

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Stories help shape who we are as a nation. To protect and celebrate our identity, we need to actively support reading, writers, libraries, and bookshops.

Here are a few priorities I'd encourage the Government to focus on:

1. Back regional and First Nations reading initiatives

For regional and First Nations communities, reading plays an important role to help preserve cultural heritage, strengthen identity, and overcome isolation. Supporting Indigenous storytelling keeps traditions and languages alive and helps young people see themselves reflected in what they read. At the same time, improving access to books in remote areas helps close literacy gaps. Investing here empowers communities and ensures Australia's diverse cultural voices don't die out.

2. Invest in national reading campaigns

Reading brings people together. It helps us understand each other by letting us step into different lives and perspectives, which builds empathy and reduces division, something we need now more than ever. It also preserves our shared history, values, and diverse voices. Strong, targeted reading campaigns for adults, children, and young people would help create a more connected and culturally rich society.

3. Properly fund school libraries

Not every public school in Australia currently has a library, and that needs to change. A well-resourced library, run by a trained librarian, is central to a student's success. Libraries give students access to books, technology, and quiet spaces to learn, while librarians teach critical skills like evaluating online information and spotting misinformation. Evidence consistently shows that schools with qualified librarians see better reading and academic results. They're essential, not optional.

4. Support libraries and community bookshops

Libraries offer free access to books, technology, and learning opportunities, helping level the playing field for people from all backgrounds. Bookshops, as local small businesses, bring energy to neighbourhoods by hosting events, and supporting local economies.