

## NYWF – PROFESSIONAL MENTORSHIPS

September 21, 2016

[Edit](#)**Sourcing and Engaging in a *Professional Mentorship****\*Fact sheet prepared for National Young Writers Festival, Sydney, September 2016*[Downloadable PDF](#)**Why should I get a mentor?**

Mentorships aren't for everyone. Some writers may not feel the need to engage with a mentor in a formal sense—the advice, encouragement and support of trusted advisors, friends, colleagues might be enough. But in some cases, a mentorship may be a way to access specialised/in-depth/targeted advice on a specific area of interest or difficulty. In these cases, a professional mentorship might be worth considering.

**What kind of advice can I expect to gain from a writing mentor?**

There are many different kinds of mentorships available to writers, from project development mentorships to industry advice. Perhaps you are working on a science-fiction manuscript and want to improve the world-building elements, or you have a polished manuscript and want to know where to send it. Whatever the area of interest or difficulty, there are knowledgeable people out there who are willing to help.

**Where can I source a mentorship?**

Mentorships can be privately sourced (see info under 'how do I approach a mentor?'), or sourced through professional institutions and awards. See list below:

1. Australian Society of Authors Emerging Writers' and Illustrators' Mentorship Program supported by Copyright Agency Cultural Fund

<https://www.asauthors.org/asa-mentorships>

*Professional advice for emerging writers and illustrators on strengthening a manuscript to publication standard for an elected number of hours over an agreed time period.*

2. Hachette Mentoring Program

*An opportunity to work with an in-house editor at Hachette Australia on a manuscript*

South Australia: <https://sawriters.org.au/2015/05/19/south-australian-hachette-mentoring-program/>

Western Australia: <http://www.writingwa.org/programmes-services/hachette-mentoring-program-for-writers/>

Downloadable PDF – [www.lianaskrzypczak.com](http://www.lianaskrzypczak.com)

Created by Liana Skrzypczak for the National Young Writers Festival – September 2016

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## 3. Valerie Parv Award

*1-year mentorship for a romance author to work with award-winning writer, Valerie Parv*

<http://www.romanceaustralia.com/p/110/Valerie-Parv-Award>

## 4. Affirm Press Mentorship award

<http://www.varuna.com.au/varuna/index.php/programs/residential-programs/pathways-publication/item/342-the-affirm-press-mentorship-award>

## 5. Writers' Centre Programs

South Australia – <https://sawriters.org.au/mentorship-program/>

Victoria – <https://writersvictoria.org.au/support/mentorships>

New South Wales – <http://www.nswwc.org.au/support-for-writers/mentorship-program/>

### **How do I approach a mentor?**

Before applying for a mentorship or choosing a mentor, the applicant should identify what they want to gain from the process. A mentor will want to know that they are the best person for the job and that they will be able to provide the kind of advice being sought. Mentorship programs won't consider an application unless they believe a specific outcome can be successfully achieved.

For privately sourced mentorships, the success of an application can lie in the strength of the query letter. Some authors will make it very clear on their website that they are not available for mentorships. It's always good to do your research and find out if they've taken mentees before—which can be a positive indication that they would be open to doing so again.

### **What should I include in a query letter?**

1. Identifiable and *relevant* details about yourself
2. Clear explanation of why you've approached the mentor including examples that express an understanding of the mentor's strengths and expertise
3. A detailed mentorship plan including SMART goals (measurable outcomes, timelines, mode of correspondence). More on SMART goals here: <https://www.projectsart.co.uk/smart-goals.php>

4. Details on how you're going to recompense the author for their time and expertise. Rates can be found on the Australian Society of Authors (approximately 100 per hour).
5. Should you be considering applying for a grant to cover the costs of the mentorship, details of grant should be supplied so that mentor can prepare relevant support letters and references. See more information about grants and funding opportunities below.

#### **How do I fund a privately sourced mentorship?**

Sourcing the right mentor is one thing, but finding a way to recompense them for their time and expertise can be the tricky part. Below is a list of grants that are specifically designed to support authors with mentorship opportunities (Apologies in advice for the South Australian focus of this blog post. Similar funding bodies can be found in each state):

#### **Arts funding bodies in SA include:**

1. CARCLEW:

<https://carclew.com.au/Funding-Program/ProjectandDevelopmentGrants>

<https://carclew.com.au/Funding-Program/fellowships>

<https://carclew.com.au/Funding-Program/quickstart-loans>

2. ARTS SA:

<http://arts.sa.gov.au/grants/emerging-artists-mentorships-impp/>

<http://arts.sa.gov.au/grants/professional-development-imp/>

3. Copyright Agency Ignite Career Fund:

<http://copyright.com.au/culturalfund/career-fund/career-fund-guidelines/>

4. Quick Response Grants:

<http://www.adelaidecitycouncil.com/your-council/funding/community-development-funding/>

<https://www.countryartswa.asn.au/our-services/funding/quick-response-grant/>

5. Local council grants (eg: City of Salisbury):

[http://www.salisbury.sa.gov.au/Council/Grants\\_and\\_Awards/Grants](http://www.salisbury.sa.gov.au/Council/Grants_and_Awards/Grants)

6. University Alumni grants (eg: Flinders University):

<http://www.flinders.edu.au/research/researcher-support/grants-contracts/>

#### **So, you've successfully secured a mentorship, now what?**

Now it's time to move on to my blog post on [\*interpreting and implementing professional advice and feedback\*](#), which will outline what to expect when working with a mentor, editor, publisher on a manuscript or project.