



ARMADALE WRITERS' AWARD

Celebrating
West Australian
Adult Writers



Judging Guidelines

The Armadale Writers' Award will be judged by a panel of authors and librarians selected by the organisers of the Award.

Judging creative writing on any number of individual criteria will inevitably rely on subjective tastes and preferences.

Entries are to be assessed according to a judge's own criteria with the expectation that this criterion is applied equally (to the best of the judge's ability) to all entries.

This document is not prescriptive and not an attempt to limit or control the judging process. This document is intended only as a broad guide in determining the quality of entries and to aid in the selection of a shortlist.

A shortlist of 5 to 8 entries is expected from each judge. The final pool of shortlisted entries from all judges will then be reassessed collectively to determine the winning entries of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. An additional 7 entries must be selected for a 'highly commended' award.

Entrants querying the judging process will be referred to this document and the following judging considerations.

Creativity

Creativity is the primary focus of the competition and one of the most important aspects to take into account when judging entries.

Creativity is not synonymous with fantastical plot or characters – a fantasy short-story can be dull and unoriginal in many ways.

Does the author display an ability to think 'outside the box', perhaps writing with a different perspective on familiar tropes or clichéd plot devices? Equal treatment should be given to entries that utilise tropes or clichés in an unexpected or clever manner.

Does the author express original or unfamiliar ideas?
Is the story thought-provoking?

Characterisation and dialogue

Believable and memorable characters that display the uniqueness, complexity and individuality of real people should be considered. Does the reader respond appropriately (either negatively or positively) with a character's actions and motivations?

Other models of character could, and should be, considered. For example, short stories can create non-realistic characters, including deliberately satirised or symbolic characters. How effective is the author in achieving this?

Is the author's intent in eliciting reactions clear?

Are characters consistent throughout?

Is any inconsistency explained adequately?

Dialogue that contributes to a rich and vivid world should be considered too.

Is the dialogue unique to the characters?

Is it too wordy or long-winded? Should a reader feel like they have browsed through a thesaurus?

Structure, tone, style

Is the short story structured linearly, or non-linearly? Does the story deliberately and resolutely create ambiguous or open-ended conclusions which create the illusion of a world beyond the relatively few words on the page? Or does it provide a clear, convincing, and compelling storyline with a recognizable arc of conflict, crisis, and resolution? How effective is the story in achieving this?

Are obstacles sufficiently challenging to the protagonists?

Is tension created organically and not at the expense of credibility?

Are resolutions (if any) innovative, believable, and authentic?

Is the story structured in such a way that assists the story, not directs it?

Does the structure, tone, and style of the story work well together?

Are any inconsistencies, tonal shifts, and/or style changes adequately explained and easily comprehended if intentional?

If the structure is unorthodox in any way, is the conclusion still satisfying and the purpose of the structure warranted?

Grammar

Is the grammar understandable?

Does it hinder your ability to comprehend the story?

The correct use of grammar is important and should not go unrewarded, but the goal of this competition is to encourage creative thinking. A fantastic entry in all other respects should not be disregarded if poor verb conjugation or spelling does not detract from the story.