

# NATIONAL INDEPENDENT RETAILERS ASSOCIATION



## Media Release

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**3 July 2009**

### **ACCC investigation is needed**

NIRA is pleased that the ACCC has recognised the negative effect on consumers of the duopoly that is Coles and Woolworths.

The CEO of the National Independent Retailers Association (NIRA) Peter Strong has expressed relief that the issue the anti-competitive nature of retail leasing in the large malls around Australia is to be investigated. “If the ACCC proceeds with this action we will see more choice for consumers, a fairer market place for small retailers and decrease in prices.” He added that “the control of leases by these large companies is slowly destroying Australia’s retail culture as we have more and more big American style malls replacing strip shopping and destroying smaller shopping centres. Local governments around Australia have contributed to the changes in our culture and the decrease in the viability of small retailers by ill considered property development. They have given the biggest companies control over leases, products and price and we hope the ACCC will highlight this problem and create some fairness for all.” Mr Strong added that “the big landlords have also managed to take control of local car parking so that consumers have no real choice but to park at their site and shop in their facilities.”

Mr Strong further stated that “family owned stores contribute more to a local economy than the national retailers and we need to ensure that communities maintain a good mix between small and large businesses and that the big players do not force out the smaller shops.” Mr Strong highlighted that “the two big supermarkets and the large mall owners tend to control what we eat and drink and limit choice to what they believe is profitable.”

Mr Strong added that “the current financial crisis, caused by poor behaviour from big business combined with bad government policy in America, is proof that we must ensure that a small number of big businesses do not dominate the marketplace. The government, through the ACCC need to consider the long term impact of policy on price, on efficiency, on choice for consumers and on our unique Australian culture.”

NIRA believes that a healthy retail sector will contain choice for consumers between big and small, between products, between location and between prices; and this applies to books, magazines, gifts, fast food, medicines, bread and pastries, furniture, printing services, fruit and vegetables and all other products. An unhealthy poorly managed retail sector will see any short term price decreases result in long term nation wide price rises.

**Ends**

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