

TOURING COSTS & BUDGETS

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

with Fiona de Garis



Preparing a budget for your touring show is a really important part of the process. It's vital to think through all the costs and be realistic about what those are. You don't want to find yourself in the position of having sold the show and being committed to a tour and *then* discovering that you haven't thought of everything.

So, I'm just going to talk you through some of the key things to think about in that process, and if at the end you have any questions, please do contact somebody who can help you because it's the one thing you really don't want to get wrong. CircuitWest is great place to start with questions – just pick up the phone

“I have a fantastic show I want to tour – how do I work out the costs?”

So, the first thing to understand is that there's possibly two separate budgets you might need to write.

The first one is a **Remount Budget**. So, let's assume that you've made a really fantastic show that you think is going to be great for touring. What will it take to get that show ready to be packed in the truck and on the road? That's your remount budget.

I'm going to suggest that, maybe, you want one week of re-rehearsal? So thinking through your budget, who do you need in the room? Just think that through, that's the first section of your remount budget.

Wages: Who do you need to pay? How much do you need to pay them? Do you need a week's wage or a fee for the lighting designer? Do they need to come back and draw your lighting plan that will work in regional venues? Or do you already have that information, and all you need is the performers and the director for a week? Have you budgeted for 'on costs' (superannuation, works compensation, holiday pay)? The other thing you might need to budget for in remount is if you have any cast members who are not local - you'll need to build into your remount budget **travel costs for those people** to get to Perth to rehearsal or to wherever you are rehearsing.

Then you need to think about what you might need in terms of **production** for your remount. You might need a **rehearsal space**, perhaps your **costumes** might need a little bit of refurbishment or you've got a new cast member and you need to buy a new costume to fit them. Allow some money for that. Perhaps some money to **fix your set, or rebuild** a part of it. Freight costs to perhaps move your set from storage to your rehearsal room? Ground transport or parking? Do you need some **equipment** in your rehearsal room? Perhaps a sound system?

Wages
+
Travel Costs
+
Venue Hire
+
Costumes
+
Set rebuild
+
Equipment Hire
+
Marketing
+
Education Pack
+
Administration
+
Insurance
+
Amenities

= **REMOUNT
BUDGET**



Marketing: Do you need any additional costs for marketing ahead of the tour? Do you perhaps need to make an **education pack** because you didn't have one the first time but you think this show would be great for schools? Did you make the show with no money and now need to shoot some promotional photos for the tour or re-edit your promo videos?

Administration: Do you need to build in a fee for the company or for a tour coordinator or yourself, as a producer? This might be where you put it. Administration costs, perhaps just \$250 a week just towards, you know, the cost of running your office? Do you have any extra **insurance** costs that you need to cover for this project? Maybe \$50 for amenities to buy everyone a sticky bun on the first day of rehearsal. And perhaps a contingency line.

The total cost of those things is your remount budget. You need to find money for remount from somewhere, and generally that's part of what you would ask the presenters that are going to buy the show to cover when they pay their performance fee. Or maybe you decide to cover it yourself, or you apply for a grant, or get sponsorship – but knowing what the costs are is the starting point.

“Okay I've finished remount week; everyone's back up to speed, I've got the gear required and it's ready to put in a truck. Now what?”

Now you need to work out what the cost is to keep the show on the road.

You need to write what I think of as the **Weekly Budget**. This is the cost, to you as a producer, of having your show on the road.

So, again, **wages:** Who is actually going on the road and needs to be paid each day of the tour?

Production costs: What are the running costs of the show on the road? Do you have consumable props that need to be replaced per performance? Do you need equipment that you need to take with you to make this show happen that's not going to be available in the venues?

Marketing/Promotion: Do you want to provide a program to the venues? Is that something you're going to print out and take with you? Is there a cost for that? Is there any other kind of marketing cost that you imagine you might need to cover along the way and want to build in here?

Administration: Perhaps a small line for emergency taxis or telephones or internet on the road. And again, in the administration area, this is probably where you would build in some kind of tour **coordinator fee or management fee** or producer fee as a weekly rate. And again, perhaps a small **contingency**. The total cost of all these things is your weekly cost.

Wages
+
Production costs
+
Consumables
+
Marketing
+
Administration
+
Producer Fee
+
Contingency
= WEEKLY BUDGET

“Okay I have my two budgets – but what about accommodation, flights, freight, per diems...?”

First you need to sell the show. So, when you're talking to the presenters, or in the information you're submitting to CircuitWest for WA Showcase, you need to put the price as the weekly cost and also indicate the cost of the remount. None of this includes what I then call the **touring costs**.

When you're writing your weekly budget, you don't include the cost of having the show on the road – these include accommodation; travel for the company; the cost of freighting the show around; per diems or LAHA (Living Away from Home Allowance). Those things are what we call the touring costs, they're not part of either of the previous budgets. **You can't write the touring cost budget until you have scheduled your tour and know the itinerary.** So, at this point, these first two budgets – the remount and the weekly – are all you need. In this model the assumption is that once you have arranged the tour schedule you will seek funding to cover the touring costs from a grant program like WA's [Remote and Regional Touring Fund](#) or nationally from [Playing Australia](#).

“How do I calculate the show fee for each Presenter?”

So, let's assume you've submitted your expression of interest and been selected to pitch your show at Showcase, and you've done that and now a number of venues are interested. The next stage is to create a schedule. So, you talk to the venues about when you could bring the show, you work out how many performances they want, how many shows you can fit in a week while traveling around, how many weeks you're going to be on the road. That's the point at which you can work out the actual cost of the tour.

Say you have an itinerary that covers **three weeks** on the road around Western Australia, and perhaps you're doing **six venues**, in perhaps **two-a-weeks**, let's say. So, you need to charge those six venues enough money to cover three weeks of the weekly cost and the total remount cost. So, the six venues are going to split the cost of the remount between them, and they're each going to pay half a week of your weekly fee. And that is the total price they will each pay as a **performance fee**.

So, if you tell the venues - the presenters - that this is this is the weekly cost and this is the remount cost, they generally have enough experience to be able to estimate roughly what it cost would them to buy one or two performances. And if they can't work that out and you're not quite sure, come and ask CircuitWest.

Eg.

- 3-week tour
- 6 venues
- 2 venues p/week

Equation:

3 x Weekly Fee
+ Remount
(÷ by 6 venues)

= PRESENTER FEE



“And now about those Touring Costs....”

Once you've got through all of that, you're probably then going to need to apply to one of the touring funds for the **touring costs**. So, that's where you would actually write the touring cost budget. Now you know where you're going, you can get quotes for the **accommodation**, you can get quotes for **vehicle hire**, you can work out how many kilometres you're going to travel, how much you need to allow for **fuel**. Any **flights** if required. Also the **per diems** you'll pay the touring party (allowances for working/living away from home). That's the budget you're going to take to the [Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries](#) or the [Australian Council](#) and seek the money to cover that final part of the cost of touring around the country and putting on a show.

There are endless variations on how to budget and what costs can be allocated to grants, what costs and income shared with the presenters, and so on. But the method described here is a basic 'sell off' model for budgeting, where you as the producer seek to minimise your 'risk' by selling the show to presenters, who then take the box office and pay you a fee.

Accommodation
+
Vehicle Hire
+
Fuel
+
Flights
+
Per Diems
+
Allowances
+
Taxis/ Transfers

= TOURING COSTS