## **Festival Commons 2026: Expression of Interest**

**Applications close: Wednesday, 24 September 2025**

**Program dates: 8 – 18 January 2026 (in-person lab during Sydney Festival 2026), with digital gatherings in November 2025 and March 2026**

**Location: Greater Sydney and online**

**All participants are paid an honorarium of $2,400 AUD for their time. Travel, access and accommodation support provided for international participants from the Asia Pacific.**

[**Please read the key information and FAQs on the landing page before submitting your application.**](https://www.sydneyfestival.org.au/festival-commons-expressions-of-interest)

### **SELECTION CRITERA**

**1. Creative and Curatorial Vision (30%)**

* Curiosity, risk-taking and innovation in imagining new models of festival-making.
* Capacity to work across disciplines, contexts and cultural frameworks.
* Creativemagnetism; a compelling voice which fosters excitement around ideas, people and events.

**2. Collaborative Practice and Leadership (30%)**

* Track record of working respectfully and effectively with diverse collaborators and communities
* Readiness to engage with peers in a spirit of exchange, and uphold cultural safety, equity and justice.

**3. Potential for growth and disruption (40%)**

* Clear goals for personal and professional development through the program
* Ability to translate learning into practice through activating resources, networks and communities
* Potential to challenge dominant narratives, disrupt entrenched systems, and model new ways of working.

### **SECTION 1: ABOUT YOU**

**1. Full Name**

**2. Pronouns** (optional)

**3. Email Address**

**4. Phone Number**

**5. Suburb / City and Postcode**

**6. Do you identify as First Nations, Black, or a Person of Colour (IBPoC)?**  
 ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Prefer not to say

**7. Cultural/community/language affiliations you wish to share (optional):**

### **SECTION 2: YOUR PRACTICE**

We’re not assessing your grammar, formatting or “arts speak”.  
We’re reading for vision, curiosity and artistic courage, and for the leadership that already exists in community, even when it goes unnamed.

**1. Tell us about yourself and your current practice.**  
 What are you making, shaping, organising, curating or dreaming into being? Who do you gather?   
 *(Up to 300 words)*

**2. Why are you interested in Festival Commons?**  
 What would it mean to be part of a leadership program like this right now –for you and for your communities? What personal and professional skills are you looking to enhance? Who do you want to meet? How do you hope what you’re currently doing might grow or change?  
 *(Up to 250 words)*

**3. What’s a provocation, idea, or question you’d want to bring into the lab about the arts?**

This might be something you’ve always wanted to say but haven’t been given the mic.  
 *(Up to 250 words)*

**4. Tell us about a moment or person who shaped your thinking as a cultural worker or organiser.**  
 *(Up to 250 words)*

### **SECTION 3: PARTICIPATION & ACCESS**

**1. Are you available for the full program dates? You must be available to travel to Sydney for the in-person lab from Thursday 8th January 2026 – Sunday 18th January 2026**  
 ☐ Yes  
 ☐ No – please let us know what might affect your availability:

**2. Do you have any access needs you’d like us to be aware of at this stage?**  
 This might include physical, sensory, neurodivergent, carer-related or cultural needs. We’re asking this to plan ahead to welcome you – it has no bearing on your acceptance to the cohort.  
 ☐ Yes (please outline below)  
 ☐ No / Not at this time

### **SECTION 4: SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

Please attach or link to the following:

**1. A 1-2 page CV or short biography of no more than 300 words (provide as PDF or Word Doc).**

**2. Examples of your work or practice: 10 minutes worth of reading or audio-visual material or a combination of both** (choose any that apply):  
 ☐ Instagram / TikTok / Website  
 ☐ Video or audio documentation  
 ☐ Curatorial statement or programming sample (delivered or speculative)  
 ☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please paste up to two links here:

**3. 360° EVALUATION**

We ask that you invite **up to three people** from your circles to offer short reflections on your practice. These can be informal. They don’t need to be formal referees or high-profile names. We’re looking for honest, relational insights from people who know your work.

You can submit these as written paragraphs, forming a total of **one page** for *all* reflections. Each reflection should be **no more than 200 words.**

Please gather input from:

* **A mentor** (someone you’ve learned from or been guided by)
* **An artist** (whose practice you’ve influenced, supported, or shared space with)
* **A community member** (someone from your audience, collective, or broader community)

### **HOW TO SUBMIT**

Submit your completed application and attachments to: programming@sydneyfestival.org.au

For access needs, questions about eligibility or support preparing your application, please contact:

Maybelline San Juan   
[programming@sydneyfestival.org.au](mailto:programming@sydneyfestival.org.au)+61 2 8248 6534

### **Thank you**