

## First Stage

In 2021, Melbourne Theatre Company and the Emerging Writers' Festival are thrilled to continue the First Stage writers program, supported by The Vizard Foundation, providing creative and professional development for four new voices in Australian theatre.

We're looking for four emerging writers who are keen to develop their skills in writing for performance, and gain insight and experience into the development ethos and process at Melbourne Theatre Company.

The program is designed to be a stepping stone for folks who might not otherwise have pathways toward working with the Company. We're *not* looking for playwrights who have formal training (such as a university degree), or who have had their work professionally produced.

We *are* looking for writers who work in other literary forms or theatre disciplines and are keen to try writing for theatre.

As part of the First Stage program four writers are given support to develop a 10-15 minute piece of writing. Through group workshops and one-on-one sessions with a dramaturg, writers explore the possibilities of writing for the stage and have an opportunity to discover their voice in a theatre context. The work is then developed through a workshop with actors and a director and then presented as a staged reading within the Emerging Writers Festival.

Writers are expected to:

- Attend up to three half-day group sessions
- Attend a half-day workshop with actors
- Develop 10-15 minutes of writing for the stage
- Attend a one-off staged reading of their writing

MTC and EWF expect that by the end of the program writers will have made a step towards writing for the stage and exploring another aspect of their creative practice. Ongoing dramaturgical support is provided throughout and all writers will receive a \$1000 honorarium.

## About Emerging Writers' Festival

Now entering our 18<sup>th</sup> year, the Emerging Writers' Festival (EWF) is one of Australia's most established and well-respected literary festivals.

EWF is a festival for storytellers of all kinds. Even though we're a writers' festival, we're not just about novels. The festival is dedicated to supporting storytelling in all its forms, including things as varied as podcasting, playwriting, poetry, interactive narrative design, photography and comics.

We champion, develop and promote Australia's new writing talent, creating platforms for connecting writing communities and their audiences. We are passionate about strengthening all tomorrow's voices, and developing emerging cultural leaders.

## About Melbourne Theatre Company

Melbourne Theatre Company is where stories come alive. Based in Southbank in the heart of Victoria's global arts precinct, the Company has created exceptional theatre for over 60 years, sharing the power of live storytelling with generations of Australians.

As the state theatre company of Victoria, MTC is known for producing Australian and international theatre for today and tomorrow, with excellence, imagination and passion. MTC embodies the creative spirit for which Melbourne and Victoria are renowned, bringing remarkable theatre to the fore to inspire, entertain, challenge and enrich the lives of its audiences.

MTC boasts a significant commitment to new playwriting in Australia. With the launch of the MTC Next Stage Writers' Program in 2017, a raft of new Australian plays have been commissioned in addition to engaging a number of writers-in-residence at the Company. The MTC Literary department also undertakes activity to support emerging playwrights through the Cybec Electric Playwriting Program and the First Stage program.



First Stage is made possible with the support of The Vizard Foundation.

## The Writers

We are looking for four emerging writers who:

- Are keen to try their hand at writing for stage
- Work in any form of storytelling
- Have had no formal training in playwriting
- Are interested in telling stories not often seen on the stage
- Can demonstrate how it would benefit them and why they want to take part

## Key Dates

**Monday 22 March:** *First Stage* call-out opens

**Tuesday 6 April:** Call-out closes

**Monday 19 April:** Selected writers notified

**Saturday 22 May:** First group meeting

**Saturday 12 June:** Second group meeting

**Saturday 19 June:** Third group meeting

**Wednesday 23 June:** Workshop with actors

**Thursday 24 June:** Workshop with actors and staged reading

## Application Process

Applications should be emailed to [nextstage@mtc.com.au](mailto:nextstage@mtc.com.au) before 5pm AEST on Tuesday 6 April.

Applications must include a writers' CV (no more than two pages telling us a bit about any other opportunities / awards / grants you've received) and a 250-500 word response to the question: Why would you like to take part in this program and what do you hope to get out of it?

You may also include examples of your work of up to 5 pages but it is not compulsory. Please ensure all this information is sent in a single document with your surname as the title.

For further information please email [nextstage@mtc.com.au](mailto:nextstage@mtc.com.au) or call Karin on (03) 8688 0936  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for this program.