

Parallel Importation of Books Study  
Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
Canberra City ACT 2601

4th January, 2009

Dear Mr Woods and Ms Sylvan,

I am an Australian author of children's books, as well as a book lover who regularly buys books from Australian bookshops, and I support the current regulations restricting parallel importation of books.

I believe the current '30 day' and '7 / 90 day' rules provide timely access to books for Australian readers. I don't believe that allowing overseas publishers to flood the Australian market with cheap, overseas-produced books would be of benefit to the Australian consumer. If this *was* allowed to occur, would booksellers really sell these books at significantly cheaper prices? It's difficult to predict, but it seems unlikely when some booksellers already sell books above the recommended retail price (reported in *ASA Newsletter, December 2008*, pp 2-3, citing an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*). If the government wants to make books more affordable, why not exempt books from the GST?

I also have concerns about overseas editions of Australian books being sold here. As an author, I'd receive reduced royalties if the US editions (rather than the original Australian editions) of my books were sold here. It must be remembered that the US and UK have parallel importation restrictions, too, and they have no plans to change this. It would be very unfair if Australian authors lost the benefits of Australian copyright, while overseas authors retained *their* territorial rights. I'm also opposed to Australian children having to read books filled with American spelling, grammar and vocabulary, when these books have been written by Australian authors. Australian children should be able to read Australian books written in Australian English. This would be made more difficult if the market was flooded with overseas-produced books.

Removing parallel importation regulations would also adversely affect Australian publishers. Australian publishers invest in Australian authors because (at the moment) there is such a thing as 'Australian copyright'. This means that Australian publishers can publish Australian authors in Australia, and then sell book rights to overseas publishers on behalf of

their authors. Under the current system, publishers can afford to nurture new writers and support local printers, editors and illustrators. All this would be put at risk by abolishing the current Australian copyright laws.

The Australian Society of Authors' submission to the Productivity Commission contains detailed information on the issue of parallel importation restrictions. I am an ASA member and I support their stance on this issue. Please retain the current regulations and protect Australian copyright.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Cooper