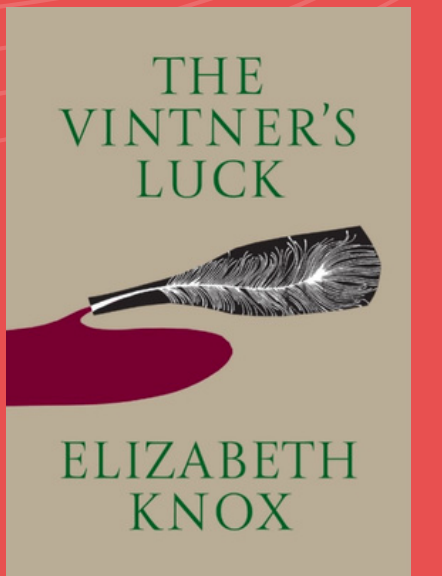
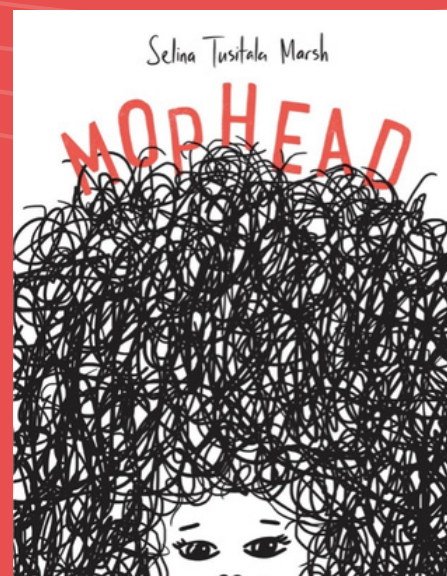
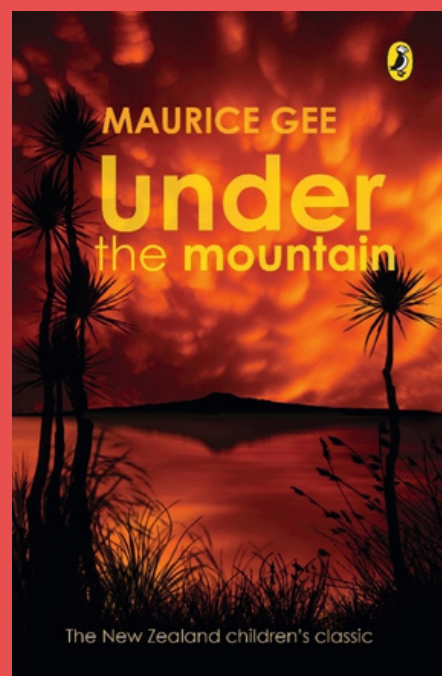
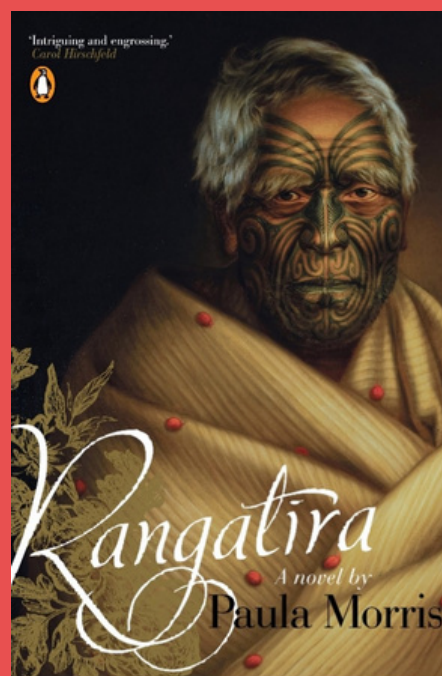
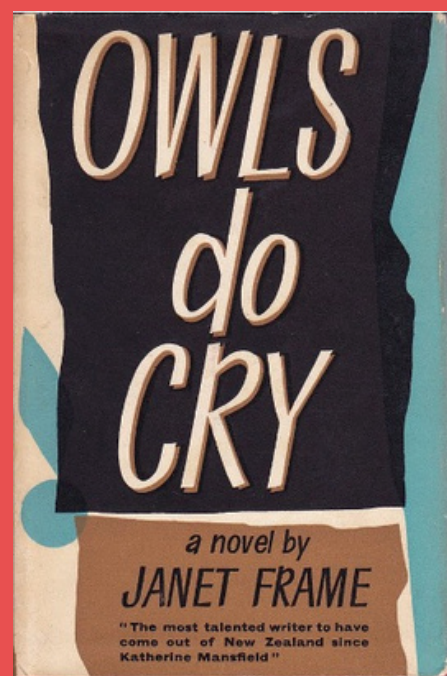


