

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

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19<sup>th</sup> May 2026

I am an author, predominately a writer of poetry and verse novels. I have two traditionally published verse novels; *Walking with camels* (UWAP 2018) and *Malcolm* (UWAP 2019), and many hundreds of individually published poems in Australian and international journals, anthologies and collections. As a writer based in regional Australia it is an ongoing challenge getting my work in front of publishers, and even though I have two books published, getting a new book published is like starting again. I have a limited income from writing in the form of royalties, a judge of literary awards, and mentoring. I have experience in publishing as a founding member Running Waters Community Press (previously Ptilotus Press), an Indigenous author-led publishing initiative. This press provides a vital role as the publisher of First Nations stories.

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'd like to see a commitment to support Australian publishing – especially the support of small publishing houses publishing First Nations writers.

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

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Leni Shilton

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