



MEDIA RELEASE

Industry-Wide Concern Over Rising Crime

(Company Statement) As widely reported, our North Brighton supermarket, Dockendorffs Grocer, was the victim of an armed hold-up late Saturday afternoon. This traumatic incident has affected not only the team members supermarket team, their families, and communities.

Ensuring the mental and physical safety of our employees is paramount, and this type of criminal behavior is utterly shocking. We are profoundly concerned for the involved team members and appreciate that they adhered to company protocol by avoiding confrontation with the assailants. They are receiving support from our management team and Employee Assistance Provider.

Additionally, we have reached out to all our employees to offer support and reiterate our Theft Policy, stressing the importance of self-protection over engagement. Unfortunately, this type of criminal behavior, while shocking, is becoming more frequent. On the same night as the armed hold-up in Melbourne, our Seymour store was also burgled. Earlier this year, three additional stores experienced robberies, including armed hold-ups.

Despite employing security guards at several locations, their presence does little to deter persistent theft. Cost-of-living pressures are contributing to stress within our community and teams, as well as among business managers who strive to maintain a safe and pleasant work environment.

Our vulnerability as a business is exacerbated by the lack of support from state and federal governments, which is creating an unsafe environment encroaching upon our workplaces. We strongly advocate for state government reforms to bail laws and juvenile incarceration policies to mitigate these crimes and deter potential offenders. We are actively collaborating with the police, government, and industry bodies such as the Master Grocers Australia (the peak Industry Body) to ensure our concerns are addressed.

Moreover, the rise in criminal activity can be linked to the unregulated sale of illicit tobacco, which has emboldened criminal gangs. Reports indicate that illegal tobacco comprises 30 percent of the market. That would mean they have a larger market share than any of the regulated Tobacco companies. These untaxed, unregulated, and unpoliced products significantly impact legitimate, tax-paying businesses. We have actively communicated with the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement inquiry into illicit tobacco and presented eight recommendations; however, none were adopted.

We hope that the recent incidents will prompt the government to finally listen to and act upon the concerns of retailers, thereby creating a safer environment for our communities and workplaces.

For press inquiries, interviews, or additional information, please contact:

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FOODWORKS

