

PARALLEL IMPORTATION OF BOOKS – SUBMISSION

To the Commissioners:

On the 11th of May I will have lived in this country for 18 years.

I had the dubious fortune to fall in love with an Aussie in Japan 20 years ago and as he could not live in rainy old Glasgow, his marriage proposal came with the condition that we would live in Australia.

Three weeks after my wedding in 1991- at the age of 25- I arrived in Sydney for the first time.

As a high school teacher I secured a job pretty quickly and enjoyed everything this country had to offer.

I even felt more connected to the country when I bought a puppy in 1992. I called him Merlin.

Then the stakes got higher. My husband was retrenched in 1996. I had a son in 1997 and three months later my father died in Scotland suddenly, at 54, of heart attack. So there I was again— torn between a new homeland and everything familiar calling me back to the UK.

After a four-month break back in Scotland I returned to a place I was beginning now to think of as home.

I continued to teach Aussie kids and pay my taxes and be the best permanent resident I could be.

Then I started to write and continued to do so whilst working full-time.

(BTW, I'll pay your psychic income observation by all means but make sure I can legally call on it when I go to my GP with psychic stress, depression, frustration and RSI. Oh and I need to make a claim too for any traffic offenses I commit when I've been up all night indulging in the psychic benefits of my second job. And if I slap a teenager at work who tells me to get f'd, I'll pay the legal bills with my psychic income).

To my amazement I was published and continue to be so.

The generosity, warmth, professional challenge and enthusiasm of the writing community in this country – particularly amongst writers for children - have made me feel that I need to take that final step and become a citizen. Oz and its people have nurtured my dream to be a writer.

Fully intend to take my oath to Australia at some point in 2009 but am so disappointed that in choosing to do so I will be condoning a country whose 'powers

that be' may be too short sighted to protect what my UK homeland already does ... and of course those cluey Americans do too.

My son was lucky enough to place a ceremonial wreath at the Menin Gate at Ypres in Belgium last year on behalf of all the Aussies who died there.

I can't wait for Anzac day this year because after all the ceremony, my friends are coming here for the weekend and we're off to play two-up at the local RSL and catch up with our news, enjoy the space to be together and offer secret thanks to our forefathers and to a country that has given us the opportunity to do so.

No one walks the tightrope between sincere patriotism, clichéd media driven showmanship and scary fanaticism quite like you Aussies.

Your Anzacs fought their balls off against all odds and gave you a legacy.

Your Australian writers pay unsung tribute to that legacy with every single deliberate word.

Like the Anzacs, they may be small fish in a big pond but with a barrier reef to look out for, you Aussie officials in government know what you need to do. It's inherent, is it not?

Protect, protect, protect your beautiful, awesome, unquantifiable 'fish' and everything they draw on to exist.

Stand tall on Anzac day this month, knowing you've supported the voice of this country in your own way.

Regards

Mo Johnson.

PS: I had my hand on Merlin's head three weeks ago when he had to give in at 17. I swear he winked at me before he let go. (He was a Border Collie. They are disturbingly smart).

Commissioners can work magic too.