

asa

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY
OF AUTHORS



INQUIRY
INTO AUSTRALIA'S
CREATIVE & CULTURAL
INDUSTRIES AND
INSTITUTIONS

OCTOBER 2020

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Executive Summary

For generations Australian literature has inspired us. It not only fires our imaginations, entertains and delights us, challenges and comforts us, it has also fostered the development of literacy from the very youngest of readers, and encouraged a culture and appetite for learning across the country.

Australian literature has also been the engine room of some of the most impressive screen and stage adaptations: think of *Schindler's List*, *Cloudstreet*, *The Secret River*, *The Book Thief* and *Big Little Lies*. For decades, it has been one of our most successful cultural industries, of which we should feel enormously proud.

However, Australian literature is now in crisis.

Author earnings are disastrously low, with only a tiny few at the top who can make a living, an extremely long tail of authors who earn virtually nothing and a badly hollowed out middle ground, where incomes are unsustainable:

- According to the ASA's Survey 2020, 80% of respondents are earning less than \$15,000 per annum.
- 99% of all titles released in the last three years sold less than 1,000 copies each year.
- Due to a variety of disrupting factors, publishers' appetite for risk is low.

Despite reading being the second-most popular way Australians engage with the arts,¹ literature receives the lowest level of funding of all the art forms.² Progressive cuts to arts budgets over many years have chipped away at much of the government support that fuelled the success of our current writing luminaries. As the Committee will see from reading submissions to this inquiry, many of Australia's most celebrated and

¹ Australia Council for the Arts. *Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*. Australia Council for the Arts, August 2020.

² excluding multi-art form and emerging and experimental arts

globally recognised authors began their careers with government investment and in return have created a significant network of jobs, a flow of export money into Australia, a national identity and rich culture, a generation of thinkers, soft power on the world stage, and joy, comfort and inspiration for countless readers.

Now, the literature sector needs Government support to reach its full potential and to nurture the talent of the future who will tell the stories that will define their generation and build the creative economy.

The opportunity to grow our literary sector is truly exciting.

The 6 steps required now to ensure the sustainability of Australian literature

1. The introduction of a 3-tier Boost Package for Literature over 3-5 years:

- a) **Investment in the talent pipeline that will fuel the creative economy of the future:** Seed money of at least \$10,000 for 100 young/emerging/new writers to upskill. This money to be used for educational purposes, for mentorship, for young writers to pay for the knowledge that will allow them to build their career
- b) **Direct investment in established talent driving the creative economy:** grants of at least \$25,000 per annum for at least 100 writers
- c) **At least a 10% increase in the Federal Government's PLR / ELR budget:** to revive a hollowed out publishing industry and support serious and long term writers.

2. The modernisation of eligibility criteria for Australia's lending rights schemes (PLR / ELR) to include digital formats (ebooks and audiobooks), a change which is supported by **99% of respondents** to the ASA Survey, demonstrating virtually universal support from our creative community.

3. The introduction of author-centric provisions into the *Copyright Act* to level a playing field which has become unbalanced.
4. An increase in the funding available for strategic investment by Australia Council, informed by an overall federal strategic plan for literature.
5. The reinstatement of the book industry in analysis conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
6. The removal of tax on literary prizes.

"Creators in this country should be supported as critical thinkers and change-makers. Don't deny our children's children. Encourage creativity as integral to being human."

Bronwyn Bancroft, Author and Illustrator

Terminology

In this submission:

- references to an “author” includes writers and illustrators as both are authors of their work;
- references to “literature” are intended as all encompassing and include all books in any format, of any genre and category, including both fiction and non-fiction.

ASA: Who we are

The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) was established in 1963 as the peak national organisation representing the interests of Australia's authors. The ASA is a broad and diverse organisation, with 3,000+ members drawn from every sector of the writing world, including novelists, biographers, illustrators, academics, cartoonists, scientists, food and wine writers, historians, non-fiction writers, graphic novelists, children's writers, ghost writers, travel writers, crime writers, science fiction writers, romance writers, editors, bloggers, journalists, poets and more.

At Appendix 1 to this submission, we **attach** a summary of ASA's purpose and services, for your reference.

Context for submission

The Publishing Ecosystem

Overall, authors are struggling in today's publishing ecosystem. To understand the proposals we make in this submission, it is important to understand the lived experience of authors. We provide some preliminary context before turning to the substance of our submission.

In its simplest form, the book industry ecosystem is straightforward:



It is the author who generates the intellectual property upon which the whole industry relies, the publisher who brings the work to market and generates buzz and the booksellers who have a vital relationship with consumers.

In the traditional publishing model, the financial costs involved in producing the book are paid by the publisher and they are responsible for the supply chain that delivers the

finished book into the hands of the retailer, ready for purchase by the reader. While these tasks are important, the publisher adds further value in their roles as curator and town crier. They are responsible for the selection of the author's work in the first place and it is their knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise that helps convince the bookseller to stock the book and persuade their customers to buy it.

Pressure on Publishers Means Pressure on Authors

Publishing is a **high-risk** business:

- There are few genuine brands among publishers, apart from Penguin, making marketing a single title or at best, brand author proposition.
- New titles release on a rapid monthly cycle, rather than a seasonal one as with most other areas of manufacturing.
- Production times are long, at a minimum of twelve months from acquisition to release on the market, making it difficult to predict trends in a competitive and fickle market.
- All books are traditionally sold to retailers on a 'sale or return' basis, which allows the retailer to return any unsold stock to the publisher for a full refund, placing the stock risk back on the publisher.
- Barriers to entry have decreased significantly, with improved production software and viable short-run printing and print-on-demand. This has increased competition, including from some service providers who are 'bad players', charging unjustifiably high sums to authors.
- The exponential growth of social media content, streaming and other competitive forms of entertainment vie for attention and reading time, further increasing the battle for the leisure dollar.
- New players in the retail market exert significant buying power and control, which also erodes the publisher margin.
- Amazon's aggressive loss-leading pricing strategy over many years has driven down the price and 'value' of ebooks.
- This has in turn led to increased consolidation among publishers, with only 5 major players across the English language territories of UK, USA, Canada and Australasia. In contrast to the consolidation at the top, there are many small

publishers at the other end of the spectrum, which are vulnerable in today's environment.

Against a backdrop of these factors, plus digital disruption, publishers face a difficult market. The book industry is characterised by the dynamics of the long tail, with a very narrow range of books contributing the majority of the sales. We know that about 5-10% of a publisher's titles deliver 90% of the sales, with the balance of the revenue being generated by ongoing sales of previously published titles (backlist). In these circumstances, it is unsurprising that the publisher works hard to minimise risk. This risk minimisation has led to trends in publisher behaviour that are at the expense of authors:

- Publishers' tendency to select books in subject areas that have already proved to be successful. The tougher the market, the less adventurous publishers will be about risking the fresh and new.
- Increased reluctance to take risks on new authors unless they have a strong social media following/other existing platform.
- A significantly higher expectation that the author will drive the marketing for their book, a role that was previously undertaken primarily by the publisher.
- A short attention span. With so many new titles being published every month, an author will only have the publisher's dedicated focus for a very small window of time, between 1 and 3 weeks typically, before the sales and publicity staff move on to the next month's new releases.
- Reduction in commitment. If the first book from a new author fails to meet expectations, then the publisher is more likely to drop that author, despite the fact that very few authors generate large sales on their first publication.
- More ruthless approach to backlist. If a book is not selling to a set level every month, it is likely that the title will be taken off range.

