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Public Submission to ACCC Grocery Inquiry  
by  
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There are justifiable concerns about the nature of urban town planning schemes and how they restrict and affect to competitive nature of small and independent retailers.

The centralised control of the shopping centre is exacerbated by how the actual centre got there in the first place.

Many councils accept the notion and indeed hire town planners that have accepted the notion, that the greater the rates revenue from such large scale developments, the better it must be for all. However, there is no viable alternative discussed and whilst smaller local retailers can get a say in local govt consultation periods, the matter is all but dealt with. This whole notion is "growth out of control" and does not seem to have any reversible trend. Thus, there does not seem to be a viable model for the re-integration of smaller scale shops and independent retailers, once the former concept has been instilled into the community by way of mass marketing ploys and advertising. The smaller retailer has been driven out and will not make a return unless a campaign at least equal to the momentum of the large centre owners, is considered by community and government.

The issue of centralised shopping can be taken to task on the basis of cost effectiveness. The planning of urban sprawl and road networks around the centralised centre does not necessarily make it cheaper for the consumer. The consumer is often locked into driving to the centre and this is a significant contributing factor to the cost of the grocery item getting from point of sale into the home. The whole issue of "ducking down to the shop" is certainly not cost effective any more.

In summary, the town planning concepts of the past three decades have allowed the design of large scale shopping centres to invade the urban shopping grounds. The added expense of profits to shareholders, having to drive to the shop, and subsidising the huge scale infrastructure is a significant contributor to costs of the grocery item. But, by far the main cause for worry is that the town planning concepts of the 21st century have not tackled the issue of reversal of centralised shopping centres...at a time when maybe we all should be open to potential local alternatives.