

Employing a contracted Artist

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Employing an artist or other arts or cultural practitioner for a project can be tricky – but only if you don't follow some basic rules! The key is clear communication from the outset. Try these handy tips...

Establish what you want

Ask for info about the artist: Don't be shy to ask the artist or group for a CV including their qualifications, a listing of their performances and achievements and some referees. Use these to establish the quality and experience level of the artist – this will all have a bearing on the artist fee you are prepared to pay.

Get it clear – detail your expectations: It's important to give the artist a clear idea of what you expect from them. What is their job description for the time you hire them? Who will be their audience? If you are running a workshop how many people will you accept? What age group are they? What areas do you want them to cover / how many performances do you want? The same applies for performances and other activities.

Communicate your target group's needs: If running a workshop what is the skill level of the participants? The artist will need to prepare so letting them know this information will make sure that you get the most out of their expertise. Whichever way you look at it a workshop which is too basic or too advanced for your participants is not a good investment.

Establish the artist's needs: Make sure you establish exactly what facilities, venue, equipment and other materials are required for the workshop or performance AND whose responsibility it is to provide them. Particularly in regional areas things which may be taken for granted in larger centres just aren't available. For example, if the artist needs to hire sound equipment they should be aware that the nearest sound hire shop is 2 hours away.

Get on top of your finances!

Get it in writing AND get detail: Make sure that all quotes are in writing and include finer details. Don't assume that a 'day' is 8 hours. Make sure if the artist gives a 'per day' rate that they indicate how many breaks and working hours this will include.

Ask the artist to itemise the quote so it is clear what is included

What workshop/performance related items are included in the artist's quote? If the artist is teaching film making are they providing the camera equipment and computers for editing? Do they expect you to do this – or do they expect you to cover the cost of hiring this? Make sure this is all clear and in writing in any quote.

Establish whether there are any other 'extras': Ask whether travel, accommodation, or expenses are included in the quote - if they are not, ask for them to be itemised and quoted. Make sure that these items are reasonable and make sense alongside the daily or hourly artist fees being quoted.

Tip - Provide the artist with a quote or estimate for some reasonable accommodation in your town (they may not be aware of local rates) to assist them in quoting accurately. Alternatively, where appropriate, you may wish to enter a billet arrangement with the artist.

Is GST included? Make sure that it is clear (and in writing) whether quoted prices are inclusive or exclusive of GST before it's time to pay!

Get invoiced correctly - Make sure the artist has an ABN and can provide an appropriate invoice. Make sure they indicate whether or not they are registered to collect GST and that any GST component is clearly itemised. Unless they are an employee of your organisation they are a 'contractor' and need to provide invoices.

Establish the terms of payment upfront: Does the artist require payment after the workshop or do they have a 7 day account etc? Is part payment required BEFORE the day? What form of payment will be accepted? I.e. direct deposit, internet deposit, cash, or cheque?

When to pay: Make payment in line with the agreed terms of payment and ONLY when an invoice with the artists ABN, address, GST details, and name has been presented to you.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

To calculate distances between locations log on to www.travelmate.com.au

AND what about insurance? For information about insurance requirements when employing artists or running workshops always seek the advice of a professional insurance company or broker. Outback Arts uses Finsura Financial Services which has a special relationship with Regional Arts NSW.

For more info - request a FACT sheet by calling Outback Arts on 02 6822 2484 or go to the TOOLS section of www.outbackarts.com.au for a PDF download.

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