When an author finds a good publisher, or finds a well-connected literary agent who in turn finds them a good publisher, publication of their book can be a wonderful experience, as it likely was for authors such as Trent Dalton (*Boy Swallows Universe*), Jane Harper (*The Dry*) and Scott Pape (*The Barefoot Investor*). For the majority of

writers, however, it is extraordinarily difficult to get published and even more difficult to become one of the tiny range of writers who achieve critical and commercial success.

Importance of Bookshops

Booksellers champion Australian authors. First-time authors and solid backlist titles benefit enormously from the hand selling and recommendations that are the domain of the independent, bricks-and-mortar retailers. Overseas online retailers, such as Amazon and The Book Depository have no incentive to spotlight our local talent (although Australian online retailer Booktopia supports the local industry). This year has seen an unsurprising swing towards online purchasing of books. Online shopping has taken off during COVID and some changes in consumer behaviour are likely to be permanent. In the online environment, discoverability is much harder, meaning that that online environment advantages a small band of brand authors and very well-known bestsellers.

Discoverability is not the only contribution made by Australia's strong independent bookshops, however. They also champion their local writers by holding launches and events in their stores, providing recommendations and space for book clubs, and can sometimes be the only promotional and retail outlets for authors who have not secured a traditional publisher. In addition, this sector of the retail market delivers an author's best royalty (unlike discount department stores which generate a much lower royalty for authors). The independent bookshop network is integral to the success of local authors and the drive to international online shopping therefore poses a risk for Australian authors.

Author Earnings

The few success stories of writers at the very top obscure the fact that for the vast majority of writers, income is precariously low and payments are irregular. In addition, other than for those who secure advances, the author is the last person in the supply chain to get paid and can often wait more than two years from the delivery of their manuscript to their first royalty payment.

Members of the ASA who are established and experienced writers are reporting to us that while it has always been challenging to make a living, in former years, a writer of talent, determination and ideas was able to make at least a basic living. Today those writers are struggling. As in the music industry, publishing has long been characterised by a small number of bestsellers at the top and an extremely long tail of writers earning almost nothing, but it is the hollowing out of the middle that is a more recent and deep concern. Authors have long accepted the need to develop a portfolio career as a writer, but with tightening backlist ranges, fewer new publishing opportunities, lower advances, concern for future Lending Rights payments because of the shift in library borrowings to digital formats and the significant reduction in event opportunities due to COVID, mid-career, midlist authors are under huge pressure.

Recently, the ASA commissioned a report from Nielsen Book³, in which Nielsen reported on book sales for each of the last three years, broken into several volume sales bands, to enable us to quantify how many titles are within each portion of the market. The ten volume sales bands - ranging from titles with over 200,000 copies sold down to titles with under 1,000 copies sold - demonstrate how few books make it to the top end of the Australian market.

Of all the unique titles sold in Australia within 2018 – 2020 YTD, on average:



³ A Nielsen Book examination of print book volume sales across Australia 2018 / 2019 / 2020 YTD. Nielsen Book. *ASA - Nielsen Book Volume Sales Band Study 2020*. Nielsen Book, October 2020.

"Since 1998, I have published 23 books for children and young adults, in addition to many articles, short stories and other works. On average, 30-50% of my annual income has come from royalties, 20% from PLR/ELR and up to 5% of my income from Copyright Agency payments. I spend between 6 weeks to 4 months of every year visiting schools, libraries, festivals and tertiary institutes to teach creative writing or discuss my books with readers. In any given year, public events account for between 30%-50% of my annual income.

Advances for mid-list authors have been falling since 2008. Australian fiction often has a relatively short shelf-life, which makes it very difficult for Australian authors to build viable long-term careers. I'm fortunate that my first novel, published in 1999, is still in print, as are all eleven of my novels. But trying to strike a balance between promoting my work and producing new books is a constant juggling act. Despite nearly twenty-five years of working in the Australian publishing industry, I'm pedalling faster than ever to make a viable income as a writer.

Australian literary culture is under threat as many authors burn out after a very small number of published works. The financial rewards are small proportionate to the work involved in sustaining a literary career. If Australians want a healthy and diverse literary community, we need to make it possible for writers to make a living from their craft."

Kirsty Murray, Author

In the past, an author could more readily build a backlist of titles selling around 1,000 copies each per year, at an average earning of \$2,500 for each book, if priced at \$30. These earnings, alongside a \$5,000 advance against the future royalties for an annual new book, plus other sources of income outlined in Kirsty Murray's summary, would add up to a modest but sustainable income. The hollowing out of this midlist in publishing has dire consequences: only the privileged few who have alternative means of support will be able to afford to write, rendering publishing the domain of the elite few. This exacerbates the diversity problem in Australian publishing at a time when we need to build a groundswell of diverse voices; a range of perspectives to counter our

siloed lives. We need to celebrate and embrace our Indigenous and multicultural creators and give opportunities to our young writers. If only those with independent means publish books, we will fail on every diversity measure and miss out on accessing the true depth and range of writing talent in Australia. How many wonderful books are going unwritten because of the lack of long term viability of writing as a career?

The ASA's 2020 survey of Australian writers and illustrators⁴ shows that we are still a long way from building an environment in which our members can develop a long and sustainable career.

- 79.5% are earning less than \$15,000 per annum
- Only 14.8% earned more than \$25,000
- Advances⁵ are low: 52.3% of respondents receive no advances whatsoever, and 75.8% receive advances under \$5,000.
- The number of members financially contributing to the cost of their own publication went from 16% in 2017, to 34% in 2019, to 32.66% in 2020.

Consider the following from Emma Craven, author of eleven secondary school textbooks:

"Like many educational writers, I'm a teacher. Most of us write for non-financial reasons. There is no money in it and I don't do it for the financial return. I'm driven by my love of science. I am either paid a lump sum for a textbook or royalties on sales. It's not a reliable income, it has to be viewed as an 'extra'. You could never say to someone, 'yes, get into educational writing'. You could never encourage that, unless you explained they must do it for the love of it."

Emma Craven, Author

⁴ The ASA is currently conducting a survey of writers and illustrators. We have targeted our members but also invited non-members to participate. The survey is still open (closes on 6 November) so in this submission we provide data on the results as at 26 October 2020. We had 1,327 respondents to the survey at that time.

⁵ An advance is a sum of money paid against future royalties. It is not a separate *additional* payment to an author, it is advancing monies to help sustain them while they write the book. Authors are then not paid again until the advance is "earned out" and royalties begin to flow.

“In the past ten years, despite writing an average of five bestselling books per year, I have seen the impact of heavily discounted pricing strategies – meaning that while my sales have been consistently strong, my income has actually shrunk. Writing is a precarious business, in that royalties are paid twice a year and authors often have no idea what that amount will be. When you consider any other industry outside of the arts – with people who are at the top of their career game – it’s unfathomable that they would have no idea what they’re likely to earn in a year and that perhaps one year they will receive significantly less than the year before for exactly the same amount of time and effort.

Writers need assurances that their career choice is financially viable. I worked in education for twenty years before becoming a full time writer just on eight years ago (I basically had to juggle two careers for a number of years before I thought I could sustain myself with writing). It was a huge leap of faith to go from a very safe and secure income to one that feels a bit like playing Wheel of Fortune every time royalty season rolls around.”

