

Dear Minister Burke,

Since you are the Minister for the Arts, I am writing to you as a bookseller to urge the government to include meaningful support for local bookshops in the New National Cultural Policy.

I manage Language International Bookshop which has operated at the current location since 2012. We have had a presence in Boroondara for many years prior to that, predominantly in the Glenferrie Road [REDACTED] precinct.

Our bookshop is unique in Melbourne – we support those teaching and learning languages as well as offering reading for pleasure in many heritage languages for both adults and children. We also advocate for Indigenous Languages, stocking many ILF publications and books by Aunty Fay Muir. We stock many Australian authors in translation. Our role is even more critical since the demise of University Bookshops throughout Australia; we sell throughout Australia and New Zealand thanks to our webstore.

Our small team of 9 employees serves as a 'one-stop shop' for schools, libraries, educational booksellers, universities as well as individuals for their foreign language resource requirements. We also stock books in English that enhance intercultural understanding. We promote ourselves by attending as many language teacher conferences as possible as well as Community Events, School Fetes and Festivals for heritage language cohorts.

Since COVID we have experienced big increases in costs. Local publishers and distributors have had to reduce their discounts to us; the cost of importing directly has also increased dramatically with fuel and customs charges and surcharges ever increasing and putting pressure on margins. Rent and outgoings as a proportion of turnover have also increased.

I know from personal experience that many European bookshops receive government support and relief. I have been a recipient of programs for professional development in France through the auspices of the Centre National du Livre (CNL) and the Bureau International de L'Édition Française.

I support the Australian Booksellers Association's call to:

- Fund the establishment of a skills training and certification program and delivery to professionalise the industry, creating recognised career pathways.
- Establish an Australian Independent Bookshop Tax Offset (AIBTO): a refundable tax rebate on core operating expenses including wages, rent, and purchases of Australian-authored titles.
- Examine the feasibility of restrictions on deep discounting of new-release Australian titles, aligned with established European models. ( Online booksellers can discount by no more than 5% discount in many countries).

- Investigate the case for GST reduction or exemption on books, consistent with international precedent.
- Invest in refreshing legacy data systems across the Australian Book Supply Chain.
- Support an Australian Book Voucher Program, redeemable at local bookshops nationwide.
- Fund ongoing grants to support bookshop event delivery.

There is magic in bookselling, I fear the loss of the thrill that putting the right book into the right hand at the right time engenders for the bookseller and the recipient alike. Every week I am told 'I am so glad that I found you'.

Our company will be celebrating 50 years in the business in 2026, having begun with the importing of Language Learning courses from the country of origin. Main languages are Chinese, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean and Indonesian. We want to be here for the next generation, continuing [REDACTED] [REDACTED] legacy.

I urge the government to act in the interests of the future of local bookshops. I believe that the measures proposed by the ABA are modest, internationally proven, and would deliver significant cultural and economic returns.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Bookshop Manager

**Language International Bookshop**  
**the retail division of Intext Book Company**

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