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TIM WINTON WRONG: NEW STUDY FINDS BOOKS COULD BE 30 PER CENT CHEAPER WITHOUT HARMING AUSTRALIAN AUTHORS & STORIES

"Books could be 32 per cent cheaper if Australia scrapped import restrictions", Tim Wilson, Director of the Intellectual Property and Free Trade Unit at the Institute of Public Affairs said today.

"Tim Winton won the *Miles Franklin Award* for *Breath*, but his greatest fiction work may be that removing import restrictions will harm Australian authors and their stories, and all at the expense of Australian book readers".

Removing parallel import restrictions will reduce the price of a typical \$19.95 paperback to just \$13.56 dollars.

This is the result of a major new study, *Unbinding Book Barriers*, published by the Institute of Public Affairs today.

The Productivity Commission is currently considering whether Australia should liberalise parallel import restrictions on books.

"This study finds that since liberalising import restrictions on CDs in 1998 the average price of CD albums has collapsed by 32 per cent. Books will follow a similar trend".

Following careful analysis of similar reforms in New Zealand and Australia, the study demolishes the myths surrounding the debate over parallel import restrictions on books promoted by authors like Tim Winton, finding that:

- The income of authors will not be harmed
- There will be no reduction in the number of Australian books commissioned
- Removing import restrictions shouldn't result in job losses in the printing industry
- There will be no impact on investment decisions by the publishing and printing industries; and
- Australian exports of books may actually grow with increased competition.

"Parallel import restrictions on copyrighted books are unnecessary and redundant. They are not a part of intellectual property protection, they are a trade barrier", said Mr Wilson.

"Australia can't have an education revolution when book prices are artificially expensive and hit at the hip pockets of working families".

"The results of the study mean that the Productivity Commission should recommend liberalising Australia's import restrictions on books in the interests of Australian consumers and a modern, competitive book industry", Mr Wilson said.

Unbinding Book Barriers can be found at www.ipa.org.au

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