

# A New Photography Residency Asks NSW Photographers to Do Something They've Never Done Before

**Long Exposure pairs one photographer with a week inside one of NSW's most celebrated regional sculpture festivals — not to document it, but to be challenged by it.**

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**WOLLOMBI VALLEY, NSW** — Visit Wollombi, the tourism organisation for the Wollombi Valley, has launched Long Exposure — a Photographer in Residence program set inside the Wollombi Valley Sculpture Festival, running 12–27 September 2026.

The program offers one NSW photographer up to a week's stay at Little Valley Summerhouse, an architecturally designed off-grid retreat in the Wollombi Valley, during the quiet midweek days of the festival. Applications are open now, with submissions closing Friday 7 August 2026.

But the invitation comes with an unusual brief: don't just photograph what's in front of you. Use the week to push your practice somewhere it hasn't been.

## **A residency built around intent, not output**

Most photographer residencies ask for a body of work. Long Exposure asks for something harder to define and more interesting to read: a clear idea of what you want to explore, and why this particular place and week are useful to that exploration.

"We're not looking for a record of the festival," says Euan Wilcox, Long Exposure program lead and owner of Little Valley Summerhouse. "We're looking for photographers who want to use this week as a genuine catalyst — to try a direction they've been putting off, to work in a style they've never had the right environment to explore, or to challenge themselves in ways their regular practice doesn't allow. Any camera. Any style. The four subjects are given. What you do with them is entirely yours."

*"We're not selecting for genre or technique. We're selecting for intent."*

— Euan Wilcox, Long Exposure / Visit Wollombi

The program accepts applications across any photographic style — street, photojournalistic, documentary, abstract, and others. What matters is not what a photographer has done before, but what they want to do next.

## **The festival as catalyst, the midweek as advantage**

The Wollombi Valley Sculpture Festival — themed 'Contemporary Sculpture in an Historic Setting' — is one of regional NSW's most celebrated cultural events, established in 2002 and now entering its 25th year. Under the patronage of Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, the 2026

festival presents over 180 works by leading Australian and international sculptors across a sculpture trail weaving through the historic villages of Wollombi and Laguna, with six indoor galleries housed in historic buildings. A prize pool of over \$80,000 — the most substantial of any regional NSW sculpture festival — signals the calibre of artists the event attracts.

“The Wollombi Valley Sculpture Festival celebrates the connection between creativity, landscape and community,” says Festival Executive Director Sheena Duncan. “We are proud to provide a platform for artists while welcoming visitors to discover the unique beauty and character of the Wollombi Valley.”

The Long Exposure residency deliberately runs across the festival’s midweek days, not the weekends. “The midweek is the creative advantage,” the program notes explain. “The sculptures are still in place, but the crowds are gone. Many of the artists who made the work are still on site — installing, adjusting, talking. That’s a completely different kind of access.”

This aligns with the festival’s own strategy. The 2026 program includes an expanded schedule of midweek events designed to encourage visitors to ‘linger longer’ — meet-the-artist talks, guided tours, workshops, live music and community activities. Long Exposure is built for exactly that extended engagement.

Participating photographers will have direct introductions to the sculptors and behind-the-scenes access arranged by Visit Wollombi, alongside the freedom to work at their own pace through the festival, the historic villages of Wollombi and Laguna, and the wider valley.

### **A valley most of NSW has never heard of**

Wollombi Valley is a hidden anomaly: the area contains around a thousand people, ringed by state forest and national park, with an extraordinary concentration of working artists, galleries and creative businesses — and a biennial sculpture festival that draws thousands of arts-focused visitors from across NSW and beyond. Its name comes from the Awabakal language, meaning ‘Meeting Place of the Waters.’

It sits less than two hours from Sydney and 90 minutes from Newcastle, largely unknown to the millions of people within easy reach. Long Exposure is, in part, a program designed to change that — by finding photographers who use it as inspiration, the same way the artists who live here do.

