

MEDIA RELEASE

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BGRA welcomes Victorian planning review

Victorian Planning Minister Justin Madden announced a retail policy review at the Bulky Goods Retailers Association forum held in Melbourne last week. The association has welcomed the review, in particular the amended definition which clarifies what items bulky goods retailers may sell from their stores.

“The BGRA is looking for certainty in the Victorian planning system. That means certainty for our existing businesses and certainty for our future planned expansion in Victoria,” said BGRA executive director Philippa Kelly. “Your amendment to the existing definition restores our certainty in the short term and we thank you for action in addressing this matter.”

Mr Madden said his government recognised the strength and size of the Victorian bulky goods sector which now represents over \$8 billion in retail sales. He said that while the government would maintain a community focus in their planning approach, they understood the need for flexibility to allow for bulky goods development around activity centres.

“An out-of-centre development may well be better described as a new centre in its own right,” he noted.

Mr Madden also said that he was across bulky goods planning policy developments in other Australian states, in particular the NSW gazetted definition which is preferred by the BGRA members, and supported national consistency.

In response to the Minister’s announcement, Ms Kelly said that to ensure the long-term viability of the sector in Victoria, the retail policy review must suitably address a number of key issues, namely the definition, out-of-centre development, and recognition of the very distinct and different role of bulky goods retailing when compared to shopping centres.

“We must have a definition that reflects today’s bulky goods industry and has flexibility to accommodate future changes in the sector,” Ms Kelly said, noting that change will be driven by new technology and consumer demand.

“We need to fix the current problem that Melbourne 2030 isn’t clear about out-of-centre development,” Ms Kelly continued. “There are key differences between bulky goods retailing and shopping centres and we need the government to recognise that our businesses cannot and should not locate in shopping centres.”

The Victorian retail policy review will commence later this month and conclude in early 2008 in parallel with the Melbourne 2030 audit.



The minister invited the BGRA to participate in a reference group that will be established to provide input and comment on matters affecting the retail policy review, and said that in the meantime the government would be looking more favourably on bulky goods developments.

“The BGRA supports any changes to the planning scheme that will streamline the process for planning approvals,” said Ms Kelly.

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