Mahi Tahī
Work Together: **A Strategic Plan**
2025 – 2030 **for the Aotearoa**
New Zealand
Book Sector



What is the book sector?

The Aotearoa New Zealand book sector encompasses the entire ecosystem involved in the creation, production, distribution, promotion, teaching and reading of a great national taonga – books.

Books in Aotearoa New Zealand, in both English and te reo Māori, date back to the very earliest days of the written word and the printing press. The New Zealand book – both poetry and prose – as creative expression and a vehicle for an emerging national culture, independent of Empire, can be said to date from 1889, when young poet Jessie Mackay published *The Spirit of the Rangatira*.

In a small post-colonial nation surrounded by an often-overwhelming globalised culture books are significant – and precious – as repositories of our stories, told by us and about us. Their extended reach also drives our best and box office-busting film adaptations including *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* (based on *Wild Pork and Watercress* by Barry Crump), the *Whalerider*, based on the book of the same name by Witi Ihimaera, and *Once Were Warriors* written by Alan Duff.

Books can be in print, large-print or braille (for the blind), digital and audio formats for both the consumer and education markets.

The sector that surrounds the New Zealand book includes authors, illustrators and designers, publishers, booksellers, printers, photographers, distributors, libraries, educators, festivals, awards organisations, media and readers of all ages.

The sector helps create a rich and vibrant cultural life, it enhances literacy and wellbeing, it helps share knowledge and it makes a strong contribution to the economy.

In character it has always been optimistic, energetic, ambitious, innovative and entrepreneurial.

The attached ecosystem map (appendix one), developed by Copyright Licensing New Zealand, offers a snapshot of the connections and complexity of our sector.





PART 1: Background to the Plan

New Zealand's book market is predominantly an English-language one although its te reo Māori and bilingual strands are growing in momentum. Books written and published here must compete with those produced by – and which have considerable media and marketing support from – the UK, US and Australia. Seventy-eight per cent of books sold in New Zealand originate overseas. Exporting is more challenging still.

Key transformational changes impacting the Aotearoa book sector

Economic Challenges:

- The shift toward online sales continues: Data measurements show that this consistently favours internationally published titles^[1].
- Financial pressures: Rising production costs, smaller print runs, and competition from digital media have all put pressure on traditional publishing and business models. The cost to consumers can be a barrier in a time of rising living costs.

Digital Transformation:

- E-books and Audiobooks: The rise of e-books and audiobooks has changed how many people access and consume narrative content.^[2] Platforms like Kindle, Spotify, Audible and Libro.fm have made reading and listening inexpensive and convenient, and enabled access for New Zealand writers to international audiences, particularly for genre/commercial fiction.
- Self-Publishing: The growth of self-publishing platforms has enabled authors to publish their work and reach audiences directly. This has led to an increase in the diversity of voices and genres.^{[2][3][4]}

Changing Consumer Behaviour:

- Online retail: Increasing numbers of readers shop online, often with international platforms that carry a limited number of New Zealand titles. E-tailers such as Amazon^[5] and Mighty Ape dominate and impose significant control over pricing, visibility and distribution.^[6] When algorithms dictate what consumers see it can be difficult for new or niche authors to compete.^[7]
- As newspapers and magazines decline so reviews of and features about New Zealand books reduce. Online and social media has gap-filled, but in a non-curated way. For commercial titles, platforms like Instagram (Bookstagram) and TikTok (BookTok) are increasingly influential. There is pressure on authors to market themselves and their work as a 'brand'.^{[8][9]}

Increased Focus on Diversity and Inclusion:

- Representation: Reflecting a global trend, books by indigenous and underrepresented groups are sought by publishers, educators and the reading public. Developing Māori writers and publishing more Māori books is essential to the principles of Te Tiriti. There is also increasing need and demand for writers and books from Pacific and other tauwi communities.

