

1 June 2016

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

I am writing to strongly object to the recommendations made in your draft report on Intellectual Property Arrangements, which was released on 29 April 2016.

I'm an author of two books with another to be published in 2017. All my books are published by a small Melbourne publishing house, Scribe Publications, and I am concerned that if the Parallel Importation Rules are removed publishers like Scribe will find it difficult to operate, and books like mine will no longer be published.

My first novel, *Berlin Syndrome*, won the Kathleen Mitchell Award and saw me named a 2012 *Sydney Morning Herald* Best Young Novelist. It has been picked up by film producers and will appear as a major motion picture with an international release in 2016.

My second book, *A Long Time Coming: Essays on Old Age*, is based on interviews with older Australians and explores the ageing and older people are treated in our society. Scribe Publications took a risk publishing a book like this – people might expect that essays are not a popular format, and writing about old age is not something that appeals to many readers. However, the book has performed extremely well – in terms of sales and its critical reception – and I believe it has highlighted important discussion that need to be had within Australian society. If PIR are removed, and international editions of books flood our bookstores, publishers like Scribe will not be able to turn a profit and publish books like mine. It seems unlikely that bookstores would import a similar type of book, or if they did it would tell British or American stories of older people's experiences, not Australian ones. In short, removing PIR will stop important Australian stories being told.

Books in Australia are very affordable. People pay less for brunch on a Saturday morning, for a tickets to a movie on a Friday night, for a bottle of wine. And books offer hours of entertainment and nourishment, rather than the fleeting pleasure of the aforementioned experiences.

I also have concerns about the touted changes to copyright laws to encompass fair use. Territorial copyright helps publishers manage risk and support the creation of new Australian stories. Without these rules, as an author, I would lose income and the support of a vibrant local publishing industry.

Australian law currently sets out a series of clear exceptions to copyright restrictions under "fair dealing". This is a fair arrangement that works well for all parties, including authors. If this were to change to the American-style system of fair use, however, I would not only lose valuable income, but would also have to

pay the litigation costs if I discovered free copying that I considered to be unfair usage. This would be beyond my means and beyond the means of most authors.

I, along with thousands of Australian authors, am deeply concerned that these changes will affect my ability to continue to write, earn a living and find a publisher. I respectfully ask that you reconsider your position.

Kind regards,

Melanie Joosten