

14 May 2004

The Secretary
Senate Select Committee on the Free Trade Agreement
Between Australia and the United State of America
Suite S1.30.1
The Senate
Parliament House
Canberra 2600

Email to: FTA@aph.gov.au

Dear Sirs,

I am writing with regard to Ms Lynne Spender's submission to the Senate Select Committee of Tuesday 4 May 2004.

Ms Spender is employed part-time for a three-month period as Acting Executive Director of the Australian Society of Authors. She did not have the opportunity for direct consultation with the ASA Committee of Management before presenting her submission.

Having now seen the relevant Hansard report, as Chair of the ASA I should inform you that the views expressed by Ms Spender are neither those of the ASA Committee of Management nor the majority of our members.

The ASA supports the extension of the copyright period from 50 to 70 years and agrees with the rationale expressed to the Committee by Mr Michael Fraser of Copyright Agency Limited.

Above all the ASA supports the proper remuneration of authors. Our members are among the most poorly paid in Australia and we strongly support their basic right to payment for the work they produce – in all media. We see no difference between the sale of a book in a bookstore and the delivery of on-line authored material. We welcome any legislation that caters to the rights of our members to a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

The ASA also shares the position of the Australian Screen Directors' Association and the Australian Writers Guild on the protection of Australian cultural content in the electronic media. We wish to be assured that Australian content will continue to be protected, both

in terms of current local content standards and in the face of future developments in digitization and the delivery of new media.

If you wish to discuss these issues further, I may be contacted at my workplace: the Australian National Playwrights' Centre on (02) 9555 9377.

Yours faithfully,

Susan Hayes
Chair, Australian Society of Authors