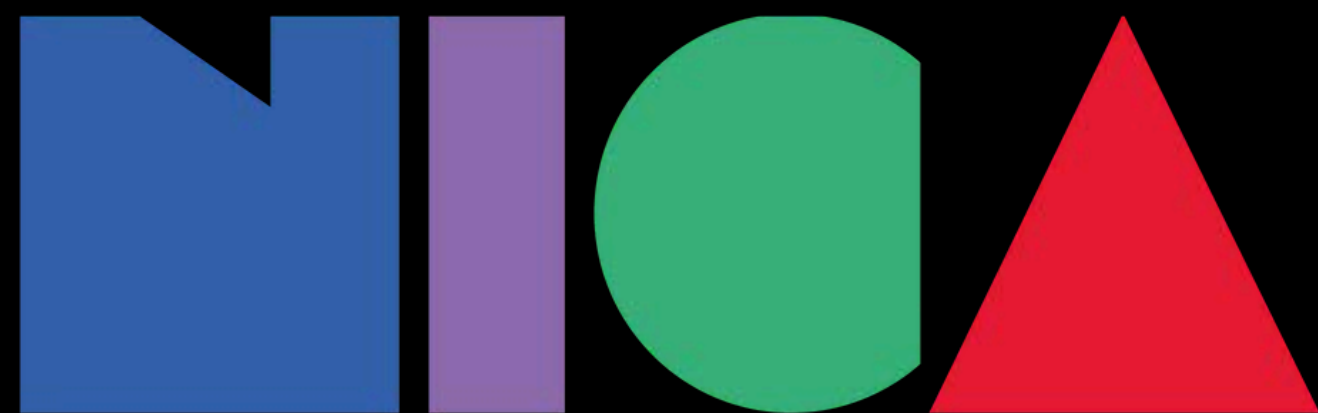




National  
Institute of  
Circus Arts



Attending  
a class at



A Visual Story



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# Acknowledgement of Country

**The National Institute of Circus Arts is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples. We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples, and their Elders past and present, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which NICA is located.**

Wominjeka' means 'Welcome' in the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri People. We are honoured to recognise our connection to Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung Country, history, culture and spirituality through this location, and strive to ensure that NICA is welcoming and that we operate in a manner that respects the Elders and Ancestors of these lands. We also acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Australia where we conduct business, their Elders, Ancestors, cultures, and heritage.



# You are welcome here

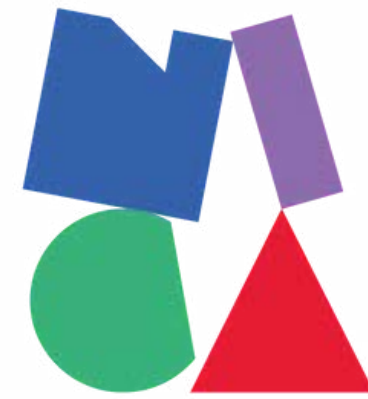
We want you to feel it is OK to be your authentic self here without judgement.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do that would make you feel more comfortable and included – for instance show you to a quieter area.

You are also welcome to use your own strategies to help you feel engaged and relaxed.



# About NICA



National  
Institute of  
Circus Arts

**The National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA)  
is a place to do circus arts that offers:**

- Public classes and workshops.
- Tertiary education (a degree in circus arts).
- A place to watch circus being performed.

All these things happen at the NICA building  
at **39–59 Green Street, Prahran, Victoria.**

Find out more about NICA here:  
<https://www.nica.com.au/>





# Attending a class at NICA



NICA  
Rec

NICA welcomes all ages, body types, skills and fitness levels in recreational circus classes.

NICA Rec is **beginner-friendly**, so if I've never tried circus before this is a good place to start!

I can choose to attend a one-off class (Come & Try Circus program) or I can choose to book a longer course (Term Class program).

I can see all my options on the NICA Rec website:  
<https://www.nica.com.au/rec>





# About our classes



NICA  
Rec

NICA Rec has many classes available across kids, teens and adult age groups.

- If I am new to circus, I can join a beginner class.
- My trainer will tell me when I am ready to progress to a harder class.
- I can choose to learn general circus or focus on a circus skill such as tumbling, aerials, acrobatic pole (featured here on the right) and more!
- I can explore the [term class timetable here](#) to see all of my options.



# How do I get to NICA?

NICA is located at **39–59 Green Street, Prahran, Victoria.**

**To get to NICA, I can take the:**

## **Train**

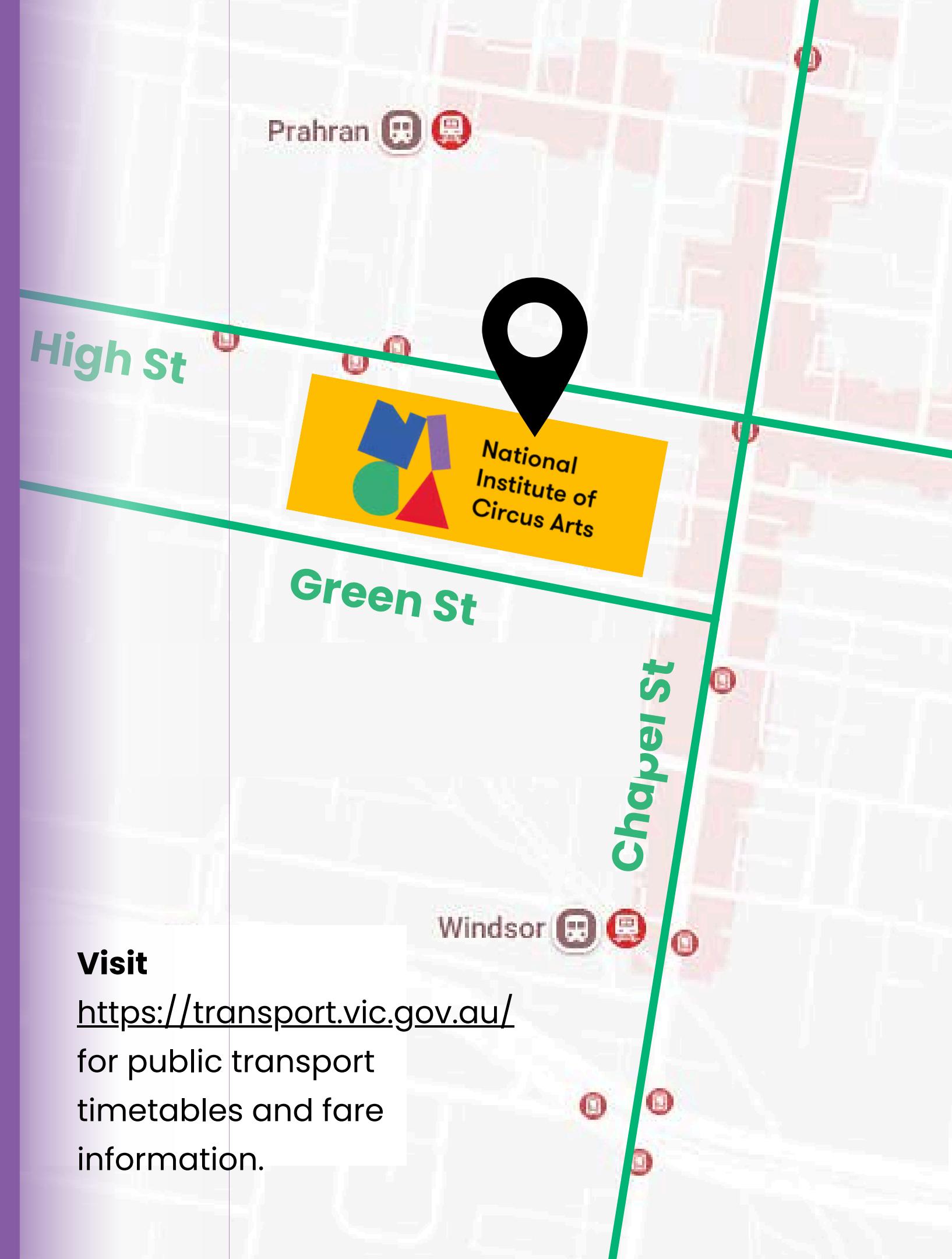
- board the Sandringham line to Windsor Station.

