

Dear sir/madam,

I am writing to express my dismay at the suggestion that territorial copyright should lapse for all Australian books twelve months after publication. As a writer living in and being published in Australia, I have recently finished an edit on my novel with my US publisher which saw the removal of many 'Australianisms' and local references, as well as a shift in the style of the novel to suit a US market. I feel that there is a danger that if overseas editions can undersell Australian editions there will be a tendency for readers to buy Americanised versions of locally produced fiction and will contribute to the 'Americanisation' of Australian culture.

As a newly published author I know how difficult it is to enter the industry and applaud independent publishing houses who take risks with emerging local authors in order to maintain the depth and integrity of the industry. However, such small local publishing houses would be very much undermined by the introduction of parallel imports. It horrifies me to think that an industry that has already been very much overrun by marketing forces, such that the emphasis is primarily on the profitability rather than the value of a particular work, especially in the area of fiction, should now be subjected even further to the dictates of the dollar, and those companies that put quality before price will suffer the most.

As writers, we constantly struggle to finance the continuation of our careers, and any move to undercut an already difficult way of life I find appalling, and an example of cultural immaturity. This is an attack not only on local artists but on the independence of the Australian voice, a complete negation of the value of diversity.

Lia Hills
poet/novelist/translator