



THE NEW ZEALAND
SOCIETY OF AUTHORS
PEN NEW ZEALAND HŌI TE PUNI KATUHŌ O AOTEAROA

The attached questions were sent to these political parties:

National Party, Labour Party, Internet Mana Alliance, Green Party, Maori Party, New Zealand First, ACT NZ and United Future.

We have had responses from National Party, Labour Party, Green Party and Internet Mana Alliance.

Here is what they had to say.

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| 1 | Broadly speaking, which of your party's policies would be most useful to support and grow the local literary scene? Which specific policies do you believe would help ensure more local writers are able to receive reasonable payment from their writing? |
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LABOUR PARTY

Labour has promoted initiatives to support writers; we've have worked to increase New Zealand book exports overseas and supported the development of New Zealand Book Month. In Government, Labour increased funding for the annual royalty payment that New Zealand authors get to compensate them for use of their books in public libraries and included this initiative in legislation. We passed Public Lending Right for New Zealand Authors Act.

Looking ahead, Labour will work with education providers, employers, Creative New Zealand, and other invited parties to support the development of measures that support early career cultural Workers.

We will review the Public Lending Right for New Zealand Author's Act five yearly (or CPI adjusted). The first review will take place when we take office.

NATIONAL PARTY

Ultimately a strong economy will help writers, because advertising does pay for a lot of the avenues for writers to be paid for their work, especially newspapers, magazines and websites. It has never been easy to make a living from writing books in New Zealand. Simon Wilson caused some controversy when he suggested that literary writers should get more involved in journalism, but the truth is that the market for freelance writing is improving in New Zealand. Authors of poetry and literary work are increasing their audiences through social media, which raises their profiles and their potential income from book sales. Authors are becoming much more like musicians, in that they are creating audiences for their work before it goes to market.

GREEN PARTY

The Green Party is committed to fostering the arts, culture and heritage at all levels. We will ensure those involved in the delivery and development of the arts and cultural heritage, including

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representative bodies such as the New Zealand Society of Authors, have a say in development of guidelines for funding.

We will promote improved communication and coordination between government ministries, funding agencies, local bodies, tangata whenua, community and other stakeholders to deliver arts funding.

A Green Party survey of artists conducted in April found:

- i. Overwhelming general concern about funding for the arts
- ii. A desire for greater recognition of the role art plays in society and that following the arts should be recognised as a valid career choice
- iii. That Government can be more active in fostering the arts, particularly in helping to build audiences and a general appreciation for the arts.

2 There can be no question that a literate society is a healthy society, or that a vibrant local literature scene is an essential ingredient in any country's cultural health. Yet literature is currently a low priority for Arts funding. What is your policy towards funding for literature?

LABOUR PARTY

Labour will continue to invest in Creative New Zealand, and directly support other institutions of national significance. We'll structure it to ensure that it is practitioner led.

In addition to the measures mentioned in Question 1, we will also work with the pan-literary group, and more broadly, to ensure that New Zealand Book Month occurs on an annual basis. Labour will review and amend criteria for writers' scholarships. Recipients of writer's scholarships should have the option of staying and working at home.

NATIONAL PARTY

I would dispute funding for literature is a lower priority. The National government invested heavily in our 2012 appearance as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the world's largest content and media trade fair, which provided huge exposure to new markets for our authors and publishers. Over 90,000 people visited the NZ pavilion in 2012. As a result of that fair New Zealand's book rights sales were ten times greater than normal. This is tangible progress for the industry here.

GREEN PARTY

The Green Party recognises the value of all artists in our society. Public funding of the arts must be transparent and sustainable and those involved in the arts must have a say in development of guidelines for funding.

We recognise the arts have an important role to play in our economic development. The success of writers such as Eleanor Catton has numerous spin-offs not just for other writers and artists, but for brand New Zealand and the wider community.

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The Green Party recognises that investment in the arts and crafts is a socially and commercially sound proposition and wishes to develop and secure the highest standards achievable in the arts and crafts. This means improving the status of artists and craftspeople and fostering a climate that encourages innovation and artistic development.

