

To the commissioners conducting this enquiry,

I opened a store called Back Bone BMX in Fisher, ACT in 2005 that specialises in providing BMX bikes, parts & soft goods, as well as BMX repairs & servicing. In the almost six years since opening, I now employ other full time staff & have an online mail order <http://www.backbonebmx.com.au> that sells in Australia & New Zealand. The field that the store caters to is obviously quite specialised & we cater to those that are after a high quality product as our customers are aware that the sport of BMX requires it.

With owning a business, it is an understanding that you will have to 'compete' with other retailers to make a living. As we are a small, speciality business there is only a handful of businesses like Back Bone BMX in Australia & as BMX is quite a popular sport, we are all able to exist & be successful together. My greatest competition is from overseas mail order from the likes of <http://www.danscomp.com> , <http://www.empirebmx.com> , <http://www.chainreactioncycles.com> from who my customers are able to purchase products at a cheaper price than what we can possibly offer. This is due to their products having no tax (GST) put on them and also my customers do not need to pay any import duties when bringing these goods into the country.

I do everything in my power to create the best experience to shopping with my store over overseas mail order, including:

1. I require my hired staff to be BMX riders as a prerequisite to ensure that the knowledge they pass on to customers to be current & correct & passionate, as customers know a non-BMX rider when they see them. I then train my staff to be effective in every facet of the store to again ensure that they can be as helpful to the BMX community as possible.
2. I make every effort within my means to sponsor & be a part of Australian BMX community happenings, whether by providing prizes for competitions both locally & interstate, volunteering my time to create & improve riding places for other BMX riders, creating BMX competitions, offering giveaways, Doing demos at local schools etc, to ensure that both existing & potential customers can see my best attempt to make the BMX community great.
3. During the existence of our online store, I am constantly searching for & maintaining a price as relative to our overseas online competitors as possible.

From projecting these points, I feel I cannot create a better shopping experience for those looking for BMX related products, but despite all this it still isn't enough to stop those making their purchases overseas. The Government needs to lower GST threshold from \$1000 or do something in the immediate future to help curb potential customers from buying overseas to keep my store & stores of similar nature open.

I hope those reviewing this can understand the weight & seriousness of this problem I'm facing.
Thank you for your time,

Rhys Williams

Owner

Back Bone BMX

www.backbonebmx.com.au