

Addressing written fiction novels only.

Copyright for Australian works of fiction should remain protected.

Works of fiction uphold Australian culture and reflect the times. Our culture is extremely valuable; we don't carry a gun to the supermarket, we have a sense of fair go, we look after the old and unfortunate. And our politicians battle with words and wit, not assassination. Australian culture does not have these atrocious characteristics.

The Setting

Australian culture is what guides and forms our collective decisions. The years ahead will be extremely challenging because of one or all of three interrelated elements; huge Climate Change impacting world food supply, political / social unrest with resultant wars and ever more mass refugees, and finally a financial system that has passed its use-by-date and will likely fail.

Australian works of fiction? Australian authors uniquely dream in depth from the Australian perspective about the world, how it functions and should function. They reflect starkly what we do, why we do it, and where we might go in the future. PLEASE DO NOT IMPERIL THIS WORK. Australians will need to think deeply about the future then make major decisions which will fundamentally dictate the quality of our future.

Australia lost out to US culture when we unknowingly drowned in a flood of American films and culture since the 50s. It could have been otherwise but the decision makers of the time didn't stop it and we have absorbed U.S. culture with all its negative elements ever since. It is politically incorrect to say that the U.S is in terminal decay but we all know it. We must develop our culture to reflect the multi coloured Australian culture and not be led by other countries and their cultures.

The Intellectual Property Arrangements Report.

The Australian reader is now paying less for a novel. You believe paying 10% less is possible. But consumer interests are already well catered for. Prices consumers pay for books have fallen under the current system and do not need to fall more because price is not the stopper for book sales, topmost is the limited number of hours in the day to read. Lower prices will not cause more books to be read, will not cause more trade. But if Australian authors are replaced by foreign authors, Australian book numbers will decline and I argue our culture hence our future welfare and happiness will suffer. The old adage, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.' would seem to apply.

Where is the logic in your report's statement?

“By lowering the upfront costs incurred in creating works, the returns required to recoup those costs is also lower and, therefore, commensurately the required strength of copyright protection.”

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Why “therefore”? There is no clear cause and effect as you take for granted. One could legitimately argue, stronger protection will encourage more authors at the expense of foreign authors and the few major authors. It might well increase the number of diverse books and therefore grow the Australian book industry because of its attractiveness. The upfront cost is appropriate and not a cause for concern.

Your statement is false:

“By raising book prices, PIRs adversely affect Australian consumers with **little or no change** in the incentives for producing works by authors (notwithstanding claims to the contrary).”

Creative fiction works is a difficult, time consuming activity. It should receive adequate compensation but we should not rely on direct government compensation because of its inefficiency. Most writers cannot support themselves on their work. Your well-meant but dangerous meddling with their book IP will reduce Australian writers.

In summary.

The Australian culture is extremely valuable, particularly in the context of the difficult years ahead. The authors of novels protect and enhance this culture.

The price of books is reasonable and falling. There is no benefit in decreasing the cost to the consumer.

Any decrease in protection will be an economic loss of opportunity for Australia.

The Intellectual Property Arrangements Report should take this opportunity to enhance and strengthen the industry and its authors.

Michael Dwyer

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