

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

Prue Bon

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I'm Prue, and I'm a Teacher Librarian, working in a chronically underfunded government secondary school in Victoria.

In the next National Cultural Policy, I'm joining Australia Reads in calling for the Australian Government to invest in a reading nation.

Reading provides better education and employment outcomes, reduces our stress and loneliness, supports social connection, and increases our empathy for others.

Reading is the backbone of any creative economy – if our students won't read for pleasure, then they will struggle to read for necessity. It's so incredibly frustrating to attend professional development sessions, to read research, to be asked what I think will change things within the educational system and to KNOW that better access to books, to libraries, to qualified staff is quite literally the answer that EVERYONE knows, including the Department of Education, but yet, they continue to underfund and ignore this data. You can't continue to ignore the things that will work, while bemoaning the state of our results!!

Reading rates are in decline. 30% of Australians didn't read or listen to a book last year, 1 in 3 students can't read proficiently, and 25% of Australian kids don't get a bedtime story.

That's why we need urgent action from the Albanese Government to turn the tide on reading.

To ensure all Australians have access to the life-changing benefits of reading, I'd like to see the National Cultural Policy include interventions that provide:

- National reading campaigns for adults, children and young people, helping them overcome the barriers to regular reading.
- A library in every school, with professional staff and collection budgets, and more support for educators and parents to create strong reading cultures for students.
- Greater community access to books and reading through author touring initiatives, voucher schemes, and book club programs.
- Promotions that showcase Australian stories, highlighting contemporary titles and First Nations creators.

Kind regards,

Prue Bon

Teacher Librarian & author