

# Contents

Advertising prices—upfront or else .....	3
The ACCC and prices .....	4
Keeping an eye on the airports .....	6
Predatory pricing .....	7
What is prices surveillance? .....	8
Whatever happened to the Prices Surveillance Act? .....	9
RRP—it's just a suggestion .....	10
When a 'wink and a nod' is not OK .....	11
Getting the good oil on petrol prices .....	12
Electricity pricing—how it works .....	14
Retailers .....	15
The ACCC's role in telco pricing .....	18
Competing over the copper network .....	19
ACCC contacts .....	20

## Editorial

THE COST OF GOODS AND SERVICES AS A CONVERSATION TOPIC MUST BE RIVALLED ONLY BY THE WEATHER. WE ALL WANT TO KNOW WE ARE PAYING A FAIR PRICE FOR WHAT WE GET, A PRICE THAT'S NOT INFLATED BY PRICE FIXING BETWEEN COMPETITORS OR BY A FIRM HAVING A MONOPOLY IN THE SUPPLY OF A PRODUCT OR SERVICE. AND WE WANT TO KNOW WE ARE NOT BEING CONNED BY ADVERTISING THAT MIGHT, FOR EXAMPLE, DISHONESTLY COMPARE SALE PRICES WITH BEFORE-SALE ONES. SIMILARLY, WHEN BUSINESSES MAKE DISCLAIMERS, WE WANT THEM TO BE SPECIFIC AND EASILY SEEN.

For most industries and services the ACCC doesn't have the power to regulate or set prices under the Trade Practices Act. However, it can prevent price fixing, which is always illegal under the Act, and it does all it can to stamp it out.

When prices are being discussed over a cuppa these days, the topic is as likely to be the cost of an internet connection as that of a loaf of bread. The ACCC's role in the pricing of services provided by the telecommunications industry and others such as aviation and electricity is outlined in this issue.

Petrol pricing, which is also a hot topic, is not governed by the ACCC in a formal way but cyclical changes in prices are monitored and this can help consumers buy their fuel at the best price.

It is heartening that almost all businesses in Australia are careful not to infringe the Act with their pricing policies. But for those that do, the ACCC will do its utmost to protect consumers from unfair pricing. The articles that follow contain a wealth of information for consumers and businesses on what the ACCC considers to be acceptable and unacceptable pricing practices.



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