## **Tram**

- Take routes 78, 6 or 72.

## **Driving**

- The roads surrounding NICA have limited 1, 2 and 3 hour street parking.

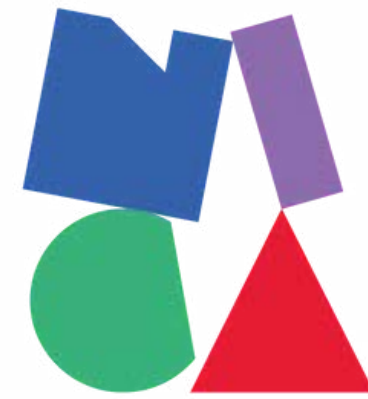


## **Visit**

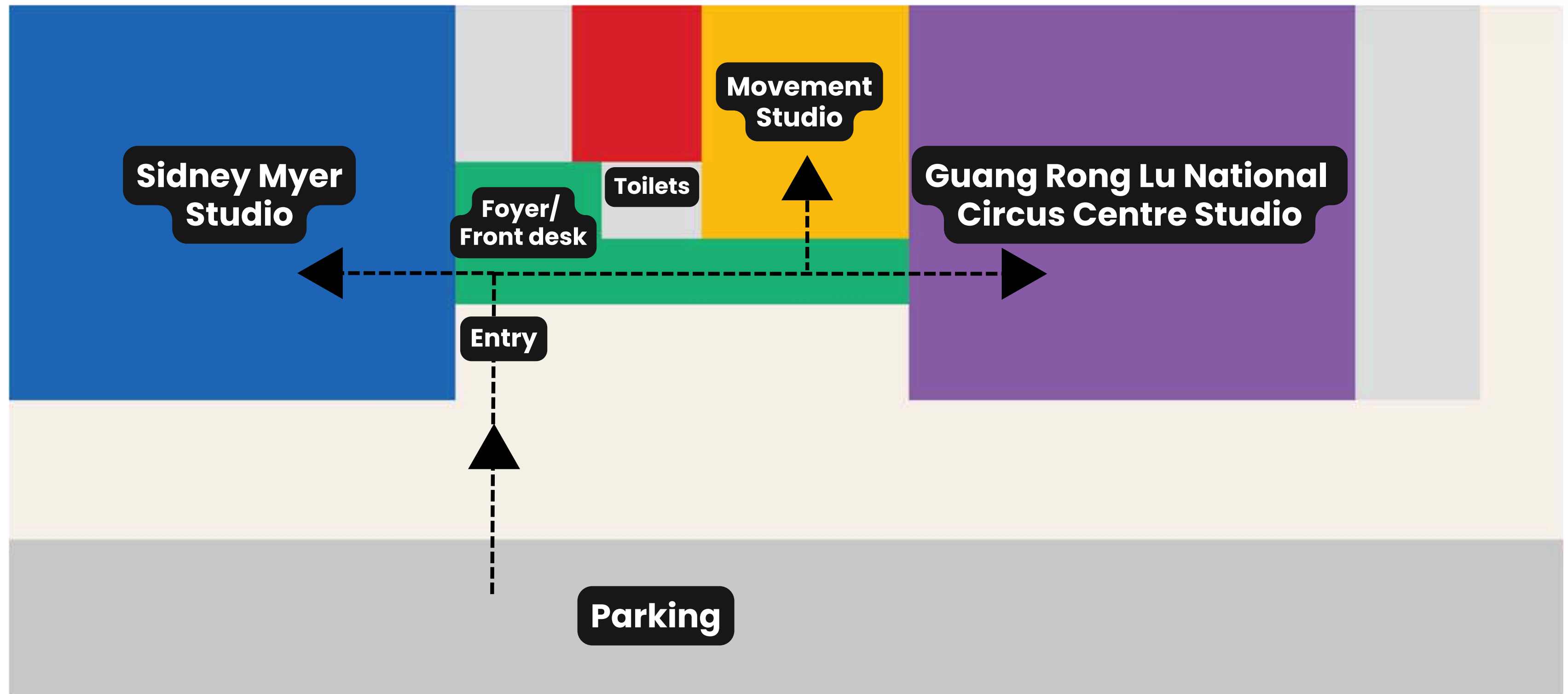
<https://transport.vic.gov.au/>  
for public transport  
timetables and fare  
information.



