Risk Assessment

SWF recognises its responsibility to ensure the safety of all who could be affected by this activity and accordingly a need for safety planning and risk management has been identified. This document provides analysis related to the event detailed activities for each risk and details risk reduction strategies to ensure a safe event.

This risk assessment applies to Sydney Writers' Festival events conducted at external venues including theatres, performance spaces and partner venues.

This document concentrates upon areas of the event under the management or control of SWF that might adversely affect others. Matters considered focus upon the safety of the audience, performers and crews in the Venue.

This risk assessment has been prepared with reference to the **Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)** and the **Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 (NSW)**.

PRODUCTION AND ASSESSMENT DETAILS					
Date of Events	Monday 17 May – Tuesday 25 May 2027	**Date of Risk Assessment**	**28/10/2026**	**Version number:**	**V1.1**
Event	Primary & Secondary Schools Days Program, Student Sessions				
Event Description	Author talks, AV presentation and Q&A	**Risk Assessment prepared by:**	Tristan Taylor – SWF Director of Production & Operations		
Location / Venue	Sydney Town Hall, The Chatswood Concourse, Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Carriageworks				
Additional production information and **related Risk Assessments**	- Venue Risk Assessments - Venue Safety Plans - Production Event Overview - Event Run Sheet	**Persons consulted during preparation / review of this Risk Assessment**	Hall Murray – Head of Production & Operations Nicola Sinclair – Events Manager Wayne Middleton – Reliance Risk, Principal Consultant		

IDENTIFY HAZARDS		ASSESS RISK			RISK CONTROL		RE-ASSESS RISK		
Break the activity or event down (e.g. Bump in, set up, event, bump out.)	*How would a person be harmed? (e.g. Fall from unfenced platform – fracture, contusions, internal injuries)*	***Likelihood***	***Consequence***	***Initial Risk Rating***	HOW RISK WILL BE ELIMINATED OR CONTROLLED? *Refer to the **Hierarchy of Controls** at the end of this form.* *The first priority to control an assessed risk is to eliminate it so far as is reasonably practicable (Level 1). When the risk cannot be eliminated, then the hierarchy of controls must be followed to minimise risk to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable (Level 2 through to Level 3)*	*Who is responsible for implementing and monitoring?*	***Likelihood***	***Consequence***	***Residual Risk Rating***
General WHS & Planning									
Insufficient Staffing Levels	- Delays to the event - Failure to complete on time. - Fatigue of other workers due to additional work required to make up time.	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	- SWF to indicate required levels of staffing to ensure successful completion of the project - Staffing contractors to ensure that adequate levels of Competent staff are maintained throughout project - Monitor progress of bump in to ensure production schedule time frames are achieved - Communicate to Event Participants/talent of the expected time frames in the production schedule - Monitor workers shifts - Ensure workers can communicate fatigue to their manager	- Head of Production - Head of Program - Production Manager - Project Manager - Venue - Contracted Service Providers	Unlikely	Minor	Low
Unsafe Working Conditions	- Injury to workers or visitors in the workplace. - Workers and visitors unfamiliar with the workspace	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	- All workers and contractors to be either inducted face to face on site by venue staff/site safety Officer before commencing work at the relevant staff room, entrance, site office or complete an online venue induction as required by the venue - All visitors to backstage areas to be inducted or escorted by an inducted worker at all times - Promotion of a safe working environment to be encouraged - Supervisors to ensure safe work practices are adhered to - Daily toolbox talk the be completed prior to work commencing, between supervisors, staff and contractors - Staff and Contractors to sign daily toolbox talks where WHS issues are identified, discussed and added to the Risk Assessment - Dangerous work practices and/or unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated and may lead to removal from site - Obtain venue risk assessments and provide to contractors, SWF staff and Presenters	- Head of Production - Head of Program - Production Manager - Project Manager - Stage Managers - Venue - Staff & Contracted Staff	Unlikely	Minor	Low

