

Mr Lyndon Rowe
Chair
Economic Regulation Authority
PO Box 8469
PERTH WA 6849

Dear Mr Rowe

Inquiry into Microeconomic Reform in Western Australia - Draft Report

Woolworths welcomes the recommendation in the Draft Report to lift the restrictions on retail trading hours.

Woolworths believes that lifting these restrictions will have many benefits to the community and economy of Western Australia. The reform has the potential to create thousands of new jobs and could be easily implemented at no cost to taxpayers.

The benefits of allowing consumers and traders to decide for themselves when to shop are well-established. The Productivity Commission considered the regulation of retail trading hours in its 2011 inquiry into the Australian retail industry and recommended that trading hours be fully deregulated. The Productivity Commission highlighted the:

- threat that online retailers, which are unrestricted by trading hours regulation, pose to local bricks and mortars retailers which are subject to trading hours regulation;
- costs imposed on retailers of restricting trade since capital investment is not fully utilised;
- inconvenience caused to consumers by imposing a restriction on their choice of when and where to shop; and
- costs to retail employees who would prefer to work during unregulated trading hours.

The Draft Report confirms that the relaxation of outdated trading hours regulations is a significant micro-economic reform that will benefit consumers and promote efficient and sustainable economic growth. Other states, like Victoria and Tasmania, do not regulate trading hours (beyond Christmas Day, Good Friday and ANZAC Day morning) and it is appropriate that the Draft Report recommends that this approach should be adopted as policy in Western Australia.

Woolworths supports this recommendation and if any further information is required please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Michael Samaras
Government Relations Manager

30 April 2014