



MEDIA RELEASE

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Bulky goods retailers demand national planning approach

At the Bulky Goods Retailers Association quarterly forum held in Perth last Thursday, keynote speaker The Hon Alannah MacTiernan, WA Minister for Planning & Infrastructure, addressed BGRA members and guests and announced the WA government's commitment to conducting a planning review to address future bulky goods development within the state.

Western Australia now joins most other Australian states in reviewing bulky goods planning policy.

"The complete absence of communication between states on planning issues relating to the bulky goods retail sector is ridiculous," said Bulky Goods Retailers Association executive director Philippa Kelly. "We are national retailers with common needs throughout Australia. Why state governments can't share resources to develop national planning policies is beyond us."

The BGRA says that while to date work with the Victorian, NSW, SA, Queensland and now WA governments has been open and positive, members are frustrated by the varied approaches between states.

"What's permissible in one state isn't permissible in another, leading to costly and time consuming planning processes for new bulky goods developments. This affects retailers, developers, agents and consumers and will no doubt have adverse effects on investment in the sector," Ms Kelly continued.

The retailers welcomed Minister MacTiernan's offer to discuss bulky goods-related planning issues with other state planning ministers at their next half-yearly meeting.

BGRA members also expressed concerns over the apparent failure by state governments to properly understand and address the fundamental needs of bulky goods developments, ultimately threatening the ongoing success and viability of the sector.

"While we applaud what various governments are trying to achieve with urban activity centre planning, they must understand that bulky goods retailing is different to other retail formats," insisted Ms Kelly. "Our items are bulky so we need large amounts of affordable floor space for display, safe loading and unloading facilities away from consumers, and car parking because our customers simply won't cycle home with their new microwave."



Bulky goods is a well-established retail sector and recent figures from BIS Shrapnel show the sector represents 22 per cent of all retail sales or a massive \$38.5 billion annually. The sector's growth has outpaced retail spend consistently for more than five years.

Ms Kelly said that unless the retailers can sustain the customer offer of low prices, comparative shopping, safe and easy access and car parking facilities then the industry will not remain viable.

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For interviews and further information on the Bulky Goods Retailers Association contact Ms Philippa Kelly, Bulky Goods Retailers Association Executive Director, on (03) 9859 0534, 0412 787 505 or email pkelly@bgra.com.au.

For other media enquiries, contact Angela Bishop, BishopCunliffe, on 03 9522 1100, 0414 392 181 or email angela@bishopcunliffe.com.au.