



Cecily Matthews



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Parallel Importation of Books  
Productivity Commission  
GPO Box 1428  
Canberra City ACT 2601

To Whom it may concern

Here are some comments on the Productivity Commission's inquiry into the Parallel Importation of Books, Draft Report dated March 2009.

1. 2008 Starcom online survey – 1200 respondents aged between 16 and 65 does not represent the breadth of Australian readers. It covers only those who have access to the internet and does not look at those under sixteen.
2. While 30% of authors may earn \$1,000 or more per week the majority (70%) earn considerably less – some less than \$5,000 - \$6,000 per annum and must work at other jobs to keep afloat. Working at another job when you would rather be writing or illustrating is a sap to creativity.
3. CBCA (Children's Book Council) Awards – These books may be published early in the year before they are short listed. If subject to the twelve month rule libraries (who purchase multiple copies of short listed books) may be tempted to buy more cheaply the overseas publications of the same titles. This would lead to a severe reduction in income for authors and illustrators.
4. Educational Publishing – I have written for publishers of reading schemes. These books influence the literacy of our children and keep them aware of our history, language and culture. How will the importation of cheap educational texts from Asia achieve this?
5. Global Financial Crisis – How will importation of books from Asia or elsewhere help Australia weather the crisis? Given that parallel importation of books means that many creators, printers and independent publishers in Australia will be put out of business.
6. Psychic Income – I agree that authors and illustrators receive non-pecuniary rewards from the creation of a book. But I find it offensive that the Productivity Commission appears to think that this is some sort of substitute for financial reward. Psychic income does not put food on the table. And while 'such rewards may be a strong motivation for the generation of manuscript' if publishers are forced out of business by the parallel importation of books who is going to publish them?

Yours faithfully

Cecily Matthews  
Australian Author of Children's Books