COPYRIGHTAGENCY

October 2026

Dear Member

As Chair of the Copyright Agency Board of Directors, I am pleased to share key updates from the past year and to invite you to read our Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2026.

In the financial year, we distributed more than $100 million to nearly 29,000 recipients, primarily writers, artists and publishers. The licence schemes that we manage continue to enable licensees in the education, government and business sectors to copy and share masses of content from vast numbers of rightsholders with minimal administrative requirements, while delivering significant payments to the creators of that content. We also continued to deliver financial support to the creative sector via our management of the artists' resale royalty scheme ($1.4m), and the money that members have agreed to set aside from licensing fees for the Cultural Fund ($2.1m).

Renegotiation of major agreements

This has been a big year for licence negotiations, with the renegotiation of our major licensing agreements with the education and government sectors. AI has been an important part of these negotiations, as we work to ensure that the scope and remuneration of our agreements appropriately address new uses of our members' content.

We are pleased that the Commonwealth, Victorian and South Australian Governments have entered new agreements that recognise the additional value associated with the use of copyright material in prompts to generative AI tools, with an increase in licence fees, indexed annually, to reflect this. Negotiations with other governments are continuing.

Our major agreements with the Schools and University sectors also expire at the end of this year. Negotiations for new agreements are continuing, and AI has made these negotiations more complex than usual. As always, our strong preference is to reach a commercial resolution with both sectors and we will provide members with a further update at the AGM.

We have also been working with members on extensions to our commercial licensing agreements to cover certain AI uses of participating members' content. This has included working with our international counterparts on bilateral arrangements and guidelines for licensing and member consultation.

Advocacy

A major focus of our advocacy has continued to be regulatory settings and Government policies that enable licensing opportunities for AI-related activities. We have continued to work closely on this with others in the creative sector, and with relevant areas of Government. The Government has clearly signalled a desire to look at changes to the Copyright Act 1968 as part of its push to attract investment from major AI developers to train their frontier models

in Australia. As you will have seen from the media, Copyright Agency has played an important role in advocating for our members. In particular, we have advocated that any framework the Government adopts must not circumvent licensing pathways, whether direct or collective. These issues will continue to engage a considerable amount of management time as the Government finalises its position on AI, and our licensing activities develop to reflect the impact of AI.

On a separate issue, we were pleased that longstanding concerns raised with Government about 'orphan works', which are works for which a rightsholder cannot be found, were finally resolved by amendments to the Copyright Act that reflected a consensus position following consultation with a range of affected stakeholders. Some perceived ambiguities about remote learning were also resolved through a consensus approach.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead, we will continue to pursue opportunities that ensure our members benefit from new uses of their content, including AI, while advocating for appropriate safeguards and payment. As the threat to creators and rightsholders' livelihoods increases with new technologies, such as generativeAI, collective licensing has a critical role to play. It offers efficient solutions that can operate at scale, whilst ensuring reasonable guardrails and fair remuneration. We urge our members to support the role of collective licensing and the efforts of Copyright Agency to take advantage of the opportunities and withstand the threats arising from generativeAI.

The Board has every confidence in the Chief Executive Officer and the Copyright Agency team as they undertake these important negotiations and build the next generation of collective licensing services.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your membership and your trust. Copyright Agency will continue to work for a sustainable future in which Australian creativity is respected, licensed and fairly rewarded.

I look forward to the opportunities ahead in 2027.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Kate Harrison
Chair, Copyright Agency Board