

Emerging Curator Program 2026 Guidelines

Background

The Emerging Curator Program (ECP) funds an early-practice curator to produce and curate a group exhibition at [Curl Curl Creative Space](#) with support from Council's arts specialists and mentorship from the curators at Manly Art Gallery & Museum.

The program is designed for emerging curators looking to develop their practice, gain knowledge of the arts sector, and grow their professional networks.

The mentorship includes support in:

- concept development and research
- artist liaison and selection
- exhibition design
- exhibition writing/essays
- development of exhibition materials (i.e., wall labels and catalogue/room sheet)
- budget and administration management.

Objectives

The key objectives of this development program are to:

1. Support an emerging curator to produce a group exhibition at Curl Curl Creative Space
2. Provide mentoring to the emerging curator to develop an exhibition plan
3. Support the growth of the local creative sector, build networks and relationships across local practitioners
4. Build the identity of Curl Curl Creative Space as a venue for experimental and emerging arts, through the delivery of a diverse mix of programming.

Timeline

The ECP will be delivered to the following timeline:

Activity	Location	Date
Program Induction	Curl Curl Creative Space	Mon 25 May 2026
Mentorship Session 1: Exhibition Plan Review	Manly Art Gallery & Museum	Wed 03 June 2026
Mentorship Session 2: Installation Experience	Manly Art Gallery & Museum	Tue 09 June 2026
Mentorship Session 3: Exhibition Plan Finalisation	Curl Curl Creative Space	Wed 24 June 2026
Exhibition Plan Due	Online	Fri 26 June 2026
Venue Induction	Curl Curl Creative Space	Mon 14 Sep 2026
Exhibition outcome	Curl Curl Creative Space	Mon 28 Sep – Sun 11 October 2026
Acquittal Report	Online	Sun 25 October 2026

Deliverables

- Produce, promote and deliver a group exhibition at Curl Curl Creative Space with a minimum of one public program between Monday 28 September and Sunday 11 October 2026
- Produce an exhibition plan for the exhibition
- Attend all activities as outlined in the timeline
- Agree to and sign the Emerging Curator Program Agreement
- Agree to abide by the [Creative Spaces Terms and Conditions of Hire](#)
- Provide a Certificate of Currency for Public Liability Insurance to the value of \$20 million
- Complete the Acquittal and Evaluation Form at the conclusion of the program.

Budget

Northern Beaches Council will pay the ECP recipient:

Item	Cost
Curator Fee	\$2,000 paid to recipient
Artist Fees	\$3,000 paid to recipient
Exhibition Materials	\$850 paid to recipient
Promotion	In-kind (up to \$200) paid by Council
Venue	In-kind paid by Council
Total	\$5,850

The ECP recipient will be required to provide receipts for all expenditure/artist fees paid in their Acquittal and Evaluation Form to show how the project funds were spent.

Payments will be made in the following instalments:

- \$2,000 upon signing of the Emerging Curator Program Agreement
- \$3,850 upon submission of Curatorial Plan.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be a resident of Northern Beaches Council Local Government Area, or based in Sydney (artists from other locations are welcome to apply, however, no further costs will be covered, including accommodation and travel)
- Not be a previous recipient of the Emerging Curator Program
- Not be an employee of Northern Beaches Council
- Be aged over 18 years and be an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident
- Have no outstanding acquittals or debts owed to Council
- Have a willingness to work to professional standards and checks (insurance, safety, etc)
- Commit to curating and managing an exhibition for presentation during the dates: Monday 28 September – Sunday 11 October 2026.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the project objectives and the following criteria:

1. Strength and viability of the exhibition plan, including:
 - a. Strength of curatorial proposal
 - b. Selection of artists/creatives, minimum of 3, maximum of 10
 - c. Public programming and related activities.
2. Curatorial experience, including:
 - a. Suitability of practice to opportunity
 - b. Evidence of capacity to execute project outcome/s
 - c. Value of the program to the applicant's professional development.

How to apply

Apply with the online form in SmartyGrants:

<https://northernbeaches.smartygrants.com.au/emergingcuratorprogram2026>

Assistance

Support is available. If you need assistance, have access requirements or are seeking translator services, please contact the Arts & Culture team at:

Email: creative@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Phone: 02 8495 5638 (9 am - 5 pm, weekdays)

Supporting Documentation

Support material is a critical part of your application.

You will be asked for:

- Curatorial/Creative CV
- Examples of curatorial/creative work – up to 10 items. A single PDF with your portfolio is preferred. There is space to add links if sharing videos, audio files or websites
- Your biography (100 – 300 words).

Assessment and Notification

Applications will be assessed by a panel of arts and cultural representatives from Northern Beaches Council. All applications will be notified in writing of the outcome by May 2026.

Cultural Protocols

If you are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists or engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories or content, please ensure you provide evidence of appropriate cultural permissions and adherence to relevant cultural protocols.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP)

Council follows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols and adheres to ICIP. We strongly encourage program participants to adhere to these in the delivery of their project.

[Available on the NSW Aboriginal Affairs website.](#)

Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts

This protocol guide from Creative Australia encourages self-determination and helps build a strong and diverse Indigenous arts sector. It provides a pathway for collaborations and the creation of new Indigenous work.

[Available on the Creative Australia website.](#)

For further information, and to reach organisations associated with local Elders or seek initial advice on historical / local cultural aspects, these links may help:

- [Aboriginal Heritage Office](#)
- [NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group](#)
- [Create NSW: Aboriginal Arts and Culture Protocols](#)
- [Webinar from Creative Australia](#) – using First Nations Protocols for Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts

Accessibility

Applicants should endeavour to ensure that their project will be accessible to people of all abilities.

Working with Children

If working with children, individuals must provide a Working with Children Check (WWCC) number.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I apply as a collective, or does it have to be an individual?

You can apply as an individual or collective, however no further funding will be provided.

Can I include my own work in the exhibition?

It is recommended to discuss this during the mentorship program. If intending to include your own creative work in the exhibition, it's important to explain your participation in your application.

I live outside the Northern Beaches Local Government Area. Can I apply for this grant?

Yes. Applicants from all areas are welcome, however no further funding will be provided for travel or accommodation.

Do I need an ABN (Australian Business Number)?

It is recommended you have an ABN for invoicing Council if successful. If you don't have one when applying, you can provide it later.

Do I need Public Liability Insurance?

If successful, you will need to provide a Certificate of Currency for Public Liability to the value of \$20 million. If you don't have one when applying, you can provide it later.

*Application Assistance***If I am not able to submit my application by the closing deadline, can I get an extension?**

Late applications will not be accepted. You will need to make every effort to submit your application before this deadline, ensuring you leave enough time to allow for slow internet or an error that the system brings up regarding your application (i.e. an unanswered mandatory question).

What if I am having issues accessing or completing the online application?

Please call 02 8495 5638 or email creative@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au if you are having difficulty accessing or completing the form. Support can only be provided during office hours.

Do I have to complete my application in one sitting?

No. SmartyGrants will allow you to come back and complete a partially completed application. You must register before you can make an online submission. Registration gives you secure access to your forms allowing you to work on them over time rather than having to complete them all at once. If you have previously registered a SmartyGrants account, you can use the same login.

Still have questions?

Please contact the Arts & Culture team at creative@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au or (02) 8495 5638 (9 am - 5 pm, weekdays) - we are here to help.