

From: s9(2)(a)
Sent: Saturday, 5 May 2018 15:12
To: Policy Webmaster
Subject: GST on imported low-value goods policy

Dear Deputy Commissioner

I write to advise that I believe this policy to be a complete waste of public money, a non-existent issue and an attempt to effectively limit consumer choice. You have approached the issue from the wrong side. Did you ask New Zealand retailers why the cost of books, CDs and DVDs is so prohibitively expensive compared not just online but in actual retail outlets in other countries eg the UK? I emigrated from the UK to NZ and have bought from Amazon UK ever since because of the incredible monopoly creating rip-off pricing, particularly for books. There is no discernible competition here.

Aside from Amazon, in the UK I can go into Tesco or Sainsburys or Asda (large supermarkets) and alongside my food can buy any of the top 10 current hardbacks /paperbacks for a discount of 50% or more. Why is market in NZ limited to a few bookstores - why can't I buy a discounted best seller in Countdown or New World or Pak n Save? In the UK the selling of discounted books, DVDs and CDs in supermarkets has created competition that has brought prices down in traditional outlets such as WH Smith. On my last trip to the UK I bought 3 best-selling new release hardbacks from a retail outlet (WH Smith) for less than the NZ equivalent of \$40; those same books in Whitcoulls cost around \$110!!! How can they just that price?

If I ordered the same books from Amazon I can still get them for \$40 including postage to new Zealand! Online in NZ (Whitcoulls) they are \$110 plus postage.

Here's an example of a best-seller today and illustrates why this policy will make no difference to anyone:

Whitcoulls - online - Fire and Fury by Michael Wolff (bestseller - hardback) = \$40.95 (12-15 day wait!) Amazon UK - £9.99 - around \$19.50 (can be here in a week)

Scenario If I can order this book and then say sell it on trade me for a profit at almost half the price of Whitcoulls current price what sort of profit are Whitcoulls making (and they buy in bulk)!

Even with GST added on with this silly policy it is a no-brainer. And the GST goes to the Govt not Whitcoulls!

In October I was in the UK and ordered a CD on a Saturday evening from Amazon - it was delivered within 12 hours on a Sunday postage free.

Instead of taxing people, who have already paid their taxes here, and attempting to stifle competition you should be asking retailers here to step up their game, reduce their prices, deliver for free (or do I drive 40km into Auckland and pay \$6 per half hour to park and spend half a day to get ripped off for a single book?) and take on Amazon. And no-one has time to look for their 'community hub' bookshop - sorry but they don't exist - people need the time to work to earn the money pay your crazy taxes (local and national).

Even if prices were the same I would still buy from Amazon - the service, choice and availability is far superior. If a book goes missing or is damaged they just tell me to dispose of it and send another postage free. Do Whitcoulls do that? For goods that Amazon don't send direct to NZ I can get them delivered to a friend and they send them to me -why go to that trouble - because NZ is a massive rip-off.

There is no competition in most areas - I voted Labour but not for this - this penalises low wage earners (only the high earners would pay Whitcoull's prices).

Cheers

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