

## **Copyright restrictions on the parallel importation of books**

### **Submission**

As a would-be author (published in the educational field but not yet in children's trade books), I would like to add my voice to the groundswell of concern about parallel importation.

I will talk about children's books because that is my area of interest, and because of my concerns that a change to the parallel importation laws may have a negative impact on Australian children's literature and on Australian writers and illustrators.

First, the cultural issue. While it is important for children to have access to great books from around the world, they clearly need to be able to read books set in Australia, books that reflect their own cultural experience. This is only possible through the viability of the Australian publishing industry.

Second, the impact on authors. The writers and illustrators that I know show enormous dedication and commitment to creating something truly Australian, something that children will connect with – generally without the financial rewards they would receive in other areas of life. The Australia Council, quoted in an ASA submission to the Taxation Review panel, noted that the median arts income for Australian authors was \$11,700 p.a. Will Australian creators truly benefit from the proposed changes?

At a personal level, I also think of myself and other would-be authors. We rely on Australian publishers (including small publishers) for the chance to begin and establish a career. If publishers are threatened, our opportunities diminish. We would then have less opportunity to gain publication, both here and then overseas (since overseas publication is generally dependent on initial local success).

Yes, the idea of cheaper books is an excellent one (GST exemption, perhaps?) – but as noted in the issues paper, it is not clear that direct comparisons can be made with other countries. And cheaper books are of no long-term benefit if their existence has a negative effect on the Australian publishing industry. If the industry struggles, surely Australian readers will face less real choice, not more?

I hope that you will consider the situation most carefully.

Warm regards,

Clare Harris