

Christine Bongers

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

Email: [books@pc.gov.au](mailto:books@pc.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to register my opposition to changing existing Australian copyright laws to allow parallel importation of books.

I am a first-time author who is looking forward to having my debut novel *Dust* published by Woolshed Press, an Imprint of Random House Australia, in July 2009.

According to its website, Woolshed Press aims to find "world-class literary titles that are both commercial and have potential in education as class sets." Their goal is to find and publish "one-off titles that showcase the best of Australian story-telling and are suitable for children and young people of all ages."

Achieving these goals will make Woolshed Press an important Australian publisher of fiction for children and young adults. However it could also make it a casualty of any change to existing copyright laws.

Current copyright laws guarantee that books must be published here within 30 days of their overseas release. If these protections are removed, it removes any imperative for overseas-published books to be published in their country of origin.

It is easy to envisage a scenario where overseas publishers could cherry-pick the best of Australian writing, flood the local market with overseas versions of Australian books and thereby swamp a local industry that is already struggling with low profit margins and worsening economic conditions.

Under this scenario, Australian readers, writers and the local publishing industry would all suffer.

Gone are the days when writers being published overseas merely had to contend with the Americanization of our spelling. High profile authors such as Nick Earls and Emily Rodda have already gone public with their experiences of American publishers wanting to change everything from setting (the Brisbane suburb of Indooroopilly being deemed

unacceptable for an American audience) to vernacular (Aussie kids asking “Mom” for “cookies”) to omitting scenes (because they don’t “get” our humour).

I would love to see my own novel *Dust*, published overseas. Yes, I would struggle with any changes to the Australian vernacular that is so much a part of the voice, but I would accept that some changes might be needed in order for the story to be understood by an overseas readership.

However I could not accept that an internationalized version of my book might be the only one available to readers in my own country, in my own culture, in my own backyard.

Please help protect our literary heritage by allowing current copyright protections to remain in force.

Yours sincerely

Christine Bongers