

SUBMISSION ON: [Copyright Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books](#)

We are both librarians, and also serious book collectors. Our personal book collection currently amounts to over 12,000 volumes, collected over more than 40 years.

We buy many Australian titles, and rely mostly not on the mass market bookshops, which all offer the same bland standard of popular titles, but on smaller, specialist booksellers who locate and represent works of both fiction and nonfiction from relatively obscure authors.

Having emigrated 40 years ago from England, we were impressed by the range of Australian authors and titles, and by the wide range of smaller bookshops in this vast country with its relatively very small population.

We firmly believe that the current restrictions on the parallel importation of books has helped to safeguard both Australian authors and publishers, but it has not resulted in expensive books – the price of books in Australia now is, relatively speaking, less than when we first arrived here, and very comparable with prices in the UK. (When we first came here in the 70s, it was often cheaper to have a book posted from England and pay the high postage costs rather than buy it here.)

There is no clear evidence whatsoever that removing the protection afforded by the Copyright restrictions would result in cheaper book prices. Almost certainly it would simply increase the profits of the large international publishers and the large bookshop chains. These rely on cheap editions – paying less copyright, or in some cases paying no copyright to the author. They would be able to use Australia as a dumping ground for remaindered titles from around the world. This would not really represent ‘cheaper books’ – just rubbish at rubbish prices. At the same time it would destroy the viability of many small Australian publishing houses, and with their demise there would be no avenue for new and emerging Australian authors.

Australia needs a strong and viable publishing industry to provide an adequate market place and adequate opportunities for genuine Australian authors. Australian authors tell the Australian story, the Australian experience, and this is vital for the country’s cultural identity.

Mass market publishers & printers know the cost of everything but the value of nothing.

Both the UK and the USA have similar protection for their own writing & publishing industry.

We implore the commission to recognize the true value of our thriving publishing industry, and to recognize the vital importance of that industry being able to support, encourage and nurture new Australian authors. For these reasons the current restrictions must be maintained.

Yours sincerely
Judith Field
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