

Submission Guidelines:

1. Entrants must be under 14 at the time of competition close and reside in the local government areas of Cessnock, Dungog, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, MidCoast, Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Singleton or Upper Hunter.
2. Entrants should submit a single work below the word limit of each category: 500 words for under-10s, 1000 words for 10-12s and 2000 words for 12-14s.
3. Entrants should submit in the age category applicable to the age they are on 30 June 2026.
4. The writing submitted to the prize must be an original, independent work of prose fiction i.e. it is the entrant's own work and has not been written either partly or wholly with the aid of a computer tool including machine learning generative tools such as ChatGPT or Microsoft Copilot.
5. Works must not contain any offensive or defamatory language, imagery or themes; works must not include any material that is illegal, harmful, or promotes illegal activity; and works must not infringe on the intellectual property rights of any third party.
6. Submissions close 30 June 2026 at 11.59pm AEST. Entries submitted after the closing date will not be accepted.
7. Only one entry per person will be accepted.
8. Immediate family of any current or former employee of Newcastle Writers Festival, including contractors, are ineligible to enter.
9. The winner in each age category will receive the following prize: AUD\$200 and a 90-minute Story Hunter school workshop, which must be completed between August 2026 and April 2027. Where an entrant is homeschooled or not otherwise currently enrolled in an applicable Hunter region school, they will instead receive free entry to a Story Hunter full day masterclass.
10. Second and third placed entrants in each category will receive \$100 and \$50 respectively.
11. If the judges believe that there are two works of equal merit, they reserve the right to divide the prize money equally.
12. Winners will be announced online no later than 31 August 2026. Winning stories will be promoted via Newcastle Writers Festival and Story Hunter websites and social media channels.
13. Full names and ages will be included in winners' announcements unless a written request is made to withhold details, in which case a first name and initial will be used. Winners may be asked to participate in events, photographs or media activities to promote the Prize; parental permission will be sought before taking photographs or video footage.