

Submission to the Productivity Commission
Written and Illustrated by Peter Carnavas



One more story, Mum?

Okay. Last one. Ever.

What do you mean?

Well, if the Productivity Commission's recommendations are enacted, it will basically destroy the Australian book industry. Publishers will have little money to invest in Australian authors, and we'll be left with nothing to read but cheap, irrelevant trash from other countries.

Oh, that doesn't sound very productive.

It's not, dear. It's not. Similar things have happened in New Zealand and Canada, with no positive consequences. Authors work really hard for not much money as it is. This will bury a lot of them.

How much money does an author make?

Well, Australian authors earn an average annual income of just under \$13,000 from their writing. That's the same as a few weeks' worth of Bronwyn Bishop's pension.

But I always thought that reading good books was the most important step to becoming clever and wise.



It is! It is! I guess sometimes it's easier for people in power to maintain their power if they prevent other people from becoming clever and wise. Sometimes people in power are threatened by the intelligence of well-read people. Also, some people just like dreaming of money more than stories.

Um, can we read the book now?

Sorry, we can't call them books anymore. We have to call them cultural externalities. That's what the Productivity Commission calls them.

Oh. Can we read the cultural externality now?

Sure... but choose wisely. It could be the last good one we read.

Okay, let's read *Possum Magic*. I love that book - I mean, I love that cultural externality.

Well, it's actually called *Squirrel Magic* now. You see, with proposed changes to copyright laws, Mem Fox will have no control over what happens to her own book, and it can be re-edited according to other cultural tastes and ideas.

Oh.

Ready?

Sure. But Mum... why are WE turning into squirrels?

No more questions, dear.

Okay, Mom.

