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author editor illustrator

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am an author, illustrator, editor, freelance writer and reviewer. I live and breathe our Australian book industry, and spend much of my time encouraging and educating children in literacy, visual literacy and a love of books. Literacy in all forms is a basic human right, and never more so now that our entire social system operates on the written word.

An award-winning and dedicated creator, I work very hard and will continue to do so in order to develop my craft and to make an income from what I do. I need this income to be able to continue in a career I feel deeply passionate about. I need it so I can continue my work in encouraging a love of books in children. I need it to help support my family, my own children.

I am a member of many literary organisations including the Australian Society of Authors, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and the Children's Book Council of Australia, and am actively involved in the children's book industry. I am the founder of the number one kids' literary site on the web—Kids' Book Review, as well as the hugely successful 52-Week Illustration Challenge, which last year exhibited for Arts Brookfield, one of the world's leaders in public art exhibitions.

I have been writing professionally for almost 30 years, and consistently work 100-hour weeks, yet despite my hard work and success (I have 23 books published, with many in production) I still struggle to earn a meaningful income. This is not uncommon for book creators, as you may well be aware.

As a committed and valued player in our industry, I know that **the parallel importation of books and the proposed copyright laws will have a catastrophic effect on my career**, and on most of the industry people I know (numbering the thousands). The Arts, and in particular, books, are a fundamental part of our education, entertainment and enlightenment, as human beings—and to be forced to seek alternative work will mean the end of many, many Australian works of all kinds—works that are vital to our heritage and to our very souls.

It really is that simple.

If parallel importation was to go ahead, our books would be at first crushed by cheaper foreign editions, with a flow on effect that would see a price rise for these foreign works (as local books would all but disappear, forcing a smaller imported market to raise their price).

These proposed changes, if they go ahead, will effectively end our local publishing industry. This very same issue has been foisted upon New Zealand and Canada, with disastrous results. And God forbid our books become subjected to Americanisms that are steeped in vomit-inducing hyper-political correctness, religious zeal, parochial thinking and woeful stereotype, especially for our well-travelled, forward-thinking, multicultural Australian kids.

To argue that the cost of a book is more important than the support of the creator and an industry that employs thousands in this country is as abomination in the extreme. We have already seen the closure of countless bookstores, and just as they are recovering and new stores are once again opening, this confounding proposal has appeared to the utter detriment of this fresh new hope.

The **proposed copyright amendments will decimate income for every book creator**. Much of my income is reliant on Educational and Public Lending Rights and reprints of my work. If I lose copyright, I not only lose a key source of income, I suffer the absolute terror of watching everyone and anyone utilise and even reprint my own work—FOR FREE. I have spent years upon years researching, producing and promoting these works—they are my babies, my soul. To hand them over to someone else for nothing, to do with what they want, and EVEN MAKE MONEY FROM THEM, is too much for my heart to bear.

The inequity in this proposed issue is beyond reproach.

No Australian creators means no Australian books.

No Australian books means no Australian culture represented for our children, youth or adult readers.

The book cannot and will not die. Please let it thrive.

Yours faithfully,

Tania McCartney
Author Illustrator