



LateralEconomics

Saturday, 28 May 2016

To whom it may concern,

Attached is a document drafted some years ago, which I nevertheless hope will be of some interest and use to the Commission in its current labours to more fully inform debate about IP in Australia. The immediate context in which it was written meant that it addressed providers of the digital infrastructure for the internet. But the principles to which it appeals are far more general.

There appear few countervailing forces to IP mercantilism and yet it should be possible to make headway by more vigorously and self-consciously promoting the interests of all those who stand to benefit, whether they realise it or not, from resisting it. Using transparency as a weapon against the siren song of mercantilism – which as Adam Smith observed works by misleading the public into believing that their own interests coincide with the sectoral interests of a powerful minority – is part of the founding myth of the Commission.

In that spirit I am hoping that the Commission might help Australia vigorously identify its own strategic interests in resisting the more outrageous demands of the IP mercantilists, and build institutions more capable of promoting greater understanding of the issues amongst Australia's policy and opinion makers. Further, in the spirit of its success with the Cairns group of agricultural exporters, Australia should lead the formation of a group of countries who identify their interests not with mercantilism but with policies designed to optimise national economic interests, most particularly where those policies also promote the global economic interest.

I'd be happy to appear before the Commission on this subject should it wish.

Regards,

Nicholas Gruen