



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (Parental Leave Position): Position Description

Reports to: Women's Circus Board of Directors

Manages: Women's Circus Staff

Works with: This position liaises with key Women's Circus partners such as (but not limited to) Creative Victoria, Maribyrnong City Council and private donors, and engages with Women's Circus members, program participants, artists and creatives.

Hours: This is a full-time position, 1.0 FTE, worked across 5 days per week, (0.8 FTE negotiable for the right candidate). Standard hours are Monday – Friday 9am-6pm, although actual hours worked are flexible. Occasional evening or weekend work is required to attend Women's Circus and sector related programs and events.

Remuneration: \$85,000–94,000 pro-rata per annum, commensurate with experience, plus 12% Superannuation and all entitlements.

Location: This position will primarily be based at Women's Circus in West Footscray, however there is some flexibility for working remotely.

Term: This is a 13-month Parental Leave term commencing Monday 30 November 2026 – Friday 17 December 2027.

About Women's Circus

Women's Circus is a not-for-profit arts organisation offering a year-round social circus program and producing socially engaged circus works. We work with individuals and communities and foster collaborations between community participants and professional artists. Our social circus and creative programs celebrate the physical and imaginative potential of the human body and nurture self-awareness and self-esteem.

Women's Circus is bold, dynamic and confident. We lead the way in intersectional feminist community arts cultural development practice to empower people of marginalised genders to shape community and culture through circus.

Women's Circus Employment Policy

Women's Circus is committed to creating a workplace that supports those from marginalised genders to thrive. We only provide employment for people who belong to a marginalised gender.

Women's Circus provides flexible employment and actively supports people with a family or other working obligations and creative pursuits.

We strive to create work environments that support the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of employees and acknowledges the diversity of lived experiences as valuable to our organisation.

We strongly encourage applications from trans and gender diverse community members, people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, First Nations people and people with disabilities.

Role Overview

The Executive Director leads Women's Circus' strategic direction, organisational sustainability and values-led culture. Working closely with the Board and staff, they oversee governance, finance, people, risk and operations while ensuring strong creative, social circus and sector programs. They hold primary responsibility for fundraising and stakeholder relationships, engaging government, funders, donors and philanthropic partners to strengthen the organisation's impact and long-term financial resilience.

All Women's Circus roles take an active part in our purpose to empower people of marginalised genders to shape community and culture through circus. It is the Executive Director's role to ensure the culture, programs and operations of Women's Circus are guided by our values: Community, Celebration, Safety and Legacy, and work towards our strategic goals of Community Engagement, Membership & Creative Opportunities and Sustainability.

Key Tasks

The Executive Director is accountable for the effective operation, strategic progress, and sustainability of Women's Circus. They set priorities, lead administrative staff, and ensure responsibilities are appropriately delegated, monitored and delivered across the organisation.

Strategy, Vision and Leadership

- Lead the organisations' strategic planning process in consultation with stakeholders.
- Promote Women's Circus and the organisation's vision, values and ambitions.
- Ensure our values of community, celebration, safety and legacy remain central to operations and programs.

Business/Organisational Management

- Develop and monitor performance against an Annual Program each year.
- Monitor performance against the Strategic Plan.
- Oversee the development and review operational policies and systems.
- In collaboration with the Director of Operations, ensure compliance with all legislative, industry and government obligations.

Budget and Financial Management

- In collaboration with the Director of Operations, create and manage the annual organisational budget.
- Work with Women's Circus staff to create, monitor and adjust program budgets.
- Manage financial reporting to the Women's Circus Board.
- Work with the Audit and Risk Sub-Committee and wider Board to implement financial controls and monitor financial risks.
- Lead the annual audit and ensure financial tasks are suitably delegated and completed.

Staff Management and Human Resources

- Schedule and support regular staff meetings.
- Manage part-time administrative roles. Provide direction and support to all administrative staff and resident trainers.
- Ensure casual and contracted employees are supported by a direct line manager.
- Lead recruitment for new staff and support contracting and onboarding for new recruits.
- Undertake annual performance reviews with all staff reporting to the Executive Director.
- Consider staff wellbeing in all decisions and communications.
- Oversee the design and review Human Resources procedures and policies as required, to ensure efficiency, consistency, equitability and accessibility.

