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MGA urges the Palaszczuk Government to rethink a Christmas Eve public holiday

At a time when the Australian economy is facing possible recession, the Queensland Government is irrationally contemplating creating a half-day public holiday for thousands of Queensland workers on Christmas Eve. Jos de Bruin, CEO of MGA Independent Retailers, questioned this needless proposal by the Palaszczuk Government for Christmas 2019. Mr. de Bruin said, "At what cost does the Premier propose to achieve what she believes is fair?" He queried how Minister Grace Grace could justify her statement that "employers would be minimally affected".

Mr. de Bruin continued, "It's quite clear that the government is either ignoring the desperate needs of small businesses who contribute \$3B to the Queensland economy or there is a strong element of naivete in government circles demonstrating that there is no comprehension of how serious any increases to wages would be at this crucial time. The Minister referred to the fact that "no reasonable person would begrudge ... workers the right to penalty rates if they work."

Well, no we don't Minister. That is in a sound economic environment, but you are wanting to create a new system at a time when small independent retail businesses are struggling for survival., leaving them with no choice but to close their doors and lose business. All in the interest of giving kudos to a government that obviously has no comprehension of the impact this decision would have on their constituents."

Mr. de Bruin urged the government to rethink this proposed change and concluded by saying, "Small independent retail businesses work hard all year for long hours and just at a time when the economy is at its lowest ebb for decades the Palaszczuk Government proposes increased penalties that will inevitably have a destructive impact on this hard-working sector. MGA urges the government to rethink this proposal and perhaps give it consideration at a time when the economy is buoyant because now is definitely not the time Minister!"

**Jos de Bruin**

Chief Executive Officer | MGA Independent Retailers

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MGA Independent Retailers is a National Registered Employer Industry Association, representing independent grocer, liquor and hardware retailers in all states and territories. These businesses trade under brand names such as Farmer Jacks, Foodland, FoodWorks, Friendly Grocers, IGA, SPAR and multiple liquor banners ranging in size from small, to medium and large, and make a significant contribution to the retail industry and the communities in which they trade, employing 115,000 people and accounting for more than \$15 billion in retail sales.

MGA's Queensland members comprise over 760 independent community supermarkets that trade under brand names such as, Supa IGA, IGA, FoodWorks, Friendly Grocers and SPAR who employ 21,000 employees and generate \$3 billion in retail sales.