

National Cultural Policy Submission

Anna Ciddor

I have been a full-time Australian author and illustrator for over 30 years and I have seen most of the financial opportunities for authors gradually erode in real terms over this time. I am supremely grateful for PLR and ELR which form a substantial part of my income, and I welcome the payments I receive from CAL. I am also extremely grateful for an Australia Council New Work Grant I received in 2005 which enabled me to take the time I needed to polish a novel (Night of the Fifth Moon) which later won a Notable Book award and other award nominations. I have been very successful over the years in terms of award nominations for various books, and in 2021 I won the Nance Donkin Award for Children's Literature. However, despite having had nearly 60 books published, none of this success has amounted to even a living wage.

Authors are at the heart of our national culture but are struggling to make a basic living. I am sorry this letter is a few hours past the deadline but I have been flat-out preparing for Book Week visits to schools this week, an activity which forms a vital part of my annual income.

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.

I would like to see the new National Cultural Policy introduce a Commonwealth fellowship and grants program to directly invest in authors, ensure public funding is contingent on authors being paid minimum rates of pay, modernise Australia's lending rights schemes to include digital formats, roll out a 'Living Wage' pilot scheme over 3 years, establish a working party to examine and introduce author-protective provisions in the Copyright Act, introduce a minimum threshold of Australian-authored content in schools, roll out an authors-in-schools program to increase income for authors, and deliver to students literacy skills, a deeper connection with books, and expertise on writing, and remove tax from literary prizes and Commonwealth grants to authors.