

OPERATIONAL POLICY



BLUE MOUNTAINS THEATRE PROGRAMMING POLICY

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Responsible service: Cultural Services

Contact position: Program Leader Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub

Policy statement

The Blue Mountains Theatre will deliver an annual theatre program that strives to seek a balance between the requirements of local, community-based not-for-profit performing arts organisations and delivering a robust, diverse artistic and commercial program of national and international scope.

The commercial performances assist the long-term economic viability of the theatre program, working to offset the expenses associated with providing the registered not-for-profit community-based program. It is important to provide a vibrant commercial program to continually entice new audience members to the venue for its long-term economic viability.

This programming policy is focused on increasing the demographic of the audience by including a range of performances catering to a diverse demographic of visitors including Blue Mountains residents and visitors to the area.

The policy sets out the decision-making framework for general theatre programming at the Blue Mountains Theatre, as distinct from its community-based program.

Scope

This policy applies to all Blue Mountains City Council employees and prospective Blue Mountains Theatre hirers, performers and attendees.

Roles and responsibilities

Positions	Responsibilities
Director Community & Cultural Services	Member of the selection panel determining the commercial performance program. Also oversees performance scheduling.
selection panel	Panel comprised of key Blue Mountains City Council employees to determine the commercial performance schedule and other pertinent matters as required.

Positions	Responsibilities
theatre programming officer	Suggest program items to the selection panel.

Definitions

Term	Definition
audience development	Prospect of proposed performance broadening the demographic of audience members and creating further demand from prospective theatre attendees.
commercial program	The part of the theatre's program that is primarily aimed at making a profit to offset the costs of operations. Program performances may be drawn from commercial booking agents or touring organisations.
community program	The part of the theatre's annual program that is allocated to Blue Mountains registered not-for-profit community-based performing arts organisations.
registered not-for-profit organisations	Organisations that do not operate to make a profit. They must be endorsed as registered not-for-profit organisations and have an ABN in order to receive benefits. These organisations must be registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission to confirm that they are legally a not-for-profit entity.

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1. Programming hierarchy and scheduling framework

As an entrepreneurial business unit of Council, the Blue Mountains Theatre works towards offsetting costs through its programming framework while also focusing on providing equity of access, diversity and fairness for all users.

The commercial program offsets the costs of providing service for registered not-for-profit organisations by enticing new audiences through the diversification of programs. In July of

each year, the Blue Mountains Theatre will ask the Blue Mountains region's major registered not-for-profit community-based performing arts organisations for their preferred performance dates. Upon receipt of these dates, performance dates are scheduled for the upcoming calendar year, pending availability. On average, Blue Mountains-based registered not-for-profit community-based performing arts organisations utilise the theatre space for 27 weeks a year.

Once the registered not-for-profit community-based performing art organisations have scheduled their performance dates for the upcoming financial year, the commercial program scheduling commences.

The content of the registered not-for-profit community-based program influences the selection of the commercial program, ensuring a diverse program range throughout the year that appeals to a broad demographic.

2. Commercial program decision-making

The commercial program is comprised of commercial venue hire booked by tour promoters, agencies, industry networks, and industry bodies for commercial performers and paid performances programmed by the theatre.

Blue Mountains Theatre employees may be approached by professional performers directly or by their agents, or the theatre programming officer may choose to seek out high-quality performances independently for consideration.

Programming decisions for the commercial program are made by a selection panel.

3. Selection criteria

The selection panel selects the commercial program performance schedule on the following criteria:

- a) Artistic quality and diversity.
 - Does the proposed performance increase the program's diversity to appeal to a wide cross-section of the Blue Mountains community?
 - Is the proposed performance new and not a repeat performance from within the last 12 to 18 months?

- b) Audience development and engagement.
 - Will the proposed performance help to develop the diversity and demographic of audiences and increase audience attendance?
 - Does the proposed performance respond to an identified demand from audiences?
 - Would a marginalised and/or disadvantaged section of the community benefit from having access to the proposed performance?

- c) Professionalism.

- Does the proposed performance have a good track record at similar sized venues?
- Is the proposed performance adequately resourced, researched and administered to ensure success?
- Does the proposed performance meet industry standards of management regarding actor equity, insurances, set logistics, technical logistics, etc.?
- Is the proposed performance economically viable?

d) Theatre usage.

- Can the proposed performance be scheduled without scheduling conflict?
- Will the proposed performance logistically and physically fit in the theatre space?

The selection panel's decisions are recorded using the Blue Mountains Theatre Program Review Form. The decisions of the selection panel are final.

Note: The panel reserves the right to reject proposed uses of the theatre that it may deem inappropriate for a local government-owned community facility.

4. Selection panel membership

The selection panel is comprised of:

- two employees from the Blue Mountains Theatre's operational team,
- Blue Mountains City Council's Manager of Arts and Cultural Services, and
- one independent internal Blue Mountains City Council employee.

The selection panel meets on an as-needs basis to determine whether to include proposed performances in the theatre's commercial program.

5. Related documents

This document should be read in conjunction with:

Legislation

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Other documentation

- Blue Mountains City Council, *Delivery Program*
- Blue Mountains City Council, *Cultural Strategy 2005-2025*
- Blue Mountains City Council, *Sustainable Blue Mountains 2025*
- Blue Mountains Theatre Program Review Form