### **The residency and visiting photographer program**

The Long Exposure residency offers one photographer accommodation at Little Valley Summerhouse for up to four nights across either the first week (Monday 15 – Thursday 18 September) or the second week (Monday 22 – Thursday 25 September) of the festival. The house is off-grid, architecturally designed, and decorated only by the work of artists who live in the valley.

A small cohort of visiting photographers also joins the program across the three festival weekends — self-arranged accommodation, the same brief, introductions to the artists and behind-the-scenes access provided by Visit Wollombi.

In return, the program asks for a body of work: a considered selection of images that represents the exploration described in the original application. The work remains the photographer’s own, shared with full credit.

### **How to apply**

Applications are open now at <https://longexposure.netlify.app>. Applicants are asked to describe what they want to explore during the week, and to provide examples of their current work — via a link to a website, Instagram, or portfolio.

Applications are reviewed as they arrive. The selected photographer will be announced Monday 10 August 2026.

The full information pack, including terms and conditions, is available via the website.

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## **ABOUT LONG EXPOSURE**

Long Exposure is a Photographer in Residence program run by Visit Wollombi in partnership with the Wollombi Valley Sculpture Festival. It offers NSW photographers a week of focused immersion in the Wollombi Valley during the festival's midweek days, hosted at Little Valley Summerhouse. The program is open to all photographic styles and approaches, with selection based on the clarity and intent of each applicant's proposed exploration. Applications close Friday 7 August 2026. <https://longexposure.netlify.app>

## **ABOUT VISIT WOLLOMBI**

Visit Wollombi is the tourism organisation for the Wollombi Valley in the Hunter Region of NSW. It promotes the valley as a destination for arts, nature, and culture, representing a community of around a thousand residents with an extraordinary concentration of working artists, galleries, creative businesses and accommodation. The valley is located less than two hours from Sydney and 90 minutes from Newcastle. <https://www.visitwollombi.com.au> · @visitwollombi

## **ABOUT LITTLE VALLEY SUMMERHOUSE**

Little Valley Summerhouse is an architect-designed, off-grid two-bedroom retreat set on a small working alpaca farm in the Wollombi Valley, Hunter Valley NSW. Designed by architect Matt Elkan and crafted over two years by owner-builder Euan Wilcox, the house is built around an open breezeway that draws light and air through to a sparkling pond. The farm runs entirely on solar. Its only decoration is the work of artists who live in the valley. Adults only. [www.littlevalleyfarm.com.au](http://www.littlevalleyfarm.com.au) · @littlevalleyfarm

## **ABOUT THE WOLLOMBI VALLEY SCULPTURE FESTIVAL**

The Wollombi Valley Sculpture Festival — Contemporary Sculpture in an Historic Setting — is one of regional NSW's most celebrated cultural events, established in 2002 and held biennially each September in the Wollombi Valley. Under the patronage of Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, the festival presents over 180 works by leading Australian and international sculptors across a curated sculpture trail weaving through the historic villages of Wollombi and Laguna, with six indoor galleries housed in heritage buildings. The 2026 prize pool of over \$80,000 is the most substantial of any regional NSW sculpture festival. The festival is entirely volunteer-run with a team of 100+ volunteers. Media contact: Sheena Duncan, Festival Executive Director — [director@sculptureinthevineyards.com.au](mailto:director@sculptureinthevineyards.com.au) · 0434 132 688 · [www.sculptureinthevineyards.com.au](http://www.sculptureinthevineyards.com.au) · @sculptureinthevineyards

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## **Media Contact — Long Exposure / Visit Wollombi**

**Name:** Euan Wilcox — Visit Wollombi

**Email:** [euanwilcox@gmail.com](mailto:euanwilcox@gmail.com)

**Instagram:** @visitwollombi · @littlevalleyfarm

**Program website:** <https://longexposure.netlify.app>

**High resolution images:** Available on request

**Media Contact — Wollombi Valley Sculpture Festival**

**Name:** Sheena Duncan, Festival Executive Director

**Email:** [director@sculptureinthevineyards.com.au](mailto:director@sculptureinthevineyards.com.au)

**Phone:** 0434 132 688

**Website:** [www.sculptureinthevineyards.com.au](http://www.sculptureinthevineyards.com.au)

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