



# WA Writing Sector Review Final Report and Recommendations

Department of Culture and the Arts  
12 June 2017



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE SECTOR

The Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA) engaged Positive Solutions to undertake a review of the writing sector in Western Australia (WA), the objective being to identify current challenges, strengths and opportunities, and examine strategies and possible future directions for the sector. DCA noted in its brief to the consultants for this Review a decline in the number of WA writers, citing Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data indicating a 9% reduction since 2006-2011. It is DCA's wish to stem this decline as far as possible.

WA has a history of significant achievement in Australian literature. Amongst others, writers include Randolph Stow (Miles Franklin winner), Sally Morgan (Prime Minister's Award winner), Tim Winton (four-time Miles Franklin winner), Kim Scott (two-time Miles Franklin winner), Gail Jones (ALS Gold Medal winner), and other major writers and prize winners.

There are at least six publishers based in WA – Fremantle Press, Magabala Books, Margaret River Press, UWA Publishing, Hesperian Press and Gestalt Publishing. There is a range of other organisations which provide support services for writers, including professional development activities – from Playwriting Australia and the Fellowship of Australian Writers to the Literature Centre and writingWA, the peak body for writing and associated activities in WA. There are also three community-based writers' centres and, throughout WA, there are 231 public libraries<sup>1</sup> which provide a nexus for writers and readers in a geographically challenging state.

There is a strong regional literary festival culture in regional WA – often initiated or supported by the public library. Geraldton, Kununurra, Avon Valley, Broome, Margaret River and Mandurah Festivals are all initiatives of, or have strong links with, their public libraries, and support from DCA provided via writingWA.

## FUNDING

Grant programs for the writing sector in WA are provided by the Department of Culture and the Arts and managed by writingWA. Aside from small fluctuations due to application numbers there has been a sustained overall level of support for writers and writing organisations. For the five year period from 2011 to 2016 there has been an overall increase of 25.9 per cent of funding provided to individuals and organisations in the writing sector. In 2015-16 DCA funding for literature totalled \$1.17m. Approximately half of funds for writing are currently directed to two WA publishers; and over a third is directed to other facilitative organisations in the sector. The proportion of funding devoted to publishers is much higher than occurs interstate. Reporting from seven key writing organisations funded by DCA indicated in the 2015 reporting period that:

- > They were funded by DCA to a total of \$1.27 million (core and additional activities);
- > From this DCA funding they levered an additional \$3.43 million in income from other sources;

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government (2016), data.gov.au, retrieved from <https://data.gov.au/dataset/western-australia-public-library-network/resource/7368683f-c5c6-41f7-9175-5577aea029c2>

- > This represents a leverage of \$2.69 for every \$1 of DCA support;
- > This additional income included \$1.57 million in earned income, or 33 per cent of their overall income;
- > The organisations undertook nearly 900 activities, engaging over 300,000 participants

In addition to its support to writers and writing organisations, Government support for the sector is also manifested through its investment in the State Library of Western Australia and Screenwest.

## DEVELOPMENT

From a survey undertaken for this study it is evident that the most important developmental support for writers had been personal networks of contacts, peer review and peer support, writers' groups and access to libraries or museums. Residencies and fellowships had ranked very highly in individual interviews conducted for this consultancy; however, they did not rate highly in importance in this survey, largely because a significant proportion had not had access to these. The most important relationships writers surveyed have within the sector are with publishers, writers' festivals and libraries (68% had accessed public libraries and 55% SLWA).

Many said that they needed a better understanding of business management, marketing and legal issues. Residencies, art flight grants, and funding that provides the time to write were mentioned frequently.

The majority of consultees felt that in its current form the WA Premier's Book Award was ineffective, and delivered few benefits to WA writers; either it should be reconfigured or the money spent elsewhere on sectoral development (however, a significant number also said it was vital to retain and reconfigure).

In framing initiatives that will grow and sustain the writing sector, the following issues arising from the research and consultation process have also influenced the consultants' advice.

- > Market development is a critical issue for everyone working in this sector in Australia, and one which WA needs to address with some urgency. WA's isolation from decision-makers and peer-groups highlights this
- > Proximity to Asia offers a significant opportunity for WA writers (and to the creative industries in WA more generally)
- > Publishers, under market pressures, are becoming more conservative and not building writers' careers in the way that many have previously
- > Collaboration between allied and sometimes competing parties, such as publishers, is an emerging model in Australia and internationally. With the disruption of internet and digital technologies there is a greater need for publishers to cooperate and negotiate with other firms, including competitors, or others such as games, software and media companies in order to create new products.
- > Sales opportunities in the digital marketplace do not fundamentally alter the
- > economics of publishing but have provided more opportunities for scholarly publishers
- > Arts financing models in other jurisdictions and overseas are demonstrating new approaches to resourcing and program delivery (further detailed provided in section 3.5).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In a number of cases DCA's role will be to facilitate implementation by other agencies rather than to directly organise from within DCA. This does, however, imply a proactive and catalytic industry engagement role, rather than a responsive funder role alone.

This review reflects DCA's wish to ensure that its policy and program priorities are effective in supporting the writing sector. Accordingly, it is recommended that DCA prepare a brief statement of sector development intentions and priorities, and provide this as a guide to individual and organisational applicants.

The 24 recommendations are clustered under creative and market development.

### CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

- > Supporting Creative Practice
- > Career development

### MARKET DEVELOPMENT

- > Promoting WA writers
- > International presence
- > Promoting a strong reading culture
- > Coordinate support agencies
- > Services delivery mechanism
- > Measuring progress

The recommendations have also been re-presented in relation to their impact upon writers at different stages of their career development.



## 2. BRIEF AND METHODOLOGY

The Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA) engaged Positive Solutions to undertake a review of the writing sector in Western Australia (WA), the objective being to identify current challenges, strengths and opportunities, and examine strategies and possible future directions for the sector.

Key tasks included:

1. Identify strengths and opportunities for the sector, including new forms of publishing, cross-artform activity and increased online distribution
2. Identify possible policy or program responses to better enable the sector to realise these opportunities; and
3. Provide recommendations for consideration by the Minister for Culture and the Arts and the sector

The review was identified as a Strategic Initiative within the DCA Strategic Plan for 2016. The consultants' brief articulated DCA's concern at the decline in the number of writers in WA (reduction of 9% 2006 – 2011: ABS) and the decline in those engaged in publishing; and DCA expressed the need to ensure the sector would be able to take advantage of new and emerging opportunities in WA and further afield. For this study DCA specified that journalists, copywriters and technical writers were excluded, as were newspaper publishing, book and magazine wholesaling.

The consultants have conducted 20 interviews with writers and 'facilitators', the latter being organisations which play a role within the writing sector, including those which provide a range of support services to writers in WA and elsewhere in Australia. The consultants also surveyed WA writers (159 respondents), facilitated three focus groups (15 participants in total) and facilitated a Sector Workshop comprising 19 representatives from DCA and key stakeholders to discuss the initial findings and explore possible future directions. In addition, the consultants reviewed a range of background documents supplied by DCA, and sourced from elsewhere (See Appendix 1).

This report examines first some national and WA contexts for writing and provides an overview of the type and levels of support available to writers currently, and a description of the ecology of the WA writing sector. Some information on recent developments in financing arts and creative activity is provided. Sector consultation findings are summarised, based on interviews and focus groups, a writers' survey, and a workshop. The report concludes with recommendations for future action.



## 3. CONTEXTS

*Strategic Directions 2016 to 2031*, the long-term strategic direction for the arts and culture sector endorsed by the WA Government last year, stated a need to identify drivers for, and barriers to, cultural and commercial growth, including those caused by government practices. One of the many objectives listed was to deliver growth in the “currently underdeveloped sub-sectors of visual arts, crafts/design, literature, digital media and theatre” by 2026.

DCA noted in its brief to the consultants for this Review a decline in the number of WA writers, citing Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data indicating a 9% reduction since 2006-2011 and further research by Macquarie University that indicates that only 7.4 per cent of all published Book Authors in Australia are located in WA.<sup>2</sup> It is DCA’s wish to stem this decline.

Major cultural developments have been underway in WA in recent years. In the Perth Cultural Centre this includes the opening of the State Theatre Centre of WA in 2011 and the current development of the New Museum, a large-scale project planned for completion by 2020. Upgrades to the Alexander Library Building, which houses the State Library of WA (SLWA), are also planned, opening up opportunities for reconfiguring its current use. The activation efforts of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority (MRA) have also seen the area used much more for major public events and gatherings. Use of it for Fringe (which has boomed) has positioned it as a viable summer venue so it is reasonable to assume that activation of the space through writing activity will also sit well.

Along with this improved infrastructure, DCA is involved in the transition of Screenwest from a Government agency to an independent, not-for-profit company. DCA seeks to strengthen the writing culture in the State so that writers are able to take up opportunities arising from these (and other) initiatives. This Review forms part of that strategy and seeks to inform DCA of the current situation and identify approaches that will grow and strengthen the sector.

### 3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE WRITING SECTOR

WA has a history of significant achievement in Australian literature. Trailblazers such as Xavier Herbert, Randolph Stow and Dorothy Hewett have been followed by others whose names are recognised around the world – Tim Winton, Sally Morgan and Elizabeth Jolley. Contemporary award-winning writers Joan London, Kim Scott, Gail Jones, Craig Silvey, John Kinsella and Shaun Tan have all emerged from the WA scene. Along with this is a healthy crop of genre-based WA writers with substantial publication and sales records who are recognised nationally and internationally in areas such as crime, science fiction and romance.

WA has also experienced some major publishing break throughs with high selling publications such as Albert Facey’s *A Fortunate Life* (Fremantle Press, over 800, 000 sold), as well as the ground-breaking publication of Aboriginal stories told by Aboriginal people, most obviously Sally Morgan’s *My Place* (Fremantle Press) and *Follow the Rabbit-proof Fence* (UQP) by Doris Pilkington. Since 1987 Magabala

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<sup>2</sup> *Book Authors and their Changing Circumstances*, (2015) Macquarie University, Throsby Zwar and Longden



Books in Broome has provided a distinct Aboriginal publishing presence in Australia. 30 years on Magabala produces c.10 titles per year and continues to give voice to Indigenous talent.

The range of writers' groups and 'facilitating organisations' in WA reflects the strong interest in the sector. Well established writers centres, writing groups, professional writing associations, public library and local government-initiated writing events and activities, journals, book clubs and literary festivals offer multiple entry points for readers and writers to engage in WA literary culture.

Musician Nick Allbrook's essay in the Griffith Review's Looking West articulates two key aspects of life in WA as culturally productive – rebellion against boredom and the compression of isolation. He notes the vibrancy of counter-culture to which Perth as a city gives rise.

Tim Winton, asked by Madeline Watts in the same Griffith Review if he considers himself a Western Australian writer answered:

*I'm very conscious of the specifics of geography and the way it shapes us, whether we recognise this or not. And it used to take a certain doggedness to be a WA writer, defiance even, given the prevailing cultural headwind.*

Winton continued, noting "a historical grievance at work, about being forgotten or forsaken by the rest of the Federation. But also, a hardiness and inventiveness that's worth some credit." Isolation, then, but also inventiveness..."<sup>3</sup>

With around 11% of Australia's population and a third of its vast landmass, the scale, diversity of its peoples and grandeur of its landscape are WA's defining features. Catherine Noske in The Conversation adds: "Much is made of facing a different sea, but the distance across land is just as significant." Writers, while acknowledging the inspiration WA provides, feel this isolation from the major population centres and business hubs keenly.

Writing matters, Noske says because '[it] has the power in WA to create community and contribute to society'.

The State's internal geography is also significant for the sector. The size of the State, the distance between population centres, the expansion of the metropolitan area, are environmental factors that have affected the evolution of the writing and publishing sector in WA.

### 3.1.1 LITERARY FESTIVALS

There are many things to celebrate in the recent, and longer-term, achievements and status of writing in WA. In the last 5 years, the Perth Writer's Festival has increased ticketed attendances by around 30%. This is largely made up of increases in school student attendances. There were 32,000 total attendances in 2012 including 12,825 ticketed; and 47,000 total attendances in 2016 including 16,691 ticketed. The Festival is currently waiting on the final figures for 2017 but estimate 45,000 total including 15,545 ticketed. By way of comparison, Brisbane Writers Festival (now 'Uplit') achieved attendances of 38,868 over five days during 2016, predominantly ticketed. The organisation presents other activities through

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<sup>3</sup> Contending with a Blank Page, Madeleine Watts, Griffith Review 47, pp 105-115. Quoted in Tim Winton to Gail Jones: why writing matters in WA The Conversation, Catherine Noske, 30 January 2017

the year, taking total attendances up to 48,890 in 2016. Melbourne Writers Festival claimed an audience of 73,000+ (described as ‘record breaking’) across its ten-day program in 2016.

Perth Writers Festival has had a large increase in free attendances for Family Day as this has become an increasingly popular event which has built over time. There have been small variances in specific programming streams which has also diversified the audience. Whilst not only a WA-focused event it enlivens and engages those who are consumers of writing across a broad range of genres.

Other literary events and festivals presented across the year in Perth include the Perth Poetry Festival from WA Poets Inc, the Australian Short Story Festival from the Centre for Stories and Perth Slam’s heats in the lead-up to the Australian Poetry Slam.

The Regional Writers Festival Partnership provides funding from DCA, Department of Regional Development and Royalties for Regions for writingWA to support regional festivals in Geraldton, Kununurra, Avon Valley, Broome, Mandurah and Margaret River. These festivals are all initiatives of, or have strong links with, their public libraries.

### **3.1.2 PUBLISHING**

There are at least six active publishers based in WA – Fremantle Press, Magabala Books, Margaret River Press, UWA Publishing, Gestalt Publishing and Hesperian Press. Fremantle Press and Magabala are recipients of Organisational Investment from DCA to underpin their operations. UWA Publishing is a small independent publisher and also a department within the university, supported through accommodation and salaries by the UWA and dependent on revenue generation for the remainder. Margaret River Press, Gestalt and Hesperian have all arisen from the personal passions of their founders and rely on various combinations of sales and other revenue for survival. Gestalt is a WA success story in producing graphic novels. Hesperian Press has been publishing titles in Australiana and aspects of history since 1969.

Journal publishing (including Westerly magazine published regularly since 1956) self-publishing, online publishing, organisational and personal blogs all add to the output of writing in WA.

### **3.1.3 SUPPORT FOR WRITING**

As detailed in the report below (section 3.4), WA has a range of organisations offering services and opportunities to writers at all stages of their writing career and across many different genres and platforms. These extend from Playwriting Australia and the Fellowship of Australian Writers to the Literature Centre, the Centre for Stories and writingWA. There are also three community-based writers’ centres and, throughout WA, there are 231 public libraries<sup>4</sup> which provide a nexus for writers and readers in a geographically challenging state.

According to their remit, these organisations cater for those who write literature (44% of writers surveyed for this study); those writing non-fiction, genre fiction, children’s and young adult fiction; and those writing for screen, theatre, video gaming and other platforms. WritingWA is positioned as the peak body in this diverse landscape to provide coordination, advocacy and a range of specific programs and services that support the writing community.

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<sup>4</sup> Australian Government (2016), data.gov.au, retrieved from <https://data.gov.au/dataset/western-australia-public-library-network/resource/7368683f-c5c6-41f7-9175-5577aea029c2>

While the activities of other support and ‘facilitating’ agencies are outlined later, two significant organisations merit noting as strategic agencies with an impact on the writing sector – Screenwest and the State Library of WA.

Screenwest, charged with developing WA’s screen culture to bring world-class Western Australian stories to the screen, is an important source of direct and indirect support to WA writers. Its investment in local production and the telling of WA stories creates opportunities for writers to develop their screenwriting skills and/or see their works produced. This includes the \$16m Western Australian Regional Film Fund launched in July 2016. Along with this Screenwest provides funding to the Australia Writer’s Guild and administers a range of funds that can assist writers and other screen practitioners with professional development activities. In particular the newly designed Bill Warnock Writers’ Initiative provides two emerging WA writers with a yearlong, tailored professional development program.

Screenwest is currently transitioning from a government agency to a not for profit company limited by guarantee and is moving its headquarters to the East Perth Creative Hub (top floor of the ABC building). This, together with changes that see more emphasis placed on screen works that are about WA or written by WA writers, indicate potential for more activity for WA writers.

The State Library of WA has an annual \$10m budget to build its collection of published material across all formats and plays a vital role in providing a context for its collection, providing research services to writers (and others) and in connecting readers with writers and promoting literacy. In partnership with local governments across WA, SLWA maintains a network of 231 public libraries that provide a nexus for writers and readers in a geographically challenging state. Its promotion of children’s literature through its highly successful Better Beginnings program is delivered through this network, as are many reading and writing initiatives. SLWA also manages the Premier’s Book Awards and accommodates writingWA and complementary organisations such as the Film & Television Institute (FTI).

DCA’s intended reconfiguration of the Alexander Library building and likely relocation of some functions will create opportunities to accommodate more activities for writers, including the development of a facility that could attract the public to larger scale reading and writing events, along the lines of the State Library of Victoria’s Wheeler Centre.

Such development would enhance the work that has already gone into creating the Perth Cultural Centre and the excitement of the New Museum project, mentioned above. The activation efforts of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority (MRA) in the Perth Cultural Centre and the public’s embrace of the area for major public events, including the booming Fringe Festival, has positioned it as a viable summer venue from which library- based writing activity could benefit.

