

28 July 2010

Mr Robert Clinch  
P.O. Box 348  
Ashburton VIC 3146

The Hon Julia Gillard  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**RE: THE COOPER REPORT**

Dear Prime Minister,

Australia has a wealth of talented, innovative and determined creative artists. The Australian art market-place, however, is small; our population is small and there are only so many buyers. But we are slowly developing a more sophisticated culture of owning original art.

Within this small market-place is a percentage who invest in art through the incentive of their self-managed superannuation funds. Those not genuinely interested and well-informed simply don't buy art.

The global financial crisis has already decimated sales, or determined that many only occur after negotiation.

You, like most of the general public, may not appreciate the impact of this when you see artists like myself (see [www.robertclinch.com](http://www.robertclinch.com)) continuing to produce and exhibit their work. Any other business would simply cease trading but we continue, by borrowing money (from banks, friends or family); working in other jobs; spending less on materials and framing; doing less challenging projects; cutting down on advertising; transporting our own work and draining any meagre savings.

Most of us do not own our own homes, and some who do, currently risk losing them.

Over our careers our market prices rise with every major or minor success. However, unlike other businesses, they do not automatically increase with increased costs: studio, materials, framing, transport and advertising. When galleries increased their commission from 33.33% to 40-50% the artist just received less. When the GST was implemented the 10% was similarly absorbed.

The market never spends any more than it has to, knowing the artist is usually vulnerable and will accept any sale gratefully.

The Cooper Report, hot on the tail of the well-meaning Resale Royalty Scheme, has made an already nervous market sit on its hands. If its recommendations become legislation many collectors will massively reduce purchasing our latest works, the sale of which we depend upon for a living. Many will invest in the inevitably reduced resale prices that will result from the recommended five year divestment forcing a glut of earlier works onto the market-place.

I already know of relationship breakdowns and physical and mental health issues that have been brought on by the current crisis in buyer's confidence. With the Cooper Report's recommendations, I expect these to accelerate.

If creativity is wound down, the whole population loses the vibrancy contributed to their everyday lives. The livelihoods of framers, art materials suppliers, art dealers, transporters, conservators and advertisers among others will be threatened.

We will all be poorer for all of this, and we will all have to pay for the consequences of these broken lives!

Yours sincerely,

**ROBERT CLINCH**

cc. Senator The Hon Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Financial Services, Superannuation & Corp. Law  
The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, Minister for Environmental Protection, Heritage and the Arts  
Mr Steven Ciobo, Shadow Minister for Tourism, the Arts, Youth & Sport  
Senator Christine Milne, Greens Senator for Tasmania