

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am an independently published author (indie) who works part-time as an employee, runs a small editorial business, runs a publishing business, and writes. There is still a stigma within the publishing establishments (traditional publishers, writers festivals, schools, bookshops, libraries, etc.) that believe indie books and stories are of lower quality compared to traditionally published books. This is not true. The indie book industry is filled with exciting books and diverse writers who represent a broad cross-section of Australia.

Indie authors are businesspeople who contribute significantly to the income of other creative professions, such as editors, graphic designers (for cover and interior designs and websites), marketing, and print-on-demand businesses.

Due to the smaller size of indie writers' businesses, we incur higher costs for printing and distributing our books. Bookshops and distributors combined usually ask for 70% of the RRP, on top of print costs, leaving tiny profit margins for indies. Most independent authors cannot get chain bookshops (QBD, Collins, etc.) to stock and sell their books because the chains do not want to work with print-on-demand businesses such as IngramSpark or Amazon (both of which have printing factories in Australia). Therefore, indie book sales aren't recorded in bookseller or bestseller data either, making it difficult to quantify the contribution indie books make to the Australian literary scene. Due to large storage and distribution costs, the three largest book distributors in Australia are reluctant to stock indie books or include them in their catalogues. All of these obstacles make discoverability difficult and constrain the diversity of books that Australians can easily access.

I would like to see more independently published authors represented in cultural policy, with incentives provided to festivals and awards to include or recognise the growing contribution and diversity that indie books make to Australian culture. I'd like to see the cultural policy encourage schools, colleges, and libraries to seek out and include local indie authors in their curricula or on their shelves. There is scope within the cultural policy to recognise the growing contribution independent authors make to literature in Australia and abroad.