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Failure of Due Diligence towards WH&S Administration	- Unqualified and/or poorly trained staff and contractors. - Inadequately Insured Contracted Service Providers.	Unlikely	Major	High	- Contractors and other providers to ensure that all staff are appropriately trained (licensed if required) and competent to carry out their assigned tasks - All contractor and other service providers to provide SWF with Current Public Liability and Workers Compensation Certificates - All contractors to provide copies of any relevant Safe Work Method Statements & Safe Work Procedures. *(SWMS & SWP) and these must be reviewed prior to any new work activity. *(SWP) - Targeted Risk Assessments to be conducted on any new work activities - All contracts with suppliers and hirers should include mandatory risk and safety compliance clauses	- Head of Production - Head of Program - Production Manager - Project Manager - Contracted Service Providers - SWF Contracted Staff	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium
Workforce Fatigue	- Diversion from safe work practices. - Poor decision making. - Delays in production schedule. - Injury / Death to Staff and Contractors	Possible	Moderate	High	- Ensure appropriate breaks are provided no more than 5 hours apart - Managers and Supervisors to monitor staff and contractors for signs of fatigue - Additional staff / contractors engaged to assist with production schedule - Appropriate down time between roster shifts - Monitor workers shifts - Ensure workers can communicate fatigue to their manager	- Head of Production - Head of Program - Production Manager - Project Manager - Stage Managers - Venue - Site Management & Supervisors - Staff & Contracted Staff	Unlikely	Minor	Low
Failure of Emergency Management Plan Failure to Implement Emergency Management Plan	- Crowd Panic. - Loss of Crowd Control. - Inadequate Response to Emergency Situation.	Possible	Extreme	Very High	- Obtain venue emergency management plan or response procedures - Conduct a briefing pre-event to inform staff on the venue's emergency response procedures and their roles	- Head of Production - Project Manager - Venue Managers - Management/ Supervisors - Staff & Contracted Staff - Security - Venue Staff - Emergency Services	Not expected	Major	Medium

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Operations									
Manual Handling	- Injury to staff or contractors	Possible	Moderate	High	- Contractors to implement SWMS for manual handling in line with code of practice (NSW Hazardous Manual Tasks 2019) and industry standards - Ensure staff are trained and competent in proper manual handling guidelines and techniques - Ensure that manual handling aids such as trolleys, pallet jacks and lifting straps are provided - Where possible minimize the distance between storage and placement of items that require manual handling - Ensure workplace is designed to minimize manual handling wherever possible - Personal Protective Equipment to be worn at all times	- Head of Production - Project Manager - Stage Managers - Venue Management & Supervisors - Staff & Contracted Staff	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium
Stages and Platforms	- Guests/Performers falling off Stage or platform	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	- Ensure edges of the stage or platform and steps are clearly marked with white tape or otherwise identified - Install handrails on stairs and steps where possible - Guests must be escorted on and off stages and platforms at all times	- Project Manager - Stage Managers - Venue Management & Supervisors - Staff & Contracted Staff	Unlikely	Minor	Low
Electrical Power Usage and Safety	- Electrocution - Overloading System - Electrical Fire - Damage to infrastructure and / or equipment. - Injury / Death to Staff and Contractors.	Unlikely	Major	High	- All electrical equipment installed in accordance with regulations and the standard AS/NZS 3000, 300:20002, 3760:2001, 4249:1994 - All electrical cabling to be tested and tagged - All electrical leads are run in a safe and efficient manner - Cable trays to be used to eliminate potential trip hazard and avoid damaging cables from forklifts, moving plant, trucks and pedestrian traffic - Earth leakage protection (RCD) to be fitted and tested - Ensure all power sources and distributions boards are away from public access - All electrical appliances, leads and cables checked regularly for damage and protected from exposure to water	- Project Manager - Stage Managers - Venue Management & Supervisors - Staff & Contracted Staff	Unlikely	Minor	Low

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Free standing banners	- Banners blowing away or falling over and injuring passers by	Possible	Minor	Medium	- Ensure banners are secure, tied down and or weighted appropriately to the expected weather conditions - In extremely windy conditions banners may need to be removed	- Project Manager - Venue Managers - Staff & Contracted Staff	Not expected	Minor	Low
Screens	- Screen falling over - Persons tripping over screen leads	Possible	Minor	Medium	- Ensure screen is secured into place and has a sufficiently wide base to support the screen - Ensure screen is located away from passing traffic - Ensure all leads for the screen are secured away and are not trip hazards - Hanging screens must have a secure structure to hang from and be installed by competent persons	- Project Manager - Venue Managers - Staff & Contracted Staff	Not expected	Minor	Low
Public Access									
Disabled or Mobility Impaired Access	- Delays in accessing venue/s for disabled or mobility impaired persons. - Duress and Embarrassment for patron. - Delays in Event Schedule. - Possible Hindrance of Emergency Services. - Reputational Damage.	Possible	Moderate	High	- Identify effected patrons and aid person including access to venues and seating allocation - Ensure travel ways are clearly defined with event staff on hand to assist if required - Supply accessible travel information in printed and electronic documents relevant to the event - Ensure Disabled and Mobility Impaired Access Points and Aids are identified and fully operational - Consult with venue to determine access-impaired facilities including parking, ramps, doors and lifts and communicate this to access-impaired Guests pre-event	- Project Manager - Venue Managers - FOH Manager - FOH Staff	Unlikely	Insignificant	Low

