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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MGA welcomes tough new retail assault laws — urges swift enforcement

Master Grocers Australia welcomes the Victorian Government’s announcement of tougher laws and penalties targeting criminals that threaten or harm retail workers.

The Victorian Government has announced that under the bill to be introduced to Parliament today, assaulting or threatening a customer-facing worker will carry penalties of up to five years’ imprisonment, with lower-level intimidation attracting jail terms of up to six months. Ram-raids will also be reclassified as aggravated burglary, with maximum penalties of up to 25 years. The Government aims to have the new laws in effect by the end of the year.

MGA CEO Martin Stirling said the announcement is an important and overdue step — but stressed that Victoria is only now catching up to the rest of the country.

“Victoria is now coming into line with the rest of the country, and we welcome this action,” Mr Stirling said. “What matters now is swift implementation and strong enforcement, so workers start to feel safer immediately.”

“Small family-owned retailers cannot keep absorbing the trauma, the cost and the daily threat of violence. This must be the beginning of a far stronger and effective response — not the end of it.”

These laws are overdue and should have been in place long ago. Countless business owners and workers have had their lives irreparably damaged. These announcements must be implemented and properly resourced immediately – every day of delay will mean more destruction.

MGA continues to advocate for additional measures to address the surge in retail crime, including dedicated police resources and the fast-tracking of workplace protection orders.

“Our small and family-owned businesses need real, on-the-ground support,” Mr Stirling said. “We look forward to working with the Government to ensure these reforms deliver safer workplaces for every Victorian retail worker.” (ENDS)

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About MGA

Master Grocers Australia is part of MGA Independent Businesses Australia (MGA), 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. Many MGA members in Victoria 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. For more information, please visit www.mgaiba.org.au