

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm Magenta, and I'm an Media Strategist working in publishing.

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.

For me, reading is a form of meditation - there's even a name for this, it's Bibliotherapy. Reading calms the mind, boosts creativity and it's proven that it also improves performance at work, due to an increased understanding of different experiences.

Not only that, but reading brings people together. I run a book club in Sydney with two other friends, that is open to anyone to join. Once a month, we book a table or two at a local pub, and see who turns up. More than once, Next Chapter Book Club members have shared how much the book club means to them - a place to meet new people, settle in a new city, and discuss great books in depth.

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.

Reading isn't just a hobby. It truly is part of the recipe for a better Australia, filled with more knowledgeable, worldly and empathetic Australians.

Kind regards,

Magenta Porter