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Slips, Trips and Falls	- Injury to person. - Lacerations. - Sprains/Strains.	Likely	Moderate	High	- Site inspection to identify hazards & remove/treat same. Good housekeeping - Cleaners to monitor/patrol & clean up where necessary - Site crew to alert Production to any spills/potential slip hazards that may exist. Remove / Barricade / Segregate hazard until rendered safe - All changes in height of flooring to be marked and highlighted - Flooring laid evenly and to be securely fixed - Holes or gaps to be covered or barricaded - Ensure all electrical cables are out of main pedestrian routes and covered using approved cable trays - Ensure pathways are lit sufficiently on the major pedestrian routes. Install light towers in poorly lit areas - Lighting check should be performed evening before event - Establish Communication protocols for calling house lights on or off	- Project Manager - Venue Managers - Staff & Contracted Staff	Possible	Minor	Medium
Welfare provisions	- Poor or no welfare facilities	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	- Check with the availability and location of amenities including accessible amenities - Ensure that there are suitable and sufficient numbers of toilets and hand washing facilities available at all periods of the event.	- Project Manager - Venue Managers	Not expected	Minor	Low
School aged Children attending	- SWF staff and presenters have contact with minors	Possible	Moderate	High	- All staff and presenters who will have direct contact with children to have proof of current WWCC - All contact with children by SWF staff/presenters must be supervised and in the open	- Head of Children's and YA - Project Manager - Venue Managers	Not expected	Minor	Low

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School aged Children attending	- Reading material available - Discussion's storytelling and talks	Possible	Moderate	High	- All reading materials available to children must be age appropriate - Presentation topics and storytelling content and talks must be age appropriate - Website information regarding age groups	- Head of Children's and YA	Not expected	Minor	Low
Traffic/Site Management									
Traffic accident or incident	- Delays in production schedule. - Injury / Death to Staff and Contractors	Possible	Moderate	High	- Staff and presenters travelling between locations. Schedule considers driving distances between events and provides adequate time to reach each destination within safe driving limits - Drivers to stop and rest for at least 10mins every 2hrs - Check road traffic conditions prior to leaving venue to identify potential traffic congestion and delays and determine alternate routes if necessary - All drivers to have valid Full Driver Licenses for the vehicles that they are driving - All staff to adhere to all Road Rules - Establish contact lists for drivers to notify production staff or venues of delays	- Head of Production - Head of Children's and YA - Project Manager - All Drivers of SWF vehicles	Unlikely	Minor	Low
Food Hygiene & Waste Management									
Drinking and eating in venue	- Food and Beverage Spills - Slips and falls from spills	Likely	Minor	Medium	- Ensure venue has sufficient cleaning staff and that they are easily contacted to clean up any spills - Ensure venue has signs available to be placed over or around spills while cleaners are mobilising	- Project Manager - Venue Management - Venue FOH Staff	Possible	Minor	Medium

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Food Safety or Allergy	- Illness - Injury to person - Hospitalisation	Possible	Moderate	High	- Ensure venue has an experienced and certified food supplier and ensure their food is fresh - Ensure all venue food handling staff are fully briefed regarding food operational processes including (but not limited to transport, packing, storage and food handling) relating to the safety and quality of food - Caterers/vendors should have detailed ingredient information available to provide accurate information for all customer enquiries in particular allergen ingredients. This includes standard recipe information and / or manufacturers product and ingredient labelling in line with the new Food Standards allergen labelling requirements - Ensure adequate staffing levels with appropriate food handling / food hygiene qualifications available to complete distribution and preparation operations during activation - Ensure medical staff at venue to be fully conversant with any specific contingencies, treatments or medication required should a patron suffer any reaction or illness as a result of consuming or coming into contact with food - First aid personnel trained to respond to anaphylaxis Ensure compliance with Food Safety Standards set by NSW Food Authority	- Project Manager - Catering Contractors - Medical/First Aid - Venue Management - Venue FOH Staff - Emergency Services	Possible	Insignificant	Low
Ineffective Waste Management	- Poor Housekeeping in and around public areas. - Garbage & Litter Build Up - Slip Hazards.	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	- Ensure venues have the correct ratio of bins per people - Ensure venues have back up waste facilities in place - Ensure venues have routine patrols for garbage and garbage bins are emptied on a regular basis - Ensure venues have sufficient waste recycling facilities available and that they are clearly identified -	- Head of Production - Project Manager - Venue Management	Unlikely	Minor	Low

