

Inner West Council x Biennale of Sydney 2026

# Working Memory

Expression of Interest Guidelines



INNER WEST

Inner West Council is on the land of the Gadigal and Wangal people.

Council pays respect to Elders past and present, and acknowledges their young people who will be our future leaders.

We honour the storytelling and artmaking at the heart of First Nations' cultures, and the enrichment it gives to the lives of all Australians.

# Where culture and creativity thrives – welcome to the Inner West.

Inner West Council proudly supports one of Australia's most vibrant and diverse creative communities.

Sydney's engine room of arts and culture, the Inner West is home to creatives at four times the Greater Sydney average.

Creative and cultural industries represent 12.5% of local jobs and 16.7% of the workforce, adding \$1.16 billion to our economy each year. With over 60 live music venues, 100+ artist studios and iconic institutions, we're a national leader in cultural production.

Council invests in this ecosystem through grants, commissions, events and creative spaces—embedding culture in the heart of everyday life.

Through our partnership with the Biennale of Sydney, we aim to bring local voices to the global stage, showcasing the Inner West as a cultural and creative powerhouse.



# Working Memory

*Embedded in the walls of White Bay Power station is the labour of those who brought it to life, and those who kept the lights on in Sydney. The thousands of workers contributed more than bricks, mortar and coal to the building. They brought energy, connection and care with one another.*



*Working Memory* is a dynamic program of experimental performance works presented by Inner West Council at the 25th Biennale of Sydney, *Rememory*, at White Bay Power Station in April 2026.

Inner West Council are seeking applications from artists with a performance-based practice to respond to the themes of *Working Memory*, *Rememory* and the site itself. Artists are invited to interpret the themes in the broadest sense: the collective generation of energy and momentum, the act of creation as labour, or the traces of workers' histories. We are seeking bold, ambitious works which will captivate audiences.

The program is open to artists, artist collectives and curators looking to present new performance works including theatre, performance, movement, dance, circus, music, and experimental sound.

## The Site

White Bay Power Station stands on Gadigal land.

White Bay is part of the Balmain Peninsula in the Inner West of Sydney and is one of the most recognised landmarks in the precinct.

White Bay Power Station finished construction in 1917 to power the rail network, and is now heritage listed.

The power station is exceptionally significant as the only one retaining machinery and equipment from before the 1950s, demonstrating the process of electricity production and its use throughout Sydney's extensive rail network. It ceased power production on Christmas day in 1983.

This building is a decommissioned heritage facility which has no in-built live performance capability. Performances which are self-sustaining, site specific and limited in traditional theatre and contemporary performance infrastructure will be best suited to the space. There is no black box facility or draping available.





## Opportunities

- 2 x \$20,000 Commissions
- 2 x \$10,000 Commissions
- 2 x \$5,000 Commissions

Three of the six commissions will be identified for the following communities: Disability, First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups or individuals.

We recognise that individuals may belong to more than one of these communities, and identified commissions will be awarded based on the balance of applications received to ensure a broad and inclusive representation of projects.

## Access Stipend

Up to \$3,000 is available in addition to the commission amount.

The primary purpose of this stipend is to better accommodate access needs during the development of your work. For example, Auslan interpretation during rehearsals, funding care requirements or finding a development space which meets the physical needs of performers.

However, projects are encouraged to also think about how to creatively embed access in the work such that the presentation is also more accessible. For example, performer led audio description or tactile interaction.

To learn more about creative access, follow [Accessible Arts](#) who run regular workshops on the subject.

## Rehearsal Space

Inner West Council will support successful projects with two weeks of free access to a Town Hall or similar rehearsal space.

Exact space and time allocations to be negotiated on balance of availability and project requirements.

## Budget

The budget submitted with your application should include all project income and expenditure. Please add any in-kind contributions which you have already received or will receive for this project.

The NAVA guide to artists/performers fees should be used to ensure fair payment to artists.

Your budget should cover:

- The development and presentation of the work – i.e artist fees for rehearsal and performance, design and build costs, community engagement.
- How you will spend the access stipend.

Inner West Council or the Biennale of Sydney will cover:

- A limited stock of standard production elements. Equipment available includes simple lighting, PA and sound ops equipment, wireless microphones and risers. For bespoke or more complex production elements, the Biennale of Sydney will liaise with the artist on the extent of production support available.
- Front of house and audience management.
- Auslan interpretation of relevant performances.
- Photographic documentation of the work.

Budget exclusions:

- Funding cannot be used for transport or accommodation, unless for access reasons.
- Events will be free to attend, so please do not include income from ticket sales in your submission.





## Assessment Criteria

Expressions of Interest will be assessed by a panel of creative industry members including Inner West Council and Biennale of Sydney staff as well as independent practitioners.

Projects will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Project's artistic merit.
- Project's response to the curatorial statement and site.
- Demonstrated experience or skills to deliver the project.
- Practicality of the project's budget.

## Eligibility

Applications are welcomed from early career through to established practitioners presenting solo, collaborative or group presentations. All artforms relating to performance in the broadest sense will be considered.

Inner West Council is committed to engaging with a diverse range of artists and encourages applications from members of the creative community across spectrums of ability, age, cultural identity, gender identity and sexual orientation.

- Maximum one application per person / group.
- Applicants must be Australian Residents over 18 years old.
- Applications must be submitted online through SmartyGrants. Late or incomplete applications are not accepted.
- If working with children, a valid Working With Children Check(WWCC) must be supplied with the application.
- Successful applicants will enter a contract with Inner West Council and be required to supply Public Liability Insurance to the value of \$20 million.

*Preference is given to artists who live or work in the Inner West Council LGA, and have not presented a major program with Inner West Council in the last three years. This is considered in the balance of applications received. Artists who delivered a major or mid tier commission for EDGE Inner West 2024 are unable to apply.*



## **Timeline**

30 June, 9am – EOI Opens

10 July, 6pm – Online Information Session

16 July 2:30pm – Site Visit at White Bay Power Station.

31 July, 4pm – EOI closes

September 2025 – Applicants notified

April 2026 – Performances

## **Information Sessions**

Register for our online information session on July 10 at 6pm here:

<https://events.humanitix.com/working-memory-eoi>

Register for our in person site visit at White Bay Power Station on July 16 at 2:30pm here:

<https://events.humanitix.com/working-memory-site-visit>

## Applications

All applications must be submitted through Smarty Grants.

<https://innerwest.smartygrants.com.au/workingmemory>

Applications open 30 June, 9am and close July 31, 4pm.

## Support

Get in touch to discuss any access requirements or general enquiries you may have in relation to this EOI.

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Council is committed to showcasing diverse voices from our community and welcome those who may need assistance regarding disability, language barriers and navigating grant application processes – let us know what you require so we can make the adjustments for you.

## Image Credits

All images;  
Legs on the Wall, *Hive of Industry*, 2024.  
Commissioned for EDGE Inner West 2024 in  
partnership with Biennale of Sydney.  
Featuring performers Anna McCulla and  
Remy Rochester. 24th Biennale of Sydney, *Ten  
Thousand Suns*, White Bay Power Station  
2024. Fancy Boy Photography.



