

# National Cultural Policy Submission



Bayawurradyangun, djirrundyangun  
We are all wounded, we all fear  
Ngabay midyungngunbuni ngaliya  
Together, you and I, we will heal

~ Joel Davison, from 'The Wounded Brave'  
commissioned by Red Room Poetry

## Red Room Poetry — National Cultural Policy Submission

Hon Tony Burke MP  
Minister for the Arts

On behalf of Red Room Poetry, our Board, Patron John B. Fairfax AO. and our creative communities, I write in support a National Cultural Policy that increases funding for the literary ecosystem as one of our most participatory artforms.

Since 2003, [Red Room Poetry](#) has grown to become Australia's leading organisation for commissioning, creating, publishing and promoting poetry in meaningful ways. We make poetry highly visible, vibrant, relevant and accessible for all audiences across the country and beyond. Our projects are created in collaboration with a spectrum of poets, communities, schools and partners for positive impact in core areas of Environment, Amplification and Visibility, First Nations, Youth and Marginalised Voices. Key outcomes include:

- 1300+ poets commissioned, employed and paid professionally
- 213,450+ students engaged and actively creating poetry
- 265+ cross sector partnerships
- 4.5 million audience reach per year via publication, public installations, live and digital events

Aligned with the 5 goals of the Creative Australia National Cultural Policy, and thanks to the stability provided by multi-year funding via Australia Council for the Arts, Red Room Poetry has undertaken numerous strategic initiatives to increase the participation, reach, visibility and value of Australian poetry. Red Room Poetry's strategic initiatives include:

### Reaching the audience

- Development and delivery of the highly participatory POETRY MONTH (1-31 August) with a diversity of 200+ poets engaged across all states and territories, national media coverage, Ambassadors and audiences of more than 1M+ per year

### First Nations

- POETRY IN FIRST LANGUAGES and *Gumayu — For all Times* commissioning and publishing over 63 First Nations poets in First Languages.

### **A place for every story**

- POEM FOREST plants a tree for every nature poem received by young people in partnership with 500+ schools nationally and the Australian Botanic Garden Mt Annan with over 7000+ poem trees planted and growing.

### **The centrality of the artist**

- Each year we commission, engaging, employ and pay 200+ artists and artworkers to create, publish, perform and develop new work nationally

### **Strong institutions**

- Through inventive cross-sector partnerships with larger institutions and the solid foundation of multi-year government funding we have leveraged and diversified investment to provide participatory opportunities for as many artists and audiences as possible

Through the challenges and opportunities of these strategic initiatives we share the following recommendations for the National Cultural Policy

- Increase funding for literature and literary ecosystems commensurate with participation, recognising that writing is the spine of many other artforms which rely on language (eg. theatre, music, film)
- Build capacity and ensure a stable base of multi-year funding for key literary organisations who engage a spectrum of writers, support the creation of new work, publication and dissemination via festivals, events, prizes and marketing channels
- Incentivise industry innovation and cross-sector collaborations to increase audiences, participation and resource sharing as well as increased distribution to programs and living wages for artists
- Support opportunities for young people in reading and writing through STEAM (rather than STEM) as well as creative curriculum initiatives like Prime Ministers Reading Prize that increases readership, reach and participation

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this submission. I confirm this submission can be made public and I am available to provide further comment if required.

Dr Tamryn Bennett  
Artistic Director  
Red Room Poetry

