

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm [REDACTED] and I'm a senior public library leader.

In the next National Cultural Policy, I'm joining Australia Reads in calling for the Australian Government to invest in a reading nation.

Reading provides better education and employment outcomes, reduces our stress and loneliness, supports social connection, and increases our empathy for others.

Throughout my nineteen years in public library leadership, I have seen firsthand that reading is not just an individual pastime; it is vital social infrastructure. Libraries serve as essential \"third places\", where stories bridge gaps between diverse communities, foster deep empathy, and build civic connection. When we invest in reading, we are investing directly in the socio-economic health and resilience of our communities. Access to literature is a fundamental right that empowers citizens and strengthens democracy from the ground up.

But reading rates are in decline. 30% of Australians didn't read or listen to a book last year, 1 in 3 students can't read proficiently, and 25% of Australian kids don't get a bedtime story.

That's why we need urgent action from the Albanese Government to turn the tide on reading.

To ensure all Australians have access to the life-changing benefits of reading, I'd like to see the National Cultural Policy include interventions that provide:

- * National reading campaigns for adults, children and young people, helping them overcome the barriers to regular reading.
- * A library in every school and community, with professional staff and collection budgets, and more support for educators and parents to create strong reading cultures for students.
- * Greater community access to books and reading through author touring initiatives, voucher schemes, and book club programs.
- * Promotions that showcase Australian stories, highlighting contemporary titles and First Nations creators.

Kind regards,

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