

National Cultural Policy Submission

1472703

Public

Individual

Shirley Alexander



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am retired and am spending my newfound time supporting the community in a voluntary capacity on NFP boards. I am also an avid reader.

I have read the policy document and am pleased to see the support for artists and creatives. But it is also important to support the audiences for those hard-working writers, artists etc the policy seeks to support. Otherwise, there will be no audience for their work.

One way of doing that is to support small, independent bookshops which play such a critical role in not only encouraging the slowly dying activity of reading, but also in creating a much-needed sense of community.

I am fortunate to have such a bookshop in my suburb, and I can attest to fact that it is incredibly important to our community. It is the heart and soul of my suburb, serving as a meeting place for locals of all ages and genders who gather to enjoy a coffee and discuss and buy books, all of which encourages reading. As a local I personally support the bookshop by always purchasing books through the shop and am happy to pay a higher price than that offered by discount and online stores such as Amazon. I do this because I want to do what I can to keep a bookshop afloat when so many are disappearing.

Not only do I support the bookshop financially, but also by co-hosting book club events at the bookshop which regularly draw a significant and diverse crowd. Last year for example, my nineteen-year-old grandson hosted a book club event on the novel Dracula. It was well attended and people were thrilled to see a young male as host.

Bookshops promote reading, the benefits of reading [1] are well known but include:

- playing a significant role in a person's happiness and success
- improving lives
- increasing literacy and numeracy which has a positive effect on jobs and income

Finally, reading and increased literacy create a healthier, wealthier and more equitable society. There is no more important goal.

Support our bookshops to support reading and literacy!

[1] Reading is Good For You: Literature Review. Australian Publishers Association.

<https://publishers.asn.au/Web/Web/Member-Resources/ResearchReports/Reading-is-Good-For-You--Literature-Review.aspx>