



LOCAL ACTRESS TURNED GLOBAL PHENOMENON SHABANA AZEEZ URGES YOUNG ARTISTS TO APPLY FOR \$400K IN CARCLEW GRANTS TO KICK-START CAREERS

6 APRIL 2026: Applications open today for Carclew’s expanded grants program to support South Australia’s up-and-coming creatives. HBO star from *The Pitt*, Shabana Azeez, urges young artists to apply, like she did at the start of her career, and take advantage of the opportunity to get started.

Backed by Carclew as a young artist starting out locally, Azeez’s experience highlights the role early funding and creative community can play in building a career, with the expanded program now set to support more young people across the state.

“Carclew backed me as an early career artist in Adelaide when I was starting out locally and trying to create opportunities for myself. Their support gave me community and the means to upskill — I will always be grateful,” she said.

Also benefiting from early Carclew support is filmmaker Emma Hough Hobbs, now behind the award-winning *Lesbian Space Princess*, which has gained international recognition.

“As an emerging artist still discovering my own voice, having that early grant backing made a huge difference to exploring and presenting my work. It gives you the space and intention to develop your art, as well as the motivation to finish projects to your best ability and continue to build that momentum,” she said.

Likewise, Lucinda Penn, now a celebrated and award-winning visual artist, with large-scale murals featured at South Australian sites like the Adelaide Markets and the Adelaide Airport, through to community projects from Stirling to Whyalla, said she was so grateful to receive this funding at the start of her career.

“I love what I do, working with communities and bringing colour into people’s lives through my art. Looking back, it was grants like this that not only gave me the confidence to keep going, but also being part of the Carclew community was invaluable. I really encourage all the young artists out there with a dream to apply and have a go,” she said.

The \$400,000 grant program announced today is the most significant boost to youth arts funding in the organisation’s history. Carclew Acting Chief Executive Robyn Jones said the investment marks a significant step forward for the state’s creative sector.

“This investment meaningfully increases young people’s access to the arts across South Australia. It removes barriers, opens doors to opportunity and supports young people to build sustainable creative futures,” she said.

The expanded program introduces funding increases of up to \$20,000 for small to medium youth arts organisations, new quick-response grants, and, for the first time, two annual funding rounds for organisations, enabling more projects more often and strengthening support for and capacity in the youth arts sector in South Australia.

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Delivered through the South Australian Government's *A Place to Create* cultural policy, the investment will see Carclew significantly expand access to funding, with a strong focus on youth-focused organisations, capacity building, and increased support for regional and underrepresented young creatives.

South Australian Minister for Arts, Kyam Maher, said the investment reinforces the State Government's commitment to supporting the next generation of creatives.

"This investment through *A Place to Create* is about ensuring young South Australians have access to the opportunities and support they need to build careers in the arts right here in our state," he said.

At a time when emerging artists face increasing barriers to entry, the expanded program is designed to provide meaningful support at the earliest and most critical stages of a creative career.

"Carclew plays a critical role in developing emerging talent, and this expanded program will help more of our young South Australian creatives take that next step, from early ideas through to professional practice," Minister Maher said.

For the first time, organisations will be able to apply for funding twice annually, while maximum funding for Capacity Building Grants has increased from \$10,000 to \$20,000, enabling more ambitious projects and stronger long-term development.

A new Quick Response Grants stream will also be introduced, offering up to \$750 in agile, fast-turnaround funding to support emerging opportunities, particularly for regional and underrepresented young creatives.

Applications open today, 16 April 2026, and close on 14 May 2026. The grants support individual artists, youth-focused organisations, and emerging creatives across metropolitan, regional and remote South Australia.

For more information, visit www.carclew.com.au. Media assets including images and B'Roll [HERE](#)

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