

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Finding a writing community should not require a corporate schedule or a lengthy commute to a city center. Currently, a significant portion of literary life is concentrated in the CBD or scheduled during standard business hours. For many practitioners—especially those balancing day jobs, caregiving, or living in outer suburbs—this creates an invisible entry fee of time and location that many simply cannot pay.

The Challenge: The Business Hours Barrier

The current centralization of the arts creates a geographical and temporal gatekeeping effect. When writing groups and networking events only meet between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, it excludes a vast demographic of working artists and those residing outside major metropolitan hubs. This reinforces the idea that the arts are a luxury for those with flexible schedules, rather than a vital part of every citizen's life.

The Opportunity: The After-Hours Creative

There is a massive, untapped demographic of after-hours creatives. By decentralizing arts hubs and incentivizing evening or weekend programming, we can move from an exclusive professional guild model to a more inclusive, democratic creative ecosystem. The opportunity lies in activating local infrastructure—such as libraries and community centers in regional and suburban areas—to host these connections closer to where people actually live.

What Matters to My Practice: Sustainability and Connection

My practice is built on the belief that art does not happen in a vacuum. It requires consistent, accessible peer exchange. When we lack spaces that accommodate the reality of modern work-life balance, the work suffers. For my practice to be sustainable, it must fit into a life that includes other responsibilities, rather than demanding that life be rearranged to fit an outdated model of the artist.

Aspirations for the New National Cultural Policy

I would like to see a National Cultural Policy that recognizes the suburban and after-hours creator as a pillar of the industry. Specifically, I hope the policy addresses:

1. **Decentralized Funding:** Direct investment into local councils and suburban libraries to host writing groups, ensuring that cultural participation is not dependent on a CBD postcode.
2. **Digital and Hybrid Infrastructure:** Support for high-quality digital communal spaces that allow for collaboration without the need for a two-hour commute.
3. **Recognition of the Dual-Career Artist:** Policies that move away from the idea that a serious artist is only one who works during business hours. We need a framework that supports the millions of Australians who create around their primary employment.
4. **Scheduling Diversity:** Incentivizing organizations that receive public funding to offer community programming outside of standard business hours.

To truly reflect the diversity of modern Australia, our cultural policy must meet artists where they actually live and work. By removing the barriers of the clock and the commute, we can foster a more resilient and representative literary landscape.