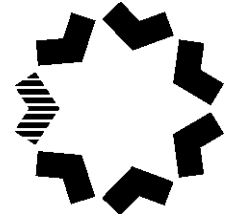


National Competition Council

Casselden Place Level 12 2 Lonsdale Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia
GPO Box 250B Melbourne Victoria 3001 Australia



Telephone 03 9285 7474 Facsimile 03 9285 7477

MEDIA RELEASE

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National Competition Council Disputes Shop Trading Claims

The National Competition Council rejects claims made today that the Tasmanian Government has mis-read National Competition Policy requirements concerning the lifting of restrictions on shop trading hours.

Mr Graeme Samuel, President of the National Competition Council said today that under National Competition Policy all governments are required to review and reform legislation that restricts competition unless the restrictions can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

The Tasmanian Government has now conducted two independent and rigorous reviews regarding restrictions to shop trading hours, both of which clearly demonstrate that maintaining restrictions would not be in the interest of the Tasmanian community as a whole.

As a consequence, the State Government plans to lift restrictions to shop trading hours. It has also recognised its obligations under National Competition Policy.

Following National Competition Policy review and reform processes, shop trading hours have been deregulated in NSW, Victoria, ACT and more recently, Queensland while the Northern Territory retail sector has always been able to trade at times that accommodate consumer needs.

The National Competition Council will be reviewing Governments' progress in implementing National Competition Policy obligations in its forthcoming assessments to be provided to the Federal Treasurer.

For further comment: Denise Healy – 03 9285 7497 or 0417 669 217