

Office for the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
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I have been a traditionally published author since 1988, full time since 1993, and my family's primary income earner for most of that time. I have written fifty books, primarily junior fiction but ranging from picture books to an adult literary novel. My work has been widely sold overseas, translated into twenty-eight languages and been adapted into a Hollywood feature film (budgeted at approximately forty million dollars and filmed in Australia) as well as an Australian feature film.

Different books have won major prizes including the CBCA Book of the Year, Junior Readers; the Prime Minister's Award for Children's Fiction and the Adelaide Festival Award for Children's Literature, as well as being finalists for these and other awards both in Australia and internationally.

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 support the ASA submission, and having had most of my work pirated feel particularly strongly about solutions to the theft of Australian authors' work by multinational tech companies operating within Australia. I would also suggest increased education for teachers into the importance of copyright.

A nationwide authors-in-schools program funded out of education budgets would also be particularly beneficial for both writers and students. Although the Canadian Authors in Schools program is provincial rather than federal I believe it is a useful model, with authors and schools being able to apply for a limited number (usually two or three) fully funded visits per year.

However I will limit my discussion to the aspects that would most assist authors such as myself, who have produced a large body of well received work over a lifetime and are finding it increasingly difficult to earn a living.

Specifically, I suggest multi-year fellowships for established authors allowing them time to write, these fellowships being based on the author rather than a specific project. I have never applied for a fellowship because I have never had a project at the right stage for the application timeline.

One of the problems of being a relatively successful late career author is the amount of unpaid work that is very difficult to refuse. For example, I generally spend three to five hours per week in a combination of:

- 1) Answering letters from readers from Australia and around the world. These tend to be quite individual and impossible to answer by template. The books may be out of print, have been read as part of such a large school based scheme that I receive only a few cents per copy, or the school may have one twenty year old copy of a book, which is read to several classes, so it cannot be seen as useful marketing. For example, in the last months, as well as more typical classroom or home school letters, I've received a letter from a Brazilian university student with obscure philosophical enquiries about *Nim's Island* and an American university student revisiting *Ark in the Park* to help deal with depression. Adults who studied *Peeling the Onion* in high school have written when they have experienced trauma years later. Replies to these letters require time and thought, which takes away from the time and thought required for my current projects.
- 2) Unofficial mentoring of other authors who write to ask for advice.
- 3) Reading other authors' books or manuscripts and providing a blurb or review.
- 4) Launching other authors' books
- 5) Judging writing competitions for charitable organisations, eg RSPCA.

Finally, I would like to note my objection to the results of this submission being summarised by AI.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Orr

