

**NATIONAL
POETRY
DAY AUG 28**

**EVENT GUIDELINES
& REGISTRATION PACK**

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Overview

National Poetry Day is a countrywide celebration of poetry in New Zealand, held in 2026 on **Friday 28 August**. The day consists of a series of coordinated public events and activities which give local communities the chance to enjoy, discover, share and explore New Zealand poetry. This is the twenty-ninth year of the event, organised in association with the New Zealand Book Awards Trust Te Ohu Tiaki i Te Rau Hiringa.

This pack contains all the information and resources you will need to successfully **organise, promote** and **execute** your own National Poetry Day event or activity.

Please note the following dates and deadlines for 2026:

- Registrations due 14 July
- Event posters and calendar blurbs due 21 July
- Calendar launch 30 July
- **National Poetry Day: Friday 28 August 2026**

If you have questions unanswered by this information pack, please contact National Coordinator, Gill Hughes, at poetryday@nzbookawards.org.nz.

What is National Poetry Day?

National Poetry Day gives communities all over New Zealand an opportunity to enjoy poetry off the page: to discover local poets, share their own work and explore the poet inside themselves. It is a series of coordinated public events and activities created by independent event organisers from across the country. Each event aims to involve as many people as possible in celebrating New Zealand poetry.

The **objectives** of National Poetry Day 2026 are:

- To encourage access to poetry in a variety of communities
- To popularise poetry with new audiences
- To celebrate the unique and vibrant voices that make up New Zealand poetry
- To support new and emerging poets

To find out more about National Poetry Day, visit our [website](#).

Organising Your Event

Your National Poetry Day event or activity can be anything that promotes New Zealand poetry or poets to the public. If you register your event, it will be included in the official calendar of events and publicised on the NPD website and social media pages. The national coordinator will be with you each step of the way.

When organising your event, you will need to decide on your:

- Event activity
- Date, time and venue
- Entry cost
- Audience
- Budget
- Promotion strategy

Stuck for ideas? Examples of successful Poetry Day events and activities have included:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| * Open mic nights | * Collaborative performances |
| * Poetry readings | * Street-chalking events |
| * Poetry slams | * Music-poetry jams |
| * Visual poetry projects | * Haiku battles |
| * Improv contests | * Public workshops |
| * Creative challenges | * Online events |

Think BIG. What would attract a large audience?

Event Guidelines

To be promoted on our official calendar, your event should follow the official **core criteria** for National Poetry Day events. These are:

1. The event or activity will provide an opportunity for the New Zealand public to experience, create or share poetry, and discover New Zealand poets and poetry books.
2. The event or activity will showcase poetry in an engaging, creative or entertaining way that is likely to attract an audience.
3. The event or activity will promote poetry, New Zealand poets and National Poetry Day to new audiences and the wider community. It involves a workable plan to use local and social media to promote each activity, as well as the contributing poets and National Poetry Day itself, to a target audience and the wider community.

As an event organiser, you will be required to create a calendar blurb for the national calendar for each activity. You will also be asked to create a digital poster, for promotion on the National Poetry Day Facebook page and other social media platforms.

4. We encourage all National Poetry Day events to be as inclusive as possible, so if your budget allows, ideally entry should be free, koha or low-cost.
5. To be part of our national calendar, the event or activity takes place on National Poetry Day, **Friday 28 August 2026**.
 - i. Prelude and wrap-up events are permitted in the week prior to and the weekend following National Poetry Day, provided they will promote the wider calendar of events and be clearly described as warm-up or wind-down/wrap-up activities.
 - ii. For competitions, submission dates should not precede the finalised NPD competitions calendar and should align with the date of National Poetry Day in some way.
6. The event should not run at the same time as other events in the same area. National Poetry Day is a day of coordinated activities and in places lucky enough to have multiple events, the timetable should allow people to move from one event to another, sampling all that their local poetry scene has to offer. We recommend communicating with other event organisers in your community. You can contact the National Coordinator to query available times or find out who you need to touch base with. Be prepared to be asked to move the time of your event if there is a timetable clash.

Support for Your Event

The following support will be provided to local and regional event organisers:

- Inclusion in the online national calendar of events.
- Promotion of your digital posters on the National Poetry Day Facebook and Instagram page.
- Advice and support in developing your event, linking with the poetry community and bringing your event to successful completion – provided by the National Coordinator.

Registering Your Event

To register your event, complete the [online registration form](#) available on our website. There is a template available on **page 13** of this document if you would like to draft your registration before submitting the online form.

You can register your event up until **the 14th of July 2026**.

If you are registering multiple events, please provide full information for all activities in one registration form.

