

Office for the Arts  
Department of Infrastructure Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts  
GPO Box 594  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

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## About Writers Victoria

Writers Victoria supports and connects writers at all stages of their development. Our program includes writing workshops, literary events, manuscript assessments, mentorships, competitions, and fellowships. We have a quarterly magazine that goes out to our 2,500+ members, and we provide low-cost studio spaces for writers. We also run targeted programs with a range of partners and communities, the longest running of which is the Writeability program for writers with disability.

## Submission

We wish to express our support and highlight the detailed submission from our colleagues at the Arts Industry Council, of which we were also a signatory. That submission articulates in detail our approach, as a group of organisations, to the five pillars in this consultation. As the state's body representing writers, we also wanted to take the opportunity to articulate and reiterate some additional recommendations and points of view specific to writers and the literary sector, with great thanks to many colleagues across the sector including independent writers, other writers centres, and the Australian Society of Authors.

Writers are at the heart of our national culture but are struggling to make a basic living. Reading for pleasure is consistently listed as one of the top ways that Australians engage with the arts in Australian Council surveys (72% in 2020). Yet writers and the wider literary sector receive 4% in federal arts funding. It is the only artform not to receive targeted infrastructure support from the federal government.

The literature sector needs Government support to reach its full potential and to nurture the talent of the future. There is an exciting opportunity to introduce policy settings to support authors' work, invest in the creative economy and enjoy the cultural, social, educational, health and economic dividends that follow.

## Recommendations

- Establish a national plan for literature. Literature is the only major art form without a national plan or funding framework through Australia Council. Similar to the Funding Frameworks administered by Australia Council for the performing arts, visual arts and crafts, and contemporary music, literature needs its own vision.
- Direct support to writers including:

- Modernisation of Australia's lending rights schemes to include digital formats
- Experimentation with various programs to achieve a living wage for writers. This could look like Universal Basic Income, or expansion of fellowships and similar initiatives to a substantial number of writers each year.
- Increased funding for independent writers, supported with a framework that ensures equity in the distribution of these funds.
- Taxation reform including removing tax from literary prizes and Commonwealth grants.
- A substantial increase to overall literature funding through Australia Council will provide significant resilience to the literary sector, including to service organisations which support writers, and to literary festivals and journals.

I give permission for my submission to be made public and published on the Office for the Arts website.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Hamilton  
**CEO | Writers Victoria**