

MEDIA RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT DECISION ENSURES BOOK READERS WILL PAY UP TO 32 PER CENT MORE

"Today's decision by the Rudd Government to keep parallel import restrictions on books will ensure consumers pay up to 32 per cent more than if they were scrapped," said Tim Wilson, Director of the Intellectual Property and Free Trade Unit at the Institute of Public Affairs.

Federal Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs, Craig Emerson, announced today that Australia's current restrictive parallel import regime on books will remain in place, despite the Productivity Commission recommending otherwise.

"Today's outcome is a slap in the face for Australia's book consumers. This is a victory for a misleading campaign to protect vested industry interests at the expense of a vibrant Australian artistic culture for authors and consumers," Mr Wilson said.

"The decision to maintain import restrictions for books by the Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs neither supports competition or consumer interests."

Earlier this year the IPA released *Unbinding Book Barriers*, a study that found by scrapping parallel import restrictions:

- Prices may fall by up to 32 per cent based on the experience of scrapping import restrictions on compact discs;
- The income of authors will not be harmed;
- There will be no reduction in the number of Australian books commissioned;
- Removing import restrictions shouldn't result in job losses in the printing industry;
- There will be no impact on investment decisions by the publishing and printing industries, and
- Australian exports of books may actually grow with increased competition.

"Parallel import restrictions on copyrighted books are not a part of intellectual property protection, they are a trade barrier," said Mr Wilson.

"In making its decision, the government has proven it is interested in protecting vested industry interests first and Australia's literary and reading culture second," Mr Wilson said.

Unbinding Book Barriers can be found at www.ipa.org.au

For more information and media comment

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