contact the Program and Engagement Manager for more information, as there are conditions involved.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

EOI's for independent work will continue to be accepted throughout the year as opportunities may be possible to hold stand-alone events under the same framework at other times, however it is in the best interest of your product to be part of the Homegrown season.

OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

This is certainly not an exhaustive list of funding options for arts projects but it outlines the main pathways for funding at all levels of government. Further advice from the projects team is available. Having adequate lead times for applications is essential for a successful grant.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CULTURAL AND ARTS SUPPORT GRANT PROGRAM

The cultural and arts support grant program is an initiative aimed at nurturing fledgling artists, supporting grassroots community arts and cultural activity and underpinning higher level arts and cultural development. There is now only one round of funding per year. Please note you cannot have two Toowoomba Regional Council grants at the same time for the same project. If you get a Cultural and Arts Support grant, you will not be eligible for a Community Access Fund grant for the same project.

For more information and forms go to: The [Toowoomba Region](#) website.

REGIONAL ARTS DEVELOPMENT FUND

RADF is back! This fund is jointly funded by the state and local government and can afford higher levels of support. It is particularly good for paying professional artists and increasing your artistic capacity.

Check it out here [Regional Arts Development Fund \(RADF\) program](#) and contact the RADF Liaison Officer for more info email info@tr.qld.gov.au or phone 131 872.

STATE GOVERNMENT

State Government funding has had some significant changes.

Check out the Queensland Arts Project Fund. [The Queensland Arts Project Fund](#) provides one-off grants to support the development and presentation of new creative work by Queensland-based individuals, arts companies, groups and organisations.

Also, if you are incorporated, the [Regional Community Arts Program](#). The Regional Community Arts Program (RCAP) supports community-led arts organisations and groups to deliver high quality, community-based arts and cultural programs and activities in regional Queensland.

Both of these funds are closing soon but hopefully will have multiple rounds. You must apply well in advance of your show to be eligible so plan accordingly.

If you are planning to tour, there is further State Govt funding available through the [Touring Queensland Fund](#).

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

REGIONAL ARTS FUND (RAF)

Is an Australian Government program designed to benefit regional and remote arts practitioners, arts workers, audiences and communities. The fund is provided through Regional Arts Australia and is administered in Queensland by Flying Arts Alliance. The fund is administered in 2 streams, Community Project grants and Quick Response Grants and each have their own opening and closing dates. Check out all the details of RAF [here](#).

CREATIVE AUSTRALIA GRANT PROGRAMS

Support a diverse range of artists, organisations, artistic practice and arts activity. They deliver grants over 5 main programs the most relevant of which are Arts Projects for Individuals and Groups and Arts projects – Organisations, depending how you are set up. Further details of CA grants [here](#).