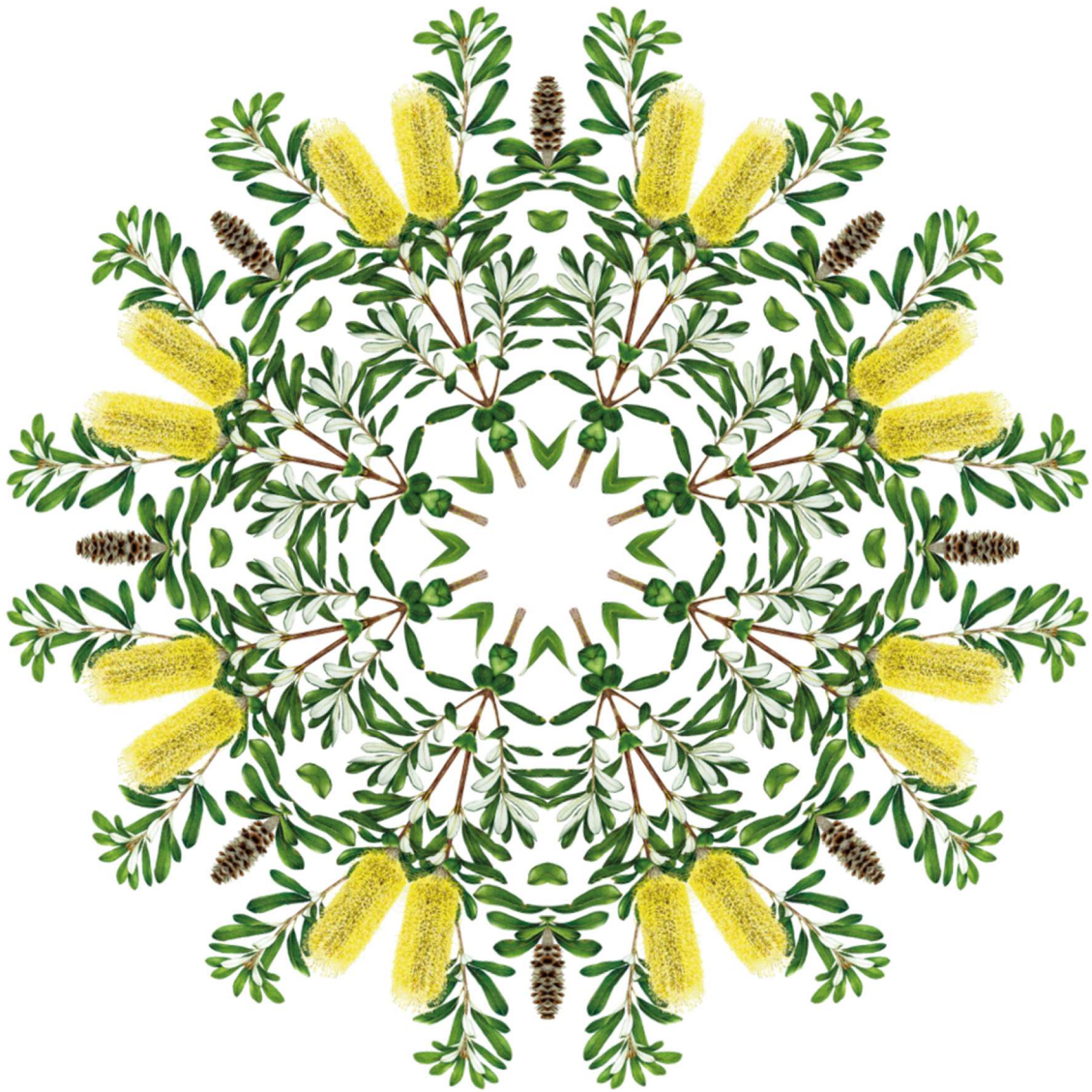


Writers in Residence Program



Information and Guidelines 2026

Botanic Gardens of Sydney

Botanic Gardens of Sydney cares for Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, The Domain Sydney, Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan and Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah and leads plant conservation through the Australian Institute of Botanical Science.

Together with our community of members, volunteers, partners and donors, we conduct critical research and action for plants, unlocking their secrets and ensuring their conservation so that the Gardens remain centres of botanic diversity and research, horticultural beauty, education, recreation and joy for future generations.