Jacqueline Harvey, Author

According to a 2015 Macquarie University study, Australian writers’ creative incomes have dropped by nearly 50% in the past 17 years, from an average of \$22 000 in the early 2000s to just \$12 900 in 2015.⁶

⁶ Longden, Thomas et al. “Australian Authors - Industry Brief No. 3: Authors’ Income.” *Australian Authors’ Income Report*, Department of Economics, Macquarie University, October 2015.
<https://research-management.mq.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/122625541/3_Authors_Income.pdf>

"I began my writing career at 19 when I stepped foot into a magazine office for the first time. I worked for free two days a week as an intern – much to the chagrin of migrant parents who didn't believe in unpaid work, especially as I was busy earning a university degree – and in the many years that have followed, I have continued to toil for the love of what I do. For many years I hoped that things would get better, but as the cost of living rises and as the industry takes hit after hit, it is apparent that things are only becoming more dire. I am now in my mid thirties, with three degrees to my name and three children to feed but very little opportunity for work that offers a solid and stable income. My wages are decreasing but my output is increasing, and it has been hard to reconcile that I have reached a dead end in a career that I have aspired to, and worked towards, for the better part of my life. Words are my passion and my joy, but I have very little talents beyond them. Increased cuts to arts funding and a declining publishing industry has devalued what I do and devalued Australian stories, and it is our communities who will suffer as we once again begin importing foreign content to the detriment of Australian culture and identity."

Sarah Ayoub, Author, Journalist and Academic

This is the reality for Australian writers and illustrators. The problem of low author earnings threatens the sustainability of Australian literature.

This is the context against which the rest of this submission must be read.

Direct and indirect economic benefits and employment opportunities

Despite the many challenges that authors face, literature is a significant contributor to the economy:

Literature's Contribution (2016)

- \$2 billion revenue
- 7,000 + new titles published per year
- 1,000 publishing businesses employing 4,000 directly
- 20,000+ employees across the industry

Copyright Industries more broadly (2020)

According to a PWC Report released in June 2020, in 2018 the copyright industries in Australia:

- contributed \$124.1 billion to the Australian economy, equivalent to 6.8% of Australia's gross domestic product;
- employed 1,034,000 people, accounting for 8.3% of total employment in Australia.⁷

In our submission, authors are key to the ongoing success of the copyright industries and investment in authors is crucial for building a stronger creative economy as we explain below.

⁷ PWC. *The economic contribution of Australia's copyright industries - 2006-2018*. PWC, commissioned by the Australian Copyright Council, June 2020.
<https://www.copyright.org.au/ACC_Prod/ACC/Media_Releases/The_economic_contribution_of_Australia_s_copyright_industries_2006-2018.aspx>

Authors underpin other art forms

Many of our films, television series, plays, musical theatre and even ballet and opera are directly adapted from books. **Attached** at Appendix 2 is a non-exhaustive list of Australian novels which have been adapted for the screen and stage. Research indicates that films adapted from books do better at the box office than original films.⁸

Without a thriving publishing industry, over time other art forms in Australia will be diminished.

Authors drive tourism and build our global reputation

There is a strong connection between the arts and both national and international tourism.⁹ The reputation of Australia overseas is built on the cultural products we export, and books are a primary part of this.

Not only do authors drive tourism through their participation in literary festivals and events, but there is a substantial history of books inspiring wanderlust in their readers. Consider, for example, the impact of *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac on cross-country travel by car in the US. In Australia, we have the lure of Tim Winton's depictions of the Western Australian coastline, or Bruny Island as described by Heather Rose.

We asked booksellers which books have inspired travel to/within Australia and they listed:

⁸ In research undertaken in collaboration with Screen Australia, Matthew Hancock found: "For titles released in 1999–2008, a comparison of the typical earnings for individual films shows that adaptations perform better in the average than original films. ... the box office earnings for adaptations are more consistent. Their median box office was almost triple that of original films during the study period, at \$1.1 million compared to \$370,000." - Hancock, Matthew. *Mitigating Risk; the case for more adaptations in the Australian film industry*. Australian Film, Television and Radio School, July 2010. <<https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/getmedia/89914fab859f-47aa-a82e-950f6ec51474/Mitigating-risk.pdf?ext=.pdf>>

⁹ International arts tourist numbers grew by 47% between 2013 and 2017 (Australia Council for the Arts. *International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures*. Australia Council for the Arts, 2018.) and domestically the total number of tourists engaging with the arts is increasing (Australia Council for the Arts. *Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the Country*. Australia Council for the Arts, 2020.)

- Outback crime such as:
 - *Wake in Fright* - Kenneth Cook
 - *The Dry* - Jane Harper
 - *Scrublands* - Chris Hammer
- Historical fiction such as:
 - *The True History of the Kelly Gang* - Peter Carey
 - *Oscar and Lucinda* - Peter Carey
 - *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* - Richard Flanagan
 - *The Secret River* - Kate Grenville
 - *Picnic at Hanging Rock* - Joan Lindsay
 - *A Town Like Alice* - Nevil Shute
- Indigenous Australian books such as:
 - *Song Spirals* by Gay'wu Group of Women - to visit Indigenous Australian sites
 - *Welcome to Country* - Marcia Langton
 - *Dark Emu* - Bruce Pascoe
 - *Loving Country* - Bruce Pascoe & Vicky Shukuroglou (to be released in December)
- Non-Fiction books such as:
 - *Mirror Sydney* - Vanessa Berry
 - *In Tasmania* - Nicholas Shakespeare
- Fiction books such as:
 - *The Watch Tower* - Elizabeth Harrower
 - *The Thorn Birds* - Colleen McCullough
 - *The Harp in the South* - Ruth Park
 - *Bruny* - Heather Rose
 - *Cloudstreet* - Tim Winton
 - *Carpentaria* - Alexis Wright

Australia has always traded on its global reputation, but this has slipped from 4th in 2013 to 6th in 2018.¹⁰ Arts and culture have been used to successfully improve

¹⁰ A New Approach. *Transformative Impacts of Culture and Creativity*. A New Approach & the Australian Academy of the Humanities, November 2019.
<<https://www.humanities.org.au/new-approach/report2/>>

relationships between countries which generates increased trade, investment and exchanges of talent. Australian writers are making great inroads into the international markets, and a thriving literature sector would further extend our global reputation and increase overseas interest.

Authors bring in money from overseas into our local economy

Australian authors bring in money from overseas through export sales, international rights sales and optioning film/screen rights for their book. Consider the following example from author Wendy Orr:

"I am the author of nearly fifty books published over thirty two years; primarily children's fiction but ranging from early childhood picture books to literary novels. Most of my books have been published first in Australia, with rights being sold by my Australian publisher to publishers in thirty countries. My books have won awards such as the Children's Book Council Award and the Prime Minister's Award for Children's Literature.

My gross annual income tends to average between \$35,000 to \$80,000. The income stream varies widely; PLR/ELR is the most consistent source. This has shrunk considerably over the years, due in part to libraries purchasing e-books, e-audio books or American editions instead of the original Australian edition; however, depending on other income streams, Lending Rights remain between 20 – 50% of my annual income. Copyright Agency payments are much more variable and smaller. 10-20 % of my income comes from public speaking and journal articles, but the primary part is usually from royalties.

The purchase of film rights for Nim's Island in 2007 brought in a one-off boost of approximately \$200,000, and an ongoing boost in sales for that title for several years. Options and sales of other film rights have brought in roughly \$10,000 over a decade.

My books are also an income source for a wide variety of people, commencing with my agent, who receives 10% of all royalties and film rights; publisher, public speaking agencies, booksellers, actors creating live performances for schools, musicians, and most significantly, the film industry. Nim's Island was filmed in Australia with a budget of approximately \$40 million, not including marketing. Although the stars came from overseas, my estimate is that at least half of that amount would have been spent here, providing employment for approximately 150 crew for about three months. Return to Nim's Island, a much smaller budget Australian film, still injected close to \$6 million into the local economy."

Wendy Orr, Author

The ASA supports the retention of local screen quotas. Locally made content supports the whole creative community, including our members.

