

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

School Library Association of New South Wales

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

A library in every school: supporting the National Cultural Policy

The School Library Association of New South Wales (SLANSW) supports the development of the National Cultural Policy 2026 and its five pillars to include a clear commitment that every Australian student will have access to a well-resourced school library, staffed by fully qualified professionals. SLANSW asserts that school libraries are essential cultural and educational infrastructure that enable the delivery of all five pillars.

First Nations First

Qualified school library professionals ensure that First Nations voices, stories and perspectives are embedded in student learning. These professionals curate collections and deliver culturally responsive programs that support truth-telling, respect and meaningful engagement with the world's oldest continuous culture.

A Place for Every Story

School libraries provide equitable access to diverse literature and information, ensuring all students can see themselves reflected and encounter the experiences of others. They are safe, inclusive spaces that support student wellbeing and remove barriers to participation, particularly in disadvantaged, regional and remote communities.

Centrality of the Artist

School libraries connect students with Australian authors, illustrators and creators, fostering engagement with contemporary Australian storytelling. By developing and delivering programs that encourage student reading and creativity, school library professionals nurture future generations of artists and audiences.

Strong Cultural Infrastructure

An appropriately resourced school library staffed by qualified library professionals has the capacity to deliver significant improvements in literacy, digital capacity, media and information literacy and critical thinking. These capabilities are the essential foundation for all Australian citizens' full participation in cultural life.

Engaging the Audience

Library professionals create an environment within their school libraries that engages students and builds cultural capital. School Library professionals foster reading engagement, support educational achievement and connect students with stories, ideas and cultural experiences through programs, events and partnerships.

Recommendation

The School Library Association of New South Wales (SLANSW) is therefore calling for the new National Cultural Policy 2026 to include a commitment that all Australian students will have access to a well-resourced school library run by fully qualified staff, as part of building a strong, inclusive and sustainable cultural future for Australia.