Sorrento Writers Festival

April 29 - May 2, 2027

Sorrento Writers Festival: Digital Newsroom Project 2027.

A Paid Journalism Placement for Victorian Students.

The concept:

In April 2027, Sorrento Writers Festival will launch its inaugural Digital Newsroom, bringing together six Victorian university journalism and media students for an immersive, six-day professional experience. Working under the guidance of an experienced Newsroom Editor, students will report on the conversations, ideas and issues shaping contemporary Australia. Across four Festival days, students will attend live discussions, interview leading authors, journalists and public figures, identify newsworthy stories and produce original journalism for publication across the Festival's digital platforms. From politics and current affairs to literature, culture, climate and social justice, the Newsroom offers an opportunity to explore the issues that matter, develop editorial judgement and experience the pace of a working newsroom.

This is a paid and mentored journalism placement. Students will work to real deadlines, receive professional editorial feedback and leave with a portfolio of published work and a professional reference.

At a glance (successful applicants must be able to attend all dates)

- Six paid positions for Victorian university journalism/media students
- Six working days: 28 April – 2 May and 6 May 2027 (remote wrap-up)
- Travel to Sorrento and accommodation check-in: Tuesday 27 April 2027
- Payment: $250 per working day. Students will require an ABN and need to invoice the Festival to be paid.
- Accommodation (private room), meals and travel costs covered by the program
- Newsroom based at The Continental, Sorrento, on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula

About Sorrento Writers Festival

Sorrento Writers Festival is a not-for-profit cultural organisation bringing writers, journalists, thinkers and readers together for conversations about books, ideas and public life. The 2027 Festival, from 29 April to 2 May, marks its fifth year. Journalism has been central to the Festival since its inception: the Festival seeks to celebrate excellent reporting, deepen public understanding of journalism's role in democracy and nurture the next generation of journalists. Past Festival speakers have included Geraldine Brooks, Julia Gillard, Andrew Denton, Helen Garner, Stan Grant, Marcia Langton, Louise Milligan, Laura Tingle and many others. The 2027 program is still being developed; previous speakers are examples only, not confirmed 2027 guests.

The itinerary:

- Tuesday April 27: Students travel to Sorrento and check into provided accommodation
- Wednesday April 28: Newsroom training day; establish content plan, roles and responsibilities
- Thursday April 29-Sunwday May 2: Daily Newsroom operations, content creation across the Festival
- 6 May 2027: Final review and wrap-up, conducted remotely
- June 2027: Post-festival evaluation and reporting completed

What will students do?

The Digital Newsroom will operate as a functioning editorial team within the Festival. Under the direction of the Newsroom Editor, students will be assigned areas of coverage while having the opportunity to identify their own story angles and pursue newsworthy developments.

- Attend Festival sessions and identify key themes, emerging issues and potential stories
- Research topics, interview authors and speakers, and gather accurate quotes and context
- Write news reports and features; contribute to audio interviews, podcasts and short-form digital reporting
- Take part in editorial discussions about story selection, fairness, accuracy and the public interest
- File work to daily deadlines, respond to edits and help publish coverage across Festival channels
- Work collaboratively in a busy, publicly visible newsroom and participate in selected live interviews
- Work will be published under student bylines and will be owned by the Festival

Real journalism, with editorial independence

Students will be encouraged to make and explain their own editorial decisions: what the story is, who to interview, which details matter and how to frame the reporting. The Newsroom Editor will review and approve all work before publication and provide guidance. Editorial decisions sit with the Newsroom Editor, independently of the Festival's marketing and communications activities.

Where will the work appear?

Student reporting is planned for the Festival website and its new "Words Matter" blog, email newsletters, social platforms including Instagram and TikTok, and short-form audio formats. Selected work may also be shared by external media partners, subject to agreement. Published content will contribute to an accessible, lasting digital record of the Festival's ideas and conversations.

What will students gain?

- Practical experience in a live newsroom with real editorial deadlines
- Mentoring, editing and individual feedback from an experienced Newsroom Editor
- Skills in reporting, interviewing, research, audio production and editorial judgement
- A portfolio of published journalism and a professional reference
- Opportunities to meet journalists, editors, authors and other industry professionals

Who should apply?

We welcome applications from students currently enrolled in journalism, media or communications courses at Victorian universities who are keen to develop their reporting skills and work in a collaborative, fast-paced editorial environment.

Applicants will be assessed on writing ability, curiosity and their capacity to work to deadlines. We are particularly committed to improving access for students who may face barriers to industry experience. One place is reserved for a First Nations student and one for a student from rural or regional Victoria. The remaining four places are open to eligible applicants.

We encourage applications from people of all backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from rural and regional communities, people with disability and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Program dates and arrangements

- November 2026: applications open via the Sorrento Writers Festival website
- January 2027: applications close; assessment and selection
- March 2027: pre-Festival briefings with the Newsroom Editor, Festival staff and Festival Director
- Tuesday 27 April: travel to Sorrento and check in to provided accommodation
- Wednesday 28 April: on-site training, editorial planning and newsroom preparation
- Thursday 29 April – Sunday 2 May: daily reporting and newsroom operations throughout the Festival
- Thursday 6 May: remote review, feedback and wrap-up

Payment and support

Each student will be paid $250 per day for six working days, a total of $1,500. The program will also cover accommodation, meals and travel expenses for the on-site period. Further practical details will be provided to successful applicants.

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How to apply

Applications can be submitted via the below link. Students will need to upload at least one example of their work Students should be available for the on-site program from 28 April to 2 May 2027, with travel on 27 April, and the remote wrap-up on 6 May.

Application link: https://mail.sorrentowritersfestival.com.au/p/8476-3MJ/digital-newsroom-project

Applications close Friday 8 January, 2027. Successful applicants will be notified by Friday January 22, 2027.

Further enquiries:

For queries related to this project, contact the Newsroom Project Manager, Olivia Fleetwood: *olivia@sorrentowritersfestival.com.au.*

Hear from our 2026 student interns:

At the 2026 Festival, Sorrento Writers Festival piloted a paid two-student media internship. Harriet Grummet and Archie MacLachlan interviewed writers and thinkers, created digital content and experienced the Festival from behind the scenes. Here is their feedback:

"*Interning at SWF 2026 was a fabulous opportunity to interview authors and journalists alike about their creative process and latest books or ideas. I especially loved speaking with Andrew Denton about voluntary assisted dying policy, and with Geraldine Brooks about her beautiful memoir, Memorial Days. I got to test out my audiovisual skills under pressure and corral speakers through busy festival hallways for photographs. The whole experience made me all the more excited about the literary world, and being amongst some of Australia's best journos renewed my will to pursue the industry through this wobbly transformational period and out the other side! If you're a media student, I'd highly recommend getting involved.*"

— Harriet Grummet, 2026 media paid intern and current journalism student

"*The greatest thing about being able to work for the Sorrento Writers Festival in 2026 was being able to see all the conversations between amazing authors and journalists, covering real-world problems or the release of their new books. Being a part of the festival shaped my perspective on journalism and the future of the job — media is evolving and becoming primarily online and digital. The media team at the festival was extraordinary at helping a student learn their skills in the moment, getting hands-on experience in how to operate in the new landscape of digital media. I think all students interested in journalism and media should have an experience like this. The skills learnt here are groundwork for later improvements that can be made through learning at university; it is necessary that students try an experience like this to gain hands-on skills.*"

— Archie MacLachlan, 2026 media paid intern and current journalism student

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