

To the Productivity Commission:

Copyright Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books

As an educational author and educator I oppose the removing of territorial copyright restrictions and lifting of parallel imports. I believe this reform would be detrimental to Australian authors, publishers and readers, especially children. Australian publishing opportunities would shrink. Author royalties would diminish. Australian content would be lessened. Australia's book sector is important and viable. Many reasons have been given in submissions to the Productivity Commission.

I write books and material for Australian schools on Australian subjects and believe young children have the right to read and learn about this country in our voice, with our values and idioms preserved by copyright. These stories connect with our culture. It is unlikely Australian educational publishers would foster new talent or remain viable under the changes. Overseas publishers would be unlikely to publish this historical information with an Australian flavour; it doesn't have broad appeal. They have little interest in Australian authors. Unknown Australian writers with fresh voices would rarely get a look-in, we are a small market and not viable to them price-wise. Author incomes would be greatly reduced in Australia.

Prime Minister Rudd wants more Australian history to be taught in schools. UK published textbooks do not reflect our society and culture. (Recently a UK editor asked me what a lap-lap was). USA translations with obscure Australian images and spellings (color not colour) do not fit with Australian curriculum. These countries UK and USA have not lifted copyright restrictions on their books. Why should we? Local copyright protects local industries and jobs.

Fewer Australian books = fewer Australian authors = fewer Australian publishers. Economic flow-on effects mean loss of jobs for illustrators, designers, distributors and printers, such as my son. What is the sense? Small savings?

Australian authors and publishers have achieved a place and a purpose. We are proud of our fledgling industry. Australia is a nation of readers but a reduction in price and a flood of cut-price foreign literature does not mean a better choice for Australians, especially young minds. Nor is it a proven economic advantage. I believe Australia copyright restrictions should remain and not for just 12 months. Australia should invest in Australians.

Yours sincerely
Kay Crabbe
15 April 2009