# NICA Map

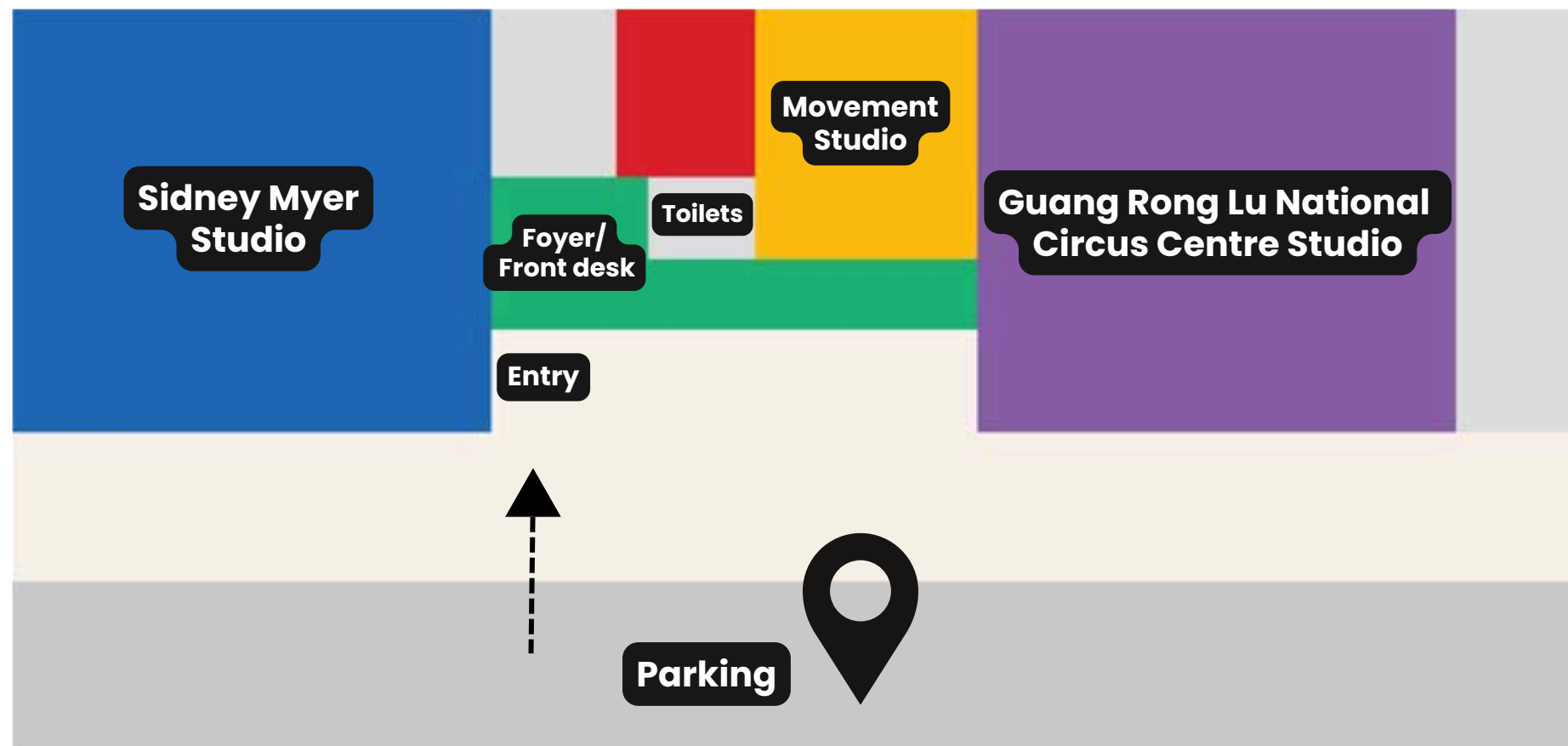


National  
Institute of  
Circus Arts





# Parking at NICA

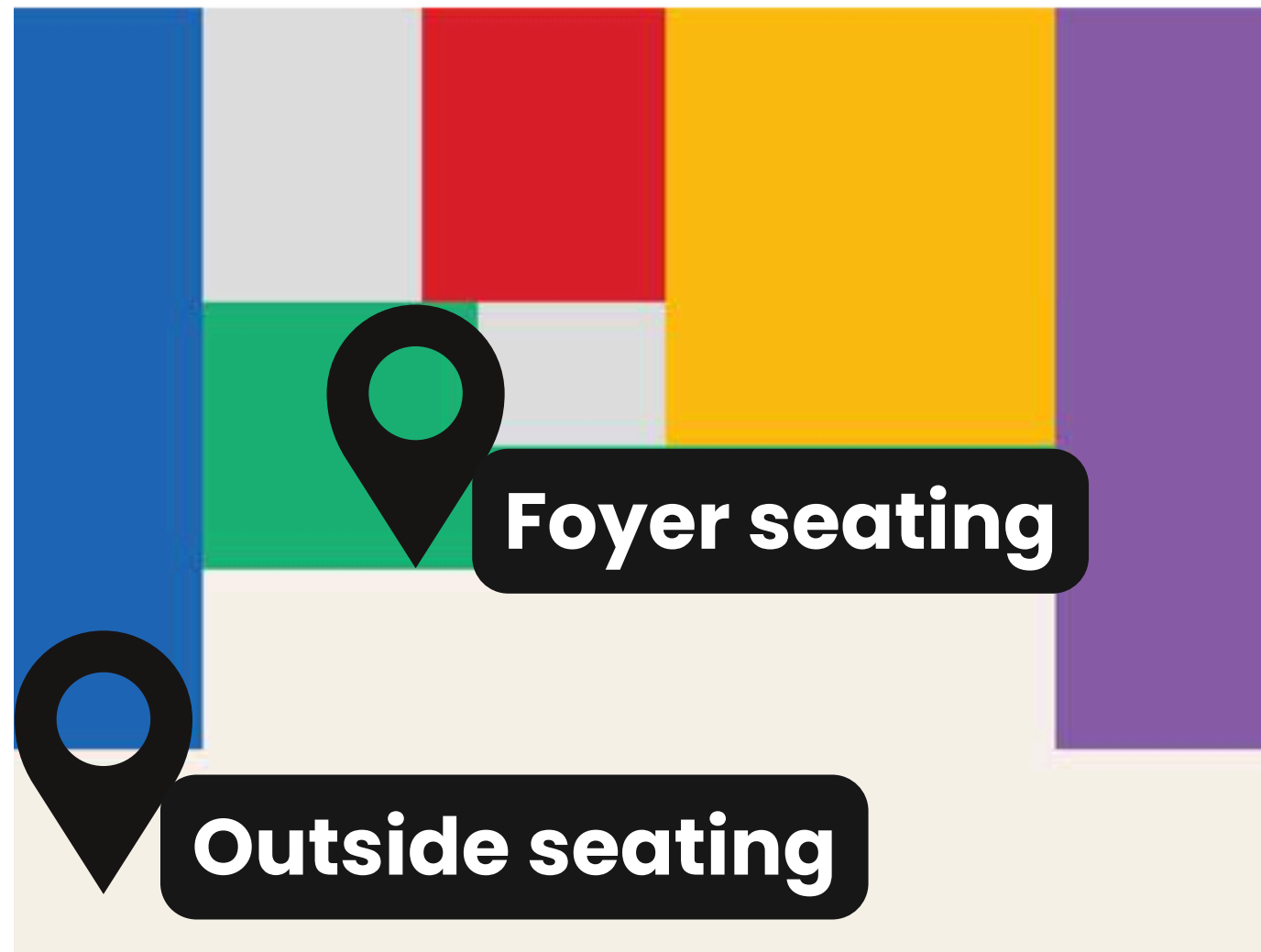


- 1, 2 and 3 hour street parking is available.
- On Green Street I will take care looking out for traffic heading toward and coming from Chapel St.
- I will be respectful of NICA's neighbours by avoiding permit zones or driveways.





# Quiet spaces at NICA



- If I feel overwhelmed, I can sit on the side and have a break by my class.
- I can ask for help from my trainers.
- If I am an adult I can leave class and use the foyer seating, or head outside, at any time.





# Accessibility at NICA



NICA  
Rec

- **Wheelchair/mobility accessible**, all entrances are at ground level.
- **Toilets, change rooms** and **gender neutral** toilets are available in the NICA main entrance foyer.
- Hard, non-carpeted flooring throughout.
- **Support animals** are allowed.
- **Free drinking water** provided.
- Tiered seating with stairs is located in the theatre. Please let us know if you need ground level seating.
- **Carers and support people** can attend NICA shows for **free**.

If I have specific access needs or questions, I can talk to NICA Recreation on 1300 006422 or email [recreation@nica.com.au](mailto:recreation@nica.com.au)





