

Office for the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 594 | CANBERRA ACT 2601

[REDACTED]

18 May 2026

I am an emerging Australian author, journalist, and community storyteller based in regional New South Wales, and like many writers, I balance multiple jobs in order to sustain my creative practice. While I welcomed the initiatives introduced through *Revive*, including the establishment of Writing Australia and digital lending rights reforms, Australian authors and illustrators continue to face increasingly precarious conditions, including declining incomes, reduced publishing opportunities, regional isolation, and the growing threat posed by generative AI systems trained on creators' work without transparency, consent, or compensation. As a regional writer, I experience first-hand the financial and geographic barriers to participating fully in Australia's literary sector, despite the important role regional voices play in our national culture. I strongly support increased direct investment in authors and illustrators through fellowships, lending rights funding, fair pay protections, educational initiatives, and stronger regulation of generative AI. Literature is essential to Australia's cultural identity, and without meaningful long-term support, many writers will simply be unable to continue creating the stories that help Australians understand themselves and each other.

I am grateful for the initiatives introduced in *Revive* to assist with the sustainability of author and illustrator careers. However, since the introduction of *Revive*, authors have been facing increasingly precarious conditions. Without immediate support, we risk the viability of the book industry in Australia.

I am calling for increased direct investment in Australian authors and illustrators through multi-year fellowships, seed funding for emerging writers, increased Lending Rights funding, and stronger support for regional and First Nations-led writing and publishing. I also support greater protections against the unauthorised use of creators' work by generative AI companies, including transparency around copyright inputs and outputs, fair licensing arrangements, and research into the long-term impacts of AI on Australian creative careers and cultural output. In addition, I support better resourcing for Writing Australia, fair pay guarantees for creators engaged in publicly funded projects, nationwide authors-in-schools programs, and tax reform measures that recognise the precarious nature of literary careers.

I am a member of the Australian Society of Authors and support its submission to the National Cultural Policy consultation. I also support broader calls from the Australian literary sector for sustained investment in books, reading, writing, publishing, and Australian storytelling.

Yours sincerely,

Shannon Benton.