

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Gillard must act now to contain petrol price rise

The Service Station Association (SSA) today called on the Gillard Government to act now to protect Australian motorists from unnecessary future petrol price hikes.

The SSA is warning that the creeping take-over of the petrol retailing industry by the two supermarket giants is threatening the very survival of grass roots competition.

SSA Chief Executive Officer, Ron Bowden, says the recent episode of profit taking by the supermarkets as exposed by Geoff Trotter's *Fuel Track*, last weekend demonstrated just how far Woolworths and Coles have gone in dominating and controlling the service station industry.

"Here is undeniable proof that the supermarkets are a law unto themselves. They can turn on petrol discounts when they want, and turn them off just as quickly," Bowden says.

"Australian motorists need a critical mass of vibrant, efficient and effective independent service stations to keep these bastards honest."

Bowden believes that the Gillard Government has just sat back and watched Woolworths and Coles turn yet another important retail sector into another cosy duopoly, wiping out thousands of independents and destroying true competition along the way.

"Unless the Federal Government commences action now to curb the power of the supermarkets, it is inevitable that the price of petrol in Australia will rise faster than the rise in the cost of crude oil. Australian motorists have enjoyed some of the cheapest petrol in the western world (before tax) for many years due to the extremely competitive structure of the Australian industry. Woolworths and Coles are slowly dismantling that and the Government is doing nothing to stop them. Continued Government inaction will inevitably lead to higher petrol prices. The need for Government action has never been greater."

Ends

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