



2026 Shane & Cathryn Brennan Prize for Playwriting Information Kit

The Shane & Cathryn Brennan Prize for Playwriting has been developed to discover and celebrate the best new unproduced scripts among Australian playwrights. \$10,000 is awarded to the winner of each category, with a further \$40,000 to be shared among a selection of other outstanding entries. The Prize invites playwrights to submit unproduced plays in one of two categories: Stage and Theatre for Young Audience.

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THE PRIZE

Stage Category

The winner of the Prize for Stage will:

- Receive \$10,000 in prize money.
- Have their winning project inducted onto Pathways for Playwrights as part of AWG's prestigious Pathways Showcase.

Theatre for Young Audiences Category

The winner of the Prize for Theatre For Young Audiences will:

- Receive \$10,000 in prize money.
- Have their winning project inducted onto Pathways for Playwrights as part of AWG's prestigious Pathways Showcase.

ENTRANT GUIDELINES

- Open to current financial AWG Full and Associate 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 Shane & Cathryn Brennan Prize for Playwriting. To take advantage of this special offer, please email admin@awg.com.au by **27 August 2026**
- New members will need to join for a minimum of 12 months.

ENTRY GUIDELINES

- Entries close **5pm 27 AUGUST 2026 (AEST)**.
- Scripts must not have had their first professional production at the time of entry or be programmed for professional production.
- Entrants must own all the rights to the script being entered. If the work is an adaptation, you must have the right or be able to secure the right to adapt the underlying material on which the play is based, or the underlying material must be in the public domain.
- There is no minimum or maximum duration for scripts entered. The playwright needs to make an informed decision about the length of the play and its commercial viability. Theatrical norms should be observed unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- If a script is multiple short plays, the short plays must be thematically linked and designed to be performed together as a whole work for one audience.
- All entries for the Shane & Cathryn Brennan Prize for Playwriting are to be completed online, including uploading synopsis and script documents.
- Your synopsis and script should not include personal details, or any indication of funding or support previously received for script development.
- Scripts should be presented and formatted to industry standards. You can find

Australian Plays Transform's suggested script layout [here](#). Please note: entrants should not publish their name or any identifying details on their work.

- All instances of collaboration and co-authorship must be declared in the entry form.
- Co-writers are not required to be AWG Members.

IMPORTANT NOTE: To ensure a fair judging process, the writer's name and personal details should not appear on any part of the synopsis/script or as a header or footer within the script. Entries should also not include any reference to previous funding or support received for the development of the script, including logos. Entries that include any of the above details will not be eligible to enter.

CATEGORY REQUIREMENTS

Stage Category

- Each entry must include a one-page synopsis and the full script, uploaded as a single PDF document.

Theatre for Young Audiences Category

- Each entry must include a one-page synopsis and the full script, uploaded as a single PDF document.
- Theatre for Young Audiences is written for a target audience of children or young people of any age up to and including 18 years. It includes 'Children's Theatre' and 'Theatre in Education' and is usually performed by a professional cast.

Definition of Unproduced

Scripts submitted to the Shane and Cathryn Brennan Prize must be unproduced at the time of entry and remain unproduced for the duration of the competition. We understand that there are many phases of script development between page and stage, and that this can make the definition of 'unproduced' ambiguous.

For example: if a script has undergone an informal table read with actors, we don't interpret this as professionally produced and the script would therefore be eligible for entry.

For the purposes of this prize, we understand professionally produced to mean the following:

- The cast are paid at MEAA minimum rates and the creatives are paid in line with guild or industry standard.
- It is produced by professional companies; or independent productions in which all participants were engaged professionally (including fringe festivals)
- It does not include student theatre productions, amateur theatre productions or independent productions on which participants aren't engaged

professionally or are engaged on a profit share or co-operative basis.

- For plays that have been staged at festivals, we define a professional production as one in which all participants are paid appropriately. It does not include fringe festival contexts in which participants aren't paid or are engaged on a profit share or co-operative basis.

NUMBER OF ENTRIES

- Entrants may enter only one individually written script in each category. However, if a script is co-written, it may be entered by any AWG Member co-writer who has not already submitted an entry in that category.
- An entrant may thus have two scripts entered in a category: one written solely by them and another co-written script entered by their AWG Member co-writer (provided that co-writer has not already entered a script in that same category).
- In all cases, no individually – or collaboratively – written script can be entered more than once in the same category.
- If you are unsure about which category applies best to your script, you may enter both categories. However, you may only be shortlisted in one category. Should your script be shortlisted in both, you will need to select which category to proceed in.

The Australian Writers' Guild expects that the winners of the Shane & Cathryn Brennan Prize for Playwriting in either category will assist in publicly promoting Australian theatre and these Awards. For this reason, recipients should be prepared to participate in a small number of media opportunities at the time of receiving their Award.

Should the play go onto be produced and/or published, we also request that the Shane & Cathryn Brennan Prize is acknowledged in writing in any published materials.

Entrants agree that their work may be assessed at the discretion of the Australian Writers' Guild for entry onto [Pathways for Playwrights](#).

JUDGING

- An industry panel will judge the scripts.
- The judges will select shortlisted and the winning scripts by assessing for:
 - Originality and excellence of the idea
 - The potential for the project to be produced, commercially viable
 - Excellence in craft and skill
- The judges' decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the decision.

In the first round of judging, a preliminary longlist will be determined according to the above criteria. An additional panel of judges will assess the longlisted entries against the abovementioned criteria in the second round to select the shortlisted and winning entries.

The shortlist and winners will be announced publicly in October 2026.

All enquiries regarding the 2026 Shane & Cathryn Brennan Prize for Playwriting should be directed to admin@awg.com.au.