

MEDIA RELEASE

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Action required not a two year bureaucratic talkfest

The Productivity Commission's recommendation to lower the low value threshold was welcomed by the retail industry but the two year timeline for any real reform has been slammed by the Australian Sporting Goods Association, who led the fight against the threshold since 2005 and was a founding member of the industry coalition the Fair Imports Alliance.

ASGA Executive Director Brad Kitschke said:

"We were assured by the Government that they had an open mind to the PC Inquiry outcomes. Now we have a recommendation that the threshold should be lowered, but that cannot occur because the bureaucrats in Customs cannot run an efficient agency."

"Whether the PC said that the threshold was a minor or major negative contributor to the current state of retail is irrelevant. The PC has said that the best thing for the economy as a whole is for the threshold to be reduced. So it's up to the Government to make that happen in a cost effective way without delay."

"The answer isn't another two year talkfest. I completely reject the notion that the best way to proceed is to have a taskforce made up of the express carriers and Australia post to look at making their own processes more efficient to enable the threshold to be lowered. These are the same groups whose submission to the PC opposed the threshold being lowered. They won't do anything to assist this process because they don't agree that there should be a lower threshold. We need action and leadership on this issue."

"The Retail industry needs action now. It's up to the Government to take that action. There is only one course of action that is appropriate here. The Customs Minister should instruct his agency to immediately implement sweeping changes to the parcel handling processes to ensure a greater efficiency so the threshold can be lowered. "This Government must decide who is running the agenda, Ministers or bureaucrats in customs"

"Retailers are doing it tough and they are changing and embracing the new market and on the whole are doing so very well. It is time to stop the negative commentary about retailers and recognize their importance in the economy and provide them with some relief and assistance not just criticism.

The ASGA has re-stated its call for a Ministerial Advisory body to be established for the retail industry to advise Government about the sector and play a role in implementing the recommendations.

"What we need is a central point of policy advice from the retail industry to government. We don't need talk fests and roundtables but we need a focal point for real policy advice and action. This Government needs to reach out to the retail sector, not establish taskforces and talkfests with open ended timelines with interested parties who don't want change"

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