

Office for the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
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I am an author. My first book was published in 2019 and since then I have published several others but have had to have a second job to support my writing. I have never been successful for a grant and have had to work full time non-writing work to support myself and my household. It is exhausting. The best thing has been ELR and PLR. An extension of grants that go to the same small number of people is not a solution, Ireland's Basic Income for the Arts is. My works, along with every other Australian author I know were ripped off by AI via Libby yet while our US counterparts are getting compensation, we have to date had nothing for having our copyright infringed in the biggest copyright theft in history.

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 – blind screened so as not to go to the same authors who have traditionally received grant money but rather open to all authors providing a more open and more equitable cross-section.
- **Support of authors and illustrators through additional funds for libraries (public and school) to buy copies of Australian published books.**
- **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.
 - Time burden and unnecessary detail for Grant applications is reduced to make it more accessible and equitable.

- **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,

R.W.R. McDonald