### **3.1.4 EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES**

An increasing engagement with Asia is evidenced by links with Singapore and Ubud Writers Festival in recent years – much of this supported by DCA funding through writingWA. WritingWA has a number of international programs to facilitate WA creators to participate in Ubud Writers and Readers Festival, the Asian Festival of Children’s Content in Singapore, and to develop new relationships and opportunities for WA writers at Makassar Festival (Indonesia) and Peek-a-Book Festival (Hyderabad). They also have hosting programs for Singaporean and Indonesian writers to encourage networking with writers, publishers and booksellers. WA’s universities also have Asian literary engagement, such as Curtin’s China-Australia Writing Centre. Westerly magazine has had strong Asian links in the past, and is understood to be re-engaging currently.

## 3.2 THE MARKET

### 3.2.1 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRENDS: PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTION

Statistics from Euromonitor released in 2015 show that global turnover from book publishing has experienced sharp declines in recent years. Between 2011 and 2014, revenue fell from \$165 billion to \$145 billion. Since then, however, a number of regions such as the UK and USA have started to grow again.<sup>5</sup>

The total market for books in Australia was valued at \$2.2 billion in 2010 by PwC in its report *Cover to Cover: a market analysis of the book industry*, conducted in its capacity as advisors to the Book Industry Strategy Group (BISG) PwC estimated trade book sales were worth \$1.5 billion and educational book sales \$820 million.

US-based ebook analysts Author Earnings included Australian data in its reporting for the first time in 2017 and estimated the ebook market was worth \$164million in the year to February 2017 with 96% sold through global online retailers; 29% were from the big five publishers, 27% self-published authors and 26% from small to medium publishers. Author Earnings reported that self-published indie authors were capturing between a quarter and a third of all ebook sales in each of the English-speaking markets<sup>6</sup>, representing an opportunity for writers.

The consultants have not been able to access reliable trend data for Australia. Many data sources only cover a single year or a limited number of years, most notably the ABS publications on book publishing and book retailing, which stopped in 2003-04.

A significant question for this study was the impact of online sales and publishing on the writing ecology. The main impact has been to increase access to book buying and publishing; all components of the ecosystem, the online store, the ebook and paper book have a viable share of the market. The sale of ebooks after rapid growth has waned slightly.

All components of the writing ecosystem remain important since digitisation; the major impact has been the way all parties – authors, stores, publishers – are developing a direct relationship with readers through social marketing. A downside has been the rise of untrustworthy publishers, which requires authors to be very cautious before entering into an online self-publishing arrangement.

The issue of parallel imports whereby there are time restrictions on imports if an Australian publisher has the rights to a book appears to have waned in importance, with the Australian Booksellers Association (ABA) now more concerned about ensuring GST is paid on all imported products to create a level playing field. The ABA is collaborating with Australian Publishers Association to address this and other issues. “More than six hundred thousand copies of the latest Harry Potter book were printed in Australia and were available on the same day as the rest of the world. So, we are working together so that readers get the book when they want it,” Joel Becker, CEO ABA said.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cnbc.com/2016/03/03/book-sales-are-in-decline-but-audio-books-are-thriving.html>

<sup>6</sup> Books & Publishing, 10 March 2017

Publishers are much more than middlemen. Traditionally they built careers, researched the market, negotiated with global distributors and launched books into the global marketplace. A good publisher guides, supports and invests in authors. With the disruption of internet and digital technologies there is a greater need now for publishers to cooperate and negotiate with other firms, including competitors, or others such as games, software and media companies in order to create new products. Apple and Amazon have developed walled gardens of content and services, and consequently publishers have surrendered their customer relationship to intermediary firms. Publishers now need to be more focused on and connected with end users than ever before.

All parts of the supply chain are subject to disintermediation: authors self-publish, agents offer publishing services, publishers cut out wholesalers and retailers, and online retailers act as aggregators, publishers, printers, and libraries, thus trying to disintermediate everyone through a vertical business from author to reader.<sup>7</sup> The authors consulted felt that aggregation without curation is not helpful to the reader. This may be one reason why in recent years there has been a slow growth of the independent bookseller in Australia, helping to fill the gap left when two major chain stores closed.

In *Digital Disruption and Innovation in the Australian Book Industry* Jan Zwar (2016) examines changes that are underway in the publishing process, drawing on findings from interviews with a broad range of senior Australia publishers. The report recounts reforms and initiatives that demonstrate a variety of innovations being trialled and implemented in the Australia industry.

The key findings of this paper were:

- > There has been a decline in sales by Australian small-scale bookstores but they are still essential for handselling books by Australian authors.
- > Online and international sales were increasing, with the result that a small number of large publishers were responsible for the majority of book sales. However, the market is still poor for Australian authors. Success in these markets is driven by travel to key book fairs.
- > Australian publishers are experimenting across digital platforms with changes to royalty and subscription agreements, providing free ebook downloads which helps make niche publishing projects viable. While authors still seek traditional publisher relationships there has been an increase in publishing innovation and technology driving new models for example:
  - E-books - marked-up versions
  - Braille and DAISY audio options
  - Experimentation with literary form and collaboration between writers and readers
- > A reduction in government support for market development has contributed to conservatism in publishing
- > There has been a shift toward social media promotion leading to new relationships between author and reader (as noted above)
- > Sales opportunities in the digital marketplace do not fundamentally alter the economics of publishing but have provided more opportunities for scholarly publishers

It has been noted that as the financial environment grows ever more challenging, collaboration, sharing best practice and pursuing joint initiatives wherever possible is vitally important.<sup>8</sup> This concept was

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<sup>7</sup> *Inside Book Publishing*, Giles Clark, Angus Phillips (Routledge)

<sup>8</sup> *The Literature and Publishing Sector Review*, Creative Scotland (2015)

supported by interviews conducted for the WA writing ecology. The same report also recognised how important it is for government to embrace the diversity of writing, recognise the importance of high quality work, take a holistic view of writers, publishers and other stakeholders, and support reader development through literacy programs, and the inclusion of national literature within the education system.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.2.2 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRENDS: READING

Australia has long been described as a nation of readers. However, there are warning signs that reading as a leisure activity may be in decline or is at best static. A Roy Morgan 2015 study of Australia's reading habits found the proportion of Australians 14+ who had read a novel in the last three months is declining (down for women to 60.9% from 64.7%). However, 74.5% of Aussie kids aged 6 – 13 enjoyed reading (higher than 2010). Consultations for this study also confirmed that young adult and children's books were the fastest growing areas.

An examination of cultural spending in WA in 2010 revealed that households spent \$2.011 million on cultural goods and services (\$19.876m nationally). Of this, spending on books in WA amounted to \$238m, only exceeded by home entertainment and Pay TV fees<sup>10</sup> (in line with national findings).

In America, the Pew Research Center survey found the share of Americans who had read a book in the last year (73%) had remained static since 2010; 65% had read a paper book compared with 28% an ebook.

However, in those parts of Asia with a high proportion of English speakers, such as India, there is a burgeoning market. According to a 2009 National Youth Readership Survey, three out of four youths in the country are literate and a quarter of the youth population (83 million) identify themselves as book readers. By 2020 the country's literacy level is projected to reach 90%, which presents a significant opportunity for the global publishing industry.

### 3.2.3 NATIONAL AND WA CONTEXTS: WRITERS

WA writers and publishers compete for the attention of readers around the world. The market for writing is global and, indeed, to be financially viable Australian writers and publishers must receive some success in overseas markets. Consequently, writers operate in an intensely competitive market.

Throsby in 2009 (*Do you really get paid for this?* commissioned by the Australia Council) estimated 7,600 practicing writers in Australia; if they are distributed according to population, this could put the number of practicing writers in Western Australia at around 850.

The Macquarie University report *Australian Authors, Industry Brief No.1 Key Findings* (October 2015) found the profession of book author to be predominantly female, outnumbering men in most genres; older with half of respondents aged 40 to 59 years, more highly educated than the general population (almost half had completed a postgraduate degree), and, on average, earned \$12,900 a year as an author.

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<sup>9</sup> ibid

<sup>10</sup> *Cultural Report* (2012) Prepared by the National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics, for the Statistics Working Group, available on DCA website

The findings from the research of WA writers conducted by Positive Solutions for this study are similar (sample size: 159). Unlike the Macquarie study however, respondents were not restricted to those who had already been published. The WA respondents ranged from aspiring writers to those who are seeking publication or have had a few books published and, at the top end, those who are now writing fulltime and receive most of their income from this work.

The WA survey found two thirds were female; two thirds had postgraduate degrees and 78% were aged 45+ years, which helps to explain why many of those providing services to the writing sector said to the consultants they were seeking to encourage a greater diversity of voices.

Less than 10% of WA writers surveyed had earned more than \$40,000 from their writing in the last financial year; while 38% had earned \$5000 or less and 24% had earned nothing from their writing. A picture emerges of a huge untapped resource, with writers devoting much of their time to non-writing work to pay the bills. Non-writing-related earnings comprised 75% or more of income for two thirds of respondents (64%).

The Macquarie study also found author's earnings from their creative practice were significantly lower than their total income. Though nearly 20% of authors worked full-time on their creative practice, less than 5% had earned the Australian ABS average annual income from their practice alone.

The highest average earnings from practicing as an Australian writer were associated with education authors (\$16,500), children's authors (\$14,000) and genre fiction authors (\$11,000). The lowest average earnings were associated with poets. The Macquarie report further stated that genre fiction authors appeared to be major beneficiaries of change with one quarter assessing they were better off than in the previous year.

Genre fiction authors were most likely to report that they had changed the way their work was published or distributed (84%) as the result of the increased number of publishing formats; nearly one in five (19%) had self-published a print or ebook in the previous year with genre fiction writers being by far the most active.

Around half (52%) of WA writers in the Positive Solutions study had had their works published as an ebook and 36% had self-published their work, a significantly higher proportion than in the Macquarie study, likely to be a result of the sample which was not restricted to published authors and, perhaps, a greater need for WA authors to overcome isolation from major publishers and markets.

The top three areas engaged in as a WA professional writer were: poetry (49%), adult fiction (44%) and other non-fiction (33%). The study asked writers to tick all applicable boxes, so it could be that for many writing poetry was a secondary interest, though poetry is certainly a popular form for many aspiring writers.

### **3.3 SUPPORT FOR WRITING IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS**

Across Australia there are various models of support for writing. The consultants have reviewed the support provided in Queensland, Victoria and federally through the Australia Council for the Arts.



### 3.3.1 AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

Support for individual artists is primarily through the peer-assessed grant program offered across several areas including career development grants, arts projects, fellowships and international residencies. Individual grant programs are offered up to four times a year and are extremely competitive, particularly for the literary sector.

Nationally, Australia Council for the Arts hosts inbound and outbound programs to promote Australian writers (publishers, scouts, literary agents and international bookfairs). In 2015-2016, the Australia Council supported 136 international curators, publishers, literary agents, music bookers, presenters and producers to attend major Australian contemporary arts events. The Visiting International Publishers program, delivered alongside the Sydney Writers' Festival in May, engaged 19 international publishers with Australia's literary culture and offered insight into global trends and opportunities for Australian authors and publishers. This led to a number of purchased titles and a long list for future consideration.<sup>11</sup> International regions of priority are North America, Europe, India and North Asia and submissions from candidates with a focus on First Nations writing is encouraged. One of the major outbound programs is the annual India Literature Exploratory when a delegation attend Lit for Life Festival, Kolkata Literary Festival, Jaipur Literary Festival and Jaipur Bookmark. The Australia Council is also an advocate for indigenous writers with support going to new initiatives such as the First Nations Australian Writers Network Workshop in Melbourne, and the black&write! Editing internships program.

The Australia Council's support for the arts is delivered through national programs and government initiatives; the Australia Council Grants Program; and strategic development through sector development, research and advocacy.<sup>12</sup>

The Australia Council provides three grant categories for artists in all artforms: The Marten Bequest, Career Development grants for individuals, and arts projects for individuals and groups. In FY 2015/16, \$4.6m was provided to literature representing 2.7% of total funding, which also included support for arts organisations through the Major Performing Arts framework, the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, Government initiatives, and support for individuals, groups and organisations through the Australia Council grants program (Key Organisations and Project Funding) and strategic initiatives. However, literature received 12.3% of the total allocated to the Australia Council's grants program and initiatives funding.<sup>13</sup> Of the total \$173.8m allocated funding in 2015-2016, Western Australia received approximately \$12.9m, and \$256,329 was allocated through the grants program to individuals, groups and organisations by the Australia Council Literature Panel.<sup>14</sup>

WA's Magabala Books was also one of thirteen literary organisations to receive four-year funding in 2016 from the Australia Council for the Arts, and the only WA literary organisation to do so. The \$5.97m shared by literary organisations in this funding round, made up 5.29% of the \$112.7m shared by 128 small to medium arts organisations.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Australia Council for the Arts 2015-2016 Annual Report

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Australia Council for the Arts (2017). Australia Council Grants List 2015-2015. Retrieved from <https://online.australiacouncil.gov.au/ords/f?p=113:1:0::NO:RP:>

<sup>15</sup> Books and Publishing 13 May 2016

### 3.3.2 STATE AGENCIES

Several state arts funding agencies now segment funding opportunities according to outcomes sought for the artist or the funding program rather than along artform lines. There is a pattern among agencies in the area of literature to direct funding primarily to writers centres and writers festivals. For example, \$3.12m or around 10% of Arts Queensland’s organisational funding for the four-year period 2017- 2020 is directed to four organisations involved in literature: Brisbane Writers’ Festival, Queensland Poetry Festival, Queensland Writers Centre and University of Queensland Press.

Funding for the individual writer is relatively small, with Arts Queensland in 2017 directing only \$19,300 to individuals engaged in writing or publishing (11.7% of total for that funding stream).<sup>16</sup> In the case of Creative Victoria a total of \$5.58m devoted to literature/ writing represents 11% of the \$49.85m paid through the Grants Management System in 2015/16.

Most agencies appeared to quarantine an amount for projects and individual funding, keeping the multi-year organisational funding in a separate funding stream. DCA support for the writing sector is described in section 3.4.1 below. DCA is unique among its state counterparts in dedicating such a high proportion of its literature funding to publishers, Magabala Books and Fremantle Press, an entrepreneurial approach that has seen much success for these organisations. It is unclear to the consultants, on the evidence provided, the extent to which this benefits WA writers in terms of income, books published or skills development. The expectations from these publishers in relation to their wider support for the sector merits attention, and is considered further in the consultants’ recommendations.

DCA’s funding for literature represented 4% of its total funding for the arts in 2015/16.

### 3.3.3 PEAK BODIES FOR WRITING

As mentioned above, in most State jurisdictions, funding for writers centres or ‘peak bodies’ is part of the overall investment, as it is in WA. Table 1 offers comparative investment details for peak organisations in Queensland, Victoria, NSW, South Australia and WA.

*Table 1: Peak Body Funding*

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<sup>16</sup> Arts Queensland website

ORGANISATION	FUNDING	EARNED	TOTAL REV	EXPENDITURE	SURPLUS
<b>PEAK BODY FUNDING</b>					
Writing WA (2015)	\$367,790 grants <i>DCA Core Funding 227,155 DCA Strategic Initiatives 13,328 Australia Council 40,000 Country Arts WA 55,078 Other Grants and Donations 29,229</i>	\$42,328	\$410,118	\$355,357	\$54,761
Queensland Writers Centre (2015)	\$642,444 grants <i>Australia Council 61,426 Arts Queensland 351,253 Other Grants 204,220</i>	\$422,724 Income \$10,647 Investment	\$1,075, 815	\$1,093, 276	\$17,461
Writers Victoria (2015)	\$317,752 grants <i>Creative Victoria 134,000 Gandel Grant for Website 28,300 Other Grants 151,918 Donations 3,534</i>	\$494,019	\$811,771	\$778,101	\$33,670
NSW Writers Centre (2015)	231,000 *Operating Grants <i>Arts NSW Australia Council Leichardt Council Copyright Agency</i>	\$517,031	\$710,115	\$689,925	\$20,190
SA Writers Centre (2015)	\$325,745 grants <i>\$281,820 Operating Grants \$43,925 Project Grants</i>	\$191,318	\$517,063	\$514,427	\$47,666
Wheeler Centre (2015)	\$2,131,048 grants <i>Arts Victoria Organisational 1,504,000 Arts Victoria Premier's Literary 240,000 Arts Victoria Project 169,527 Other Gov Grants 217,521</i>	\$842,113 Earned \$342,759 Donations \$577,214 Other	\$3,893,134	\$3,024,533	\$868,601

## QUEENSLAND WRITERS' CENTRE

Among other services, the Queensland Writers Centre offers support via mentoring programmes; a manuscript development program, in partnership with Hachette Australia [which operates this in other States, including WA]; and free online writers' guides. It also publishes a catalogue of books written by Queensland writers as well as the Australian Writers' Marketplace. It hosts a think tank, if:book Australia, designed to foster engagement by Australian writers, readers and publishers with digital futures. The diagram below shows a summary of programs offered by the Queensland Writers Centre. This diagram outlines the programs of support designed for meeting the various stages of a writer's career.

