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## **Productivity Commission Submission**

Relaxing the parallel import restrictions for Australian books would be a big mistake. One that would lead to sad consequences.

I leave precise financial figures and other aspects of the repercussions to others. I'd like to suggest that losing our Australian writers would be to the detriment of *all* Australians.

We need *Australian* writers to remind us of who we are, who we used to be and who we can become. A healthy nation has a healthy arts industry. Ideas, written down for broader communication within our community, can lead to changing of entrenched notions and prejudices, enrichment of readers' imaginations and aspirations.

Australian writers have a respected position in the world literature scene. They win awards and admiration from readers in many countries. This reflects well on the whole country.

But it is not easy remaining a professional writer in Australia. Even with our reading enthusiasm, we have a relatively small population and buying audience. If this was eroded further by cheap parallel imports many fine writers could no longer continue. What a loss this would be for the hearts, consciences and imaginations of Australians of all ages. Writers need to eat, pay their rent and mortgages and put their children through school. Further erosion of royalty incomes would definitely put many writers in the 'endangered species' category.

It seems to me that some booksellers want more than their 'piece of the pie'. They want everyone else's piece. It would be highly unfair to allow those booksellers to undercut the value of Australian authors' books. Surely there can be some reasonableness about giving authors their fair due. Changing the parallel import laws to disadvantage Australian authors, I believe, would eventually damage all of us in various ways. Let's value our authors, publishers and their books by being fair in spirit *and* law.

Otherwise, it could be 'Save the Panda', 'Save the rain forests', 'Save Australian writers'.