# Media Release

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**Small Businesses Must Be an Election Priority**

Small businesses power Australia’s economy — and as campaigning draws near to the end, support for the sector must be a Federal Election priority. MGA Independent Businesses Australia (MGA), representing independent retailers nationwide, is calling on all major parties to act on the key challenges impacting small businesses across urban, rural and regional communities.

Our members are at the heart of their communities, providing essential goods, local jobs, and vital services. Their future depends on practical, fair and responsive policy. To ensure their ongoing success, MGA urges all Parties and Candidates to support action across five critical areas:

**1. Simplifying Employment Law**

Australia’s employment laws are overly complex and increasingly difficult to navigate and understand, which can serve to discourage employers taking on more staff as well as failing to meet the modern flexibility needs of younger workers.

**2. Crack Down on Illicit Tobacco**

Illicit tobacco undermines independent retailers and shrinks Federal tax revenue. MGA urges the adoption of previous federal inquiry recommendations, including a national tobacco licensing scheme, revisit tobacco excise policy through the lens that considers the exploding illicit market and delivering coordinated enforcement with increased funding through National Cabinet.

**3. Tackle Law and Order**

Retail theft, violence, and antisocial behaviour — increasingly linked to illicit tobacco — must be elevated as an urgent priority. We need a nationally consistent approach to protecting the right of people to feel safe in their workplace. MGA urges the Prime Minister to lead a cross-jurisdictional response through National Cabinet that supports the States in grappling with this burgeoning problem.

**4. Reduce Red Tape**

Duplicated and complex compliance requirements are a major burden on small business, including excessive compliance costs, complex employment relations, record keeping and reporting. Governments must commit to clear targets to cut red tape and drive efficiency.

**5. Cost of Doing Business**

Small retailers are being squeezed by rising costs across the board — wages, energy, insurance, transport, and goods — placing immense pressure on viability. Immediate relief and long-term cost containment strategies must be prioritised to ensure small business survival and competitiveness.

**Quote attributable to David Inall, CEO, MGA Independent Businesses Australia:**

*"Independent retailers are the backbone of our communities — but they cannot continue to operate under mounting pressure. We call on all parties to work with us in delivering practical solutions that support small business growth, safety, and long-term viability."*

**About MGA**

MGA Independent Businesses Australia (MGA) is a national industry association representing thousands of independent grocery and liquor retail businesses across all States and Territories of Australia. MGA has been representing family-owned independent retail businesses since 1898. Our members range from small to medium and large in size and account for tens of billions of dollars in retail sales and collectively employ more than a hundred thousand people. MGA’s members are typically smaller in scale than the established large chains. In addition to trading under independent local brands, many MGA members trade under various well known and respected banners including IGA, FoodWorks, SPAR, Foodland, Friendly Grocer, IGA Xpress, Cellarbrations, The Bottle O, Duncans, and Local Liquor. (ends)

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