

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

[REDACTED]

19 May 2026

I am the author of [The Animals in That Country](#) - winner of the prestigious Arthur C Clarke Award, The Victorian Prize for Literature, the ABIA Small Publishers Adult Book of the Year and co-winner of the Aurealis Award for Best Science Fiction Novel 2021. The French translation, *Les animaux de ce pays*, won the 2025 Prix Gargantua. I am also the author of *Holiday in Cambodia*, and my latest collection is [Gunflower](#). I was the 2025 Frank O'Connor International Short Story Fellow to Cork, Ireland, and I teach Creative Writing at Massey University. I'm based in Brisbane, Australia. Despite my fortunate position as an author who publishes books to accolades, I struggle to maintain a basic income, with my work stolen to train large language models for AI and the threat to any future work, and to find paid writing work.

As I write this letter, my inbox is filled with requests (from humans) to work for free, as well as AI generated scam letters targeted particularly at desperate authors, and emails from my accountant about my looming tax return, which will include paying money out of grants.

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,

Laura Jean McKay