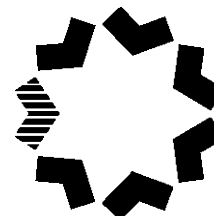


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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Consumers & Workers to Win with Deregulated Shop Hours

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Tasmanian consumers and employees would be the winners as a result of the State Government's announcement to remove restrictions on retail shopping hours.

Mr Graeme Samuel, President of the National Competition Council today congratulated the Tasmanian Government on conducting a rigorous and objective review of the State's shopping laws and, as a result, acting to lift retail shopping hour restrictions.

Tasmania's restricted shopping hours have led to a range of inconsistencies, which has frustrated both consumers and retail businesses and reduced shopping convenience.

Two reviews have now been conducted on this issue – both of which clearly demonstrate that the restrictions to shop trading hours are not in the public interest.

In particular the most recent, independent review shows that removing restrictions will create over 300 new jobs, enhance consumer welfare and create greater opportunities for the retail sector to benefit from tourism.

The predicted benefits for Tasmania have already been realised in Victoria where retail employment grew by nearly 7000 jobs following deregulation of shop trading hours in 1996.

Tasmania's review findings are also in line with economic analysis reported by the Productivity Commission, suggesting that deregulation of shop trading hours would increase retail demand and employment and generate benefits to the consumer.

Removing restrictions does not mean that all shops will open 24 hours a day seven days a week. Rather, retailers can choose to open when they and their customers wish, without breaking the law.

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