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Safety & Security									
Medical Emergency / First Aid Incident – **External Venue**	- Delayed Response. - Inadequate Response	Likely	Moderate	High	- Confirm with Venue of adequate First Aid Station/resources in venue/site during program - Current First aid trained staff in venue/site during program - Staff briefed on Venue Emergency Management Plan and on Emergency procedures - Any incident during the event is to be reported to the Production Manager - If the injury or near miss is notifiable, this must be reported to the state or territory regulatory Authority, Head of Production will manage the reporting	- Project Manager - Stage Managers - Venue Manager - FOH Staff	Possible	Minor	Medium
Unauthorised Access to area	- Financial loss - Damage to reputation - Injury to person	Possible	Minor	Medium	- Back of House access to be restricted to approved personnel - Venue Security to monitor for any persons without identification/accreditation - If you open a secure access door, close it behind you - All staff to wear venue identification while on site	- Project Manager - Venue Management - Staff & Contracted Staff - Contractors - Security -	Possible	Insignificant	Low
Missing Persons / Lost Child	- Duress / Panicked Patrons	Possible	Minor	Low	- Implement Venue Lost Persons Procedure - Identify an area where lost persons can be located - Encourage teachers and carers to supervise children - All staff have WWCC in NSW - Venue, Security and Police involvement if person not located	- Front of House Staff - Venue Staff - Event Security - SWF event staff	Unlikely	Insignificant	Low

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Psychosocial Hazards	- Public nuisance/inappropriate behaviour - Verbal aggression - Distressed child - Harassment including sexual harassment. - Bullying - Discrimination	Likely	Moderate	High	- Staff and presenters to be made aware of the potential psychosocial hazards and risks and action they should take if they involved in, observe, or become aware of any occurrences - Ensure school staff are aware and present to assist is comforting a distressed child - Venue FOH and or Security to actively patrol event precinct - Senior staff take active measures to prevent incidents and act immediately they become aware on incidents - Implement formal reporting and escalation process consistent with the SWF psychosocial policy.	- Project Manager - Events Venue Senior Technicians - Staff & Contracted Staff - Contractors - Security -	Possible	Insignificant	Low
Bomb Threat (via Phone or In Person) – **External Venue**	- Panic - Loss of Crowd Control. - Injury / Death to Staff & Patrons. - Reputational Damage.	Possible	Extreme	Very High	- Ensure all staff and Security have a copy of a Bomb - Threat Checklist - Refer to – Australian Federal Police / Australian Bomb Data Centre / Phone Bomb -Threat Checklist - Contact NSW Police immediately upon receiving Bomb Threat. - Project Managers to conduct White Level Inspections with Venue staff, within their areas of responsibility - Apply HOT principle to any unclaimed items or suspicious items. o **H – Is the article hidden?** YES / NO o **O – Is the article obviously suspicious?** YES / NO o **T – Is the article typical of the items in your area?** YES / NO - Evacuate, Cordon and Contain immediate area around suspicious item - Establish a Safe Zone (No Go) extending out from Containment Area - Deny Access into Safe Zone other than Emergency Responders - Do Not Re-Enter the Area until given the "all Clear" by authorities	- Project Manager - SWF contracted staff - Venue Staff - NSW Fire & Rescue - NSW Ambulance Service	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium

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Emergency Situation (Fire, Medical, Bomb, Personal, Evacuation, Failure of essential services) – **External Venue**	- Delay and / or Cancellation of Event Schedule due to 'Act of God'/natural disaster, pandemic response or loss of venue. - Loss of Crowd Control. - Injury / Death to Staff & Patrons. - Reputational Damage.	Possible	Extreme	Very High	- Ensure all Event and Presenters are briefed on the Venue Emergency Management plans and any responsibilities required - Notify the Venues of the details of mobility impaired patrons if known - Ensure the Venues have plans and the capability for the evacuation of mobility impaired patrons - Liaise with Venue, Police LAC and other Emergency Agencies as required - Initiate crisis management plan - Procure cancellation and abandonment insurance - Review with Venue their cancellation Policy	- Project Manager - Venue Management - SWF Contracted Staff - Venue Staff - - NSW Fire & Rescue - NSW Ambulance Service -	Not expected	Moderate	Medium
Fire	- Damage to structure/asset Long term injury to person Damage to reputation - Injury to person Death Site evacuation Cancellation of event	Unlikely	Extreme	High	- Venue and SWF Emergency Management Plan issued and staff briefed on Emergency procedures. Existing Venue fire equipment should hold current test & tag - All electrical items to have valid Test & Tag attached - Fire retardant materials to be used where possible - Fire extinguishers to be onsite (suitable for purpose at hand) - Fire Blanket to be onsite - In the case of a fire call Fire Brigade on 000 immediately & vacate the area - Venue Emergency Evacuation plans to be implemented when required	- Head of Production - Production Manager - Venue Staff - NSW Fire & Rescue - NSW Ambulance Service	Not expected	Moderate	Medium

