

South Australian Literary Awards

2026
Guidelines



Government
of South Australia



State Library
South Australia

About the Awards

Established in 1986 by the Government of South Australia, the South Australian Literary Awards honour and celebrate Australia's vibrant writing culture. The awards program offers both national and state-based prizes across a diverse range of genres, recognising excellence in published works and supporting new voices.

Held biennially and proudly managed by the State Library of South Australia, the Literary Awards also include awards and fellowships for South Australian writers - highlighting the importance of local storytelling, supporting the literary community, and encouraging public engagement with literature.

Key dates

Entries open: Wednesday 1 October 2025

Entries close: Wednesday 12 November 2025, 5pm

Deadline for books to arrive at the State Library:

Friday 21 November 2025, 5pm

Shortlist announced: August 2026

Winners announced: October 2026

South Australian Literary Awards

email: sa.literaryawards@sa.gov.au

web: slsa.sa.gov.au/south-australian-literary-awards

Postal address

South Australian Literary Awards

State Library of South Australia

GPO Box 419

Adelaide SA 5001

Supported by the Government of South Australia through CreateSA, the State Library of South Australia, and valued partners.



Category partners



National Awards for Published Works

These awards celebrate excellence in Australian literature, recognising outstanding books across six categories.

Open to Australian citizens and permanent residents, the awards honour works published between 16 December 2023 and 12 November 2025 (inclusive), including books first published overseas, provided their Australian publication was after that date.

Premier's Award

Value \$25,000

For the best overall published work. Contenders for this category are the winners of the other categories listed below. The \$25,000 prize is in addition to the winner's category prize.

Fiction Award

Value \$15,000

For a published novel or collection of short stories, of high literary merit.

Non-Fiction Award

Value \$15,000

For a published non-fiction work that demonstrates a command of the subject as well as a fluent and outstanding literary style. Books may include biographies, autobiographies, works of history, narrative journalism, philosophy and literary criticism, provided they meet the highest standard of literary merit.

John Bray Poetry Award

Value \$15,000

For a published collection of poetry, honouring the late Dr John Bray for his distinguished services to Australian poetry.

Young Adult Fiction Award

Value \$15,000

For a published book of fiction aimed at readers aged approximately 12 to 18 years.

Children's Literature Award

Value \$15,000

For a published fiction or non-fiction book with substantial literary content, aimed at readers up to approximately 11 years.

Eligibility and criteria

To be considered, entries must:

- Be the author's own work
- Not have been previously published in any other format. Works that were originally published electronically before the eligible period will, and later published in print, will not be accepted.
- Anthologies including contributions from multiple authors are not eligible in any category.
- Not be a revised version of a previously submitted work, unless the revisions are substantial enough for the book to be considered a new work. In such cases, the entrant must:
 - Clearly identify and outline the new material.
 - Include one copy of the original edition with the entry form.

Due to the large number of entries expected in the published works categories, entrants are encouraged to submit their entries well in advance of the closing date.

Awards and Fellowships for South Australian Writers

These awards recognise and celebrate the excellence and diversity of South Australian writers and writing, highlighting the importance of local storytelling and helping to cultivate a vibrant writing culture in South Australia.

The fellowships are designed to support South Australian writers in the creation of new literary work. Through a dedicated cash prize, the program enables authors to focus on their fellowship project and develop their practice.

These awards and fellowships are open to South Australian residents only.

Fellowship recipients are eligible to apply to CreateSA and Creative Australia for funding to support other projects while completing their fellowship project.

Jill Blewett Playwright's Award

Value \$12,500

Established in 1992, this Award honours the legacy of Jill Blewett, former Chair of State Theatre Company South Australia, whose passion and leadership left a lasting impact on the state's theatrical landscape.

The award offers a cash prize for an unproduced play of any genre written by a professional South Australian playwright aged 18 or over.

Eligibility and criteria

To be considered, entries must:

- Be an original work that is unproduced
- Demonstrate artistic excellence, clarity of vision, and reflect a distinct South Australian perspective
- Be ready for production, not in early development stages
- Be written by an individual playwright
- Be submitted by a current South Australian resident who can provide proof of a valid South Australian address.

The award is intended to support the potential presentation – or a direct pathway to presentation – of bold, compelling new South Australian work at State Theatre Company South Australia.

Entries

- All entries must be submitted online – physical entries will not be accepted.

This award is made possible with the support of the State Theatre Company South Australia.

Awards and Fellowships for South Australian Writers

CreateSA Wakefield Press Unpublished Manuscript Award

Value \$10,000

The award recognises the importance of new writing to a vibrant literary culture in South Australia. Offered in partnership with Wakefield Press, it provides a cash prize and publication of the winning manuscript.

Eligibility and criteria

To be considered, entries must:

- Be a book-length manuscript of non-fiction, fiction or poetry
- Be writing with fresh ideas, a distinctive voice and exceptional literary merit
- Not have been previously submitted for this award, unless substantially revised
- Have world rights available
- Consider inclusion of a statement of cultural authority. For example, if your entry represents the voice or experience of a marginalised or vulnerable group, do you identify as part of that community? This question is not compulsory and will only be visible to the judging panel as part of the assessment process.

