

The Max Afford Playwrights' Award 2026

Awarded '...to a talented young playwright ...to enable them to further their education in the field of drama, to improve their creative writing and, to improve the general public's appreciation of Australian drama and playwrights'

About the award

The Max Afford Playwrights' Award was established to:

- help and give incentive to young playwrights;
- provide funds to enable them to further their education in the field of drama;
- improve their creative writing;
- improve the general public's appreciation of Australian drama and playwrights.

The award is an initiative of the late Thelma May Afford, who in her Will established a fund to offer a periodical prize in memory of her husband.

The award is currently awarded biennially.

Perpetual Trustee Company Ltd ABN 42 000 001 007 is the Trustee of the Will. The Trustee is guided in making the Award by the decision of a majority of judges as appointed by the Trustee. The prize is directed to be awarded to the person who is judged to have the highest merit.

How do I qualify?

Applicants must be:

- an individual between the ages of 18 and 40, at the close of entries date; and
- a resident of Australia during the four (4) years prior to the closing date for entries.

Scripts must be:

- of an original nature
- a full-length play of not less than one (1) hour duration
- completed not earlier than three (3) years prior to the closing date for entries; and
- unperformed, not have been previously produced, or had a public reading. This rule will apply up to the time of the creative development with APT.

Key information

Prize - \$33,000

The prize includes:

- \$15,500 cash, and
- Expenses to a maximum of \$17,500 towards creative development with Australian Plays Transform.

Applications open:
February 2026

Applications close:
Sunday 23 March 2026
at 11:59PM AWST

Official announcement of winner:
May-June 2026

Trustee:
Perpetual Trustee Company Ltd

Award Administrator:
Australian Plays Transform (APT)
E: hello@apt.org.au
www.apt.org.au

Award enquiries:
Award enquiries should be directed to Australian Plays Transform by email at hello@apt.org.au

To apply, visit:
www.apt.org.au and follow the links to submit

How to apply and the fine print

Application requirements

Each applicant must complete or submit the following to be eligible for this award:

1. An online application form and acceptance of the Terms and Conditions via the online system. The application process closes at **Sunday 23 March 2026 at 11:59PM AWST**
2. A PDF version of a piece of official identification showing date of birth (e.g. birth certificate or passport).
3. Evidence of Australian citizenship or Permanent Resident status e.g. Australian passport; Australian citizen certificate; or Australian Permanent residency documentation.
4. Evidence of proof of residency in Australia during the past four (4) years. This may be a recent utilities bill, lease, etc.
5. Two (2) copies of the submitted play (including one that is a 'clean' copy on which the writer's name, contact details or agent's details do not appear anywhere) via the online application system.
6. A complete synopsis of the submitted play.

Judges and judging process

Judging is based entirely on material submitted by the applicant by the close of entries date. No additional material will be accepted after this date. Please note that insufficient or incomplete applications may not be eligible.

The trustee reserves the right to refuse applications not considered eligible for entry, and late applications will not be accepted.

Dates listed under 'Key Dates' must be strictly adhered to by the applicant. There are no exceptions to this rule.

The prize shall be awarded to the applicant who, on the recommendation of the majority of judges, is considered to have written the play of the highest merit.

If the majority of judges consider that there is no entry of sufficiently high merit to warrant the award, no prize will be awarded.

The majority decision of the judges and of the Trustee on the interpretation of all award rules and conditions shall be final and legally binding, and no correspondence will be entered into with regard to the judges' decision.

All successful and unsuccessful applicants will be contacted by email.

The judges' names are not disclosed until after the judging process.

If at any time after the award has been granted to any entry, and a majority of judges determine that the entry did not comply with the conditions of entry or eligibility, the award may be withdrawn from that entry, and the artist must immediately repay the prize money to the Trustee. In the event that an award is withdrawn from an entry pursuant to this condition, the other entries which were submitted in the same year may be reconsidered for the award; otherwise, no award will be conferred in respect of that year.

Whilst it is expected that these conditions will be strictly observed, the Trustee reserves the right to waive compliance with or alter any conditions.

The award recipient should obtain their own professional advice in respect of any taxation implications of receiving the award.

Publicity and promotion

By entering this award, the applicant grants the Trustee and its agent a licence to reproduce any material or entry/ies by electronic or print media or on television leading up to, or for the duration of the exhibition, and thereafter, to further advertise and in other ways publicise the Max Afford Playwrights' Award, and any other scholarships/awards in its portfolio.

It is expected that the winner of the award will be announced in May-June 2026. As soon as applicable after the announcement of the award, all applicants will receive notification to their email address.

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