

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**An open letter from Jackie French (AM) in response to the
Productivity Commission's Report on Australia's intellectual property
arrangements**

Theft and Failure of Economics 101

For 25 years I have worked as an author, supporting my family.

Innocently, I had assumed that the royalties from these books would continue to support my husband and myself in our old age.

Now, in my sixties, I have been told by the ill-named 'Productivity Commission' that 'Writers rarely write for financial reasons,' and I may only own my work for 15 years.

If I had spent my time renovating houses, or investing in shares, I'd own them. So would my heirs.

If you built a bicycle or a house, would you give it to anyone who cares to grab it, in 15 years' time?

Does Thomas Keneally have no moral right to *Bring Larks and Heroes*?

Does Mem Fox no longer have a right to *Possum Magic* nor I to *Diary of a Wombat*?

Will Malcolm Turnbull give away his investments when he has owned them for 15 years?

How can we become his 'clever country' if inventions belong to the creator for such a short time?

The Productivity Commission has failed to substantiate any of its claims. Books are NOT always cheaper overseas, though they used to be. New Zealand 'freed' its import market nearly 20 years ago and books are now MORE expensive than they are here - and their publishing industry has crashed.

One in four Australian jobs are in the creative industries. This report will not just abolish most of them, but prevent the innovation culturally, technically and scientifically on which future jobs depend.

Economically, the report is rubbish. Morally, it is indefensible.

And for the future of Australia - economically, culturally - and for our children, who deserve not just jobs from cultural and technical innovation, but books written about their land, by Australians, in order that they know who they are and what we may become, it is criminal.

Jackie French, AM

Notes to Editors:

- Jackie French is an award-winning Australian author who has penned over 150 books for adults and children. She is one of Australia's most popular children's authors, and writes across many genres.
- Her most celebrated children's titles include the international bestsellers, *Diary of Wombat* and *Hitler's Daughter*.
- Jackie French was the 2015 Senior Australian of the Year and was inducted as a Member of The Order of Australia in 2016's Australia Day Honours.
- Jackie French was the Australian Children's Laureate for 2014-2015 as well as the 2015 Senior Australian of the Year.
- Jackie is also an historian, ecologist, dyslexic, and a passionate worker for literacy, the right of all children to be able to read, and the power of books.
- Visit her website for more: www.jackiefrench.com

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