Entries

- All entries must be submitted online – physical entries will not be accepted.
- Submission format for manuscripts is:
 - Save your file as .doc or .docx
 - plain font
 - 11 point
 - one and a half line spacing
 - numbered pages
- include the title of your manuscript in the header of each page
- name your file using the title of your manuscript.

Assessment

- Entries will be judged anonymously by a panel of independent judges.

This award is made possible with the support of Wakefield Press and the Government of South Australia through CreateSA.

Awards and Fellowships for South Australian Writers

Tangkanungku Pintyanthi Fellowship

Value \$15,000

This fellowship is open to South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers working in the genres of fiction, literary non-fiction, poetry and playwriting.

Eligibility and criteria

To be eligible, entrants must have one or more of the following:

- a full-length work in the process of being published by a recognised publisher or with a firm contract for publication from a publisher
- a full-length work being prepared for production by a professional theatre company or for electronic media
- a full-length manuscript, script or collection that is close to completion, along with other publication credits – such as individual pieces published in journals or anthologies
- at least one full-length work performed or presented by one or more of the following:
 - State or other full-time professional theatre companies
 - regional theatre companies with full-time artistic directors and administrators
 - a professional project-based company
 - radio and television (mini-series, telemovies, radio drama, etc.)
 - cinema (full-length films).

Entries

To enter, entrants must submit:

- Supporting documents, including:
 - proposed fellowship project outline and synopsis
 - writing sample up to 2,000 words
 - CV or biography
- All entries must be submitted online – physical entries will not be accepted.

Barbara Hanrahan Fellowship

Value \$15,000

This fellowship was created in 1993 in honour of the distinguished South Australian writer and visual artist, Barbara Hanrahan. It is open to writers working in the areas of fiction, poetry, drama, scriptwriting, autobiography, essays, major histories, literary criticism or other expository or analytical prose.

Eligibility and criteria

To be eligible, entrants must have one or more of the following:

- a full-length work in the process of being published by a recognised publisher or with a firm contract for publication from a publisher
- a full-length work being prepared for production by a professional theatre company or for electronic media
- a full-length manuscript, script or collection or other publication credits – such as individual pieces published in journals or anthologies
- at least one full-length work performed or presented by one or more of the following:
 - State or other full-time professional theatre companies
 - regional theatre companies with full-time artistic directors and administrators
 - a professional project-based company
 - radio and television (mini-series, telemovies, radio drama, etc.)
 - cinema (full-length films).

Entries

To enter, entrants must submit:

- Supporting documents, including:
 - proposed fellowship project outline and synopsis
 - writing sample up to 2,000 words
 - CV or biography
- All entries must be submitted online – physical entries will not be accepted.

Awards and Fellowship for Young SA Writers

This program celebrates young South Australian writing talent, offering awards and a fellowship to recognise and support the next generations of writing talent. The program is presented in partnership with Carclew, Adelaide's home of youth arts and creativity, and Writers SA, South Australia's peak organisation for writing and literature.

Carclew Young Writers Awards

These awards provide young writers aged 8 to 17 with the opportunity to showcase their creative voices through works of original short fiction of up to 2,000 words. Winning works will be published on the South Australian Literary Awards website.

Awards age categories are:

- 8 to 12 years – 2 awards of \$500 each
- 13 to 17 years – 2 awards of \$750 each

Eligibility and criteria

To be eligible, entrants must:

- Be a South Australian resident
- Be aged 8 to 17 years (inclusive) on 12 November 2025
- Submit only one entry per person.

The short story must:

- be an original work written entirely of fiction by the entrant
- be no more than 2,000 words (entries exceeding this limit will not be accepted)
- demonstrate exceptional literary merit, originality, and creative expression
- be unpublished and not submitted elsewhere, including:
 - not currently entered in other writing competitions
 - not under consideration by publishers
 - not self-published or posted online (e.g. blogs or social media)
 - work submitted to school is permitted, provided it hasn't been published publicly.

Entries

To format your short story:

- Do not include your name on any page of your entry. Entries are judged anonymously.
- Save your file as .doc or .docx
- plain font
- 11 point
- one and a half line spacing
- numbered pages
- include the title of your story in the header of each page
- ensure the word count does not exceed 2,000 words (excluding the title)
- name your file using the title of your story only. Example: *Rapunzel.docx*

Assessment

- Entries will be judged anonymously by a panel of independent judges.

This award is made possible with the support of Carclew.

Awards and Fellowship for Young SA Writers

Carclew Max Fatchen Fellowship

Value \$12,500

This fellowship is designed to support a young writer to develop a new work in the genres of fiction, literary non-fiction, poetry or playwriting.

The fellowship includes a cash prize of \$10,000 plus \$2,500 towards professional mentorship arranged with assistance from Writers SA.

The author's work will also be considered for publication in Writers SA's publication *Splinter*.

The fellowship was named in celebration of South Australian writer, Max Fatchen and his commitment to children's literature and the local writing community.

