

June 3, 2016

Submission to the Productivity Commission Draft Report (April 2016) – Intellectual Property Arrangements

To the Commission,

I've been writing since I finished a Post-Graduate Degree in Writing and Editing back in 1999. I began my career in tv and film, winning Best Australian Short Film at the Melbourne International Film Festival for Mr Wasinski's Song, and then touring the film internationally to the London and Berlin film festivals. I wrote for many Australian TV series, and frequently experienced the frustrations of producers as storylines were changed due to what they knew would be acceptable overseas. As much as I loved writing film and television, I felt more and more frustrated by the limitations of the industry, and the pressures to make international stories rather than our own.

So I jumped ship. And wrote my first young adult novel in 2014. It was published by UQP and I've since published four more. My novels have been published in Germany, the US, Turkey, and Portugal. They are intrinsically Australian stories, and some of them would struggle to be understood outside this country.

My YA novel *Frankie and Joely* would not have been published without a strong Australian publishing industry because it is not a commercial work. It's a slight, intimate and emotional observational novel that needed to be nurtured by an Australian publishing house. And nurture they did. I've had all the editorial help and support I could want as an emerging writer, but I strongly believe that if parallel importation restrictions were lifted, I wouldn't have been published.

I have two primary school aged children who are huge readers. They want to read Australian stories. They want to recognize their world and their lives. They seek out work by Australian writers because the idiom, the language and the characters are those they recognize.

Last year one of my books was overlooked for publishing in the US, because the sport that I'd featured was netball and not basketball. Netball is not a widely played sport in the US like it is here, so the US publishers believed it wouldn't find a market. That is what we're

dealing with. If we remove the opportunity for Australian authors to write inherently Australian stories with Australian experiences, then those stories will not exist. End of story.

Yours sincerely,

Nova Weetman