

# **Submission on the affects of lifting Copyright Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books into Australia**

by Helen Croome

I am an avid reader of Australian literature and wish to voice my concern with regard to the current study by the productivity commission.

For the sake of our local industry, I urge you NOT to lift restrictions on parallel imports.

I wish to argue against a lifting of the restriction on the parallel importation of books on the grounds of protecting our unique Australian writing culture.

It will mean butchering of the Australian language as it is altered to meet a universal audience, rather than reflecting our culture. We are going to lose the uniqueness of our language and become bland.

Local publishers who support this unique publication of our culture and I know how hard it is to have poetry published in Australia. These publishers are providing an essential service for Australian readers. They deserve to have their returns and autonomy protected, and not become controlled by overseas expectations and markets. This could ultimately see smaller publishers driven out of business, which would reduce even further the opportunities for Australian writers to have their work published.

We have a vibrant publishing culture that risk takes to produce original and outstanding literature, especially children's literature. The New Zealand experience in allowing parallel imports shows that this puts originality and the livelihoods of local writers and publishers at risk.

The United States and the UK protect their publishers and writers by not allowing parallel imports, so the relaxation of such restrictions in Australia would produce a one-sided result that would be detrimental to our local community. What is "open" about Australian-published books not being able to be sold in the USA or the UK, but American, British or any other English-language edition from anywhere being able to be freely sold here? Perhaps I'm missing the point, but why should we accept American and British versions of our books, when they won't do the same?

In view of all these factors, I believe that the introduction of parallel imports would severely reduce the number and extent of opportunities for writers like me, and many would be forced to seek employment elsewhere.