

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469206

Public and anonymous

Individual

[REDACTED]

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm [REDACTED], and I'm a retired teacher librarian with 15 years experience in a School Community Library.

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. I believe that reading is essential for learning about the world and for understanding different perspectives. Regular reading ensures that children and adults gain literacy and numeracy skills which enable them to be functional citizens in our modern society. When parents or adults read to children, and it is imperative that this is done from birth, they are forming bonds, developing literacy and numeracy skills, and demonstrating that reading is valuable. When there is no library or books available for children and adults this sends the message that reading and literacy is not important. Teacher librarians in school libraries have the skills and knowledge to support children, students and staff to select books for many situations such as reading for pleasure or for research.

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, [REDACTED]