

Sent: Tuesday, 11 March 2008 11:55 AM
To: Grocery Prices Inquiry
Subject: Submission by Jan Laidlaw, Geelong

I am writing to express the hope that this enquiry will really get to the bottom of the amazing price differences we experience here in Geelong between Safeways, IGA and greengrocers.

Recently, I compared prices for some pretty basic stuff - oranges and lemons.

At that time, a three kilo bag of oranges was \$3.99 at my local IGA supermarket, and the same price at the nearby fruit and vegetable shop.

Meanwhile, at my local Safeways, a three kilo bag of oranges cost \$5.98.

A similar situation applied to lemons - a kilo of lemons cost \$3.99 at the IGA and also the fruit and vegetable shop.

At Safeways, a kilo of lemons cost \$5.99.

While Safeways and Coles have stated that they welcome the Enquiry by the ACCC and are keeping costs to consumers as low as possible, the simple examples I have described give the lie to this statement.

Given the advantages that such huge conglomerates have, their buying power means that they would, because of the volume of their purchases, be paying much less for produce than IGA or the fruit and vegetable shop.

I don't have a car, so cannot get to places like Coles and Aldi easily to make similar comparisons.

The difference between the price producers get, and what consumers pay, needs to be explored so that transparency is achieved and the public can see why, how and by how much these differences exist.

Profiteering and price gouging should be thoroughly investigated, and we expect, as consumers and producers, to have ongoing investigation and appropriate penalties for offenders.

Jan Laidlaw