

19<sup>th</sup> January 2009

**Re: Copyright Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books**

To the Productivity Commission,

As a freelance illustrator I am an avid reader of children's books and have been heavily inspired by the creativity and diversity of the Australian book industry. The clever works of Shaun Tan are a perfect example of just what we have to lose if changes are made to our copyright laws. Tan and other Australian writers create original, thought provoking and culturally significant works of art which I have no doubt would not exist without the support of local publishers who are interested in local content. Trying to write such books for overseas publishers would be near impossible given they would not have such a vested interest in Australia's stories and tailor their works to a very conservative market.

My experiences illustrating for a number of US publishers has been incredibly frustrating in that any flair or deviation from the 'norm' was not allowed and resulted in a bland, uneventful book. What makes us stand out from overseas books is that we take risks, include challenging topics and are not afraid to be different. I recently illustrated a book for a local publisher with fantastic results. I was able to use creative license and even decide which pieces of the content I would illustrate. This would be impossible with an overseas publisher and shows how innovative our industry is.

If authors cannot make a basic living out of their work due to parallel importation there will be a flow on effect for all who surround and support the industry, including illustrators. Moreover we will lose our stories, those that reflect our unique identity and experiences. We already have enough Americanisms and do not need our identity further diluted.

Our existing laws mean publishers can take risks and support local talent. I ask you to support our thriving and successful industry by upholding our current Copyright Laws.

Yours sincerely

Nahum Ziersch  
Freelance Illustrator