

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of Poetry in Action in regards to the proposed changes to the statutory licenses governed by the Australian Copyright Act. As both artists and educators Poetry in Action is uniquely placed to offer a very informed opinion on this change and the broader impact it would have both on content creation and education.

Poetry in Action is one of Australia's premier providers of theatre in education programs and a recipient of a 2013 Copyright Agency Cultural Fund grant.

Our grant was used to create a brand new piece of Australian theatre based on the writings of both new and established Australian poets. We have been touring our show to high schools around Australia and have received outstanding feedback both from teachers and students regarding the quality of our work and its impact both on the creativity of young people and also on their education.

This new Australian work will be seen and enjoyed by thousands of Australian high school students this year in addition to providing teachers with vital tools to make their poetry units easier to teach.

This would not have been possible without the grant allocated by the Copyright Australia Cultural Fund.

I can only assume that a change from statutory licenses to voluntary licenses is intended to somehow improve the current system, but in fact it does the opposite. It would take a system that is currently aiding both education and artistic creation and replace it with one that is complicated, obscure and ultimately destructive to all parties.

The current statutory licenses allow teachers access to quality teaching material while also providing content creators and producers with fair remuneration. A change to voluntary licences would break that unified system into one of relative chaos and uncertainty for all concerned.

Teachers would be uncertain of what content they could legally use and authors, artists and publishers would be forced to enter into individual licensing arrangements with educators. For individual artists and smaller publishers, this is patently unworkable. As someone who has established personal relationships with thousands of schools across the country I can tell you; it's a full time job.

Perhaps most crucially of all, in both cases it is a distraction to the central work of both parties; education and creating new Australian works of literature and art. No individual artist, company or teacher could feasibly manage this volume of work, not to mention its complexity, without it impacting on the real work at hand.

In addition, with the fees it collects, the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund is then able to provide grants to the cultural sector that in turn seeds the creation of new content. It's a really smart, workable and viable cycle of creativity and reward.

The installation of voluntary licenses would in effect remove the very planks that support the whole system.

No industry in history has been able to grow and thrive while simultaneously destroying its ability to reinvest in itself.

The Cultural Fund allocates grants of \$2,000,000 a year to the creation of new work. To remove that and expect creativity to continue unabated is shortsighted to say the least. It's akin to cutting off the water and expecting plants to continue growing because they always have.

PIA will perform to 50,000 students across Australia this year. This makes us one of Australia's largest touring theatre companies. Since our inception in 2006, we have performed to over 150,000 students.

By 2017 that number will be 500,000. And we are just one company supported by the Cultural Fund. One of hundreds that will be adversely affected if these proposed changes go ahead.

In summation, Poetry in Action sees any change to the existing legislation as destructive for artists and educators alike making it both undesirable and unnecessary.

Poetry in Action along with many thousands of other effected parties will be keenly interested in the outcome of the proposed changes.

I happy to discuss any of these points further should you wish to contact me and make myself fully available via the details below.

Kind Regards

Bryce Youngman