

Via The Chairman
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601
Via email: books@pc.gov.au

Dear Committee

It is not for me to say whether or not we should allow the importation of books. I trust that you will make the best decision. I would be willing to assist you in any way, and I would welcome your call at any time.

May I please urge you to ask the correct probing questions. So far, I have researched some of the arguments, and as an author and publisher, I fear that there have been one-sided arguments designed to mislead.

Some people say that importing books will not harm authors. This is incorrect. Let us look at typical publishers' contracts. From my experience, as an author who has signed contracts with Prentice Hall/Simon & Schuster, Penguin, Pearson Education, ABC Enterprises, HarperCollins, Ink Group, and a host of other international organisations, I know that the percentages and the loopholes within the contracts will mean that the royalties received by authors will be magnificently reduced. Contracts state that international sales are a fraction of the domestic amounts.

Also, people say that importing books will make them cheaper. These people compare typical wholesale prices across regions. They do not seem to calculate freight, storage, customs, etc. So they are insulting your Committee by their calculations.

They denounce the idea that remaindered books will flood the market. Having been in business for over 30 years, and having worked for retailers plus multinationals such as IBM, I have seen how the world of commerce operates. I fear that your Committee might be misled about how remainders really work, and what triggers them. The loopholes in these areas are so huge, that authors might not only never receive royalties, but also have to actually PAY to have their books shipped to Australia. The argument is laughable and complex for those who are not well versed with how this industry works.

What will happen when, due to freight and long lead times, the retailers start to e-print titles? The contracts for e-prints are again amazingly unfair. Author will not only receive miniscule royalties, they might also be charged for marketing and advertising subsidies. I can show you signed contracts from large operators who actually thrust their unfair practices onto authors.

My submission to you could easily turn into fifty pages and cover a raft of areas. I shall pause here to invite you to contact me if you would like additional information so that you can arrest people whose illogical arguments are designed to baffle you and the public.

I shall support your decision. I am not trying to sway you either way. However, I cannot abide unethical self-serving conduct by business people. I do not mind any corporation making a submission that brazenly seeks higher profit and control. My abhorrence relates to organisations who twist halve truths to seek sympathy via a back door. They should deal in facts, not propaganda.

I wish you every success.

Yours faithfully

Jonar Nader.
7 April 2009