**Summary of Core Programs: How we work with writers**

	Aspiring	Emerging	Developing	Established
<b>NEEDS</b>	<p>Beginners, casual writers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information</li> <li>• Community</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Inspiration</li> </ul>	<p>Actively seeking publication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artistic development</li> <li>• Industry knowledge</li> <li>• Professional networks</li> <li>• Pathways to publication</li> </ul>	<p>Early &amp; mid-career published authors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audience development</li> <li>• Promotion/platform</li> <li>• Business skills</li> <li>• Peer networks</li> </ul>	<p>Writing as primary income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy &amp; policy influence</li> <li>• Promotion/platform</li> <li>• Pathways to International markets</li> <li>• Diversification of income</li> <li>• Employment</li> </ul>
<b>SOLUTIONS</b>	<p>QWC provides...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information, advice and referrals</li> <li>• Writing workshops</li> <li>• Literary events</li> <li>• Online training</li> <li>• Market information</li> <li>• Creative networks</li> <li>• <i>The Australian Writer's Marketplace</i></li> </ul>	<p>QWC provides...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Australian Writer's Marketplace</i></li> <li>• Masterclasses</li> <li>• Industry seminars</li> <li>• Partnerships with publishers (Hachette, Allen &amp; Unwin)</li> <li>• Manuscript development</li> <li>• Editorial mentoring</li> <li>• Grant assistance</li> </ul>	<p>QWC provides...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry IQ series (tax, finance, rights &amp; licencing, marketing)</li> <li>• Career mentoring &amp; peer groups</li> <li>• Author promotion</li> <li>• Festival sponsorship &amp; touring</li> <li>• Grant assistance</li> <li>• if:book Australia</li> </ul>	<p>QWC provides...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy &amp; policy influence</li> <li>• Employment &amp; job referral</li> <li>• Author promotion</li> <li>• Festival sponsorship &amp; interstate touring</li> <li>• International rights showcases (export)</li> <li>• if:book Australia</li> <li>• Industry research</li> </ul>

Figure 1: Summary of core programs. Reproduced with kind permission of Queensland Writers Centre

**WRITER'S VICTORIA AND THE WHEELER CENTRE**

Writers' Victoria runs similar services to QWC and in addition provides an incentive for young adult and children's writing through a publishing contract that provides a \$10,000 advance for a previously unpublished manuscript (TEXT prize).

In Victoria, the Wheeler Centre, operating out of the State Library of Victoria, is designed to provide a hub for the discussion, debate and practice of writing and ideas, and maintains a year-round profile and presence for writing. The Centre has no Australian equivalent in either vision or in its unique funding model, including significant philanthropic support. However, its program dedicated to the promotion and profiling of writers and ideas has provided the Victorian literature sector with a credibility and international standing with publishers that is unparalleled in other states. The Wheeler Centre is an important partner in the Australian tours of visiting international writers and in the profiling and promotion of Victorian and Australian writers. A number of WA Writers had participated in their program and it was the most often cited model for WA to consider during this review.

More than 80% of The Wheeler Centre events are free and its digital publishing arm produces original video and audio of events, plus original writing. With 70% of the events becoming available online, it reaches regional, national and international audiences. It is worth noting that not all activities which occur



at the Centre are 'own promotions'. Other organisations present activities in or under the banner of the Wheeler Centre, contributing to its brand and profile, at the same time as benefiting from this.

## 3.4 SUPPORT FOR WA WRITING IN WA

### 3.4.1 CURRENT DCA SUPPORT

The State Government provides funding to the writing sector through project grants to individual writers, groups and organisations; support for regional writers' festivals through the Royalties for Regions Creative Regions program; and through initiatives of Screenwest and the State Library of Western Australia.

In terms of grants programs provided by the Department of Culture and the Arts, aside from small fluctuations in application numbers there has been a sustained overall level of support for writers and writing organisations. For the five year period from 2011 to 2016 there has been an overall increase of 25.9 per cent of funding provided to individuals and organisations in the writing sector. In 2015-16 DCA funding for literature totalled \$1.17m.

Funding amounts for the 2016/2017 period are not yet available as the Department of Culture and the Arts does not disclose financial statements until all accounts have been audited in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards by an Approved Auditor. However, DCA has reported that 2016/2017 levels have been largely unchanged from the previous year.

Less than 10% of DCA funding is directed at the individual writer; this is likely to be an under-estimate, given some smaller publishers may have applied for projects in the peer- assessed grant round, and that writers also access funds through 'facilitators' (see table 2).

Approximately half of funds for writing are currently directed to two WA publishers; and over a third is directed to facilitators. The proportion of peer-assessed funding has been declining in recent years (see table 3). With 88% of DCA funds allocated to recurrent funding, this gives little room for strategic initiatives that respond to the needs of the swiftly moving market place.

A question for the current Review is whether the current funding allocation and mix is the most effective in helping grow the writing sector in WA, and specifically whether more of the funding should be earmarked for direct support for WA writers rather than relying on a matrix of support agencies to sustain the sector.

Table 2 below indicates the funding provided by DCA to the writing sector and is not a comprehensive list of writing organisations and stakeholders in WA

*Table 2: DCA funding for literature*

			2016-2015	2015-2014	2014-2013
<b>INDIVIDUAL WRITERS &amp; PROJECTS</b>					
Projects	Peer-assessed	Individuals	\$108,698	\$104,629	\$125,612
		Sub total	\$108,698	\$104,629	\$125,612
		% total DCA funding	9%	9%	11%
<b>FACILITATORS</b>					
Writers group	Peer-assessed	Fellowship of Australian Writers WA	\$-	\$17,370	\$14,000
Writers group	Peer-assessed	Katherine Susannah Prichard Fdn	\$-	\$30,250	\$30,850
Performing arts	Peer-assessed	The Australian Script Centre	\$-	\$10,000	\$10,000
Performance writers	Recurrent	Australian Writers Guild (WA)	\$28,100	\$15,981	\$15,748
Service Org	Recurrent	Writing WA	\$194,366	\$192,929	\$154,419
Young People	Recurrent	Children's Book Council of Australia	\$52,520	\$52,932	\$42,729
Young People	Recurrent	The Literature Centre	\$65,836	\$65,350	\$54,146
Performing Arts	Recurrent	Playwriting Australia	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$35,000
Performing Arts	Recurrent	Stages (WA Playwrights)	\$54,091	\$81,178	\$79,993
		Sub total	\$444,913	\$515,990	\$436,885
		% total DCA funding	37.81%	43.76%	38.91%
<b>PUBLISHERS</b>					
Publisher	Peer-assessed	Westerly Centre (UWA)	\$32,261	\$-	\$10,000
Publisher	Peer-assessed	Gestalt Publishing	\$-	\$-	\$-
Publisher	Recurrent	Fremantle Press	\$327,050	\$309,175	\$304,660
Indigenous Arts	Recurrent	Magabala Books Aboriginal Corp	\$263,682	\$249,270	\$245,630
		Sub total	\$622,993	\$558,445	\$560,290
		% total DCA funding	52.95%	47.36%	49.90%
		Total DCA writing funding	\$1,176,604	\$1,179,064	\$1,122,787
		% Total DCA funding for writing	4%	4%	4%

Table 3: Recurrent/peer-assess split for DCA funding

RECURRENT AND PEER FUNDING				
Recurrent funding		\$1,035,645	\$1,016,815	\$932,325
	% total	88%	86%	83%
Peer-assessed grants		\$140,959	\$162,249	\$190,462
	% total	12%	14%	17%
	<b>Total funding</b>	<b>\$1,176,604</b>	<b>\$1,179,064</b>	<b>\$1,122,787</b>

### 3.4.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In WA, local government is a key investor in the arts, spending an estimated \$155m annually on arts and cultural development, according to a 2015 report by the Chamber of Arts and Culture and CANWA.<sup>17</sup> Local government was not raised during our consultations as playing a support role for writing – but the consultants note the significant part played by the local library network throughout the State, which is financed for capital costs and operating costs by local government.

Some writers and facilitators were keen to see local governments develop a paid residency program for writers (which might be combined with education departments) that would be of mutual advantage, providing time to write in return for services to youth, literacy programs and so on.

### 3.4.3 STATE LIBRARY WA AND COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

As mentioned above SLWA spends \$10m on purchasing published material, although it is not known what proportion is devoted to purchasing books by WA writers.

The State Library hosts a steady stream of authors who use its resources to do their research for fiction and non-fiction. More broadly, libraries are significant supporters of authors in helping them reach their audiences. The Writers on the Road initiative, funded by DCA and SLWA and operated through writingWA, provides direct income through payment of professional fees, literary festivals, author talks as well as through the encouragement of reading, so that society has the skills and capacity to consume what is being produced.

### 3.4.4 MARKET DEVELOPMENT: AWARDS

Awards on the whole are designed as a way to:

- > Scout for talent (publishers)
- > Promote reading
- > Further the careers of writers

They may be targeted at emerging, established or unpublished writers in a range of fiction and non-fiction genres. Many involved in the writing sector value awards as a way to build their credibility in the market place, and also as an affirmation of the value government places on reading.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.canwa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Arts-and-Culture-and-WA-Local-Government-Report-2015.pdf>



The prize-money is awarded to the writer, and there has been some discussion around whether a proportion of this should be shared with the publisher, which bears the cost of entering the titles for an uncertain commercial reward. In WA one publisher has made the commercial decision not to enter any of its titles into awards. In Australia, only the Stella Prize, Children’s Book and Miles Franklin awards generate a boost in sales, according to specialists interviewed for this study.

WA Premier’s Book Awards, administered by SLWA, was an annual award but recently became biennial. The table below lists the awards available in WA.

Table 4: Awards available for literature in WA

AWARD TITLE	DESCRIPTION	PRIZE
<b>PREMIER’S BOOK AWARDS</b>		
Premier’s Prize	Overall best entry	\$25,000
Premier’s Award Non Fiction		\$15,000
Premier’s Award Fiction		\$15,000
State Library of WA West Australian History		\$10,000
WA Emerging Writers	First published work by an author residing in WA	\$10,000
Poetry		\$10,000
Scripts		\$10,000
Digital Narrative		\$5,000
Young adult		\$10,000
Children’s		\$15,000
People’s Choice		\$5,000
<b>WRITINGWA AWARDS</b>		
The Curtin University Prize for Fiction	Writers based in regional Australia	\$6000 (plus prof. dev.)
SLWA Prize for history	Writers based in regional Australia	\$6000 (plus prof. dev.)
<b>UWA PUBLISHING</b>		
Dorothy Hewett Award	Unpublished Manuscript but not necessarily first book	\$10,000 plus publishing contract

### 3.4.5 WRITING SUPPORT AGENCIES IN WA

As discussed, writingWA is the peak body for writing in WA with many of the facilitating organisations as its members. WritingWA provides professional development events and programs. They also provide international facilitation, particularly in Asia with festival linkages in Singapore and Indonesia. They provide regional programs and produce various local and newsletters promoting the sector. Finally, they

offer business development support with philanthropic support through the Literary Lions donor program.

Other organisations which provide support services for writers, including professional development activities, include:

- > Australian Society of Authors
- > Society of Editors
- > Australian Writers Guild
- > Society of Children's Book Writers and illustrators
- > Copyright Agency Limited
- > Australian Publishers Association
- > Applied Linguistics Association of Australia
- > Australian Booksellers Association
- > Children's Book Council of Australia

WA, and Perth in particular, has benefited from this range of organisations that has a history of supporting the development of writers. Additionally, three Writers Centres are housed in venues steeped in WA's literary history. Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers' Centre has been operating at Katharine's Place in Greenmount since 1985 and offers a busy annual program of events, genre-based writing groups, workshops and residencies. The Fellowship of Australian Writers WA at Tom Collins House in Swanbourne formed in 1938 and hosts writing groups, talks and readings, workshops and writing competitions. The Peter Cowan Writers' Centre is housed in historic Edith Cowan House, relocated to the Joondalup ECU campus in 1997. Twenty years on it is providing support for writers in Perth's northern suburbs through residencies, writing groups, competitions and events. This trio of organisations offers geographic access to would-be and developing writers across Perth.

The Literature Centre's Talented Young Writers Programme (TYWP) is designed specifically to nurture the writers of the future through full day writing workshops held each school term at the Centre in Fremantle, and also in Bunbury, Busselton, Albany, Geraldton, Port Hedland and Newman.

These are joined by many other writing groups such as WA Poets Inc, Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, Out of the Asylum Writers and Society of Women Writers WA in supporting the aspirations and talents of WA's writing population. The Centre for Stories, established in 2015, is dedicated to storytelling, story writing and story gathering with a particular commitment to ensuring a diversity of voices in its program. The survival of these groups over years and the emergence of new initiatives in communities across WA speaks to the power of writing. The sustainability of these groups is largely or wholly dependent on volunteer effort. Some attract funding and/or sponsorship, income from membership and service fees. A list of services and programs offered by key writing organisations in WA can be seen in Table 5.

While the geographic and interest spread of services provided by these groups is a potential strength in meeting the needs of WA's (especially Perth's) writing population, it does risk dissipating the energies and resources of the support base – government funding, audiences or customers, corporate partners and others. It opens up the potential for duplication and conflict in the face of scarce resources. This has

occurred at times in the sector's history, most notably when the Australia Council first offered funding for a State Literature Officer in WA (the precursor to writingWA).<sup>18</sup> One observer during the course of this review did suggest that WA had been in a fug since that time because there was 'too much jockeying for power rather than providing services'. It must be noted that many others consulted throughout the review claimed the sector collaborated well and refuted any suggestion of difficulty arising from the number of players.

### 3.4.6 OUTCOMES

It would be desirable for the current review to correlate outcomes achieved from the work of the support organisations and facilitators with the funding inputs provided by DCA. The data to support such an analysis is not readily available, and the consultants have made some recommendations for how this might be addressed in the future. DCA have provided some useful outcome data for the 2015 year relating to the following organisations:

- > Fremantle Press
- > Magabala Books Aboriginal Corporation
- > Australian Writers Guild (WA)
- > Children's Book Council of Australia (WA)
- > The Literature Centre Inc.
- > Stages (WA Playwrights Consortium)
- > Writing WA

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<sup>18</sup> Described as an 'unholy row' by Ken Spillman in his paper, Are We There Yet?

Table 5: Services and programs offered by selected WA organisations

WritingWA	Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers' Centre	The Peter Cowan Writers' Centre	Fellowship of Australian Writers WA	Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators,	Others
<p><b><u>Industry advocacy</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Host public and Industry Forums.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Professional development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contract Review service</li> <li>- Writers and the Law Seminar</li> <li>- Mentoring programs</li> </ul> <p><b><u>International program</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitate participation in               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ubud Writers and Readers Festival</li> <li>- Asian Festival of Children's Content.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Makassar Festival (Indonesia) and Peek-a-Book Festival (Hyderabad)</li> <li>- Relationship and opportunity building</li> <li>- Host Singaporean and Indonesian writers.</li> <li>- Host Singaporean publishers and distributors</li> <li>- Represent WA publishers/books at Frankfurt Book Fair</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Regional Program</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WA Writers Festivals support, including program funding, - media and marketing support and capacity building</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Communications, Audience Development</u></b> (including WritingWA &amp; ProximityWA (regional content) websites, and a range of newsletters)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cover to Cover Satellite TV Program</li> <li>- Love to Read Local Live campaign</li> <li>- Love to Read Local Loyalty campaign</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Business Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Philanthropic support through Literary - Lions donor program</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Industry advocacy</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Literary events (author talks, seminars, launches, dinners, open days)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Professional Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mentoring for writers in all career stages</li> <li>- Term writing classes</li> <li>- Holiday workshops</li> <li>- Author talks</li> <li>- Residencies for writers in all career stages</li> <li>- WA Writers United</li> <li>- Writing groups</li> <li>- Writing workshops</li> <li>- Fellowships for aspiring and emerging writers</li> <li>- Manuscript assessment</li> <li>- Industry workshops (marketing, branding, online publishing)</li> <li>- Retreats for emerging writers</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Communications, Networking, Audience Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anthology publication for aspiring and emerging writers</li> <li>- Networking opportunities for emerging and established writers</li> <li>- Creative networks</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online and print publication</li> <li>- Competitions for young, aspiring and emerging writers</li> <li>- Historic literary venue</li> <li>- Certificates</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Business Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information, advice and referrals for young and aspiring writers</li> <li>- Employment and job referral</li> <li>- Author promotion for emerging and established writers</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Professional Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular Workshops</li> <li>- Writing Groups</li> <li>- Radio Reading at the ECU Radio Station</li> <li>- Editor in Residence</li> <li>- Writer in Residence Program</li> <li>- Writers' Retreat</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Library Collection</li> <li>- Writing Competitions</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Professional Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Book Length Project Group</li> <li>- Memoir Writing</li> <li>- Write Night</li> <li>- Short Courses</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Communications, Networking, Audience Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friday @ Furphy's: A social gathering featuring a writer of interest.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tom Collin's Poetry Prize: Held annually each summer</li> <li>- Stuart Haddow Short Story Prize: Held annually each winter, opening soon</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Professional Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual Rottnest retreat/conference for writers and illustrators</li> <li>- Critique Groups</li> <li>- Workshops</li> <li>- Informal Mentoring</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Communications, Networking, Audience Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Informal networking and social media connectivity</li> </ul> <p><b><u>International program</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International network</li> <li>- International conferences in America and Europe</li> <li>- Bologna book fair</li> <li>- International online forums</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'The Book' advice on publishing. Published through the parent company</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Business Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Grants and Awards</li> </ul>	<p><b>OUT OF THE ASYLUM WRITERS/ WRITING AT THE CENTRE</b></p> <p><b><u>Professional Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friday writing classes at Fremantle Arts Centre with Helen Hagemann</li> <li>- Poetry classes with Shane M'Cauley</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Communications, Networking, Audience Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 Free Westerly journal per end of year.</li> <li>- Lunchtime meetings before class where writers meet on a social basis</li> <li>- Network Tuesdays, the weekly e-broadsheet with a calendar of writing news, competitions and opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced fees to Writing at the Centre</li> </ul> <p><b>SOCIETY OF WOMEN WRITERS WA</b></p> <p><b><u>Professional Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual Writers' Retreat</li> <li>- Writers' Circles</li> <li>- Writing Workshops</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Communications, Networking, Audience Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly Newsletter</li> <li>- Monthly Meetings</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Resources</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Literary Competitions</li> <li>- Website Space</li> </ul>



Reporting from these seven writing organisations funded by DCA indicated in the 2015 reporting period that:

- > They were funded by DCA to a total of \$1.27 million (core and additional activities);
- > From this DCA funding they levered an additional \$3.43 million in income from other sources;
- > This represents a leverage of \$2.69 for every \$1 of DCA support;
- > This additional income included \$1.57 million in earned income, or 33 per cent of their overall income;
- > The organisations undertook nearly 900 activities, engaging over 300,000 participants; and
- > The organisations had 476 paid or unpaid members

### 3.4.7 OVERVIEW OF THE ECOLOGY

Writers live and work as part of a complex and fragile ecosystem. The notion of self-reliance is inaccurate; writers need the connection and support of others engaged in the sector - agents, editors, publishers, fellow writers, and often with consumers such as readers and libraries. Writing is a solitary activity and networking is critically important as is buying the time to write.