Evolving Educational Practices:

- Digital content: Schools and universities have increasingly incorporated digital books and resources into curricula. This has increased access and lowered costs, but it has implications for engagement, leading in some cases to a return to paper only.
- Focus on literacy: Poor literacy levels are linked to poor social capital and reduced productivity. Arresting the persistent trend of declining literacy has been the focus of successive governments,^[10] but there has been little improvement.
- Access to books: The number of school libraries and school librarians has fallen, reducing the guidance young people need to access quality books.^[11]

Environmental Awareness:

- Sustainable publishing practices: Reflecting a global awareness of environmental impact and sustainability,^[12] New Zealand publishers are adopting eco-friendly practices, such as using recycled materials and reducing carbon footprints.^{[13][14]}
- Distance issues: Many New Zealand titles are printed overseas (China, Hong Kong, Singapore) and/or are warehoused in Australia, working against other reductions in carbon footprints.

Technological Integration:

- Data: Publishers are increasingly using data analytics to understand reader preferences and tailor marketing strategies.^[15]
- Artificial Intelligence: This offers potential for marketing and distribution, but there are serious ethical and financial implications for writers and the creative sector, including the theft of copyright work by New Zealand writers to create AI tools.

1.2 Amplify: A Creative and Cultural Strategy for New Zealand (Draft) 2024–2030

In November 2024 the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, Paul Goldsmith, released a draft of the **Amplify** strategy, outlining an ambitious vision for New Zealand to emerge as a global creative powerhouse by 2030. Central to this vision is the integration of arts and culture into the nation's identity and economy.

The draft emphasises targeted support for various creative industries, including the book and literary sector, recognising their vital role in fostering cultural expression, economic growth, and international reputation.

The draft strategy aspires to see the arts and creative industries significantly contribute to New Zealand's GDP, with a target of \$20 billion by 2030. It also prioritises increasing engagement with cultural activities, both locally and globally, while aiming to close the income gap for creative professionals, including writers.

Amplify recognizes the book sector's integral role in shaping New Zealand's cultural identity and advancing soft power on the global stage. Literature, as part of the broader creative ecosystem, contributes to economic growth through cultural tourism and international trade.

A core focus of Amplify is the celebration of New Zealand's rich Māori and Pacific heritage. For the book sector, this presents opportunities to support storytelling rooted in Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. Partnerships with iwi and Pacific cultural groups will play a pivotal role in fostering inclusive narratives and promoting these works internationally.

The strategy highlights the importance of a robust research programme to inform future initiatives. For the book sector, this includes gathering data on industry performance and exports to guide evidence-based policymaking. Strengthened insights will help shape strategies that maximize the sector's potential.

Feedback from the book sector on the strategy has highlighted key areas that require further attention and investment. In particular: focusing on improving literacy levels, enhancing the role of libraries in both fostering literacy and promoting local books and content, and ensuring greater inclusion of the book sector as a vital part of the country's creative and cultural ecosystem.

How the Book Sector can interact with the strategic pillars of the draft Amplify Strategy

Investing for Maximum Impact focuses on optimising government funding to empower creative practitioners by:

- Simplifying funding structures and revising regulatory frameworks such as the Public Lending Right (PLR) for New Zealand Authors Act to better support authors' incomes.
- Modernising copyright legislation to ensure fair compensation for intellectual property in an evolving digital landscape.
- Promoting literary festivals, international book fairs and cultural events to enhance global recognition and drive cultural tourism.

Nurturing Talent emphasises building a robust pipeline of creative professionals through education and training.

- Including New Zealand's literary and cultural heritage in school curricula to inspire future generations of writers and readers.
- Developing vocational qualifications and providing business training to enable authors and publishers to sustain creative careers.
- Fostering career pathways through mentorship, internships, and regional opportunities.

Reducing Barriers to Growth focuses on creating an enabling environment for creatives by:

- Providing clearer tax guidance for writers to manage diverse income streams.
- Offering support for digital transformation to improve audience access.
- Addressing potential intellectual property (IP) risks like AI to protect authors' rights and cultural heritage.
- Expanding access to digitised literary works, to enhance visibility of and engagement with national collections.