Eligibility and criteria

To be eligible, entrants must:

- Be a South Australian resident
- Be aged 18 to 26 years, or 30 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrants (inclusive) on 12 November 2025
- Entrants will be required to show proof of age and residency.

Entries

To enter, entrants must submit:

- Supporting documents, including
 - proposed fellowship project outline and synopsis
 - writing sample up to 2,000 words
 - CV or biography
- All entries must be submitted online – physical entries will not be accepted

This fellowship is made possible with the support of Carclew, and assistance from Writers SA.

How to enter

Entry process for National Awards for Published Works:

- Complete an online entry form by 5pm ACST, Wednesday 12 November 2025.
- Post, courier or deliver 4 copies per category of the book entered.
 - Please mark your delivery Attn: South Australian Literary Awards.
 - We must receive your books by 5pm, Friday 21 November 2025.

Entry process for CreateSA Wakefield Press Unpublished Manuscript Award

- Complete an online entry form by 5pm ACST, Wednesday 12 November 2025.
- Attach the manuscript file to the online entry form
 - Refer to the category information for details about how to format the manuscript file.
 - If the document is too large to attach, please email or transfer your files to SA.LiteraryAwards@sa.gov.au

Entry process for all Fellowships and Young SA Writers Awards

- Complete an online entry form by 5pm ACST, Wednesday 12 November 2025.
- Attach all required documents to the online entry form
 - Refer to the category information for details about how to format your supporting documents.
 - If the document is too large to attach, please email or transfer your files to SA.LiteraryAwards@sa.gov.au

Entry forms available at slsa.sa.gov.au/south-australian-literary-awards

After submitting the online entry form, entrants will receive an automatic confirmation email. State Library will only be in touch if we require clarification about your entry.

Postal address:

South Australian Literary Awards
State Library of South Australia
GPO Box 419
Adelaide SA 5001

Deliver in person:

South Australian Literary Awards
c/- Information desk, Level 1
State Library of South Australia
North Terrace, Adelaide

Opening hours:

Monday 10am to 5pm
Tuesday 10am to 7pm
Wednesday to Friday 10am to 5pm
Saturday to Sunday 12 to 5pm
Closed public holidays

Terms & conditions

Entries and eligibility

- Entrants must complete and submit the relevant award category online entry form.
- Entry forms must be submitted online by 5pm ACST, Wednesday 12 November 2025.
- Hard copies of all published books must be received by 5pm, Friday 21 November 2025
- Incomplete entries will not be accepted.
- Entrants will not receive an individual confirmation of receipt of their books.
- Authors must be living at the time of entry. If a prize is awarded to a recently deceased author, the prize money will be paid to the author's estate.
- Works generated wholly by AI are not eligible.

Assessment

- Independent judges will assess all categories.
- Decisions are final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Judges reserve the right not to recommend an award if they determine the submitted works are not considered to be of sufficient merit.
- Judges have the right to move an entry to a different category if they deem the category to be more relevant.
- Fellowships are awarded on the basis of writing ability, as demonstrated by the entrant in the form of supporting material, and in the context of other entries being considered. Entrants should, therefore, provide a clear idea of the fellowship project. If entering to work in a different genre, entrants should consider including a sample of work that will assist judges to understand the writer's capacity to develop in that field.
- Judges will consider the potential benefit of a fellowship to the entrant.
- Judges reserve the right to undertake interviews with entrants if considered necessary.

Intellectual property

- Entries must be wholly the original work of the author. At their discretion, the Awards and its judges may determine that an entry does not comply with this condition. In some circumstances, they may determine that an award is to be withdrawn and prize money is to be repaid to the State Library of South Australia.

Disqualification

- The State Library of South Australia reserves the right to withdraw the South Australian Literary Award if a recipient has engaged in behaviour that could be seen to bring the South Australian Literary Awards or the State Library of South Australia into disrepute. The State Library of South Australia reserves the right to conduct criminal record checks if deemed necessary.
- It is the responsibility of the entrant to ensure that the information provided is correct. Incomplete or incorrect entries may make it invalid. The State Library of South Australia has the right to withdraw the offer of prize money or require the return of prize money already paid, if any of the information provided in the entry is false.

General

- State Library reserves the right to change the conditions of entry, cancel, or vary the awards process at any time, whether before, on, or after the closing date.
- Breach of the Terms and conditions will make an entry invalid.
- Winning and shortlisted entrants are expected to be available to undertake activities to promote the Awards during and up to when the next Awards are presented. Promotional activities may include media interviews (face-to-face or via electronic means), photographs or video content, personal appearances at functions promoting the Awards, program and events at the State Library of South Australia and, where possible, through the SA Public Library network.

Terms & conditions

- Submitted publications will not be returned after the judging process. Entries withdrawn by an entrant will not be returned. Publications may be added to the collection of the State Library of South Australia.
- Unsuccessful entrants will not be advised personally of the results.
- No person will be entitled to claim compensation for loss from the State Library of South Australia for any matter in connection with the Awards, including, but not limited to, a failure by State Library of South Australia to comply with the Terms and conditions.
- While all reasonable care will be taken, the State Library of South Australia accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to submitted books or manuscripts.