

Office for the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
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I am an author, based in ████████. debut novel was published by ████████████████████ in ██████████ and I have spent the last year in the promotion of this novel as well as writing my second novel, which is not yet contracted. I also make a podcast where I interview mothers who are also published authors about their experiences of how to continue to write creatively in the midst of work and family life, an increasingly difficult proposition given diminishing incomes and the increasing cost of living. As one of my guests said, in relation to publishing a book – everyone else in the process is getting paid for their work – the editor, the copy editor, the cover designer, the printer, the person that drives the truck that takes books from the warehouse to the bookshop, the bookseller – everyone is getting paid except the person that wrote the book. But all their jobs hinge on the creatives, who actually write the book.

For me, in the year after my debut novel was published (despite receiving an above average advance for my debut novel of \$25k, which was as always paid in instalments and diminished by 15% for my agents fees) my income from writing was officially a loss as any income was outweighed by the expenses incurred as a result of promoting my book – largely as whilst I received invitations to speak at writers festivals and events, most of these festivals were not able to support my travel from Tasmania or my accommodation so I was forced to spend the small ASA mandated payment as a contribution to these costs. Even when I was awarded grants, such as the Ian Potter Cultural Trust Fellowship or when I won an award – the Woolhara Digital Literary Award, these all formed part of my taxable income, and were taxed at the same rate as other income, all contributing to a net loss income from writing in the year of my debut novels release.

As such, I take on many other roles – I work in government, as a counsellor and as a Non executive director for an aged care company, all of which have significantly slowed my ability to finish my second novel – especially given that I have five children, two of school age, to support. Without my husband who has a very high income, - for example, were I to get divorced or were he to get ill - I would not be able to continue to write novels or to build a career as an author at all.

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:

- **Direct investment in authors and illustrators** via:

- Multi-year fellowships supporting mid-career authors by providing them with time to write.
- Seed money for emerging writers.
- A top up to the Lending Rights budget.
- A basic income pilot, involving 300 authors.
- **Investment in First Nations-led writing and publishing.**
- **Solutions to the unprecedented theft of Australian authors' work by multinational tech companies** operating within Australia. For instance:
 - Transparency on copyright inputs for, and outputs from, generative AI models.
 - Research into the impact of generative AI on creative careers and Australian cultural output.
 - Structural solutions to bring multinational AI companies to the licensing table with Australian rightsholders.
- **Tax reform to support author careers** including tax-free literary prizes and grants, and a tax-free threshold for writers and illustrators.
- **Adequate resourcing for Writing Australia** to deliver:
 - Increased coordination between federal and state funding.
 - Commissioning of critically-needed research to provide baseline data from which to measure impact for the book industry.
 - Express guarantees included in every funding grant, ensuring that:
 - Authors and illustrators engaged in funded projects will be paid at, or above, ASA recommended rates
 - Generative AI will not be used to replace or diminish the role of human creators in government-funded projects.
 - Coordination of a book-to-screen pipeline.
- **Commitment to educational interventions that support Australian authors and writing careers:**
 - Nationwide authors-in-schools program funded out of education budgets.
 - Reversal of the failed Job-Ready Graduates program.

I am a member of the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and support its submission.

Yours sincerely,

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