Opportunities for the Book Sector
The *Amplify* strategy presents significant opportunities for the book sector, including:

- Simplified and expanded access to funding and regulatory support.
- Enhanced promotion of books and literary events as cultural exports.
- Integration of literature into educational frameworks to build future audiences.
- Support for collaboration and innovation in publishing practices.
- Protection and fair monetization of intellectual property in the digital age.



PART 2:

Book Sector

Strategy

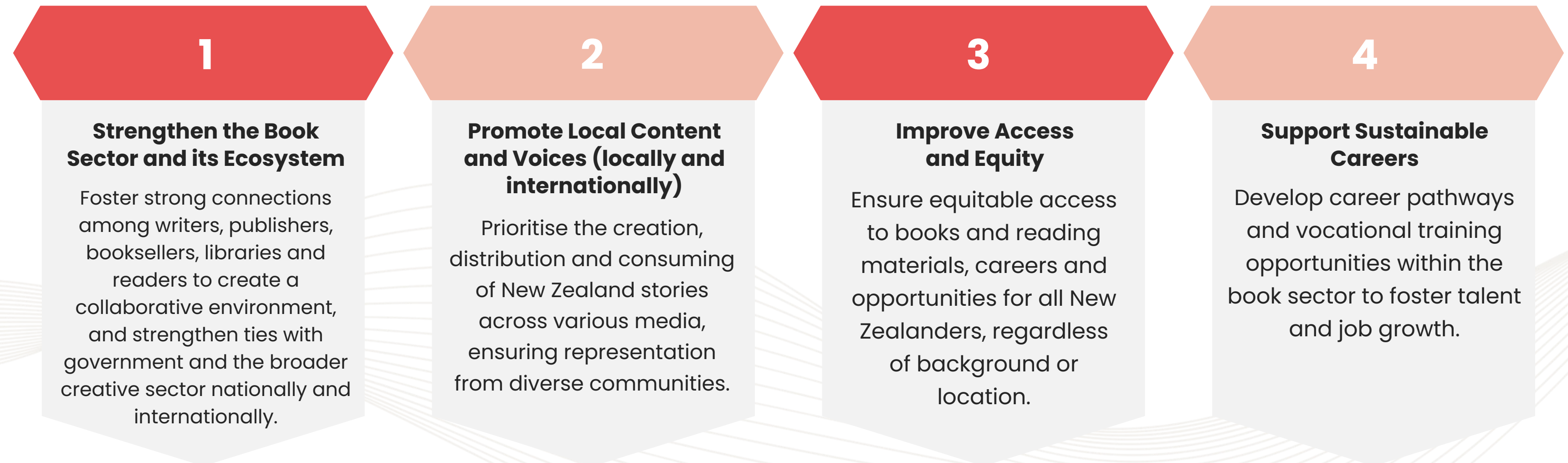
This strategy has been developed based on contributions and wide feedback from the sector (appendix two); analysis of the draft *Amplify* strategy; consideration of wider creative and cultural sector strategies or published priorities; and study of trends and evidence gathered nationally and from international sources.

Kaupapa

To foster a thriving book sector in Aotearoa New Zealand, grounded in a deep love of reading, enriched by powerful local stories that reflect our unique cultures and experiences, and strengthened by increased access to diverse narratives.

The sector seeks to build a sustainable, interconnected ecosystem that values and supports all contributors, ensuring a vibrant future for our literary community.

Objectives



Strategies

1. Cultural and Economic Advocacy

Collaborate with government and education sector to promote the cultural and economic value of reading New Zealand stories.

2. Support for Indigenous Stories

Ensure Māori authors and stories are represented, promoted and publicised. Ensure Pasifika authors and stories are represented, promoted and publicised.

3. Support for Diverse Stories

Ensure that all community voices are included in the narrative of Aotearoa.

4. Accessibility

Advocate for policies that promote equitable access to literature, including funding for school libraries and literacy programmes.

5. Collective Initiatives

Create platforms for collaboration among writers, publishers, and other creative sectors.

6. Unified Advocacy

Establish a cohesive voice to advocate for the book sector’s interests to government, other stakeholders and society.

