



Greetings, I'm writing following the invitation for a submission into the issue of IT price discrimination in Australia. I'm not exactly sure how such a document should be worded, nor am I affiliated with any group or organization – though if pressed I would claim to represent the average Aussie Gamer, with (more importantly) an average wage.

I am sure of the many submissions (I should hope) that are sent regarding this issue, this particular link will appear many times. I won't be the first or the last to quote this:

<http://www.steamprices.com/au/topripoffs>

This site points out the top rip-offs we suffer compared to the rest of the world – You can see up to \$50 to \$70 more expensive in our pricing is fairly standard, with a \$90 price point being fairly common place for a new release game compared to the American's \$50.

(To clarify for those not in the know, "[Steam](#)" is essentially the number one distributor and online digital store for the Pc Gaming platform, with over 40 million active accounts and indeed many titles these days actually requiring an account and activation on the service regardless of where the product was originally purchased.)

I've heard rumours and speculation as to the reasoning of our outrageous price discrepancy, everything from: the Australian dollar being relatively low compared to the greenback years ago during the mid 80's – and has never caught up where electronic media is concerned; to: Australian's have a much higher minimum wage (Although **average** wage is rarely brought up, and the mention of our inflated cost of living comparatively is often absent..) and thus should "stop complaining since we can afford it".

The only words that spring into my mind regarding this issue are "[Cartel](#)" and "[Price Fixing](#)" by our greedy local distributors. The argument of increased costs due to shipping physical goods from overseas died the day we entered the digital age – many years ago. There is absolutely no reason why I should be charged up to \$50 more for the exact same 1's & 0's that are purchased from the exact same store just because I happen to have an Australian accent. The word Absurd doesn't even come close to describing it.

If local physical "brick and mortar" stores wish for online pricing to increase so that they can stay competitive then these stores need to get with the times or get left behind. [GAME recently went bankrupt](#) and I have no sympathy for their inability to adjust. JB Hi-Fi on the other hand has recently [announced they will be selling grey import goods](#) at similar overseas prices – A good sign and a start.

The fact of the matter is, amongst all my gaming associates, both physically and across social media such as Facebook (and the aforementioned Steam itself) I don't know of anyone who takes this treatment lying down – between 3rd party online sellers, (be they legit or otherwise) overseas import sites, "Paying" an American through Paypal to gift us their cheaper versions, IP masking for the more technically apt to actually trick these sites into thinking we are purchasing from the USA, all the way to simple downright piracy - I've seen it all and admittedly engaged in all of the above at least once, and honestly can you blame us? All these hoops to jump through just to get a regular (Read: Fair) pricing on what the rest of the world takes for granted.

I look forward to Australia moving out of the Stone Age by finally introducing an R18 classification for games as has been discussed over the last few years, I can only hope we can cease being the laughing stock of the rest of the westernized world completely by fixing our very archaic and disgusting pricing issues as well.

From a savvy game purchaser who has spent a lot of money overseas which could have otherwise been injected back into the Australian economy,

Stephen Delvecchio.