

Dear Commissioners,

I wish to make a brief submission to your inquiry into parallel importation of books into Australia. The submission cover sheet is attached.

I am a widely published author with both Australasian and international publishers. My overall concerns are twofold: that changes to the 30 day rule will weaken Australian publishing and result in a serious financial disadvantage to authors such as myself.

In Australia I have long published with the Text Publishing company, who also arrange for overseas sales of my books. Text has a long term commitment to my writing, and their editorial input is without doubt the finest and most valuable of any publisher I have worked with or heard of.

Making such an investment is expensive, and is only paid back over the long term. To the extent that a change to the rules will weaken independent Australian publishers like Text, so will my career as a writer be compromised.

In the short term I stand to lose significantly from a change to the rules. I have a number of books published both in Australia and overseas, under existing contracts. If the 30 day rule changes, what is to prevent overseas publishers from dumping remaindered stock of my books in Australia, thereby depriving me of legitimate royalties? Changing the rules after contracts have been signed is iniquitous, and books are long-lived commodities that earn out for years.

If Australian publishing was languishing, I could understand the desire to change things. But it is flourishing. And I fear that publishing, being a complex business, is likely to be made worse rather than better by the proposed intervention.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Flannery

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