

**2016 NSW
Writer's
Fellowship
(Early Career)
Assessment
Meeting Report**



Arts
NSW

Assessment Meeting Report

NSW WRITER'S FELLOWSHIP (EARLY CAREER)

Closing Date: Monday, 14 March 2016

Panel Meeting Date: Monday, 18 April 2016

The NSW Writer's Fellowship (Early career) is offered by the State Government to enable a professional writer in the early stages of his/her career to undertake a self-directed program of professional development.

The purpose of the Fellowship is to assist an early career writer in acquiring new skills, knowledge and networks, whether through facilitated formal or informal learning opportunities. The fellowship is not intended to be used solely for the development or delivery of work/s, but is a chance for writers to consider what activities and opportunities would support both personal development and career advancement.

The Fellowship recipient will have the additional, optional opportunity of a week's residency at Varuna - The Writers' House.

Since 1989, Varuna has inspired the creation of new Australian writing and provided support for a thriving writing community and growing Alumni. The Varuna residential program supports intensive work, conversation and community for writers at all levels of experience and across a wide range of writing practice.

The residency is optional and the dates of the residency are to be arranged with Varuna and the recipient

The value of the Fellowship is **\$30,000**.

ACTIVITIES

Types of activities funded

Activities could include a combination of:

- international or national travel
- mentorships or internships with recognised professional practitioners or organisations

- residencies at institutions or organisations
- an outstanding opportunity of significance to the applicant's practice
- short-term courses, workshops or other training at recognised institutions or organisations (note: the Fellowship is not available to support study which will result in a university degree or other formal qualification)
- research and development
- creation of new work (note: the Fellowship is not available solely for the creation of new work).

Assessment Criteria

Applications were assessed by a peer panel against the following equally-weighted criteria:

- the demonstrated high artistic merit of the applicant's work (as evidenced by support material)
- the potential for the proposed program to significantly benefit the applicant's professional practice as an early career writer
- the program is well planned, achievable and has a budget that is realistic, accurate, and represents value for money.

ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

The assessment panel recognised the high calibre of the applications received for the 2016 Writer's Fellowship (Early Career). The panel noted that it was a very competitive round, particularly when considering the top ten proposals.

The panel was pleased to see that there was a good response from across the State, with 48 eligible applications received from writers working in, and across, a variety of disciplines and practices. 31 per cent of applications received were from regional NSW or Western Sydney. Arts NSW encourages applications from across NSW to apply for future fellowships.

The panel commented that a variety of genres were creatively explored, including fiction, non-fiction and literature for young adults. Trends of writers using blogs and digital and other non-traditional media to publish their works were a feature of applications received for the fellowship.

Many of the proposals featured a strong mix of activities with strong outcomes for professional development – mentorships with experienced practitioners, residencies for learning and writing and travel for

research and significant opportunities. Many applications also included an allowance for time to create new work.

The panel commented that stronger applications included relevant support material, included activities appropriate for stage of career, demonstrated good planning and clearly articulated the professional development benefits of their program.

Future applications are reminded to:

- include relevant support material, with a focus on quality rather than quantity
- explain the value and specific contribution of activities, such as literary festivals, to professional development
- take time to budget properly, with more detail and explanations/notes on costs
- provide evidence of Aboriginal consultation on projects and adhere to the [Arts NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Protocols](#) if working with Aboriginal communities.

Applicants are encouraged to:

- include letters of support (or expressions of interest) from potential mentors
- seek assistance in preparing their application from Arts NSW, local Regional Arts Development Officers, or other key sector organisations
- contact Arts NSW staff to discuss their application prior to submitting.

FUNDING STATISTICS

GRANT CATEGORY	Fellowships
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	48 eligible applications
SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS	1
HIGHLY COMMENDED	1
AMOUNT FUNDED	\$30,000

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT

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Biography

Anwen Crawford is a Sydney-based writer. She is the music critic for *The Monthly*, and her essays have appeared in publications including *The New Yorker*, *Best Australian Essays* and *Meanjin*. Anwen is in the early stages of developing her practice as a writer of book-length literary works, and has published one short book, *Live Through This*, as part of Bloomsbury's 33 1/3 monograph series about popular music.

She was

born and raised in Sydney, and has also lived in Melbourne and New York.

Fellowship Proposal:

Anwen Crawford's proposed program includes self-directed research, involving visits to key collections in Australia and in the United States of America; participation in local and international conferences; attendance of writers' festivals to develop new literary and publishing networks; and creation of new work. Anwen also plans to take up the opportunity of the week-long residency at Varuna - The Writers' House to develop her manuscript, combining memoir, reportage and criticism.

Panel Comments

The panel's comments on Anwen Crawford's application include the following:

The panel commends the high artistic merit and innovation of this program and of the applicant's work. This program will expand her skills as a writer and allow Anwen to extend her practice to develop long-form literary works using elements of memoir and reportage. The activities will also substantially increase her professional networks and further develop her research skills and knowledge base, which is appropriate at this stage of her career. Anwen's program will engage

in an international exchange, and allow her to take the next step in her career in Australia and beyond our shores.

The panel noted that it was exciting to see writing about music, and a proposal, that is modern, fresh, current, timely and globally relevant.

HIGHLY COMMENDED LIST

The Panel also recommended Melissa Beit to be highly commended.

Melissa Beit is an early career writer who has had stories published in *The Australian*, *Best Australian Stories*, *The Big Issue*, *Southerly*, *Meanjin*, *New Australian Stories*, *Sleepers Almanac*, and in various national and international anthologies. The panel commended Melissa on her clear drive and well-planned program that was strongly connected to her career. The panel encourages the applicant to continue to develop her writing and publication record.