

This is my response to the Issues Paper on IP.

As an Australian author with over 70 books published, I am dismayed at the Commission's lack of understanding of the situation of a working writer such as myself. I have seen my income from my books much reduced in the past 5 years and this is not as a result of copyright laws. To the contrary. It's the result of a changing market and an attitude that writers should make their work available for free, which is an insidious idea that even politicians seem to subscribe to without any knowledge of how writers work and how we make a living (or not – usually not).

Two key sentences I particularly take issue with:

'An efficient system ensures IP is generated at lowest cost to society.'

Why should making things cheaper for people to buy be at the cost of reducing my ability to create new work? Every time you reduce my control over my own work and the potential for me to sell it or otherwise make an income from it, you are pushing me further and further away from remaining an Australian author.

'copyright protections and exceptions are very prescriptive and, many argue, are insufficiently flexible to cope with rapid change'

You should not seek to answer this issue by simply loosening the laws so there might be less litigation. That does nothing to protect my work and my income, nor my ability to invest further in my own work. Without copyright protection I have little incentive to continue writing. There are already pirate copies of my work on the internet, and you want to make this easier to do and harder for me to fight to protect my creations.

You also say that following international rules makes it worse for Australia. You are wrong about that in terms of copyright because the more countries that adhere to the Berne Convention the easier it is for me to tackle the issue of piracy.

I wish to lodge this as my key objections to the issues paper, and fully support the submission made on behalf of myself and all Australian authors by the Australian Society of Authors.

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