# Enrolling into a circus class



NICA  
Rec





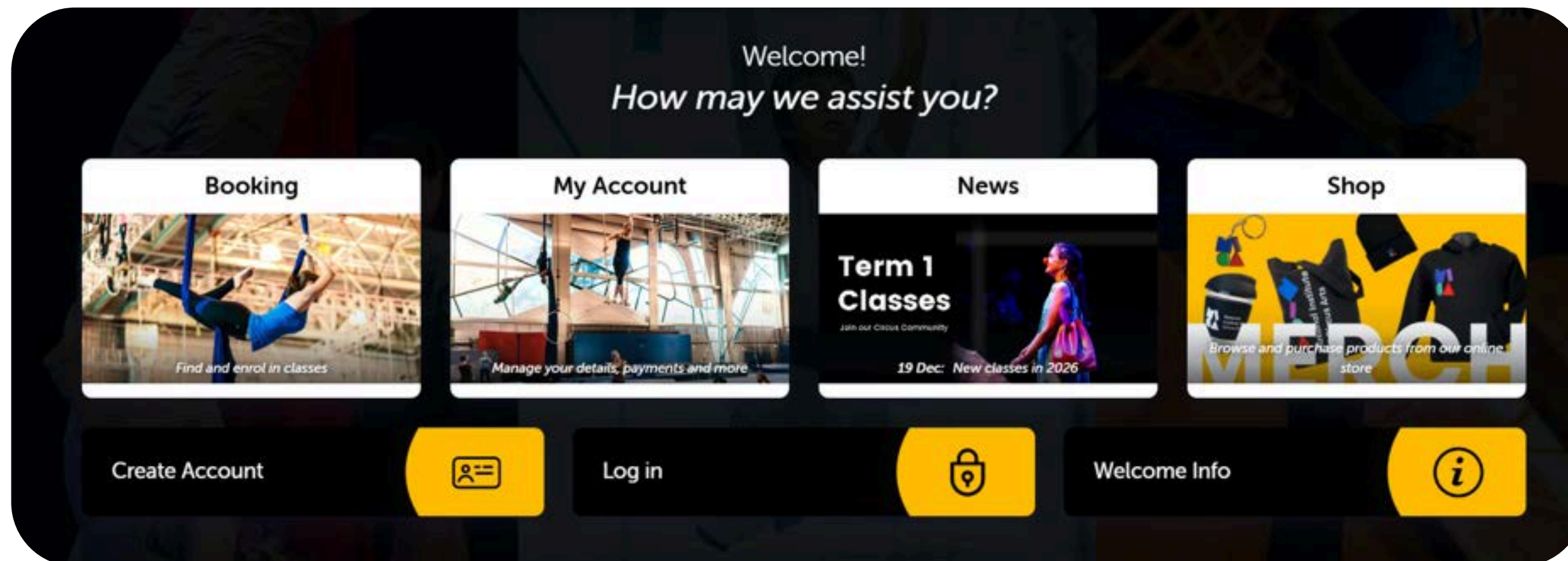
# How to Enrol



## Step 1

Head to NICA's Booking Portal: <https://portal.iclasspro.com/nicacircus/dashboard>

I can browse circus classes, create an account or login to an existing NICA account here.





# How to Enrol



## Step 2

When I create a new account, I let NICA know if I want to enrol myself, a friend, a family member or partner into a circus class.

### I will provide:

- My name.
- Contact details.
- A password.

15 I also will review and accept NICA's policies.

A screenshot of the NICA Rec app interface. At the top, there is a yellow circular icon with a person and a key symbol. Below it, the text "What is your relationship to the student?" is displayed. Underneath, there are seven rounded rectangular buttons arranged in two columns: "Friend", "Grandparent", "Guardian", "Other", "Parent", "Partner", and "Self". The background of the app screen shows a blurred image of a person in a circus costume.

# How to Enrol

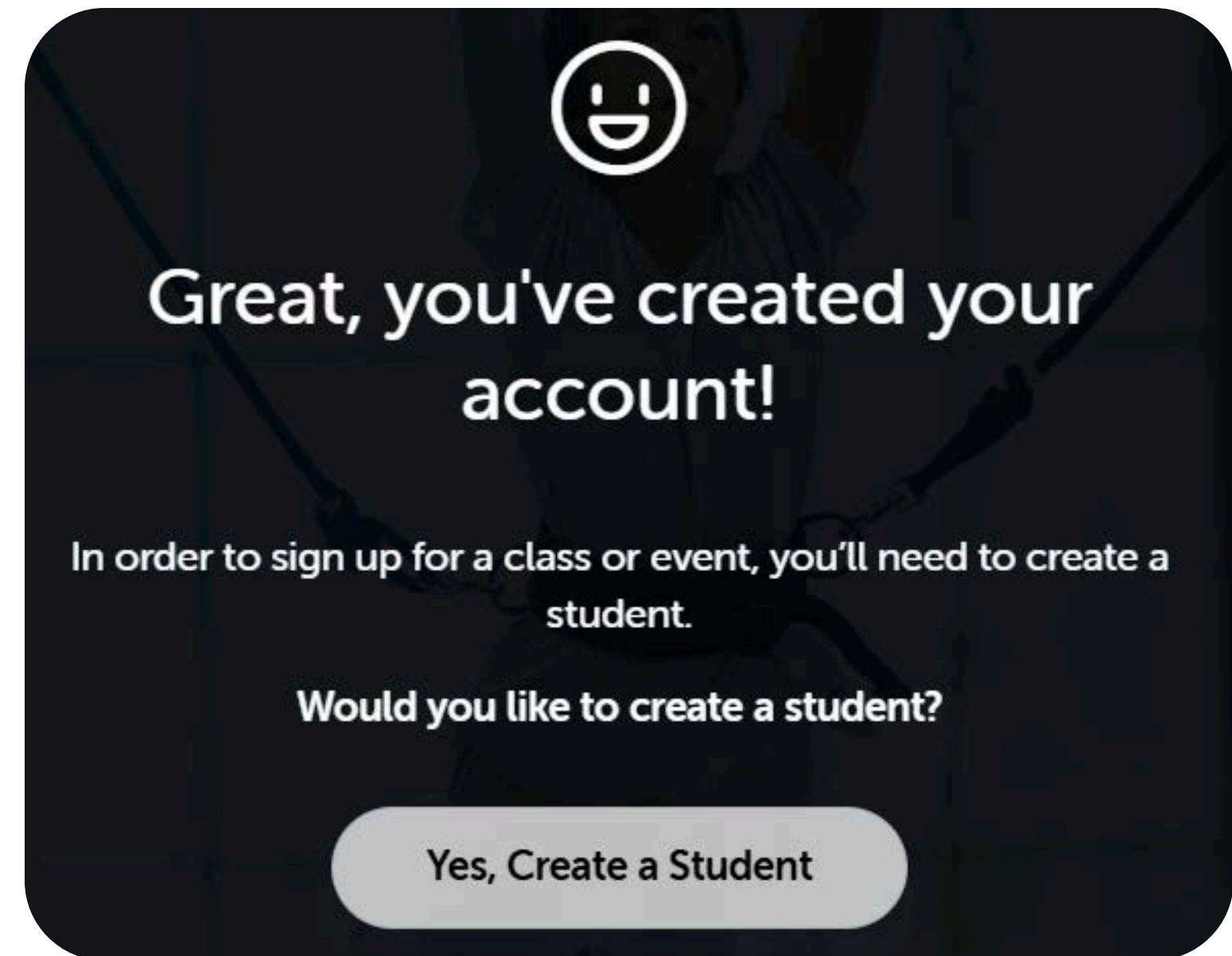


NICA  
Rec

## Step 3

I create a student profile to enrol into a class.

- I can choose to enrol myself or I can enrol someone else.
- I will provide the student's name, age, gender and preferred pronouns.
- I provide **emergency contacts**.
- I can advise NICA about any **health conditions** or **accessibility needs**.





