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Parallel Importation of Books  
Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
Canberra City ACT 2601

To the Productivity Commissioners,

I am writing to express my concern at the proposal to remove – to any degree - the Parallel Importation Restrictions on books. I am an independent education consultant, and I am particularly concerned at the impact such a proposal would have on young readers.

I believe this will force Australian publishers to focus on worldwide markets, and to reduce the number of books that speak authentically to young Australian readers. It will drown our authors under the flood of cheap imports, and thereby reduce the proportion of Australian books in homes, schools and libraries. It will reduce the incomes of Australian authors, forcing many to stop writing and thereby reducing the pool of quality Australian literature.

It is important for children to see the language and idioms of their country reflected back at them in what they read. In order for them to develop a sense of national identity, they need to work with texts that reflect the history and culture of Australia. In order for them to develop as citizens, they must read about the issues that this country is facing. In order for them to engage with literacy, they must have access to books that are directly relevant to them.

Of course we want our children and our students to value other cultures. However, to paraphrase David Williamson's play *Emerald City*, without Australian films and theatre and books we would come to believe that everything that matters happens elsewhere, and in accents other than our own.

I would also hope that Australian children could aspire to be authors, editors or publishers, if this is what they choose to do. Allowing Parallel Importation of books into Australia will reduce the number of opportunities available to them in this country and the financial rewards they would receive for their work.

Australia is one of the greatest book-buying nations, per capita, in the world. The current price structure is clearly not acting as a deterrent. Why would we give away so much that matters in return for so little benefit?

Regards,

***Dr Deb Hull***