

National Cultural Policy Submission

1468322

Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm Ashley Kalagian Blunt and I'm an author and reading advocate. Research shows that reading has immense positive benefits both for individuals, in terms of physical and mental wellbeing, and for communities and society at large.

In the next National Cultural Policy, I'm joining Australia Reads in calling for the Australian Government to invest in a reading nation.

Reading provides better education and employment outcomes, reduces our stress and loneliness, supports social connection, and increases our empathy for others.

But reading rates are in decline. 30% of Australians didn't read or listen to a book last year, 1 in 3 students can't read proficiently, and 25% of Australian kids don't get a bedtime story.

That's why we need urgent action from the Albanese Government to turn the tide on reading.

To ensure all Australians have access to the life-changing benefits of reading, I'd like to see the National Cultural Policy include interventions that provide:

National reading campaigns for adults, children and young people, helping them overcome the barriers to regular reading.

A library in every school, with professional staff and collection budgets, and more support for educators and parents to create strong reading cultures for students.

Greater community access to books and reading through author touring initiatives, voucher schemes, and book club programs.

Promotions that showcase Australian stories, highlighting contemporary titles and First Nations creators.

Kind regards,

Ashley Kalagian Blunt