

To The Productivity Commissioners,

I am a parent, teacher and educator who is passionate about sharing my love of literature with children. It was with a great sense of dismay that I read the draft report into Intellectual Property Arrangements.

I am gravely concerned as to what these recommendations would do to our wonderful Australian authors and illustrators and the publishing industry that supports them.

According to the Draft Recommendation 5.2; repealing parallel import restrictions for books would not affect Australian consumers, nor would it change incentives for authors.

However it would impact on Australian publishers. And Australian publishers use those profits to publish Australian authors. The New Zealand publishing industry collapsed when its own PIRs were removed.

Overseas publishers won't publish Australian stories – they have their own that they will dump on us. If I want to teach my children about the ANZACS, I currently have a wealth of books to choose from. Does anyone honestly believe an American publisher will give a second thought about Australian history.

As an enormous consumer of books, I can find cheap books easily - there are second hand bookshops, I can go online and find books for next to nothing and if I don't want to pay anything at all I can go to the library and borrow as many as I want.

But as a consumer I don't want to read cheap books to my children. I want the best books. I want the best Australian books that mirror my children's lives and tell them their story. I will pay a higher price for these books because I can't put a value on my children's importance.

Buying a book isn't just buying a consumer product. It is buying a cultural artefact. It develops a child's mind and heart and soul. I do not want my children calling me 'mommy' because the market has been flooded with cheap American books – just to save a few dollars.

So I beg to differ, repealing the PIRs would greatly impact on me as a consumer. The idea of no longer being able to find the beautiful Australian stories that I share with my daughters would be devastating. To lose a future Alison Lester, Aaron Blabey, or Jackie French, because we have lost the industry that would support them, would be a terrible and shameful thing. And that is what this recommendation would do.

I am also deeply concerned about Draft Finding 4.2; which urges the copyright term of a piece of work to be reduced to 15 to 25 years after creation.

I am aware that authors are some of the lowest paid people in our society. The idea of reducing their income even further is supremely unfair. It can take years for a book to be written and during this time, the author earns nothing. Why would they continue to write? How can they possibly afford to do it?

Imagine if someone built a house and then after 15 years they were thrown out because their ownership time was up? This recommendation sounds more like theft rather than something that would encourage innovation.

If it is fine to steal an author's work, why not take everyone's?

Yours sincerely,

Krys Saclier