

MEDIA RELEASE

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Christmas trading hours changes are good for independent WA businesses

MGA applauds the decision by the Minister for Industrial Relations, Bill Johnston MP to rationalise the Christmas/New Year trading hours for 2018. However, the decision to reduce extended trading by one hour in the morning as distinct from the 2017 trading hours extension, appears to have been met with a somewhat hysterical reaction from big businesses. Coles and Woolworths are highly dissatisfied with the loss of one hour extended trading in the morning. Which poses the question is it necessary to open so early? Jos de Bruin of Master Grocers Australia thinks not. He said "Realistically if a consumer desperately needs to purchase items before 8 o'clock in the morning then there are plenty of smaller shops around that are readily available for business. This decision is not going to throw people into looking for grocery items On Line as has been claimed just because the local Coles is closed at 7.30 am and the consumer happens to need a litre of milk. Large businesses such as Coles and Woolworths are using surveys that don't appear to have much foundation. They are trying to persuade the public into thinking that the WA consumers are devastated by the inability to shop at 7am. They are just trying to bully the WA Government into changing what is a rational and realistic decision into a decision that they want and are desperately trying to persuade the Government that it's what consumers want. We are fortunate to have a Government Minister stand up to big business and let them know that there is equity in their decision and they are pulling back on the more liberal approach taken last year. We congratulate the Minister for his stance, and supporting Western Australian family businesses, he should be praised not criticised for his decision to stand firm

Mr.de Bruin continued, "When you are an independent retailer you rely on every minute of available trading time. Clinging to every available hour is vital to their survival. Just having one-hour early morning trading for family businesses makes a big difference to their bottom line. The ministerial decision to prevent the big stores from a 7.00am starting time brings some understanding into this equation and instead making 8,00 am the starting time for extended trading hours this year is a small but welcome decision"

Mr de Bruin concluded that "Undoubtedly, the Christmas trading hours for 2018 are reflective of a much fairer approach to a serious issue. We oppose big business encroaching on the early morning trading of Western Australian independent

businesses bringing a little extra Christmas cheer for many family businesses. Just having that one hour to the exclusion of the bigger retailers will make a big and welcome difference.”

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MGA Independent Retailers is a National Registered Employer Industry Association, representing independent grocery and liquor retailers in all States and Territories.

In Western Australia MGA's members trade under a variety of different brand names including; Farmer Jacks, FoodWorks, Supa IGA, IGA, IGA Xpress, Eziway, Cellarbrations, The Bottle O and Mitre 10 Hardware.

In WA, MGA has 491 members, employing over 20,000 staff with a sales turnover of \$2.8B per annum.

The independent grocery sector makes a significant contribution to the WA economy and the communities in which they trade.