

2026 Geelong Short Play Festival Guidelines

Our point of difference as a festival is our focus on the quality of the text.

Welcome to the 2026 Geelong Short Play Festival. After our highly successful inaugural festival last year, we learned a great deal about creating a successful festival and what support our writers needed to be successful in crafting their play so that it was shortlisted by our team of judges. This succinct document will assist you to write a play that fits within the guidelines, whilst still giving you the freedom to produce the 2026 winner performed at Geelong Arts Centre in August.

Firstly, the play should:

- **Be no longer than 15 minutes-** this is about 15 pages of dialogue and brief stage directions.
- **Be one scene,** with props that can be removed at the end of the play efficiently, by the actors. There is no curtain, no space for conventional sets, and no ability for projections in the space we use at GAC. Items such as chairs and tables were used successfully as a multitude of set pieces by performers last year.
- **Have no more than 5 characters-** this means that writing a play with more characters but played by actors who will play more than one character will not fit the criteria.

The performing space is the Open House at the Geelong Arts Centre. Please keep in mind that it is not a conventional theatre like the Playhouse and the Storyhouse. Last year, our stage was 3 metres by 8 meters.

Then, format your play:

Plays should be supplied as an A4 Microsoft Word document or an Adobe PDF file only.

To format your play, please refer to the APT Formatting Guide at:

<https://apt.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/APT-Submissions-Style-Guide-08.13.21.pdf>

- It's a good idea to keep stage directions to a minimum. Directors and actors need the space to put their own interpretations on what you have written.
- Numbering in a footer begins with the first page of dialogue.
- Include a cover page as the first page and include only the name of your play. (Do not include your name and contact details - you will include these in your submission form. This allows the judges to "blind read" the submissions.)
- When naming your .docx or pdf file, please use the title of your play only.

Then, once you are happy with the final draft, please submit your play using the entry form. The link for this is at www.geelongwriters.org.au/competitions/geelong-short-play-festival-2026/.

Judging Criteria

The plays will be assessed by the judging panel, using the following criteria:

1. The Dramatic Action, Play Structure, and Conflict
2. The Dialogue
3. The Creative Process and Setting
4. The Characterisation and Empathy
5. The Mechanics and Formatting

Finally, enjoy the process of crafting and writing your play. Remember that there will be 6 finalist plays that local theatre companies will direct, cast, and perform. Further information about critical dates for submission of your play can be found on the Calendar page on Geelong Writers website.

www.geelongwriters.org.au/events/

Any further updates will be posted to www.geelongwriters.org.au/competitions/geelong-short-play-festival-2026/ and also to our social media accounts.

All writers will be notified of the judging outcome by late April by email/newsletter.