

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.

My local bookshop, [REDACTED] supports the local community in [REDACTED] and its surrounds. Local bookshops are not just 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.

My local bookshop hosts so many events that bring like-minded, book-loving people together. Meeting people can be very hard as an adult, and the community connections local bookshops help create are invaluable to me and many others.

Aside from meetups, book clubs, and other events I access through my local bookshop, it also connects me to the Australian literary scene. Recommendations from experienced and passionate booksellers have led me to countless authors whose books I never would have discovered from covers alone on big online retail sites.

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,

[REDACTED]