



## 2026 JOHN HINDE AWARD INFORMATION KIT

The John Hinde Award for Excellence in Science-Fiction Writing was established to encourage, reward and foster creativity in the development and showcasing of Australian science-fiction writing for film, television, web series and interactive media.

Funded by a bequest from the late Australian film critic John Hinde, the award offers \$10,000 in prize money, to be shared among winning writers each year.

John Hinde began his career as a journalist and was a correspondent in the Pacific during World War II. He became a film reviewer for the ABC in 1966, working in radio before making the transition to television in 1983. Later in his career, Hinde gained a new generation of fans through appearances on programs such as *McFeast*. In 2002 he received an award in the Queen's Birthday Honours for his services to the film and media industry. He died aged 92 in 2006.

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### THE PRIZES

- Winning writers will share in \$10,000 prize money
- Winning scripts and writer profiles will be added to the AWG's prestigious Pathways Program

## HOW TO ENTER

- Ensure that your AWG membership is up to date. For questions about your membership, please contact [admin@awg.com.au](mailto:admin@awg.com.au).
- Please ensure that you have read this document in its entirety before submitting your entry. Entries that do not follow the guidelines may be deemed ineligible and subsequently withdrawn and refunded.
- Login to your member account at [www.awg.com.au](http://www.awg.com.au).
- Select 'competitions' from the site menu and then navigate to the John Hinde Award page.
- Follow the link to submit an entry for either the produced or the unproduced category.
- As part of your entry form, you will be prompted to upload a PDF document which contains your logline, synopsis and the script itself. Please note that all three must be included in one file (more information about suggested lengths below).
- The entry form will also prompt you to pay the entry fee of \$50.00.
- After you submit, you will receive two separate emails: a payment receipt and a confirmation of your submission.

## ENTRANT GUIDELINES

- Open to current financial AWG Full, Associate and Student members. Membership must be valid at the time of entry and for the duration of the competition.
- AWG offers to waive the joining fee for new members joining to enter the John Hinde Award. To take advantage of this special offer, please contact [admin@awg.com.au](mailto:admin@awg.com.au)
- New members will need to join for a minimum of 12 months.

## ENTRY GUIDELINES

- Entries close **5pm (AEST) on Tuesday 7 April 2025**
- In the unproduced category, entrants must own all the rights to the script being entered.
- Entries may be a feature or short film, television series or miniseries, web series, audio, animation, children's television, game or interactive media.
- All entries for the John Hinde Award are to be completed online, including uploading synopsis and script documents.
- The script must meet the definition of science-fiction as outlined below.
- Scripts must be presented and formatted to industry standards. You can find Screen Australia's suggested script layout [here](#).
- All instances of collaboration and authorship must be declared in the entry form. Co-writers are not required to be AWG members.

### Entries must include:

- **Unproduced Category:** Each entry must include a logline, one-page synopsis and the full script, uploaded as a single PDF document.
- **Produced Category:** Works must have completed principal photography or principal production between **1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025**.
- Each entry must include the full script, uploaded as a PDF document. Entrants must also provide the following information: principal photography dates, producer(s) names(s), production company and broadcaster.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** To ensure a fair judging process, the writer's name should not appear on any part of the synopsis/script or as a header or footer within the script. Entries that include the writer's name will not be eligible to enter.

## NUMBER OF ENTRIES

- Entrants may enter up to three scripts in each John Hinde Award category.
- In the unproduced category, if you are entering the script for a television series, the script should be the first episode/pilot. If you are entering the

script for a web series, the script may be the first episode/pilot, or any number of episodes up to and including 35 minutes (1 minute = 1 page).

- In the produced category, no more than one episode of the same series or miniseries may be entered by a member. However, a member may enter one of their own individually credited episodes even if another episode of the same program – written by the member in collaboration with another member writer(s) – has already been entered by one of the other collaborators.
- Members may enter previously submitted scripts provided the work is significantly changed from the original submission. We encourage members to develop, redraft, edit and polish their work as part of their creative process.

The Australian Writers' Guild expects that the winners of the John Hinde Award in either category will assist in publicly promoting Australian science-fiction writing and these Awards. For this reason, recipients should be prepared to participate in a small number of media opportunities at the time of their award.

Entrants agree that their work may be assessed at the discretion of the Australian Writers' Guild by the Pathways Showcase judging panel for entry onto Pathways Showcase.

