

13th May 2026

Dear Minister Burke,

My name is Danielle Binks, and I am writing as an author, RMIT creative-writing lecturer and literary agent with Jacinta di Mase Management; to urge the government to include meaningful support across the sector in a new National Cultural Policy. Specifically, I am writing in broad support of the recommendations and suggestions laid out by *Australia Reads* and *Books Create Australia*.

Australia Reads, the – ‘not-for-profit initiative of the Australian books industry to get more people reading more books, more often,’ – has specific recommendations for a thriving literary ecosystem, with a focus on increasing reading engagement. Their recommendations include urging the Australian Government to support the growth of national reading rates through implementing:

- 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 showcasing Australian stories, highlighting contemporary titles and First Nations creators.

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One of Australia Reads program collaborators is ***Books Create Australia***; a partnership between authors, booksellers, librarians, and publishers.

Their recommendations include;

- Stronger support for Australian authors, illustrators and translators;
- More investment in Australian publishing and literary infrastructure;
- Better discoverability for Australian books;
- Stronger libraries, bookshops, festivals and school programs;
- Protection of copyright and creator rights in the age of AI;
- Expanded funding for Writing Australia, writers' centres, mentorships, residencies and paid author appearances.
- Adopting and funding a National Plan for Books and Reading;

As well as backing the recommendations being made by ***Australia Reads*** and ***Books Create Australia***, I will also point to successful foreign government campaigns that have bolstered their arts industries and books specifically – like the ‘Canada Book Fund.’

The Canada Book Fund (CBF) ensures access to a diverse range of Canadian-authored books nationally and internationally, by fostering a strong book industry that publishes and markets Canadian-authored books. The CBF has two components – Support for Organizations and Support for Publishers (with two sub-components);

- The CBF's Support for Organizations stream contributes to the marketing and promotion of Canadian-authored books and strengthens the infrastructure and efficiency of the Canadian book industry through professional development, internships and technology projects.
- Support for Publishers includes The Business Development; sub-component of the CBF provides financial assistance to publishers for internships and business planning. And Publishing Support is a sub-component of the CBF that provides financial assistance to publishers for the ongoing production, marketing and distribution of Canadian-authored books.

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There are also ongoing cultural markers, like *I Read Canadian Day* – a national celebration of Canadian books for young people, with the goal of elevating the genre and celebrating the breadth and diversity of these books. Every year in November; they encourage schools, libraries and bookstores to invite a local author to a school, library or store to celebrate the day. It’s encouraged as a day to spotlight Canadian authors, their books and what a great day to buy a Canadian book – with strong national support and campaigning, bolstered by the government.

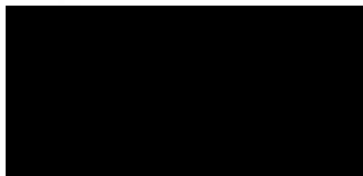


We are a nation of storytellers – including the world’s oldest living culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose stories have endured for 65,000 years and some 500 generations. Stories are how a nation and its people, understand themselves. For example; Australia has long nicknamed itself ‘The Lucky Country’ – an imperfect slogan lifted from Australian journalist and social critic Donald Horne’s 1964 book. The full quote is forever apt and will apply in my urging those in charge of implementing an expanded National Cultural Policy, to be more curious; "Australia is a lucky country run mainly by second rate people who share its luck. It lives on other people's ideas, and, although its ordinary people are adaptable, most of its leaders (in all fields) so lack curiosity about the events that surround them that they are often taken by surprise."

If a lack of curiosity and the idea of being taken by surprise doesn’t appeal to you, then take heed from Iranian American poet Kaveh Akbar, who once wrote; ‘Art is where what we survive survives.’

I want to see Australia survive and thrive into an uncertain future – climate catastrophe, weaponised technology, extremist politics ... we need art and stories more than ever, to hold a mirror up and see ourselves to understand ourselves.

Yours Sincerely,



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