Botanic Gardens of Sydney's 2025-2030 strategic plan aims to deliver on the organisation's vision, purpose and role:

- **Vision:** Plants at the heart of a thriving world.
- **Purpose:** To inspire enjoyment, learning and conservation of nature.
- **Role:** Prioritise Plants, Connect to Country, Empower Action.

Underpinned by our collections, people, assets and partners, the plan focuses on four key priorities and outcomes:

- **Learning, Engagement and Experiences:** Inspire people to feel, think and act in new ways that is in balance with nature.
- **Thriving Sustainable Organisation:** Create positive environmental, social, ethical and economic impact.
- **Embracing Country:** Advance reconciliation and strengthen relationships with Country and First Peoples.
- **Conservation Impact:** Reduce the risk of extinction and secure a future rich in plants.

Writers In Residence program

The Botanic Gardens of Sydney Writers in Residence Program 2026 supports writers to create new work inspired by the living collections, landscapes, research, and cultural history of Botanic Gardens of Sydney. Residencies run for three months beginning from April 2026.

This is a non-residential program. Each writer receives:

- \$15,000 stipend to support the creation of new work for the 3-month period of the residency
- A dedicated workspace at one or more of the Gardens' sites (Mount Annan, Mount Tomah, Sydney)
- Opportunities to collaborate with staff and experts across Botanic Gardens of Sydney from the fields of science, horticulture, marketing and/or education and more.
- Full access to the Daniel Solander Library
- Behind-the-scenes access to our living collections, herbarium, seed bank and green spaces.

The scope of this program is intentionally open. Creative applications that propose inventive use of the resources and collections on offer are welcomed.

Each writer will produce:

- One or more creative works inspired by Botanic Gardens of Sydney
- Two public engagement activities (e.g., talks, workshops, readings, guided walks) in 2026

Eligibility and selection criteria

Residencies are open to:

- Australian citizens or permanent residents aged 18 and above
- Emerging and established writers
- Writers working in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, hybrid forms, digital writing, screenwriting, or cross-disciplinary practice
- Applicants with a demonstrated interest in nature, science, culture, or place-based storytelling

Not eligible:

- Academic research projects without a creative output
- Projects already under contract for completion unless the residency meaningfully contributes to new material
- Applicants who cannot commit to the required on-site engagement

Submitted material must be the original work of the applicant.

Applications are welcomed from across Australia, but the successful applicant must be available to travel regularly to Botanic Gardens of Sydney sites in May, June and July 2026.

It is the responsibility of appointed Writers in Residence to:

- Make their own travel and accommodation arrangements to visit the Botanic Gardens of Sydney sites (this is a non-residential opportunity).
- Participate in publicity activities related to the residency organised by Botanic Gardens of Sydney and provide images and give interviews to promote the program.

The writer will always retain copyright of their images and creative work and will be credited in any promotional or marketing materials.

Application process

Expressions of interest

Expressions of interest for the 2026 intake of the program will open from Wednesday 10 December 2025, and close at 5pm on Tuesday 27 January 2026.

To be considered for the program, applicants must submit an expression of interest to media@botanicgardens.nsw.gov.au, consisting of the following elements:

1. Project Proposal

- a. Description of the proposed work
- b. How the Gardens will inform or inspire the project
- c. Proposed use of the collections and/or space
- d. Intended outcomes

2. Writers Statement

- a. Creative practice overview
- b. Why this residency is important at this stage of your career

3. CV (max 2 pages)
4. Writing Sample (up to 10 pages)
5. Community Engagement Proposal
 - a. Outline of two public-facing activities (workshop, talk, walk, reading, etc.) to take place during the residency.

Selection panel review

The selection panel will be composed of internal experts and external literary professionals. The panel will assess each expression of interest against the following criteria:

- Artistic merit and vision
- Strength of proposal
- Strategic alignment
- Relevance to Botanic Gardens of Sydney

Shortlisted applicants

Expressions of interest will be reviewed by the selection panel after applications close, and a shortlist will be invited for interview.

Interviews, outcome and commencement

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview in February 2026, and successful applicants will be notified by early March 2026.

Residencies are scheduled to begin from April 2026¹ for a duration of three months.

Further information

Enquiries about the Botanic Gardens of Sydney Writers In Residence program can be directed via email to media@botanicgardens.nsw.gov.au.

Further information about Botanic Gardens of Sydney can be found at via our website at www.botanicgardens.org.au.

¹ A later starting date for the three-month residency may be considered upon application by a candidate; however the residency must start no later than May or June 2026.