

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As a Teacher Librarian at a secondary school [REDACTED], I would like to highlight the essential role that school libraries, and those who staff them, play in realising the ambitions of the new National Cultural Policy. School libraries are more than just classrooms; they are dynamic hubs of cultural engagement, creativity, and inclusivity. Our work as Teacher Librarians goes far beyond curating Australian cultural content; we also have the privilege and responsibility to engage young Australians directly in our nation's stories, with a special emphasis on works by Australian and First Nations authors.

School libraries are often the very first place students encounter the breadth of Australian literature and develop an appreciation for the diversity of voices that make up our national narrative. It is in these spaces that new generations become lifelong readers, critical thinkers, and passionate sharers of their own stories.

I strongly believe that school libraries should be formally recognised as essential cultural infrastructure. Every student, regardless of where they live or their background, deserves equitable access to a well-resourced library, led by qualified Teacher Librarians and supported by committed library staff.

Importantly, Teacher Librarians play a key role in supporting the National Cultural Policy's goals by: Curating and promoting Australian and First Nations authors and stories; Fostering a strong reading culture that underpins lifelong learning; Providing spaces for creative expression and critical inquiry; Supporting students to become confident and ethical creators and consumers of information. Investment in school libraries is an investment in Australia's cultural future. However, the ongoing decline of qualified library staffing and school library funding represents a real threat to educational and cultural equity. Without targeted national support for sustainable library staffing, collections, and reading programs, we risk leaving behind students who most need these opportunities.