



# MEDIA RELEASE

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### Tough new cartel laws in force from today

The Australian Competition and Consumer watchdog has been given tough new laws to use in the fight against criminal cartel behaviour from today.

Individuals and companies that fix prices or reduce choice by distorting the ordinary flow of competition now face some of the stiffest penalties in the world for this type of offence.

Under the laws passed by the Australian Parliament recently, anyone engaging in serious cartel conduct faces up to 10 years in jail to send a clear message that cartel conduct will not be tolerated.

No longer will individuals or companies be able to buy their way out of a criminal prosecution.

Under the new powers, the ACCC can also authorise telephone interception to be used by the Australian Federal Police as part of any criminal investigation.

Price fixing is essentially theft and consumers are the ones who suffer.

These new laws demonstrate the Government's ongoing commitment to strengthen laws promoting competition.

The Trade Practices Amendment (Cartel Conduct and Other Measures) Bill 2009 was passed by the Senate on 15 June.

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