

To the members of the Australian Productivity Commission...

Dear Madams/Sirs

Re: Changes to Intellectual Property Arrangements

I'm a children's author who believes in the significance of Australian books for Australian children. We have a small industry here anyway, and yes, authors find it difficult to earn enough from book sales and copyright. Many have to supplement their income by other means. This does not mean the investment authors make in their time, labour and lifestyle change to write books is of lower importance, or assume (as some uninformed people believe because most authors do not earn huge incomes) that being an author is a hobby. It is *not* a hobby, it is a career.

In both UK and USA the copyright terms are for the duration of the author's life + a number of years. Why would the Productivity Commission work to destroy the livelihood of authors here in Australia when you are supposed to be the Australian *Productivity Commission*?

For the Productivity Commission (one must be suspicious this direction comes directly from the government even though they deny it) to reduce Territorial Copyright from 75 years to 15-25 years, it is a senseless move. You are not recognising the long-term impact on the publishing industry as well as on the livelihood of many thousands of Australian authors.

Territorial Copyright is authors' investment in our future. It's our way supporting ourselves – many of us want to pay our own way in life.

We now see Government literature and arts grants being deliberately screwed by economic-rationalist politicians who do not recognize the value of our unique cultural literary input to the Australian community and society. More shame on the government.

If someone buys an investment property here, the government doesn't take it off them after 15 years because they think they've had enough income from it. Your proposed changes to the laws will force many authors out of business.

The Productivity Commission makes its recommendations based on its claims that most works have a commercial life of less than 5 years. This is not true – my own Australian children's novel set on an outback dinosaur fossil dig was in print and sold to libraries and schools across the country for 10 years. The reason was partly because it was a unique story of Australian exploration of our paleo-past.

John Marsden's *Tomorrow When the War Began* was written well over 15 years ago. It is an example of never going out of print. Why would you want to destroy this national iconic author's ability to be paid for his creative work by taking away his right to claim copyright for his books and the electronic uses of his story? I shake my head in disbelief.

There is another issue that appears to be linked to the copyright one – *like the elephant in the room...* that of conservative governments' desire to lift the Restrictions on Parallel Importation of Books. It is clearly there in your Issues Paper written by ex-Treasurer, Joe Hockey ...

'the findings and recommendations of the Harper Competition Policy Review in the context of the Australian Government's response, including recommendations related to parallel import restrictions in the *Copyright Act 1968* and the parallel importation defence under the *Trade Marks Act 1995*.

Lifting the Parallel Importation Restrictions will harm the Australian publishing industry as well as demote and change literature in this country – especially in children's books.

We fought this battle in 2009 because we believe Australian children deserve to read Australian-authored books without American spelling, references, lack of subtleness and all the other ways these imported Australian written-American republished titles are changed. They would enter the reading chain in this country, in direct competition to the authentic versions if you lift the Restrictions. This would be a huge loss to our culture and to Australian children – and that disaster would be under your watch.

In the hope of protecting my copyright, the rights of other authors, and literature in our country, I urge you not to make the overall changes to copyright laws you are proposing. At the very least, I believe that the arts should be separated from patents and looked at in terms of the unique field that they are.

Yours faithfully

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