Governance and Board Relationship

- Attend all board meetings.
- Work with the Chair to create meeting agendas and related papers and prepare regular reporting regarding organisational activities, finances and tracking against KPI's as outlined in Strategic Plan.
- Communicate regularly with all board members ensuring they are engaged and identify areas for assistance by board members.
- Participate as a member in board Sub-Committees including Artistic, Audit & Risk and Fundraising & Development Sub-Committee
- Maintain the governance calendar and action governance compliance requirements.
- Support board recruitment.

Risk Management and Workplace Health and Safety

- In collaboration with the Director of Operations, oversee compliance relating to risk management and Workplace Health and Safety.
- Maintain an understanding of risk management and workplace health and safety.
- Monitor and maintain the Risk Register with the Audit and Risk Sub-Committee.
- Foster a culture of safety at Women's Circus, underpinned by clear policies and procedures.

Funding and Development

- Seek and secure funding to support operations and programming through grant applications and donor and partner recruitment and management.
- Seek out, establish and nurture relationships with potential and current philanthropic, trust and foundations partnerships, donors and major gift givers.
- Oversee the development and implementation of annual fundraising campaigns and activities in alignment with 2026-2028 Fundraising Strategy.
- Manage and develop relationships with key Government, philanthropic and cross sector funders, partners and stakeholders, including Maribyrnong City Council, Creative Victoria, Creative Australia and Vic Health,
- Oversee and prepare reporting for funders, sponsors and other stakeholders as required.
- Oversee management and use of the organisation's CRM, Airtable.

Program Design

- Engage with Women's Circus staff, members and community to design programs and projects aligned with the strategic plan, including the social circus program, creative programs, community engagement program and sector development programs.
- Oversee program delivery and evaluation where required.

Community Engagement

- In collaboration with the Community Partnerships Manager, participate in the continual development of the Community Partnerships Strategy and Cultural Engagement Plan,
- In collaboration with the Community Partnerships Manager, identify and develop relationships with align community group and organisations.
- Support member engagement and participation in Women's Circus programs.
- Create a membership program that encourages member acquisition and retainment.
- Develop strategic relationships across the community and performing art sectors.

General

- Ensure the smooth flow of information and enable collaborative and positive interpersonal relationships with the Women Circus team.
- Identify and implement professional development and training initiatives for staff to ensure ongoing effective delivery and professional growth.

Selection Criteria

Essential

- Commitment to Women's Circus values, vision and strategy.
- Strong financial acumen, planning and project management skills.
- Experience in management and governance of a not-for profit or social enterprise.
- Demonstrated leadership experience managing diverse teams and fostering an inclusive workplace culture.
- Excellent communication skills and ability to manage relationships with diverse stakeholders.
- Proven ability to raise funds including through grant writing and philanthropic engagement.
- Ability to identify problems and contribute to solutions to improve organisational systems and culture.
- Resilience and adaptability to work under pressure and in a dynamic environment.

Desirable

- Familiarity with circus or other performance art practice.
- Understanding of community-engaged practice.

To apply

Applications close at midnight on Tuesday 13 October 2026.

You can apply any of the following ways. Please include a CV/Resume (up to 3 pages) to support your application.

- Written cover letter (no more than 2 pages)
- Video (less than 10 mins)
- Audio (less than 10 mins)
- Auslan video (we can arrange interpretation of your video if needed – please contact us)

Your application (cover letter or alternative format) should introduce yourself, address your interest in the role and Women's Circus, and outline your relevant professional experience addressing the key selection criteria.

Applications can be addressed and sent to Women's Circus Board Chair Noni Sproule at boardchair@womenscircus.org.au. Applications will be assessed as they are received. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

Questions can also be directed to boardchair@womenscircus.org.au, please allow a few days for response. We encourage anyone who needs specific services, support or would like to discuss how they can fully engage with the application or interview process to contact us.

Interviews will be held in the week commencing Monday 19 October.

Deadline and Softline:

If you are unwell or experience an unexpected interruption that means you will not be able to meet the closing deadline, please get in touch to discuss an extension. You do not need to disclose the reason for the extension.

Women's Circus acknowledges the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, train and create. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Sovereignty was never ceded. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.