

To Whom it may concern,

My wife and I are in a partnership that own two IGA stores,

We are very concerned with the deregulation of trading hours. As an independent we find it very hard to compete with Coles and Woolworths at the best of times. Our pricing is based on the chain prices as we compete with them in all areas of our stores. Being as we purchase off a middle man, Metcash, then for us to compete we have smaller margins than the chains, but that is what we have to do. Though we have busy times similar to the chains, we tend to do better when they are closed, either early in the morning or later at night. If the chains have deregulated hours then this will decrease our sales dramatically.

We are the only country in the World that has two Supermarket businesses with such a big percentage of the available retail sales and now the government want to make them stronger using the guise of deregulating trading hours will make the retail environment more competitive, is ridiculous. The government talk about protecting small business then why would it deregulate the hours sending more small businesses out of business. It is hard enough to provide an equal service for our customers but we also employ over 150 staff that could lose their jobs. Will Coles or Woolworths employ these people, NO so more people will be out of work, is this what our Government wants.

I see no value to a customer if the hours are deregulated, in fact it will reduce competition as Independent close their doors due to the Duopoly that Coles and Woolworths has. If we want to increase completion giving customers a more competitive environment then the Government should encourage and develop Small business to grow and the Chains to have Supermarket store numbers capped.

Yours sincerely

Nick and Alison Habgood