

To Whom It May Concern

My submission is one I'd just like to make in general support of protecting copyright for authors in New Zealand.

I think it's vital that we protect, preserve and pay for content written by New Zealanders so that we maintain some sense of our history and collective identity. While creative work is often a celebration or manifestation of an individual voice, in a broader social sense, actively financially supporting the writing of Te Ao Māori, history, philosophy, political analysis and imaginative works of literature can only help both preserve and expand an empathetic society where urgent and complex issues are openly discussed. Paying authors copyright fees helps to encourage these intellectual and creative elements - that in turn foster broader understanding of our history and future direction.

Recent incidents like the horrific mosque killings show that Aotearoa can have a distinctive attitude to urgent social issues such as gun ownership, violence, the will to embrace diversity in the face of fascism. (And indeed we have a history of fighting fascism abroad in the world conflicts.) I think that our literature - creative and non-fiction - is a repository and 'genome' for how we have a collective will to make social change under times of crisis. An event like the mosque killings underlines the adage 'lest we forget' - we must understand our social and political history in order to double down on hate speech and hate activity. High quality writing on these topics must be sustained and rewarded.

Writing is work. It needs to be financially acknowledged. Copyright fees are a vital part of this.

I have been grateful for publisher advances, royalties and copyright licensing fees or reprint fees for individual poems; and although this income hasn't been enough to support even me alone (not to mention my family), it does validate and enable the work undertaken. I think it also helps to support readers - in that financial encouragement to carry on writing enables authors to produce books that do affect lives. This next point is purely anecdotal, but I have had several readers approach me about my novel *Billy Bird*, to tell me "I too have a Billy" - and that the novel helped them to feel their own complex parenting challenges with quirky, bright children were recognised, affirmed, and the readers felt boosted to carry on trying to help, and acknowledge the particular value in, their child; and others have told me that the novel helped them to confront long term grief. The way creative fiction can contribute to psychological health was made movingly clear to me when I was approached by several readers, festival audience members, and radio listeners about this novel. I think we underestimate the contribution creative work makes to our society at great peril.

Yet the time, energy, and commitment and financial sacrifices that go in to writing a novel are considerable, even in the happy situation where a writer gets a grant. Writers need every cent they can get - even \$50 for the reprint of a poem or for photocopying recompense does make a difference, however small - and it can fuel the mental energy needed to tackle another project, which may in turn go on to have a noticeable social and artistic impact.

If an individual or institution distributes copies of an author's work without attribution or payment, it is basic theft. Authors pour days, weeks, months and years into their work, and use any financial recompense the way any other income is used: to feed families, pay for medicine and GP visits, cover electricity bills, buy clothes, renew reading glasses ... etc.

Yours faithfully

Emma Neale