

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

2016 - 2017

Division/Agency: Productivity Commission
Question No: 366
Topic: Book Industry - Parallel imports
Reference: Written
Senator: Carr, Kim

Question:

Regarding the Government's response on 24 November 2015 to the Competition Policy Review (the Harper Review), that it would remove restrictions on the parallel importation of books:

- a. Did the Productivity Commission or the Treasury make any contribution to this response? Please provide a detailed account of any input.
- b. What modelling or consultation has the Government undertaken on the potential effects of this proposal on the book industry's viability and on our national cultural production?
- c. Has the Government conducted any analysis of the effect of this proposal on innovation and on investment attraction in the book industry?

Answer:

While the Commission notes that the issue of parallel importation of books has been considered in a number of reviews, it is only in a position to comment on its own activities and the analysis that it has undertaken. It is not within the Commission's functions to contribute to a Government response to an independent inquiry such as the Harper Review.

In 2008, the Commission was asked to examine parallel importation provisions for books. As part of that study, the Commission consulted widely and undertook a comprehensive analysis of the effects of parallel import restrictions. The impacts on the book industry and the issue of cultural value were considered (see for example chapters 5 and 6 of the final report on Restrictions on the Parallel Importation of Books (available here <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/books/report/books.pdf>)).

The more recent inquiry into Australia's Intellectual Property arrangements also considered the issue of parallel import restrictions on books in some detail. The inquiry's consultation processes are set out in the response to SBE 365. The final inquiry report, and the analysis contained therein, is yet to be made public.