

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm a reader, writer and have worked in book publishing, the film industry and the GLAM sector. In the next National Cultural Policy, I'm joining Australia Reads to call 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. It gives readers an escape from everyday life, nurtures our imaginations and allows us to dream of a better, brighter future for everyone. Reading rates are currently 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. (There is research that being read to as a child is one of the most powerful indicators for future success in life.) We need urgent government action to turn the tide on reading. To ensure all Australians have access to the life-changing benefits of reading, the National Cultural Policy could include interventions such as: 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 First Nations creators and contemporary titles that will genuinely engage readers (including genre fiction). Many thanks, Amanda