

Office for the Arts
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
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I am an author. In 2022 I was named a Best Young Australian Novelist by the Sydney Morning Herald for my debut novel *Where the Line Breaks*, published by Fremantle Press in 2021. My second novel, *BLACKSWANSONG*, was shortlisted for The Australian Fiction prize and will be published in March 2027. Despite winning awards and prizes, I have never made enough from my writing practise to sustain a household – I have always had to work a full-time job in order to pay the bills.

I believe that literature and books are vitally important to the Australian way of life. If we are to get through any of the multiple challenges facing our world at the moment: climate change, political instability, the rise of nationalism and the far right, the continuing fight for equality, and the desecration of copyright laws and free-thinking by multinational tech conglomerates in the name of 'Artificial Intelligence', then books, art, and reading are going to be more important than ever.

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 a member of the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and support its submission which calls 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 – in particular, 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,

Michael Burrows