

10.7. Don Bank Writer in Residence 2024

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ATTACHMENTS	1. CONFIDENTIAL - Councillor Briefing Note 08MAY2024 [10.7.1 - 2 pages]
CSP LINK	4. Our Social Vitality 4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe 4.2 A centre for creativity and learning 4.3 North Sydney's history is preserved and recognised

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is the selection of the Don Bank Writer in Residence for 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Through the Writer in Residence program, Council offers writers exclusive use of the Don Bank Museum studio for twelve months, for the completion of a creative project. Writers also contribute to Stanton Library's schedule of public programs through the delivery of workshops and talks for the community.
- Expressions of Interest for the 2024 Writer in Residence at the Don Bank Museum Studio have been processed and reviewed by the selection panel. For the 2024 residency there were three applications received, two of which were short-listed, and both are of very high quality. The third applicant failed to respond to the criteria.
- The selection panel seeks the support of Council in offering the 2024 residency to the recommended applicant, with details provided in the attached confidential briefing note.
- Should Council wish to discuss this report it is noted that the attached confidential document includes personnel matters that relate to the employment conditions of specific individuals. It is noted that this item does not deal with personnel matters of a group but is specific to individuals and as such should be considered in closed session.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council resolves that the identified attachment to this report is to be treated as confidential in accordance with section 11(3) of the Local Government Act for the following reason under section 10A (2) of the Local Government Act:

(a) personnel matters concerning a particular individual

2. THAT Council supports the selection of Applicant 1 for the Don Bank Program commencing 1 July 2024.

Background

Council offers writers a unique opportunity through the Don Bank Writer in Residence program to pursue their creative work in the tranquil and historic Don Bank Museum, a heritage building in a garden setting located in the heart of North Sydney CBD.

The Residency seeks to serve the writer in their creative development, while enhancing the cultural enrichment and vitality of the North Sydney community. Council invites writers of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, memoir, playwrights, and songwriters to apply for the opportunity to complete a creative project in the writer's studio, whilst contributing to the library's public programs by delivering workshops and other activities to engage the community.

Successful residencies have previously been completed by playwright Justin Fleming, crime writer P.M Newton, and children's author Yvette Poshoglian. In June 2024, Margaret M. MacDonald's term will complete with the delivery of writing programs *appealing to a variety of creatives ranging from sci-fi writers, screen writers, fiction, and artists.*

Report

In February 2024 applications opened for the Don Bank Writer in Residence program. The program was promoted through the Stanton Library e-newsletter, website, and Council social media channels. Program guidelines were produced and sent to writing organisations and writers in Sydney.

Two applications were assessed by the judging committee, comprising:

- Amanda Hudson, Community Development Librarian
- Ian Hoskins, North Sydney Council Historian
- Martin Green, Director and Publisher at Pantera Press.

Despite the low number of submissions, the two candidates were very strong.

Applications were assessed on how the residency might directly benefit the author's writing, as well as enriching the cultural and literary life in North Sydney. Applicants were invited to present ideas for workshops and activities that will engage and stimulate conversation, prompt action such as joining writing or literature groups, and provide the opportunity for creatives to connect.

In June 2024, Margaret M. McDonald completed a successful residency with the delivery of two screenwriting workshops and a writers' Discussion forum at Don Bank Museum. With the support of the Constant Reader Bookshop, Margaret ended her residency with the launch of her book she had been working on during her residency, *The Phoenix Effect*.

The two applications for the 2024 program are discussed in detail in the attached confidential briefing note.

Applicant 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

- The programs proposed by the applicant fulfill the library's strategic outcome to deliver adult writing programs. This would be accomplished by offering mentoring opportunities for local writers and building interest in the upcoming adult short story writing competition to be delivered in 2025.
- By selecting applicant 1, Council will be supporting a local resident whose poems are set in North Sydney, and who has existing connections with *'The Live Poets at Don Bank'*, therefore recognising the value of Don Bank Museum as a venue for inspiring creativity and peace of mind.

Consultation requirements

Community engagement is not required.

Financial/Resource Implications

The Resident Writer pays a peppercorn rent of \$1 for 12 months. Utilities are provided under the Don Bank Museum operational budget.

A bond of \$500 is paid by the writer and refunded upon exit.

Legislation

A lease agreement between North Sydney Council and the successful applicant is signed for the duration of the residency.