

Re the discussion draft on trade book sales -

I'm amazed by the proposals in the discussion draft on trade book sales, which recommends PIRs only for the first 12 months of a title's life, on the grounds that the majority of a book's sales occur during that period. Just how completely can people miss the point?

Consider: the books that sell most in the first 12 months are the many books whose sales drop off, either because the book doesn't have what it takes or because initial sales depended upon some instant publicity factor. On the other hand, the books that continue to increase their sales over a longer period are books whose appeal takes time to spread by word of mouth. The books with slow but steadily building sales are precisely the books that matter long-term. These are our Australian classics of the future!

I don't understand the thinking behind the discussion draft at all. If one ultimate goal is to encourage a healthy and vibrant Australian literary culture, why focus on books that make short-term sales in preference to books that make long-term sales? Think of our existing Australian classics - count them through. How many sold in large quantities in the first twelve months? but how many have continued to sell in gradually increasing numbers over many many years?

Import restrictions should be maintained permanently. Every other country makes an effort to preserve its own literary culture - why should we alone treat books on a par with bananas or clock radios or digital cameras?

Regards  
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