

National Cultural Policy Submission

1469776

Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Investing in libraries in Australia is an investment in literacy, community connection and national culture. Libraries are among the few truly public spaces that remain free, inclusive and accessible to everyone, regardless of age, income or background. In a rapidly changing digital and economic environment, their importance continues to grow rather than diminish.

From a literary perspective, libraries play a critical role in fostering reading, learning and lifelong education. They provide equitable access to books, digital resources and educational programs that many Australians might otherwise be unable to afford. Early exposure to reading through children's programs helps develop literacy skills and imagination, while access to diverse literature broadens understanding and critical thinking. Libraries also support Australian authors by promoting local writing, preserving Australian stories and encouraging new generations of readers and writers.

From a community perspective, libraries act as social infrastructure. They are safe, welcoming spaces where people gather to learn, collaborate and connect. Public libraries provide internet access, study spaces, language classes, employment assistance and technology training, helping reduce social inequality and digital exclusion. For migrants, seniors, students and vulnerable members of the community, libraries often serve as an essential point of support and inclusion. In regional and remote areas especially, libraries can be among the most important civic institutions, strengthening social cohesion and access to opportunity.

Culturally, libraries preserve and celebrate Australia's identity and history. They safeguard archives, historical records and Indigenous knowledge that form part of the nation's collective memory. Libraries also create opportunities for cultural exchange through exhibitions, public talks, festivals and educational programs. In a multicultural society such as Australia, they help communities share stories, traditions and perspectives, promoting understanding and social harmony.

Importantly, libraries evolve alongside society. Modern libraries are no longer only repositories of books; they are dynamic centres of creativity, innovation and public engagement. Investment in libraries supports not only literacy and culture, but also economic participation, digital capability and community resilience.

A strong library network reflects a strong society. By investing in libraries, Australia invests in informed citizens, connected communities and the preservation of its cultural heritage for future generations.