



Science Teachers' Association of New South Wales Inc.

Providing leadership and promoting excellence in science education

29th July 2013

To: The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) Review Committee of Copyright and the Digital Economy

I am the President of the Science Teachers Association of NSW (STANSW), the leader provider of science professional learning in NSW.

STANSW has a membership of about 500 both individual and school faculty members throughout NSW across all sectors of science education. We publish a member's quarterly journal written and edited entirely by member volunteers and academic friends of STANSW. The journal is a valuable asset to members as it provides up-to-date information about current issues in science education as well as pedagogical strategies and lesson ideas. Our journal has a part-time, unpaid editor, who is also a retired teacher. The task of collating items for these four journals requires a time commitment of between 4 and 6 hours a week, time spent on contacting potential authors, proof readers and sub-editors, all of whom are full-time teachers. Time is also spent contacting both the STANSW office manager who deals with advertisers as well as tracking project reports and liaising with the graphic designer.

STANSW currently receives an amount of recompense through copyright for the use of articles published in our journal, Science Education News, and this supplements the income we generate from the professional learning events we host and which are presented entirely by volunteers. We receive no funding and attract a small amount of income also from event sponsorship and advertising by relevant suppliers. The costs of publishing a journal are not covered by our membership fees and the copyright fees we collect help to off-set these costs. Without these payments we would not be able to support the publication costs.

The amount of copyright we currently receive is a good indication of the value to teachers of

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the articles we provide. We are therefore concerned that changes to the legislation will impact on the ease with which teachers can, not only use our resources, but also document their use in regards to copyright requirements. Good teachers, who constantly update their content and try to make their lessons relevant to their students, will spend time on administrative work documenting where their resources were accessed from rather than spending time on engaging their students. Updating resources will be too difficult and teachers may resort to rehashing the same outdated worksheets because accessing new information is too mired in documentation.

As a NSW-based teaching association we are also very aware of the difference in the curriculum requirements in NSW in comparison to the rest of the country. As such we can provide information specifically relevant to NSW teachers, often not provided by textbook publishers who present a one-size-fits-all version of textbooks. We frequently present information from the Board of Studies in relation to current requirements in terms of curriculum developments and assessment protocols. Thus our readers are well-informed in regards to issues of direct relevance to their school accreditation and compliance responsibilities.

As a full-time teacher and volunteer president of the association I spend many hours in a week outside the classroom preparing lessons for the 4 senior classes and 1 junior class I teach as well as managing the daily issues of the association. Part of my role as president is to ensure that all projects are reported to members, that current curriculum issues are researched and presented to the wider membership, that current scientific research as well as pedagogical ideas are all presented to members. This is outside my normal working role which involves marking homework tasks for seniors as they prepare for HSC exams as well as preparing lessons and planning for the implementation of new curriculum. I also

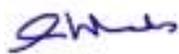
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present workshops for the STANSW in city and regional locations, often on the weekend and these involve preparation time. I also write at least one article per publication apart from the President's message. I, like all our regular contributors, give gladly of my time because teachers provide feedback to us in regard to the value of the journal. I would therefore not like to see its value diminish because using the articles becomes too difficult due to these new copyright proposals.

STANSW strives continuously to ensure our journal is both relevant and useful to our members as well as other institutional readers who access it via publication databases. We have recently prepared a searchable database of past journals that enables our members to search for articles by topic or author. We hope this makes it easier for time-poor teachers to find worthwhile lesson plans and worksheets. Hopefully we are not providing easier ways to access valuable resources that are going to be costly, in terms of time, for teachers to use because of the requirements that this new proposal may impose.

Regards



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