The number of Australian authors breaking onto the global stage is growing. Macquarie University, supported by the Australia Council and Copyright Agency, has just completed research into international rights deals from 2008- 2018, which export Australian books to the world. We are waiting for the publication of this research but understand from an overview given by academics Dr Paul Crosby and Dr Jan Zwar at the 2020 BookUp Conference that international rights sales are on an upward trend. Broad genres are sold overseas and this income is hugely valuable for our local authors and publishers.

Non-economic benefits

The non-economic benefits are difficult to measure but they are deeply felt, valued and intuitive to Australians. As stated in 2020 research undertaken by A New Approach:

"We asked participants to speculate about what a world, a country or a life without arts and culture would look like. Their reactions were visceral: the outright rejection of the notion was spontaneous and highly emotional. They felt deeply that life without arts and culture would be bleak, dull and colourless."¹¹

It is difficult in this submission to comprehensively cover the vast non-economic benefits of the arts, and literature in particular. Research conducted by A New Approach, an independent think tank helping to inform public policy, has explored the benefits to the nation of the arts and we refer the Committee to the series of reports it has published this year.¹²

Here we will focus on some non-economic benefits specific to literature.

Community

Almost 50% of Australians report feeling that society is broken, with one in four reporting frequent loneliness.

- Literature builds social cohesion, which in turn builds a stronger economy.

¹¹ Fielding, Kate and Trembath, Jodie-Lee. *A View from Middle Australia: Perceptions of Arts, Culture and Creativity*. A New Approach & the Australian Academy of the Humanities, May 2020.
<<https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ANA-InsightReportThree-FullReport.pdf>>

¹² <https://www.humanities.org.au/new-approach/reports/>

- Attendance at book festivals, especially in regional areas, is growing: 4.5 million Australians attended literary events in 2019, (an increase of 15% since 2016) and on average each one attended 15.6 events.¹³
- Booksellers are reporting significant growth in community book clubs.
- Literature provides solace and reassurance that you are not alone.

"Australians have told us that imagination, belonging and inspiration all grow out of engagement with arts, culture and creativity – and that these opportunities are fundamental to being Australian, and even to being human."¹⁴

Australia has been steadily declining in mean scores in international education measures over the last 20 years. Arts-based and cultural education, especially literature significantly help the development of intellectual skills now in demand: creativity, innovation, imagination, critical thinking, communication. We strongly object to the Jobs-Ready Graduate Package reforms to higher education which would see fees for courses in the humanities increasing by up to 113% and call for this decision to be reversed.

Social wellbeing

Australia has an ageing population and increasing rates of mental health problems and youth suicide.

¹³ Australia Council for the Arts. *Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*. Australia Council for the Arts, August 2020.

<<https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Creating-Our-Future-Results-of-the-National-Arts-Participation-Survey-PDF.pdf>>

¹⁴ Fielding, Kate and Trembath, Jodie-Lee. *A View from Middle Australia: Perceptions of Arts, Culture and Creativity*. A New Approach & the Australian Academy of the Humanities, May 2020.

<<https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ANA-InsightReportThree-FullReport.pdf>>

Reading has been proven to significantly enhance health and feelings of wellbeing,¹⁵ including:

- reducing stress
- preserving brain health and thus reducing the risk of dementia
- alleviating anxiety and depression
- increasing life expectancy.

Reading has always been a popular pastime, but it is hugely encouraging to see the continued growth in participation. Despite increasing forms of competing entertainment, Australian authors enjoy a genuinely popular and growing national base. Research shows:

- In the Australia Council for the Arts' 2020 Arts Participation Survey, 72% of respondents read for pleasure, up 17 percentage points since 2016.
- In 2019, 4.5 million Australians attended book or literary events or festivals, or 22% of the population aged 15 years and over – up from 15% in 2016. On average, those who attended book or literary events attended 15.6 events in 2019. Across the Australian population, this equates to 2.2 book or literary events attended for every Australian aged 15 years and over.¹⁶
- Nine in ten Australians enjoy reading for interest or pleasure and seven in ten would like to spend more time reading books.¹⁷
- 71% of Australians agree with the statement: "Books make a contribution to my life that goes beyond their cost."¹⁸

¹⁵ A New Approach. *Transformative Impacts of Culture and Creativity*. A New Approach & the Australian Academy of the Humanities, November 2019.

<<https://www.humanities.org.au/new-approach/report2/>>

¹⁶ Australia Council for the Arts. *Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*. Australia Council for the Arts, August 2020.

¹⁷ Macquarie University & Australia Council for the Arts. *Reading the Reader: A Survey of Australian Reading Habits*. Macquarie University & Australia Council for the Arts, May 2017.

<<https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/reading-the-reader/>>

¹⁸ Ibid.

Since COVID, Australians have reported that they have increased the amount that they are reading.¹⁹ Books and writers have never been more important.

"Studies show that being engaged in reading fiction can foster empathy; I believe it can also increase resilience. We need a strong Australian publishing industry so that children can grow up with books that they identify with, as part of a vibrant Australian culture."

Wendy Orr, Author

National Identity

A nation builds its culture and identity through the arts and the foundation stone of the arts is *story*.

Storytelling lies at the heart of our beliefs about the creation of our world, the people who have gone before us and the future that lies ahead. Stories are how humans make sense of their world. In Australia, we have the unique honour of a tradition of storytelling of the oldest living civilisation on earth. We define ourselves through our literature and see ourselves reflected within it.

One of the country's foremost literary awards was bequeathed by Miles Franklin for the book that best presents "Australian life in any of its phases".

¹⁹ The Australia Council for the Arts' 2020 National Arts Participation Survey showed that 36% of Australians have been reading more since COVID-19 - Australia Council for the Arts. *Creating Our Future: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*. Australia Council for the Arts, August 2020.

“While other girls my age worried about changing bodies, confusing friendships, their burgeoning sexuality and first relationships, I negotiated my parents' strict cultural rules and traditions in one part of my life and the stereotypes and assumptions that came with being Lebanese in Australia in another.

In an attempt to reconcile my anxieties, I sought solace in young adult novels that depicted other girls of migrant heritage. They seemed to capture those feelings of being caught between two worlds so perfectly, and gave me the encouragement I needed to forge my own path in life with a nod to my past and with hope for my future. Now, many years later, I receive countless messages, social media comments, emails and even hand-written notes from culturally and linguistically diverse teenage girls who have found solace in my own novels, and from others, not so diverse, who came to understand someone, or something, foreign as a result of reading them.”

Sarah Ayoub, Author, Journalist and Academic

While support for arts and culture is strong, there is an opportunity and need to increase the diversity of author voices to reflect the richness of cultures that make up Australia. We also must ensure that the organisations which are part of the literature ecosystem, better reflect that diversity. It is vitally important that young people in particular, are encouraged to take their place as the country's next generation of storytellers.

Impact of COVID-19

ASA Survey Results

The book industry has largely held up well during COVID-19 and sales are tracking well. However, our survey results show that revenue is not enjoyed across the board.

In the ASA Survey, we asked: how has your writing income been impacted by COVID-19? More than 32.14% of respondents said their income has decreased, with 23.3% reporting the impact on their income is still unclear. Only 6.84% of respondents said their income had increased. Concerningly, almost 34.96% of respondents said their non-writing related income had decreased too.

In this environment, the rate of applications for JobKeeper and JobSeeker was surprisingly low. For JobKeeper, 18.29% of respondents had applied for the payment scheme, and yet, only 23.08% indicated applying for the government subsidy was not necessary for them. For JobSeeker, only 7.52% of respondents had applied for the payment scheme, with a 43.11% success rate. We attribute this partly to how difficult it is for creators to qualify for income support given the varied and lumpy way they are paid; royalties are generally paid 6 monthly so writers have to wait a very long time to show a reduction in revenue and income needs to be averaged to be meaningful given that an author might release a book this year but not last year, skewing earnings.

