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LABOR'S BOOKS BACKDOWN A PROTECTIONIST THROWBACK

Parallel Import Restrictions on books are an effective tariff on international trade, similar to the archaic tariffs that were abolished under the Hawke-Keating government.

“Labor’s decision to oppose the abolition of Parallel Import Restrictions on books reads like illiterate protectionism. This is an area where we know as a fact that prices of books will be lower as a result of this reform,” said Evan Mulholland from the free-market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

“All of Australia’s leading economists in review after review have pleaded for the changes, from the Prices Surveillance Authority review in 1989, the ACCC review in 1999, the comprehensive Productivity Commission report in 2009 and the draft Productivity Commission report into Intellectual Property”

“It’s very clear that keeping this tariff in place comes at the expense of the consumer - Libraries and schools trying to buy more books, poor families struggling to buy books for their kids, or university students needing to buy dozens of textbooks. The only winners here are multinational book publishers.”

“Attempts by authors, now backed sheepishly by Labor, to derail the Government's attempt to abolish Parallel Import Restrictions on books read like the same fear campaign that was run by Peter Garrett and John Farnham in 1998 when the Howard Government abolished Parallel imports on CD’s. Did the music industry in Australia die as they suggested it would? No. Did CD’s almost half in price? Yes.” Mr Mulholland said.

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