

Office for the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
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I am a New York Times, USA Today and internationally bestselling of over twenty books for children and young adults. I have been writing full time since 2014, and support my family by doing so. I am deeply invested in the Australian arts scene—each year I speak to thousands of children during school visits, as well as participating in literary festivals and book launches. I also mentor extensively within the industry—not in a paid role, but rather to pay forward the advice and assistance I received.

I know how deeply writers matter to our society. There's a reason we all read stories to our children. There's a reason we tell stories to each other. We've all been affected by a story—on the page, or on the stage or screen—that's changed the way we see the world. Although what authors bring might not be as concretely and immediately obvious as the contribution of a doctor who hands you a prescription, or an engineer who designs a bridge, we are nevertheless vital to society.

Remember that moment some years back when we realised that the bees were dying, and that they had in fact played a truly vital role in pollinating plants and crops we need to survive? Writers are society's bees. You might not always see what we're doing, but you'll learn what we did by our absence, unless we receive more support.

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:

- Fellowships that allow authors time to write over more than one year.
- Residencies that welcome working parents via funding for or the provision of childcare.
- An expansion of the Lending Rights budget—this program is all that stands between many authors and giving up.
- A basic income pilot, as was recently seen in Ireland. I am also an Irish citizen, and saw and felt firsthand the impact this had not only on the artists involved, but on the way they were viewed by those around them. It was also profitable, returning 1.39 euros for every euro invested.

- Protection from AI companies, who continue to use our work without compensation.
- Tax reform to support writers—tax free literary prizes and grants, and a tax-free threshold on our earnings. (Again, look to Ireland for the cultural and economic benefits of their 50,000 Euro tax-free threshold.)
- Authors-in-Schools programs funded at a national level—I should not have to fund these visits myself, to ensure that children meet an author at least once during their schooling.

I am a member of the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and support its submission.

When I'm on book tour in the USA, I am frequently asked what's in the water over here, because we produce so many talented writers. I tell them that we help each other, providing mentoring, support and opportunities wherever we can, and have a strong sense of community.

What I wish I could tell them is that our government funds and invests in the storytellers who help our society see itself, and know itself, and stay true to itself. I am writing to ask you to protect us.

Yours sincerely,

Amie Kaufman