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Sheryl Gwyther

29th July 2013

**To: The Australian Law Reform Commission - Review Committee of Copyright and the Digital Economy**

Dear Commissioners

I am a children’s author writing for 7-15 year olds and my name is Sheryl Gwyther. I’m also an Assistant Advisor for the Society of Children’s Writers and Illustrators Australia/New Zealand region, and I’m on the current board of the Australian Society of Authors, so this issue is very pertinent to my livelihood and interest.

My intellectual property comes from using my time, creative skills and knowledge. I own the copyright to my material and I expect people who use it pay for my time and effort just like any other professional would do.   
  
The statutory licences that the ALRC is recommending be repealed are very important to me. If my work is copied and shared by teachers in the classroom, I receive a copyright payment from the Copyright Agency. Considering the low level of royalties, this payment is essential for many.  
  
The payments are recognition of the value of the material I have created, using my time, skill and experience. My work facilitates education and the development of young imaginations.   
  
The system works very efficiently and quietly with very little administrative requirement from me. However, should the change proposed be made, I have no expertise in developing licensing arrangements myself. I can’t track down copyright breaches.

I am a specialist in my field, I have little expertise in the intricacies of Copyright Law, nor the time to pursue breaches – no matter how concerned I am. What compensation will I get for loss of income; to mount legal challenges or for the time it takes me to administer licensing arrangements?  
  
  
So I completely reject the repeal of the very effective and fair Australian educational statutory licence system. Such a recommendation is an attack on my rights as a professional author, and will affect all authors’ livelihoods. In the case of children’s authors, ultimately it will affect our ability to create books for children.

Yours faithfully

Sheryl Gwyther, Children’s Author