

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As an emerging author and working parent in Victoria, I am concerned about the financial reality of pursuing a writing career in Australia.

After attending the Sorrento Writers Festival recently, I heard repeated stories from published authors about how difficult it is to survive financially in the industry. Scholarships are taxed, royalties are taxed, commissions are deducted, and many writers spend years working in jobs they do not enjoy simply to save enough money to give themselves a few months to write. It was confronting to hear even published authors often cannot make a living from writing alone.

Currently unpublished, I already feel the tension between wanting to write a book and needing to stay in work that pays the bills. As a parent living in Victoria during a cost-of-living crisis, writing feels almost impossible to pursue seriously. It becomes something squeezed into evenings, weekends and spare moments rather than a meaningful career path.

This creates a bigger problem for the arts industry. When writing is financially out of reach, the industry risks becoming dominated by people from particular educational and economic backgrounds. The people who can afford the time to write are often those with financial support, savings or privilege. Many talented writers with important stories to tell are locked out before they even begin.

The current system makes it incredibly difficult for ordinary people to participate.

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
- investment in First Nations-led writing and publishing
- solution to the unprecedented theft of Australian authors' work
- tax reform to support author careers
- resourcing for Writing Australia
- educational interventions that support Australian authors and writing careers.

Without change, writing will continue to be treated as a side hustle instead of an important contribution to Australian culture.

The loss is not only for writers. It is a loss for the stories Australia gets to hear.

I support the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and its submission.