“Authors are gig workers. Authorship is not a conventional, salary-paying career with benefits. Few authors (at best, the top 20%) earn a living wage writing full-time; most patch together other forms of income, from teaching to full-time day jobs in a wide variety of fields. People who work in more conventional occupations often find author earnings so low as to be insignificant; but to authors, these earnings make up a personally meaningful part of their income mix. In this way, the profession of authorship is a harbinger of the larger gig economy, where more and more people juggle multiple part time jobs and contract work and receive no employee benefits.”²⁰

The biggest damage done by COVID-19 is unsurprisingly to appearance fees as visits to schools, libraries and festivals have disappeared or pivoted to digital. 55.04% of

²⁰ Larson, Christine. *The Profession of Author in the Twenty-First Century*. University of Colorado-Boulder, February 2020.
<<https://www.authorsguild.org/industry-advocacy/authors-guild-issues-report-exploring-the-factors-leading-to-the-decline-of-the-writing-profession/>>

respondents reported a negative impact on appearance money, and 34.5% indicated they were not able to mitigate their losses by performing events online. Income from events is routinely reported as being a significant component of author income.

From our survey respondents:

"As a children's writer paid events and school visits form a significant part of my income. All my paid events were cancelled."

"In the three months between June and September, my appearances income dropped from \$34,000 to \$14,000."

"I lost about \$15,000 in appearances."

"Events were a big part of my income. Decreased 80%."

"All my speaking events in libraries etc. have been cancelled. These events are critical to my income."

"I earned nothing from online events."

"This year, my income has dropped. I've lost a huge amount from events. Initially, everything was cancelled. I had trips planned to NSW, Queensland, Victoria and the ACT, including regional areas in those states. Not only did I lose appearance money but I also lost the chance to promote my book and the royalties that would have flowed from resulting sales. My general sense is that this year has been hard for writers who are not well known, who have launched their book and then have conducted one or two online events and that's it. The big name authors are probably doing well but for a book that only gets a chance when there is an author out there promoting it, it's been tough."

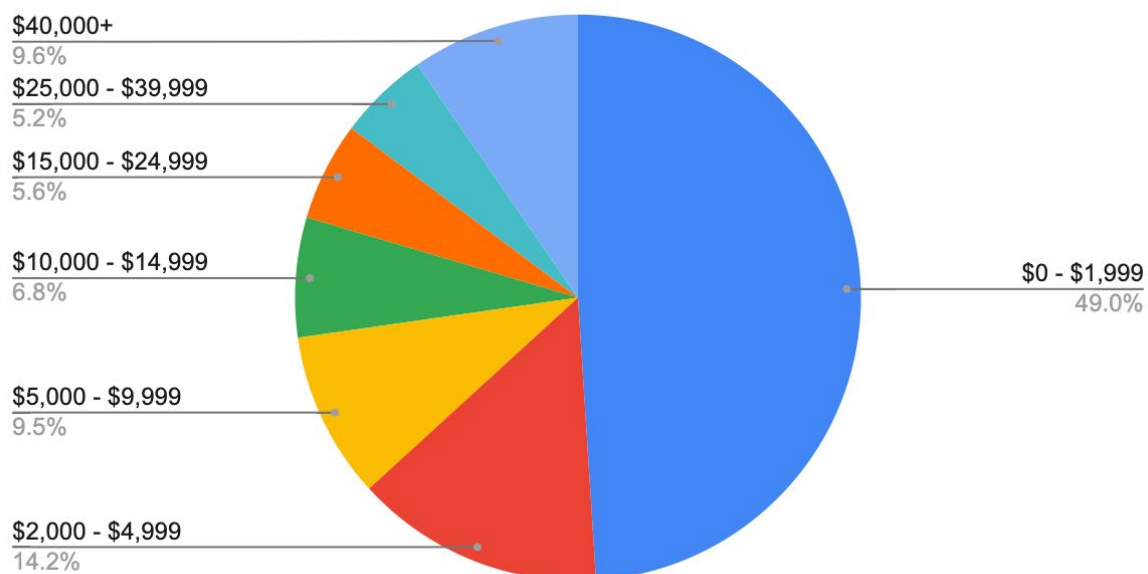
Holden Sheppard, Author

According to the ASA's 2020 survey, since the pandemic began, only 1.45% of respondents have received funding from Australia Council and 1.45% of respondents have received funding from Copyright Agency. 3.25% of respondents have applied successfully to State Government Arts bodies. The majority of respondents did not apply for funding at all.

At best, this speaks to the independence of Australian writers but at worst this suggests a level of hopelessness and pessimism when it comes to applying for funding. The lack of funding for literature will be discussed later in this submission.

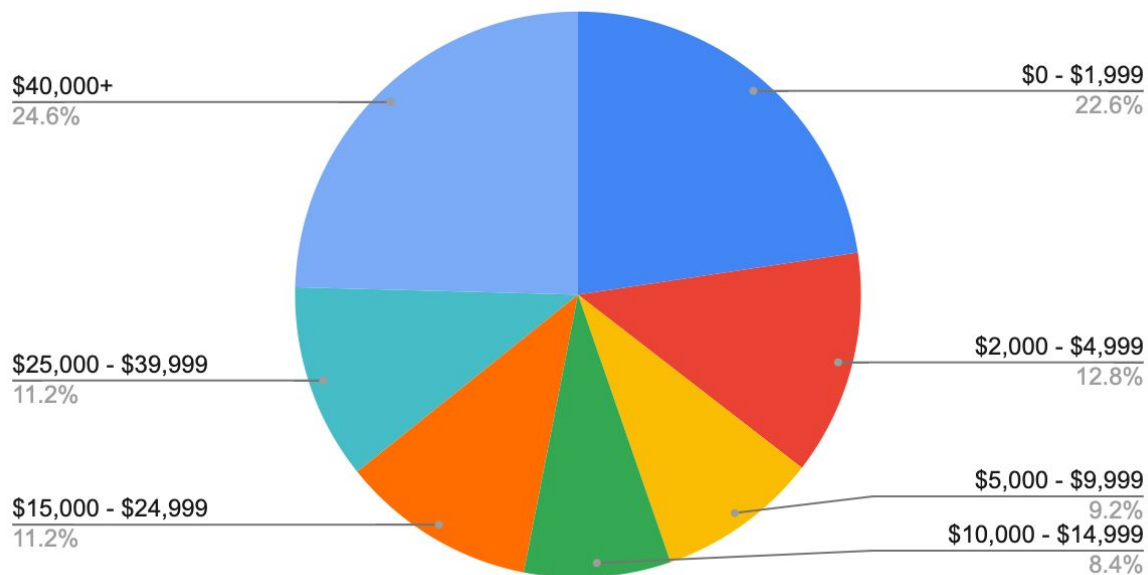
Let's now put into perspective the reduction of revenue for many writers this year, given they are generally starting from very modest incomes.

We asked: What is your average annual income from your creative practice?



Of the total respondents, 79.5% are earning less than \$15,000 per year.

The findings for **full-time writers** are even more concerning:



53% of **full-time writers** indicated they earn on average less than \$15,000 per year from their creative practice, with 22.6% of them earning on average between \$0 and \$1,999 per year.

The statistics on author earnings raises significant concerns about the sustainability of Australian literature.