All registered events and activities will be included in the national calendar of events provided they meet the National Poetry Day event criteria.
By registering you agree to fulfil the minimum criteria for National Poetry Day activities.

Running a Competition

Writing competitions are a great way to encourage your community to get actively involved with National Poetry Day! You might wish to run a competition for your town, region or even the whole country. **If you decide to run a competition, make sure you are prepared to run and promote the competition as early as possible. You should allow at least six weeks** for entries to be prepared and give as much notice as possible to potential participants.

Competitions require careful **planning** and **organisation**. Organisers often underestimate the number of entries they will receive, so make sure you have the resources to manage and process the demands of a competition before committing to organising one.

If you are organising a National Poetry Day competition, you will need to consider:

- Who will process entries and forward them to judges?
- Who will judge the competition?
- Will they need to be paid for their time?
- Are they going to be available to deliberate and reach a decision when needed?
- What will be the timeframe for submissions and judging?
- Will there be a range of categories/age groups/themes?
- Will it be open nationwide (and promoted nationally) or will it be a regional competition?
- How will the winner(s) be announced and when? e.g. in your local newspaper and/or at a local event on National Poetry Day.
- What kind of prize will be offered?
- Will the winning poems be published somewhere?
- How will copyright issues be managed?

Your competition should:

- Promote the winners and winning poetry.
- Provide participants with a sample of published, contemporary New Zealand poetry to read for inspiration.
- Seek a high participant rate.
- Be open to email submissions.

See → Page 11 for a template of the Competition Calendar Blurb.
Final blurb copy is due no later than 21 July, or earlier if your competition is running ahead of National Poetry Day.

Promoting Your Event

Once you have planned and registered your event, it's time to publicise it! As a local or regional event organiser, **you are asked to create an entry for the national calendar of events** for each of your registered activities, so that your event/s may be:

- Included in the online calendar of events on the National Poetry Day website.
- Promoted on the National Poetry Day Facebook page and other social media platforms.

You are also asked to:

- Create a digital poster for online promotion ([see p.12](#)).
- **Posters are due Tuesday 21st July 2026.**

In addition to your calendar entry and online poster, we recommend that all event organisers:

- Create at least one online presence for your event in addition to the calendar and your usual website (e.g. Facebook event, X profile, Eventfinda, The Big Idea), and include the URL hyperlinks in your calendar blurb.
- Send a press release to local media to arrange promotional coverage of your event and the nationwide calendar. Any media releases should mention National Poetry Day in full.

It is a **requirement** to:

- Include the names of all contributing poets in all major promotional materials.
- Prominently display the National Poetry Day logo and web address in all promotions.

We encourage you to think of other creative ways to advertise, publicise and promote your event, both online and off! You might like to try community notice boards, radio interviews, or even creating your own YouTube videos, and if you have local funding, poster runs and flyer drops. The cheapest and strongest promotional tool is social media, in particular Facebook and Instagram.

**Our hashtag is [#NZPoetryDay](#)
Add this to all your social media posts and make your event easy to find!**

Executing Your Event

There's a lot involved in executing a successful National Poetry Day event, but it's also a lot of fun. Here are some tips to help you keep things organised. Leading up to National Poetry Day, you should:

- Organise a few **volunteers** to help you out with your promotions and set-up.
- Prepare a detailed **timetable** or a checklist which makes note of important times, actions, resources and people, and allows for contingency situations.
- Contact all your **participating poets** and make sure they are ready to go.
- Depending on the scale of your event, have a full **production meeting** or run through.
- Check you have the technical equipment you are going to need, and on the delivery of any **hire equipment**.

If you are planning multiple events, prepare a timetable or checklist for each one!

On National Poetry Day, you should:

- Work from your **timetable** or checklist to ensure your event runs as smoothly as possible.
- Make sure that **poetry books** are on sale (where possible).
- Remember to **document your work** and to **take photographs**, both for your own records and to assist with reporting.
- Remember to **thank** your participants and sponsors.

Calendar Blurb Template for Events and Activities

Use the headings and format outlined below to create calendar blurbs for your National Poetry Day events. Submit your final blurb(s) to poetryday@nzbookawards.org.nz by **21st July**, ready for the Event Calendar to go live **30th July 2026**.

For competitions, see the **Competitions Calendar Blurb Template**.

Calendar Blurb Template

Event Title: Title as it will appear on the calendar of events and your poster.

Description: Tell people what to expect from your event. National Poetry Day wants a short, catchy description of your event. Your blurb should sum up what your event is, who is involved and why they are worth coming to see. You'll also want to tell people who it's for and how they can participate (e.g. bring a poem to share). If you have a theme, this is the place to share it. Please write in the third person and stick to a 100-word limit. Short sentences help. They have more impact too.

