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Letter of support for Clare Mendes

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Dear Creative Australia,

It is with great pleasure that I provide this letter to support Clare Mendes in her application for the Keesing Studio residency.

Clare is a highly experienced theatre practitioner with outstanding skills in writing, producing, dramaturgy and facilitating workshops to support other writers. I know that, as well as working on the script of her fifth play during the residency, Clare is committed to sharing her skills and passion for theatre by providing playwriting workshops for the community and other artists in residence. Clare has a great deal of experience running workshops and inspiring and mentoring other writers and would-be-writers and it is this aspect of Clare's application that I will focus on in this letter of support.

I first met Clare in 2018 through *In One Act*, a program Clare ran for Melbourne Writers Theatre at my local library with the aim of introducing beginner writers to the art of theatre writing. I signed up for this 4-month program as a person with a vague interest in writing for theatre and emerged as a writer with a solid understanding of the basics of playwriting and a passion to learn more. Clare's subsequent guidance and support have helped fuel that passion to the extent that I have subsequently had over 20 short plays produced.

Following *In One Act*, I have participated in several other programs Clare has run for Melbourne Writers Theatre, including *Page to Stage* (2022 and 2024) and *Gasworks ScriptLab* (2023), which offer writers intensive support to develop a full-length script. Through these programs I have deepened my understanding of the writing process and intensive dramaturgical guidance has taken my scripts to the next level.

Clare is a talented writer and provides feedback and support to other writers from a deep understanding of the writing process. More than that, Clare has a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of theatre including producing and grant writing and a generous willingness to share her knowledge and experience to help others grow. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from Clare over the years and my writing practice has benefited greatly as a result.

As a facilitator, Clare is committed to supporting all participants, regardless of their level, and always provides encouraging, considered and constructive feedback. Through the many programs she runs for Melbourne Writers Theatre, Clare provides theatre writers in-depth tutelage in the art of theatre writing, that would otherwise be difficult to access.

Clare is hardworking, dedicated and eternally positive and I am confident that if she receives a Keesing Studio residency, she will offer useful, well-pitched and encouraging playwriting sessions that will spark wide interest in writing for theatre.

Thank you for this opportunity to voice my support for Clare Mendes and I am confident she will make an outstanding contribution as writer in residence.



Louise Hopewell