



Joint media statement: Check your behaviour when you check in: retailers, retail workers and shopping centres unite with 5 point lockdown action plan

With Australia's two biggest centres of economic activity now locked down, retailers, retail workers and shopping centres have joined forces with a five point action plan designed to protect business and consumers in extremely trying circumstances.

The Australian Retailers Association, the National Retail Association, the SDA the union for retail workers, the Pharmacy Guild and the Shopping Centre Council of Australia are calling on shoppers to abide by health authorities' rules on the wearing of masks and checking in with QR Codes whenever they shop.

The clear medical evidence is that masks vastly reduce the risk of transmission of the virus, especially in enclosed spaces, and that consistent use of QR Codes makes the task of contact tracing much more effective.

Lockdowns are a time of stress, but that is no justification for abusing or threatening retail staff. Essentials are in good supply; there is no need for panic buying; retailers and retail staff are doing their best to ensure you get all you need.

Quotes:

Paul Zahra, CEO Australian Retailers Association:

"Frontline retail staff have played a vital role throughout the pandemic under the most challenging of circumstances.

"We ask Australians to recognise and support the important work of these teams in keeping customers Covid-safe – we are all in this together.

"Unfortunately, customer aggression has been a big issue throughout the pandemic and can be heightened when new health measures are introduced.

"We understand it's an anxious time for people, but our retail staff are simply doing their jobs.

"Retailers have doubled their efforts to ensure their stores are safe shopping environments and will continue to encourage customers to do the right thing and follow the health measures in place. We ask the community to please respect their efforts."

Dominique Lamb, CEO National Retailers Association:

"These are incredibly challenging times for NSW and Victoria and it's critical that everyone plays their part when visiting stores to uphold safety standards.

"Retail businesses and their employees are operating under a particularly stressful environment and consumers need to comply with all protocols when entering a store and respectful towards staff.

"The retail sector has shown repeatedly that it can be trusted to enforce the necessary measures during Covid lockdowns and this is the latest example."

Trent Twomey, National President Pharmacy Guild:

"Community pharmacists and their staff are implementing measures to protect patients and people working in pharmacies during the pandemic.

"These measures may mean that the experience of shopping in a pharmacy is different from what people have been accustomed to where some of the actions may seem confronting and uncomfortable.

"But the measures are necessary to protect the community and as such the people in the pharmacy must continue to be treated with respect and courtesy during these difficult times.

"Bad behaviour towards pharmacy staff simply will not be tolerated. We must work together to help manage the virus."

Gerard Dwyer, National Secretary SDA:

"Retail workers and their employers are united in their determination to provide the community with access to the essentials of life in these difficult and dangerous times.

"Wear a mask and check in with the QR codes. Check your behaviour when you check in to a store. No retail worker deserves a serve. Observe health regulations on social distancing.

"The more closely shoppers follow health and safety measures, the safer shopping for essentials will be for consumers and the retail workers alike."

Angus Nardi, Executive Director the Shopping Centre Council of Australia:

"Our members are operating shopping centres in a Covid-safe manner, supplying the community with essential goods and services.

"We're united with the union and retailers on this issue, and sadly we've seen anti-social behaviour in areas such as food courts along with road rage incidents within car parks.

"We are focused on doing the right thing and in some cases, abuse and aggression towards our staff is the result of them simply reminding people to follow government rules such as wearing a face mask or using a QR Code check-in."

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