

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm a traditionally published author. Here are the areas I believe need attention in a new cultural policy:

1. School libraries are being closed, underfunded, staffed by sometimes disengaged admin staff instead of librarians or teachers, and otherwise made unavailable to kids during school hours. How can we expect kids to read if they don't have access to a strong range of books, time to browse, and the leadership of passionate reading role models?
2. Discount department stores undercut booksellers. If there was a 3-month period during which all new books must be sold at RRP (instead of heavily discounted), this would support publishers, authors and bookstores. At the moment, discount department stores like Kmart and Big W slash the prices of all new books, using them as loss leaders to bring customers into their stores so they will buy other things. It hurts the whole writing and book industry.
3. Universal basic wage for career artists. I work more than 40 hours a week writing, publishing and mentoring other writers and at times I can barely pay my mortgage. Ireland has tested this basic wage for creatives and is already seeing good results: \,For every €1 invested by the state, the wider economy gained €1.39 through administrative savings, reduced welfare reliance, and increased taxable earnings.\, (BBC). This would significantly reduce stress and career abandonment for creatives.
4. More arts grants and better grant assessment processes. Remove frameworks causing nepotism and bias in grants assessment systems. Increase the number and breadth of arts grants to support career writers, artists and musicians.
5. Develop a robust AI data policy that protects creatives from theft of work to train LLMs and remunerates creatives appropriately if they opt to offer their work to train LLMs. Our work is being stolen and we aren't making any money from it - only the tech billionaires are.
6. Force art/book/music platforms (and the creatives using them) to declare all use of gen-AI in creative works. Many people want to support human artists but platforms offering art, books or music are not required to reveal which works are human-made and which are AI generated to consumers. Help artists retain our careers and help consumers buy with their eyes open.
7. Have the hard conversations about AI and how it will impact our lives and livelihoods in the next 1, 10 and 100 years. Examine the environmental sustainability of AI servers and platforms. Look at how the unbridled use of AI may impact our critical thinking, mental health and even ability to make small decisions about life. Form policy based on hard data and facts, not pressures from the business and tech worlds.

Thanks!

Sasha Wasley