

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public and anonymous

Individual



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

This new NCP doesn't reflect the reality of nearly all the many writers I know and work with - across all ages and stages of career. Many of the statements relate to novelists, failing to capture the increasing relevance + resonance of other formats, particularly poetry - whereas, in contrast, prizes are notably responding to Australian poetry's current renaissance.

The current situation for nearly everyone I know is unsustainable. The picture of success for our most prolific, reputable, and significant writers is far below an annual income of \$30k. I know several people who are able to sustain their practice because they receive disability pensions. For these, earnings made from writing can create unnecessary taxation problems. Others are fortunate to be able draw from independent wealth, which is, for sure, always part of literary culture. But should the voices of a privileged few speak for the art of a nation? For the rest: after one or two promising books, burnout and disappearance feel inevitable. It is not possible to continue strong creative practise while juggling paid work, family commitments, and the like, with very little sense that what one strives for, sacrifices much for, is valued by the broader community. I would say this third category is where I am placed. Today I put all of my recent print publications together (I am a prolific poet and essayist) and felt that the height of the pile was final.

If Australia is serious about sustaining proper literary culture, this is what is needed:

- secure income for writers that is independent of prize and grant cycles
- taxation reform for writers and artists, including a form of 'health care card' concession for artists
- application reform for funding opportunities. Applications are overly time consuming and those who must work for their living are disadvantaged by having far less time to devote to these processes
- a creative culture that is not centred on festivals and prizes
- meaningful and sustaining engagements with international authors