



COPYRIGHTAGENCY

LICENSED COPY

Tel: +612 9394 7600

www.copyright.com.au



The Australian, Australia

23 Aug 2017, by Stefanie Balogh

General News, page 2 - 167.00 cm<sup>2</sup>

National - circulation 96,602 (MTWTF)

ID 832351597

BRIEF COPYRIGHT INDEX 1

PAGE 1 of 1

# Teachers slate copyright reform

## EXCLUSIVE

STEFANIE BALOGH  
NATIONAL EDUCATION  
CORRESPONDENT

Teachers across five states are warning that proposed changes to copyright rules would decimate locally produced and culturally relevant textbooks, posing a threat to the overall quality of Australian education.

Twenty-three teacher associations, representing 200,000 educators, have written an open letter calling on the federal government to protect Australian stories and local content by rejecting the Productivity Commission's recommendations to rework copyright rules.

The teachers want MPs to dismiss the changes proposed by the government's economic advisory body which, if implemented, would dramatically reduce their ability to produce high-quality and relevant textbooks and teaching resources for their members.

The government is currently weighing up the recommenda-

tions. The open letter warns the changes are "not just unfair, it is a threat to the overall quality of Australian education and its relevance for student and societal needs".

"The importance of copyright in supporting effective learning and in the development of cutting-edge educational content cannot be underestimated. Australian children should be able to grow up inspired and entertained not only by our local stories and our local culture, but also by locally produced educational materials," the teachers argue.

Wendy Cody, president of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English, said teachers did not understand why the commission had headed down this path. "I'm also an author of textbooks so wearing that hat and wearing my AATE hat, because we also produce textbooks and resources, I'm just thinking, 'what is going on here?'" she said. "What is the point of it? Is it just because of economics, or is it philosophy, ideology? I'm not sure. Whatever it is, it's just wrong."

The changes would impact on

the current system, which includes education departments and universities paying the copyright licencing organisation, the Copyright Agency, to allow schools and tertiary institutions to copy and share information. The money is then distributed by the agency to the owners of the copyright.

The commission recommendations include adopting the American legal doctrine of "fair use", which has enabled large US enterprises to access copyright material for free.

There are some estimates that moving to a US-style system could cost the national economy more than \$1 billion because there would be less local content, more copyright losses and legal free-for-all on copyright litigation costs.

The open letter from teachers also argues the proposed changes being pushed by the commission, large organisations and big technology companies will "impact on the current fair payments that are made to creators for the use of their copyright material, many of whom are educators".