

21 May 2026

I am a queer and Autistic author, writer and multi-disciplinary artist living and working on Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country in Canberra.

In addition to developing my own practice as an independent artist, I am also an artswoker, supporting Quantum Leap Australia and the Canberra Theatre Centre in addition to engaging in a number of arts advocacy roles: I am the Chair of MARION, an organisation dedicated to elevating writers and their art, a board member of Stellar Company, an inclusive dance company, an ambassador of the Chief Minister's Reading Challenge and a member of strategic body, the Minister's Creative Council.

In 2021 my debut novel *Now That I See You*, was the winner of the Australian/Vogel Literary Award. At the time, this was the most income I had ever generated from my artistic practice and combined with the publishing contract I was offered by Allen & Unwin, my work began to attract national and international recognition. I have since been fortunate to receive multiple government grants, residencies and other paid opportunities and, in addition to my casual and part-time work as an arts worker, I have been able to cobble together enough money to make a living as an artist.

I recognise that my situation is a rare exception; it is almost impossible to maintain a career as a professional independent artist in Canberra. Many artists from our region move interstate for tertiary study before going on to establish careers in other cities. For those who stay or return, we often work multiple jobs or maintain a full time job outside of the arts to make a living, or perhaps rely on support from a partner or family member to maintain our practice.

As a young person, I grew up within a youth arts organisation. Quantum Leap was the youth dance ensemble developed by the Australian Choreographic Centre, an organisation that was nationally funded from 1999 to 2008. When its Australia Council funding ceased, the organisation restructured to focus on youth programs supported by state funding only.

Under the Choreographic Centre, Canberra was a site of choreographic innovation and the young artists connected to the organisation were exposed to the experimental and ground breaking work of many choreographers, the most impactful for me perhaps being Tanja Liedtke who created her first work *Twelfth Floor* in the same theatre which I still dance and perform within today. Being able to observe new work being made, to take class and collaborate with such a broad range of professional artists, was undeniably influential on my own artistic development.

And while this dynamic began to shift as the Choreographic Centre became QL2 Dance (now Quantum Leap Australia) I was fortunate to benefit in other ways; the new organisation was able to

invest in more opportunities for young artists including national and international tours and further programs that centred the creation of my own work.

Today, I continue to maintain a movement based practice alongside the development of my writing. I am particularly interested in projects that bring these two ways of making together, and that centre collaborative ways of working both with other professional artists but also with young people. While I have been fortunate to secure funding to develop new works, a particular difficulty I face at the moment has been securing a publication contract for my new novel. The consistent feedback I have received from agents and publishers is that while they admire the work, it is not considered commercially viable enough for publication.

This experience highlights that not only do individual artists need support to develop their practice and create new work, the structures that exist to shape and distribute their work are also in need of Government intervention. The broader ecology remains depressed, and the cost of living crisis continues to impact commercial outcomes for the industry.

I am grateful for the initiatives introduced in *Revive*, particularly the introduction of Writing Australia and a focus on arts practice for young people. Since the introduction of *Revive* however, artists, arts organisations and creative businesses continue to navigate increasingly precarious conditions. Without immediate support, we risk the viability of the arts and cultural sector in Australia.

In particular, I am calling for:

- Greater national investment in artists and small to medium arts organisations based in Canberra (outside of the National Institutions)
- Increased coordination between federal and state funding
- A focus on young artists and their development
- Multi-year fellowships supporting mid-career artists
- Solutions to the unprecedented theft of Australian artists' work by multinational tech companies operating within Australia
- Tax reform, including tax-free prizes and grants, and a tax-free threshold for artists
- Structural support for the publishing sector, particularly small independent publishers
- Commitment to educational interventions that support Australian artists and the development of young people as artists and audiences

With regard to more discipline specific recommendations, I am a member of the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and MARION, and support each of their submissions. Through my association with Quantum Leap Australia, I also support the submissions made by Theatre Network Australia and the National Dance Managers Group.

Best,

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