

Submission by writer, Susan Hawthorne to the National Cultural Policy

Biography

Susan Hawthorne is a writer who works across a number of forms including fiction, poetry, trade non-fiction, academic non-fiction and performance. She is the author and (co-)editor of thirty books. She has mentored writers through her work as a teacher of creative writing, including as the supervisor of MAs and PhDs, and through formal mentoring programmes.

Susan is a member of the ASA and has been a speaker at an ASA conference. She has been an invited guest at writers' festivals in Melbourne, Bendigo, Brisbane, Cairns, Margaret River and Alice Springs. Internationally, she has spoken at festivals, book fairs and conferences in India, The Netherlands, Germany, USA, Canada, and Aotearoa New Zealand. She has organised writers' festivals including Women 150 Community Writers Week, hosting Doris Lessing at the National Gallery of Victoria (March 1985); New Moods Women Writers Festival (August 1985); Feminist Book Fortnight (September 1989 and 1991); 6th International Feminist Book Fair (July 1994). She was also on the Melbourne (Spoleto) Writers Festival Management and Programming Committees 1986–1988). She has received funding for overseas travel as a writer including from DFAT (1987 to Israel), Copyright Agency (2016 to the Philippines), the Australia Council (2018 to Chennai).

Her books have been translated into Tamil, Hungarian, Arabic, French, German, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Czech. In addition, individual poems have been translated into Chinese, Indonesian, Swedish, Spanish and German.

Susan's writing spans publications from 1972 to the present. She is the author of three books of fiction, nine of poetry, six non-fiction and the editor of twelve anthologies. She was shortlisted for both the Kenneth Slessor Poetry Prize and the Judith Wright Poetry Prize, among others. She has received grants from Arts Victoria, the Australia Council, Arts Queensland and had three international residencies in Chennai, Rome, and Bursa which have resulted in four books. She is currently working on a new hybrid fiction/poetry title and preparing a book on AI.

The following are important issues for me as a writer:

1. Financial support for writers that enables them to take time out to write.
2. Protection from copyright theft, especially from AI companies.
3. Support for author organisations such as the ASA and state-based writers centres.
4. Acknowledgement of Copyright Agency as an important source of income for writers.
5. Implementation of digital rights for PLR and ELR.
6. Contribution of writers over 70 years of age.

1. Financial support for writers that enables them to take time out to write.

I know from my own experience that funding has contributed to writing and completing a number of books. I received support for the following books:

The Falling Woman, Arts Victoria (1990). Published 1992.

'Unstopped Mouths' a section in *The Butterfly Effect*, Arts Victoria (1998). Published, 2005.

Cow, Asialink Literature Resident, Arts Queensland and Australia Council (2009). Published 2011.

Lupa and Lamb, BR Whiting Residency, Rome, 2013-14. Published 2014.

Biodiversity, (also written during the Rome Residency. Published 2014.

Dark Matters, Australia Council, 2015. Published 2017.

Vortex: The Crisis of Patriarchy, Göll Writers House, Bursa, Turkey, 2018. Published 2020.

Without the above support these books would have taken longer or might not have eventuated at all. Such funding offers recognition and time to write. It is a major prompt to completion. There is always a gap between the time of funding receipt and completion because books take time.

2. Protection from AI theft

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3. Support for author organisations such as the ASA and state-based writers centres

These are crucial to finding success in the literary community, especially for young writers. They can find mentors, and experienced writers who can guide them through contracts and the writing industry norms. Moving state can be a challenge and writers centres contribute by providing a 'home' to writers.

4. Acknowledgement of Copyright Agency as an important source of income for writers

Copyright Agency provides a hugely important role for writers in payments for copies made by schools and universities. In some years this has provided the bulk of my writing income. It should be made more visible so that writers understand its importance.

5. Implementation of digital rights for PLR and ELR

PLR and ELR need more resources. Libraries and educational lending are important income streams for writers, but with so much happening in the digital space, more progress needs to be made on digital rights for writers.

6. Contribution of writers over 70 years of age.

In an age when there are special grants for particular groups of writers, some consideration should be given to writers who have contributed to the literary culture for many years. My observation of grant rounds is that such writers are often missing out. There is no guarantee that writers over 70 have a solid income, indeed they might be struggling.

Conclusion

Without our storytelling, literature and non-fiction writing, the world would be a much poorer place. With the inroads being made by AI, there is a threat of homogenisation of

culture (especially the imposition of US cultural values). Australia has a rich diversity of voices that includes writers like me, a lesbian with a lifelong disability. I have contributed across these areas, as well to mainstream areas dealing with politics, ecology, globalisation, war, artificial intelligence.

Susan Hawthorne