



Australian Society of Authors

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PRESS RELEASE: ASA rejects findings of Productivity Commission

The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) rejects the findings of the Productivity Commission on the Parallel Importation Restrictions of Books into Australia.

“If these changes are implemented by government, Australia will become an international laughing stock,” says Dr Jeremy Fisher, ASA Executive Director. “Removing the territorial copyright of books will simply destroy our hard-won literary culture. There will be no benefit to anyone – authors, booksellers, publishers, printers and readers will all suffer.”

The ASA’s position on territorial copyright is supported by the New Zealand Society of Authors, the UK Society of Authors and the Authors Guild in the USA whose Director Paul Aiken notes: “It’s hard to believe a country would choose to devalue its publishers’ backlists in this way, forcing publishers to compete against cheap imports for the very titles they had chosen to invest in. It would have to lead to a shrinking publishing industry in Australia, since most publishers are so dependent on their backlists. This would be bad for all authors who are published in Australia, of course. In the long run, it would also be bad for Australian readers, who would find themselves increasingly dependent on the exports of foreign publishers, who would have little interest in nurturing Australia’s literary culture.”

“The Australian publishing industry is Australia’s most successful creative industry,” Dr Fisher adds. “It is highly regarded internationally and it prospers without any support from the taxpayer, unlike most other creative industries. What sense is there in punishing success by removing territorial copyright? Only free market economists could be so pig-headed – but of course their deregulatory mantra caused the global financial crisis!”

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