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Act of Terrorism	- Explosive Device. - Active Shooter. - Loss of Crowd Control. - Injury / Death to Staff & Patrons.	Possible	Extreme	Very High	- Ensure venue and SWF Emergency Management Plan issued and staff briefed on Emergency procedures - Venue Managers Event Supervisors and Event Security to conduct White Level Inspections at the commencement of the working day - Controlled access within back of house areas of venue - Venue Security to be advised of any suspicious packages / items. (Do not use 2 way or mobile phones near these items) - All staff to monitor crowds for suspicious persons and behaviour. Immediately contact NSW Police - Implement Emergency Management Plan. - Active Shooter Actions On: o ESCAPE – Where Safe To Do So. Evacuees should leave behind their personal belongings, visualize their entire escape route before beginning to move and avoid using elevators. Maintaining concealment or cover while moving is also important. o HIDE – If Safe Evacuation Can Not Be Achieved. Seek to hide in secure areas where you can lock the door, blockade the door with heavy items. Cover all windows, turn off lights and remain silent. Mobile phones should be turned to silence. o TELL – The more information you can pass on to police the better, but NEVER risk your own safety or that of others to gain it. - Follow venue specific evacuation maps for meeting locations if an evac is required	- Head of Production - Production Manager - Venue Staff - NSW Ambulance Service	Not expected	Major	Medium

RISK MATRIX		CONSEQUENCE					
		WHS	INSIGNIFICANT Injury/Illness not requiring medical assistance	MINOR Minor injury, first-aid treatment, no time off work	MODERATE Injury requiring one or more days off work. Potential claim from a patron	MAJOR Injury requiring hospitalisation or 5+ days off work	EXTREME Fatality or serious injury likely to cause permanent disablement
LIKELIHOOD	ALMOST CERTAIN	Is expected to occur many times each year, could occur within days to weeks.	Medium	High	High	Very High	Very High
	LIKELY	Cold occur in most circumstances. Could occur within weeks to months.	Medium	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
	POSSIBLE	Has occurred before. Could occur within months to years.	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
	UNLIKELY	Has occurred before in a similar organisation. Could occur within the next few years.	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	NOT EXPECTED	Has occurred elsewhere. Could occur within decades	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High

Note: The Matrix is to be read in conjunction with the Risk Treatment table overleaf.

RISK CONSULTATION

The Sydney Writers Festival is committed to WHS consultation, so far as is reasonably practicable, with staff carrying out work for the Sydney Writers Festival. Workers consultation will include:

- Sharing of Information
- Opportunity to contribute to the process
- Views are taken into account
- Outcomes of consultation are communicated



WHS RISK TREATMENT

RISK SCORE	TREATMENT
Very High	**UNACCEPTABLE: Do not start activity** *Risk level is unacceptable.* • Inform Manager / Supervisor immediately
High	**UNDESIRABLE: Management consent required** *Requires attention of CEO, HOD* • Activity must be carried out under the **supervision** (watching over) **of a supervisor / manager**, *and* • Activity must be covered by a **current SWP** or an approved **SWMS**, *and* • Worker undertaking activity must be deemed adequately **trained/instructed** and deemed competent by the manager, *and* • Controls and procedures should **regularly be reviewed** to determine if risk control improvements are feasible (IE risk can be eliminated or isolated).
Medium	**TOLERABLE: Proceed with supervisor consent** *Requires attention of your manager* • Activity is managed using approved documented procedures and controls. • Controls and procedures should regularly be reviewed to determine if risk control improvements are feasible (IE risk can be eliminated or isolated).
Low	**BROADLY ACCEPTABLE: Proceed with activity** *Monitor and manage as usual* • Risks have been controlled to such a degree that a low residual risk remains

