

# Competition Policy Review

Making Australia a Happier Place.

## Submission

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## Monopolies

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## **Anyone ever met a monopoly they liked? Not me!**

Surely it is possible to frame legislation that would limit the ability of monopolies to make life miserable for all and sundry. I say 'all' because common logic dictates that they will eventually adversely affect us 'all'.

As matters currently stand, anti-social, amoral monopolies, headed by people who have themselves probably never owned businesses, happily wreck the livelihoods and dreams of small business people and their employees throughout Australia, on a daily basis. The quality of life, or even survival of their neighbours, are of no discernible concern to them.

This is not good for the general psyche of a nation, much less its long term prosperity and longevity. It guarantees too, an infinitely more difficult situation when eventually, governments are forced to step in and attempt to clip a few big-business wings. If we believe 'big business' is too big to deal with today, just wait until tomorrow.

'**World domination**' is scarcely an overstatement where these voracious predators are concerned. Ideally, the size of monopolies should be restricted, but given the unlikelihood of such an event (even now) attention should be directed toward limiting their ability to monopolise further and behave unfairly. Their activities and spheres of influence need to be severely curtailed, for the good of our nation. Trade Practices, Ethics Legislation, Laws that are unequivocal; whatever it takes. Delay now and ensure we pay more dearly, later.

Big shopping centres, for instance, have got us all believing they are 'convenient' but they have become so large that parking is closer and walking distances shorter in most main streets! Congestion caused by a concentration of people and vehicles around shopping centres is already a nightmarish and heading south.

**The sole goal of monopolies is, funnily enough, to monopolise!** Any trimmings, like customer service, are merely a means to their own end; that of increasing their influence and stranglehold on everything and everyone. **Today's business environment is not only unpleasant and upsetting, it is far too dangerous (financially).**

Small businesspeople, particularly, but not only, within shopping centres cop it in the neck from all directions. Competition is one thing, but harsh leases skewed in favour of **retail monopolies** and dictated by **landlord monopolies**, bear no resemblance to anything remotely resembling a fair go. This is not how people in this country should live.

**Unemployment could be slashed** were the playing field of small business to be evened-out somewhat. Monopolies employ far fewer staff per turnover than does small business.

Take Bunnings for instance: How many conveniently situated hardware stores, employing huge numbers of **local** staff, were once scattered all over Australia? Look at us now! Once-upon-a-time the congestion was spread, the distances and time spent on roads was far less and the service more friendly and personal. Witness instead, today's monopoly-sponsored mess!! The same applies to almost any type of business we care to mention.

Today we have a relative few huge and thoroughly ruthless landlords who call almost every shot. One landlord dictating the destinies of countless retailers is only ideal for that landlord! Retailers, to them, are no more than a herd to be milked dry and discarded.

Excuse any repetition but, in the good old days of exclusively strip shopping and corner stores there existed ubiquitous and comprehensively stocked small businesses offering friendly personal service and competing on more or less equal terms; butchers, grocers, hardware stores, small nurseries and so on.

Very importantly, there were also **thousands of small landlords** who negotiated sensibly and fairly, again on more or less equal terms.

**That was the ideal. - Our primary aim today should be to adhere as closely to that ideal as we possible can.**

Wouldn't it be 'nice' if, instead of today's fiasco, a pleasant, efficient and **fair** business environment could be developed? It can be done, people! It can be done by being convinced by and committed to the prospect of doing some good and achieving a goal. No buckling to the predictable and potent pressure from bullying, powerful monopolies; no being swayed by falsehoods and expensive lawyers. Instead, simply doing what is **just and fair**. Nothing comes unstuck while things are fair and people remain vigilant.

If all this sounds like too much of a challenge, please consider the eventual alternative. If, after doing so, it still sounds beyond government capabilities, do give me a call. I am a mere 'know-nothing nobody' but I bet I would get the job done and rid the country of a stack of angst, ill feeling and red tape whilst doing so! - You see, I am 'dedicated'!!

Small business is already handicapped rentwise, pricewise and labourwise.

**1. Rentwise**, because the huge landlords dictate unreasonable rents, terms and conditions to small businesses whilst granting reduced rates and added privileges to the bully-boy monopolies.

**2. Pricewise**, because of the quantity discounts and other lurks demanded by monopolies who already benefit from numerous other economies of scale and strength.

Great efforts should be made to ensure that small business can buy at competitive prices where possible. Many prices (eg; groceries) should be capped regardless of location or size, and wholesalers and manufacturers should simply factor-in and average-out cost prices. The Federal Government **MUST** develop the wit to outwit monopolies and prevent the curtail the shenanigans of monopolies.

**3. Labourwise**, because monopolies can roster staff over seven days (and nights!) whereas one person, or one family, has limited resources, strength and energy. For instance: How does one trust a small jewellery store and access to safes etc. to casual staff? **Trading hours should be capped.** To hell with the demands of pressure groups.

Yours sincerely,

John N. Wright

The bottom line should always be 'fair' ...as in a 'fair go'. Fair enough?  
~ When life is fair, few complain. ~