

RE: Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books -  
Productivity Commission Discussion Draft

Dear Mr Woods and Ms Sylvan,

As an author published and a primary school teacher, I believe the 12-month protection suggested in the Productivity Commission Discussion Draft is unsatisfactory. It will have a devastating effect on the Australian publishing industry and on our Australian culture. Others have discussed the impact on the industry and upon authors, I want to concentrate on the impact on our children.

Our world is continually shrinking thanks to advances in technology, and with that comes the real possibility that our unique Australian voice and culture will be swallowed, turning us into a generic society.

Already, the Australian Film industry is struggling and the amount of Australian drama produced for TV is diminishing. The only place left to tell our unique Australian stories is in literature, and this is especially the case for our children and teenagers.

Where else are they to experience stories that reflect our unique culture, identity and experiences?

Where else are city children going to learn about life in a small rural town?

Where else are country kids going to discover what it's like to be a student at a school which has a population bigger than the town where they live?

Where else do our children learn about Australian history and how it impacts on them today?

Where else, apart from radio's Hamish and Andy, do they experience our unique Australian humour?

Where else indeed!

Richard Franklands' Digger J. Jones, Julia Lawrenson's The Push, Andy Griffith's Just series – all different, all unique, all Australian, and all vital to our cultural landscape.

Australian publishers, particularly independent publishers, which I am proud to be published by, produce quality Australian books that allow our children to learn about and understand our culture, our people and our uniqueness in the world. Surely that is to be valued and protected.

On one hand our Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, talks about the importance of our culture and about reflecting our culture and history in our classrooms. Yet on the other, his government is exploring the possibility of killing that culture by lifting parallel importation of books.

I implore you to protect our unique and wonderful culture and our children by maintaining the present parallel import restrictions. Allow Australian publishers to continue to nurture Australian writers and to produce high-quality Australian books that reflect our unique Australian way of life. Allow our children to see themselves, hear their voice and discover their place in the world through Australian literature.

Sue Lawson

Author and Teacher. March 23, 2009