

# Chair's Message

The Copyright Agency has had a strong year in performing our core task of supporting our members, who include Australian publishers, writers and visual artists.



Photo: Richard Birch

We paid out close to  
**\$120m**  
to our members for use of their work

Our members invest in Australian content, produce rich material that helps educate Australian students across the country, and they tell our stories in ways that make us think afresh about what it means to be Australian or see things from an Australian perspective.

The Copyright Agency's primary job is to support this extraordinary wealth of creativity. We do this by licensing, for a fair fee, universities, schools and businesses to use material produced by our members.

This year I am delighted to report that we had a good year with net income of \$126.6 million - which enabled a payout to members of close to \$120m for the use of their work.

Our members also, in all the surveys we conduct, have overwhelmingly told us that it is important for the Copyright Agency to advocate for their rights with politicians and the community at large. Creators' rights were under threat from a 2016 report issued by the Productivity Commission that recommended weaker copyright protection for creators.

The Copyright Agency worked closely with colleagues at APRA | AMCOS, Screenrights, the APA, the MEAA and ASA, as well as with major media companies, to argue in favour of policy settings that support Australian creativity and to oppose the more egregious recommendations the Productivity Commission made about Australia's copyright regime and its future.

As part of this advocacy campaign, we also sought to provide a channel for individual members to let politicians know how they felt about their rights. The response was overwhelming. Members were generous, thoughtful and powerful in their support of a balanced and fair copyright system. Thousands of members wrote to local politicians and many came to Canberra to put their position directly to key decision makers.

This support has had a positive impact.

In August, the Government responded to the Productivity Commission's report. The Government "noted" the recommendation to adopt a US-style 'Fair Use' copyright exception, which would have undermined members' rights, and observed that there were alternatives available and that it would continue to consult with stakeholders. It represents some common sense in dealing with an unusually harsh and deeply opinionated, rather than factually based report.

I'd like to thank all members involved in representation, as well as all members who were and are engaged with advocacy on these issues, and are willing to step up to prosecute the core case for fairness in addressing the rights of creators to control approvals and terms for the use of their work.

You can read about our successes and challenges in the pages ahead.

With every best wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Williams'.

Kim Williams