

Sydney Writers' Festival – Expression of Interest

Role Title:	Festival Publicist
Reports to:	Head of Marketing and Digital
Works closely with:	Artistic Director, Festival Producer, Marketing Team and Senior Management Team
Direct report:	Publicity Coordinator (paid position from January–June each year) and interns (if required)

Sydney Writers' Festival encourages applications from all backgrounds, communities, and industries and are committed to having a team that is made up of diverse skills, experiences and abilities.

About Sydney Writers' Festival

Sydney Writers' Festival is one of the world's leading and most beloved literary institutions. It is a place for readers, writers and thinkers to share ideas, tell stories and celebrate literature.

Since our first Festival in 1997, we have brought thousands of diverse writers and thinkers from Australia and around the globe together in Sydney. In the company of the world's best novelists, poets, journalists, public intellectuals, economists, politicians, podcasters and scientists, we've discussed some of the most pressing issues of our times. We've celebrated prize-winning authors, long-awaited novels from writers at the height of their careers and introduced debut authors to eager and enthusiastic new audiences.

Readers and writers have exchanged thoughts and opinions, perspectives and philosophies, creating a powerful community based on radical dialogue and respectful debate. The drumbeat of questioning that thrums underneath the Festival is powerful and enlivens Australia's democratic tradition.

About this role

Reporting to the Head of Marketing and Digital, the Festival Publicist develops, manages and implements strategic publicity and communications campaigns that complement the marketing campaign to enhance the Festival's public profile and engage with diverse audiences. This role requires a publicity professional who has strong industry networks. This role plays a crucial part in driving audience engagement, increasing media coverage and ensuring the Festival's box office

success by effectively promoting its events, authors, and initiatives to local, national and international audiences. This role is responsible for crisis management, developing a proactive and agile strategy for the company.

Responsibilities and expectations

1. Publicity and Communications Campaigns

- In collaboration with the marketing and digital team, create and implement strategic publicity and communications plans that align PR efforts with overall Festival events and key organisational messages
- Tailor specific campaigns for individual events
- Supervise and manage the efforts of a Publicity Coordinator to maximise results in regional, suburban, CALD and community press – both online and traditional media.

2. Crisis Management and Messaging

- Proactively identify and anticipate potential risks facing the organisation and Festival and provide strategic counsel to ensure strategic risk management is in place
- Assist in the development and delivery of the crisis and incident management framework incorporating crisis and incident response planning, response and recovery protocols
- Respond to and manage any negative publicity or crises that may arise, maintaining the Festival's reputation.
- Provide timely and strategic responses to media inquiries during crises

3. Media Relations:

- Leveraging your extensive network of key media contacts at the local, national and international levels, you will develop a publicity plan to strategically engage targeted media outlets – both digital and traditional media
- Identify new PR opportunities and partnerships to expand the Festival's reach to diverse and general media
- Create a strategic campaign that utilises your established relationships with journalists, editors, bloggers and other media professionals to secure media coverage not only within literary outlets but also in mainstream media
- Able to pitch compelling stories, arrange interviews and secure media coverage for the Festival
- Serve as the primary point of contact for media inquiries, providing timely and accurate information
- Manage a high volume of media requests with tact and strategic intent

4. Publicity Materials

- Draft and distribute press releases, media alerts and promotional materials in a timely fashion to effectively communicate Festival news and highlights
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive media contact list, ensuring outreach to relevant publications, broadcasters, and online platforms
- Collaborating with the Festival Producer, create publicity schedules for program authors and uploading them into the Festival database, Filemaker

5. Event Management

- Manage media accreditation and oversee onsite press activities during the Festival
- Organise and manage the use of the media room (onsite)

- Work with Marketing and Partnerships to manage the recording of Sydney Writers' Festival events by outside parties for online and radio broadcast, including ABC Sydney, ABC Radio National, ABC Big Ideas, etc
- Assist with gaining relevant recording permissions and act as the Sydney Writers' Festival representative for onsite filming and recordings

6. Monitoring and Reporting

- Conduct research and establish accurate and timely media monitoring to ensure all relevant media coverage is captured and recorded
- Monitor and report on media coverage, providing a comprehensive post-Festival analysis of campaign impact, reach and engagement

Qualifications

- Experienced Communications and PR professional with a proven record of accomplishment in publicity and communications management preferably within the arts, entertainment or event sectors
- Experience in crisis communication and reputation management
- A strong record of high-impact campaigns and strategies delivered through an extensive network of media contacts. Demonstrated experience within the arts industry and/or Festival context an advantage.
- Strong network of media contacts, particularly in the arts, culture, and general news sectors locally, nationally and internationally
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills with a flair for storytelling and crafting compelling pitches that translate nuanced themes into impactful, engaging messages
- Thorough knowledge of media practices and trends across all current and emerging mediums, including social media and the digital landscape with experience amplifying campaigns across multiple channels and platforms
- Ability to manage multiple projects and deadlines in a fast-paced environment
- Ability to absorb and retain a high level of information and communicate it accurately
- Strong organisational skills, strong attention to detail and the ability to work both independently and as part of a team

Preferred skills

- Knowledge of the literary and cultural events landscape.
- A creative problem solver with demonstrated flexibility and creativity in successfully managing media issues.
- Knowledge and experience using Filemaker is advantageous

This role is a contract role from January–June each year. It is hoped that the Festival Publicist will commit to a minimum of three years. The successful candidate will also need to be available for up to four days throughout November–December of each year to respond to long lead timelines.

How to apply

Interested candidates are requested to submit a resume and a cover letter of no more than two pages that responds to the position description and a quotation for services based on 75 days work. Noting that the below calendar is indicative of the time required and is subject to change.

2024

November – 2 days

December – 2 days

2025

January – 9 days

February – 13 days

March – 13 days

April – 15 days

May – 17 days (including the Festival dates)

June – 4 days

Total – 75 days

If this sounds like you, submit your resume and cover letter to jobs@swf.org.au addressed to Brooke Webb, CEO. **Submissions close Sunday 29 September, 5pm AEST.**