

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

Rachel Spencer



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am an emerging writer and editor and I am also a member of the Writers SA Board. I am writing this in my personal capacity but I do endorse the Writers SA submission and the Australian Society of Authors submission.

As an aspiring writer, institutional support is very important to me. Writing is a solitary pursuit and organisations like the SA Writers Centre are invaluable in providing a support network for writers who otherwise may not have any means of networking with other writers. Writers SA and its counterparts around the country provide support services to writing that are not available in any other forum. Writing centres know what writers need and know how to access the expertise that writers need to tap into. Collectively, around the country, they provide a connected national infrastructure. The National Writers Centre Network (NWCN) is Australia's largest network of writers. It is vital that Government ensures that the NWCN receives a level of investment that recognises the ongoing role that these centres play in helping writers to make a living from their work. These centres also encourage community-led writing practice and provide opportunities for writers to receive payment to engage with readers and other writers through presentations and talks.

Through my membership of Writers SA, I can connect with over 10,000 writers across Australia. I have the opportunity to learn from established authors across all genres, all styles and all parts of Australia. Fundamentally, Writers SA can provide me with information that I would otherwise not have access to or would have difficulty finding, such as news about awards, prizes, fellowships, residencies, grants and other opportunities. Through Writers SA, writers can find 'their people'. Through Writers SA, writers can feel like they 'belong' and that their contribution to society is valued and valuable. Government should be proud of the Australian literary community and support it by championing the National Writers Centre Network.

Like all creative endeavours, writing is an enterprise that inherently involves risk-taking. Writing and story-telling are not luxuries or 'lifestyle choices'. They are the essential components of record-keeping, of human connection and of intergenerational and international communication. I urge the Government to support mechanisms that provide payment to authors for their creativity, risk taking and engagement.

I support the establishment of a stand-alone Australian Book Fund to support new Australian works and culturally significant publishing, including literary journals. I also support the Books Create Australia call for a National Plan for Books and Reading. It is alarming to know that literacy levels in Australia are threatened by falling reading participation, uneven library resourcing, precarious and insecure author incomes, continually rising publishing and bookselling costs, poor visibility for Australian books, and AI disruption. The fallout from the latter is yet to be calculated. A coordinated national policy is vital to ensure not just the survival of Australia's literary culture but to ensure that it flourishes.