

Submission to the

## 2026 National Cultural Policy Consultation

---

**Dear Minister,**

I write on behalf of FolioFox, a locally owned and operated short-run book printing company and a member of both the Australian Publishers Association (APA) and the Australian Society of Authors (ASA). We support Books Create Australia's call for a National Plan for Books and Reading, and endorse the submissions of the APA and the ASA to this consultation.

Our business exists because Australian authors write and publish books. Every day we work with self-publishing authors, independent publishers, literary organisations, and book event producers to bring Australian stories into print. The challenges they face are challenges we feel directly.

A book industry with fewer independent businesses means fewer books for printers to produce. The number of businesses in Australian book publishing has declined at a CAGR of 2.4% since 2020 with just 884 publishers left (IBISWorld), as many of Australia's once-independent publishers have been acquired by major international houses, reducing the diversity and volume of work available to local printers.

Self-publishing authors have to make a significant investment for a chance to share their stories without the backing of a publisher, from the costs of professional editing, design, book production and more. This is increasingly difficult when the average annual income for an author is below the poverty line and exacerbated by the rising costs of living. Almost every author we have worked with has to supplement their income through another job because of financial necessity, which makes the economics of publishing even more difficult as production costs increase every year but book prices have been relatively stagnant.

Printing is not only a leading contributor to the Cultural and Creative sector, which added **\$67.4 billion** to the economy in 2024 (IBISWorld, 2025), but one of Australia's largest manufacturing employers. The printing industry is made up of 4,562 businesses that employ nearly 26,000 workers across the country (IBISWorld, 2025), and yet industry revenue continues to shrink at a CAGR of 2.1% over the past five years. When authors cannot afford to print locally, the losses extend well beyond our business to local designers, editors, and publishing suppliers who lose work too.

30% of Australians didn't read a book last year and one in three students can't read proficiently (Australia Reads). For short-run book printers like us, cultural policy is manufacturing policy. When reading rates fall and authors cannot afford to publish locally, we lose work that instead goes to internationally owned platforms like Amazon KDP and IngramSpark. Many of the self-publishing

authors we work with cannot get their books into Australian bookstores without routing through these overseas corporations because there is no nationally supported distribution infrastructure to help them.

In the next National Cultural Policy, we ask the government to:

- Introduce tax reform for authors and publishers, including tax-free literary prizes and grants, a tax-free threshold for creators, and creative industries tax offsets for book publishing (ASA and APA).
- Fund a national book distribution database to help self-published and independent Australian titles reach bookstores without depending on international intermediaries.
- Increase library acquisition budgets, with a specific allocation for self-published and locally printed Australian titles, improving discoverability and supporting local literary supply chains.
- Fund literary events, author touring programs, and national reading campaigns, particularly for children, which generate direct economic activity for local businesses like ours.

Supporting books and reading benefits all Australians because investment in Australian literary culture is investment in Australian small business. We urge the government to include these measures in the new National Cultural Policy.

---

Kind regards,



Brand Manager

FolioFox

