



Commerce (Criminalisation of Cartels) Amendment Act 2019

Public Act 2019 No 9
Date of assent 8 April 2019
Commencement see section 2

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The Parliament of New Zealand enacts as follows:

1 Title

This Act is the Commerce (Criminalisation of Cartels) Amendment Act 2019.

2 Commencement

This Act comes into force on the second anniversary of the date of Royal assent.

3 Principal Act

This Act amends the Commerce Act 1986 (the **principal Act**).

Part 1
Criminalisation of cartels

4 New sections 82B to 82E inserted

After section 82A, insert:

82B Offence relating to cartel prohibition

(1) A person commits an offence if—

- (a) the person,—
 - (i) in contravention of section 30(1)(a), enters into a contract or arrangement, or arrives at an understanding, that contains a cartel provision; and
 - (ii) intends, at that time, to engage in price fixing, restricting output, or market allocating; or
- (b) the person,—
 - (i) in contravention of section 30(1)(b), gives effect to a cartel provision; and
 - (ii) intends, at the time the cartel provision is given effect to, to engage in price fixing, restricting output, or market allocating.

- (2) An individual who commits an offence against this section is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 7 years or a fine not exceeding \$500,000, or both.
- (3) A person other than an individual that commits an offence against this section is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding the greater of the following:
 - (a) \$10 million;
 - (b) either,—
 - (i) if it can be readily ascertained and if the court is satisfied that the offence occurred in the course of producing a commercial gain, 3 times the value of any commercial gain resulting from the contravention; or
 - (ii) if the commercial gain cannot be readily ascertained, 10% of the turnover of the person and all its interconnected bodies corporate (if any) in each accounting period in which the contravention occurred.
- (4) *See* the exceptions set out in Part 2, which relate to conduct that would otherwise contravene section 30(1)(a) or (b).

82C Defence relating to exceptions to cartel prohibition

- (1) In a prosecution under section 82B, it is a defence if, at the time of the alleged contravention, the defendant believed on reasonable grounds that 1 or more of the exceptions set out in Part 2 applied in relation to the conduct that constituted the alleged contravention.
- (2) However, the defence does not apply if the defendant's belief is based on ignorance, or mistake, of any matter of law.

82D Disclosure by defendant in cartel prosecution

- (1) A defendant that wishes to claim that an exception set out in Part 2 applied in relation to the conduct that constituted the alleged contravention, or to rely on the defence in section 82C, must—
 - (a) notify the prosecution of that fact within 20 working days after the defendant pleads not guilty (or at any later time with the leave of the court); and
 - (b) at the same time, provide sufficient details about the application of the relevant section to inform the prosecution about how the exception is claimed to have applied or how the defence will be relied on.
- (2) The court or the Registrar of the court must give written notice of the requirements in subsection (1) to a defendant who pleads not guilty.

82E Consequences of failure to disclose under section 82D

- (1) This section applies if, at the hearing or trial of a defendant, the court is satisfied that—

- (a) evidence sought to be adduced by the defendant is, or is based on, information that should have been disclosed to the prosecution under section 82D; and
 - (b) that information was not disclosed.
- (2) The court may—
- (a) exclude the evidence; or
 - (b) with or without requiring the evidence to be disclosed, adjourn the hearing or trial; or
 - (c) admit the evidence if it is in the interests of justice to do so; or
 - (d) exercise its powers under any other enactment or rule of law that deals with the failure of a party to comply with the directions of the court.
- (3) However, if it appears to the court that the defendant was not given notice in accordance with section 82D(2), the court—
- (a) must not order the exclusion of evidence under subsection (2)(a); but
 - (b) must adjourn the hearing or trial if the prosecution requests an adjournment.

Compare: 2008 No 38 s 34

Part 2

Consequential and related amendments

5 Section 30 amended (Prohibition on entering into or giving effect to cartel provision)

In section 30, insert as subsection (2):

- (2) *See* section 80 for liability to a pecuniary penalty, and section 82B for criminal liability, for contravention of this section.

6 Section 31 amended (Exception for collaborative activity)

- (1) In section 31(1), replace “section 30(a)” with “section 30(1)(a)”.
- (2) In section 31(2), replace “section 30(b)” with “section 30(1)(b)”.
- (3) In section 31(3), replace “section 30(b)” with “section 30(1)(b)”.

7 Section 44A amended (Exceptions in relation to international liner shipping services)

- (1) In section 44A(4), replace “section 30(a)” with “section 30(1)(a)”.
- (2) In section 44A(5), replace “section 30(b)” with “section 30(1)(b)”.

8 Section 44B amended (Further exception in relation to international liner shipping services (price fixing in relation to space on ship))

- (1) In section 44B(1), replace “section 30(a)” with “section 30(1)(a)”.

- (2) In section 44B(2), replace “section 30(b)” with “section 30(1)(b)”.

9 Section 79B amended (Relationship between pecuniary penalties and criminal liability)

- (1) In section 79B(1), replace “section 86B or 87B” with “section 82B, 86B, or 87B”.
- (2) In section 79B(2), replace “section 86B or 87B” with “section 82B, 86B, or 87B”.

10 Section 80A amended (Restriction on indemnities relating to contraventions of section 30)

- (1) In section 80A(1)(b), after “imposed”, insert “; or”.
- (2) After section 80A(1)(b), insert:
- (c) any penalty imposed on person A by the court following the conviction of person A under section 82B; or
 - (d) any costs incurred by person A in defending any criminal proceedings in which person A is convicted under section 82B.

11 Section 82A amended (Exemplary damages for contravention of Part 2)

After section 82A(2), insert:

- (3) The court may not order a person to pay exemplary damages in relation to conduct for which the person has been convicted of an offence under section 82B.

12 New section 107 inserted (Cartel prosecutors panel)

After section 106A, insert:

107 Cartel prosecutors panel

- (1) The Solicitor-General must appoint a cartel prosecutors panel for the purpose of enabling prosecutions under section 82B to be taken speedily.
- (2) The Solicitor-General must consult with the chairperson before appointing the panel.
- (3) The panel must consist of those lawyers that the Solicitor-General considers appropriate.
- (4) Only members of the panel may conduct prosecutions under section 82B on behalf of the Crown.
- (5) In this section, **lawyer** has the meaning given in section 6 of the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006.

13 Schedule 1AA amended

- (1) In Schedule 1AA, clause 2(1), replace “Section 30(a)” with “Section 30(1)(a)”.
- (2) In Schedule 1AA, clause 2(2), replace “Section 30(b)” with “Section 30(1)(b)”.

(3) In Schedule 1AA, clause 2(4), replace “section 30(b)” with “section 30(1)(b)”.

Legislative history

15 February 2018	Introduction (Bill 22–1)
20 February 2018	First reading and referral to Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee
17 August 2018	Reported from Economic Development, Science and Innovation Committee
25 October 2018	Second reading
13 March 2019	Committee of the whole House (Bill 22–2)
4 April 2019	Third reading
8 April 2019	Royal assent

This Act is administered by the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment.