

## National Cultural Policy Submission

1472790

Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am an author. My debut novel came out in Australia and New Zealand in [REDACTED] with a major publisher. I worked for five years on this novel and gave up opportunities for paid work to return to university to study an Associate Degree in Publishing and Editing at RMIT.

I rely on my savings and my husband's income as my expenses of being a writer far outweigh my income.

Adding to the stress, I signed with a literary agent who rarely responded to my communications once I had signed and did little work other than collect fifteen per cent commission on my small advance. She then ended representation shortly before my release.

Grants are highly competitive with slim chance of success and they take a lot of time away from writing. Australia risks having a literary landscape crowded by stories written only by the few authors who can afford to work for very little or in some cases no remuneration, while other important Australian stories go untold because the authors simply cannot afford to write them. Not supporting creative writers will have a catastrophic effect on our understanding of our past, present and future – as individuals, communities and as a society.

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:

- The development of a basic income scheme for creatives, that allows us to research and write our stories while removing or at least alleviating the financial strain and stress of working with small advances and constantly applying for grants.
- Regulation of AI companies with a plan to prioritise ethics regarding: copyright integrity (payment and permission contracts for the creator/s of any work used to train large language models), child safety (including the long-term effects of AI use in literacy and education more broadly), and the potential for massive environmental damage via data centres (in a dry, drought-prone country already struggling with the effects of climate change).
- Greater regulation of literary agents. Authors and illustrators need protection from exploitation and neglect by nefarious or grossly incompetent literary agents. Self-regulation is not working.
- Investment in pathways to help people from marginalised groups including First Nations peoples, and people from remote or regional communities to gain access to writing and publishing courses and publication opportunities.

I am a member of the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and I also support its submission.