

3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2016

RE: Productivity Commission's proposed changes to parallel importation restrictions

Dear Sir/Madam

I am an Australian author whose first novel will be published by Text Publishing in June, 2016. I have two more books to be published by the same publishers between now and 2018.

My concerns relating to the recommendations of the Productivity are as follows:

That removing PIRs will allow mass importation of low-royalty and/or royalty-free editions of Australian authors' books into the Australian marketplace. This might make some books cheaper at the bookstore, but would be at the expense of Australian writers and Australian publishers.

Removing PIRs would make local publishers reluctant to sell foreign rights to Australian authors' works, which means writers like myself would miss significant opportunities to have our work sold and read overseas.

Removing PIR's would reduce local publishers' ability to distribute local editions of international bestsellers which would give them less money to invest in Australian authors. Australian authors already earn less than \$13,000 per year on average. If PIRs are removed, we would lose advances, royalties, income from overseas rights sales, and the support of a healthy local publishing industry.

The Australian book business is a national and international industry. The current territorial copyright regime ensures that Australian writers are read both here and overseas with the support of innovative and commercially minded publishers willing to take risks and invest in building a community of readers for these authors.

I fear the consequences will be job losses, public revenue loss as profits are transferred overseas, and a significant reduction in the range of Australian books publishers will be able to publish. Australia will become a dumping ground for American and English books.

The book industry is not a protected industry. We are not asking for subsidies such as exist in other sectors of Australian business – the mining industry as an example. We are not asking for handouts, we simply want to protect a thriving and diverse part of Australia's culture. In order to do this we need the same rules and intellectual property rights that prevail for writers and book publishing in the USA, in Britain, in Europe.

In short my principal concerns relating to the proposed changes are:

- Fewer Australian authors and fewer Australian books published;

- Less diversity of books available to Australian readers;
- Jobs lost in Australian publishing, bookselling and printing;
- Lower royalties and lower advances for Australian authors;
- Less promotion of Australian authors and trade in their rights internationally; and
- Further reductions in the independent bookselling sector.

I urge the Productivity Commission to allow Australian writers, publishers and book sellers to continue to thrive and contribute to Australia's productivity and culture through the maintenance of the current regime of parallel importation restrictions.

Yours sincerely

MARK SMITH