We will:

- i. Reallocate resources within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to establish an arts and cultural promotion unit.
- ii. Recognise the intrinsic value of the Arts in Aotearoa New Zealand and fund it appropriately.
- iii. Support funding for research and development in the arts as a contributor to both the New Zealand economy and society.
- iv. Provide incentives for non-arts based businesses to invest in arts based projects and initiatives so that the sector can move away from reliance on inappropriate and inconsistent sources of revenue, i.e. lotteries, gambling.
- v. Make contributions to bona fide artist organisations tax deductible along the same lines as charity donations.
- vi. Support Buy NZ Made.
- vii. Reinststate a financial support scheme for arts and cultural employment administered by Work and Income, and ensure that Work and Income staff are trained to recognise and respect the arts as a valid vocational choice.
- viii. Ensure that copyright of a commissioned work is retained by the artist, not the commissioner.
- ix. Continue to support the Public Lending Right.
- x. Establish a Literature Commission to undertake research, act as a champion for New Zealand writing and writers, examine issues such as copyright and digital rights as they affect writers, examine ways of raising remuneration for writers and support New Zealand publishers to best serve the interests of writers.

3 The success of New Zealand Music Month is evidence of how a sea-change in attitude towards local artists can be engineered over time and the enormous benefits this ultimately brings. Would you support increased funding for NZ Book Month to enable it to similarly focus on promoting local writing and writers?

LABOUR PARTY

Labour work with the pan-literary group, and more broadly, to ensure that New Zealand Book Month occurs on an annual basis.

NATIONAL PARTY

That is an interesting comparison, because there are certain other factors at play there – interest in NZ music is often cyclical, and certain factors such as radio play quotas may be important. So it's too simplistic to say that NZ Music Month created support for Lorde, for example, and Lorde herself has disputed that kind of idea in the media.

The government has put considerable resources into growing opportunities for the industry as above - for example through the Frankfurt Book Fair, which was a tremendous success. It's not necessarily

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the case that government funding of a book month, rather than more targeted events and promotion, would be the best use of funds from a direct funding perspective.

GREEN PARTY

The Green Party would fully support the concept of a NZ Book Month. We recognise the importance of providing opportunities and platforms to nurture our own talent and creativity as a nation, reflecting the unique cultural environment of Aotearoa New Zealand.

We aim to support and promote this uniqueness to position the Aotearoa New Zealand producers of books, music, television, film and alternative/new media as world-class practitioners and providers for the domestic and international market.

We will support strategies to ensure the production of quality Aotearoa New Zealand books music, films and programmes by Aotearoa New Zealand composers, producers, directors and writers through innovative incentive programmes, Creative New Zealand, the New Zealand Film Commission and NZ on Air.

4 The Public Lending Right compensates writers for lost royalties on public library holdings. The income provided is increasingly welcome as writers' incomes come under ever-greater pressure. However the Fund has not been increased since 2009. Do you support a significant increase in the PLR Fund?

LABOUR PARTY

Labour will review the Public Lending Right for New Zealand Author's Act five yearly (or CPI adjusted). The first review will take place when we take office.

NATIONAL PARTY

The book rate varies year to year, but it is interesting to note the book rate in 2013 (\$2.92) was almost 20% higher than in 2009 (\$2.45). It is not a downward spiral, since it reflects very much the books in current use in libraries. This is an issue I have been interested in since I was chair of the Arts Board. This is an Internal Affairs issue, but I would be interested in meeting to hear any proposals the Society may have on this matter.

GREEN PARTY

The Green Party certainly supports the Public Lending Right and believes it is wrong that this vital source of income should be eroded by inflation through a policy of neglect by the current Government. We would look to reinstate the purchasing power of the PLR Fund.

5 Currently there is not similar compensation to writers for lost royalties on library holdings in education institutions. Do you support the establishment of an Educational Lending Right (ELR) similar to that which operates in Australia? (original request has weblink for more)

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LABOUR PARTY

We are open to exploring this idea, and would need to consider the implications for both writers and education institutions.

NATIONAL PARTY

There are no plans to do this. It is within the ambit of Internal Affairs, and we would have to talk very closely with tertiary institutions which already face rising costs, for example, before a policy like this was pursued.

GREEN PARTY

We recognise lost royalties for writers is a serious problem, especially in a country with a small population and hence a lower potential income from royalties. Assuming the ELR concept had the full support of authors, in government, we would look to extend the PLR concept to educational institutions.

6 Do you support the appointment of a Children's Laureate to be an advocate for New Zealand children's literature, literacy and reading, as well as celebrating the work of New Zealand writers and illustrators? Would you support funding for such an appointment? What priority do you place on the importance of encouraging our children to grow into literate, widely-read and knowledgeable members of society?

LABOUR PARTY

NATIONAL PARTY

This government places huge value on encouraging children to read and enjoy learning. That's why we have introduced national standards into primary schools, and one of the key better public service targets is getting more pre-school kids enrolled in early childhood education.

