

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469618

Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

G'day.

My name is a [REDACTED] and I am an Art Director and Writer for television animation, as well as having a personal body of work that spans animation, comics, murals and illustration. I'm most well known for being the Lead Art Director of [REDACTED]. I am currently embarking on being the dual author/illustrator of an adult demographic graphic novel.

I am writing to highlight that there is an incredibly cavernous gap in the literary industry in Australia for supporting graphic novels.

Embarking on my current journey to acquire an agent to begin pitching to publishers I have been baffled with how little infrastructure there is in Australia for graphic novels. They are not accounted for anywhere in literary grants or residencies. There is one single literary agent in Australia who represents adult demo graphic novels. And there are no associations, festivals or conferences that provide help, information or networking opportunities with the overseas market. Comics is a huge and lucrative global market and Australia is completely on the back foot.

I have previously been shortlisted for a comic award in 2019, and have every pedigree one could arguably need to gain an agent and a publishing deal (an Emmy, AACTA and a Logie for my Art Direction work. And 11 years of leading teams and writing in television animation). However I have been left to turn to, as the majority of working Australian comic artists do - to be entirely supported by the overseas comic market.

It's a great loss to the canon of Australian cultural storytelling that the medium of comics is not supported. I have seen over the past 11 years working around the medium, multiple generations of incredibly talented artists wither and die on the vine. It is plain fact that it is impossible to work full time as a comic artist in Australia.

Comics also act as a crucial stepping stone to gaining the skills needed to become a storyteller in animation. Both mediums are intertwined and better support for the medium of comics in Australia will create a healthy incubator for the next generation of Australian animation talent, which punches well above its weight in our entertainment industry both culturally and financially.

To address the needs outline I offer the following suggestions

- Educating more grants distributors and residencies available in the Australian literary scene on how better to accomodate graphic novelists
- Providing opportunities for artists, agents and local publishing houses to for learn from overseas counterparts to begin the process of building infrastructure and support for working artists. As well as anyone interested in starting small production business' around the medium

Uplifting the comics industry in Australia is absolutely crucial and I would argue one of the biggest gaps in our cultural policy. As one of the artists behind Bluey, I have seen first hand how authentically told Australian stories can uplift the entire nation. Better support for this corner of the industry is the next step on that journey.