



Play It Strange

2026 Songwriting Competitions

Terms and Conditions

Closing Date

1. All entries must be submitted online no later than midnight on the advertised closing date for each competition. The Play it Strange Trust ("Play it Strange") reserves the right to extend this date under reasonable circumstances at its discretion.
2. Any entry submitted after midnight on Sunday 3rd May 2026 will only be considered for judging in extenuating circumstances, at the discretion of Play It Strange.

Entrants & Eligibility

3. **All entrants must be enrolled in an NZ secondary school** (Years 9-13) or be of secondary school age (17 years old or younger as of January 2026) if not enrolled in an NZ secondary school.
4. Each entry may have multiple songwriters. All songwriters must be detailed on the entry form.
5. All songwriters, cowriters and contributors to the song must be secondary school aged. Entrants must not have received assistance from any person older than secondary school aged.
6. An act is not eligible to enter if they have signed a recording or management contract and cannot continue in the competition and/or redeem the prize/s if any members sign a recording or management contract, without the prior written approval of Play It Strange Trust.
7. Entrants must reside in New Zealand.
8. Songs that have been professionally recorded, commercially released, and/or are available for sale or monetisation via streaming platforms are not eligible. Any songs professionally recorded or already available on streaming platforms will not be eligible for a studio day or any other competition prizes.
9. Failure to properly and honestly complete all required sections of the entry form will make the entry ineligible.
10. Each entrant must confirm during the entry process that a parent, guardian or teacher has consented to the use of the song and recording as set out in these Terms & Conditions.
11. An automatic confirmation of entry will be sent to the email address provided on the entry form. If you do not receive email confirmation of your entry within 24 hours of submission, please email info@playitstrange.org.nz.

Song Entered

12. Each act may enter **one song per Play It Strange competition**. If more than one song is entered, only the first submission will be eligible for judging; all subsequent submissions will be disqualified.
13. The song must be submitted with an MP3 or M4A audio file.
14. The song entered must have both lyrics and music.
15. Typed lyrics must be copied and pasted into the appropriate section of the entry form. Please do not include chords, tablature, or notation.
16. Songs may contain swear words.
17. Play It Strange urges entrants to consider the impact of the material they write. While there are no constraints on the creative process of songwriters, lyrics that may cause harm might not suit these competitions.
18. Songs entered may be in any genre.

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19. The recording may be performed by anyone who is secondary school aged, provided the performer is not a professional artist. It is not necessary for the songwriter(s) to perform on the recording.

Languages

20. Song titles and lyrics may be in any language, or a combination of languages.
21. If lyrics are in a language other than English, please state the language in the lyric section of the entry form.
22. If your lyrics are in a language other than English, please provide an English translation in the lyric section of the entry form.

Copyright

23. Entries must be the exclusive original work of the entrant(s) and must not infringe the copyright or other rights of any third parties. Entries must not be arrangements or adaptations of traditional, non-copyright work or another third-party original work.
24. Any sampling of another work must be fully cleared and approved for use prior to submission.
25. Play It Strange exists to encourage creativity through songwriting. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in the creation in the song and/or recording, in any capacity, is strictly prohibited. This includes but is not limited to:
 - AI generated lyrics, melodies, chord progressions or song structures
 - AI generated instrumental and/or vocal parts
 - AI generated backing tracks
 - The use of AI tools to substantially generate, alter or complete a song or any part of a song

Entries identified as containing AI generated or AI assisted content will be disqualified. Play It Strange reserve the right to request proof if AI use is suspected. Entrants failing to provide proof may be disqualified at Play It Strange's discretion.

Entry Data

26. Copies of the entry recordings and lyrics will be retained by Play It Strange, unless specifically requested otherwise.
27. Information provided in the entry form will be used (copy / metadata) for the announcement, promotion and content of a winning song. Entrants are responsible for ensuring all spelling and details are correct. Incorrect information may result in errors on streaming platforms, which will be the responsibility of the entrant to resolve.
28. Please indicate in the entry form if you wish your song to be published under an artist name. Entrants are advised to check streaming platforms first for existing artists with the same name.
29. A physical postal address (not a school address) must be provided in case the entrant is selected as a winner.
30. Play It Strange will not use or distribute personal information for marketing or other purposes.
31. Finalists agree that their contact details will be shared with their chosen recording studio.