I don't think there is a need for a "children's laureate" because we have had many fantastic ambassadors for children's literature that did not require a paid government position, from classrooms to nationally someone like Margaret Mahy.

GREEN PARTY

We would support the concept of a Children's Laureate as a great idea to advocate for New Zealand children's literature. We would leave decisions for Government funding for such a position to the appropriate expert body such as Creative New Zealand, which allocates funding on a contestable, priority basis.

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7 Ensuring a vibrant local literature scene requires a level playing field for local writers, publishers and bookshops. But with cheap overseas titles readily available through overseas-based websites, local titles risk becoming a luxury item. Do you support removing GST on all locally-published books OR imposing GST on books bought online?

LABOUR PARTY

Ideas such as these could be considered by the Labour and the 'pan-literary group' which Labour will re-establish.

NATIONAL PARTY

This is a tricky issue being faced by countries all over the world. While I am sympathetic to the arguments raised by retailers on the issue of GST, it is important to recognise that there are a number of factors influencing why consumers choose to shop online that have nothing to do with GST, including; convenience, product variety, availability, and the desire to access digital products.

The issue of GST on online purchases is not unique to New Zealand; other countries are struggling to come up with practical solutions. There are also a range of related issues such as the taxation of online businesses more generally. The OECD is currently working on guidelines to assist countries in collecting GST on online purchases and New Zealand is heavily involved in that work.

The purpose of the customs de minimis is to ensure that tax collection is undertaken in a cost-effective manner. It is currently set at \$60. Customs does not collect GST/duty on lower value goods imported to NZ when it is less than \$60 for practical reasons – the administrative costs would be higher than that GST/duty collected. A 2011 review found it was not cost effective to collect GST where the duty owing was \$60 or less.

Customs is reliant on the self-declaration that the importer makes on the goods. The onus is on the importer to declare the true value of the goods.

In terms of making NZ books, GST exempt, that would make GST more complex and unwieldy and is not something that could be seriously considered.

GREEN PARTY

We would not support the removal of GST from books. The Green Party believes allowing exemptions for particular items will make the tax unnecessarily complex and there is no certainty that the removal would assist the people the policy is aimed to help.

We will certainly work towards imposing GST to books and other items bought overseas online. We fully support local businesses and the Buy NZ campaign. The avoidance of GST for online purchases is a double problem - it gives overseas producers and suppliers an unfair advantage; and the government misses out on revenue.

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The imposition of an effective regime to capture GST from online purchases is challenging, but the Green Party will pursue this with vigour.

8 Local copyright laws are coming under increasing pressure around the world as multinational organisations seek to undermine the rights of copyright owners. For example, as part of the TPPA, countries are being asked to adopt a US “fair use” policy which would water down many of the existing protections and safeguards. Do you support strong copyright laws which give the rights of the copyright owners’ precedence?

LABOUR PARTY

Yes, Labour will undertake a full review of the Copyright Act, with the aim of introducing a new Copyright Bill by 2015 that updates and extends the framework for digital copyright in New Zealand.

Labour recognises while there are strong potential benefits in the TPPA there are also real risks. We do not currently know what is in the text. That’s why the Government must release the text before it is signed, so that we and other New Zealanders can determine whether it is in our interests.

NATIONAL PARTY

The National government passed an amended section 92A of the Copyright Act in its first term, to address the issue of illegal downloading. Unlike other parties such as the Greens and Labour, National takes intellectual property and creators’ rights seriously.

GREEN PARTY

The Green Party opposes the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), particularly as the details of the agreement have been kept secret from the public and will not be officially released before the member states agree to it. Leaked text of the TPPA shows the planned deal compromises members’ sovereign rights in several important areas including protecting our environment, health system and copyright. The Green Party strongly opposes any such agreements.

Green Party ICT spokesperson Gareth Hughes recently stated: "New Zealand's copyright rules should be written by New Zealanders not outsourced to secret negotiations dominated by Hollywood." New Zealand is well behind other countries like Australia and the United Kingdom in terms of reviewing their copyright laws in an electronic age. The current Government is delaying reviewing the copyright law review until it gets agreement on TPPA. The Green Party would conduct an immediate review.

INTERNET PARTY

Chris Yong, Candidate for Te Atatu electorate, West Auckland and arts spokesperson for the **Internet Party** has advised the he would greatly welcome feedback on their [draft arts and culture policy](#) and any ideas you have that could improve it from your perspective.

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