

# ONLY I CAN SAY

*Who else sees what I see?*

*Feels what I feel?*

*Only I know where I've been, and where I am going.*

*The adventures I've been on. The places I will travel.*

*The people I know, and those I will one day meet.*

*Oh, the conversations we will have ...*

*What secrets do I hold?*

*What thoughts?*

*What stories?*

*What worlds live in my imagination?*

*Only I can say.*

The Living Stories Western Sydney Writing Prize returns for its 5th year in 2025. Living Stories is a creative writing competition for residents of Western Sydney and Wingecarribee Shire, offering an opportunity at physical publication and cash prizes from a pool of over \$12,000.

Entries, either a short story/narrative non-fiction (up to 500 words) or a poem (up to 25 lines) are open to residents from the 14 LGAs across four age groups 10 - 12 years; 13 - 15 years; 16 - 18 years; and adults (18+). This year, participants are asked to respond to the theme: *Only I can say.*



Free creative writing workshops will be hosted throughout April at participating libraries across Western Sydney.

## IMPORTANT DATES FOR ENTRANTS

Entries close Sunday 5th May.

Winners and highly commended entries in each category, from each LGA, will be announced mid June 2025.

The overall winners will be announced on the third week of July at the launch of the publication.

WestWords Western Sydney Centre for Writing is dedicated to developing and championing the writers and writing that comprise the heart of Western Sydney.

To find out more:

 [westwords.com.au](http://westwords.com.au)

WestLit Libraries is a collaboration between the library services from Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Canterbury-Bankstown, Cumberland, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Liverpool, Parramatta, The Hills Shire, Penrith, Wingecarribee Shire and Wollondilly to bring the Western Sydney story forward.

Living Stories is a WestWords, WestLit Libraries initiative.

This project is proudly supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

## LIVING STORIES WESTERN SYDNEY WRITING PRIZE 2025

# ONLY I CAN SAY

Open to adults and children aged 10 years and above who live in Western Sydney and Wingecarribee Shire.

Entries close Monday 5th May.  
Submit your entry online at  
[www.westwords.com.au/living-stories](http://www.westwords.com.au/living-stories)



# COMPETITION GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

- ✓ Entry is free via the online entry form at [www.westwords.com.au/living-stories](http://www.westwords.com.au/living-stories)
- ✓ To be eligible, entrants must reside within one of the following local government areas:
  - Blacktown City
  - Blue Mountains City
  - Camden Council
  - Campbelltown City
  - The City of Canterbury-Bankstown
  - Cumberland Council
  - Fairfield City
  - Hawkesbury City
  - Liverpool City
  - The City of Parramatta
  - Penrith City
  - The Hills Shire
  - Wingecarribee Shire
  - Wollondilly Shire
- ✓ Entries must be written primarily in English, and may be in the form of short story, poetry, personal essay, or creative non fiction. The length must not exceed 500 words or 25 lines for poetry.
- ✓ The theme to which entries should respond is **Only I can say**.
- ✓ WestWords/WestLit Libraries is unable to provide any additional creative clarification or advice.
- ✓ Work must be original and unpublished.
- ✓ Living Stories will not accept any work generated or edited by A.I. (large language models).
- ✓ Entries will be judged according to the following criteria:
  - \* Originality and creativity
  - \* Construction and use of language
  - \* Engagement with the stated theme

- ✓ Do not include external links, such as video or audio, within your text. Doing so will invalidate your entry.
- ✓ The judging process will be conducted blind. Please do not include your name within the text of your entry.
- ✓ To be eligible, all entries must be lodged via the online entry form at [www.westwords.com.au/living-stories](http://www.westwords.com.au/living-stories), by 5th May.

## There are four categories:

- \* 10-12 years
- \* 13-15 years
- \* 16-18 years
- \* Adult (18+)

Please note that an entrant's category is based upon the age they will turn in 2025.

Up to one winning entry and one highly commended entry from each category in each participating LGA will be announced online in mid-June.

Only winners and highly commended entrants will be individually notified.

Judges' decisions are final.

No correspondence will be entered into.

## The Workshops

WestWords and WestLit Libraries are offering free writing workshops in your local area.

See [www.westwords.com.au/living-stories/](http://www.westwords.com.au/living-stories/) for details.

In each LGA, in each age category, up to one winner and one highly commended will be awarded.

From the regional winners, an overall winner and highly commended in each age category will be selected.

All winning and highly commended entries will be published in book form and online.

Entries can only be submitted online at [www.westwords.com.au/living-stories/](http://www.westwords.com.au/living-stories/)

Further information contact WestWords:

**E** [admin@westwords.com.au](mailto:admin@westwords.com.au)

**P** 1800WestWords

**W** [westwords.com.au](http://westwords.com.au)

Total prize pool: \$8,000

## Overall Winner

Adult - \$750

Junior categories - \$300

## Highly Commended

Adult - \$250

Junior categories - \$200

## Regional (awarded in each participating LGA) Winners

Adult - \$100

Junior categories - \$75

## Highly Commended

Adult - \$75

Junior categories \$50