# How to Enrol



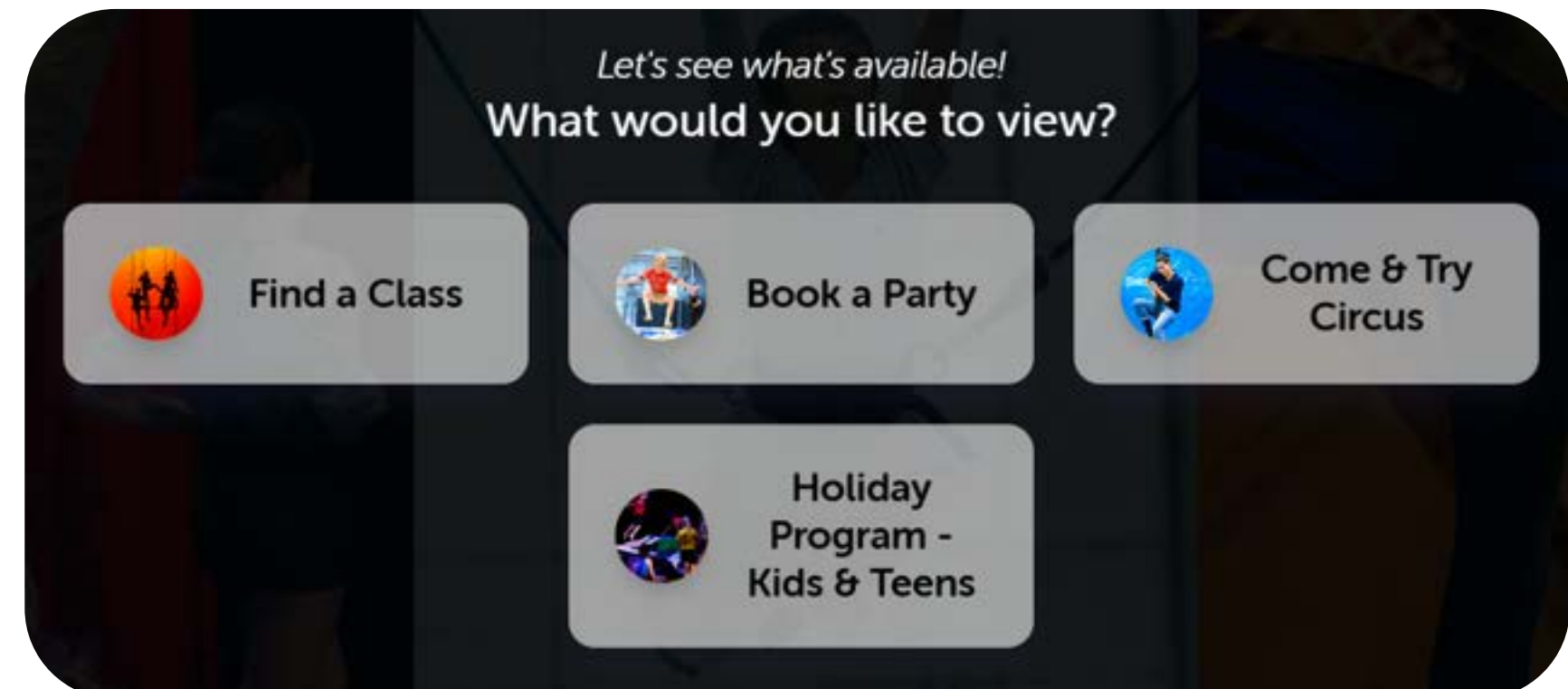
NICA  
Rec

## Step 4

- I select my **chosen class** or circus program for myself or someone else.
- I can let NICA know anything else about my enrolment that I'd **like to share**.
- At checkout, I make a payment to **confirm my enrolment**.

## Who do you wish to enroll?

*Or, skip this step and [view all classes](#)*





# What happens if I can no longer attend?

## Withdrawing class before term

- NICA can provide a full refund if I withdraw more than **7 days before** the first class of term.

## Mid-term withdrawal reasons:

- I need to email [recreation@nica.com.au](mailto:recreation@nica.com.au) and provide **14 days notice** before class begins to withdraw due to change of mind or if my availability changes.
- If I have an injury or illness I need to provide a **medical certificate**.





# Before Class Information



NICA  
Rec





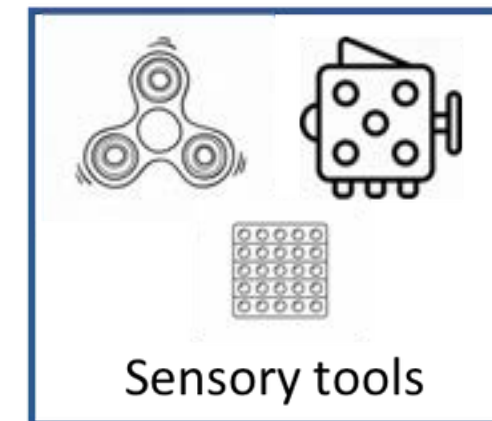
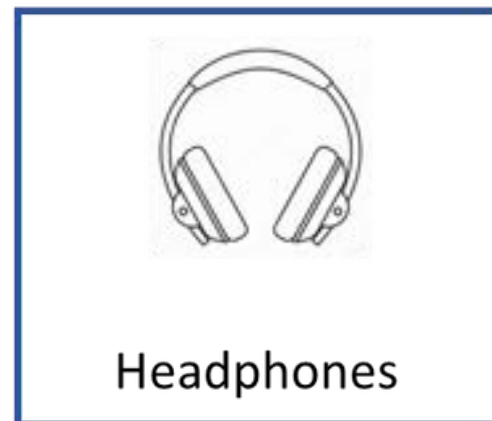
# What to bring



NICA  
Rec

Sometimes it is busy, noisy, bright and loud at NICA.

I can bring things to help me enjoy my class. Things I might want to bring include:



**If I need a snack or a meal I can find many options on Chapel Street, which is a 2 minute walk from NICA.**





# What to wear



**I should wear exercise clothing that I can move in easily.**

## **NICA suggests:**

- Tracksuit pants, shorts or leggings, and a fairly close fitting T-shirt or singlet.
- A jumper or jacket to put on between activities.
- If I have long hair this needs to be tied back.
- I should also remove jewellery.

## **Clothing requirements to protect myself from chafing:**

- **Aerial classes:** Wear full length leggings to protect my legs.
- **Acrobatic Pole:** Also bring jeans, and long sleeves. This is needed over exercise clothing to protect my arms & legs.
- Wear flat soled shoes, such as Volleys or Converse to allow my feet to grip onto the pole.



# Things to know – Sensory

NICA is a colourful place!

During my visit at NICA I might have different sensory experiences.

## What to expect



- Overlapping voices from different areas.
- Sounds from the ice machines.
- Soft music in background.
- People bouncing on trampoline.
- Internal sounds (such as when rolling).



- Textures beneath my bare feet (the squishy fast track, springy foam pit, heated stone ground, wet floor in the bathroom, carpet).
- Textures of equipment (Rubber on the devil sticks, silky tissu, squishy foam).



- When everyone exercises it might smell sweaty!



- Ropes and rigging up high everywhere!
- Dark areas.
- Glare on windows.
- Bright lights up high.

## What I can do if I feel overwhelmed

- Sit on the side and have a break by my class.
- Have a drink of water.
- Ask my trainer for a break in the foyer.
- Put on my headphones.
- Wear sunglasses or a hat.
- Use a stim or fidget tool.



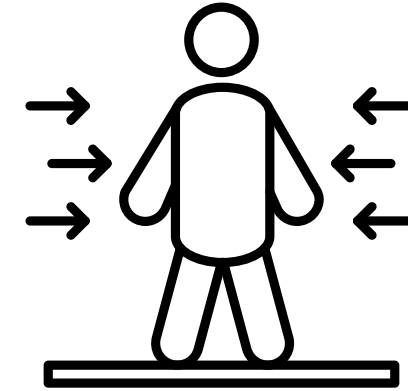
# Things to know – Body senses

At NICA, I might have some new sensations in my body.

These are normal.

## What to expect:

- Headaches while somersaulting.
- Dizziness.
- Feeling unsteady.
- Feeling seasick.
- Movement noises.
- My body temperature quickly changing (hot or cold).



## Making shapes with my body:

- Being upside down.
- Balancing.
- Jumping.
- Flipping.
- Sinking.
- Spinning.





# Things to know – Body senses

If I feel like I need a break or if something doesn't feel good, I can check with my trainer.

## What I can do

- If I feel dizzy from spinning, clapping in front of my eyes can help them regain focus. This helps my brain reorient it's sense of "upright."
- I can breath deeply and evenly. Steady breaths help to reduce dizziness or feeling sick.
- I can stay still for a few seconds. This helps my inner ear settle.
- From upside down, I will gently move to an upright position.
- I can also train my inner ear to spin longer and faster, or build **vestibular resistance** through regular practice.





