

MEDIA RELEASE

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WA Government Commits to Bulky Goods Review

At the Bulky Goods Retailers Association quarterly forum held in Perth last Thursday, keynote speaker The Hon Alannah MacTiernan, WA Minister for Planning & Infrastructure, announced that the WA government would commence a planning review to guide future bulky goods development within the state.

“It is clear to us that the phenomenon of bulky goods has not been handled well in our planning system,” said Minister MacTiernan.

The minister acknowledged the rapid growth of bulky goods in Western Australia and admitted to the state government’s lack of understanding about bulky goods retailing and the specific planning issues that affect the sector.

However Minister MacTiernan welcomed the opportunity to have ongoing open and frank discussions with the BGRA throughout the policy review process.

“Planning policy relating to our sector must consider the unique nature of bulky goods retailing,” insisted Philippa Kelly, executive director of the Bulky Goods Retailers Association. “For this to happen it is vital that the minister and her staff understand the factors that drive the long term success of our industry.”

Ms Kelly said that bulky goods shoppers enjoy the opportunity to compare prices and products in the one location on the one shopping trip and are particularly attracted to the high level of competition among the retailers.

“Our products are big so we need large amounts of affordable floor space for display, safe loading and unloading facilities away from customers, and car parking because our customers simply won’t cycle home with their new microwave,” Ms Kelly added.

The review will form part of Western Australia’s Metropolitan Centres Policy which was last reviewed in 2000, and will be brought into line with the overarching Network City plan.

Western Australia now joins many other Australian states that are, to varying degrees, reviewing planning policies relating to bulky goods.

Members noted the similarities between WA’s Network City and other state planning directions, calling for national approach to planning issues relating to bulky



goods, and welcomed the minister's suggestion that Australian planning ministers discuss the issue at their next half-yearly meeting.

Minister MacTiernan said the WA government hoped that its review would bring consistency among councils in their approach to bulky goods development, and would focus on issues relating to the location and design of bulky goods retail precincts.

In particular, the minister said the review would redefine land use classifications to include bulky goods retailing, and provide guidelines for the location of the retailers within designated activity centres or activity corridors that have specific provision for bulky goods retail.

Regarding the design of bulky goods retail stores and centres, Minister MacTiernan said, "Properly designed bulky goods facilities should address the streetscape and provide a good urban environment."

Ms Kelly stressed that it was essential to the ongoing viability of the bulky goods sector that government, retailers, developers, agents and other key stakeholders share an intimate understanding of all the elements required to create a bulky goods development that is successful in the long term.

The bulky goods retail sector represents 22 per cent of all retail sales in Australia or a massive \$38.5 billion. Its growth has outpaced retail spend consistently for more than five years.

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