

Office for the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 594 | CANBERRA ACT 2601

23rd May 2026

National Cultural Policy

I am an Australian Children's author and illustrator, and would like a say in the future directions of the National Cultural Policy.

I decided to pursue a career in the book industry four years ago and have worked on several published picture books, illustrated novels and covers. I absolutely love the work and the impact books have on readers both young and old. However, I am really struggling in this career and love nor passion, are not enough to save it. It would be a dream to be able to work on books as a full time job but unfortunately, the low or staggered pay are unsustainable even in the lowest income bracket. I rely on my paid work as a casual bookkeeper, designer and scenic artist. It has been difficult juggling the hours to pay the bills while pushing to meet deadlines and the huge commitment for illustration/writing.

As an author and illustrator, published with small and medium companies, I have not nor will likely, ever earn royalties. The harsh truth is that the time and effort is almost exploitative for creatives trying to break even financially let alone make a profit or a living off their work.

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:
 - o Multi-year fellowships supporting mid-career authors by providing them with time to write.

- o Seed money for emerging writers.
- o A top up to the Lending Rights budget.
- o 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. For instance:
 - o Transparency on copyright inputs for, and outputs from, generative AI models.
 - o Research into the impact of generative AI on creative careers and Australian cultural output.
 - o Structural solutions to bring multinational AI companies to the licensing table with Australian rightsholders.
- **Tax reform to support author careers** including tax-free literary prizes and grants, and a tax-free threshold for writers and illustrators.
- **Adequate resourcing for Writing Australia** to deliver:
 - o Increased coordination between federal and state funding.
 - o Commissioning of critically-needed research to provide baseline data from which to measure impact for the book industry.
 - o Express guarantees included in every funding grant, ensuring that:
 - Authors and illustrators engaged in funded projects will be paid at, or above, ASA recommended rates
 - Generative AI will not be used to replace or diminish the role of human creators in government-funded projects.
 - o Coordination of a book-to-screen pipeline.
- **Commitment to educational interventions that support Australian authors and writing careers:**
 - o Nationwide authors-in-schools program funded out of education budgets.
 - o Reversal of the failed Job-Ready Graduates program.

Yours sincerely,