Increasing access and opportunities

1. Introduction of a 3-tier Boost Package for literature over 3-5 years

In addition to current funding for literature through Australia Council, the ASA calls for a targeted **Boost Package for Literature** to catch up on some of the ground lost. We propose a 3-tier, 3-5 year plan:

1. **Direct Investment in established talent driving the Creative Economy:** Five year grants of at least \$25,000 per annum to at least 100 writers in recognition that some of our most talented and important writers cannot survive from income from their creative practice alone. These grants would have the specific purpose of valuing their important contribution and giving writers time to write. An appropriate selection criteria should be imposed and applicants should be means tested.
2. **Investment in the talent pipeline that will fuel the creative economy of the future:** Seed money of at least \$10,000 for 100 young/emerging/new writers to upskill. This money to be used for educational purposes, for mentorship, for young writers to pay for the knowledge that will allow them to build their career.

"I received an ArtStart Grant of \$10,000 from the Australia Council about 5 years ago. You had to have a University degree in a creative course to qualify. The purpose of the grant was to establish you as a business, as an artist.

I paid for my ASA membership with that grant. I paid for a mentorship through the ASA with that grant. I couldn't have afforded the membership fee or the cost of an experienced mentor without it. Through that mentorship, I realised that my writing had to lift. That mentorship was instrumental in making my work publishable. I paid for workshops and seminars with that grant to learn about the industry, who the players were, publishers, agents, how it all works.

Five years down the track, I have a writing career. And it all started with that grant. Young writers need two things: recognition as having the potential to write professionally and seed money to begin. A lot of awards are for people who have already written a book. When you are starting out, you need someone to invest on you, take a chance on you. Government can build our future creative economy by investing directly in young talent."¹⁵

Holden Sheppard, Author

²¹ The film and television rights to Holden's novel *Invisible Boys* have recently been acquired, by auction, with multiple producers interested

This need for early support is reinforced by experienced author Anna Jacobs:

“In my first year of writing, I earned \$2,000. My 92nd book is being published now; I write three books a year and have built to a six figure income. This has taken time. I have achieved this by accessing international markets, my books sell in the UK, France, Germany and elsewhere. The majority of my income is brought in from overseas. I am a small business success story, exporting my stories to the world! But building a back list (where most of my income is generated) takes time and young writers need early investment to achieve the stability I have achieved over my long career.”

Anna Jacobs, Author

Building backlist is the day-to-day sustenance that keeps both publishers and authors going. According to Nielsen data, only 7.9% of titles which have sold this year, so far, are “front list” (titles released this year). The huge remainder are backlist. Publishers don’t survive without backlist titles. Authors can’t sustain themselves without backlist titles. It is almost impossible for an author to be able to live off a one-off success. Authors need to be able to write the second book quickly after the first, capitalise on the momentum and visibility of the first book and build....and build...and build. A “bestseller” in Australia may sell 5,000 copies, depending on the genre, generating for the author royalties of around \$10,000. For how long can an author live on \$10,000? It is the building of steady sales over many titles and many years that allows a writer to write full time for a living and hone their skills to excellence. This is why investment in our writers is crucial.

3. **Increase in the Federal Government’s PLR / ELR Budget:** We call for the amplification of the Lending Rights scheme by (a) boosting the overall budget for PLR / ELR payments to creators and publishers by at least 10% and (b) expanding eligibility to include digital formats. This would allow the Government to invest in the work of authors through an existing administrative structure. This investment would see an easing on mid-list authors who are struggling to survive in a hollowed out literary sector.

Proposal: That a new 3-tier Boost Package for literature be rolled out.

2. Modernise the eligibility criteria for Australia's Lending Rights Schemes (PLR / ELR) to include digital formats

Australian books held in public and educational libraries are subject to lending right payments – a Federal Government scheme that makes payments to eligible Australian creators and publishers in recognition of income lost through the free multiple borrowings of their work from libraries. The Public Lending Right (**PLR**) and Educational Lending Right (**ELR**) schemes were established in 1975 and 2000 after successful campaigning by the ASA.

For many authors, these payments are a valuable additional source of income, particularly for titles that are no longer widely stocked in bookshops, but which are still in demand by readers. Under the current arrangement, the lending rights schemes only cover **print** books. It is time to modernise the schemes to include digital formats: ebooks and audiobooks.

Since COVID-19, the widespread closures of libraries has meant borrowings of digital format books, both ebooks and audio books, have risen dramatically. Civica's Libraries Index²² assess borrowing data from more than 38 million loans across 90 regional and metropolitan libraries in Australia and New Zealand. In their recently released 2020 Index,²³ there were two major changes recorded:

- A significant increase in the borrowings of Australian books, at 60% of the Top 20 borrowings over the survey period, 20 percentage points higher than the 40% recorded in 2019.

²² Civica, provider of the cloud based Spydus library management system to schools, TAFEs and local government, partnered with the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) to generate the index.

²³ "Australian novels the most popular choices amongst readers.", *Civica*. 25 May 2020, <https://www.civica.com/en-au/container---news-library/australian-novels-the-most-popular-choices-amongst-readers/>

- A significant increase in borrowings in digital formats. For example, a major library service experienced a 56% increase in e-book loans in April and a 50% increase in e-audio books.

Civica, individual reporting libraries and ALIA (the Australian Library and Information Association) all consider that this new pattern of lending behaviour will continue post the pandemic.

According to the ASA's survey, **99% of respondents** who expressed a view on Digital Lending Rights were **in favour of expansion** of the scheme to cover digital formats. This is overwhelming evidence of universal stakeholder support for change.

Proposal: That the Government immediately expands the eligibility criteria of the lending rights scheme to include digital formats.

3. Introduce author-centric clauses into the Copyright Act to level a playing field which has become unbalanced

Traditional publishers are in a powerful position in the publisher/author relationship, in part because they write the contracts. It can be very difficult for a first-time author to negotiate the terms of their contract, when all the cards are in the publisher's hands and publishing opportunities are fiercely contested.

Unlike in many other countries, where there are some protections for authors embedded in legislation, in Australia, authors' rights and interests in their work are wholly dictated by contract. Freedom of contract underpins Australian copyright legislation. Given that authors typically have low bargaining power, do not know the market value of their books (the prediction problem), suffer an asymmetry of information and almost never get to renegotiate the terms once signed, relying on contract is not sufficient to address the distribution of revenue fairly. As academic Rita Matulionyte has argued:

"An alternative solution could be the introduction of legislative provisions, the so-called 'author-protective provisions'...Their purpose is to re-establish a legal balance in author-publisher relationships, and improve the chances of fairer author contracts leading to increased remuneration for authors."²⁴

The ASA submits that amendments to the *Copyright Act* should be introduced to allow for:

- (a) **Specific licensing:** We believe that the *Copyright Act* should render void the transfer of rights relating to forms of exploitation that are unknown or unforeseeable at the time the copyright licence was concluded.²⁵
- (b) **Reversion rights:** It is common for publishers to make a land grab for rights, whereby the publisher will ask for rights to every potential format, in every possible territory for the full term of copyright, which is the life of the author, plus 70 years after their death. The ASA argues that if the publisher fails to exploit those rights, they should revert to the author: licensing on a 'use it or lose it' basis. This right is provided for in the European Copyright Directive²⁶ which states:

²⁴ Matulionyte, Rita. "Empowering Authors Via Fairer Copyright Contract Law." *UNSW Law Journal*, vol. 42, no. 2, June 2019.

²⁵ "Many civil law jurisdictions also have restrictions with regard to rights transfer to future works. The laws of France, Hungary, Poland, and Spain expressly prohibit general transfers of rights to future works. Other countries (Germany, Italy) allow it, however, subject such transfer to certain conditions, such as a mandatory time limit or the obligation to pay additional remuneration to authors." - Ibid.

