

National Cultural Policy Submission

1472572

Public

Individual

Ann James AM

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

For many years I have worked in the area of Australian Children's Literature. In 1988, with my partner [REDACTED], we established Books Illustrated, a business to promote Australian picture books and their creators. This led us to be closely involved with many organisations associated with the Children's Literature community, both in Australia and overseas. Believing that our national culture is firmly based on story, and importantly for children first, we are buoyed by positive results coming from Revive, in particular Writing Australia, and welcome this opportunity to submit suggestions for future development. The Australian Children's Literature community is strong with many state and national organisations run with passion, dedication, and achievements have been many. We support many of their suggestions submitted for this consultation, particularly for recognition and support of our creators (ASA) and the crucial need for libraries and teacher librarians in schools (ALIA). My submission addresses the issue of organisational infrastructure as in Pillar 4. My proposal is for a Government funded National Centre for Australian Children's Literature and Story to be established in Canberra. This proposal has been suggested for many years but now is a critical time to ensure this area can respond to change and achieve successful outcomes to encourage and promote the importance of story for children across the country, strengthening this vital part of our national culture into the future. The Centre would represent a collective of the key Children's Literature organisations serving our industry in Australia. Offices in shared space would allow for streamlining of aims, and a reduction of administration costs. Most importantly the natural interaction, cooperation and shared focuses would result in innovation and rather than competition and duplication of projects. Situated in Canberra, the Centre would have 'national' status and could promote to visitors of all ages and interests through exhibitions, workshops and education programs that would also support creators. Many Children's Literature Centres overseas are inspiring examples of the strength and importance such Centres have for the promotions and successes of their Culture eg. Quentin Blake's Centre for Illustration (UK), Seven Stories (UK), The Eric Carle Museum (USA) International Youth Library, Schloss Blutenburg (Germany). Extensive research has been done on these Centres. NCACL National Centre for Australian Children's Literature I believe that the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature (NCACL) could be at the heart of this Centre. It has been located in Canberra for over fifty years, initially formed by Children's Book Council as The Lu Rees Archives. Its Archive represents the history of Australian Children's literature with author, illustrator and publisher archives valued at over 12 million dollars. Currently housed at the University of Canberra, it is a national treasure, funded through donations and run by volunteers. Being part of a funded National Centre with exhibition and specialist workshop spaces would allow this national resource to be shared nationally and internationally. After dreaming, thinking and discussing this idea with many people for many years, I'd be pleased to be involved!