7. Buy and Read Local Campaigns

Launch sustained campaigns to encourage the purchase of local books by consumers, libraries and organisations.

8. Diverse Formats

Promote books in various formats (print, digital, audio) to cater to different reading preferences.

9. Data Collection

Gather data on literacy rates and access to books in different communities to identify gaps and inform targeted interventions.

10. Impact Measurement

Collect and disseminate data on the impact of reading and works created by the local book sector to demonstrate its value culturally, economically and educationally.

11. Export Promotion

Continue to support New Zealand authors and publishers in accessing international markets.

12. Increase presence in international markets

Target initiatives to lift activity in US, Canada, Australia, China and India.

13. Participation in Global Events

Increase engagement in international book fairs, international collaborations, and cultural exchanges to elevate New Zealand’s presence.

14. Digital Adaptation

Use technology to enhance reading experiences and reach new audiences, including working with libraries on digitisation to share Aotearoa New Zealand’s literary heritage. [16]

15. Interactive Platforms

Explore digital platforms for storytelling that engage younger and diverse audiences.

Plan Implementation

What must the Book Sector do itself?

Strengthen ecosystem and collaboration

- Use the Coalition for Books to foster stronger connections among writers, publishers, booksellers, libraries, and other stakeholders to strengthen a cohesive industry voice.
- Explore deeper cross-sector partnerships with creative sectors such as film and gaming.
- Continue work with schools, libraries, media and communities to increase awareness of the value of New Zealand books.

Embrace digital opportunities

- Continue to encourage and support investment in existing and evolving digital formats to engage younger and more diverse audiences.
- Expand the sector's understanding and use of analytics to analyse reader preferences and employ platforms) for targeted sector marketing.

Enhance professional development:

- Develop career pathways for emerging professionals through internships, mentorships, and networking opportunities.
- Support writers in developing and sustaining careers

Prioritise sustainability and innovation:

- Emphasise and strengthen guidelines for sustainable sector practices and seek opportunities to innovate, identifying ways to reduce the carbon footprint of printing overseas.

Expand export markets and international audiences:

- Promote New Zealand's unique cultural identity, including its Māori heritage, natural landscapes, and innovative storytelling traditions, as part of a compelling 'New Zealand story'.
- Build on New Zealand's strong reputation in educational publishing.

How must the Book Sector work with national and local government?

Education & Literacy

- Collaborate to integrate New Zealand books into school curricula and enhance access to well-resourced school libraries, fostering improved literacy outcomes and inspiring a lifelong love of reading.
- Work collaboratively on literacy initiatives to improve national literacy rates and ensure equitable access to books.

Funding & Policy

- Collaborate to simplify funding mechanisms and ensure the sustainability of the sector.
- Modernise the Public Lending Rights (PLR) to better reflect property rights for authors, including school/tertiary holdings and digital and audio formats.
- Update the Copyright Act to protect and value intellectual property in the digital age, addressing risks such as AI misuse and copyright infringement.

Cultural Promotion & Export

- Participate in government-led international trade missions, literary festivals, book fairs, art fairs and other cultural events to showcase New Zealand's book sector and literary talent on the world stage.
- Include New Zealand books and writers in cultural diplomacy initiatives.
- Develop campaigns that promote the purchase of New Zealand books by consumers, and for libraries, boosting local creators and cultural tourism.

Diversity & Inclusion

- Collaborate on initiatives that amplify Māori and Pasifika voices through funding, infrastructure, and international promotion.
- Promote underrepresented voices in publishing and ensure New Zealand's diverse population is reflected in its literature.

Research & Data

- Unlock investment for comprehensive research on the book sector's contributions to the economy, culture, and literacy, creating a foundation for data-driven policy decisions and future sector strategies.

Digital Infrastructure

- Invest in the digital infrastructure to ensure New Zealand literature and content can compete on a global scale, improving accessibility, discovery and engagement with New Zealand books, content and creators.

Enhance Professional Development

- Provide and promote training programmes to improve governance, financial literacy, marketing and tech skills for authors and publishers.

**What must
the Book Sector
ask of the
government?**

Funding and Resource Allocation:

- Increase funding for literary initiatives, including festivals, PLR, and digitisation projects.
- Create a dedicated literary funding stream within Creative New Zealand ensuring equity with other creative sectors.
- Support infrastructure improvements, including revitalising libraries in schools and underserved communities.

