

To the Productivity Commission:

I write this submission from London where I am attending the London Book Fair, with the assistance of the Australia Council for the Arts, to sell the license to publish my authors' books to publishers in English in the UK, the US, and in translation in as many country's as possible from Greece to Portugal to Spain to China and every nation in between.

The integrity of territorial copyright is completely fundamental to how international publishing – an industry in which Australia is now a vigorous and competitive participant, a real 'player' – operates. And we – i.e. the Australian publishing industry, operate now at a high level indeed.

The international publishers with whom I've met this week, to a man (and woman) have shuddered when apprised of the possibility of parallel importation, for they full realize its implication: the total undermining of the Australian publishing industry. And the shudder doesn't dissipate when they are informed of the twelve-month extension compromise recommendation. As one remarked to me yesterday, "What a stupid idea."

In my previous first-round submission I explained in detail how parallel importation will seriously undermine author income, and author choice of with whom to publish and where. I won't rehearse that here again.

The commission may think the twelve-month notion is a way to wiggle out of proceeding down a route that was on a hiding to nowhere. "Give 'em twelve months and then review it in a few years. That will throw a piece of fresh meat to the big chains and the wolves howling in the populist press and keep the publishing whiners and their greedy authors quiet for a while."

Well – it just doesn't wash. And if the Commission's latest recommendation is accepted by the government, both the Commission and the government will have the metaphorical blood of a major Australian creative industry on its hands.

Don't let that happen.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Cunnane

17 April 2009 (6:50 am London time)