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THE EFFECTS OF COMPETITION POLICY ON COUNTRY AREAS

(ESPECIALLY VIEWED FROM THE POST OFFICE SIDE)

* Almost all rural Post Offices are privately owned and operated. The operators (Licensees) are paid commission on the work they do.

Because there is not much work, there is not much commission.

They often have another business in the hope that they will keep viable. Often the other business is a country general store, sometimes with a petrol pump outside.

* The effect of competition on these small post offices (ie deregulation of postal services) means that big companies are able to compete without having the set up and operational costs of a post office. (The effects of inter-connection, which is a parasitic idea if ever there was one)

* Rural and isolated areas are already suffering because of the loss of:

- the school
- the bank
- the library
- the policeman
- the hospital
- the doctor
- the railway station
- most businesses
- government services

This means that the population drifts from country areas to cities, making the situation even worse in the country.

A shrinking effect on communities.

Loneliness for young families

Increased youth suicide

Social problems such as excessive drinking

Long distances to be travelled to access services such as: doctor, dentist, etc

* What will happen when the post office closes? The town/area will die completely

* The Liberal Party's rural platform included providing \$70 million to set up "rural transaction centres" (or "one stop shops").

These already exist - they are called "post offices."

Only about half of all LPOs have technology. Why not put that \$70 million towards extending the technology in post offices so that all Australians could have access to all services which are available in post offices. (including banking)

Keep the post office open and keep the community alive.

* The spirit of Australia is still in the country area - but if it is killed by the advent of big business over-running the community spirit of small businesses, then competition policy will have to wear the responsibility.

Australia needs the support, dedication and loyalty of its country people, and especially small business people in the country, to continue its proud tradition of independence and mateship.

These small businesses provide direct employment for local people, some fulltime, some casual, and a spin-off effect in the area.

Left to the mercies of big business, the exodus of people from country to coastal cities would become even more pronounced, making it an expensive and unattractive option to continue to live in country areas.