Figure 3 provides a snapshot of the WA writing ecology. Prepared by Positive Solutions this shows the relationship between the writer and other elements of the writing ecology.

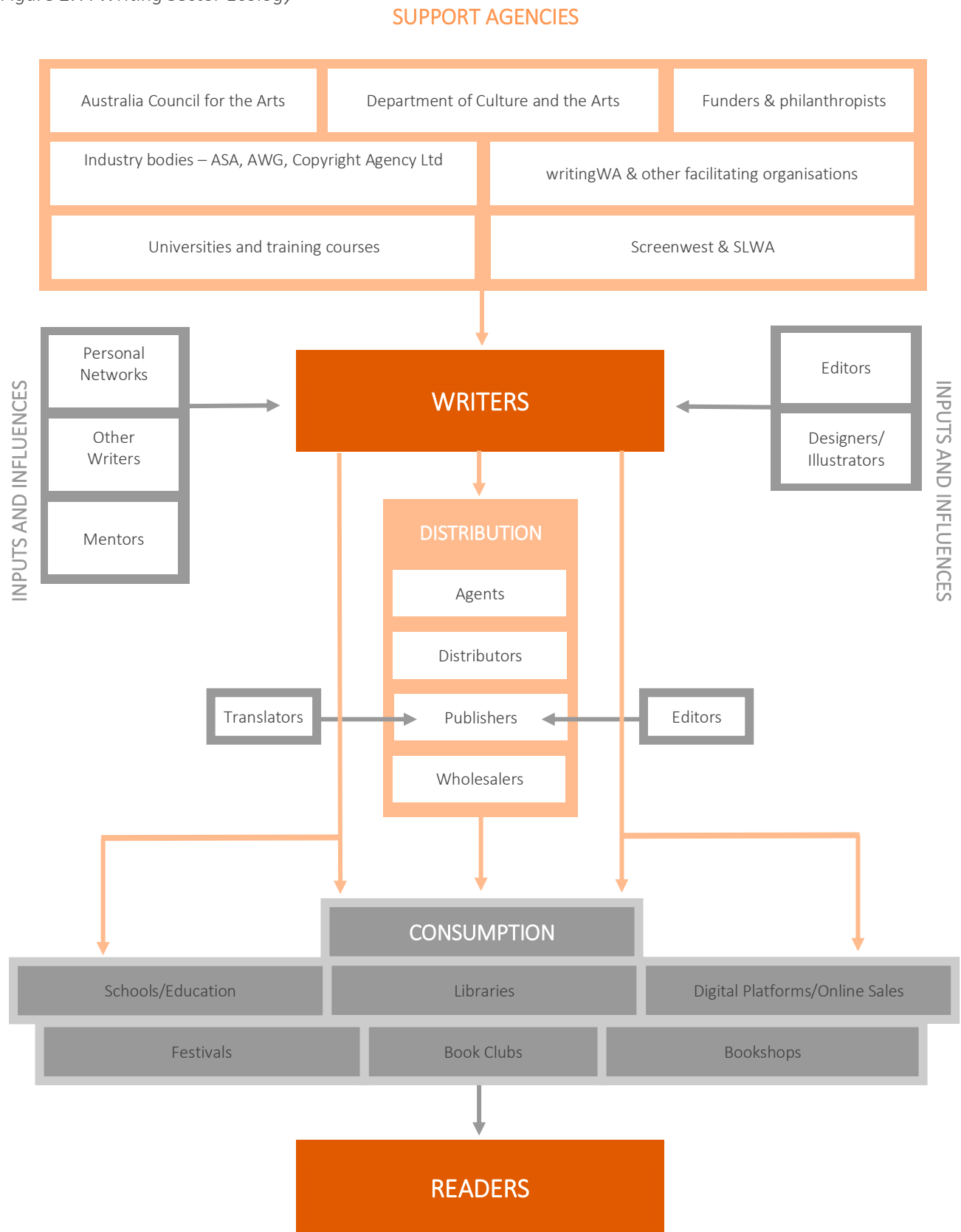
Most Australian writers still prefer a traditional publishing relationship; however, niche titles are increasingly being sold exclusively on digital platforms, which entails working with editors, typesetters, designers, online retailers and the widespread promotion of a title. Many publishers and bookstores have their own online stores, and link this to major online retailers.

In addition to the framework described above, there are event programs, creative writing groups (primarily the aspiring writer), wellbeing, health and justice-related activity, organisations within, or connected to, academia or education, literacy programs, the media and others providing critical or promotional coverage of books, awards and organisations representing writers in various areas.

Figure 2 maps a typical ecology as described by documents and specialists consulted for this study.

This does not, however, reflect the reality for many of the WA writers. The most important relationships with other areas of the sector according to writers surveyed for this consultancy were with publishers (these may be magazines, journals), writers' festivals, libraries and retailers. Respondents were most likely not to have interacted with translators, specialised printers, illustrators, literary agents, designers and publicists, perhaps indicating a limited universe for many of WA's writers. The lack of connection with literary agents is worth noting as a critical gap for those seeking to develop a writing career. What cannot be ascertained is the degree to which the literary agent role is now being filled by writers' centres.

Figure 2: A Writing Sector Ecology



According to survey results, the top-ranging factors that had been most important in their development as a writer were:

- > personal network of contacts
- > peer review and other peer support
- > writers' groups and access to libraries and museums

The factors most likely not to have been applicable to respondents were fellowships, residencies and mentorships, which indicates a gap in service provision, given many in the interviews and focus groups had said these had been critical to their early success. When asked what had been or would have been most useful when starting out as a writer, 32 out of the 97 respondees mentioned mentoring, describing a need for sustained mentoring, manuscript assessment and the ability to connect with and learn from editors and publishers.

## 3.5 RESOURCING THE SECTOR

As Government funding for the arts, nationally and overseas, becomes more constrained, there have been a number of initiatives and explorations of other mechanisms for resourcing arts activity. Examples of the impact of such non-traditional forms of finance include investment in the publication *New Matilda* via crowd-funding, at a time when its future was insecure; and the use of QuickstART loans by individual writers to finance professional development opportunities overseas or to buy time to rework a script. Queensland Writers Centre using a loan to finance commercialisation of a product they had developed. A brief overview of different mechanisms which have emerged is provided here.

### 3.5.1 PHILANTHROPY

This is clearly a growth area as Australia goes through a significant intergenerational transfer of wealth and more and more individuals establish their own PAF's (private ancillary funds) which have to distribute a minimum percentage of earnings to charities and non-profits every year. When it comes to philanthropists specifically engaged with the development of artists, this is likely to come from a personal interest and can lead to individuals setting up their own institutions (such as Tarrawarra Museum in Victoria and MONA in Hobart) or working in partnership with governments and respected public institutions and curators to deliver a partnership project.

In 2008, DCA established the Philanthropy Incentive Program (PIP), the first of its kind in Australia, with a fund of \$250,000 to encourage individuals, groups of individuals and businesses to establish private philanthropic foundations supportive of the arts. Since its inception, the Program has distributed \$309,498 in the form of eleven grants to ten arts organisations. In all cases, the grants formed a new philanthropic relationship between the arts organisation and the private foundation. In all but one case, a funding relationship has continued. Since the program's inception additional donations from the foundations have totalled \$245,018, suggesting some latent potential for additional income.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.5.2 CROWDFUNDING

The different types of crowdfunding include:

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<sup>19</sup> DCA (2017) WA Philanthropic Incentive Program



- > Donation-based crowdfunding, a contributor makes a payment (or 'donation') to the project or venture, without receiving anything in return. The contributor's 'donation' may simply be acknowledged – for example, on the crowdfunding website.
- > Reward-based crowdfunding, the promoter provides a reward (goods, services or rights) to contributors in return for their payment. For example, the contributor may receive merchandise or a discount. In many cases, there are different levels or types of reward, according to the level of contribution and whether the fundraising reaches the prescribed levels.
- > Equity-based crowdfunding, the contributor makes a payment in return for a share (or equity interest) in the company undertaking the project or venture. The share in the company will provide the contributor with certain rights including the right to participate in future profits (dividends), voting rights, and rights to returns of capital upon winding up. (the Australian Government is currently consulting on how this may work in an Australian legislative framework)
- > Debt-based crowdfunding, the contributor lends money to the promoter (or pool of promoters) who, in return, agrees to pay interest and repay principal on the loan.

Artists and arts organisations have primarily been utilising donation and reward based crowdfunding, and creative businesses equity and debt based forms of sourcing support. As well as the commercial web-based platforms (which take a percentage of income) there is also the Australian Cultural Fund for individual artists.

The Australian Cultural Fund is managed by Creative Partnerships Australia and artists upload their project, start their fundraising campaign and invite art lovers and supporters to donate. An example of some current writing projects being supported by the platform are Art Collective WA's publishing programme; the Sunshine Coast Hinterland Poetry Trail Project; and the Queenscliffe Literary Festival 2017. Unlike other platforms artists set a fundraising goal, if it's not met at the end of the campaign all donations are still taken into account. Furthermore, donations are tax deductible.

The use of crowdfunding is only anticipated to grow when the government resolves the legislation around equity based models. Creative Partnerships also had a matching scheme for crowdfunding where they were matching dollar for dollar money raised. An example of a project funded through this model is The Fashion Archives, an online publication about the history of fashion in Queensland. This matching program is currently under review.

Research is currently being undertaken in the UK on whether partnership funding can really grow crowdfunding. Two models are being tested:

- > A 'top-up model' where 25% of match funding is released once a project has managed to achieve 75% of its funding target.
- > A 'bridge model' where projects crowdfund up to 25% and then bridge funding is released which brings them to 50%. The funding is then conditional on the project going on to reach the final 50%.

### **3.5.3 ENTERPRISE INVESTMENT**

Like government grants, support from philanthropy, including crowdfunding, tends to be project based and does not take into account the strengthening or building of individual artists' careers or of resilient arts organisations. The growth in that area in the arts has been in utilising the emerging social finance

models of debt and equity financing to create new products specific to the sector. Two such products - in Queensland - which are leading the way include the QuickstArt Fund for individual artists and creative businesses, and the Arts Business Innovation Fund (ABIF) for small to medium arts organisations. Although not strictly 'impact investments', in that neither scheme creates a financial return to the investor, they use the same model.

QuickstART is a micro loan scheme for individual artists and small scale cultural enterprises managed through Foresters Community Finance. QuickstART is a \$100,000 fund (with a mix of loan capital including from individuals) with the capacity to support artists and other creative practitioners with different loan options up to a maximum of \$5,000 for the development of their practice or their business. Some of the capital is loaned interest free with a small administration charge; some at current interest rates. Many Queensland artists have benefitted from such loans and the scheme has been copied to create the IF Loans in South Australia.

The creation of the Arts Business Innovation Fund. ABIF came about through a proposal from Positive Solutions, Foresters Community Finance and Creative Enterprise Australia (CEA) to Arts Queensland to:

- > Utilise new investment dollars for innovation to leverage additional support
- > Focus 'innovation' on building strength and capacity in the organization itself – in order to create great art into the future
- > Managed a scheme outside the government grant system but with the same level of rigor in assessment in order to use debt financing
- > Incorporate new forms of financing including debt and equity (should there be an opportunity to engage with for profit cultural and creative enterprises in the future)

Half a million dollars of government grant has been matched with half a million from the corpus of the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, which is being used as no interest loans.

Organisations are able to access up to \$100,000 in matching funding which will be delivered through both a grant and no interest loan. The match they will provide can be made from a variety of sources including their own reserves. Six investments have been announced to date for companies across Queensland and spanning all artforms. All are for initiatives that will grow the sources of un-tied income for these organisations.

### **3.5.3 EARNED INCOME**

The brief for the current review calls for consideration of the potential for writers to increase their income not only from contributed income, such as philanthropy, but also through earned income from sources other than traditional publishing. Some writers earn part of their income through theatre writing, screen-writing, or writing for games software development. While the opportunities for income generation through theatre may be limited, both screen and the digital sector are promising. The WA State Librarian noted that there was a 47% increase in digital loans during 2016. The rapid growth of games software (and it is projected to continue for many years to come – a standout within the creative industries) is likely to generate a hunger for plot-lines and character. Currently, a high proportion of Australia's games industry is based in Melbourne. From discussion with ScreenWest it is evident that income flows to authors through several of their funds and activities. To a large degree a healthy screen and digital/ games sector in WA will contribute to a healthy writers sector. This has implications for the professional development of writers, ensuring they are 'screen ready' and 'digital ready'.

## 4. CONSULTATION FINDINGS

From interviews, a writers' survey, focus groups and a sector workshop undertaken by Positive Solutions in WA, and broader-based secondary research, the consultants have the following observations, some of which have been mentioned in earlier sections of this report. A list of those consulted is provided at Appendix 2.

### 4.1 WRITER'S SURVEY

The online questionnaire using SurveyMonkey was circulated widely by DCA emails, social media and through the State Library newsletter. A total of 159 people took part in the survey with the maximum response rate at 155 for a single question. A number of respondents skipped numerous questions for reasons perhaps of relevance and time. The number of responses is noted for each question. The objectives of the research were to:

- > Develop a profile of WA writers
- > Better understand what was and would be most helpful to them in the development of their career
- > Identify opportunities and obstacles

In brief, the findings of this survey of WA writers presents a picture of a highly qualified and dedicated cohort who struggle to deliver their writing commitments while having to earn most of their income from non-writing activity. Non-writing-related earnings comprised 75% or more of income for two thirds of respondents (64%). Less than 10% of WA writers had earned more than \$40,000 from their writing in the last financial year; 38% had earned \$5000 or less and 24% had earned nothing. The WA demographic and income profile is very similar to that described in a 2015 Macquarie University report that surveyed published authors across Australia.<sup>20</sup> Writers tend to be predominantly female, older and were likely to have post graduate degrees.

Summary points are provided below. A fuller analysis is provided in Appendix 2.

#### 4.1.1 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

- > Two thirds (66%) were female and 78% were aged 45+ years, with nearly a quarter (23%) aged 65+ years, a profile often described during individual interviews; it is a priority for many service organisations within the sector to encourage a greater diversity of voices
- > The top three areas engaged in as a professional writer were poetry (49%), adult fiction (44%) and other non-fiction including biography (33%). The study asked writers to tick all applicable boxes, so it could be that for many writing poetry, which has a relatively small readership, was a secondary interest, though poetry is certainly a popular form for the hobbyist.
- > This is a highly educated cohort with 67% having achieved university post-graduate qualifications. Most (91%) had received training in core writing skills but less than half had had training in legal, technology or business management.
- > The respondents ranged from hobbyists to those who are seeking publication or have had a few

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<sup>20</sup> Zwar, J., Throsby, D., & Longden, T. (2015). *Australian Authors. Industry Brief No. 1: Key Findings*. Retrieved from [http://www.businessandconomics.mq.edu.au/our\\_departments/Economics/econ\\_research/reach\\_network/book\\_project/authors/1\\_Key\\_Findings.pdf](http://www.businessandconomics.mq.edu.au/our_departments/Economics/econ_research/reach_network/book_project/authors/1_Key_Findings.pdf): pp. 2-3

books publishes and, at the top end, those who are now writing fulltime and receive most of their income from this work.

#### 4.1.2 INCOME AND PUBLICATION

- > Around 20% had received funding from DCA and around the same proportion had received funding from other government or non-government sources
- > Less than 10% had earned more than \$40,000 in the last financial year; 27.5% earned between \$5001 to \$40,000; 38% \$5000 or less and nearly a quarter (24%) had not earned anything from their writing in the previous financial year.
- > A picture emerges of an untapped resource with the majority paying their bills from work that is not related to writing: earnings from their core area of interest comprised less than 5% of total income for two thirds (64%) of the writers responding, while non-writing related earnings comprised 75% or more of earnings for two thirds of respondents (64%).
- > 79% had been published by an Australian publisher, which seems high given the
- > response to the income question; but for many this would be publication with little or no remuneration in journals, magazines and online (particularly for short story writers and poets); 40% had been published by a publisher from elsewhere. Around a third had self-published. A quarter had been published by a university or other academic institution. Each writer may use different publication avenues for each work.
- > Two thirds (67.5%) had been published in physical book form, sold online and
- > through retailers, and 53% had published as an ebook only.