²⁶ Directive (EU) 2019/790 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market and amending Directives 96/9/EC and 2001/29/EC available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2019.130.01.0092.01.ENG#ntr3-L_2_019130EN.01009201-E0003

"Member States shall ensure that where an author or a performer has licensed or transferred his or her rights in a work on an exclusive basis, the author or performer may revoke in whole or in part the licence or the transfer of rights where there is a lack of exploitation of that work."

Such a right should be introduced in Australian legislation.

(c) **Royalties:** The ASA is aware of several problems with royalties from an author perspective:

- (i) There has been a shift away from retail based royalties in recent years, with some trade publishers paying royalties on "net receipts" instead of the list retail price, at a rate that disadvantages authors. Publishers also increasingly sell books to retailers at deep discounts, resulting in dramatically reduced royalties. The ASA is aware of authors' royalty statements where royalties for half of the sales were paid at deep discount rates.
- (ii) Only one-third of respondents to the ASA survey receive rising royalties (where the author's royalty increases once defined sales thresholds are achieved). This is unacceptable given that the publisher may determine the threshold at which the higher royalty kicks in and based on Nielsen data, we know how rarely these sales thresholds are achieved. There is no reason why rising royalties for print, ebook and audiobook formats should not be included in every publishing agreement across the board, allowing authors to more fairly enjoy in the upside of a runaway success.
- (iii) There is wide variation in the quality of royalty statements issued by publishers with some being excellent and some being deficient in information. As small business operators, transparency in royalty accounting is critical for authors.

Given these issues, a huge step forward would be to include in the *Copyright Act* a requirement for proportionate and equitable remuneration and for transparent reporting. This has been done overseas.²⁷

“In Germany, the so-called ‘bestseller’ clause allows authors to ask for a modification of the contract if the remuneration agreed upon is not proportionate to the income generated from the use of the work. France, Spain, Poland and some other EU Member States have similar bestseller clauses that require the remuneration indicated in the contracts to be ‘proportionate’ or ‘equitable’ and enable authors to request the amendment to the contract if this happens not to be the case. These clauses are meant to ensure that in case an author’s work becomes highly popular, the revenues generated are fairly shared with the author, notwithstanding the remuneration provisions in the initial contract.”²⁸

While publishers will of course negotiate on some of these issues if pressed, if an author has not obtained specialist advice on the contract or does not have an agent to help them, it is almost impossible for them to have the detailed understanding of the contract or the industry to help them negotiate a fairer deal. Requirements in legislation would be to the benefit of all authors.

Proposal: Australia is one of only a handful of countries that has no author protections built into their Copyright Act. It is therefore proposed that a small industry task force be charged with developing appropriate clauses for inclusion in the next round of copyright reforms.

²⁷ Article 18 of the European Copyright Directive provides: “Member States shall ensure that where authors and performers license or transfer their exclusive rights for the exploitation of their works or other subject matter, they are entitled to receive appropriate and proportionate remuneration.” Article 19 on the Directive states: “Member States shall ensure that authors and performers receive on a regular basis, at least once a year, and taking into account the specificities of each sector, up to date, relevant and comprehensive information on the exploitation of their works and performances from the parties to whom they have licensed or transferred their rights, or their successors in title, in particular as regards modes of exploitation, all revenues generationed and remuneration due.” Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/790/oj>

²⁸ Matulionyte, Rita. “Empowering Authors Via Fairer Copyright Contract Law.” *UNSW Law Journal*, vol. 42, no. 2, June 2019.

4. Increase the funding available for strategic investment by the Australia Council into literature

Federal funding for the Arts is challenging overall, but funding for literature is particularly low, as the following data demonstrates:

- In the decade between 2007/2008 and 2017/2018, the Federal Government committed 18.9% less expenditure on culture.²⁹
- A \$20.5 million increase in the quantum of performing arts funding in the ten years between 2009/2010 and 2019/2020, compared to a decrease of \$18 million in Australia Council grants and initiatives since the 2013/2014 financial year.
- **Literature represents only 7% of the total grants and initiatives funding pool, and 2.7% of total Australia Council funding overall.**
- Only 4% of that grants and initiatives allocation is spent in strategic development.³⁰

The quantum of funding available to literature, the lack of understanding about the necessary support structures and the absence of any strategic plan for the future of our writers all bear witness to the devaluing of literature. Literature has become the poor relation within the broad Arts family, generating an unsustainable average income for its creators, yet is fundamental to underpinning the arts more broadly and enjoys very high public participation rates. No one with a deep understanding of the literature sector has been included in the 12-member panel which comprises the recently formed Creative Economy Taskforce intended to provide strategic guidance to the Government, but all other art forms are represented.

²⁹ A New Approach. *The Big Picture: public expenditure on artistic, cultural and creative activity in Australia*. A New Approach & the Australian Academy of the Humanities, 2019.
<<https://www.humanities.org.au/new-approach/report1/>>

³⁰ The above statistics are all taken from Australia Council annual reports, available at:
<https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/about/annual-reports/>

The discretionary capability of the Australia Council for the Arts must be increased in order to better provide for strategic development across the various arts' disciplines. Currently, the 4% spend on strategic development amounted to \$2.8million in the 2019/2020 financial year, which equates to a tiny spend of \$560,000 each, across the five major art forms of Literature, Dance, Music, Theatre and the Visual Arts.³¹

This structure of funding gives Australia Council very little opportunity to work with each major sector of the Arts to develop strategic plans that are appropriate for each art form, which would in turn help to build the creative economy to which we are aspiring.

Proposal: That the Government increase the funding available for strategic investment in literature by Australia Council

5. Reinstate the book industry in analysis conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics

To inform strategic investment, research is needed. When the government cut funding to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2014, data collection for both Book Publishing and Book Selling was discontinued. This was a blow for the industry at the time and in the six years since that decision was taken, it has proved to be difficult to obtain meaningful data and track trends across the breadth of the total book industry.

The reinstatement of this data collection is vital for the industry to ensure that future investment is allocated appropriately for long-term growth and sustainability.

The Economics Department at Macquarie University has been at the forefront of book industry research for some years, undertaking major surveys into publishers, authors and reader trends. Their most recent survey into international rights sales and the export of Australian books will be released imminently.

³¹ Australia Council for the Arts. *Annual Report 2019-20*. Australia Council for the Arts, September 2020. <<https://www.transparency.gov.au/annual-reports/australia-council/reporting-year/2019-20-1>>

While Macquarie University's studies have been invaluable, there are still many significant areas of the industry about which we have very little hard data:

- Diversity: How representative are Australian books and the Australian book industry?
- Self-publishing: Who is doing it, how are they doing it, what is it costing and is it working?
- Book Clubs: How many people belong to a club, what are they reading, where do they get their books from?
- Reading patterns in young people
- The makeup of the publishers' sector, outside of the major internationally owned corporates.

For a very modest commitment of funds, accurate data on these and other topics of importance to the future of the industry could be obtained, which would make it significantly easier to allocate future funding into areas where it would make the biggest difference.

Proposal: That the Government commit to funding research into the literature sector to obtain valuable data on which a future overall federal strategy for the literature sector may be based.

6. Remove Tax from Literary Prizes

The ASA asks for the tax-free status enjoyed by recipients of the Prime Minister's Literary Awards to be extended to *all major literary awards* in Australia, including:

- The Miles Franklin Award
- The State Premier's Literary Awards
- The Barbara Jefferis Literary Award
- The Stella Prize
- The Vogel's Award
- The Children's Book Council of Australia Awards.

The total tax on these combined awards each year represents a tiny amount for the Government but would constitute a significant sum for individual authors.

