

National Cultural Policy Submission

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I am enormously grateful for the government funding *Kill Your Darlings* has received for Australian writers' payments since we began in 2010. Without this funding, we would have struggled to fairly remunerate our contributors and develop other programs, prizes and initiatives for emerging writers. And by any measure, government funding for *KYD* has yielded strong results: we have published thousands of Australian writers, created a range of literary prizes, mentorship programs and other editorial opportunities, and are one of the country's best read literary magazines. It has been a privilege to work with so many talented Australian writers and to share in a small part of their writing journeys. It has also been hugely gratifying and often moving to see how readers have responded to our writers' work.

I have always believed the success of *KYD* relates directly to this government investment. The imprimatur of government funding bodies had an extraordinary effect on our fledgling organisation: it gave us confidence, pride, motivation, and short-term financial security.

And though we have always appreciated this funding and tried to make the most of it, I have often felt like our organisation has succeeded in spite of the government of the day, not because of it. Politically motivated funding cuts to the arts has had a profound impact on our business and wellbeing of our organisation, as well as other small publishers like us. Every year we are incredibly anxious about how little funding is available for distribution, and what it might mean if we miss out. And while we have always strived to be innovative, nimble and resourceful, the scarcity of this government funding coupled with the arbitrary nature of these cuts threatens to erode that resilience. Government investment in the arts should feel like a partnership, not a battlefield. Imagine what could be achieved if there was more security, and more trust.

I would, therefore, like to see the paradigms of policy discussion around arts funding to change in this country. It's not radical change I'm seeking, but some consistency, and some fairness. I would like to see the literary sector afforded the same measurement of financial support as other industries. That our successes as an industry are recognised, and the metrics of this success are considered in a rational and non-partisan manner. That whether the arts are valuable in our society is no longer questioned. That the literary sector is recognised as a legitimate industry: one that generates cultural output *and* enjoys strong economic growth and productivity.

This vision would see long-term, secure and proportionate government investment in a greater number of literary organisations and their workers. This investment would generate new jobs, new vocational opportunities for writers, new teaching and creative training, and most importantly new Australian writing for a public that appreciates Australian literature in all its forms. This investment would demonstrate that literary sector jobs and livelihoods are valued fairly, and that our value as Australians is measured equally.