

School Poet Laureates Program

Mini Resource, November 2026

schoolpoetlaureates@thepoetryco.org

Australian Association for the Teaching of English

THE POETRY CO.

SCHOOL POET LAUREATES

Looking for a way to support the young writers at your school?

Seeking a free and curriculum-aligned resource that ignites poetic learning in your English programs?

Our new School Poet Laureates Program might be for you!

New in 2027, this resource supports schools across Australia to run their own programs that engage students in poetry. Schools can elect their own School Poet Laureates, who act as poetry heroes by advocating for literacy and creativity within their communities.

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Psst. This mini resource is just an introduction. The full learning resource will arrive in early 2027.

What is a School Poet Laureate?

School Poet Laureates are students who are called upon to champion poetry. While the responsibilities of each Laureate depends on their schools and teachers, this may include being invited to compose poems for special occasions (such as assemblies or graduations) or selecting a poem for the newsletter.

Each School Poet Laureate selected by their schools will have their name published online by The Poetry Company and will receive opportunities to grow their poetic resume. In early 2027, we will be launching a free learning resource that equips schools to implement this program with their students.

School-wide Benefits of the Program

- Creates an atmosphere where poetry is celebrated.
- Encourages young writers to spend time honing their craft.
- Increases teacher confidence in teaching and appraising poetry.
- Aligns with Australia's appointment of the first National Poet Laureate.
- Sparks conversations about who speaks for a nation, and why poetry matters.
- Supports students to compose and share poems with their communities.

Did You Know?

- The term “Laureate” derives from the laurel wreath used in ancient Greece and Rome to recognise outstanding poets, scholars, athletes, and heroes.
- In 1688, England crowned the first official “Poet Laureate” John Dryden.
- Australia will soon announce their first National Poet Laureate, a spokesperson who will champion the contemporary significance and national diversity of poetry.
- Traditionally, the formal plural of Poet Laureate is Poets Laureate. However, in modern usage “Poet Laureates” is widely accepted.

Over the past decade, Poet Laureates of the **United States** have included,

- Ada Limón
- Tracy K. Smith
- Joy Harjo (pictured)
- Arthur Sze (current)



Since 1997, **New Zealand** has elected 14 Poet Laureates. Their current Laureate is Robert Sullivan, a Māori poet who has written more than 12 books.

Famous Poet Laureates of the **United Kingdom** include,

- William Wordsworth
- Alfred Tennyson
- Carol Ann Duffy
- Simon Armitage (current; pictured right)



SCHOOL POET LAUREATES



How To Adapt the Program to Suit Your School

The School Poet Laureates Program can be delivered within or beyond an English Classroom. It can be run:

- As part of the curriculum, within English or Drama classes, or during Book Week.
- In collaboration with the school library, where poems might be displayed.
- As an extra-curricular activity, such as a Writing Club, Poetry Slam or a Performance Poetry Group.
- With a small group of interested students, or as a whole-school initiative.
- By a small number of staff, or with many teachers across multiple grades.

See the next page for specific examples.

Ways to Deliver the Program Within Curriculum

Utilise an existing English program to encourage poetry writing and reading.

- Choose a time throughout the year when students are studying poetry.
- Incorporate poem composition challenges, provided in our forthcoming full resource, into classroom learning to select your School Poet Laureates.

Create a new project-based unit of work for an English course.

- Design a new unit of work incorporating resources and activities from the School Poet Laureates Program.
- Set poem composition or performance challenges as an assessment, to assist in choosing School Poet Laureates.

Ways to Deliver the Program Beyond Curriculum

Open a call for competition entries from any student, managed by a specific staff member or volunteer.

- Set aside 10 weeks during the school calendar to run the program.
- Set poetry challenges as an extra-curricular activity, then select School Poet Laureates through the strongest entries.

Use an existing writers' club as a hub for poetry writing and submissions.

- Launch the program within your writers' club and make selections from entries written (or performed) by members.
- Use the learning resource to set group activities and texts that build their engagement with contemporary poetry.

Sample Calendar for Selecting a School Poet Laureate

Whether you want to start small and choose a single School Poet Laureate or scale up to select multiple Laureates as a whole-school activity, we recommend **approximately 10 weeks**.

Timeline Example 1: School Poet Laureates within Project-based Learning

Discovery Phase: Weeks 1-3

- Discover poems by Poet Laureates from around the world.
- Research Australia's new National Poet Laureate program.
- Discover information about working as a writer in Australia.
- Host a launch event for the program.

Create Phase: Weeks 3-5

- Poetry writing and refining workshops.
- Poems due for submission to judges at the end of week 5.

Share Phase: Weeks 6-7

- Print and display poems, to encourage sharing between students.
- Assessment due: 3-4 poems with accompanying reflection.
- Discuss poetic learnings and questions.

Celebrate Phase: Weeks 8-9

- Shortlist announced (week 8).
- Competition outcome: SPLs chosen (week 9).
- Share poetry excerpts with the wider school community

After the Project

The selected School Poet Laureate/s are encouraged to share poems at significant school events (assemblies, graduations) or in newsletters. Laureates are further supported with online poetry workshops and potential publication opportunities, organised through The Poetry Company.

Sample Calendar for Selecting a School Poet Laureate

Timeline Example 2: School Poet Laureates as a Whole-school Initiative

Week 1-2	Generate interest by advertising the program to the school community.
Week 3	Host a launch event (more information forthcoming in our full resource).
Week 5	Due date for student submissions. Judging and shortlisting begins.
Week 6-7	Optional extra activities, if required for the shortlisting process.
Week 8	Shortlisted students announced.
Week 9	Competition event; School Poet Laureate/s chosen.
Post-Program	The selected School Poet Laureate/s are encouraged to share poems at significant school events (assemblies, graduations) or in newsletters. Laureates are further supported with online poetry workshops and potential publication opportunities, organised through The Poetry Company.

Further Opportunities for Selected School Poet Laureates

Celebration!

In celebration of their achievement, the names of all appointed School Poet Laureates from your school will be published on The Poetry Company's website.

Publication!

Schools will have an opportunity to submit poems from their School Poet Laureates, to be considered for publication on The Poetry Company's website. These will sit beside poems from International Poet Laureates and National Youth Poet Laureates (pictured below).

Workshops!

Selected School Poet Laureates will be invited to attend at least three online poetry workshops a year, free of charge, produced and delivered with an established guest poet.



Interested? Excited? Here Are The Next Steps...

Register Your Interest

To receive the full learning resource when it launches in early 2027, head to The Poetry Company's website.

thepoetryco.org/school-poet-laureates

Contact Us

Interested but have some questions? We would love to hear from you!

schoolpoetlaureates@thepoetryco.org

If you're ready to explore the School Poet Laureate Program in 2027, register here to receive the full (free!) resource pack, containing:

- Poetry activities and exercises, adaptable for various ages and abilities.
- Curriculum and learning alignments.
- Information and teachable texts from Poet Laureates and contemporary poets.
- Ideas for writing challenges and prompts to use for shortlisting.
- Tips for running and judging a competition event.
- Advice on running a launch event.
- Detailed project calendars.
- Staff roles.
- Suggested judging criteria.
- Glossary and further links.

thepoetryco.org/school-poet-laureates



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