22 July 2013

**Re: Review of Copyright and the Digital Economy**

I am a literary agent and author. My livelihood relies on the sale of copyright, as does that of my clients.

Every day literary agents negotiate, quite simply, for authors to be paid for their work. For an author to be paid enough for their work to earn a decent wage is no easy thing – indeed, most Australian authors rely on other sources of income to supplement what they earn from their writing. Any legal changes that will mean authors’ meagre salaries are eroded will have a detrimental impact on the cultural life of our country.

Many of my clients rely on income garnered from the copying and sharing of their work in the classroom and they payments they receive for the same through the Copyright Agency. Making this material available for free sets a very dangerous precedent regarding the value of writers’ work. It suggests to children, for example, that the work of creative artists is there for the taking, whether it’s in the classroom or via pirating on the internet. If an electrician was not paid for his work he’d sent the debt collectors’ around – why is an author’s work of less worth?

The system, in its current form, works efficiently and efficiently for my clients with very little of their valuable writing time spent administering it. Without this, or a similar system, authors would have little or no chance of licensing the material direct or of monitoring copyright breaches. They certainly cannot afford to mount legal cases.

As both a literary agent and a writer, I reject the repeal of the Australian educational statutory licence system. Writers are doing it tough enough already.

Yours sincerely,

Gaby Naher