

6 December 2008

Dear Mr Woods and Ms Sylvan,

I am an author of 20 novels, written across several genres. I wish to register with you my avowed opposition to the lifting of restrictions regarding the parallel importation of books into the Australian market.

On the one hand, I am, of course, concerned about my own income. I have many international editions of my book in circulation. Should remaindered UK editions, for example, be introduced into the market, I would lose a significant amount of money in royalties.

On the other hand, I am even more concerned about the issue of the preservation of Australian culture. I do not write realist Australian fiction; far from it. I am known as an author of fantasy and gothic fiction, much of it not set in Australia. But it is still *Australian writing*. Allow me to offer you an example. My 2004 novel *Giants of the Frost* was revised significantly for the American market. Along with the letter "u" dropping out of colour; along with the "taps" become "faucets"; the US editors required a "happy" ending to a story that was set up from the beginning as a tragedy. At the time, I chose to see this change as akin to a translation into a local idiom. Now I see that, should this book, for example, outstrip sales of my Australian editions here, something essentially Australian has been lost.

I am one of the lucky ones. I have had books published. There are many other fine authors out there whose work may never be published, should Australia be flooded with cheap foreign editions. Publishers will be less able to take a chance on new voices, with the landscape of the market so radically changed.

I do understand that booksellers in Australia are concerned about readers' access to Amazon etc; but surely that concern must now be softened by the much lower value of the Australian dollar against the US dollar. We are not in the days of near-parity anymore, and shoppers at Amazon still have to pay for international shipping. Making a firm and far-reaching decision based on anything as constantly shifting as an exchange rate is surely never wise.

All formality aside, I die a little when I think about how Australian culture-- Australian literature and its unique images and language--may be eroded by removing restrictions on parallel importation. We have struggled so long to get a foothold, to develop confidence in our voices, to make an impression on international markets. And with one decision, it is all put at risk. A nation's culture is worth preserving (which is, no doubt, why the US and UK do not allow parallel importations... even though they would be quick to exploit our market).

Thanks for your time. Submission cover sheet is attached.

Regards
Kim Wilkins