



To whom it may concern,

I write on behalf of Hardie Grant Publishing in support of a National Plan for Books and Reading as part of the next National Cultural Policy.

As one of Australia's leading independent publishers, we invest in the creation, production, marketing and export of Australian stories and ideas. Across our broad portfolio of adult and children's publishing, our imprints publish books that shape cultural conversation, foster literacy and curiosity, support great storytelling, and help readers engage more deeply with the world around them. Our publishing contributes to Australian cultural life by supporting local authors and illustrators, championing First Nations voices and perspectives, and creating books that reflect Australian experiences, values and identities.

We are proud that we support the livelihoods of hundreds of Australian creatives, namely authors and illustrators, but also photographers, designers, editors and many more beyond our immediate staff. A thriving publishing industry means driving income well beyond our business and includes bookshops and printers too – an entire ecosystem exists to support this industry.

However, publishing Australian books is becoming increasingly challenging. Rising print, freight and staffing costs, combined with increasing pressure on discoverability and market visibility, are making it more difficult to invest in new Australian intellectual property and culturally significant publishing. At the same time, publishers are navigating rapid technological change, including copyright and AI concerns, evolving accessibility expectations, and the need for stronger metadata and rights infrastructure.

Independent publishers play a vital role in discovering and nurturing new and emerging literary talent, supporting diverse Australian voices, and investing in books that have significant cultural value. It is crucial that independent publishing in Australia is able to survive if we are to restore culture to the centre of Australian life, as originally set out by Revive.

We support the APA's call for targeted measures within a National Plan for Books and Reading, including the establishment of an Australian Book Fund, investment in national book data and discoverability infrastructure, stronger export and rights

support, funding for accessible publishing, and importantly, copyright and AI settings that prioritise consent, licensing and fair payment.

Hardie Grant is unusual amongst Australian publishers in that almost 40% of our income comes from export sales and we enjoy direct distribution in both the UK and USA. Beyond broadening our market, we take pride in the fact that we bring Australia voices to the world through our publishing, and have many established bestsellers across genres. Publishing for global audiences and navigating foreign markets requires substantial investment and carries greater commercial uncertainty, particularly for independent Australian publishers competing in highly saturated international territories. The costs associated with market entry, discoverability, sales representation and audience development can be considerable, with a heightened risk attached to international publishing programs.

We would strongly support the establishment of expanded export-focused initiatives, including greater opportunities for international market exploration beyond existing book fair funding programs, and targeted support to increase the discoverability and visibility of Australian-authored and Australian-published books in overseas markets.

Improved discoverability of Australian published books by Australian authors is another crucial measure which requires support. The Australian book market is saturated with international authors and publishers, often at the cost of promotion and sales of Australian books. Ensuring that these books are supported through digital discovery, marketing and publicity funds and visibility is an important measure to cement the ongoing publishing of Australian and debut authors in particular.

These measures would strengthen the sustainability of Australian publishing and support the continued creation and commercial success of Australian books at home and across the globe. They would ensure publishers continue investing in Australian authors, illustrators and designers, while ensuring Australian stories remain visible, accessible and competitive in a rapidly changing global market.

Books are essential cultural infrastructure. They support literacy, education, imagination, public debate and national identity. A strong publishing sector is critical to ensuring Australian stories, knowledge and ideas continue to reach readers, schools, libraries and international audiences.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Brown, Roxy Ryan and Julia Kumschick
Hardie Grant Publishing