

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am the author of two published novels and a suite of short stories. I have a PhD in Creative Writing and undertake paid freelance work in [REDACTED]

The current policy Revive has focused on digital lending rights and the creation of Writing Australia, among other projects. These programs improved the writing sector in terms of greater investment and opportunities, and I hope the next Australian Cultural Policy builds on this by increasing funding for both writers and programs to ensure sustainability at an uncertain time.

Over 20 years in the [REDACTED] arts sector, I have seen how literary journals and competitions, writers' centres, community writing organisations, and writers' festivals support emerging and established writers by offering opportunities, education, and community. Writing is a solitary pursuit that's eased by networking with peers, attending workshops and having work recognised through competitions and publication. All these aspects of the sector need increased and consistent funding in order to support arts workers and writers.

As a teacher and mentor, I regularly encounter passionate new writers from a range of backgrounds. However, many are unable to pursue their goals because writing in most genres doesn't pay well, if at all; instead, it costs money in terms of classes, mentoring, and organisational memberships. This is especially difficult for low-income writers, writers from CaLD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, female writers, and parents, all of whom have less capacity for discretionary spending. I know established authors who have to stall new projects because they do not earn enough from their writing to sustain themselves. I'm privileged compared to my peers, as I have the financial and emotional support of a well-paid spouse. I would not be able to sustain myself on my writing and freelance work alone.

This situation is especially difficult in [REDACTED], where it costs more to engage with the wider Australian writing community through festivals, residencies, and meeting publishers and agents. It's also hard for niche festivals and other organisations to fund interstate writers to come to WA. This is harder still in regional and remote areas of [REDACTED] and the other states and territories, where writers will feel isolated and readers have a decreased chance of meeting the authors they love.

Greater funding of the sector would help to ease all of these issues. As part of the next Cultural Policy, I and other writers would welcome

- seed money for emerging writers to establish themselves in the sector;
- multi-year fellowships for mid-career authors to sustain momentum;
- a higher tax-free threshold for creative income and tax-free literary prize winnings to add value to money earned; and
- increased funding of Writing Australia to provide support for literary journals, festivals and writers organisations, and for individual authors to engage with these bodies both locally and nationally.

Thank you for your consideration.