**National Cultural Policy Submission**

1472379
Public
Individual
Jarrod Maine
[redacted]
Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Dear Minister Burke,

I am writing as a passionate supporter of independent bookshops, to urge the government to include meaningful support for bookshops in the new National Cultural Policy.

Now an English teacher, bookshops have been part of my life for as long as I can remember. From Collins booksellers and Warrnambool books in Warrnambool where I would spend my weekly pocket money, through to my first bookshop job at Latrobe University bookshop and then again at the DUSA bookshop in Burwood Deakin. I cannot stress enough how integral bookshelves are to developing readership and a culture of literacy. Increasingly important in the current climate where critical thought is evaporating with the mushrooming of bland, stupid AI.

My local bookshops, Book Bird, Torquay Books, and The Bookshop at Queenscliff, support the local community.

They are cultural infrastructure.

You cannot have an informed intelligent voting public who don't read and you can't have a public who don't read if they don't have access to real bookshops. The experience be able to walk into a place and talk to somebody who is passionate and knows what they're talking about is irreplaceable.

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

I support the Australian Booksellers Association's call to recognise local bookshops as cultural infrastructure. Local bookshops are irreplaceable - but without support, more will close. As a reader and community member, I ask you to stand up for these vital spaces before they are gone.

Yours sincerely,

Jarrod Maine