

Authors appreciate the help of librarians across Australia

At this time each year, authors scramble to ensure they have submitted their new title claims for the Australian Public Lending Right (PLR) and Educational Lending Right (ELR) schemes. The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) wants to thank all librarians for their role in making this scheme possible.

WHAT IS PLR/ELR?

The Australian Government, through the Department of Communications and the Arts, pays creators and publishers under these schemes in compensation for royalties foregone when books are made available in libraries for free. Last year, \$22.3 million was paid out by the Department to extremely grateful creators and publishers.

In the words of one great Australian author: 'When I think of PLR/ELR, a feeling of abundant gratitude and joy spontaneously erupts in this author. (Every June I want to ring

those lovely people in the Canberra office to thank them or write them a love letter, but I don't want to interrupt their essential work.) Particularly in the last few years, with the arrival of Amazon, ebooks and subsequent reduced royalties, the continuity of those faithful cheques from both public library and educational lending have made it possible for me to keep being a writer for children. Without PLR/ELR, I would not have the income to keep a roof over my head, clothe or feed my family. Thank you forever and always, PLR/ELR!' – [Anna Fienberg](#)

The PLR/ELR schemes recognise the fundamental importance of free libraries, providing our community and our students with access to books but it also balances this need with fair compensation to creators for repeated 'free' lending.


Payment is made based on library holdings of print books. We know that librarians cooperate in annual surveys to determine which creators and publishers are eligible for payment. From the authors and illustrators of Australia, we want to say thank you.

'Every year when my PLR/ELR payments flow in, it's like having a garden where the perennials keep blooming for no extra effort. Fabulous!' – [Loretta Re](#)

You might already know that earnings from writing are precarious and low, with the average income from writing hovering just under \$13,000 per annum. In this context, PLR/ELR payments are so important.

The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) was instrumental in campaigning for the introduction of PLR in 1975 and ELR in 2000 and is now actively working with the Department of Communications and the Arts to test the case for an extension of the scheme to digital formats (ebooks and audio books).

Librarians across the country are champions of Australian authors. This year, if you are called upon to provide information on book holdings in your library, please remember that authors and illustrators are relying on this income and are hugely grateful for the role you all play in this.

'PLR and, more importantly, ELR, since most of my titles are for children and YA readers, comprise the biggest one-off payment I receive for my writing each year. My payments have grown steadily each year along with my publications and enable me to spend more time writing and less time doing non-writing work.' – [Deb Fitzpatrick](#) 

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