## **JUDGING**

- An industry panel with experience in genre writing will judge the scripts.
- The judges will select the winner by assessing the script for:
  - Originality and the excellence of the idea
  - Excellence in craft and skill
  - The writer's grasp of the science-fiction genre.
- The judges' decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the decision.

The shortlist and winners will be announced publicly in the second half of 2026.

## **CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS**

If your story or characters significantly depict the lived experiences of minority cultures or community groups that fall outside your own lived experience, the AWG requests that you accompany your entry with a short statement (maximum one page) outlining the collaborations, processes and practices that allowed you to confidently complete the submitted work.

The statement may detail processes involving co-writers, producers, consultants and/or actors, or anything else you deem helpful in assisting and informing the judging panel in understanding your methodology (any collaborators mentioned by name will be redacted for the judges). This statement will help the AWG and AWGIE judges maintain standards of excellence, quality and integrity in the judging process. Files should be PDF only and should not include the writer's name. You will have the opportunity to upload your statement when completing the entry form online.

## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

The Australian Writers' Guild asserts that art in all its forms is an expression of our humanity; that good writing is human writing; that the art and craft at the core of great writing results from human endeavour, experience, and aspiration, and often from application across many years.

The Australian Writers' Guild's primary purpose is to affirm and defend the right of every writer to have the value of their work recognised and protected through copyright and properly remunerated through just and fair industrial agreements.

Artificial Intelligence is by its nature iterative, and therefore an affront to that purpose. By those measures, Artificial Intelligence will never knowingly be awarded for writing excellence by the Australian Writers' Guild.

No script, or part thereof, that has been created, generated, storylined, drafted, or iterated utilising Artificial Intelligence can be entered into any Award Category. Any script discovered to have been wholly, or in part, the result of Artificial Intelligence, will immediately be disqualified, and the entry fee forfeited. Further, any Award later discovered to have been awarded to a work that did employ Artificial Intelligence at any point during the writing process will be withdrawn and re-awarded to the runner-up in that category

for that year, and the new results will be publicly announced.

## DEFINITION OF SCIENCE-FICTION

For the purposes of this award, science-fiction is a genre in which speculative scientific discoveries or developments or technological developments, major social or environmental changes, space or time travel, or life on other planets, form part of the plot or background.

Science-Fiction elements include:

- A time setting in the future, in alternative timelines, or a historical past that contradicts known facts of history.
- A spatial setting or scenes in outer space, in other worlds, or subterranean earth.
- Characters that include aliens, mutants, humanoid robots and other characters arising from future human evolution.
- Futuristic or plausible technology such as ray guns, teleportation machines and humanoid computers.
- Scientific principles that are new or that contradict accepted physical laws, for example, time travel, wormholes or faster-than-light travel or communication.
- New and different political or social systems, e.g. dystopian, post-scarcity or post-apocalyptic.
- Paranormal abilities such as mind control, telepathy and telekinesis that are specifically due to fictional science and not magic/fantasy.
- Other universes or dimensions and travel between them.

Science-fiction is as much a genre as it is a setting. A world of advanced technology can be a setting to a story about crime and would thus be a hybrid Sci-fi/Detective Story, for example, *Blade Runner*. Alternatively, science fiction can be employed as a plot point – for example, characters in the 'real world' coming into contact with something futuristic, such as *ET*.

There are many hybrids and subgenres, all of which incorporate some element of sci-fi, be it setting, plot devices or central concept. Some examples of these are Science-Fantasy, Cyber-Punk and Apocalyptic or Post-apocalyptic narratives.

Science-Fantasy is probably the most common of the hybrid genres and involves the mixing of Science-Fiction and Fantasy – usually in the form of

Magic Technology, which is technology that runs on magic, as opposed to technology that runs on fictional science.

Cyber-Punk is centred on the transformative effects of advanced science, information/communication technology, computers and networks ("cyber") and their role in a breakdown or radical change in the social order ("punk").

Apocalyptic fiction is concerned with characters having no technology due to the downfall of civilization; however, they usually revolve around some kind of fictional virus or cosmic/geological event.

There are numerous other hybrid and subgenres including Sci-Fi/Horror, Sci-Fi Thriller, Space-Opera, Space or Sci-Fi Westerns, Tech-Noir and Sci-Fi Comedy.

To encourage and promote Sci-Fi the way John Hinde intended, the scope of eligible entries has been expanded. Subgenres and cross-genre pieces will be accepted and encouraged, from horror-hybrids to post-apocalypses – we want to see it!

**All enquiries regarding the John Hinde Award should be directed to [admin@awg.com.au](mailto:admin@awg.com.au).**