

PARALLEL IMPORTATION OF BOOKS – SUBMISSION

To the commissioners:

As a published children's author, both in Australia and internationally, I would like to state my strong opposition to the possible change in current importation and copyright regulations for Australian books.

To be perfectly honest, I really don't want to be writing this submission at all.

What I really want to be doing is to be working on my latest novel – a young adult novel set in rural NSW that tells the tale of an Australian family dealing with loss and grief, with the mysteries of the past and with their connection to the land. It's a story I'm passionate about. One I hope to see in Australian bookstores one day.

As with most Australian authors, it is already so difficult to earn a decent living from royalty income that I have to squeeze my writing around my "real" job – usually in the evenings or weekends. But if my dream of seeing my latest work become a published book and reach Australian teenagers is ever to be a reality, I know that I must not work on it this evening. I have something far more important to do. I must write this submission. The possibility of this and many other stories in the hearts, minds and laptops of creators throughout Australia ever reaching their intended audiences is at stake.

I consider myself to be an "emerging" writer. I've been told that my strength as a writer is in my writing of place and dialogue. Australian place. Australian dialogue. My stories are about Australian life and experience. They are filled with Australian characters and places, Australian humour and idiom. Sadly, if the changes to copyright and importation occur, with their subsequent ramifications to viability and margins for Australian publishers, I fear my chances of finding an Australian publisher will be severely reduced.

We have a vibrant publishing culture that produces innovative, high quality Australian Literature. An industry that nurtures and develops new voices. As outlined in the many submissions already logged on the website, changes to the importation and copyright laws will jeopardise this. Please look to the New Zealand experience where allowing parallel imports has been shown to have a negative impact on the viability and growth of their publishing industry.

The United States and the UK protect their creators and publishers by not allowing parallel imports. Please protect our Australian creators and publishers in the same way. Australian stories must continue to be told.

Kind regards

Sue Whiting