

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Dear Minister Burke,

I am writing as an independent bookshop OWNER to urge the government to include meaningful support for local bookshops in the new National Cultural Policy.

Our independent book shop , BEAUMARIS BOOKS has operated in the Melbourne Bayside suburb of BEAUMARIS for OVER 24 YEARS.

Our shop is a cultural Pillar itself!!! Every day customers come to 'chew the fat' & share ideas. We are certain that these interactions have positive mental health benefits. Over the years we have run hundreds of author events attracting large audiences. We have hosted many important Australian writers and artists, including Tim Winton, Colleen McCullough, David Malouf, Maggie Beer , Margaret Whitlam, Carla Zampatti and Troy Cassar-Daly...just to name a small sample. We support local authors by stocking their books and running events. We have strong sections of indigenous books for adults and children, providing excellent, accessible resources for our community. We have provided employment for many, including giving first job experience to many young people in our community. We collaborate with other community groups eg Beaumaris Art Group ( 'ArchiBeau art festival) and Beaumaris Modern with various events around the mid-century houses of the area. Our community is wonderful and we are told virtually every day that our book shop is a very very special place for our community .

Local bookshops are not merely retail businesses. They are cultural infrastructure - Yet every year bookshops close, undermined by online giants and discount department stores.

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

I support the Australian Booksellers Association's call to support local bookshops as cultural infrastructure, creating audience engagement:

- Establish an Australian Independent Bookshop Tax Offset (AIBTO): a refundable tax rebate on core operating expenses including wages, rent, and capital expenditure would deliver significant cultural and economic returns.
- Fund establishment of a skills training and certification programme development and delivery to professionalise the industry, creating recognised career pathways
- Enable accessibility to books and bookshops for all Australians. Study pricing and discounts; examine the feasibility of restrictions on deep discounting of new-release Australian titles, aligned with established European models, and investigate the case for GST reduction or exemption on books, consistent with international precedent.
- Support and expand ongoing grants for events in bookshops including author events, book clubs, workshops, story times, and other community programmes. Grant funding in this space benefits audiences and authors and the wider community.

It is getting harder and harder and we need government support. We see other independent bookshops being forced to close and we do not want our community to lose their special bookshop.

The measures proposed by the ABA are modest, internationally proven, and would deliver significant cultural and economic returns. Please help.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl Martin

Owner/manager

Beaumaris Books

