

On 15 October 2001, the Prime Minister announced that there would be an independent review of the competition provisions of the Trade Practices Act 1974 and their administration. The Treasurer announced the terms of reference for the review and the membership of the review Committee on 9 May 2002. The Committee's report was released in 2003

At that time the writer was president of a society called Australian Justice & Reform, which made submissions to that review, focused on ways to introduce more competition in legal services market.

That Committee's report, as far as I can see, totally ignored the lack of competition in various legal services markets, despite profit margins for solicitors firms of over 30% and for barristers' firms of over 60%. Those margins, which should be around 10% positively scream out that there is a lack of competition, but such is the power of the profession and its powers of obfuscation that anyone raising uncompetiveness issues is tossed into a sea of irrelevant commentary and quietly drowned.

Nonetheless I would suggest that the cost of legal services, and therefore of access to justice, raises matters covered in AJ&R's submissions to the Trade Practices Review.

I now set them out here:

(Also accessible as submission 022 here

<http://tpareview.treasury.gov.au/submissions.asp>)

Yours faithfully,  
B S Dawson.