#### 4.1.3 DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

- > The most important developmental support for writers had been personal networks of contacts, peer review and peer support, writers' groups and access to libraries or museums. Residencies and fellowships had ranked very highly in individual interviews conducted for this consultancy; however, they did not rate highly in importance in this survey
- > Half the sample responded to an open ended question with regard to services and
- > the writers' centres, Perth Writers Festival, Society of Children's Book Writers and writingWA was mentioned most frequently, though by only 11 people (see below); the importance of WA publishers was also mentioned.
- > Professional development: mentoring – sustained, professional and at a high level –
- > emerged as a service that had been most useful when they first started their career (editors, dramaturgs, manuscript assessment, etc were frequently mentioned); many expressed regret the university courses and internet had not been available to them when starting out
- > Many said that they needed a better understanding of business management, marketing and legal issues,
- > Residencies, art flight grants, and funding that provides the time to write were mentioned frequently throughout this survey and in other consultations
- > The most important relationships writers surveyed have within the sector are with publishers, writers' festivals and libraries (68% had accessed public libraries and 55% SLWA)
- > 70% said they were a member of writingWA, which given it does not accept memberships from individuals indicates the high profile it must have within the sector (most said they subscribed to the email service); around a third (34%) belong to ASA, which targets multi-published writers; genre writers belong to relevant organisations often based outside Australia

- > A number suggested improvements for the library service, primarily around technology issues: more digitisation, more streamlined digital search function and a simplified and faster approach to the download of ebooks

#### **4.1.4 BEING A WRITER IN WA**

- > Isolation was seen as both an advantage and disadvantage of being a WA writer; The key advantages lay in the accessibility of peer support that comes from living in a smaller community, the landscape and quality of the support agencies
- > As expected the key disadvantages were isolation from markets, literary agents and influential networks
- > The greatest barrier to writing for most was ‘lack of time’, the difficulty in getting published, lack of outlets for performance writing, the global market within which they compete and the economic downturn – a few had the insight to mention the pressure on publishers and the subsequent impacts on the writer
- > Ideas for overcoming the obstacles revolved around marketing (through agencies such as writingWA), expanding the remit beyond literature to genres, more specialised input by writers into government’s policy development and a need for high speed Internet
- > A number said government funds should focus on writers who are published or in the final stages of a book’s journey (i.e. not aspiring writers); conversely some said government should focus on building an understanding in the community of the value of writing and reading
- > A theme did emerge over a number of questions that there is definitely a core of people who believe the training and networking should be provided at a more advanced level than now (national and international) if it is to deliver real benefits to serious writers
- > The majority felt that in its current form the WA Premier’s Book Award was ineffective, and delivered few benefits to WA writers; either it should be reconfigured or the money spent elsewhere on sectoral development (however, a significant number also said it was vital to retain and reconfigure)
- > Relationship building with influencers interstate and internationally was another theme to emerge as a way to support writers and to position the state globally as a cultural epicentre

## **4.2 INTERVIEWS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.2.1 PUBLISHERS AND DISTRIBUTION**

In a tougher economic climate publishers, who are in a high risk, low margin business, have become more conservative and were no longer able to nurture writers’ careers as they had done previously. Getting the book into the hands of the reader is just as hard as it always has been; which is why most writers still seek a traditional publisher relationship, despite greater access to self-publishing.

Distribution in Australia is a bottleneck with only two distributors working nationally; likewise, the cost of postage is an added burden for online sales of books printed on paper. “Distribution for small publishers and emerging writers is the number one issue”. This is a major burden, particularly for small publishers and emerging writers.

## 4.2.2 SUPPORTING THE INDIVIDUAL WRITER

Publishers are no longer able to nurture writers' careers as they had done previously.

Writers cited paid residencies, fellowships, awards, new work funding, and mentors as the interventions that had been of most use to them; buying the time to write is the most valued asset. These, and other points raised in interviews, echoed findings from the writers' survey.

More could be done in situating work from WA writers in other art forms; e.g. there could be a role for writers in public art initiatives, or support for adapting local writing for stage, video or screen. Consultees emphasised the importance of developing business and marketing skills for writers, alongside core writing skills.

Writers need support through various stages of their career – it was not appropriate to focus, for example, only on emerging writers.

A number of interviewees commented on the need for greater diversity in those who participate in writers' programs (age, ethnicity, background)

## 4.2.3 MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Discoverability in a global market is a major hurdle for Australian writers and publishers; this is very keenly felt by WA writers who are isolated from the major population centres in the east.

A WA advocacy and developmental agency was thought essential to addressing this isolation. For some this was writingWA but with a sharper focus on its national and international advocacy role. The Asian market was thought to be particularly important, given WA's proximity to that market.

Major eBook retailers including Google, Amazon and Kobo are based overseas and have little awareness of the Australian market. As a result, Australian publishers are experimenting with new business models strengthened by developments in technology.

There is a very small number of opportunities for contemporary authors to achieve bestseller success in print. However, independent bookstores are important for sales of books by new Australian authors and literary works.

Achieving international sales is seen by publishers to involve personal networks and extensive international travel to key book fairs.

Awards, usually designed to promote reading, are proliferating, which means they must be distinctive and imaginatively marketed to raise the profile of authors and generate sales. All thought the WA Premier's Book Awards made a statement about the importance the State places on books and reading, though they should be annual, and much needed to be done to raise their profile and set them apart from other Premiers' awards.

#### 4.2.4 NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Despite the digital revolution and closure of two book chains several years ago, the physical book and bricks and mortar outlets remain important; after a major setback, the number of retail outlets is now growing slowly, particularly the independent stores.

The sale of literary books in the digital marketplace does not fundamentally alter the economics of their publication.

There is a shift to incorporate social media promotions and encourage literature discussions across online platforms. Online discussions are facilitated by the cross- promotion of book bloggers, YouTube reviews, media interviews and author websites. The increase in online communications has also reinstated the importance of face to face events. The younger generations of book readers engage with literature across online platforms, highlighting the importance of bloggers and YouTube reviewers to the future of the sector.

Both writers and publishers need stronger digital knowledge and engagement to benefit from new platforms, challenges and opportunities.

#### 4.2.5 FUNDING ENVIRONMENT

According to experienced Australian publishers the potential constraints that threaten innovation within the Australian writing sector stem from the reduction in government support to promote books and reading, and the small scale of the Australia market.

However, some interviewees mentioned investment funding as a model to help micro- businesses kick-start new ideas but where the funding requirement was reduced or eliminated over time.

In addition to the growth of philanthropy, new arts funding mechanisms being trialled elsewhere may hold promise for support of the writing sector – crowdfunding, loans, equity schemes, enterprise investment. Comment on these is provided in section 3.5 above.

#### 4.2.6 OTHER

Consultees also commented on:

- > The increasing national recognition of WA writers, a sense that there had been a coming of age of the writing sector in WA in recent years – and that it was important to build on this
- > Strong support for writing WA, particularly from writers and some facilitators, though some were unable to articulate its value; all felt a body advocating and promoting WA writers was essential
- > SLWA was a valued resource, but few could see its role expanding into developing the writing sector

Strategies mentioned that might address some of the above included:

- > Greater focus on funding the individual writer – those who were actively seeking to be published through to established writers (needs change as writers become more established);
- > Expanded residency programs;

- > Collaboration between all players in the writing sector to create, for example, a destination event that would put WA on the literary map;
- > A revamped annual Premier's Book Awards that had clear objectives and was imaginatively marketed;
- > Developing a WA independent agency/peak body whose role was to market WA writers nationally and internationally and create networking opportunities that would ease the isolation of WA writers and strengthen their skills.

### 4.3 WA WRITING SECTOR WORKSHOP

Following the distribution of an interim Discussion Paper by Positive Solutions, a cross-section of participants (see Appendix 3) from the writing sector together with DCA officers, took part in a five hour workshop. During the Workshop participants were asked to comment on the brief findings that were presented and to:

- > Identify elements or opportunities which they believed were missing
- > Consider alternative scenarios or 'ways forward' for the writing sector
- > Consider the role of Government vis-à-vis other agencies
- > Discuss policy development and possible program initiatives
- > Discuss possible (organisational) models of support for the advocacy and promotion of WA writers, such as:
  - Writers Hub approach (similar to the Wheeler Centre with dedicated program of events and activities and providing residencies for individuals/groups).
  - Independent service organisation undertaking advocacy, promotion and support for writers (such as writingWA, Queensland Writers Centre or Writers Victoria)
  - Library network based support (SLWA and the public library)

Through a series of group and plenary sessions a lively discussion ensued from which some clear emphases emerged.

Participants identified many 'gaps' in the ecology models presented, highlighting the complex and occasionally idiosyncratic web of factors influencing a writer's trajectory in WA. While writers and readers were clearly identified as the centre of the ecology, reviewers and review sites, translators, editors, manuscript assessors were all added to the contributors. The groups argued that a visual representation of the writing ecology needed to be three dimensional to effectively capture its many intersections and points of entry.

There was also discussion of the wider inputs that impact the WA ecology or ecosystem and the need for greater data or information in relation to:

- > Readers and their habits
- > The location, genre and level of aspiration of WA writers
- > The scope of writing to be captured in any ecology and to be considered for funding
  - creative writing; literary fiction; genre-based writing; technical and cross-disciplinary writing



A discussion of what participants regarded as the 'special conditions in WA' (eg. vastness, distance from markets, proximity and time alignment to Asia) prompted questions about what drives government investment in literature in WA:

- > Support of WA writers?
- > Support of WA readers?
- > Creating and distributing WA stories?

In response, participants identified the following priorities:

- > Investing in talent, in those things others wouldn't and taking risks
- > Securing 'cultural' content
- > Investing in building communities, including reading / writing / learning culture – augmenting other government departments and funding
- > Core organisational funding
- > Advocacy - valuing, positive promotion of sector

And beyond the funding role:

- > Policy to support the sector
- > Documenting the value of the sector
- > Data gathering
- > Legislative protections
- > Trade and intergovernmental connections

Along with other points covered, the workshop culminated in a vision for an enlivened and connected 'writers' hub' that brought together the many intersecting forces desired to fully engage WA writers, writing and readers.

### **4.3.1 WRITERS HUB**

The emergence of the writer's hub idea appeared to be grounded in the hunger for interaction and personal contact in an isolated field, the value placed on mentoring and the desire to simplify or streamline access to sources of advice or information currently available.

The vision was variously described as a one-stop-shop or a Wheeler Centre, suggesting a physical presence as core to the idea. It was agreed any physical hub would also require a vital virtual presence to meet the needs of regional delivery and interaction.

The main functions of a hub that emerged in the workshop and in other consultation include:

- > Coordination of writing sector and possible accommodation for writing groups
- > Communication within and beyond the writing community
- > Programs – workshops, informal and formal mentoring, networking events, publishing activities and residencies, writers tours and visiting writer or inspiring speaker programs
- > Events – Awards, debates, conferences, festivals; a 'destination' event
- > Marketing of WA writers and writing locally, nationally and internationally
- > Advocacy of WA writers and writing – cross-government initiatives and connections, particularly

with Education, Health, Local Government

- > Linking writers and books with other platforms and opportunities – screen, games, technical
- > Fostering cross-artform innovation and collaboration
- > Growing the diversity of voices active in WA writing

There is a range of possible models for what a ‘hub’ might constitute in relation to its physical presence and its scope of services. The Wheeler Centre is one model – but there are others. In Victoria, for example, there is a very successful independent initiative in the games software development field – The Arcade – which is a home for c.100 software developers. This provides a mix of long-term office space, hot-desking, professional support programs, and events which link the developers with key industry players such as Microsoft and Google. A proposed music ‘hub’ is being considered, but may be more of a meeting space to encourage interaction, and a home for a couple of key industry organisations. Overseas there are many examples of cooperative working spaces. The consultants are not recommending a specific model out of the consultation process for this review, as this requires further exploration.



# 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

In framing initiatives that will grow and sustain the writing sector, the following issues arising from the research and consultation process have influenced the consultants' advice.

- > The creative process – the act of writing - is severely hampered by lack of time and money
- > Market development is a critical issue for everyone working in this sector in Australia, and one which WA needs to address with some urgency. WA's isolation from decision-makers and peer-groups exacerbates this
- > Proximity to Asia and the alignment of significant time zones offers a considerable opportunity for WA writers (and to the creative industries in WA more generally)
- > Market forces are causing publishers to become more conservative and mean they are not building writers careers in the same way. How is this gap to be filled?
- > Collaboration between allied and sometimes competing parties is an emerging model in Australia and internationally. With the disruption of internet and digital technologies there is a greater need for publishers to cooperate and negotiate with other firms, including competitors, or others such as games, software and media companies in order to create new products.
- > For emerging and small publishers, distribution can be a major hurdle
- > Self-publishing without an experienced guiding hand is a minefield for new writers
- > While authors still seek traditional publisher relationships there has been an increase in publishing innovation and technology driving new models. Australian publishers are experimenting across digital platforms with changes to royalty and subscription agreements, and providing free ebook downloads which helps make niche publishing projects viable
- > Digital opportunities are encouraging a more direct relationship between writers and readers, publishers and readers, booksellers and readers
- > Sales opportunities in the digital marketplace do not fundamentally alter the economics of publishing but have provided more opportunities for scholarly publishers
- > The WA writing sector is supported by a range of community-based writers' centres, facilitating organisations and by writingWA.
- > Throughout WA there are also 231 public libraries which provide a nexus for writers and readers in a geographically challenging state.
- > There is a strong regional literary festival culture in regional WA – often initiated or supported by the public library. Geraldton, Kununurra, Avon Valley, Broome, Margaret River and Mandurah Festivals are all initiatives of, or have strong links with, their public libraries, and funding from DCA, DRD and Royalties for Regions, delivered via writingWA
- > The history and capacity for publishing Aboriginal stories by Aboriginal people is a strength of WA writing
- > There is a need to increase the diversity of voices and participants in the writing community
- > Recent and current infrastructure developments, plus the proposed reconfiguration of SLWA offer opportunities for increased writing-based activity and activation
- > Changes to governance arrangements at Screenwest and its greater emphasis on the telling of WA stories offer opportunities for writers

With regards to professional development and other support for WA writers, the following table provides an illustration, based on the consultation findings, of how specific types of intervention or support may assist writers at different stages of their career development.



Table 6: Writers' Services Table

	ASPIRING	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	ESTABLISHED
What might they need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writers workshops</li> <li>- 'Safe' experiences</li> <li>- Core writing skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workshops</li> <li>- Advice (how to get published, etc)</li> <li>- Sustained Mentoring</li> <li>- Manuscript assessment</li> <li>- Awards/prizes for unpublished manuscripts</li> <li>- Residencies and fellowships</li> <li>- Skills development</li> <li>- Exposure</li> <li>- Publication in Journals &amp; occasional publications</li> <li>- Knowledge about how the writing sector operates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time and income to write and research new work</li> <li>- Workshops</li> <li>- Advice</li> <li>- Sustained Mentoring at a high level</li> <li>- Skills development</li> <li>- Exposure</li> <li>- Journal publications</li> <li>- Access to publishers or publishing</li> <li>- Advice on business and sole operation</li> <li>- Market expansion to national audiences</li> <li>- Approaching publishers elsewhere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time and income to write</li> <li>- Skills development</li> <li>- Access to publishers or publishing</li> <li>- Advice on business and sole operation</li> <li>- Continual market expansion – international</li> <li>- Residencies here, nationally and overseas</li> <li>- Contractual advice; info re rights etc, brokering deals for film etc</li> <li>- Personal and practical support for the vagaries of a largely solo creative pursuit</li> </ul>
Who might provide it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public libraries</li> <li>- Community writing groups</li> <li>- Adult Ed type courses</li> <li>- Local gov't supported activities</li> <li>- Self-generated activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing groups and networks</li> <li>- Tertiary institutions</li> <li>- Westerley, national journals</li> <li>- Online publishing</li> <li>- Local festivals and events (via public libraries)</li> <li>- Awards and prizes (publishers, universities, etc) regional and national</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing groups and networks, such as ASA</li> <li>- Tertiary institutions</li> <li>- Publishers</li> <li>- Local festivals and events (via public libraries)</li> <li>- Australia Council</li> <li>- The Literature Centre</li> <li>- Prizes and fellowships</li> <li>- Awards and prizes regional and national</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Professional networks via ASA</li> <li>- Writers festivals</li> <li>- Australia Council</li> <li>- The Literature Centre</li> <li>- Prizes and fellowships</li> <li>- Australia Council</li> <li>- Awards and prizes, regional, national and international</li> </ul>
Why would DCA invest?	<p>Main reason would be to encourage participation but (given other potential providers) it's not a strong enough reason to make it a priority</p>	<p>To encourage and find new talent &amp; build the creative heft of WA (build on an existing strength and ensure innovation)</p> <p>To encourage diverse talent that tells the story of WA in all its diversity – culturally, linguistically, age, gender, geographically, economically and in terms of genre</p> <p>To engage young people, hear their voices and ensure a contemporary face to WA</p>	<p>To ensure that talent which has been identified can develop writing career and continue to write</p> <p>To increase the likelihood of employment from writing – both for writers and for collaborators</p> <p>To build the potential for innovation in the application of writing and its distribution</p>	<p>To develop national and international profile of WA writers and WA and increase their market share</p> <p>To encourage 'elders' to give back</p> <p>To maintain the distinct identity of WA through its writing and its writers; cultural prestige</p>



## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In a number of cases DCA's role will be to facilitate implementation by other agencies rather than to directly organise from within DCA. This does, however, imply a proactive and catalytic industry engagement role, rather than a responsive funder role alone.

