

To whom it may concern,

As a worker in the music recording business for nearly 30 years, one of the most significant changes to the Australian music industry occurred in 1998 when the parallel importing and copyright laws changed. We saw a fall of about 10 - 20% of the price of a CD. Sadly, people don't buy more CD's because they are cheaper - unlike coal or oil. Consumers buy music because it's good, and because they like the songs and the artist. These things can take considerable time and investment to develop.

In less than 5 years after the changes, we saw the number of major recording labels shrink from 10 to 3, and the number of people employed directly and indirectly fall dramatically. Investment in our local music industry has fallen proportionately.

The once thriving local music industry is now a cottage industry with little support from the remaining major labels or the government. The internet and free downloading of music's has also contributed to this fall.

The 1998 changes made it harder for composers and music labels to make a living, or profit from the small market we represent. Successful musicians now make more money playing live concerts than selling their CD's.

Technology is also making books and their associated copyright vulnerable in the same way the internet has impacted on music sales. The parallels with the current book publishing industry and the former music industry are remarkably similar.

Please consider the changes you are proposing to the book publishing industry carefully, and learn from the past mistakes.

I fear that if these changes are made, there may be little or no more industry left for the next generation of wonderful Australian authors to make a living.

Don't sacrifice the careers of our wonderful Australian authors and culture in the interests of making books a few dollars cheaper. Unlike musicians, stand up poetry or book readings by authors has limited appeal.

yours sincerely,

David Hemming
Music producer and engineer.

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