

"Public Submission to ACCC Grocery Inquiry by Georgina Close on
11th March 2008."

I am writing to voice my concern about rising food prices. We are a young (25yrs) married family with a 19mth old baby and another on the way soon. We have a mortgage and I am a stay at home Mum. My husband works full time and also runs a business to pay for our needs which means that we can have our children at home (to be raised by their mother not by strangers at a child care facility) and eat be clothed etc.

With the rising interest rates and very expensive petrol we are stretched to the max and even before interest rate rises we were finding food to be VERY expensive. We believe in good health and as such eat the best quality food home cooked with lots of fruit, vegies and good quality meat. But this is becoming extremely difficult because food (Especially the GOOD stuff) is more and more expensive. I live near a local Coles, butcher and fruit shop that I try to support cause we also live near a Huge Westfield and I don't want our local shops to close because people aren't going to them. BUT food there is just as expensive. (My butcher is great- but because food everywhere else is so expensive we can only afford to buy mince and eat vegetarian 1 to 2 times a week- not very good for humans that need red meat for iron etc – especially for our baby and for when I am breast feeding and pregnant- but again what choice do you have when you aren't able because of unreasonable prices)

To give you some examples

1. I was at Woolworths Tuggerah NSW and normally buy Vallia yogurt in a tub it not very long ago was \$3.99 per tub then they put it up to about \$4.49 then would have it on sale for \$3.99 then it went up to \$4.79 and then the sale price was \$4.49 and THEN not even a few weeks later it was \$5.05!! I couldn't believe it! And also couldn't afford it. It was not even a week or two before that it was \$4.79. If that is not profiteering then I don't know what is!
2. Bread is soooo expensive even the supposed cheap Coles bakery bread is now at over \$3.00! yes they have sales on it at the end of the day but the sale price is what the real price was a few months ago
3. Milk is over \$6.30 for 3 litres!! And for a young family you need milk and the thing that is worse is that the lower fat ones (which are good for you) are the most expensive
4. Coles and Woolies seem to be 'getting rid' of choice, there are so many of there own brands and other brands are disappearing, no free choice. And they also only make them about 20cents cheaper and whenever they put the other prices up the home brands ALWAYS follow suit.
5. Meats in the deli are going up and up some of the leaner cuts of ham are at \$16 or more a kilo
6. Cheese is at over \$9.00 a kilo for just full fat more for lesser fat kinds it used to at the end of last year \$7.00
7. I buy jam in the tin and it has gone up to \$3.49! last year it was only \$2 and that was about November.
8. Tin tomatoes Admona have gone up to be \$2.10 when it was only \$1.60
9. I buy home brand rolled oats from Woolies and they are now over \$2 nearly \$3 and they are home brand rolled oats!! Nothing fancy.

10. Fruit and vegie in supermarkets firstly is awful cause they keep them in freezers for months and bring them out when they want to and also they are just Extremely expensive especially in season fruit!
11. Nappies!! What more do I have to say, I use Huggies nappies because they are the best and keep my baby clean and dry. Coles brand was so bad that I took it back the next day but they still charge Lots for them and they are CRAP! We wait till huggies are on sale and buy a whole bunch. But even the sale is more expensive. When our baby was born Huggies nappies on sale were about \$20 for a box now they go on sale for \$32 ish.! It is unfair because we believe in great parenting and one of those things is to be able to use good products and huggies should be affordable for parents because they keep there child clean!!

So basically it is a marketing thing, they bring in these no frills brands push up the prices for everything else you are paying more and then you are more likely to buy the coles or woolworthes brand, and who does that benefit? Not us! These big companies should not be able to do that. It is tough for young and old families, all we want is to be able to live well, and not be so stressed about money unnecessarily. It is fine to be modest and not go over the top with debt etc but even being modest is really hard when you can't afford the basics and then all sorts of detrimental things happen for example credit card debt, unhappiness which means stress on marriages, stress in parenting etc

Now don't get me wrong we are very happy to pay for what we use and we are working hard and smart to increase our income to be able to afford more, BUT we are NOT happy to pay for products that are at ridiculous prices just cause they can, naked profiteering!!

On another note we have Woolworths shares and they are going up and up, so we KNOW that woollies are somehow making HEAPS of profit on this absurd price hike, and while it is good for our shares we still are not ahead because there is no way to buy more investments when you spend all your money on FOOD!

Please help to reduce the over priced goods and make it a fair price for a fair good.