The purpose of this review is to propose strategies which will support sector development. Following adoption, or amendment, of the recommendations below it will be helpful to prepare a 'sector development statement' which summarises DCA's main areas of focus for support of the writing sector during the next new-years. Effectively this would be a 'vision' statement, supported by the individual recommended actions. Such a statement might address, and set targets for, amongst other elements:

- > Development of creative talent
- > Sustaining quality – WA writers/writing stands with the best
- > Celebrating Aboriginal culture
- > Celebrating the growing cultural diversity of WA
- > Promoting Perth's liveability and culture and WA's unique cultural and natural history assets internationally
- > Achieving employment outcomes and contributing to the WA economy
- > Promoting a WA reading culture, with a focus on WA writers
- > Increasing access to writing, publishing, professional development and sales opportunities through digital technologies
- > Advocating for a positive legislative framework (e.g. copyright, digital publishing, parallel imports)

### 5.2.1 CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

#### Supporting Creative Practice

1. DCA support the development of WA Writers by generating time to write, through the provision of an expanded program of Residencies and Fellowships. These could be wholly DCA-funded or supported in partnership with other agencies – local governments, Australia Council, education sector and philanthropists. DCA resources can be augmented through leveraging such partnerships as far as possible.

#### Career development

2. With program partners DCA to support the development of a coherent (and individualised?) professional development program to address the needs of writers at various stages of their career. Models include ACT writers HARDCOPY year long program and Screenwest award. Topics may include, for example, creative skills, business skills, contractual issues, marketing, adapting to a digital environment.
3. Support professional development opportunities by bringing in key publishers and other strategic industry players who are vital to the health of the WA writing ecology
4. Facilitate mentoring opportunities and mutual support within the sector through hosting (or facilitating the hosting) of periodic networking events (plus see 6 below)

5. Consider establishment of an online platform to encourage networking and interaction between writers and others engaged in the sector

## 5.2.2 MARKET DEVELOPMENT

### Promoting WA writers

6. Support periodic visits to WA from nationally-based industry-significant players – e.g. publishers, editors or media – who may advance the cause of WA writers following greater familiarization with their work
7. Facilitate collaboration between players in the writing sector to create a distinctive destination event that places WA on the literary map nationally and internationally (plus see 13 below)
8. Encourage SLWA, local libraries, booksellers and other agencies to combine for WA Writing Week. Theatre companies, cinemas and TV could be on board also
9. Return the Premier's Book Awards (PBA) to an annual cycle. Review success factors for the Miles Franklin and Stella awards. Develop a business plan and communications plan for the PBA that maximises the profile of the Awards. Consider institutional or corporate partnerships that may enhance the impact of and resources available to the Awards
10. Sustain the Writers on the Road initiative. Review delivery arrangements for this (currently via writingWA) to determine if SLWA, independent contractors or writingWA is best placed to deliver and optimise impact and reach of the program

### International presence

11. Confirm priority overseas markets (e.g. India and, in light of previous writingWA efforts, Singapore) and target attendance at book fairs and festivals/ events. Partner with Australia Council and perhaps other states where practical – but make the offer WA-specific, intriguing and compelling.
12. Bring the world to WA with a major destination event (collaboration model) around an area of strength that has reasonable public appeal (young adult fiction, e.g.) or a priority area for development (say writing for the screen) ...this or Perth Writers Festival might be where Premier's Book Awards are announced.
13. Contract an organisation to drive international and national market development. Consider establishment of a specialist market development committee comprising key representatives from publishing, booksellers, writing, media, SLWA, online guru (collaboration model)

### Promoting a strong reading culture

14. Encourage SLWA to be proactive in stimulating reading – through events, competitions, celebration of WA authors, and through encouraging and supporting local libraries throughout the State. Require SLWA to develop five-yearly and annual plans for developing a strong reading culture in WA
15. Investigate the development of a formal network of WA book clubs, which could be used to promote WA writing and participate in Premier's Book Awards

### Coordinate support agencies

16. Facilitate twice-yearly stakeholder forums which encourage industry networking and collaborations. These may need to be semi-structured e.g. focus on specific topic areas and have a mix of formalised presentation and discussion along with informal/ social time
17. Prioritise initiatives which demonstrate collaborative working between agencies within the sector
18. Prioritise initiatives which leverage support from third parties to enhance resources available to the WA writing sector
19. Investigate further the concept of a Writers Hub – a place of meeting and interchange, and a public face for the sector in WA. The redeveloped SLWA building may provide suitable accommodation for such a hub, although it would also need a regional/ remote dimension as well as a Perth location

#### Services delivery mechanism

20. Bundle services required to implement some of the recommendations above into one or two RFPs, and invite competitive proposals from interested parties to deliver some or all of these services
21. Ensure that RFPs and/ or funding agreements contain clearly specified outputs and outcomes, and with a proportion of funding linked to targets achieved. Some of the outputs may comprise a number of the recommendations outlined above

#### Measuring progress

22. Ensure that regular data is collected regarding authors published, income secured to track ROI for DCA's engagement with the writing sector
23. Establish clear KPIs, linked to the outcomes intended for this series of policy and program interventions. Ensure these are integrated into service and funding agreements with clients, and that resulting data is collated and reported – to the industry as well as within Government.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS: IMPACT BY A WRITER'S CAREER STAGE**

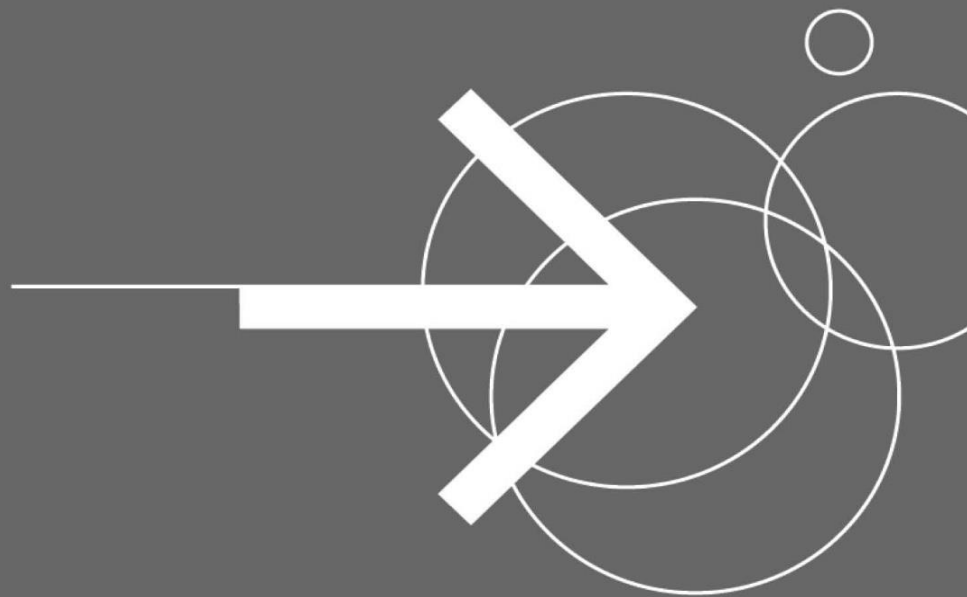
Career stage is defined as follows:

1. Aspiring: beginner or casual writers
2. Emerging: writers who are actively seeking publication
3. Developing: early and mid-career writers
4. Established: writers whose main source of income is from writing



	Aspiring	Emerging	Developing	Established
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>				
<b>DCA statement of priorities</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Supporting individual creative practice (fellowships, residencies etc).</b> Leverage partnerships to deliver		✓	✓	
<b>Career development</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
With service orgs ensure coherent program for each career stage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sustained mentoring		✓	✓	
Professional development of key industry players		✓	✓	✓
Networking events to strengthen support network		✓	✓	✓
Online platform for networking & interaction	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Promoting WA writers</b>				
Visiting publishers and media		✓	✓	✓
Destination event for sectoral players (see below)			✓	✓
WA Writing Week		✓	✓	✓
Premier's Book Awards (annual and re-configured)		✓	✓	✓
Writers on the Road, delivered by SLWA	✓	✓	✓	
<b>International market development</b>				
Identify priority markets			✓	✓
Bring the world to WA for event around sectoral strengths (Collaboration model)			✓	✓
Contract organisation to deliver promotion and market dev				
<b>Promote a strong reading culture</b>				
SLWA to develop five-yearly and annual plans for developing a strong reading culture in WA	✓	✓	✓	✓
Investigate formalising a network of book clubs			✓	✓
<b>Co-ordinate support agencies</b>				
Twice-yearly stakeholder forums around specific topics		✓	✓	✓
Prioritise initiatives involving collaboration between agencies	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Delivery of services</b>				
Bundle services for delivery of recommendations into one or two service orgns (RFP)	✓	✓	✓	✓
RFPs and funding to have specified outputs & outcomes	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Measure data (authors published, income earned, etc)</b>		✓	✓	✓
Ensure KPIs for this program integrated into service and funding agreements with clients				

# APPENDIX



## APPENDIX 1: LIST OF KEY DOCUMENTS

- > Future of Public Libraries Discussion Paper, 2016
- > Book Industry Strategy Group Report – Australian Government Response, Manufacturing Policy Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, June 2012
- > Book Industry Collaborative Council, Final Report, 2013
- > Disruption and innovation in the Australian book industry: Case studies of trade and education publishers, Macquarie Economics Research Papers, 2016
- > Don't Panic: The Impact of Digital Technology on the Major Performing Arts Industry, Australia Council, 2008
- > Literacy and Social Inclusion: The Handbook, Basic Skills Agency, 2005
- > Public Library Services in Western Australia in 2025: Research & Consultation Findings, Western Australian Local Government Association, June 2015
- > Vision 2025: Public Library Services in Western Australia and Framework for Strategic Action, Western Australian Local Government Association
- > Are We There Yet? A Personal Perspective on the Evolution of the WA Writing Sector Over Recent Decades, With Some Thoughts on its Future Development, Ken Spillman, WA Writing and Publishing Sector Forum, 2016
- > The National Voice Report, Australian Writers Guild
- > Contending with a Blank Page, Madeleine Watts, Griffith Review 47, pp 105-115
- > Tim Winton to Gail Jones: Why Writing Matters in WA, The Conversation, Catherine Noske, January 2017
- > Book Sales are in Decline but Audio Books are Thriving, Luke Graham, News Assist, 2016
- > Inside Book Publishing, Giles Clark and Angus Phillips, Routledge
- > The Literature and Publishing Sector Review, Creative Scotland, 2015
- > Annual Report, Australia Council for the Arts 2015-2016
- > Arts and Culture in Western Australian Australia, Local Government Report, March 2015
- > How We Work with Writers, Katherine Susannah Prichard Writer's Centre, Summary of Programmes
- > Literature Sector Plan, Australia Council, 2011- 2012
- > The Business of Writing, Juliet Rogers, 2016
- > Funding in the Writing Sector, Department of Culture and the Arts, 2008-2016
- > Organisations Investment Program, A New Model for Investing in The Arts in Western Australia, Assessment Framework, Department of Culture and the Arts, 2015
- > Arts and Culture Monitor, Department of Culture and the Arts and ScreenWest, May 2015
- > Summary Report on the 2016 Survey of Writing WA's Members
- > Summary Report on the 2016 Survey of WA Writing Sector Professionals
- > Strategic Plan, Department of Culture and the Arts, 2016
- > Strategic Directions, Arts Leadership Group, 2016- 2031
- > Growing Western Australia's Literary Culture
- > Creating Value, An Arts and Culture Sector Policy Framework, 2010-2014
- > International Arts Activity, Australian Arts Sector, Summary Report, Australia Council for the Arts, August 2015
- > Arts in Daily Life: Western Australian Participation in the Arts, Instinct and Reason, July 2014

- > Arts Nation, An Overview of Australian Arts, Australia Council for the Arts, 2015
- > International Arts Activity, Australian Arts Sector, Survey Detailed Report, Australia Council for the Arts, September 2015
- > Domestic Content Policies in the Broadband Age: A Four-Country Analysis, University of Canberra, Faculty of Arts and Design, 2015
- > Arts Nation, An Overview of Australian Arts, Australia Council for the Arts, 2015
- > Creative Industries Statistical Analysis for Western Australia, ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, 2013

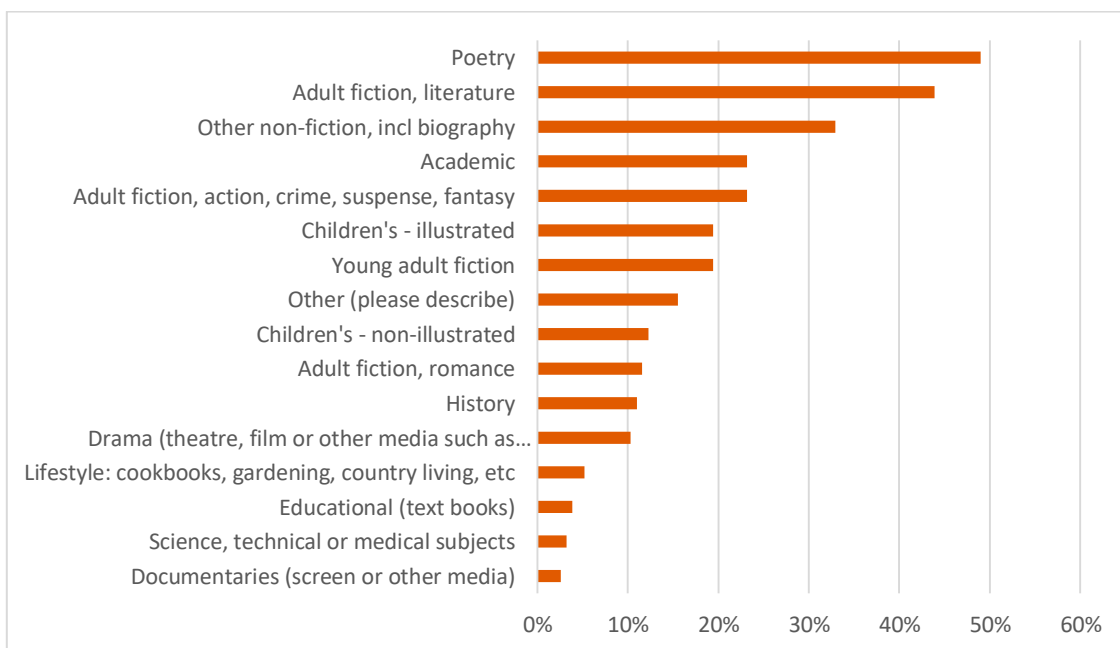
## APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF WRITERS' SURVEY

159 writers participated in the online survey, which was promoted by DCA, writersWA and through a number of other channels.

### 1. Which of the following genres or activities are you engaged in as a professional writer?

The top three areas engaged in as a professional writer were:

- > Poetry 49%
- > Adult fiction 44%
- > Other non-fiction, including biography 33%



## 2. If not one of the above, which are the main genres you work within: (n=118)

The responses to this question did not add substantially to the information contained in the above graph, though the perils of classification were well described by some respondents:

- I have over 70 novels published so have covered a lot of ground in the past two plus decades. I currently write for two UK publishers and produce three novels a year...I write family/relationships novels, both historical and modern, and have written romantic suspense and fantasy novels. I've won and been shortlisted for awards for my writing.
- I write adult fiction.
- This can and does include romance, romantic comedy, satire, suspense, thrillers,

## 3. Of all the areas you are involved in as a writer, which is the fastest growing? In your opinion does this growth reflect the needs of the marketplace or your own particular interest or passion?

Despite the question specifying the response should be based on the writer's own experience, the above questions were widely misunderstood as being about the marketplace as a whole. Don't know, don't care. 'Fast growth' isn't important to me seemed to sum it up. There appeared, however, to be a lack of awareness of what is happening in the marketplace, though several saw children's fiction, romance, thriller and science fiction genres as growing areas.

