

The Chairman
Gary Banks
The Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428 Canberra

Dear Mr Banks,

I am an Australian author of works for children, and I urge to you retain current parallel importation restrictions.

I am a full time writer who struggles to make a living income. I hope one day to be able to support myself fully with my writing. At present, I rely on public speaking engagements and other short term employment to supplement my writing income. I resist any legislative changes that will make it more difficult for me to earn an income at my profession.

I work with a range of publishers, from small local companies to multinational companies. I am concerned that removing the restrictions on parallel importation will make it more challenging for small companies to survive, and for larger companies to maintain an Australian list. The Australian Children's literature sector here is vibrant, reflective of our broad cultural experience and informative to both Australians and an international market. We produce quality works, both in content and presentation. It is a young industry, and works hard to establish a unique voice and maintain a place in a world market. I fear that removing the parallel importation restrictions, with the flood of potentially less quality productions will at the very least dilute our cultural experience, and at worst, destroy the local industry.

Royalties are imagined by many to make writers and illustrators (creators) wealthy. Most Australian creators are far from wealthy. Royalties from international sales are considerably lower than royalties from local sales. A recent royalty on the sale of more than 2000 copies of a book overseas was less than \$100. How can removing parallel import restrictions not make my income less?

There is a suggestion that direct subsidy may help overcome the income loss to local creators and publishers, administered potentially through bodies like the Arts Council. Arts Council Grants are wonderful, but there are not many of them. A certain degree of success is often required before applications can be made. Writing grant applications is a separate art of its own. There are seminars available in many writing centres on 'How to write a Successful Grant Application'. How is merit for any subsidy to be measured? What criteria will measure eligibility? What cost will be involved in administering such a scheme? How does it compare with the cost of removing the parallel importation restrictions.

I am concerned that if any program of subsidy is introduced as part of a compensation package that it will be short term or require extensive submission and lobbying every few years to retain or update it. We already experience this with ELR payments.

At this time I can see many concerns and few benefits in the removal of parallel importation restrictions. Suggested compensations do not reassure me. I hope that the commission will find that we need to protect our local industry and creators and oppose any removal of restrictions.

Regards,

Claire Saxby
Writer