

National Cultural Policy Submission

Name: Brian McAleer.

Submitted: as an artist

I am a writer, among other things, and happy to be introducing myself and honoured to be submitting my letter on the National Cultural Policy.

I have been writing freelance and professionally for almost ten years. My first article was published in 2013, on the topic of how parents could set boundaries for teenagers. This was followed by several more articles in that field. In 2014, I self-published my first book "Setting Goals using The SMARTEST Method.". This has been a great accompaniment to my Life & Career Coaching Practice. As a hobbyist, I also write film reviews. Currently, I am close to finishing my 2nd book, tentatively titled "Life is a Road" which is an inspirational book for teens and young adults on defining their identity, and life and career directions.

Of the five pillars, the one which stands out as an area of concern and interest to me is "Reaching the Audience."

As one of my target groups is youth (teens and young adults), I know the challenges in reaching this audience. They are looking for information and guidance, but are not always avid readers. You may not see them carrying a physical book, opting for e-readers or their mobile device instead, and prefer to read in bite-sized pieces of easily digestible content. This is not meant to generalise today's young people; but I believe it is reflective of how and why they read.

With my current project in the works and nearing completion, it's original format will be a book, but could then be broken down into smaller, more accessible pieces of content; including chapter samples, blog posts, articles, or even video or audio content. These are often the platforms that attract young people to know more, and ultimately lead them to pick up the book and read it through.

As I also write for and support those close to young adults (parents, teachers, youth professionals), they are often the ones searching for and recommending books to their children, students or clients. Where do they go to find the books they want to pass onto their youth, in the hopes it will guide them to make the right choices in life? Finding such books is not always an easy task.

With my genre of writing, I am aware there are not a large variety of publishers specialising in self-help or motivational books for youth. This leads many writers like myself to go down the self-publishing path, which does ensure a printed book, but doesn't guarantee effective marketing, promotion and distribution to get that book in the hands of young people. I intend to submit my 2nd book to publishers, but wouldn't know where to look.

I would like to see more publishers seeking out writing in the field I specialise in, and perhaps some incentives for writers like myself to keep writing these books, with the support and guarantee that their books will reach the right audience – young people – meeting them where they are physically, and at the stage of adolescent development or young adulthood they are in.

Authors are at the heart of our national culture but are struggling to make a basic living.

The literature sector needs Government support to reach its full potential and to nurture the talent of the future. There is an exciting opportunity to introduce policy settings to support authors' work, invest in the creative economy and enjoy the cultural, social, educational, health and economic dividends that follow.

From what I have read so far on the policies intended for implementation, I am pleased to see these being considered and can see the benefits they would bring to writers and the creative industries as a whole.

I do give permission for my submission to be made public and published on the Office for the Arts website.