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Mr Paul Rohal
Adelaide Appliance Repairs

Right to Repair – Productivity Commission (*the “Inquiry”*)

I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide a response to this issue.

Both sides of the argument

As an appliance repairer and with this perspective in mind, we are affected on both sides of the ‘right to repair’ debate. We agree the public needs to be limited from unqualified and potentially unsafe repairs. In particular electrical devices; given that the risk of getting it wrong can be life threatening.

On the other hand, large OEM’s limit access to the wider repair market, the necessary relevant technical documents, tools, and training. Making their repair offerings, in many cases, the only option. Meaning of course, their charges are less subject to fair competition.

We reference Submission 51 regarding this issue: **Dr Jesse Adams Stein** Senior Lecturer & Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Research Fellow School of Design Faculty of Design, Architecture & Building UTS

OEMs must be required to make accessible relevant repair and/or maintenance software information to independent repairers (and/or consumers, depending on the type of product in question). (This point has likely been made many times by others submitting to this Inquiry, so we have chosen to keep this point brief.

Gas/Electrical reciprocation licenses

The once allowable cross over of licensed electricians and plumber/gasfitters for connect and disconnect of appliances has faded into obscurity. It is ridiculous that dual fuel appliances such as free-standing ovens requires 2 trades to repair one oven. Reinstating these licenses would certainly decrease waste and costs to the public.

Warranty Work

Repairs by authorised agents is again another measure to control competition. The manufactures’ agent’s like to use authorised repair agents as a means to affect some control of the negative reviews being made available to the public. If the authorised repair agent doesn’t tow the party line, they lose the work. It is also another method to limiting warranty costs. Because open competition is not in play, customers are forced to wait longer for both repair dates and have to remain at home longer while waiting for the authorised agent to arrive on the given day. Often customers use after market repairers and pay them in order to avoid the inconvenience. Thereby reducing warranty costs for the agent.

DIY part supply

Most of the appliances in Australian homes are manufactured overseas. When an appliance owner decides to DIY an appliance repair they often use the internet to purchase the parts. eBay is a growing supplier into this market. When the eBay parts arrives and fails during the warranty period, consumers don’t know that as part of the warranty process, they have to return the faulty goods to the supplier. The freight to do so is often dearer than the part itself. Not to mention the fact that

consumers don't know if the parts meet the required standards or are in fact suitable to the purpose.

Repair rather than replace

For the most part the decision to repair or replace is driven by the economics. If a system for calculating the land fill cost of appliances were factored in to the decision, then repairing appliances would often be a more economical outcome. This would also drive aftermarket part suppliers to fill the void when OEM's reduces the end-of-life cycle through parts being No Longer Available (NLA) thus making the real end of life potential moot. If you can't get the part, often that is the end-of-life.

Paul Rohal

Proprietor