Proposal: That the Government exempt prize money from literary awards from income tax.

Conclusion

"Australians deserve that their lives, experiences, country and culture be reflected in the literature that they read."

Thomas Keneally, AO

We draw the committee's attention to the important submissions made by many esteemed writers such as Kate Grenville, Helen Garner, Peter Carey, Nick Earls, Malcolm Knox, Gail Jones, Helen O'Neill, Michael Robotham. These submissions have the ASA's wholehearted support.

The recurring themes in many such submissions and this submission is that the opportunities afforded to writers in the past have receded and that investment in authors is desperately needed to fuel twenty-first century economic growth.

Research by A New Approach has found that: "Literature and print media is the only cultural and creative domain to have experienced negative GVA growth since the initial ABS analysis of Australian cultural and creative activity in 2008-09. Despite its decline, this domain is still a significant contributor to GDP."³²

³² Fielding, Kate and Trembath, Jodie-Lee. *Australia's Cultural and Creative Economy: a 21st Century Guide*. A New Approach & the Australian Academy of the Humanities, October 2020.

<<https://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ANA-InsightReportFive-FullReport.pdf>>

The COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted some of the challenges in Australian publishing but also provides an opportunity to 'build back better'. Policies that invest in authors will have an amplified return in terms of societal and community benefits, employment multipliers and international reputation. It is time for a significant boost to literature.

"Investing in Australian stories is an investment in our future: it's an investment in our youth, in mental health and education, and in our quest for a more just and understanding society. But it's also an investment in an industry which so many people are dependent on to break the monotony of everyday life. We look to books, movies, plays and TV shows to bring us joy, life lessons, family time and understanding."

Sarah Ayoub, Author, Journalist and Academic

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OF A U T H O R S

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Advocacy • Support • Advice

Appendix 1



Australian Society of Authors – About Us



Our purpose is to support authors and illustrators to pursue their creative career.

Our primary services are:

Advocacy

- Campaign at industry and government levels for author and illustrator rights including, but not limited to, fair copyright protections, fair contracts and fair pay.
- Campaign to increase the level of investment in literature, as the art form that underpins Australia's creative endeavours and cultural identity.
- Set minimum recommended industry rates of pay for authors and illustrators.
- Represent our members' interests to relevant policy-making bodies, including representation on the boards of copyright collecting societies and other book industry bodies.

Support

- Provision of training and mentorships to support members' writing and illustrating practice, with a particular focus on empowering members by increasing their business knowledge and expertise.
- Manage awards, residencies and other selective opportunities.
- Direct members in acute financial need to the Writers Benevolent Fund.

Advice

- Publication of template contracts and detailed information for authors and illustrators on professional matters including, but not limited to, publishing and copyright.

- Provision of extensive individual advice for members across a wide range of industry issues and, in partnership with Banki Haddock Fiora Lawyers, a heavily subsidised contract assessment service is made available to members.

Appendix 2

Non-exhaustive list of Film and TV Adaptations from Australian books over last 20 years

- *Round the Twist* (1990 – 2001) – first two series were based on stories by Paul Jennings
- *Looking for Alibrandi* (2000) – based on the book by Melina Marchetta
- *Chopper* (2000) – based on Mark Brandon Read's autobiographical stories
- *He Died with a Falafel in his Hand* (2001) - based on autobiographical novel by John Birmingham
- *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002) - based on the novel by Doris Pilkington (Nugi Garimara)
- *Stiff* and *The Brush Off* from The Murray Whelan series (2004) – based on the detective novels by Shane Maloney
- *48 Shades* (2006) - based on Nick Earls' novel 48 Shades of Brown
- *Romulus, My Father* (2007) – based on the biographical memoir by Raimond Gaita
- *Nim's Island* (2008) and *Return to Nim's Island* (2013) –based on children's book by Wendy Orr
- *Snowtown* (2011) – based on the books *Killing for Pleasure* by Debi Marshall and *The Snowtown Murders* by Andrew McGarry
- *Red Dog* (2011) – Loosely based on a 2002 novel by Louis de Bernières (English writer)
- *The Hunter* (2011) - based on the novel by Julia Leigh
- *The Slap* (2011) – based on the novel by Christos Tsiolkas
- *Puberty Blues* (2012) - based on the novel by Kathy Lette and Gabrielle Carey
- *Conspiracy 365* – based on the novels by Gabrielle Lord
- *Jack Irish* (2012) - based on the Jack Irish novels by Peter Temple
- *The Broken Shore* (2013)- based on crime novel by Peter Temple
- *The Book Thief* (2014) – based on the novel by Markus Zusak
- *The Dressmaker* (2015) - based on the 2000 novel by Roslaie Ham

- *Tomorrow When the War Began* (2016) - based on novel by John Marsden
- *Lion* (2016) - based on memoir of Saroo Brierley
- *The Family Law* (2016) - based on memoir by Benjamin Law
- *Barracuda* (2016) – based on novel by Christos Tsiolkas
- *Jasper Jones* (2017) - based on novel by Craig Silvey
- *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (2017) - based on novel by Elliot Perlman
- *Big Little Lies* (2017) - based on novel by Liane Moriarty (American producer, HBO)
- *Breath* (2017) - based on novel by Tim Winton
- *The Secret River* (2018) - based on novel by Kate Grenville
- *Ladies in Black* (2018) - based on novel by Madeleine St John
- *Lambs of God* (2019) - based on novel by Marele Day (ranked high among Foxtel's most watched programs)
- *Ride Like a Girl* (2019) - based on memoir of Michelle Payne
- *Dirt Music* (2019) - based on novel by Tim Winton
- *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2020) - based on novel by Peter Carey
- *Burial Rites* - based on novel by Hannah Kent
- *The Dry* - based on Jane Harper's novel (starring Eric Bana, due for release August 2020)
- *Shantaram* - based on memoir by Gregory David Roberts
- *The Secrets She Keeps* – based on novel by Michael Robotham (TV series, Network ten)
- *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (TV series and film, 2020) – based on novels by Kerry Greenwood
- *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart* – based on novel by Holly Ringland (funded for development by Screen Australia)
- *The Hating Game* - by Sally Thorne (in production, American producer)
- *Boy Swallows Universe* - by Trent Dalton (being adapted for television with Australian actor Joel Edgerton named as the show's producer)
- *Billie B Brown* – by Sally Rippin (being adapted for television, has funding through Film Victoria's Development on Demand Fund)
- *Flames* - by Robbie Arnott (will be developed into TV series, partly funded by Tasmanian government).

Non-exhaustive list of adaptations from books to stage

- *Storm Boy* - Colin Thiele
- *The Magic Pudding* - Norman Lindsay
- *The Rabbits* - John Marsden
- *Merry Go Round the Sea* - Randolph Stow
- *Picnic at Hanging Rock* - Joan Lindsay
- *Hating Alison Ashley* - Robin Klein
- *The Messenger* - Markus Zusak
- *The Secret River* - Kate Grenville
- *Jasper Jones* - Craig Silvey
- *The Harp in the South* - Ruth Park
- *Cloudstreet* - Tim Winton
- *The Drover's Wife* - adapted from Henry Lawson's short story for the stage by Leah Purcell and then into a book by Leah Purcell
- *The Nutcracker* (adapted as a ballet) - E.T.A Hoffman

Non-exhaustive list of musical theatre productions based on books:

- *Phantom of the Opera*
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*
- *The Woman in Black*
- *Cats* (based on T.S. Eliot poetry)
- *Doctor Zhivago*
- *Hamilton*
- *Wicked*
- *Les Misérables*
- *Matilda*