

21 June 2011

Senator the Hon Nick Sherry, Minister for Small Business  
Senator the Hon Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science & Research  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
By Fax: (02) 6273 4104  
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Dear Senators Sherry and Carr,

I write to you as a member of the Book Industry Strategy Group and as Executive Director of the Australian Society of Authors, and draw attention to the remarks attributed to Senator Sherry as reported in media on Tuesday 14 June and subsequently.

It was most dismaying to our authors to hear comments to the effect that local booksellers face a diminished future, if not complete irrelevance. As you would both be aware, thousands of Australia's authors are dependent on local booksellers to make their books available to purchasers and readers. They seek – as we believe the Australian government also seeks – a healthy bookselling sector as part of a vital book industry.

There is no question that bookshops are obliged to reconfigure to take advantage of the digital era and its possibilities – as all retail must do, here and around the world. A bookshop is in essence a means of getting intellectual content from authors to readers. To continue to do this effectively the new 'bookshop' may also be required to deliver content in formats additional to print. But the bookshop's fundamental purpose and value remains clear. Minister Sherry should have every faith in the ability of this important sector to adapt and answer the near-term and future needs of all Australians.

The ASA supports the work of Minister Carr as it does that of Minister Sherry in their efforts to build healthy Australian businesses and industries. We find it hard to believe, however, that either of you would want to see the 'end of bookshops', in whatever form they exist while ever they provide what the community wants. May I suggest that it would be timely for the government to now speak with one voice on behalf of an industry sector working hard to manage its way through significant change and into a healthy future?

Kind regards,



Angelo Loukakis  
Executive Director