

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Submission to the National Cultural Policy Consultation

As an Australian reader, I really appreciate the chance to contribute to the consultation process for the National Cultural Policy.

Our stories are a big part of who we are as a nation. To protect and celebrate our identity, Australia needs to actively back reading, authors, libraries, and bookshops. The upcoming National Cultural Policy is a great chance to enrich Australian life by putting books and reading front and centre.

I encourage the Government to adopt the following key priorities:

1. Boost reading participation through targeted national campaigns for adults, children, and young people.

Reading plays a powerful role in bringing people together, connecting us to our communities and the wider world. It helps build empathy by letting readers step into the lives of characters from different backgrounds, which can challenge stereotypes and ease social division. Literature also carries a society's history, values, and diverse voices from one generation to the next. By giving us shared stories and common reference points, reading helps turn people from passive consumers into active participants in a more connected, thoughtful, and culturally rich society.

2. Help schools build a strong reading culture through well-funded libraries.

Right now, not every public school in Australia has a library. A well-funded school library, staffed by a trained librarian, is the intellectual heart of a school and essential for both academic success and navigating the digital world. Libraries give students equal access to books, technology, and quiet places to study, while librarians help them make sense of it all. As media literacy experts, trained librarians teach students how to assess online information critically and spot misinformation. Research consistently shows that schools with qualified librarians have stronger reading results and better academic outcomes, which makes them an essential part of student success.

3. Back local libraries and community bookshops.

Libraries and bookshops are a vital part of the cultural and social fabric of our communities. They help level the playing field and act as hubs of local culture. Libraries are free, democratic spaces that help bridge digital and educational gaps by giving everyone, regardless of income, access to books, technology, and community programs. At the same time, bookshops support a neighbourhood's creative and economic life as small businesses that curate distinctive collections, host author events, and keep money circulating locally. Together, they help turn a neighbourhood from a group of buildings into a connected, engaged community.

4. Strengthen support for regional and First Nations reading initiatives.

For regional and First Nations communities, reading is incredibly important for preserving cultural heritage, strengthening self-determination, and addressing geographic isolation. Reading literature, especially work by Indigenous creators, helps keep storytelling traditions strong, supports language revitalisation, and ensures young people can see their identity reflected with pride. At the same time, books are a powerful equaliser in remote areas, helping to bridge literacy gaps with urban centres. Building a strong reading culture supports local voices and helps ensure Australia's diverse heritage continues to thrive from the ground up.