# On the day



NICA  
Rec





# Entry to NICA



## Main Entrance

- For my very first time at NICA, I check-in with the friendly front desk receptionist.

## Foyer

- They will then direct me to wait in the foyer until my class is called by my **circus trainers**.

I can more learn about circus trainers on the next page...



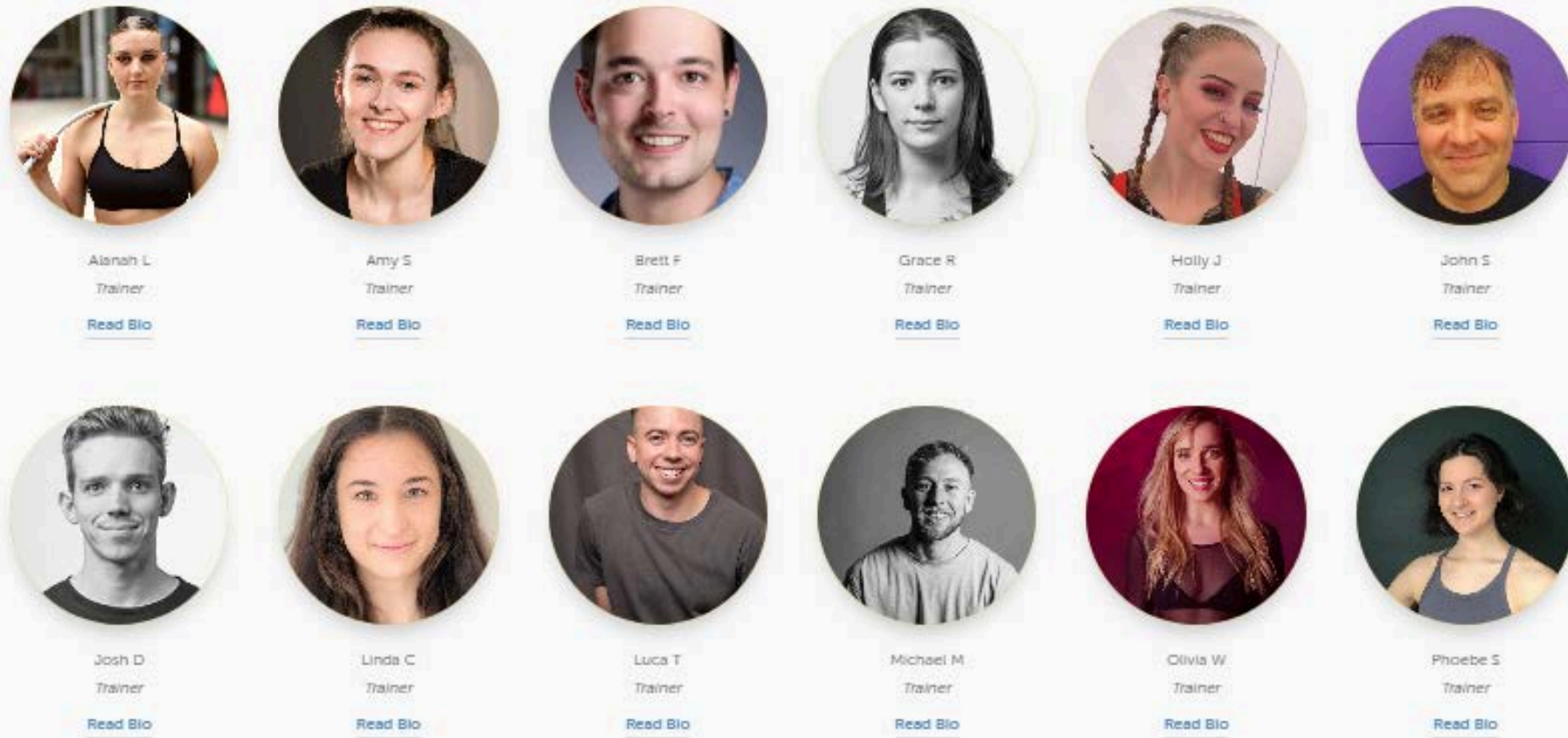


# Meet the Trainers



NICA's recreational courses are taught by NICA graduates and circus industry professionals.

I can learn about NICA Rec's **circus trainers here**.





# Circus Safety



NICA  
Rec

Circus safety is very important. I follow **circus safety rules** to keep myself and others safe in my class:

1. I will **not touch the ropes** as they are important for the safety of people doing aerial skills.
2. I **take off my shoes** before I go into the studio to not bring in dirt or glass from outside.
3. I **take my socks** off as they are slippery. This means that I will be **barefoot**.
4. I **listen to my trainer** and follow their instructions.
5. I **follow the pathway**. This helps keep me safe.
6. I ask for **consent** before touching, spotting, or partnering, and my trainers do too.





# Staying Safe



NICA  
Rec

## NICA Safety calls I should know about:

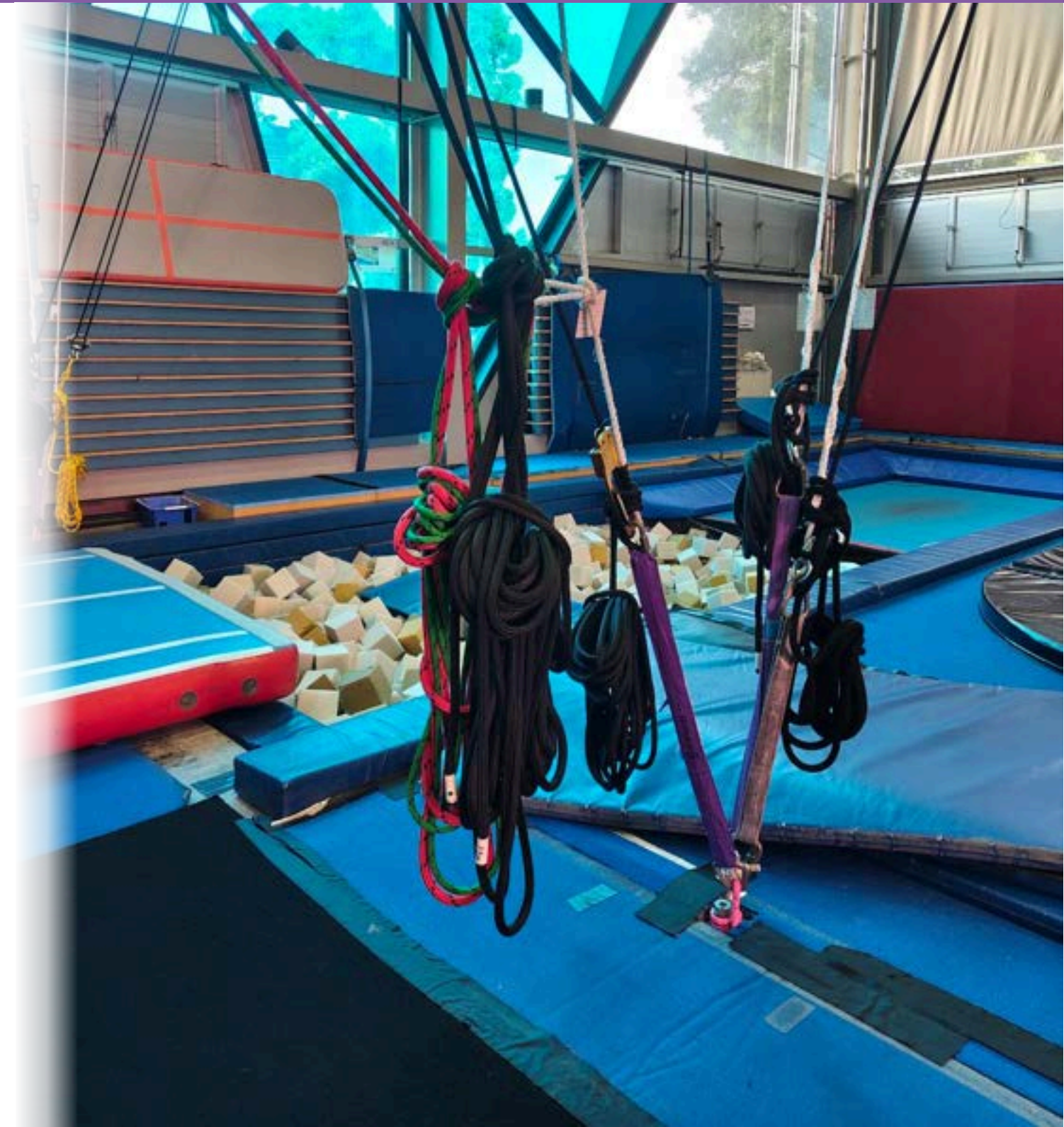
**“FREEZE!”** Stop what I am doing and stand still.

