615. P Lowe

SUBMISSION ABOUT PROPOSED COPYRIGHT REFORMS.

Dear ALRC, As a writer of niche market books, mainly about Indigenous subjects, I receive little in the way of royalties. Copyright payments are therefore a very welcome and necessary addition to my income, and reassure me that my books are being used — even those that are out of print. In addition to my own work, I receive requests for permission to copy the artwork of my deceased husband, whose posthumous income is paid into a charitable trust in his name.

My experience of 'voluntary' payments is that there are none. I sometimes get requests for permission to use my work, and either no mention of payment is made, or I am asked to state 'if' a payment is required, putting the onus on me to decide whether I should charge a fee and if so, how much. Often, the person requesting the permission will make a point of the work being 'not for commercial use', or for 'educational use only', with the implication or outright request that I should waive any fee. And indeed, I usually don't charge one, because I have no idea what is fair and reasonable. Even so, the requesting party or organisation usually sends me permission forms by email, which often have to be printed off and returned by mail at my own expense — in my view, an unreasonable imposition. Gone are the days of receiving two or three copies in the mail, along with a return stamped and addressed envelope.

Although I am always pleased to know that someone wants to use my work, especially for educational purposes, I do not wish to be burdened by requests of this nature, nor to have to make decisions about fees. I would certainly be worse off under a voluntary system and would miss my payments, modest as they are, from the Copyright Agency, which I have found to be an efficient and valuable service.

I understand that the request for change to the copyright system comes from educational and other institutions, but I do ask you first to consider the author, without whom there would be no material to copy. Yours faithfully, Pat Lowe, author.