

Janette Dalgliesh

Parallel Importation of Books Study
Productivity Commission
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To Whom It May Concern:

I write to state my opposition to any changes to the current restrictions on the parallel importation of books.

The Australian voice is a rare and fragile one, but all the more precious for that. Like any rare species, it will suffer if exposed to the simple bottom line of commercial imperatives.

The economic well-being of Australian authors and publishers will be put at great risk if changes are made to the current system. Globalisation of these practitioners will force them to sink or swim along with everyone else, in a kind of homogenised mid-Atlantic literary soup. With a few notable bestselling exceptions, any other option will reduce writing and publishing truly Australian books to a hobby.

Consumers may have a short term benefit in terms of cheap books - though they can already access cheap books as loss-leaders out the front of any big retail bookseller (or supermarket, come to that). But consumers will ultimately be the losers. When they seek out an Australian work by an Australian author, written in a voice that sings to Australian readers, they won't find such a beast.

No doubt the Commission will hear long and loud submissions from the large retailers and overseas publishers who would love to have open access to our wallets and our minds. They are not the most important people in this debate. That role is reserved for the readers of the future, who deserve to have the same access to true Australian culture that we have enjoyed all our lives.

Please don't let our authors and publishers go the way of the dodo. We need them.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Janette Dalgliesh