Export and Global Presence:

- Ensure greater inclusion of the sector in cultural diplomacy efforts and increased support for participation in global book fairs to grow export revenue.
- Create targeted support initiatives to promote New Zealand literature and educational content internationally, utilizing opportunities such as book fairs, literary festivals, and translation programs to enhance global visibility and cultural influence.

Improve Regulatory Settings:

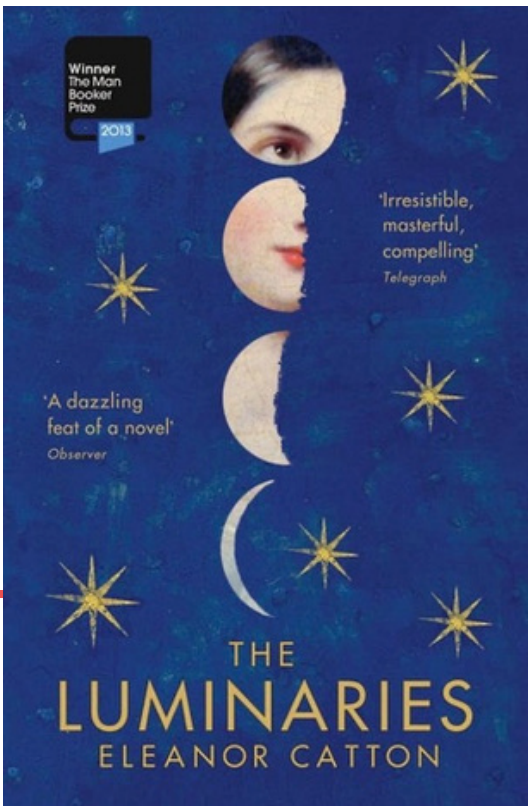
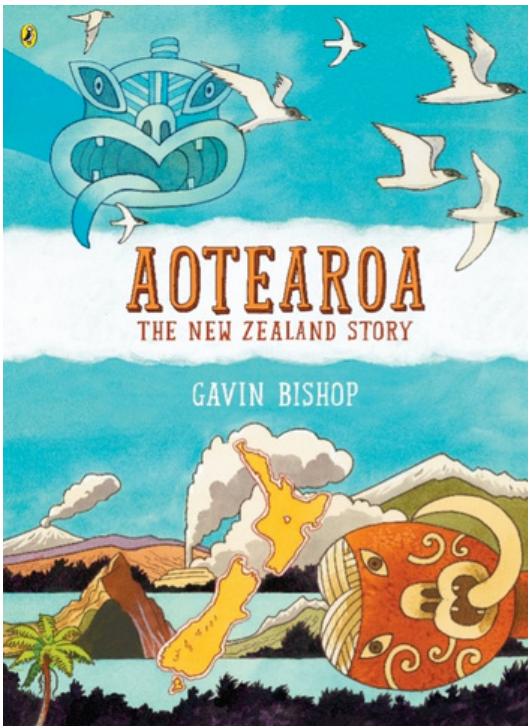
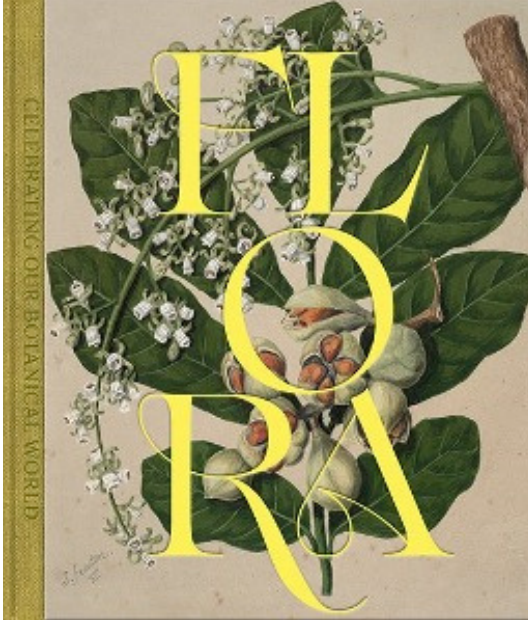
- Modernise the Copyright Act and Public Lending Right to reflect digital realities and ensure fair compensation for creators for use of their work.
- Establish ethical guidelines for AI developers that includes the use of intellectual property rights and respect for cultural sensitivities.