Entry Details: Cost. Event open to (e.g. R18, youth or all ages?). Any RSVP requirements.

Date/Times: Day, month, start time – end time.

Location: Venue name and full street-address (including town).

Contact: Name and email (required).

Further Info: Facebook Event | Web address | Eventfinder Listing (at least one is required).

Blurb Example

The Poetry Troupe on Show

Join The Poetry Troupe at The Place on National Poetry Day this year. An all-day interactive poetry exhibit gives you the rare opportunity to see The Poetry Troupe's work on show in visual form. Wander around and be inspired. Add to a collaborative poem being created throughout the day. Watch a poetry film in the video booth to experience innovative, local performance poetry. Cast includes Poet 1, Poet 2, Poet 3, and Poet 4 from The Poetry Troupe. All ages welcome.

Entry Details: Free. Open to all ages.

Date/Times: 28 August, 10am-4pm

Location: The Place, 123 Street, Citytown

Contact: Poet 1, poet1@poetrytroupe.co.nz

Further Info: www.facebook.com/poetrytroupe/linkdetails | www.thepoetrytroupe.co.nz/npdevent

Don't forget to name your contributing poets in your blurb – we can't celebrate poetry without celebrating the poets!

Calendar Blurb Template for Writing Competitions

Use the following headings and format outlined below to create calendar blurbs for National Poetry Day writing competitions. Submit your **final blurb** to poetryday@nzbookawards.org.nz for the Competition Calendar by **21st July 2026**, or earlier if your competition is running ahead of National Poetry Day.

Competition Blurb Template

Event Title: Title as it will appear on the calendar of events and your poster - try to make it something that will stand out from other National Poetry Day competitions.

Event Description: Please **write in third person** and **stick to a 100-word limit**. Short sentences help. They have more impact too. Tell people about your competition. Your blurb should sum up **what** your competition involves, **who** it is for and who is judging, **why** it is worthwhile entering and why it is happening. You'll also want to tell people how to enter and what they will need to submit. If you have a theme, this is the place to share it.

Entry Details: Cost. Open to (e.g. age and regional restrictions). Submission details (e.g. send your poems with name and contact details by email to?; get entry forms from?).

Submission Dates: Open Date – Close Date.

Contact: Name and Email.

Further Info: Facebook Event | Web address | Event Finder Listing (**at least one is required**).

Blurb Example

National Online Poetry Competition

Mystery District Library is celebrating National Poetry Day with an Online Poetry Competition for the whole country. Have your poem published online and be in to win a prize and the glory. Competition open 20th July to 28th August 2026. Winner announced on National Poetry Day. Competition judged by James K Baxter. Send up to 4 poems on any topic. Up to 2 poems per entrant will be published on the Mystery District Library Blog at <http://mysterydistrictlibrarydoesntexist.wordpress.com/>

Entry details: Free to enter. Open to all NZ residents aged 18 and over. Submit your poems and contact details by email to library@thelibrary.com. Limit of 4 poems per entrant.

Submission Dates: 20 July – 28 August 2026

Contact: library@thelibrary.com.

Further Info: See submission guidelines online at mysterydistrictlibrarydoesntexist.wordpress.com/

Visit the 2025 [Competitions Calendar](#) to view examples from last year.

Poster Guidelines

All official National Poetry Day events should have a digital poster for online promotions. We recommend that you also print posters and place them in your community and at local events. If you have a limited budget, think about creating a colour poster for online promotion and a black-and-white version for print. **You will need to send a digital copy of your poster in .jpeg format to the National Coordinator by 21st July.** You may be asked to edit your poster before it can be approved – it is recommended you use the checklist below and consult with the National Coordinator on your draft prior to the final poster deadline.

Poster Checklist

Things to make sure you have on your poster:

- Event title (matched to calendar listing)
- Venue name
- Town
- Date and time
- Feature poet names
- Entry cost and booking info
- National Poetry Day logo (please do not alter the logo in any way)
- National Poetry Day website address – www.poetryday.co.nz

*Look at other event posters to get a feel for what works (and what doesn't).
Remember to spell check!*

Poster Design and Templates

There are no required poster templates provided this year, so organisers may design their own, provided the Poster Guidelines and Checklist above are followed.

As a guide, most organisers use A4 or A3 portrait posters at print resolution (300 dpi), with a smaller .jpeg version created for online use.

Email your poster in .jpeg format to the National Coordinator before the **final deadline for posters, Wednesday 21st July.**

Poetry Day Registration Form Template

Use the headings below to prepare your registration in a text document you can save, and then enter your information into the [Event Registration Form](#).

