

MGA Independent Retailers

(MASTER GROCERS AUSTRALIA)

Modern Awards Review 2014

AM2014/1

**Comments on the selection of modern awards for redrafting in
plain language**

May 2016

1. MGA Independent Retailers (Master Grocers Australia) is a national employer industry association representing independent grocery, liquor and other retail outlets including hardware, in all States and Territories. These businesses range in size from small, to medium and large, and make a significant contribution to the retail industry, accounting for approximately \$15 billion in retail sales.¹
2. There are 2,700 branded independent grocery stores, trading under brand names such as: Supa IGA, IGA, IGA Xpress, FoodWorks, Foodland, Farmer Jacks, Supabarn, Friendly Grocers, and SPAR, with a further approximately 1,300 independent supermarkets trading under their own local brand names. In addition, there are numerous independent liquor stores operating throughout Australia and trading under names such as: Cellarbrations, The Bottle O, Bottlemart, Duncans, and Local Liquor, which are either single or multi-store owners. There are also independently owned hardware stores trading under brand names, including Mitre 10 and True Value Hardware.
3. A substantial majority of employees in the independent supermarket, hardware and liquor sector are employed under the General Retail Industry Award 2010 ('GRIA'). It is estimated that approximately 115000 employees are employed in the independent sector of the retail industry.
4. Whilst many MGA member retailers are small businesses with around 15 to 20 employees there are many employers who employ up to 50 employees or more but still consider their businesses to be relatively 'small'. Most of these members do not have the benefit of in-house human resources facilities and therefore need to be able to readily refer to the award themselves. Whilst there is the opportunity to contact MGA to interpret an award clause it would be more productive for them to have access to a plain language document.
5. There is also a significant number of retailers who have only a few employees and do not belong to an employer association who would no doubt benefit from access to a document that is straightforward and easy to comprehend.

¹ PricewaterhouseCoopers, *The economic contribution of small to medium-sized grocery retailers to the Australian economy, with a particular focus on Western Australia* (June 2007), p iv

6. Whilst award modernisation has resulted in a much less complicated single retail award than the previous complex awards that existed prior to 2010 there remain opportunities to clarify areas of the General Retail Industry Award that are considered to be difficult to comprehend. For example members of MGA have indicated some confusion in regard to understanding a number of clauses in the General Retail Industry Award including, but not limited to, when overtime rates are payable and the interpretation of classifications clauses. If there is an opportunity to provide greater clarity in the General Retail Industry Award by re-drafting problematic clauses such as these then employers and employees would undoubtedly benefit.

7. MGA welcomes the selection of the General Retail Industry Award for the purpose of plain language re- drafting and also welcomes an opportunity to participate in and/or make comment on any suggested re-drafting of the General Retail Industry Award that may be proposed by the Fair Work Commission.



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