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Parallel Importation of Books Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
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Dear Commissioners,

**Re: Proposed lifting of Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Commission again. I'm a children's author and I have three areas of concern to address:

1. **Lifting PIRs because it *might* give Australian consumers cheaper books.**
  - The Commission has had much evidence showing this is *not* guaranteed ... e.g. a submission from the New Zealand Society of Authors. One would also have to ask – if allowing Parallel Importations of Books was so wonderful, why do the US and the UK prohibit it? Because it risks their publishing industries, perhaps?
2. **The Cultural Impact of lifting PIRs.**
  - Much has already been said about this aspect, as I did in my first submission, but I want to add a telling example. In all my recent conversations with parents, grandparents, teachers and librarians about this issue the thing that horrified and alarmed them, universally, was the possible threat to Australian books from Americanised (or Americanized) spelling and the replacement of Australian voices with American.
  - I provided the example from Michael Gerard Bauer's book, *Don't call me Ishmael*. When Scholastic resold it in the US much of the content was changed... e.g. an Australian football game became grid-iron; a family's holiday in New Zealand became a holiday in Hawaii; Jelly became Jell-O; and yawp ... what the heck is a yawp? Imagine a future where books, like Bauer's with its very Australian humour had been published in the US first and then sold here?
3. **The PI risk to our healthy Australian publishing industry.**
  - Letting Parallel Imports go ahead, **even after 12 months as the Commission proposes** would threaten the livelihood of Australian authors. A miniscule amount of publicity is spent by publishers on new authors' books now. It's

not unusual for word of mouth, or winning a Children's Book Council Award to thrust a book into best-selling mode – e.g. Michael Gerard Bauer's *The Running Man*. All too often those high sales figures shift into the second year of a book's publication, just when PIs would be freely permitted. Authors get 10% of a book's RRP (if they're lucky) – they risk losing all royalties if it's open slather under the so-called 'free trade' of PIs. Australian authors don't generally earn any income from remaindered books which would flood the market if PIRs are removed or reduced.

- In this scenario, if Australian publishing houses hadn't become warehouses for their Head Offices overseas, they would not risk time and money on non-established writers. Developing writers and those new emerging voices would be forced out in an already competitive field. How is that giving the Australian book consumer choice?

I'm a passionate reader as well as a writer; I buy books from independent booksellers now, and stay away from the large booksellers who push for lifting the restrictions because they often sell books above the Recommended Retail Price and they don't provide the assortment of Australian literature that I am looking for.

If a book is not one I wish to keep on my 'top shelf' I borrow it from a public library (noting that authors/illustrators receive a share of this source too in PLR/ELR). I believe many Australians do this too – when a book is carefully chosen and valued, we don't mind paying a few dollars more for it.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to this important debate.

Yours sincerely

*Sheryl Gwyther*