

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shocking Violence at Family Stores: MGA Demand Government Action Before More Are Hurt

The violent storming of several independent supermarkets by armed youths this week has once again exposed the terrifying reality faced by retailers, staff, and shoppers alike — and Master Grocers Australia (MGA) is demanding urgent, coordinated government action before more lives are endangered.

In incidents spanning multiple Melbourne suburbs across the south-east, masked assailants carrying machetes, crowbars, and swords targeted family-owned supermarkets in broad daylight — traumatising workers and assaulting an elderly customer.

“We’ve raised the alarm repeatedly, and nothing has changed,” said Martin Stirling, CEO of MGA. “Our retailers are not just being robbed — they’re being terrorised, powerlessly expecting to be attacked at any time. Why is this being tolerated?”

MGA, which represents thousands of independent grocery, liquor and hardware retailers, says staff are turning up to work in fear, and families are now questioning whether opening their doors is worth the risk to their lives.

“This is not isolated. It’s part of an escalating pattern of violent, coordinated attacks targeting small businesses — and the perpetrators are becoming more brazen and aggressive with each incident,” Mr Stirling said.

While Victoria Police continue to respond quickly and professionally, MGA argues the time has come for a whole-of-government response — starting with a recognition that the current approach is not working.

“Police are doing what they can — but they’re being left to mop up a crisis that needs political will and policy reform to address,” Mr Stirling said.

The upcoming 1 September ban on machetes in Victoria is welcomed — but MGA says it is far too little, far too late.

“It shouldn’t take public outrage after multiple attacks to prompt action,” he added. “Our stores are community lifelines — and they are under constant attack. Organised attacks by thugs against innocent family businesses should send shockwaves through government.”

MGA is demanding urgent action from state and federal leaders, advocating for stronger protections, increased safety funding for small businesses, and evidence-based interventions that address the root causes of youth crime.

“This must never be allowed to become the norm and our communities deserve better,” said Mr Stirling. “Retailers are exhausted. Their families are terrified. It’s time for government to act — not tomorrow, not next year — but now.” **END**

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About MGAIBA

MGA Independent Businesses Australia is the national industry association representing thousands of family-owned grocery and liquor retailers across all states and territories. Trading under banners like IGA, FoodWorks, SPAR, and Cellarbrations, MGA members are the backbone of local communities — employing over 100,000 Australians and contributing billions to the economy. Learn more at www.mgaiba.org.au.