

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF AUSTRALIA, LTD

To:-

**AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION AND CONSUMER COMMISSION
INQUIRY INTO THE COMPETITIVENESS OF RETAIL PRICES
FOR STANDARD GROCERIES.**

IN THE MATTER OF:-

The pricing practices of the national grocery retailers and the representation of grocery prices to consumers.

Consumer groups have long argued for unit pricing to enable a more practical and quick comparison of value for money on grocery items both in stores and between stores.

Recent research undertaken by the Queensland Consumers Association (QCA) and the Consumer Action Law Centre (CALC) has shown that a saving of approximately 47% could be achieved by consumers on 25 major brand items on a shopping basket that "Choice," an Australian consumer organisation designed. This was achieved by buying the same TOTAL quantity of items from only brands and sizes with the lowest unit price.

Current legislation does require that certain prepacked foods to be unit priced unless they are in standard sizes. These foods include fruit and vegetables, cheese and meat and Supermarkets advertising such goods refer to a price per unit quantity, which provides the purchaser with a valid measurement for comparison between similar foods. Not only price per unit quantity of various goods becomes apparent, but value for money can be more easily ascertained through this common comparator.

As a consumer advocate with almost 30 years experience, I support the extension of existing unit pricing requirements which would not only increase competitiveness in the marketplace, but also reduce the cost of groceries to the consumer - as shown by the above research. Unit pricing of food should be compulsory as there is no doubt it would enable consumers to make more meaningful comparisons between foods, and therefore obtain better value for money which would ultimately lead to lower grocery bills.

Some years ago, Australian consumers gave up individual pricing on supermarket goods in favour of shelf pricing - mainly for the benefit of industry. Australia now needs a compulsory, uniform, high quality and efficient unit pricing system for pre-packaged grocery items to benefit the consumer and to encourage competition at the retail level.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important matter.

Prepared on behalf of The National Council of Women of Australia, Ltd.,
By Elaine Attwood,
State Advisor,
National Council of Women of S.A..

The National Council of Women is a national non-government, not-for-profit, umbrella organisation with broadly humanitarian and educational objectives, seeking to raise the awareness of women as to their rights and responsibilities as citizens and encouraging their participation in all aspects of community life.

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