## 4. Is there an area you would like to spend more time on? Please specify

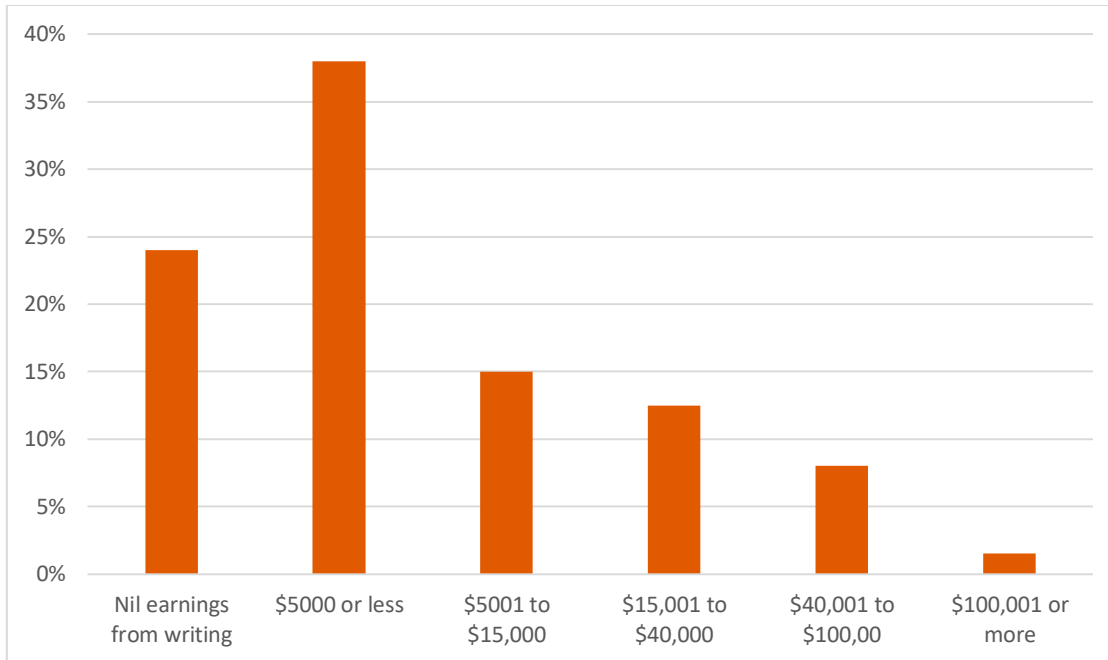
Some of the areas mentioned were:

- > time on my screen-writing craft (x4)
- > drama
- > adult fantasy fiction
- > interplay of biography and memoirs
- > translation
- > documenting the history of institutions from an Aboriginal perspective
- > connecting with other writers and readers
- > more time to devote to longer form projects (mentioned by many)

- I'm currently fully employed with publishers 'courting' my agent for extra books from me, but I don't have the time. I'm very happily engaged in writing - and still grateful for the early support given in the grants/writers in residence fellowships of the local system. What emerging and beginning writers need is time to develop their skills - but like everyone else they still have to earn a living.
- I also spend more time than I would like on marketing and promotion. My issue isn't time, it's discoverability - finding a way to let people know that my books exist and getting them to buy them. It would be nice if I could hand the promotion and marketing over to someone else, but I'm not in the financial position to do that as  
vet

**5. In the last financial year, how much did you earn from your writing, including government grants?**

Income range last financial year	%
Nil earnings from writing	24%
\$5000 or less	38%
\$5001 to \$15,000	15%
\$15,001 to \$40,000	12.5%
\$40,001 to \$100,000	8%
\$100,001 or more	1.5%
Does not add up to a hundred due to rounding	99%



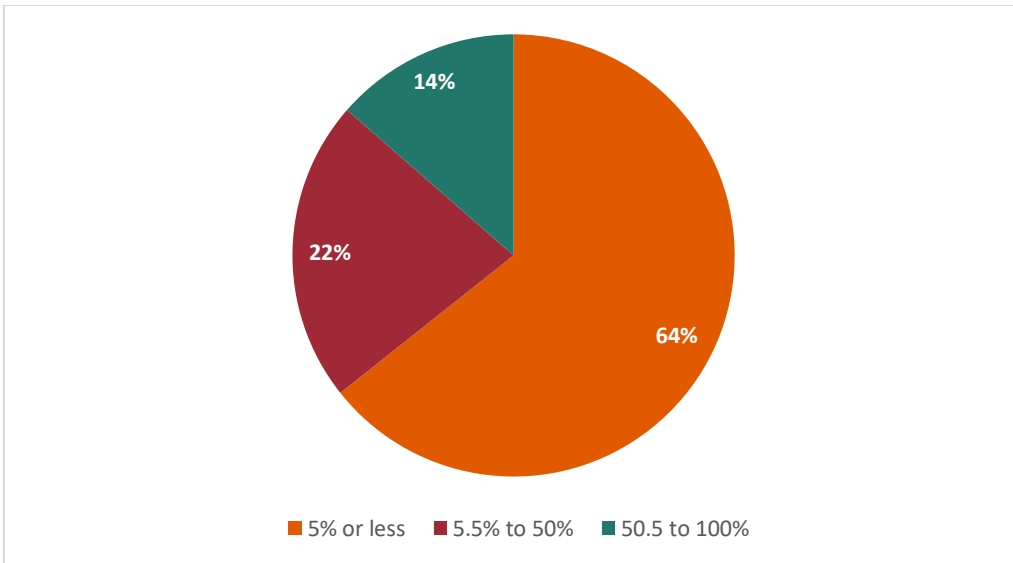
Nearly a third (62%) earned nothing or less than \$5,000 in the last financial year; around a quarter (24%) had no income from writing in that period. For 55% of all respondents this was about the same as the previous year, with the remainder fairly equally split between more or less income.

Answer Options	%
More?	23.0%
about the same?	54.9%
Less?	22.1%

**6. Please indicate what proportion of your annual income (all sources) comes from the list below (should add up to 100%) N=121**

Proportion of income from core area of interest:

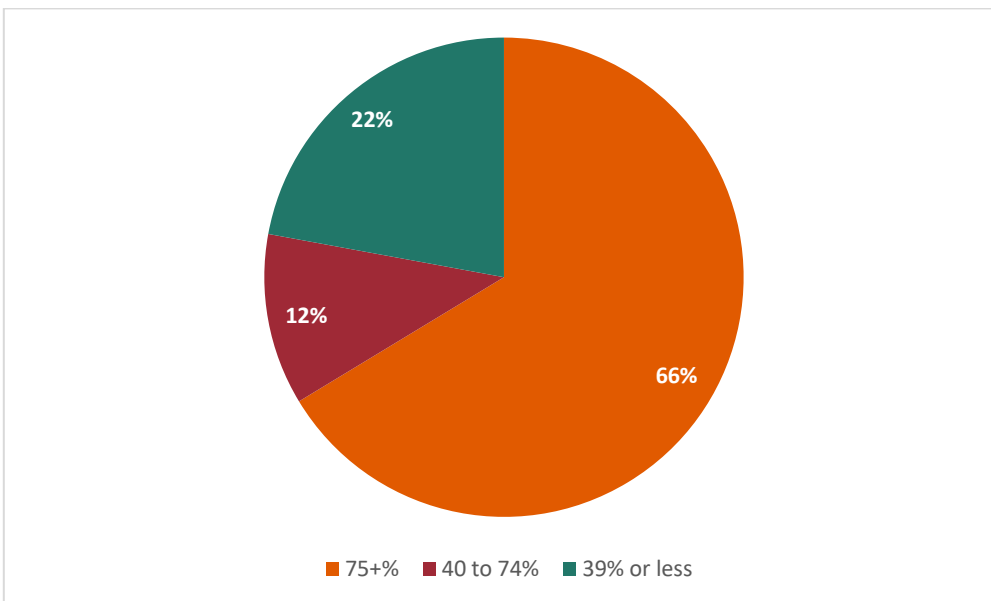




Usable responses (50% of sample)

Earnings from core area of interest comprise 5% or less of total annual income for two thirds (64%) of writers responding to this question. Five writers earned all their income from their core area of interest, while 43% earned nothing or less than 1%.

### Non-writing Income



usable responses (38% of respondents)

Two thirds earned 75% or more of their annual income from non-writing related activities. Five were earning all their income from writing related work.

This question also asked the proportion of income earned from events or speaking, and 98% of those responding (63) earned 20% or less of their income this way; two people earned 100% of their income

from writing outside their core area of interest; other writing-related accounted for 40+% of income for 8 people (only 25% of sample responded to this question)

**7. Have you received funding from DCA towards your writing activity in past five years?**

Most (80%) had not received DCA funding in the past five years.

yes	19.67%
No	80.33%

**8. Have you received funding from other government or non-government sources in the past five years?**

yes	21.14%
no	78.86%

Similarly, 79% had not received funding from other government or non-government sources in the past five years.

**9. Please indicate the types of formal training you have received.**

	Yes	No	No Responses
University Post Graduate	67.29%	32.71%	107
Creative Writing Centre	62.79%	37.21%	86
Community Group	59.04%	40.96%	83
University undergraduate	72.63%	27.37%	95
Writers' residency	40.00%	60.00%	80

A high proportion had university post graduate and undergraduate qualifications, while nearly two thirds of those responding to this question had training via a Creative Writing Centre.

**10. What kinds of skills did you obtain from your training?**

	Yes	Total
Core writing skills	91.23%	114
Promotion of your work	65.12%	86
Copyright and other legal issues	44.16%	77
Tools for self-digitisation	35.14	74
Financial and business management	22.37%	76

Most had received training in core writing skills, however less than half had received training in copyright/legal issues, tools for self-digitisation, and financial and business management.

#### 11. In the last five years have you...

Answer Choices	%
been published by an Australian publisher?	79.13%
been published by a publisher from elsewhere (not Australia)?	40.00%
self-published your work?	36.52%
been published by a university or other academic institution?	25.22%
been published by a third party, other than those mentioned above? please specify	20.00%

79%, a surprisingly high proportion (given the response to the income question), had been published by an Australian publisher in the last five years, while less than half had been published overseas.

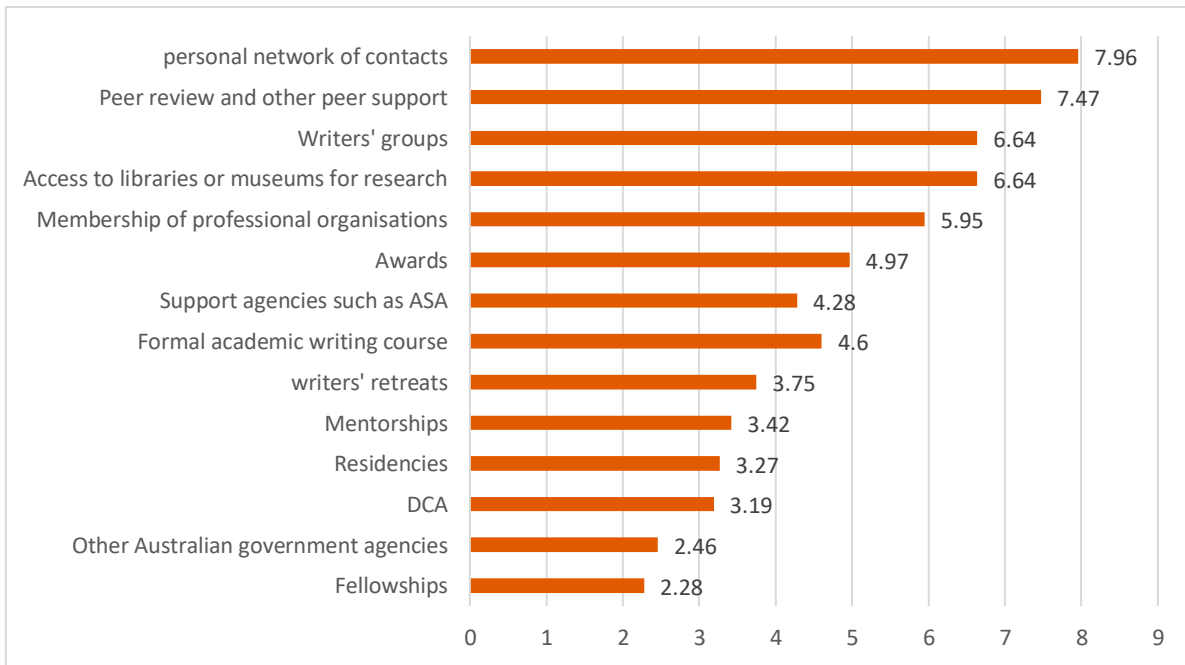
12. Have your works been published...

Answer Choices	%
physical books, sold online and through retailers?	67.54%
as ebooks?	52.63%
physical books, sold online?	48.25%
pdf available through a website or blog	26.32%
other (please specify)	27.19%

More than two thirds had had their works published as physical books, while just over half had had their works publishes as e-books. In the 'other' category, descriptions included: audio books, journals, online journals and blogs (poets), performance, visual art installations, online anthologies, self-published physical books sold locally.

13. How important have the following been in your development as a writer? (1 = not at all important 10 = very important.) Please indicate not applicable for those factors you have not personally experienced.

Support most valued in development as a writer



The above averages exclude those responding not applicable.

Peer and personal networks are most highly valued, along with writers' groups and access to libraries and museums.

	N/A	Total response
fellowships	56	110
residencies	46	115
Other Australian govt agencies	44	111
mentorships	42	112
writers retreats	40	114
DCA	40	116
awards	25	117
support agencies, such as ASA	24	112
formal academic writing course	21	116
membership of professional organisations	15	116
writers' groups	12	117
access to libraries or museums for research purposes	5	118
peer review and other peer support	3	119
personal network of contacts	1	120

The factors most likely not to be applicable to respondents were fellowships, residencies, mentorships and government grants.

**14. What services (apart from funding) have been important to your development? (leave blank if not applicable).**

Half of the sample answered this question, stating a range of organisations in WA across writers centres (KSP and Peter Cowan frequently mentioned), the Perth Writers' Festivals with writingWA mentioned most frequently by 11 people with the Society of Children's Book Writers also mentioned by some. Others also described the importance of WA publishers and the value in having been well edited by them or having been mentored with them. (answered by 97 writers)

**15. What sort of services would have been (or were) most useful to you when you first started on your career as a writer?**

Mentoring was mentioned most frequently (32 of the 97 responses), with some specifying the need for sustained professional mentoring, manuscript assessment, connection with editors and publishers. A significant number also mentioned they would have benefited from a greater understanding of the industry, the market place, contracts and financial managed. Others expressed a regret that the university courses for writing and internet had not been available when they started out.

**16. Please indicate the types of professional development you would find most useful now and why.**

Some representative responses follow:

- Business and management mostly, I think. When setting yourself up as a writer, I feel like you're mostly expected to guess at what to do and how to shape a career, rather than learning from a supportive group about what you should know and where you should be moving towards.
- Business development - accounting and tax information for writers, marketing and promotion, business planning, networking events to meet publishers and agents based overseas or interstate.
- Peer review. Meeting authors working in similar genres.
- An editor to read and work with on new works
- Assistance in publication, editing for publication, positive critique without destructive tendencies, notification of requirements by publishers/editors
- Promotion - use of social media
- Dramaturgs and Performers
- Relationship with a publisher and an independent editor.
- Financial advice
- More support for regional and remote writers
- Time/funding
- Access to quiet residential place for periods of up to one month, with board and lodging supplied, to write-up longer work
- Funding to complete works and get them ready or closer to publishing
- I'm not looking for PD now - just enough funds to facilitate writing time - via sales, awards, grants, whatever means available.
- Mid list author support- Funding to help support me while I write another book
- More funding opportunities to allow me time to write and research, support for literary journals that publish WA writers, writing fellowships and retreats, access to services in regional WA (south west)
- New forms (eg. screenplay, digital/multi-media, short story/picture book) : to extend range, experiment
- I have a PhD in literary studies so I don't need much now I have written my first novel and working on my second. What I would like is a holistic approach to new technologies with programs run by experts, not people who are only learning as they go
- High level writing workshop, international
- International markets
- Book promotion, creating book trailers, networking, introductions to publishers,

advice on editing

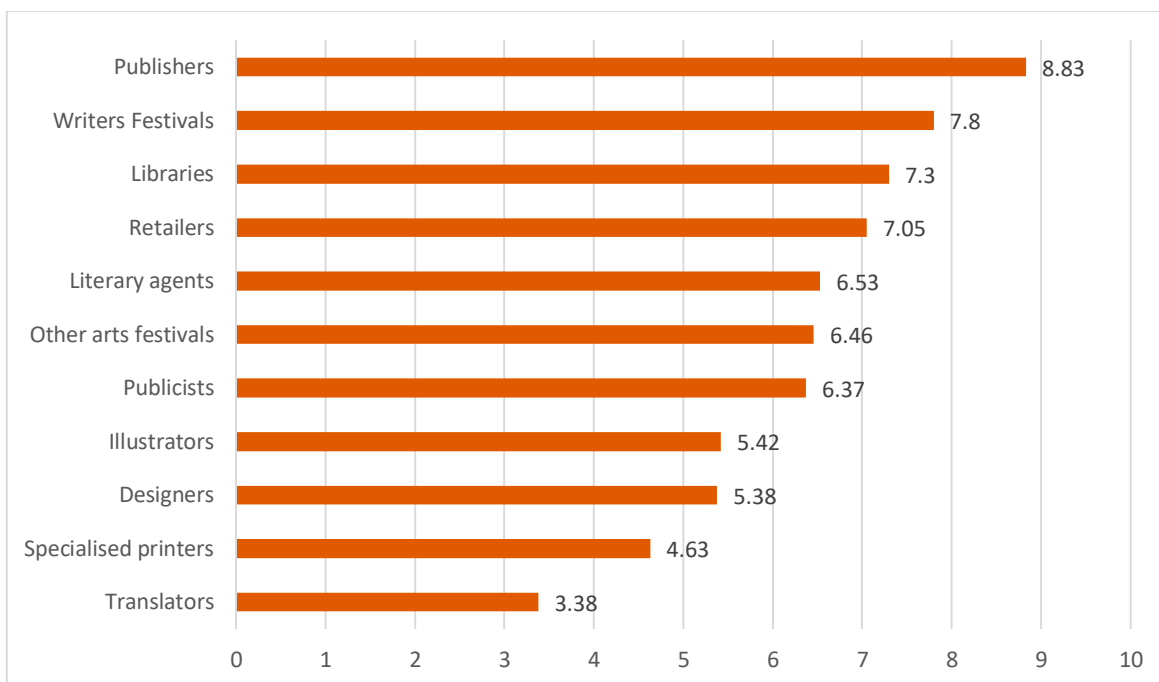
- Art flight grants that enable networking worldwide in residencies as offered by Res Artis [http://www.resartis.org/en/residencies/list\\_of\\_residencies/?id\\_content=5098](http://www.resartis.org/en/residencies/list_of_residencies/?id_content=5098)
- grants for travel, development grants, research grants travel - to promote my work and gain new contacts
- Path to professional publishing
- Effectively approaching publishers, submitting manuscripts. I find this hard without knowing what is currently sought for by publishers and I have limited time myself due to job commitments

17. Are you a member of one of the following professional organisations for writing? Tick all applicable boxes.

Answer Choices	Responses
Writing WA	70.59%
Australian Society of Authors	34.31%
Australian Writers Guild WA	6.86%
First Nations Australia Writers' Network	1.96%
Other (please specify)	54.90%

In the 'other' category, writers centres, both local and interstate, were most frequently specified. Other organisations specified included: Fellowship of Australian Writers WA, Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (Australia West); Children's Book Council of Australia; WA Poet's Inc; Alliance of Independent Authors; Poetry Australia; Western Australian Poets Inc (WAPI); Novelists Inc (for multi-published authors); Romantic Novelists Association of the UK; Romance Writers of Australia (mentioned by several);

18. Please indicate how important your relationship with other areas of the sector is to your work as a writer (1 = not at all important 10 = very important.) Indicate not applicable if you have not interacted personally with that area or role.