**“HEADS!”** Something is falling, and the rigger does not have control over it. Cover my head as it may be falling towards myself.

**“HEADS UP”** This will be said if I walk by a rigger to make me aware that they are working overhead.

**“ROPE COMING”** A rope is being lowered and the rigger has control of it.

**“INCOMING”** Something is being lowered from above in a controlled way.





# Warmup & Stretch

It is important to prepare the body for learning circus by warming up.

It's okay to not know some of the stretches before my class.

My trainer will guide me through some stretches on the day.

## Example stretch routine

1. Head up/down/turn left & right/tilt left & right
2. Arm Circles 10x forward/backward/opposite
3. Arm across chest, swap arms
4. Arm behind head, swap arms
5. Pike stretch, toes pointed/flexed
6. Straddle stretch to the right leg/left leg/center
7. Lunge, nose to knee
8. Happy puppy
9. Butterfly seal stretch
10. Stretchy cat
11. Bridge
12. 10 tuck rocks
13. Toe stretch
14. Ankle & wrist circles

**Warmups help prevent injuries when I do circus activities!**





# Warmup Games

These are some of the games we play at the start of class.

We play these games to warmup our bodies.

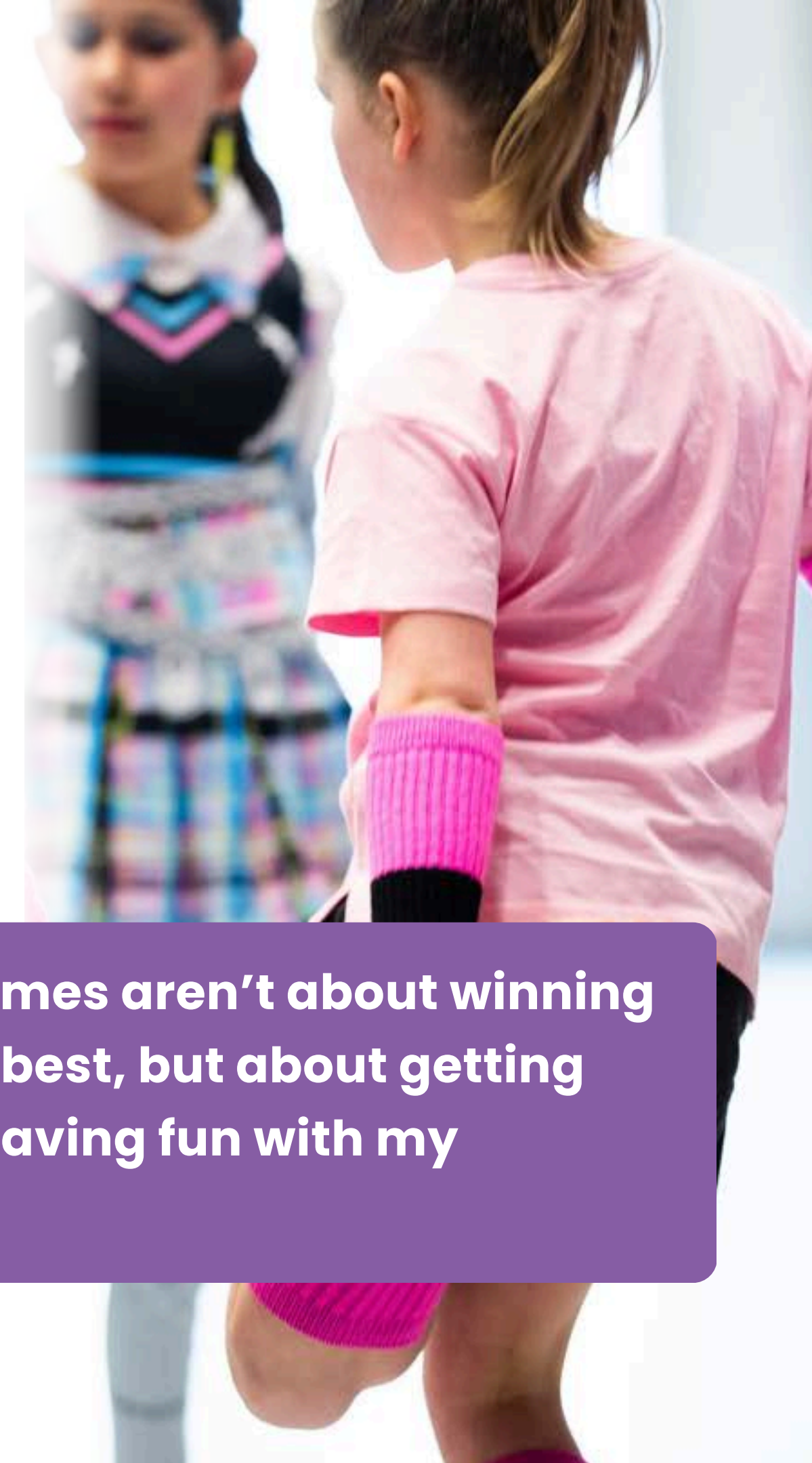
This helps us not get injured when we do circus activities!

I do not need to know how to play these games. My trainer will show me on the day.

## Some example Games

- Tiggy
- Captain's coming
- Rob the Nest
- Fruit Salad
- Duck, Duck, Goose
- Noughts & crosses
- Snakes in the grass
- Builder & Destroyers
- Simon Says
- Ship, Shark, Shore

**Warm up games aren't about winning or being the best, but about getting active and having fun with my classmates.**





# Class structure

I can learn more about circus specialties in a [Circus Glossary](#) found on pages 37–41.



NICA  
Rec

At NICA, each class is a little different and developed to help me **learn specific circus skills** through a range of activities.

At the start of each session, my trainer **explains the class**, so I know what to expect. Every trainer has their **own teaching style**.

After a warmup and stretch, or a fun game, my trainer will **teach circus skills**. They may focus on one main circus specialty or a few different types of circus specialties learnt in rotations.





# Circus Skills

These are some of the aerial skills I can learn in a NICA recreational class.



NICA  
Rec

## **Tissu**

I can learn how to wrap, climb, invert, extend, drop and more.

## **Aerial Hoop**

I can learn how to mount, hang, balance, arch, spin and more.

## **Static Trapeze**

I can learn how to hang, spin, invert, stand, pose and more.

