

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Organisation



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

As the owner of a small independent bookstore and creative business in regional Victoria, I believe culture is not only found in major cities or large institutions. Small businesses, local creators, authors, artists, markets and community spaces all play an important role in how Australians connect, discover stories and build community.

One of the biggest challenges facing the cultural sector is accessibility and sustainability for small and emerging creative businesses. Rising costs, freight, venue fees and limited access to funding make it difficult for independent bookstores, artists and creators to compete with large corporations and overseas retailers. Regional businesses also face additional barriers around visibility, distribution and audience reach.

At the same time, there are huge opportunities. Australians are actively seeking connection, community and authentic local experiences. Independent bookstores, markets, book clubs, live events and online creative communities are growing because people want spaces that feel personal and human. Digital platforms have also created opportunities for smaller creators and businesses to reach audiences nationally and internationally.

I would like to see the next National Cultural Policy place greater focus on:

- supporting regional and small creative businesses

- improving access to grants and funding for emerging cultural enterprises
- supporting Australian authors, publishers and independent creators
- recognising the economic and community value of grassroots cultural spaces
- investing in programs that encourage reading, creativity and arts participation for young people
- ensuring Australian stories remain visible and discoverable in an increasingly global digital environment.

Culture is built not only through large organisations, but through everyday people creating spaces where stories, art and community can thrive. Independent creative businesses are part of that future and deserve to be recognised and supported within Australia's cultural landscape.