

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

Anna Fienberg



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Having enjoyed a long, satisfying career in writing fiction for children and young adults, (over 40 books published), I was so happy to see the new governmental interest expressed in REVIVE, building support our country's authors and illustrators.

I am one of the multitude of writers who would not have been able to live 'a writing life' without the early assistance of government. Writers write around the edges of life - at night, early morning, lunch breaks, bringing a notebook to the bathroom! But to birth a novel all the way to the end, well, it takes time and you have to eat.

After winning an award, I was lucky enough to receive a grant from the Australia Council back in the early nineties - a multi-year book fellowship you would call it now. And that was the start of my lifelong career. I was able to take a whole 2 years away from work to write (while looking after my baby).

I am so filled with gratitude to the government and Arts Council each time I think about it, and was similarly delighted when wonderful Gough Whitlam and his government introduced PLR. Together with the later establishment of ELR, this injection of cash helped me to become a full time writer and visitor to schools, where I still hope to inspire and pass on my love for stories.

A progressive Labour government is the only kind of government in Australia that might bring us back up to the standard of excellence we need to support our country's writers and illustrators. I feel so strongly that this, now, is our chance!

I am a career-long member of the ASA and I support ALL their initiatives for Revive - and especially for increased investment in First Nations' creators. Having been a judge for this year's and last year's State Library NSW Literary Awards (and short-listed for a novel in 2024), I have seen a marvellous breadth of current writing for young people.

In my opinion, literature's finest feature is that it examines life from the inside. No other art (or form of AI!) can show us so so profoundly the silent, intricate workings of the secret self. I want all children to have the opportunity to learn that books are where they can go to both understand and escape their lives, returning bigger than they were before.

Children who read become adults who read - adults in our society with increased imagination and empathy for the geography of the human heart.