Mayors' short story challenge

It's on again…the Mayors' Short Story Challenge 2026

Alexandrina Council, City of Victor Harbor and the District Council of Yankalilla have been running the Mayors' Short Story Challenge since 2010 and we invite your school and students to join the 2026 Challenge. The creative writing Challenge is held during term two each year for school aged children, from Reception to year 10.

This year's Challenge...

There are six group categories:

- ✓ Reception - Year 2
- ✓ Year 3 - Year 4
- ✓ Year 5 - Year 7
- ✓ Year 8 - Year 10
- ✓ Special Options Students – Primary level (Reception to Year 6)
- ✓ Special Options Students – High School level

Prizes

The winner from each category will receive a $50 gift voucher with the overall winner for each Council receiving an additional $50 gift voucher. The school from which the highest scored entry originates, from each Council District, receives $1000*.

Special Options entries will be judged together from across the region by the Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee, with prizes awarded as detailed in the criteria attached.

Winners will be announced at a joint regional presentation at Victor Harbor Public Library in September 2026. Schools will be notified by invitation in mid-August 2026.

Competition details

The Challenge opens on Term 2 Monday, 27 April 2026 and **closes on Friday, 12 June 2026.**

Entry is open to all registered school aged children in the City of Victor Harbor, Alexandrina Council and District Council of Yankalilla. Entries must be submitted to your school's Council area library by **5pm Friday, 12 June 2026***.

*Please note that the competition's closing date has been moved forward this year due to local Council Elections. If this year's deadline is unachievable, please give your Library contact a call the discuss.

city of Victor Harbor

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District Council of YANKALILLA

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Criteria

- Only 1 entry per person.
- Word Guide: Reception to 7, up to 500 words, Years 8 to 10, between 500-2000 words.
- Story and picture books are acceptable, although judging emphasis will be on readability, originality, language, and presentation. The judge's decision is final.
- Special Options (SO) Categories are available for students in a Special Options setting, within a Special Class or Disability Unit and/or those who meet criteria for Special Options eligibility as specified by the Department of Education. This category is open to all students within the City of Victor Harbor, Alexandrina Council and the District Council of Yankalilla. All SO entries from all 3 Councils are judged by members of the Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee. The winner of each SO category will receive a gift voucher as indicated in the 'Prizes' paragraph of the cover letter attached. The Special Options student with the highest score over all 3 council regions and across both SO categories, will receive a $50 prize voucher with their school library receiving $300. These 2 prizes are donated by Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee.
- To ensure equity of the competition, entries must be completed with limited guidance (only for spelling) so that the content is reflective of the students' abilities and genuine ideas. Hence all entries must be original and previously unpublished.
- The MSSC values human creativity and aims to develop creative literary skills in the individual. We strongly discourage the use of any AI chat in the creation of stories.
- A year level category officially opens upon receipt of 2 student writing entries. If less than 2 entries are received, the student will receive a Participation Certificate and no prize will be awarded.
- Entries must be submitted by class teachers/home school parents only, with a completed 'Class Entry Form' on top of each class bundle. Home School student entries can be submitted to their residential Council area library by their parent (teacher) with proof of home school registration attached.
- Copyright remains with the author; however, each library reserves the right to publish winning entries, at their discretion.
- Authors are encouraged to retain a copy of their stories as entries will not be returned.
- In the event of a 'draw' the prize will be divided between the owners of the winning entries.
- If a Home School student entry is the overall winner, the major prize of $1000 will remain with the council library for community collection use. The winner can offer suggestions on collection additions, but items will remain the property of the council library.

For any enquiries please contact:

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