



Invest in a reading nation



Reading is vital for a healthy, resilient and creative country.

Reading provides better education and employment outcomes, reduces our stress and loneliness, supports social connection, and increases our empathy for others.

Yet we're in the midst of a global reading crisis. 30% of Australians didn't read or listen to a book last year, 1 in 3 students can't read proficiently, and 25% of Australian kids don't get a bedtime story.

Australians want to read more - but over half of us struggle. We lack skills and confidence, get distracted by devices, or simply don't know how to access or find books we'll enjoy.

Reading is an urgent issue which – left untended – will cost our economy over \$40billion a year.

The evidence is clear: Australians need support to overcome the barriers to reading.

We're calling on the Australian Government to turn the tide on reading.

1

Invest in national reading campaigns

2

Equip schools to create a reading culture

3

Support access to books and reading for all communities

4

Showcase Australian stories

Recommendations

1



Invest in national reading campaigns

To create a national reading culture, we need to make books more visible and accessible for all Australians. We need targeted, national campaigns that address barriers to reading, including:

- Adult campaigns that target lapsed and aspiring readers, showing them how to find, access and make time for books and reading.
- Young adult and children's campaigns, connecting them with books they'll love and inspiring peer-led discussions.
- Family campaigns to highlight the importance of shared reading for child development and family bonding.

2



Equip schools to create a reading culture

Schools are a vital part of healthy reading communities. To support educators as they create lifelong readers, we need to:

- Mandate a library in every school, with qualified staff and collection funds.
- Support schools to build a love of reading in students, alongside skills development in the classroom.
- Provide schools with tools and resources to help parents create positive home reading environments.

3



Support access to books and reading for all communities

Too many Australians miss out on the benefits of reading. Access to books provides better outcomes - for all Australians. To increase access, we can:

- Support First Nations-led programs in Indigenous communities and languages.
- Facilitate book voucher and gifting programs for target groups.
- Back a national book club program to reach new readers, through existing library and bookshop infrastructure.
- Sponsor the National Reading Symposium, increasing industry capacity to engage new audiences.

4



Showcase Australian stories

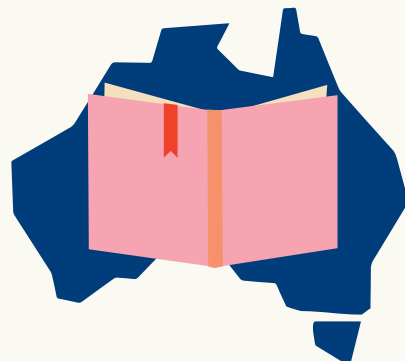
A healthy reading culture needs books that reflect our lives. To offer readers relevant Australian titles, we need to:

- Invest in data systems that increase visibility of Australian books.
- Fund an 'Australian stories' promotion with a strong focus on First Nations writers.
- Enable festivals and publishers to tour Australian authors regionally.
- Expand the LitUp program to deliver locally-led author events to all Australian schools.
- Research the impact of representation in Australian books.

Key statistics on reading

The state of reading in Australia

- Australians want to read more – around half of Australians read less than they intend to.
- 44% of Australians have low or very low literacy.
- 29% of Australian secondary school students don't read for pleasure in their free time – rising to 52.6% in some States.
- Young men aged 15–24 are the least likely to read recreationally in Australia.



Children & young people's reading

- 1 in 3 Australian children can't read proficiently.
- 25% of Australian parents rarely or never read with their children.
- 86% of Australian children enjoy having books read aloud at home because it is a special time with parents.
- 48% of Australian teens said that having more good books at their school library would help them read more.



Reading, health and social connection

- Reading fiction for just five minutes can reduce stress by nearly 20%.
- Adults who read almost every day had a substantially lower risk of being diagnosed with depression.
- 43% of readers said reading helps them get a better night's sleep.
- Readers are 57% more likely to have a greater awareness of other cultures.

