

As an author and bookstore owner, I believe lifting PIRs would devastate our Australian book industry as Australian authors would no longer receive full royalties (payment) on their books and Australian publishers and booksellers would be forced to compete against cheap, mass imports of books from overseas (including Australian titles).

I've had 11 books published with trade publishers, many that are on recommended reading lists, and still I work 25 hours a week while my husband works 40 plus to fund my writing and keep our young family fed and clothed and with a roof over our heads.

My 'second job' is owning a book store. As an independent bookseller it's already difficult to compete against big chain department stores that can buy books at cheap, mass purchase discount prices. I do these jobs that barely pay the bills though because I love it, it makes me feel alive, and I feel I am contributing to society in the best way I can. If the proposed changes go ahead it will be impossible for me to continue writing and my business will fold. With book stores already struggling to survive amid rising rents, mass order discounts and online competitors, I see the end of the independent book store.

When that happens all we will see is mass produced, commercial books lacking any Australian flavour or cultural value. You won't be able to walk into a book store and ask for a recommendation, to discuss your latest favourite read with another customer or meet and chat with authors who come in to do a signing or launch their book.

Likewise, authors will not be able to survive on already meagre incomes generated from books by receiving reduced royalties and new authors will not be able to be published at all as Australian publishers will struggle, and tightening belts means dropping less profitable titles.

I don't want to read about America and American culture, I don't want my kids to grow up calling me Mom instead of Mum. I want picture books that depict Australian animals, and where it is acceptable to show a baby's bottom (unlike in the US). I want to read about our outback, to picture myself on the beaches described in the latest novel, and to learn about issues that affect us as Australians. I want the 'u' in colour, the double 'l' in travelled. I want to keep seeing our vibrant and talented Australian writing community continuing to thrive.

I want people who are passionate about story to keep writing. I want new writers to be able to spend time nurturing and developing their talents. I want to keep writing, keep reading, keep selling and keep talking about books. Because this is my passion, this is what I love, and in a democratic, free Australia we should all have the right to nurture our talents, to feed our souls, to contribute economically in the way we can best do that. Whatever happened to Australia being the 'clever country?' Without books we will never be that because no matter who we are, or what we do, we all learn through reading.