1. Region

2. Organisation name

3. Contact details

- Contact person name.....
- Phone.....
- Email.....
- Address.....

4. Title of each event/activity

5. Brief description of each event/activity. (What do you want to do?)

6. Each event date/start time/end time. (Events should be scheduled for National Poetry Day, Friday 28 August 2026 or align with the calendar launch dates. Events not scheduled for the actual day must still have some connection to it.)

7. Event address

8. Entry cost

- Free
- Koha/Donation
- Other (eg low cost). Details

9. Target audience:

10. Anticipated attendance

11. Promotions plan (e.g. social media, YouTube, flyers, local media, radio etc)

DECLARATION: I / We agree to adhere to the guidelines and reporting requirements. Tick to indicate you agree to each of the following points before signing.

- Act as the official contact person for all events I have registered above.
- Communicate the relevant National Poetry Day guidelines to my team.
- Create at least one additional online source of further information about my registered activities.
- Submit a calendar blurb for each event, using the appropriate calendar blurb template.
- Submit a digital poster for each registered event, using the poster guidelines.
- Ensure the National Poetry Day logo and web address are included in all promotional materials.
- Engage local media coverage of all activities registered above and National Poetry Day itself.
- Provide materials before the required deadline: 21 July (Event Posters and Calendar Blurbs),

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Scroll down for our Tricks and Tips on Event Planning

Planning Your Event – Step-by-Step

Vision and Ideas

It's important to develop a clear vision for your event, and to ensure that it reflects the primary objective of National Poetry Day 2026: **to put poetry into places and formats where it can be enjoyed by New Zealand communities**. When brainstorming your event:

- Consider what your organisation or business wants to **achieve** by being associated with National Poetry Day 2026. How are you going to make this happen?
- Try to devise a '**point of difference**'. What will make your event different or stand out? This will assist you in getting media coverage and in generating an audience.
- Consider whether you want to have a **theme** for/around your event. Is there anything distinctive about your area or group that you want to celebrate through poetry?
- Investigate whether you have any **high-profile poets** in your area. Do you want to involve them? How will they work with your theme, or should you fit your theme around the poet(s)? There may be opportunities for one of the four finalist poets in the 2026 Mary and Peter Biggs Award for Poetry at the Ockham NZ Book Awards to participate in regional events. Get in touch with the National Coordinator if you are keen to explore this possibility.
- Consider creating a balance with young emerging poets and more established poets to generate an **exciting mix** and encourage all age groups to attend your event.
- Investigate **potential local funding, grants or sponsorship** early in the planning process, as National Poetry Day seed funding is not available in 2026. Identify likely supporters and consider how your event outcomes will align with their objectives.
- Ensure that your ideas are **practical**. Can you deliver on them in view of the time, resources and budget available?
- Devise a **target audience** profile and ensure that the event matches that profile in terms of content, time, venue and price.
- Think of a **catchy name** for your event, one that reflects your organisation or event activity. Ideally, the name should be a single word or brief phrase.

Planning

Thorough planning is the key to a successful event!

- Involve others and remember the importance of communication.
- Schedule regular planning meetings with your team of volunteers.
- Create a list of requirements and resources and have a contingency plan.
- Consult with those involved and create a timeline/checklist for actions and deadlines. This will ensure your plan is practical and deliverable.
- Prepare a list of contacts for everyone involved and distribute.
- Allocate and clearly communicate responsibilities.
- Contact your local bookshop.
- Pay attention to details. Continually check that deadlines are being met!

Budgeting

- Prepare a realistic budget based on available funds.
- Consider approaching local businesses for sponsorship to cover costs. Negotiate in-kind sponsorship for things like venue hire, printing, gear hire, prizes and refreshments in exchange for logo presence on your promotional materials.
- Obtain quotes for goods and services to help you establish a realistic working budget.
- Continue to monitor and take responsibility for expenditure.
- Allocate a contingency of at least 10% for unforeseen circumstances.

Organising Your Venue

Book your venue early and make sure your participating poets know what they will be working with on the night.

- Ensure that the venue is suitable for your event and have a wet weather contingency plan if planning an outdoor event.
- If your event involves a reading, consider whether you require a sound system.
- Consider room layout – your audience will want to be able to see the performers.
- Keep venue staff informed of your plans and requirements: Make sure they have copies of your promotional materials and place these in the venue in the lead up to your event.
- Check access to power and the lighting of the venue.
- Check and confirm all details and remember to re-check details just prior to the event.
- Ensure your venue has health, safety and emergency procedures in place and that insurance responsibilities are clarified.

**Register now! Become part of the 2026 National Poetry Day
nationwide promotion of New Zealand poetry and poets.
Go on – just do it!**

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