

National Cultural Policy Submission

Gabrielle Wang

Submitted: As an artist

I am a children's author and illustrator and the current Australian Children's Laureate for 2022 and 2023.

During my two-year tenure as Laureate I am touring each state and territory in Australia talking to children, teachers, parents and other industry professionals about the importance of books and reading. We all know how important children's books are for the development of the individual from picture books to novels all the way through primary school into secondary school. The power of story plays a crucial role in educating young people to understand the world around them. Story can teach a child how to handle aspects of life that are usually out of their control, to be empathetic towards those who may be of a different skin colour or way of life to their own, as well as helping those children who feel like they don't fit in. A major theme of my Laureateship is encouraging young people and caregivers to read and share diverse books written by diverse authors.

It is crucial that the role children's authors and illustrators play in shaping our society be recognized and rewarded.

I believe the National Cultural Policy should:

1. Extend the Public Lending Rights scheme to include Digital Lending Rights, and develop a National Strategy for Literature to support and protect Australian literature into the future;
2. Increase the number of fellowships offered to reflect the value and breadth of our working artists and writers, and pay them a living wage;
3. Introduce a minimum threshold of Australian-authored literary texts in the Australian Curriculum;
4. Introduce an authors-in-schools program as an ongoing plan into the future.
5. Reinstate school libraries and teacher librarians which are and have always been the beating heart of a school;
6. Acknowledge that artists are essential workers;
7. Acknowledge that culture forms part of the foundational economy, and that access to art and culture is a fundamental right;
8. Recognise and respect the crucial place First Nations stories play at the centre of our arts and culture;
9. Restore and increase Australia Council funding with a focus on small to medium organisations and the direct funding of independent artists and writers;
10. Remove tax on prizes and grants, change superannuation and tax legislation to ensure working artists and writers are eligible for superannuation on all payments;

Thank you for this opportunity

Gabrielle Wang
Australian Children's Laureate 2022 & 2023