

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

Writers SA (SA Writers Centre Inc)

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

A sustainable Australian writing culture depends on connected infrastructure

This infrastructure remains underfunded, uneven and vulnerable to rising costs, service gaps and fragmented policy responsibility.

The next National Cultural Policy should treat it as a national system requiring coordinated investment, stronger institutions and long-term policy responsibility.

Writing Australia is the institutional anchor for this system, but it needs sufficient scale and scope to inform policy, fund sector development and coordinate literary infrastructure.

Our experience and circumstances

Writers SA works with and connects to a national infrastructure for writers and the wider sector - operating in a State-wide context where access to opportunities, particularly to publishers, regular events alongside national and international authors and dedicated writing space is limited. Opportunities for South Australian writers can be limited both across the State and in national reach and recognition.

Australian writers represent the largest single artistic occupation in the country, with an estimated 8,800 practising professionals. Yet writing remains one of the most economically precarious creative careers.

Why writing centres matter

Writing and storytelling are among the most fundamental human activities, and their benefits extend well beyond the literary sector, with value not only for individuals but for communities.

Working within the National Writers' Centre Network allows for shared resources for writers, greater reach for activities and reduces duplication of services. It ensures that local delivery has national connectivity and national impact.

Current pressures

Providing broad, equitable access to professional writers' development and community participation and engagement is increasingly difficult to sustain. Competition has overtaken many of the activities that sustained writers' centres in the past. The sector faces rising costs, and is constrained by limited private and uneven government resourcing.

Without stronger support, access to Australian literary culture will become more concentrated in the three major east coast cities.

Writers SA asks government to:

ensure that the NWCN receives investment that recognises the ongoing role the centres play to provide Australia wide services to writing and nationally significant programs with discrete areas of expertise and delivery, as part of a connected national infrastructure;

support mechanisms that provide payment to Authors for creation, risk taking and engagement (including NWCN), contingent on recognised industry rates for authors, illustrators, translators and cultural advisers;

invest in First Nations writers, illustrators and storytelling and infrastructure, including cultural protocols, community consent, ICIP protections and fair payment for First Nations authors, publishers, Elders and cultural authorities;

establish a stand-alone Australian Book Fund to support new Australian works and culturally significant publishing, including literary journals

encourage community-led writing practice and increase opportunities for writers to receive payment to engage with readers through participatory activities, presentations and talks.

Writers SA endorses the Books Create Australia call for a National Plan for Books and Reading

Writers SA endorses the submission of Australian Society of Authors

We welcome the opportunity to work with Writing Australia and industry partners