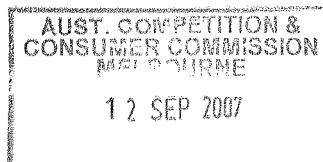


The Australian Competition & Consumer Commission

GPO Box 520, Melbourne

Victoria 3001



Dear Sir

re: ACCC Petrol Price Enquiry

m20071383

FILE No: D07/85771
DOC:
MARS/PRISM:

I would like to make the following submission to the Enquiry.

SUBMISSION

I have no connection with any of the large oil companies, or the motoring organizations, or any political party.

I am just a member of the public - a consumer, if you will - who wishes to highlight one of the main barriers to price competition at the retail level.

Whenever I have phoned a service station to check on the price of petrol on any given day, I am told that it is against the law to give out such information over the phone.

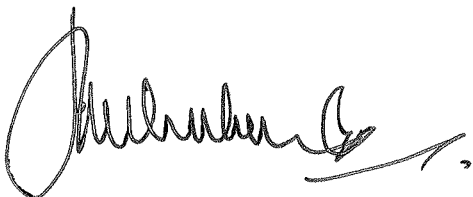
I can phone half a dozen appliance retailers to find out who has the cheapest washing machines or television sets on offer; or half a dozen butchers to see who has the cheapest steaks; or even all the local supermarkets to check on the daily specials, but I can't phone through to the service stations to discover who has the cheapest gas.

This law, and I'm assuming that there is such a law and it's not just an oil company directive, has the effect of stifling competition, and denying consumers of the opportunity to make an informed choice.

Petrol prices are extremely volatile, and may vary as much as 30 cents a litre on a daily basis, and 20 cents a litre between outlets in the same area. The only practical way that a member of the public can find out the lowest price is to pick up the phone, and any legislation or directive which denies that right to know is a direct restriction on competition.

My submission is very simple - that retail petrol outlets be legally obliged to disclose the price of fuel at their bowsers at all times, without reservations.

Price openness equates to price competition. Secrecy delivers the opposite.



John Malcolm Shepherd