

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## RETAIL SHAKE UP NEEDED – BIG CHANGES REQUIRED FOR FUTURE OF THE SECTOR

Leading industry Association and founding member of the **Fair Imports Alliance** lobby group, the Australian Sporting Goods Association (ASGA) says it is time that drastic action was taken to shake up the retail sector, including the way it is represented.

The ASGA is calling for sweeping changes to be introduced to assist the sector to tackle the changing market place, and believes this can only occur by dismantling the centralised power of the retail associations and developing a new retail representative structure. The ASGA has been at the leading edge of debate about the GST Threshold since 2005 and has been calling for the creation of a retail advisory body to provide advice to Government.

ASGA Executive Director Brad Kitschke said

“It is clear that the major retail Associations have failed to lead the industry and provide policy thought leadership in relation to the future of the sector. They are only concerned about competing for membership and revenue. They don’t represent the majority of retailers, less than 10% of ASGA members are represented by the major retail associations. The Government must establish a truly representative advisory structure which isn’t top heavy with the old retail associations. They are unrepresentative and dominated by self interest.”

This call for a greater focus on retail policy comes while the sector waits for the Government to release the Productivity Commission’s report into the future of the retail sector.

“The Government has had the final report since 4 November so the sector is just waiting for its release and for the Government to take some action.

The ASGA says it would like to see positive action by the Government in three key areas;

- The establishment of a truly representative retail advisory council;
- The re-instatement of the \$15m in funding, cut at the last budget, for the Small Business Online Program designed to help Australian Businesses engage in the digital economy;
- Immediate implementation of efficiency measures in Customs which will allow the Low Value Threshold to be reduced;

“The Government has two choices. It can take the report’s recommendation of a lower threshold and establish a taskforce to examine it. Or it can take action, implement efficiencies in Customs and lower the threshold. This issue is about the Government’s willingness to implement change. But for now though we just wait for them to release the report,” Kitschke concluded.

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