

To the Productivity Commission,

Regarding the review into the Copyright Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books:

I urge the Government to reject the proposal to import cheap overseas editions of Australian books from 12 months after their publication in Australia, including overseas remainders. This practice would seriously disadvantage Australian writers, particularly those who are struggling to establish themselves as successful authors that can eventually self-fund themselves from the royalties they receive on their books. I am also concerned that Australian books, published overseas may have alterations made to the original better suited to the overseas audience but with the resulting rendering of the story as less relevant to Australian audiences and possibly even dumbed-down.

I take offence at the suggestion that Australians would appreciate 'cheap imported books' – not so when the real cost lies in the reduction and even elimination of the genuine Australian voice speaking through Australian authors and the elimination of jobs in the Australian publishing and book selling industries. The loss of these jobs and the loss of the Australian voice makes these 'cheap' imports very expensive indeed. We have ample evidence of this situation already in the manufacturing industries – the textile sector in particular.

Please do not opt for the proposal that recommends allowing the importation of overseas editions of Australian books from 12 months after their publication in Australia. We do not want such a short-sighted and insulting option to be adopted. Australians are desperately in need of the Australian voice and this proposal would effectively silence it. The Television media is an example of where this has virtually happened – only cheap Australian drama is produced, with the effect that it is mundane, repetitive drivel in many cases (with the exception of some of the special documentary and current affairs programs on the ABC). Australian television broadcasting is swamped by American programs (of varying quality) because the Australian government, commercial interests and the Australian people have not stood up for engendering Australian talent and supporting it. This is not what we want in our books; our authors, poets and playwrights should be encouraged and supported not threatened by such proposals as those already mentioned.

I trust the Productivity Commission will consider the points I have raised.

I look forward to the outcome of the inquiry and hope it is in the favour of supporting Australian authorial creativity and financial security.

Yours sincerely,

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