

Friday, 17th April 2009

Re: Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books

My name is Jessica Owen and I work as an Editorial Assistant employed by Walker Books Australia. I have been working for Walker Books for 2 years and 7 months, firstly as a Product Assistant and most recently as part of our editorial team.

I am writing this submission as an objection to the interim report on copyright restrictions and parallel imports recently released by the Productivity Commission. The proposed changes to parallel imports for books will have a direct negative impact on me, my fellow employees at Walker Books, our authors and illustrators and ultimately the publishing industry as a whole.

If import restrictions end one year after publication I can only imagine the detrimental impact this will have to the Australian publishing industry. As I have worked beside our mother and sister companies, Walker Books UK and Candlewick Press USA, I am well aware of their smaller costs for producing a title compared to us as an Australian publisher. This understandably means a lower price for the customer for the end product however it does not necessarily mean a better product. In fact, I hold the quality of our Australian titles in the highest esteem. I do not consider a lower price for customers an equal substitute for quality.

Most of our Australian titles are hugely influenced by Australian culture and when these titles are published by foreign publishers they have the right to amend the product to suit their market, which means if these editions are imported to Australia and sold the reader will miss out on the Australian content and culture that they deserve.

As a consumer who frequently purchases books I believe the proposed changes will also decrease the variety and choice of titles, especially books by Australians. I am an avid support of Australian literature and would hate for my consumer needs not to be met by the book market.

I am quite new to the Australian publishing industry but I plan to be part of it for years to come. The decisions that you make will have a direct impact on my future in this industry.

I appreciate you considering this and the many other objections I know you have received from authors, illustrators, publishers and printers.

Regards,
Jessica Owen
Editorial Assistant
Walker Books Australia