

Office for the Arts
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22/05/26

I am the author of two novels. My first came out in █████ and my second in █████ I am currently working on my third. My books have been published internationally and in translation and yet I have to work a second full time job to be able to support my family and eat.

Currently I write in the short times I can find between work and family. I have been working on my third novel since late 2024. I'm desperate to finish it. I'm struggling. It's breaking my heart that the ONLY obstacle in my way is economic, I cannot afford the time to write *and* support my family. ELR and PLR are the most reliable source of writing income I have, yet these don't pay enough to fund time to write.

I have applied, unsuccessfully, for numerous grants. These take weeks of my scant writing time to prepare for, the hours I can snatch to write taken away from my writing to throw my hat into a ring where the same names usually win.

My books, and the books of most authors I know, have been stolen in the name of AI 'training' to make the companies that 'train' and monetise them billions. Which we get told is 'fair'.

The Australian book publishing industry generates roughly \$2 billion annually – and yet it is run of the backs of authors who must work second and third jobs to write. Despite the importance of this industry, successive governments seem to prefer appeasing and wooing big tech over valuing and supporting those who create the cultural, moral and imaginative work that underpins our shared humanity and culture.

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 for authors.

- **Tax reform to support author careers** – including tax-free literary prizes and grants, and a tax-free threshold for writers and illustrators.

- **Solutions to the unprecedented theft of Australian authors' work** by multinational tech companies operating within Australia:
 - 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 the ASA recommended rate, and that generative AI will not be used to replace or diminish the role of human creators in government-funded projects.

- **Investment in First Nations-led writing** and publishing.

- **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,

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