

National Cultural Policy Submission

1470350

Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Dear Minister Burke,

I am writing as a passionate supporter of independent bookshops, to urge the government to include meaningful support for bookshops in the new National Cultural Policy.

As a child, I discovered books and reading; as a parent, I introduced my children to books within our local bookshop (Benn's Books in Bentleigh). I have attended launches and book clubs and author events in bookshops; I have browsed, read and fallen in love with stories in bookshops.

Local bookshops are not merely retail businesses. They are cultural infrastructure - community gathering places where Australian stories are discovered, where children fall in love with reading, and where literary careers begin. Yet every year bookshops close, undermined by online giants and discount department stores. In the UK, Amazon has 50%+ of the book market; in USA it's 75%+. Is that where Australia is going?

This week alone we've seen announcement of closures from Boffin's Books in Perth and Antipodes Bookshop in Sorrento.

Australia lags behind comparable countries in protecting its book retail sector. France, Italy, the UK, Germany, and more have introduced proven measures that have stabilised their independent bookshop sectors. Australia should do the same.

I support the Australian Booksellers Association's call to recognise local bookshops as cultural infrastructure. Local bookshops are irreplaceable - but without support, more will close. As a reader and community member, I ask you to stand up for these vital spaces before they are gone.

Yours sincerely,

Susannah Bowen