

Let's protect our reputation as pillagers and thieves

It's a reputation we've spent 200 years trying to cast off. However, if the suggested IP legislation is passed, the world will rightfully see Australia as the bastion of charlatans, raping the creators and celebrating the frauds.

In 2015, the Fortune 500 CEOs listed their top want as 'creativity'. Yet Australian lawmakers are set on a path to stamp it out.

The shortsightedness of the proposed changes spits in the face of the world trend to recognise, foster and protect design. The UK have recently tightened their IP laws. Copyright now lasts the artist's lifetime, plus a further 70 years. What's more, transgressors will be landed with crippling fines and long gaol terms.

If Australia was a factory to the world, like China, this move would make at least a modicum of sense: 'Rip off the innovators, keep our factories running.'

But our factories are already non-existent. We have nothing to make - largely because we showroom our own designers' ideas, then reward merchants like K-mart and Country Road with a purchase. We are fostering the proud Aussie passion for a cheap knock off.

If you believe, as I do, that design is the highest function of the human brain, those who dare to defy the odds and start their own consultancy should be celebrated. Under the proposed policy, they will be sentenced to fail before they even start.

It's no wonder some of our brightest talent now works overseas. When was the last time you saw Marc Newson? Why does Adam Godrum now design for Alessi in Italy? Your totally reckless approach to IP will see this brain drain not merely continue, but snowball.

It will take great policy makers to get a perspective on this crime, but it is possible.

The music industry got it right. Artist, writers and performers live, thrive and survive on their royalties. By contrast, the design industry delivers 1000s of graduates each year to work as barristas, wait staff or to Centrelink. Exacerbating the problem, the demise of the local car industry strangled all but a handful of design jobs in Australia.

Please re-think this criminal legislation before it's too late. Remember, everything is designed. The only way for us to compete on a world scene is to design better.

Come on Australia, change from a knock-off nation and embrace the real Aussie spirit of: **Fair Go.**

BERND WINTER

Founder



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