

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

19/5/2026

Office for the Arts

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,

Regional Development, Communications and the Arts



In August 2022, I submitted to the National Cultural Policy. Only one of my suggestions has been adopted. I'm 61, have published nine books, am considered one of Australia's most successful senior writers, having had one bestseller, and won or been shortlisted for all the major prizes. Yet I still earn on average \$22,000 pa. I'm a decades' long member of the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and support their submission.

I'm grateful for the adoption of e-book remuneration recommended by Revive, nevertheless authors face increasing precarity. Without immediate support, we risk the viability of the book industry in Australia.

I am calling for 1:

- Immediate tax reform. Stop taxing grants and prizes. Implement a tax-free threshold for writers and illustrators.
- More multi-year fellowships for mid-career and senior writers. NOT TAXED.
- A top-up of the Lending Rights budget.
- Basic income pilot, involving 400 authors. Peer reviewed.
- Mentoring by experienced First Nations writers for emerging First Nations writers, editors and publishers.

2:

Creative Australia should not be using AI to summarise our submissions. It is antithetical to the fundamental need to protect us from AI and heed our individual stories. I'm one of thousands of authors whose work was stolen by Meta company Llama. Our government has not protected us, nor supported us in overturning this crime. You must do so immediately.

- Mandated transparency on training data and AI generated content.
- Legislation that forces big tech to license copyright content as a condition of deploying their models in Australia and ensures compliance with ICIP protocols.
- Express guarantee that generative AI won't be used to replace or diminish the labour of human creators in government funded projects.

3:

Educational interventions that support Australian authors and writing.

- Nationwide authors-in-schools program funded from education budgets, co-ordinated with State governments.

4:

Apart from novels, I write art criticism and cultural critique, but receive no discounted access to art galleries and museums. I cannot afford tickets to the theatre. Recently, in Italy on a tourist visa, I was given free access to museums due to being an art writer with 30+ years' experience. Italy is a much poorer country than Australia, currently under fascist rule. Here, artists and writers pay membership at the same rates as lawyers and doctors who earn twenty times more than us.

- Discounted art passes for professional artists to galleries, museums and theatres nationwide, co-ordinated with state governments.

5:

When I write for media owned by billionaires – Murdoch publications, Schwartz media, The Sydney Morning Herald/The Age, etc, I receive the same payment or less than I did twenty years ago. [REDACTED] We demand:

- Immediate enforcement of award rates to writers from mastheads.

6:

- No government interference in peer-reviewed decisions. The Sabsabi/Dagostino rescindment was a despicable example of institutionalised racism.
- To Creative Australia: less inquiries and restructures. Action now.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Fiona Kelly McGregor