

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

When I travel by plane or train, I actively walk around to see who is reading and who is not. And by reading, I mean hard cover books AND tablets. Usually in a plane of about 140 people (full), only about 10 plus me are actually reading. And almost all of them are adults. As an educator in a regional senior high school working with many First Nations young people, I like the 5 pillars including the First Nations First. More investment in First Nations publications in traditional languages or Kriol will be excellent resources to enable these young people to read in the language they learn to speak in. Critical for ESL or EALD development into Standard Australian English at school. A Place for Every Story - investing in publishing houses and the written word as a valued skill of scholarship and deep thinking of our future communities. Reading and writing go hand in hand, so removing exposure to screens and replacing with hands on books, papers, pens and pencils to develop these skills for life. Centrality of the Artist - improve the percentage of publishing houses and galleries that actually goes to the people who create the art. Also, stipends for writers who are creating texts or projects and greater time limits (legislated) where a writer's work remains within copyright. Incentives for families to buy books and use books as central to family life. Even Iceland has a larger publishing and reading population (per capita) than Australia. Strong Cultural Infrastructure - this needs to be at the community, town, regional, state and national level, with more opportunity for early career writers and artists (these are not necessarily young people). Engaging the Audience - community and school libraries have been dying a slow death. This cultural policy could change that significantly by revamping the place of the library (and the bookshop) in every shire in every community. Investment in this now will reap massive benefits in the future. Imagine if Australia could get a UNESCO listed place which reflected our massive turnaround in reading, writing and literature production! Thank you, the next generations will thank us for this.