

Media Release



NSW State Library announces \$50,000 creative writing fellowship in landmark year

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The State Library of NSW is excited to announce its newest initiatives for writers and researchers – a \$50,000 creative writing fellowship and \$10,000 Summer Scholars Program – launched today as the Library’s prestigious Fellowship Program turns 50.

According to State Librarian Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon: “For 50 years researchers, writers and historians have been sharing their knowledge, their discoveries and their stories through the support of the State Library. I am incredibly proud that we have been able to support 179 fellowships totalling \$2.6 million since 1974.”

“What better way to mark this occasion than with two new fantastic opportunities for researchers and creatives at the early stage of their careers.”

The \$50,000 Imago Creative Writing Fellowship, made possible through a generous anonymous benefactor, aims to support an emerging writer to produce a non-fiction or fiction work of any genre.

“I was eager to support a literary project judged on its creativity as well as its importance to our cultural life,” said the benefactor.

The Summer Scholars Program, supported by the Library Foundation, will provide 10 people (5 tertiary students and 5 creative practitioners) with the opportunity to learn important archival research skills that they can take with them into the next stage of their careers. Each successful candidate will receive \$1,000.

“The Library’s thriving Fellowships Program, which also includes a diverse and productive cohort of Visiting Scholars, would not be possible without the Library Foundation and the incredible generosity of private benefactors,” says Dr Butler-Bowdon.

The Library’s rich history of supporting NSW-focused research into the Library collections – aimed at telling new stories about our shared past – started in 1974 with the CH Currey Memorial Fellowship.

“The Library’s Fellowships Program has helped to launch the careers of some our best historians like Mark Dunn, Grace Karskens and Sean Scalmer to name a few, and has resulted in landmark books on Australian history and society,” says Mitchell Librarian Richard Neville.

“The work of our fellows has equally changed the way we talk and write about Australian history and culture. Fellows ask new questions of our collections, and the results of their work help us better understand the complexities and nuances of our past. Our fellows have explored

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an amazingly diverse range of topics: First Nations history, colonial experience, religious history, Vietnam war protests, the emergence of the 8-hour day, and the history of computer games.”

The Library’s 2016 CH Currey Fellow Dr Mark Dunn said his fellowship was “a game changer for my career as a historian.” His research on colonial Hunter Valley led to the writing of his first book, *The Convict Valley*, which was shortlisted for the Prime Minister’s Literary Awards in 2021.

Dr Rachel Franks has ‘looked after’ the Library Fellows for almost 10 years. She says Fellows not only enjoy exclusive use of the Library’s Donald and Myfanwy Horne Room and special access to Library expertise, but also experience “a real spirit of camaraderie and community among its members which can be career and life changing.”

Nominations are now open for the 2025 Fellowships and Scholars Program, with \$186,000 on offer.

- Imago Creative Writing Fellowship (\$50,000)
- Australian Religious History Fellowship (\$20,000)
- Dr AM Hertzberg AO Fellowship (\$25,000)
- CH Currey Fellowship (\$20,000)
- Nancy Keesing AM Fellowship (\$25,000)
- David Scott Mitchell Memorial Fellowship (\$12,000)
- Merewether Fellowship (\$12,000)
- Ross Steele Fellowship AM (\$12,000)
- Summer Scholar, 10 positions (\$1000)
- Visiting Scholar (unfunded)

Applications close 5pm, Friday 12 July. For more information and to apply, visit www.sl.nsw.gov.au/fellowships

The successful recipients will be announced as part of a special 50th anniversary event at the Library on 30 October.

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