

Dear Senators

Let's be absolutely blunt.

We have a situation in Australia where the consumer food and related market is dominated by two players, known colloquially as Coles and Safeway (aka Westfarmers and Woolworths).

A situation which sees them dominate food and beverage, alcohol, petrol, insurance... and spreading into pharmacy and optometrical areas amongst many more as they dominate every corner of the nation's consumers

A position which, as a number of my United States of America based relations advise would be illegal over there and thus which does not occur.

Indeed, Safeway/ Woolworths cannot do in the USA as they do here in Australia.

And how many times have we seen either directly, locally, or via television current affairs programs where these two overtly and excessively powerful supermarkets take on a small retailer, a grocery and or a fruit shop and under cut their prices until they are run out of business. Then that same supermarket sends its won prices through the roof.

I recall when my parents owned a continental delicatessen many years ago, where I assisted. On many an occasion Coles sold items that we also sold cheaper than we could buy them. I recall myself, and I am a Justice of the Peace with decades of service, where I asked John Bertocchi of Bertocchi Smallgoods why that was so and he advised that with their buying power they could make demands and get them, plus they bought in bulk.

Yet on most occasions their prices were way above every one else's. They bought cheaper but sold dearer to make greater profits, except when they acted to destroy their competition.

There is so much more that I could say but it would, effectively, be repetitive.

Put succinctly, the two major supermarkets have an excess of power which they use to dominate the market and to obliterate their competition.

If Parliament has neither the will nor the understanding to stop this evil then you will see more and more small businesses close. Just as milk bars are now virtually extinct.

Sincerely

Mr Angelos T Kenos