

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm a writer, a 4-day-per-week public servant, and a consumer of many types of arts and culture. Australia punches above its weight culturally but could be stronger if artists and their eco-system were better supported. The area I know best is literature. It's extremely difficult to write long-form (I'm a novelist) in the current economic context. My books take 7-10 years to write, and it's a constant battle to carve out and protect the time to do it alongside working 4 days a week. I think that a Universal Basic Income (UBI)-type approach would be good for artists and writers and would greatly enhance and diversify Australia's arts scene. Alternatives to this might include special taxation arrangements. I earn almost nothing from my writing (around \$1,300 per year) which doesn't even cover the direct costs of writing, so my sole trader business always comes in at a loss. My day job covers the cost of living and offsets other costs to allow me to write, but it requires commitment and the support of my partner and the good will of the people I work with, which I know I'm lucky to have. I think to understand how much the economics can help to grow and support literature a really good example is the Irish system, where writers don't pay tax (I believe) -- as a result Irish literature continues to vastly outdo every other English speaking country's literature when considered on a per capita basis, it's like watching Australia at the Olympics. I think Australia is in an excellent position to have a MUCH stronger cultural presence in the world, for a relatively modest cost, given how much of the costs of our current cultural output are currently borne by the artists themselves. A relatively small uplift would surely have an outsized effect and Australia already has a lot of goodwill that can be leveraged to support our cultural products out in the world. Australian literature is currently good but it could be so much better if writers had a way to create a little more time for themselves to write, read and reflect while still being able to pay the rent but this is extraordinarily challenging in the current moment. Further, the theft of creative IP for machine learning is a massive concern for all artists but probably especially for writers. I'd love to see Australia (continue to) take a strong approach in this matter to ensure our cultural riches aren't just making wealthy Americans richer. How can this wealth be shared, and how can it support continued human production of art and culture?