

National Cultural Policy Submission Template

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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:

First Nations

Opportunity – Valuing and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and knowledges.

Challenge – Is the sector ready and willing?

A Place for Every Story

Opportunity – Everyone has a story to share, not just the loudest voices

Challenge – Who decides on what stories are told?

The Centrality of the Artist

Opportunity – Everyone should have the opportunity to create and experience the joy that comes with that

Challenge – Artists are supported to create

Strong Institutions

Opportunity – continue to fund key organisations, and in particular the First Nations Australia Writers Network

Challenge – Is there enough funding for everyone?

Reaching the Audience

Opportunity – International audiences want to have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience. Domestic audiences are also searching and willing to learn from Traditional Custodians.

Challenge – How can local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses be supported to provide an experience to domestic and international audiences?

Please tell us how each of the 5 pillars are important to you and your practice and why. Feel free to respond to any or all that are applicable to you:

First Nations

As an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writer it is important for me to express myself. The support, encouragement and mentoring of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers is essential to emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers. There is a diversity of voices in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature and they should be celebrated.

Furthermore, an Australian Poet Laureate should be established. It is recommended that the inaugural poet would be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

A Place for Every Story

It is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to see themselves reflected in Australian literature. They need to read about their Mob, family, Elders and have role models and leaders.

The Centrality of the Artist

Artists should be supported to create. Career pathways established and supported with training and ongoing professional development.

Strong Institutions

Continue to support and fund key national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts organisations. The First Nations Australia Writers Network be included amongst those organisations.

Are there any other things that you would like to see in a National Cultural Policy?

I support the Australian Society of Authors submission and in particular the following recommendations:

A national plan for literature

Literature is the only major art form without a national plan or funding framework through Australia Council. Literary creators need a funding framework which coordinates funding between state and federal levels of government, defines the priorities for the literature sector over the medium and long-term and locks in multi-year funding. Similar to the Funding Frameworks administered by Australia Council for the performing arts, visual arts and crafts, and contemporary music, literature needs its own vision.

Direct investment in authors

Introduce a Commonwealth fellowship and grants program to directly invest in authors.

As the most vulnerable individuals in the entire supply chain, we must prioritise direct investment in our writers. We call for a Commonwealth Fellowships and Grants program which includes a focus on diverse publishing and writing from outer-metropolitan, regional and remote areas designed to fuel the talent pipeline and build the creative economy of the future. We also request support for First Nations mentorships and investment in First Nations-led organisations to develop, publish and promote the work of First Nations writers and illustrators.

Ensure public funding is contingent on authors being paid minimum rates of pay

Authors do not fall under the protection of awards or industrial agreements and, as freelancers, have to negotiate on a case by case basis to be paid fairly. The government may assist by ensuring that public funding for projects that engage authors is always contingent on the payment of authors at or above ASA recommended rates of pay.

Modernise Australia's lending rights schemes to include digital formats

The Australian Lending Rights schemes ([PLR / ELR](#)) are world-leading and lauded by authors but, unfortunately, have fallen out of date and require urgent modernisation. Currently, lending rights payments to authors and illustrators are limited to print books and do not include ebooks or digital audiobooks. Changing technology and COVID has seen an enormous shift towards e-borrowing, and an increase in libraries' digital collections. The PLR/ELR schemes must be updated to reflect contemporary library collections which include digital formats in addition to print books. And the budget for PLR / ELR must be increased by at least 20% (\$4.4 million) to allow for

existing digital books to be included in the PLR /ELR schemes and forecast growth in digital collections.

Roll out a 'Living Wage' pilot scheme over 3 years

We encourage the Government to think boldly about tackling financial insecurity for our authors. We support the introduction of a 'Living Wage' pilot to be rolled out in Australia, similar to the Basic Income for the Arts (BIA) scheme currently being run in Ireland.

Increase support for the literary ecosystem

A substantial increase to overall literature funding through Australia Council will provide significant resilience to the literary sector, including to service organisations which support authors, and to literary festivals and journals.

An increase in funding for the Australian Bureau of Statistics would allow for much needed data on levels and type of employment, trends, and revenue across the book industry.

Legislative reform which supports creators

Establish a working party to examine and introduce author-protective provisions in the Copyright Act.

We encourage the Government to follow European examples of establishing author protections in legislation such as:

- principles requiring appropriate and proportionate remuneration,
- comprehensive and transparent royalty statements, and
- reversion of rights back to the author if the literary or artistic copyright work is not being exploited.

Remove tax from literary prizes and Commonwealth grants to authors

Maintain a meaningful copyright framework.

Educational policy settings

Introduce a minimum threshold of Australian-authored content in schools

Roll out an authors-in-schools program to increase income for authors, and deliver to students literacy skills, a deeper connection with books, and expertise on writing.

Better support tertiary arts education.