

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469220

Public

Individual

Elizabeth Woodcock



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Dear Minister Burke, I am a passionate supporter of independent bookshops and urge the government to include meaningful support for bookshops in the new National Cultural Policy. My local bookshop, The Avenue Bookstore in Albert Park, among many others, provides a focus for local activities. This bookstore sits among other businesses, particularly café's and clothing stores.

The bookstore and the adjacent businesses complement each other, the bookstore providing customers for the cafes and visa versa. Local bookshops are not merely retail businesses. They are cultural infrastructure - community gathering places where Australian stories are discovered, where children fall in love with reading, and where literary careers begin. Yet every year bookshops close, undermined by online giants and discount department stores.

In addition to sales, book stores organise cultural activities, such as author appearances and regular book clubs. Australia lags behind comparable countries in protecting its book retail sector. France, Italy, the UK, Germany, and more have introduced proven measures that have stabilised their independent bookshop sectors. Australia should do the same. I support the Australian Booksellers Association's call to recognise local bookshops as cultural infrastructure. Local bookshops are irreplaceable - but without support, more will close.

As a reader and community member, I ask you to stand up for these vital spaces before they are gone.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Woodcock