

Submission to Productivity Commission from Robert Mulas, Cosmic Enterprises

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My background

I began my career as a high school teacher in 1977. Over the next 37 years of my career I was successful at achieving the positions of Head Teacher Social Sciences, Deputy Principal and finally Principal in the NSW Department of Education.

I was trained as a Social Sciences teacher, so Geography and Economics were my main teaching subjects. During the late 1990's the subjects Business Studies, Work Studies and Work Skills were added to the Social Sciences curriculum. It is these subjects that supported my professional development to become an author, presenter and publisher.

Working with publishing companies

In 1995, with three other colleagues, two Social Sciences Head Teachers and a university Associate Professor – we wrote a three-unit Business Studies textbook for the Business Studies course. This was an important professional development exercise for me as it led to work with the full range of personnel in the publishing industry – in this case Heinemann publishing company. This book was a four-chapter book and I wrote one chapter on Human Resource Management.

In 1998, the NSW Board of Studies began the process of reviewing and writing new Syllabus documents that were to be used in NSW schools. With three other colleagues, a Social Sciences teacher, a Social Sciences Head Teacher and a Sydney University Associate Professor – we began writing two textbooks for the Business Studies course. This was again for Heinemann publishers. This was an important growth as it introduced the concept of electronic support of a data CD to accompany the textbooks. This has now transitioned into internet support of education-based resources. The CD support provided teaching programs, teacher development and extension classroom resources.

These textbooks attracted attention and, with one of my colleagues, we spent the years between 2000 and 2012 writing professional papers for a number of education support organisations and lecturing to NSW Higher School Certificate students and to teachers of Business Studies.

The success of this textbook series led to my work in writing for Pearson's publishers in the Commerce subject area. Again, a team of three colleagues writing two textbooks for the NSW years 9 and 10 course in Commerce. This also led to lecturing to teachers to explain the way they could use the resources we had developed in the classroom.

Developing my own business in publishing

Working with these large publishers on the various textbooks and resources provided me with the experience of working within the publishing environment, so with editors, developing artwork, electronic support resources, script readers, and then the printing and marketing of educational resources. Lecturing to teachers was an important part of my professional development. The lecturing to HSC students was a particularly important part

of my personal and professional development as it provided the opportunity to be seen as a subject specialist.

As a result of the success of these ventures with large publishers, I branched out with two colleagues and formed a writing team linked to an organisation called Biriwa Education Services. We wrote, developed, printed, marketed and distributed a number of targeted resources to support the work of teachers of Business Studies. This also included the development of electronic resources which had become part of the teacher's toolkit. 'Black line masters' for photocopying were also an important part of this resource offering.

When the Work Studies and Work Education syllabuses were redeveloped, I saw an opportunity to develop teacher support materials for classroom use. With my wife as a co-writer we formed a publishing enterprise called Cosmic Enterprises. We have written materials for the subject Work Education which is aimed at the NSW year 9 and 10 student cohort. We have supported this with smaller booklets and electronic CD resources. This venture also led to lectures to teachers to enhance their professional knowledge of the subject and its presentation to students. As the publishers of these resources we take control of all the aspects of the textbooks and electronic resources – from writing through to printing and distribution.

As well, in 2005, Cosmic Enterprises went on to coordinating the development and publishing of resources in the NSW year 9 and 10 Visual Arts subject. This involved the recruiting of two authors and all the other aspects of producing two textbooks and CD resources for distribution across NSW.

Although small in turnover, these ventures have provided huge opportunities for professional engagement and growth. We have been financially successful.

How I have used revenue from secondary copying of my work

As an author and publisher I have been able to supplement my income. As a result of my involvement in the production of these resources I have also received money from the Copyright Agency (CAL) as a result of photocopying of the original resources. Over the years of my writing and publishing this has amounted to a significant contribution to my income. Teachers and the education industry are notorious for photocopying resources for handing out to students in classes. I know of cases where my smaller booklets have been totally photocopied by the school for classroom distribution to students rather than the purchase of a full book by that school.

Copyright Agency (CAL) money has allowed me to resource my writing and publishing activities to a greater extent. The purchasing of computer hardware (PCs, laptops, printers, scanner, cameras, etc) has allowed me to continue to produce textbook and electronic resources for sale. The purchase of items such as DVD/CD burners has allowed me as a distributor to produce electronic resources at home. I have been able use the money to purchase a wide range of other resources needed in a professional office as well as purchase subscriptions that enhance research. As well, I have been able to travel and attend conferences that add to my professional knowledge that is then added to publications. CAL money increases my flexibility to continue to develop a wide range of resources.

I have recently retired and with my wife, am looking to continue to work in writing and publishing as there is a need to produce resources for classroom use as syllabuses are redeveloped.

Robert Mulas
Retired Principal