

## Competition Policy in Rural Australia

1. Personal research is on rural education and training (and community development)
2. Most evidence presented will be anecdotal. Some statements are speculative. Some hard evidence is available in electrical power industry (x2) and education profession
3. Small communities and agencies are not generally equipped with infrastructure, and occasionally expertise, but have previously delivered multifarious services using flexible needs based approaches and good will towards the community
4. Larger centers and agencies have competitive advantages in tendering because of larger (and more practiced) infrastructures, eg plant, contract preparation divisions, ... They may and appear also be more experienced at creating 'on going work'
5. Loss of contracts to agencies in smaller centers (whether regional centers, small municipalities or rural/remote towns) dismantles existing infrastructure and workforces
6. This effect exacerbates other decline or loss of infrastructure, service capacity and populations in rural and remote locations. This also diminishes or effects previously provided 'associated' (multifarious) services - like road contractors completing small works on recreation reserves)
7. A knock on effect occurs from any larger player to smaller ones eg regional centers, to a point where rural and isolated communities are under greater survival pressure than previously or otherwise applied
8. Global assessments of community and/or government costs to provide the previous services (such as cost of maintaining recreation facilities in 6) or standards of living (and potential welfare or unemployment benefit payments) are not considered in assessing savings through a narrow consideration of competitive tendering. These costs exist in one form or other, although they are rarely estimated, calculated or counted. They should be for a comprehensive assessment.

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