

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469408

Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm Kerrie and I'm an experienced teacher librarian.

In the next National Cultural Policy, I'm joining Australia Reads in calling for the Australian Government to invest in a reading nation.

Reading allows our population access to a broader world, it provides better education and employment outcomes, it massively increases empathy toward others, it reduces stress and loneliness, it provides social connection, and it is a valuable re-set tool for over-stimulated students.

We know reading rates are in decline, with recent research reflecting that 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 targeted to adults, children and young people, helping them overcome the barriers to regular reading

A library in every school, with qualified professional staff and adequate collection budgets, along with more support for educators and parents to create strong reading cultures for students at home and at school

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,

Kerrie Backhouse