

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## Yvette Holt

Submitted: On behalf of a not-for-profit arts organisation

On behalf of an arts peak body

On behalf of an organisation with arts-components (e.g. community organisation, tourism, venue, health, education etc)

As a worker/professional in an industry who uses arts (e.g. art therapist, tour guide)

As an artist

As an individual

**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

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander storytellers carry the unceded sovereign voices of our poetry. A Poet Laureate to Australia is an essential element addressing all five pillars of this submission. As the Executive Chairperson to FNAWN and a Board Director to AP Australian Poetry (The Wheeler Centre) I am seeking this application to be considered for relevant and timely discussions in seeking a voice for a Poet Laureate to Australia, emphatically with the first Poet Laureate being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, and then further commitment to have the tenure rolled over every second year, thereby opening it to all Australian poets for nominations from 2026 onwards.

## A Place for Every Story

The coming together of Australian poetry for a Poet Laureate to Australia, first being in 2024 a First Nations poet, we consider this shared decision with deep respect and honour of the original storytellers of these lands and seas. FNAWN and AP Australian Poetry equally support the foundation of *A Place for Every Story* must firstly be in the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander poets to bring Australia literature together in celebration of this national recognition.

## The Centrality of the Artist

Understanding that this would be the undertaking of the artist poet promoting, cultivating, sharing, national and international workshopping, continuing to publish their works and being an integral existential arm of the future of Australian poetry in a leadership role, comradie and international diplomacy held within a nation's aspirations and esteemed anchorage of poetry, surely a gift to all Australians.

## Strong Institutions

- FNAWN First Nations Australia Writers Network, the only leading peak-industry body of advocacy, support, career development and networking for Indigenous, First Nations peoples in the world. And yes, you may quote me on that.
- AP Australian Poetry the peak industry of Australasian Poetry support, back, and are partners with FNAWN in the quest to seek a Poet Laureate to Australia.
- University as a possible two-year tenure to cover salary and employment placement for the Poet Laureate, discussions have been underway for than eighteen months in conversation with key academics at multiple institutions.

- Australian Philanthropic Society as a possible private sector of financial support for travelling, salary, remuneration of national advisory committee

The focus of the Poet Laureate to Australia would command immediate media attention in favour of celebrating what is long-overdue in the government of the day endorsing, supporting and allowing ambassadorial engagements nationally and internationally as the showcase of our finest poets. Australia has contributed globally since the ink hit the notepad of poetry, from settler times to current digitisation of narrative. The time has arrived.

**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**

Over eighteen months I have lived breathed and slept through my dedication to work on the Poet Laureate to Australia template. I have shared this vision with the Board of FNAWN, the Board of Directors at AP, Australian poets and First Nations poets via every state and territory, leading peak-industry literary bodies including ASAL, Writing NSW, Australia Council, ASA to name a few. As an author of Australian literature, I believe in the power of storytelling. I live through the multitude of literary prisms. I believe and am overtly passionate about poetry. I am First Nations, I am woman, I am sovereignty unbroken. I am LGBTQ!. I am like no one else you have nor would ever meet to bring this vision into light and to make it what it ought to have always been. A truth-telling celebration of Australian poetry – led by a First Nations person in consultation with a national advisory committee in honouring our spoken and written words.

### **A Place for Every Story**

There is a place for every story within the telling of every poem. Poetry is to literature what the seasons are to the leaves. We bring beauty and contrast to every story ever told.

### **The Centrality of the Artist**

The very real challenge would be that a Poet Laureate to Australia essentially needs the unified backing and support of the current progressive Labor Government under Prime Minister Albanese. I discussed the viable possibility with Minister Tony Burke at Ainslie House, Canberra Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August.

### **Strong Institutions**

We have mobilised multiple institutions as stated who are willing and able to assist and mobilise this calling.

### **Reaching the Audience**

We believe that the target audience would be reached by celebrating a national Poet Laurette holding firm anchorage from early infancy storytelling, childhood literature, primary school years, through to middle years, and beyond into young adulthood. A target audience to the investment of poetry through the lens of literature is a shared destiny and one in which is inclusive of all Australians with esteemed pride and diversity.

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

I would like the National Cultural Policy to think of the Poet Laureate to Australia as a long-term investment of national recognition within the field of literature as a sustainable and encouraging moment in our shared herstory/history were this model of achievement extends as a foundation of cultural assertion led firstly and foremost by the National Cultural Policy Advisors.