

8<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Attn: Ms Jill Irvine  
Productivity Commission  
Canberra

Dear Jill,

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

Penguin Books Australia first published a work by me, a children's book called 'Animalia', in 1986. Over the ensuing 23 years I have published exclusively with Penguin Australia, granting them rights to secure overseas publishers in USA, UK, Canada and many other countries.

This package of global rights has enabled Penguin to invest in me and my work at a level that would have been impossible had I granted them Australia-only rights and signed international deals myself. Without the support they were able to provide as a result of having these rights, I would not have been able to spend the 3 years that 'Animalia' took to create. The book would never have happened – a book that has sold over 3 million copies worldwide, all flowing back to an Australian company. With every book I have made – each taking at least 2 years to create – I have likewise relied on Penguin to support me with funds that they have been able to offset by on-selling international rights. If they did not have those rights they could not have supported me. The books would not have happened – or I would have had to create them in a fraction of the time, with a resultant reduction in quality.

Whilst I am now in a position where I could deal directly with overseas publishers, cutting out the local company who has supported me for so long, surely this is not in Australia's interests? I do not know how emerging authors would manage without local companies to support them in the crucial early years. I can only suppose they would be forced to go offshore, if they could afford to, to find someone able to give them the start they need to forge a career. The Australian publishing landscape will become a droughtscape.

I implore you to reconsider making changes to the copyright laws that will pull the rug from under our local publishers. The immediate and long-term effects will be to strip authors of income, drastically curtail opportunity for emerging authors, and release a flood of overseas titles – both foreign-edited versions of Australian titles and overseas-originated titles filling the void created as local publishers fail - onto shelves that previously proudly displayed Australian books by Australian authors.

Sincerely,

Graeme Base