

**National Cultural Policy Submission**

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Public

Individual

Dub Leffler



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Hi, My name is Dub Leffler and I am an Indigenous Children's Author & Illustrator. I'm also Deputy Chair of the ASA (but I'm writing this submission as an individual) I've been working in Children's Publishing for over 25 yrs- some of that time, I had to have a second job to make ends meet. I have visited over 300 schools across Australia as a Travelling Author & Illustrator- this is where I make most of my meager 'wage' - on a good year- \$24,000 (the most I've made in one year is a little over \$30,000.) I've won a few Awards but have never been successful in any serious Grants or Fellowships etc - and I'm in the top 4% of Authors/Illustrators in the country in terms of book sales. The Revive program has helped as well the new changes to ELR & PLR - thank you. AS Children's Authors & Illustrators, School visits are where the bulk of our earnings come from. It's also a great opportunity to connect with our readership, as well as witness where reading levels are across socio-economic groups. I've worked in Private Schools as well as tiny Schools way out in the desert (often with only 4 students)- so I've seen the whole gamut. The smaller, Public Schools- because of their smaller budgets- often only but the books that are shortlisted for awards- such as the CBCA. This denies those Students- (who often have lower literacy levels), more opportunities to engage with books. Part of my role as a visiting Author/Illustrator- is to provide more teaching resources for the Teachers as well as inspire their Students to read.

During the Pandemic- creators such as myself took it upon ourselves to provide content for Schools online- this was all done for free. (I created a few Illustration episodes on Youtube that some schools used in their online classes- such was the demand for class content.)

As an Aboriginal Children's Author & Illustrator- It's hard to convince Students (especially Indigenous students) to see the value in writing & Illustrating when we, ourselves are not rewarded for our writing work. Children often ask me 'How much money do you make?' I make a joke of it and tell them that I came to School in a Helicopter or my Butler dropped me off in my Golden Mercedes.

Because School Visits are where we make the most of our earnings- we are bound by the School calendar- meaning, when school ends for the year- so do our earnings. School visits dry up from November to February. I don't have holidays- because I can't afford them- when I travel to Schools- that, is my holiday. I can't go for Bank Loans- because there is no consistent wage. In light of this- I propose a living wage for Creatives. For 4 months - from November to February. Thank you for this opportunity to be heard. Sincerely, Dub Leffler.