

Office for the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
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I am an award-winning, mid-career author of Young Adult fiction. My most recent novel, *This Stays Between Us*, won the inaugural John Marsden Prize for Writing for Young Adults in the 2026 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards and was a shortlisted title in the CBCA, ABIA and Aurealis Awards. My first novel was published in 2018, and yet 2025/26 will be the first year I will earn above the tax-free threshold from my writing and related work (school visits, workshops, manuscript assessments, etc.), largely thanks to my 2026 release selling into the US. Despite strong sales figures, foreign rights deals and critical acclaim I see no possibility of generating a living wage from my writing, and this severely limits the time and attention I can portion to creative work.

As a children's author who engages in school visits, which offer a valuable opportunity to champion children's literacy and a vital source of supplementary income for authors, I'm acutely aware and deeply disappointed that hosting authors remains out of reach for many public schools, particularly those in regional areas.

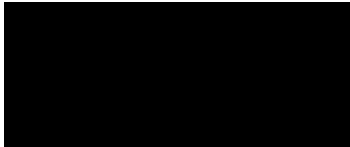
I am grateful for the initiatives introduced in *Revive* to assist with the sustainability of author and illustrator careers. However, since the introduction of *Revive*, authors have been facing increasingly precarious conditions. Without immediate support, we risk the viability of the book industry 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. For instance:
 - 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** including 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, ASA recommended rates
 - 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.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Margot McGovern