

Media Release

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'Enough is enough': Independent Grocers demand immediate action on law and order

Independent Grocers across Australia are calling on governments in all jurisdictions to take immediate and meaningful action to combat the growing scourge of youth crime that violently attacks, torments and intimidates their staff.

Following yet another weekend of violent attacks across Melbourne, store owners, their staff, and families live in fear each day as stores open to serve their local communities.

"This simply cannot continue. Enough is enough. We are seeing the escalation in crime not just in the number of family stores being hit, but the perpetrators are increasingly become more violent," said David Inall, Chief Executive Officer of MGA Independent Businesses Australia.

"Communities are living in fear. Violence against innocent staff is not something we ever expect to see in Australia, and quite frankly, this should have been addressed by now.

"Many of these cowardly attacks are targeting tobacco, with stolen goods then being pushed into the illegal tobacco market. Our members, through this organisation, have been ringing the alarm bell around illegal tobacco for the last eight years since 2016.

"We know that Police are doing what they can with the resources available. They have our full support.

"But we need to see significantly more resources allocated to tackle youth crime, with a substantial tightening of bail conditions and tougher penalties," Mr Inall added.

"Speaking with staff and store owners who were brutalised this past weekend, the message is clear: they are tired and quite frankly expect more from government.

"Earlier this year, the Federal Government allocated \$188.5 million to support cross-jurisdictional task forces throughout the states of Australia to fight illegal tobacco. Nothing is happening, and businesses and their staff are fed up," Mr Inall stated.

"These robberies do not just impact the staff who are on duty at the time. Their families are fearful while their children and siblings are at work. Everyone is affected.

"This lawlessness is the number one priority for our members, and we will do everything to highlight these perpetual political failings and hold governments to account," Mr Inall concluded.

About MGAIBA

MGA Independent Businesses Australia (MGAIBA) has been representing independent grocers since 1898. MGAIBA is a national employer industry association representing thousands of independent grocery and liquor outlets in all States and Territories of Australia. These businesses range from small to large and account for approximately \$16 billion in retail sales within the supermarket and liquor sectors, collectively employing over 120,000 people. Independent retailers represent about 15% of the supermarket and liquor retailing sectors. MGAIBA members trade under various respected banners, including FoodWorks, Foodland, Friendly Grocer, IGA, Supa IGA, SPAR, Cellarbrations, and The Bottle O. Although facing similar industry challenges as major chains, MGAIBA members have significantly fewer resources and many are family-operated, enduring the same economic pressures as the average Australian.

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