532. B Pattinson

To whom it May Concern,

I was disturbed and upset to hear that the statutory licenses for educational publishing are to be reviewed with a view to diminishing this essential resource for writers. Without copyright payments my work would not be economically viable.

I write textbooks and study guides for both secondary and primary education and they are used in all states of Australia and in some overseas countries. This is both time consuming and complex work and based on over thirty years experience in the educational field. These texts have to be thoroughly researched, checked and re-worked for changing syllabi and student needs. This is an on-going process and involves hundreds of hours of research and writing, much of which is funded by copyright payments which I regard as fair payment for my work. Without this copyright payment my work would not be viable and thus educational institutions would lack valuable resources which, by examination of my copyright documentation, they copy frequently for student use.

My copyright payments pay for research trips, computers, graphics and writing resources without which I could not afford to conduct, upgrade or resource my work. Perhaps you do not realise an author’s royalty payments are miniscule and that many educational institutions purchase one copy of a text and photocopy it to ‘death’. I know for a fact many educators regard copying a whole text as ‘fair use’ as they consider works to be ‘fair game’ and that copyright does not apply to them. This is not how I see my work. It is my intellectual property and, if they wish to use it, it should be paid for fairly.

The current system is reasonably just in that we authors are recompensed for the amount of work we do. It would be an injustice to think otherwise. My work is done to help educators and students but it is not free. It is expensive in time and resources. Therefore authors should be compensated fairly.The current system works very efficiently and quietly with very little administrative requirement from me. The Copyright Agency represents me well and distributes the license money equitably. However, should the change proposed be made, how will I develop licensing arrangements myself? How will I track down copyright breaches? How will I prosecute breaches? How will I afford to mount a legal case? What compensation will I get for loss of income; to mount legal challenges or for the time it takes me to administer licensing arrangements? For an author these tasks are onerous and not what I write for. I am a specialist in my field of education but I have little expertise in the intricacies of copyright law, nor the time to pursue breaches – despite being deeply concerned about these proposed changes. I have no desire to become a bureaucrat, I am an educator.

I completely reject the repeal of the very effective and fair Australian educational statutory licence system. Such a recommendation is a personal attack on my rights, intellectual property and creativity. Without fair remuneration I cannot continue my work in its current form and thus well and widely used educational resources will be lost.

I am more than happy to follow-up this email with anyone from your organisation.

Bruce Pattinson