

SUBMISSION FOR THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

The University of Queensland Press (UQP) is one of Australia's leading publishing houses. Established in 1948, UQP has consistently produced culturally significant and award-winning works across genres such as fiction, non-fiction and poetry, as well as children's and young adult books. For over 35 years, we have also published the work of First Nations writers who have gone on to win every major national award and be published in many overseas countries. We are a small, Queensland-based publishing house releasing up to 40 new books each year that are available across print, ebook and audiobook formats. We license publishing rights to these Australian books in dozens of countries around the world.

The challenges and opportunities that we see for the national publishing sector, as they relate to the five pillars in Revive are:

- **Pillar 1:** First Nations storytelling requires sustained, culturally governed publishing pathways. Publishers need greater support for ethical editorial processes, appropriate consultation and long-term relationship-building.
- **Opportunity:** strengthen First Nations-led publishing ecosystems, including dedicated funding streams for acquisition, editorial development and long-tail readership access.
- **Pillar 2:** The publishing sector is increasingly fragmented, with discoverability a major barrier for Australian-authored books in the global digital marketplace. Small and independent publishers often publish more culturally diverse works, but face structural disadvantages in reach and scale.
- **Opportunity:** targeted national support for discoverability of Australian works (e.g. metadata infrastructure, library and bookstore visibility, national promotional campaign of Australian books).
- **Pillar 3:** Author incomes remain structurally unstable, particularly for emerging and literary authors. Lending rights and copyright frameworks are out of step with digital consumption and library usage patterns. AI and digital reproduction present urgent risks to copyright protection and author remuneration.
- **Opportunity:** strengthen creator rights in the digital environment and invest in sustainable career pathways for writers, illustrators and editors.
- **Pillar 4:** Australia's book infrastructure (publishing, libraries, schools, bookshops, distribution) is interconnected but unevenly supported. Small and

independent publishers face high fixed costs and limited capacity to invest in long-term infrastructure (data systems, rights management, metadata).

- **Opportunity:** national investment in publishing infrastructure (metadata, ISBN/rights systems) to improve efficiency and global competitiveness.
- Financial support for small publishers for printing, so that they can continue to afford to print in Australia
- **Pillar 5:** Reading habits are changing, with increased competition from digital entertainment and algorithm-driven media. Book discovery pathways are weakening, particularly for Australian literary titles. Libraries and schools remain critical cultural access points but require stronger integration into national cultural policy.
- **Opportunity:** coordinated national strategy to ‘build a reading nation’, including campaigns, school engagement and library investment

We would like to see the following represented in the new National Cultural Policy:

A National Plan for Books and Reading that recognises books and reading as core cultural infrastructure, not just an industry sector. It should respect First Nations storytelling and cultural authority, support Australian authors and publishers and fair copyright, and strengthen the systems that enable discovery and access. This includes investment in libraries, bookshops and schools, improved national infrastructure and discoverability, and initiatives to build reading engagement and ensure Australian stories are widely visible and read across communities.

University of Queensland Press (UQP)