Judging

32. The judges' decisions are final.
33. Entrants may opt in to receive written feedback from Play It Strange for a fee of \$10. Feedback is final, no further feedback will be provided, and the commentator will remain anonymous.
34. The recording quality of the entry will not be taken into account when judging.
35. Judges will assess entries based on songwriting quality and, where applicable, the competition brief and/or theme.

Notification of Results

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36. Competition results will be posted on the Play It Strange website and social media following the completion of judging, approximately three weeks after the closing date.
37. All entrants will be contacted with the results via the primary email provided in the entry form.

Prizes

38. All finalists receive an 8-hour day in professional recording studio in New Zealand, to the value of \$850+GST, which includes time for mixing *and* mix feedback.
39. Once a recording is sent for mastering, no further mix changes can be made. All finalists will receive a mastered version of their recording prior to album release and will be given at least 48 hours' notice to check mastering quality and notify Play It Strange of any errors. After this notice period, no further changes will be able to be made.
40. Finalists will be provided with a list of approved studios, engineers, and producers across Aotearoa. Any alternative choices must be approved by Play It Strange **prior** to booking.
41. All recordings must be completed in a professional recording studio in New Zealand.
42. Entrants will not be paid for recording time.
43. Play It Strange will pay the recording studio/engineer/producer directly upon receipt of the mixed song and will not fund entrant equipment for home recordings or other recording personnel such as session musicians. If the finalist wishes to include session musicians, this will be at their own cost.
44. Play It Strange will assist with organising studio sessions by introducing finalists to their chosen studio and sharing information with studios from the Studio Booking Form. Finalists are responsible for confirming session dates unless otherwise stated.
45. If an entrant fails to attend a confirmed studio session, the entrant will be responsible for covering the full studio day cost of \$850 + GST. Play It Strange will not be liable for no-show fees.
46. Studio sessions must be used to record the awarded song only.
47. Each competition has a three-month recording window from the date of the announcement of finalists. Failure to complete the recording within this window may result in forfeiture of the prize at Play It Strange's discretion.
48. Play It Strange will not pay travel to and from studio recordings. However, should costs be a barrier to partake in the prize, email info@playitstrange.org.nz to discuss options.

Promotional Use

49. By entering the competition, the entrant agrees that entry materials or photographs may be used by Play It Strange for non-sale promotional purposes. This may include photographs of recording sessions, audio of winning entries, and/or reproduction of lyrics on the Play It Strange website, social media and any other channels.
50. Any recording included on a Play It Strange compilation album and uploaded to digital service providers will remain there indefinitely.
51. The rights and ownership of the songs will remain 100% with the composers. The songwriter/s grant Play It Strange a non-exclusive, royalty free licence to use the song and the recording for the purposes of Play It Strange activities, including incorporating the song and recording on any Play It Strange compilation album and publishing the lyrics of the song in marketing channels..
52. The songwriter(s) grant permission for reproduction, broadcast, streaming, downloading, and communication of the recording to the public without payment by Play It Strange.
53. Any income derived by Play It Strange from the streaming, downloading or other exploitation of the recording as part of any Play It Strange compilation album or in connection with Play It Strange activities will be collected by Play It Strange and used to fund the activities of Play It Strange.

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Strange. Please note, this licence does not affect the songwriters' entitlement to receive performance or mechanical royalties payable to them as composers through collecting societies such as APRA AMCOS.

54. Any recordings confirmed for inclusion in the Play It Strange compilation album must NOT be independently uploaded to digital platforms by the songwriter/s (Spotify, Apple Music, Tidal, YouTube etc) prior to Play it Strange's album release. Linking to artists profiles after Play It Strange releases the song remains the responsibility of the songwriter(s).

Performance and Media Opportunities

55. By entering the competition, winners of the Play it Strange competitions agree, where reasonably possible, to publicly perform their winning song and participate in media opportunities at the request of Play it Strange for a 12-month period following the competition closing date without payment. Play It Strange will cover transport costs.

Other

56. Any grant funding received by Play It Strange in connection with the competition will be used by Play It Strange solely for the purposes of administration and delivery of the competition. Songwriter/s are not entitled to receive any grant funds.

By submitting an entry to Play it Strange, the entrant agrees to be bound by the Play it Strange Trust competition entry Terms and Conditions.

Play It Strange reserves the right to interpret these Terms and Conditions and make all determinations arising from the competition.

Terms and Conditions are subject to change without notice.