

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Creative Industries



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NEW MELBOURNE FESTIVAL CELEBRATES ART AND DISABILITY

The Andrews Labor Government is recognising the contribution Deaf and Disabled creatives make to the cultural fabric of Victoria, with a bold new arts festival showcasing works from creatives with disabilities.

Taking over Arts Centre Melbourne this September, the first-ever Alter State Festival will bring creatives from Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa to feature works to live audiences across theatre, circus, music, storytelling and art making paired with family friendly events.

Lived experience is at the core of Alter State with Deaf and Disabled artists leading decision-making, creative development and connections with the disability arts sector and the broader Deaf and Disabled community.

The program has been developed by creative lead Caroline Bowditch, Arts Access Victoria and Arts Centre Melbourne – alongside the festival’s Foundation Artists, Victorian disability activist and writer Carly Findlay OAM, WA-based dancer/choreographer Joshua Pether and New Zealand/Aotearoa dancer Rodney Bell.

Performers from Women’s Circus will bring Arts Centre Melbourne’s outdoor spaces to life with *Momentum*, while Rodney Bell’s work *Meremere* will weave stories from the artist’s life through dance and theatre.

Local theatre-makers for young people Polyglot will team up with the UK’s Oilycart for *When The World Turns*, while a unique sensory work for children and aspiring young creatives will take a deep dive into creative practice with the workshop series *Come And Make Performance (CAMP)*.

Alter State also includes collaborations with disability-led screen festival The Other Film Festival – Australia’s leading arts and disability forum Meeting Place – as well as accessible portable arts space Nebula.

The festival prioritises accessibility with quiet spaces, Auslan and New Zealand Sign Language interpreters and live captioning. The Victorian Government has supported the development of Alter State through VicHealth.

Alter State will take place at Arts Centre Melbourne venues from 12 September to 9 October. Visit artscentremelbourne.com.au/festival-and-series.

Quote attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Steve Dimopoulos

“Alter State is about showcasing the extraordinary talent Deaf and Disabled communities bring to our creative industries, putting artists at the helm of a new festival that raises the bar on inclusive and accessible events for all.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Disability, Aging and Carers Colin Brooks

“Improving access, employment opportunities and participation for people with disability are integral to making Victoria a more inclusive place to live, work and enjoy through exciting events like Alter State.”

Quote attributable to Alter State Creative Lead and CEO of Arts Access Victoria, Caroline Bowditch

“I am hoping audiences will experience a welcome that allows anybody to feel a sense of belonging. Authentic stories and voices will be shared through incredible art.”

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Quote attributable to Nina Taylor Member for Southern Metropolitan

“Alter State will offer inclusive and accessible events and performances, while bringing some of the most compelling talent from Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa right here to our nations culture capital.”