

Books, in particular children's books, are very important to me.

In my spare time I am part of a volunteer reading program that reads to children who have, through no fault of their own, suffered disruption to their education and home life, often leading to poor literacy skills: literacy skills that are one of the most important markers of their future life success.

When kids like these are struggling with reading, it is my belief that Australian books, with Australian content, Australian language and Australian spelling are vital for fostering a love of reading as well as improving literacy skills.

Kids are most interested in reading about other kids like them. They don't need to be confused by Americanised spelling of words or the introduction of Americanised words, such as 'faucet' and 'diaper' into their written language.

I am concerned that removing Parallel Import Restrictions will force Australian publishers to focus on a more global market, and this will reduce the number of books that speak authentically to young Australian readers. I am also concerned that if the books produced in our country are not relevant to how they live, Australian kids will be less likely to want to read them.

To me, the real issue here is about quality.

Quality books are important for children learning, and struggling to learn, to read: quality books by Australian authors, not quantities of 'cheap' imported books (not that I've read any real evidence that removing restrictions on the parallel importation of books will lead to more affordable books for consumers).

We do not need to introduce any more hurdles in the path towards increasing and improving children's literacy. I choose to put quality first and reject any changes to the current laws on Parallel Import Restrictions.

Maree Kimberley