

National Cultural Policy Submission

1470106

Public

Individual

Andrew Pippas



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I propose the introduction of an annual refundable tax credit for the purchase of books that are both Australian-authored and Australian-published, capped at \$400 per person per year. This figure of \$400 represents the equivalent of approximately 12 paperbacks — one book for each month. I believe such a policy would create a further incentive for Australians to buy local books and participate in the nation's literary culture.

At present, most arts policy support is directed toward individual writers, publishers, festivals, and other arts organisations. But robust literature also depends on strengthening the relationship between writers and readers. The National Cultural Policy must be grounded in the idea that our nation's stories are distinctive and important. Those stories need more readers. In keeping with that belief, we should create incentives for all taxpayers to choose Australian stories, poetry, and non-fiction.

A refundable tax credit is preferable to a simple tax deduction because it benefits all readers, regardless of income. A deduction favours higher-income earners, while a refundable offset ensures that low- and middle-income earners are encouraged to participate in this scheme.

The benefits of the policy would outweigh its cost. I suspect many people would not claim the full amount, and much of the expenditure would return to government through GST, wages, and taxation within the domestic publishing economy. A sceptic might ask: why not give every industry a \$400 refundable tax credit? Australian books represent an essential aspect of our national identity. They are the stories we tell about ourselves; they contain our knowledge. Very few writers can even make a living in Australia, and most arts funding has focused on improving the material conditions of writers. The principle behind this proposal is clear: it is time readers are materially encouraged to invest in Australian books.