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MEDIA RELEASE

New survey shows overwhelming support for shop trading hour reforms, assurance for independents

- A new survey of residents in Metropolitan Adelaide reveals that 75% of Adelaide's adults believe in extending at least some permitted retail hours and 61% want a referendum on the matter.
- South Australians confirm their support for independent retailers, with 90% indicating that they would either continue to, or increase their support of local small retailers if there was a change in trading hours.
- Six in ten respondents believe that reform would lead to a significant increase in job numbers, with 78% concerned about youth unemployment in SA.

Research jointly commissioned by The Shopping Centre Council of Australia (SCCA) and the National Retail Association (NRA) has revealed that six in ten Adelaide citizens are calling for the referendum to decide their shopping, employment and entertainment future, with three quarters (75%) having already made up their mind that at least some permitted retail hours should be extended.

The research follows [modelling released](#) last month by the SCCA and NRA which showed the State's current shop trading hours are costing South Australian workers an additional 2.2 million hours per year, resulting in more than \$68 million in lost wages.

The reform package to be introduced by the South Australian State Government ultimately seeks to give South Australians the say on whether large retailers can extend their trading hours to cater to their customers' needs and give consumers more choice.

The research will alleviate concerns from independent retailers that opening up trading for wider retailers in South Australia will decrease foot traffic, with nine in ten Adelaideans (90%) stating they would support local smaller retailers as much if not more than before.

SCCA Executive Director Angus Nardi said the research shows that everyone can be a winner should the referendum go ahead.

"This is South Australians making their views clear. They want trading hours reform. They want the vote. And when the changes are made, they will keep shopping at their local IGAs, Foodlands and other independents," said Mr Nardi.

"We have known for some time that South Australians emphatically support a change in the unnecessarily restrictive shop trading hours in South Australia. What we are glad to see – but not surprised at – is that small businesses and independents will continue to have a high level of support from shoppers.

"Extended trading hours have been enacted in the majority of states for many years, which has provided greater levels of employment opportunity and allowed consumers to shop more flexibly in line with the demands of modern lifestyles."

NRA Chief Executive Dominique Lamb said the results of the survey were not surprising, and that she hoped it provided comfort to those who sought to block the Adelaide people's rights to referendum.

"The results are telling; the people of Adelaide are calling for these reforms. If it needs to be done via a referendum, then their answer is so be it," said Ms Lamb.

"We know that many small retailers benefit when larger retailers can open and trade, particularly in shopping centre environments. In an age when anyone can buy anything sitting on their couch at home, politicians should be making it easier for shoppers to go to their local shopping centre, not standing in their way. The opponents of this reform need to answer why they are supporting the mega-online retailers as opposed to the local butcher, retailer or surf store owner. South Australians want to go to the shops, why are the opponents standing in the way?

"Many retailers are frustrated with the rigid schedule made available to them by the current laws, which restricts their flexibility to respond to their customers' needs.

"The enactment of the extended trading hours will put money back into the pockets of local businesses, increase employment of students and part-time workers and enliven shopping precincts as social areas."

The South Australian Government's Bill is currently seeking Parliament's approval to put the referendum to electors on March 19 next year.

Ends

MORE INFORMATION/INTERVIEWS:

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Note: The research will be available on both the Shopping Centre Council of Australia website (<https://www.scca.org.au/>) and the National Retail Association website (<https://www.nra.net.au/>).