The most important relationships writers had within the sector were with:

Publishers

Writers' Festivals

Libraries

Area	N/A
Translators	64
Specialised printers	55
Illustrators	53
Literary agents	50
Designers	46
Publicists	45
Retailers	37
Other arts Festivals	26
Publishers	13
Writers Festivals	7
Libraries	6



Respondents were most likely not to have interacted with translators, specialised printers, illustrators, literary agents, designers and publicists. Most had had interactions with publishers (this may be of journals, magazines and so on), festivals and libraries.

**19. To support your writing do you access collections, services or participate in programs delivered by the following institutions?**

Public libraries	67.83%
The State Library of WA	54.78%
Online collections	51.30%
University libraries	44.35%
Museums	33.91%
State Records Office	19.13%
None	8.70%
Other (please specify)	20.00%

**20. If you access public libraries or specific local collections or services, are there improvements you can suggest which would benefit the writing sector in WA?**

There were few comments about services offered, though there was a call for more digitisation, a more streamlined digital search function and a simplified and faster process for the download of ebooks. The inter-library loan system is appreciated and there was a call by several for there to be more purchasing of books by WA writers and for there to be a special section for WA authors. There was also a call by some for featured authors at libraries to contain more WA writers. (answered by 33)

**21. What are the top two or three advantages for you as a writer living in WA?**

Representative comments are given below. The most frequently mentioned advantages were, strangely, the isolation, peer support, the landscape and valuable support organisations.

- The isolation and open space gives greater space in which to develop ideas. The close-knit nature of the writing sector which enables ongoing networking especially focused around the writers centres.
- Isolation Landscape Space to think
- (1) A wealth of previously unexplored raw material to draw upon (2) Splendid isolation (3) A relatively healthy screen sector
- Nature and landscape. The systems in place to assist me in regional WA that would be less likely to exist elsewhere.

- large network of fellow writers
- Western Australia has a vibrant, diverse, supportive, proactive and visionary writing community. I benefit greatly from contributing to and receiving from this community
- Being represented by Writing WA. Having a local non-for-profit publisher (Freo Press) Writing and arts festivals.

## 22. What are the top two or three disadvantages for you as a writer of living in WA?

Not surprisingly, isolation from markets, agents, publishers and influential networks were the most frequently mentioned disadvantages. Representative comments follow.

- Isolation, isolation, isolation. From the rest of Australia. The vast majority of Australian children's publishers (and publishers full-stop) are in Victoria and NSW. The biggest population centres are there. The biggest writers festivals are there.
- lack of publishing opportunities in WA lack of support for writers by DCA compared to other arts distance from centralised services experienced in regional areas
- Distance from publishers, difficulty getting to Writing Festivals as presenter or attendant
- little financial support to dedicate time to writing, removed from national centres of publishing
- Difficult to expand my readership to the other side of the country. Difficult to get published in journals.
- A lot of the best programs are run over east, which means flying to Melbourne.
- W.A. writers have to work so hard to have their names and works noticed east of the S.A. border. 2. The cost of travel between Perth and distant destinations - intrastate, interstate and international.
- Scarcity of funding
- When you've sold over half a million books worldwide in less than five years, it's insulting to sit through presentation after presentation from authors I've never heard of, harping on about how books don't sell and authors don't make a living. Yet because there doesn't appear to be enough funding for an author peak body in WA, authors who DO make a living here by targeting interstate and overseas markets have no voice in WA.
- 1. No MFA programs/no opportunity to hone one's work in a workshop-based environment for academic credit. 2. Isolation, lack of community. 3. Few events/readings/etc.
- no money, no opportunity, cultural apathy
- The sense that you're a novelty, an exotic curiosity at best, rather than plugged into the cultural mainstream. (multi-published author)
- Travel is SO expensive Being seen by outsiders as a "regional writer," but not for the purposes of special funding!! Worst of both worlds. WA people look to the East, but not overseas enough. You are not going to meet a real literary agent in Perth - and meeting them does matter.

- In the earlier stages of my career, limited access to industry events, PD, critiques/connections with editors etc. Difficult to sink \$\$ into trips to conferences and other events when you are not generating any tangible income, and yet that's precisely when such things are often important.

**23. What are the current external factors that are having the most impact on your writing career?**

Lack of time, difficulty getting published, lack of outlets for performance writing, lack of money, the hugely competitive market place, economic downturn. A few had the insight to mention the pressure on the publishing industry and subsequent impacts on the writer.

Changing technology, surprisingly, was mentioned by only a few.

**24. Please describe how these external factors might be addressed, either by yourself or others working on behalf of the writing sector.**

The solutions provided revolved around a number of themes:

- > overcoming isolation through promotion and marketing, and through agencies such as writingWA
- > expanding government's purview beyond literature to specific genres
- > focusing more on writers who are published and serious about their career and on the final stages of a book's journey (editing, manuscript assessment, etc)
- > boosting the funding of support organisations
- > the advantages of government seeking specialized input into its funding programs
- > a need for faster internet

- I would like help selling my foreign language rights, my audiobook rights etc, but at this stage I'm finding it difficult to work out how
- Grants that are not focused on literary writing would help boost other writers. Anything that's commercial, such as romance, is dismissed early on in the selection stage of the current grants system.
- Need for an advanced writing centre and writers conventions. Most writers groups cater for beginners and wannabes. Serious writers have few networking opportunities. Need for more book fairs and opportunities for WA writers to promote and market their product.
- Stop cutting funding to organisations like writingWA, journals like Westerly, libraries and the Perth Writers Festival
- Set up a cost-effective company to do this
- Create and support a local creative hub that will foster symbiotic relationships between writers and related arts genres to encourage collaboration and innovative developments.
- More mentorship/scholarship opportunities could be offered where successful

applicants (emerging writers) receive subsidised manuscript assessment/editing services. These should not be age specific. It is often difficult as a mature writer (in her fifties) when some opportunities are consigned to writers of a younger age group (20s and 30s).

- Perhaps a board drawn from the writing community to advise the DCA?
- Encourage people to read, visit libraries, go to writing (reading) festivals.
- NBN. At my house. Preferably yesterday, but as soon as possible.
- Government anti-trust legislation to reign in Amazon and other social media
- If organisations such as Writing WA could do more to promote WA writers interstate and internationally it would be a great help. Also more workshops on the business of writing would be beneficial.
- More programs to get WA writers out into the world at festivals and workshops. More festivals and workshops that would attract eastern states people here - networking would then occur more.
- better avenues for WA writers to be represented nationally better avenues for WA writers to meet national publishers /agents to promote work/ideas more opportunity to attend national events like writers' festivals

## 25. Attendance at readers'/writers' festivals

65% had attended writers' festivals, with two thirds of these attending festivals in Australia and one third overseas.

## 26. How significant is the Premier's Book Awards in the promotion of writing and reading in WA? Are there ways this initiative could be made more effective?

Opinions were divided on this, with many believing the money would be better spent elsewhere in the writing sector, with others saying it was vitally important but needed significant improvements: it should become an annual award again, have a WA or Indian Ocean focus, be much better and more widely promoted and some said it should include genre fiction. Few thought it was effective in its current format. (91 responses)

- It needs to take place annually. Limit entry to West Australian writers. If awards can go to the best scientists working within WA annually why not to the best West Australian writers?
- They are currently ineffective. To have made these awards a virtual clone of other awards in Australia was wrong-headed. They are overshadowed by other Australian awards. There needs to be a WA and or Indian Ocean focus.
- I'm doubtful that they're particularly significant in the promotion of reading and writing. That said, I think that this sort of incentive is very significant to writers and it's a great initiative. Restoring the annual award would probably help to raise its

profile.

- Vital It should prioritise WA writers and be an annual award again
- you want the support when the book is new not a couple of years later. My small publisher overlooked the date! I do use it to choose new authors. I think it should focus on wa writers only especially if cost is a factor in only having it every two years.. Local only, less prize money but more often
- yes, give the major prizes to WA writers. what is the point of giving a prize to a writer who has already won prizes in other states, or national prizes. this does not help local writers
- Very significant. As a past winner, my book received additional focus locally. Reinstating as an annual award. A category (or categories) specifically for West Australian authors. Children's category in the People's Choice section.
- Eroded significance, not 'WA' anymore.
- Totally insignificant. Used to be focused on WA writing and so encourage new writers. People like Gail JOnes got their first acknowledgment that way. Now they're national its just another way of money going to established writers
- It's significant to win it, as the cash prize enables the winner to 'buy' more creative time. I don't know how widespread the results are to the wider population.
- For genre fiction writers it is insignificant.
- they don't really care about genre fiction, not at all.
- They do not help the industry generally.
- Frankly I think the money could be better used elsewhere in the writing sector. Does the award help the book sales at all?
- widen the awareness!
- It is of no relevance to readers, who are the only ones who can save writing (economically speaking, that is).
- Far too elitist and academic. It doesn't connect with most readers
- Awards at this level seem to be proliferating. Could these Awards target niche areas to build a more focussed brand for the Premier's Book Awards?
- It has been a totally confusing award for some years and i doubt anyone considers it seriously unless they want the money
- As far as I am concerned it is insignificant and useless given that indie authors are not permitted to enter. Yet another hang over from trad publishing trying to hang on to their monopoly. Shame really.

**27. Are there other initiatives which exist or could be developed that would raise the profile of WA writers, locally, nationally or internationally?**

Ideas raised included:

- > partnerships with writers' festivals in other states
- > poetry and/or genre specific festivals
- > indie festival similar to Sundance (but for books)
- > develop or increase partnerships such as the one Writing WA had with AFCC in Singapore

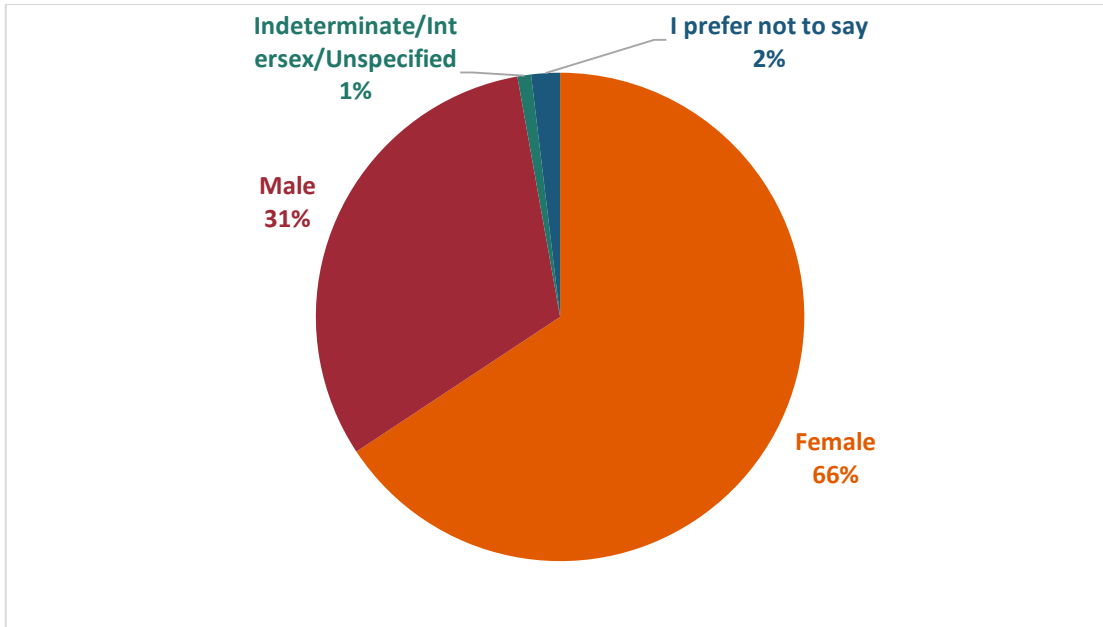
- > greater focus by government on community impacts: How do we develop a culture of writing, creative expression through words and sustain lifelong learning in these skills? rather than on the economy of writing; building an understanding in the community of the value of writing and reading
- > writingWA does a brilliant job in connecting, promoting and guiding writers in WA. this could be expanded to be a more effective service that also supports performance writing; others also commented on the need for this organization to forge partnerships and collaborations more widely across Australia and overseas
- > more high-level international exchanges and high-level networking with publishers
- > greater collaboration between WA writers' centres to develop a more strategic and varied approach for a greater range of writers
- > comprehensive social media strategy to make WA writers more discoverable
- > greater use of all media to promote WA writers
- > more support for performance poetry, which is becoming more popular in WA
- > make the Premier's Awards international by massively increasing the value of the prizes
- > More travel grants and funding
- > Greater diversity in the content of writers' festivals and writing events

- Create more international residencies and collaborative projects with international writers.
- Fostering relationships with interstate and overseas festivals, publishers, and writers' groups would probably help raise the profile of WA writers (poets, at least), and provide opportunities.
- writingWA, for example, has/had several excellent programs - Writers on the Road, the writingWA Awards, Hachette Mentoring Program, to name just a few - but struggles to maintain them with a tiny staff and limited funds.
- Continue to support the independence of local writers' centres. How about funding a linkage program between writers' centres in WA and other states?
- I hate that the state I love is seen internationally as nothing more than a big mining pit with little or no culture and literature. Governments can turn this perception around easily by generously supporting the people who tell Western Australian stories and bring its history to life.
- Writing underpins the performing arts yet, our writers, end up the poor cousins of our actors, directors and designers. Come on, guys, just get real about what makes the arts and cultural sector tick and start championing the wordsmiths and ideas men and women who underpin it so many varied (and mostly unrewarded and unrecognised) ways
- The avenues for critical/creative discourses are either very niche or focusing on major bestsellers.

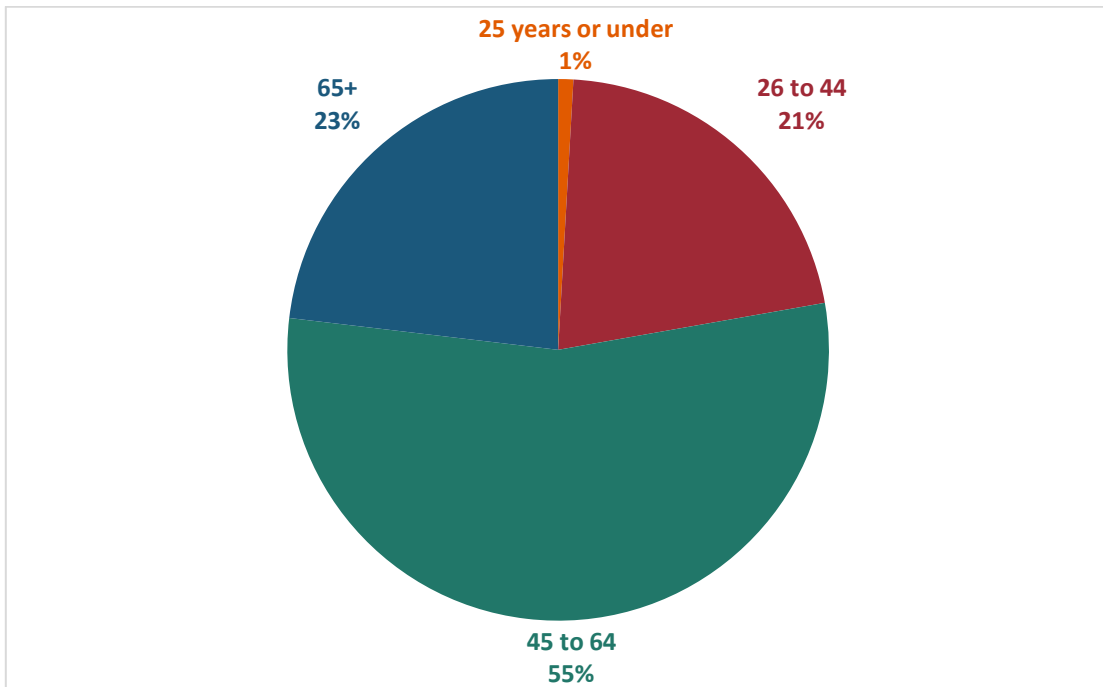
## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Two thirds (66%) of respondents were female and 78% were aged 45+ years (with 23% 65+ years).

### Gender



### Age range



## APPENDIX 3: WRITING SECTOR REVIEW WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

- > David Fishel, Director, Positive Solutions
- > June Moorhouse, Consultant
- > Rebecca Sheardown, DCA Policy and Research Officer
- > Marty Cunningham, DCA Manager Research, Policy and Evaluation
- > Amber Moffat, DCA Investment and Development Officer
- > Duncan Ord, DCA Director General
- > Colin Walker, DCA ED Arts and Cultural Development
- > Margaret Allen, State Librarian and CEO State Library of Western Australia
- > Katherine Dorrington, Program Manager, Perth Writers' Festival PIAF
- > Clive Newman, Founder, Writers' Agency
- > Noel Turnbull, Adjunct Professor Media and Communications RMIT University
- > Anna Moulton, CEO Magabala Books
- > James Foley, Illustrator
- > Terri-Ann White, Director UWA Publishing
- > Dr Catherine Noske, Editor, Westerly Magazine
- > Claire Boston, Author
- > Amanda Curtin, Author
- > Lee Battersby, Author and Cultural Officer, City of Rockingham
- > Meg McKinlay, Author
- > Sharon Flindell, CEO writingWA
- > Shannon Coyle, KSP Writers' Centre





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