

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

6 January, 2009

Dear Mr Woods and Ms Sylvan,

I am an Australian, internationally-published author of both adult and young adult fiction.

Being born in the mid-70s, I am very lucky to have begun writing at a point in time where writing about my own country and way of life was not only acceptable, but encouraged. It is hard to believe that this right could be swiftly turned into a privilege. It is hard to believe our currently colourful market could be turned into a grey market with the parallel importation of books.

I have serious doubts that if I had begun my career under parallel importation that I would have had a single book published, let alone nine. I can not see how Australian stories could continue to be told when the only viable publishing option would be for Australian authors to compete to sell their work in the US/UK markets against US/UK authors with US/UK voices and stories.

My fellow authors have outlined all the arguments against parallel importation far more brilliantly than I ever could. How difficult publishing Australian work would be for Australian writers and publishers and how Australian booksellers would also suffer.

For me, however, a single (wasted) half-hour of my life plays over and over in my mind when I think about parallel importation. At the risk of sounding crass, parallel importation would see us US-version *Kath & Kim*'d. We all saw it (once). It wasn't pretty. As a nation, we hated it. Yet this is what is at risk under parallel importation – we are risking a lifetime of reading US *Kath & Kim* versions of our existence.

Yes, Australian books are too expensive. But cheap books for Australians at a high cultural cost to Australia is not the solution to this problem.

Yours sincerely,

Allison Rushby