

# National Cultural Policy Submission

**Steven Lang**

Submitted: As an artist

**What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you? Feel free to respond to any or all pillars:**

The Centrality of the Artist

As a writer/novelist I am deeply concerned about the lack of support for literature from all levels, but in particular from the Federal Government.

Average income for writers throughout Australia is pitiful and unsustainable. Writers require significant income support that recognises the time it takes to produce work, and - this is equally important - the fragile and tenuous nature of that process.

While the Australia Council does a remarkable job with the limited resources available to them, the process of applying for grants is riddled with problems. Writers all around the country waste an incalculable amount of time preparing submissions for grants' programs that simply do not have enough funding to provide for anything like the number of applicants. At the moment something like 10% of all applicants receive funding. This means that a further 20% of applicants - whose work deserves to be funded - are left with nothing. This is not idle speculation; the Australia Council itself is so aware of the problem they even have an expression to describe those applications that miss out: 'unfunded excellence'.

The time and creative potential that is lost through this is criminal. If we do not support those who are prepared to put their lives on the line for the arts then we, as a culture, lose out, we become suborned to culture imported from overseas and miss out on an appreciation of our own.

There will be works produced that are of limited, or even little, value, but there will also be writers nurtured and nourished who have the ability to set the world on fire. We need to take the risk.

Please put significantly more funding into literature.

## **Strong Institutions**

Please give proper resources to the Australia Council.