Research and Data:

- Invest in comprehensive research on the book sector's contributions to the economy, culture, and literacy, creating a foundation for data-driven policy decisions.

Summary of Roles

Area	Book Sector Responsibility	Government Partnership	Asks of Government
Funding	Develop strong applications for funding sources.	Collaborate to simplify and align funding.	Modernise PLR and increase funding pools for books/literature. Libraries buy local CFB/Book Commission support
Education	Advocate for the inclusion of NZ books in curricula.	Support educational collaborations.	Invest in local book/literature-focused curricula.
Promotion & Tourism	Create content for cultural events. Collaborate with other creative sectors on the New Zealand story/brand, and book adaptation	Co-promote literary festivals and events. Joint marketing; cultural diplomacy	Boost festival funding and global reach. Mandate local purchasing.
IP & Regulation	Build sector-wide awareness.	Co-design copyright and IP frameworks.	Modernise copyright laws.
Leverage Digital Innovation	Explore tech adoption.	Partner on digitization projects. Digital skills training; creative collaboration	Fund national digital archives; and digital infrastructure support.
Research & Advocacy	Provide data and insights.	Participate in evidence-building.	Invest in industry-specific research.
Building Capacity	Professional development, and clarity around career pathways for young people.	Ensure appropriate training and education programmes exist across secondary and tertiary.	





The book sector in Aotearoa New Zealand continues to evolve, shaped by digital disruption, shifting consumer behaviours and a growing recognition of its cultural value. By working together and in partnership with the government, implementing self-directed strategies, and advocating for targeted support, the sector can thrive as an enduring cornerstone of New Zealand's creative and cultural ecosystem.

The further detailed implementation of these strategies will be determined by ongoing sector consultation.

The book sector of Aotearoa is poised to advance its impact, promote diverse voices, grow a broad and engaged community of readers, and ensure its sustainability in a rapidly changing world.

Appendix One



Appendix Two: Contributors to the creation of the Book Sector plan

Contributor	Book Sector Affiliation
Sacha Beguely	Publisher
Juliet Blyth	Read NZ Te Pou Muramura
Paula Browning	WeCreate
Malcolm Burgess	Creative New Zealand
Graeme Cosslet	Publishers Association of New Zealand
Mark Crookston	National Library
Vicki Cunningham	Storylines Children's Literature Trust
Anne de Lautour	Storylines Children's Literature Trust
Alan Dingley	Te Awhi Rito Reading Ambassador
Trish du Temple	Wheelers Books
Sam Elworthy	Publisher
Catriona Ferguson	Auckland Writers Festival
Ella Fischer	Auckland Libraries
Kate Gordon	Writer
Bernie Hawke	New Zealand Public Libraries
Fran Hoover	Facilitator
Kate Innes-Monsalve	Auckland Libraries
Sam Irvine	Copyright NZ
Elizabeth Jones	National Library
Melanie Laville-Moore	Coalition for Books
Nicola Legat	Book Awards Trust

Contributor	Book Sector Affiliation
Tony Moores	Booksellers (BookHub)
Paula Morris	Academy of New Zealand Literature, Wharerangi Māori Lit
Lee Murray	Writer
Jenny Nagle	Society of Authors
Nevena Nikolic	Nielsen IQ BookData
Sandra Noakes	Publisher
Nicky Page	Dunedin Unesco City of Literature
Oliver Powell	Manatū Taonga Ministry of Culture and Heritage
Renee Rowland	Booksellers Aotearoa New Zealand
Janette Searle	Plan Writer
Tracey Sharp	Going West
Vanda Symon	New Zealand Society of Authors, Writer
Melinda Syzmanik	New Zealand Society of Authors, Writer
Jenna Todd	Time Out Bookstore
Kirsteen Ure	Coalition for Books
Linda Vagana	Duffy Books in Homes
Steph Walker	Word Christchurch Festival
Sonya Wilson	Kiwi Christmas Books
Mel Winder	Publisher

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