



Attention: Committee Secretaria - Inquiry into IT Pricing

This submission will focus on PC video games including those available through online distribution portals and popular online stores.

Online Distribution

The most popular platform for PC games is currently the Steam platform, owned and operated by the Valve corporation. On this platform, individual video-game publishers set their own prices, initiate sales and advertise based on the location of the user accessing the platform. [A website called "steamprices" aggregates the prices of all content on the platform and highlights price differences](#). A number of publishers are considered 'the usual culprits' such as Activision, EA and Ubisoft. They regularly price their games at a different level for AU customers compared to US customers, despite the platform only supporting purchases in US dollars for AU customers. Representatives of these organisations have indicated in forums for associated games that this pricing is in place to support local retail partners.

A number of other platforms such as [EA's Origin](#) and [Gamestop's Impulse](#) charge consumers from Australia significantly more for the exact same product, however the pricing discrepancy is harder to demonstrate without a VPN.

Such large pricing discrepancies are designed to drive people towards retail purchases, however among cost conscious consumers, retail is not a reasonable option.

Online retailers

A number of online retailers based in the UK such as [Ozgameshop](#) and [Wow HD](#) are able to provide video games at a lower cost than local retailers, including shipping!

In my personal experience, Ozgameshop is typically 50% cheaper than online distribution platforms which have arbitrarily higher prices for Australian consumers. For example, a relatively new release game like Mass Effect 3, published by EA, [on Origin costs \\$79.99](#) whereas on Ozgameshop, [Mass Effect 3 is \\$38.99 including shipping to Australia](#). This is an astounding price difference considering the copy sources from Origin is a digital download cutting out the middle men of distribution and retail.

These price differences are evident throughout the industry across all platforms. I have provided the committee with a small selection of examples. There are many more readily available examples! I am sure consumers such as myself would appreciate any changes to this regional pricing scam.