

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release



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RECENT COMMENTARY WRONG ON RETAIL

The Fair Imports Alliance said statements made today about the retail industry demonstrate a lack of understanding and are nothing more than an attempt to grab headlines.

Fair Imports Alliance Spokesperson, Brad Kitschke said it was disappointing commentary about the Productivity Commission Inquiry into the retail industry had become a 'bash the retailer' campaign.

"It would be more constructive for interested parties to work with the retail and wholesale sectors to lobby for reforms that would remove some of the barriers faced by Australian retailers.

"Retailers have always said from the outset that they are in favour of structural changes that will allow them to access goods at a reduced cost and offer lower prices to consumers.

"If you examine the pressures faced by Australian retailers - who are on the whole doing it tough - and look at the price points, it's easy to see how and why some products are more expensive in Australia.

"Take the example of the pair of shoes. It isn't as simple as is made out. Add a 10 percent Goods and Services Tax, add a five percent Custom duties and tariffs for footwear. Then take into consideration skyrocketing retail tenancy costs which are some of the highest in the world and to which the trader in the other country isn't subject. Then consider that many of the countries we are comparing with don't pay their staff the wages that retail workers in Australia receive. Rightly this country pays people properly. Then add on the additional charges imposed for freight and logistics in Australia which are not efficient or as cost effective as offshore.

"The public policy debate should be above removing structural barriers and not unfairly criticising retailers. We are advocating for a removal of the GST threshold and no Custom Duties and Tariffs, for reform of retail tenancy laws and improvements to freight and logistic capabilities. Those are things all within the realm of responsibility of the Commonwealth Government and are outside the control of the retail store operator," Kitschke said

The Fair Imports Alliance comprises the following organisations: Australian Retailers Association (ARA), Australian Sporting Goods Association (ASGA), Bicycle Industries Australia (BIA), Australian Toy Association (ATA), Photo Marketing Association (PMA), Australian Fishing Trade Association (AFTA), Australian Booksellers Association (ABA), Australian Music Association (AMA) and the Retail Cycle Traders Australian (RCTA). For more information visit: www.fairimportsalliance.org.au or email fairimportsalliance@retail.org.au or call 1300 368 041.

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For interviews with Fair Imports Alliance spokesperson Brad Kitschke call 0403 809 630

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