## **Straps**

I can learn how to tuck, twist, spin, split and more.





# Circus Skills

These are some of the ground based skills I can learn in a NICA recreational class.



## **Tumbling**

I can learn how to roll, handstand, cartwheel and more.



## **Trampoline**

I can learn how to jump, twist, drop, somersault and more.



## **Partner Acrobatics**

I can learn to make shapes partnered with classmates.



## **Manipulation**

I can learn how to juggle balls or clubs and perform tricks with hula hoops, diablo and more.





# End of class

This is a great time to review some skills I learnt, ask questions and learn about what comes next.



NICA  
Rec

In the last 5 to 10 minutes of class my trainer will guide me through some stretches and cooldown exercises.

**Gradual recovery:** Allows my heart rate and breathing to return to normal slowly, instead of stopping suddenly.

**Reduces muscle stiffness:** Gentle movement and stretching help prevent tightness and soreness in my muscles.

**Promotes flexibility:** Stretching at the end of an activity keeps my muscles flexible and healthy.

Cooling down is important because it helps me feel better after exercise and prepares my body for the next session of circus!





# Leaving NICA & going home



NICA  
Rec

At the end of my class, after we finish stretching and exercises, my trainer will officially finish the session.

If there are children in class, my trainer will ask them to **leave with an adult** or a “big person they know” to keep them safe, especially in the winter when it can get dark outside.

I also need to be careful when leaving during pick-up time. I will **watch out** for cars and make sure I don't run into the street.

[I can join NICA Rec Classes here](#)





# Circus Glossary



**These are some terms I might come across at NICA. It is okay if I have never heard of them before!**

## **Aerial Apparatus**

**Aerial Pole** A metal pole suspended from a rigging point, allowing spins, climbs, and tricks similar to pole dance but performed in the air.

**Chinese Pole** A vertical pole (usually rubber-coated) on which performers climb, slide, and perform acrobatic holds, flips, and balances.

**Cloud Swing** A long, soft rope or cable that forms a swinging arc.

**Lyra (or Aerial Hoop)** A circular steel apparatus suspended in the air, used for spinning, poses, and acrobatic movements above the ground.

**Rope (or Corde Lisse)** A smooth cotton rope suspended vertically, used for climbs, wraps, and dramatic aerial drops.

**Silks (or Tissu)** Two long fabric ribbons suspended from the ceiling that performers climb, wrap around their bodies, and use for drops, holds, and poses.



# Circus Glossary



**These are some terms I might come across at NICA. It is okay if I have never heard of them before!**

**Straps** Two long, sturdy fabric or leather straps used for strength-based aerial acts involving spins, holds, and dynamic movements.

**Trapeze** A horizontal bar suspended by ropes; can be static, swinging, or flying. Used for solo or group aerial acrobatics.

## **Acrobatics & Balancing**

**Acrobalance** partner or group acrobatics focusing on lifts, balances, and counterbalances, blending strength and trust.

**Contortion** The art of extreme flexibility, often combining backbends, splits, and balance poses in performance.

**Globe Balancing** An act where a performer balances and moves on top of a large sphere.

**Handstand** A balance skill performed upside-down on the hands; a foundation of acrobatics and strength acts.



# Circus Glossary



**These are some terms I might come across at NICA. It is okay if I have never heard of them before!**

**Rolla Bolla** An apparatus consisting of a board balanced on a rolling cylinder. Performers stand, jump, or stack multiple boards.

**Tight Wire (or Tightrope)** A wire or rope stretched tightly between two points; performers balance, walk, or perform tricks on it.

## **Juggling & Object Manipulation**

**Antipodist** A foot juggler!

**Devil Sticks** (or Flower Sticks) A juggling prop set consisting of one main stick (the “baton”) and two hand sticks used to flip, spin, and toss the baton in the air.

**Diablo** (or Diabolo) A double-coned prop spun and tossed on a string between two sticks

**Hula Hoop** A circular hoop spun around the body or manipulated for performances.



# Circus Glossary



**These are some terms I might come across at NICA. It is okay if I have never heard of them before!**

**Juggling (or Manipulation)** The art of skillfully throwing, catching, and balancing objects (balls, clubs, rings, hats, etc.).

**Spinning Plates** Lightweight plates spun on the end of a stick, often balanced, exchanged, or juggled in performance.

## **Circus Vehicles & Wheels**

**German Wheel** Two large parallel rings connected by crossbars; the performer stands inside and rolls, spins, and balances.

**Group Bike** A bicycle designed for multiple performers to ride and perform tricks with.

**Roue Cyr** A large metal ring in which a performer spins and rolls across the floor, performing acrobatic manoeuvres.

**Unicycle** A one-wheeled cycle ridden by balancing on the seat and pedaling.

# Circus Glossary



**These are some terms I might come across at NICA. It is okay if I have never heard of them before!**

## **Rigging, Safety & Equipment**

**Lunge Rope** Also known as a lunge line or safety rope, a long rope attached to a performer's harness or belt and held by someone to prevent a fall by acting as a counterweight.

**Mag (or Magnesium Chalk Dust)** A substance used to prevent slipping. Usually dusted on the hands, it helps increase grip.

**Rigging** A system of ropes, pulleys, counterweights, and related devices within a theatre or circus training space that enables riggers to hoist components such as curtains, lights, scenery, and, in the case of circus, people.

**Spotting** Refers to the process where a coach or 'spotter' physically assists a circus artist to safely complete a skill.

**Truss** A type of structural framework, commonly made of aluminum or steel, used to support and distribute loads in circus performances.



# Frequently asked questions



NICA  
Rec

## **Where are toilets/accessible toilets/changing places located?**

- I will find the toilets, change rooms and gender-neutral toilets located in the NICA main entrance foyer.



## **Where can I get help, and how can I identify them?**

- I can ask for help from our friendly receptionist located at the front desk. Or our safety supervisor in an orange high vis vest. I can also ask for help with a NICA Trainer, they wear a black NICA Trainer shirt and are located in our studios.

## **Where can I go if I feel overwhelmed or need somewhere quiet?**

- I can sit on the side and have a break by my class. Quiet spaces and seating are located in the main entrance foyer. If I am unsure where to go, I can ask for help.

# Frequently asked questions



NICA  
Rec

## **How will I find out about any disruptions or changes?**

- NICA Rec will send an email about a planned disruption; I will also receive a phone call if there is a sudden change to my term class schedule.

## **Term Class frequently asked questions.**

- I can find commonly asked questions and answers for term classes [online here](#).

## **Holiday Program frequently asked questions.**

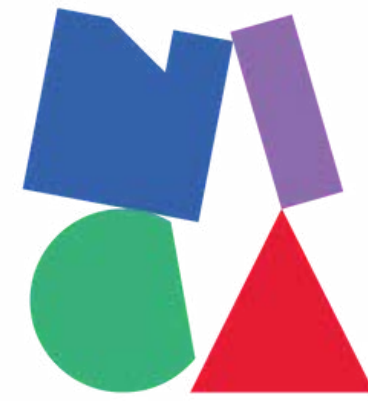
- I can find commonly asked questions and answers for circus workshops [online here](#).

## **Can't find an answer?**

- I can contact NICA Rec on 1300 006422 or email [recreation@nica.com.au](mailto:recreation@nica.com.au).



# Thank you from NICA



National  
Institute of  
Circus Arts

Thank you for taking the time to learn about NICA and our circus classes.

We love feedback and are eager to know what helped or how we can improve your circus learning journey.

I can fill out an [online form](#), contact NICA on 1300 006422 or email [info@nica.com.au](mailto:info@nica.com.au).

All feedback is welcome.

