

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Office for the Arts

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,

Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

GPO Box 594 | CANBERRA ACT 2601



21/5/26

To whom it may concern

I am an author of two traditionally published novels, have twice been shortlisted for major literary awards/fellowships and contributed chapters to two published nonfiction works.

My third novel on which I have worked 18 months marks a leap in ambition and vision. I believe it could fill a gap in my state's literature and contribute to national self-awareness and social cohesion in this fragmented time.

I recently cut better-paid work hours because combining responsibilities for a young child and ageing parents, writing, and a demanding, stressful day job, was unsustainable. I now work fewer hours for a much lower wage.

But my task remains daunting. I have 80,000 words but daily ask myself how this will become a work of literature. My attempts to secure a grant/fellowship are so far unsuccessful. My caring responsibilities preclude residencies.

I've investigated a Master's, converting to PhD, but recent changes took away scholarships for Master's. This might mean I cannot justify it, despite the supervisor's enthusiasm about my research topics and telling me I am an ideal candidate.

I last year learnt my published works, which took years to write, were used to train Meta's AI LLMs without consent or compensation, while I scratched for every cent I could with event and library appearances, which took time and focus away from creative work. Imagine my feelings when I see in the submission process that a human being may not even bother to read this submission that it took me a precious hour to write, but may use a robot to \summarise\, it.

Even as a middle-class educated white woman (a head start in life at getting even this far towards a creative career) the odds feel stacked against this book. It is no wonder most of my writing peers have no children/teenaged or adult children/are retired/come from wealthy families. I feel constant doubt – am I crazy to keep trying? – but I continue because I believe societies need writers to understand, improve, and celebrate itself. Not to mention that parents of young children should not be locked out of career growth.

I am grateful for Revive's initiatives to make author and illustrator careers more sustainable and for the Public Lending Rights scheme, my primary author income source.

But since Revive was introduced things have not got less precarious. The industry seems ever-shrinking, though I try not to dwell on the sense that when I finish this book it will have no market and no prospect of publication.

Have you heard Ireland, a country with a heavy history but famous literary heritage, is trialling a basic income for its creators?

Imagine if Australian creators were so held and valued. Imagine the potentially transformative effect to the quality and quantity of their output, which would reach far beyond our national borders.

I am a member of the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and support its submission and its calls for multi-year fellowships supporting mid-career authors, seed money for emerging writers, a Lending Rights top-up, a basic income pilot, investment in First Nations-led writing, solutions to tech companies' theft, tax reform, resourcing for Writing Australia initiatives and commitment to educational interventions.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Young