

Office for the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
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Saturday 23 May 2026

I am the author of five published books, including three novels and two works of nonfiction. It took me ten years of effort around full-time to gain the skills necessary to get my first book published: since that book was published in 2019, I have earned less than \$500 dollars from it. Now my books earn six figures, but each can still take up to two years to write.

Crafting moving stories that captivate readers and make a lasting cultural impact takes time. Time first to gain the skills required, and then time to work through ideas. Countries like Ireland that support their financially writers also produce some of the best stories around the world. This leads to real financial gain in terms of GDP and benefits everyone.

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, involving 300 authors.

Investment in First Nations-led writing and publishing.

Solutions to the unprecedented theft of Australian authors' work by multinational tech companies operating within Australia:

- Transparency on copyright inputs for, and outputs from, generative AI models.
- Research into the impact of generative AI on creative careers and Australian cultural output.
- Structural solutions to bring multinational AI companies to the licensing table with Australian rightsholders.

Tax reform to support author careers

This includes tax-free literary prizes and grants, and a tax-free threshold for writers and illustrators.

Adequate resourcing for Writing Australia to deliver:

- 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.
- Coordination of a book-to-screen pipeline.

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, as well as the book industry submission by Books Create Australia.

Yours sincerely,
Ashley Kalagian Blunt