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MEDIA RELEASE

'BE KIND IN RETAIL' CAMPAIGN RETURNS WITH MASSIVE INVESTMENT AND EXPANSION PROMOTING RESPECT AND SAFETY

The *Be Kind in Retail* campaign, Australia's leading retail safety and respect campaign, returns on 4 November, as the retail industry unites to tackle unacceptable behaviour towards workers and promote safer, more respectful retail environments.

Customer aggression, abuse and violence remain a serious concern for Australia's retail industry. Research published by the Australian Retail Council highlights the scale of the challenge, with 51 per cent of retailers reporting physical abuse monthly or more frequently, and 87 per cent of retail workers reporting experiencing verbal abuse.

The impact extends across the workforce, including retail and pharmacy team members, security officers, cleaners, convenience and fuel attendants, and shopping centre staff. These workers should never have to accept abuse, intimidation or aggression as part of their job.

With an industry investment valued at more than $10 million, from November 4 across the busy Christmas shopping period, *Be Kind in Retail* campaign advertising will appear across more than 2,700 locations, including more than 400 shopping centres, reaching millions of Australians as they shop.

The campaign is a joint-industry initiative supported by the Shopping Centre Council of Australia (SCCA), the Australian Retail Council (ARC), the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Australian Security Industry Association Limited (ASIAL), the Australian Association of Convenience Stores (AACS) and the Building Service Contractors Association of Australia (BSCAA), with the support of a growing coalition of retail partners.

New partner Viva Energy Retail (OTR and Reddy Express) join longstanding supporters Woolworths, Hoyts Cinemas and Commonwealth Bank, alongside other participating organisations.

Be Kind in Retail aims to address unacceptable behaviour towards workers by encouraging a simple but powerful message: *kindness and respect should be the standard in every retail environment.*

The industry has deliberately chosen a positive, behaviour-focused message. SCCA research indicates that positive messaging can be an effective way to influence behaviour, making respect the central theme of the campaign rather than focusing solely on negative conduct.

The *Be Kind in Retail* campaign is an example of industry-led collaboration in action, demonstrating how businesses and industry associations can work together to promote safer workplaces and improve the experience of workers and customers alike.

Alongside *Be Kind in Retail*, the industry is working with governments and police to deliver practical results, including stronger action against illicit tobacco, Workplace Protection Orders and coordinated retail crime strategies and operations. Operation Percentile in NSW, Operation Measure in South Australia and Operation Pulse in Victoria demonstrate the impact of industry, government and law enforcement working together to target offenders, disrupt criminal activity and make retail environments safer.

Guy Barnett, Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs said: "No Tasmanian should have to put up with abuse, threats or violence simply because they are doing their job. Everyone deserves to go to work feeling safe, whether they are serving customers at a supermarket, working in a pharmacy or keeping our shopping centres safe and clean. Our Government is taking strong action to strengthen protections for workers. We will introduce legislation to establish Workplace Protection Orders, giving courts another tool to protect workers from people who have demonstrated violent, intimidating or threatening behaviour. We are sending a clear message that this behaviour has no place in our community and will not be tolerated."

Angus Nardi, Chief Executive of the SCCA said: "*Be Kind in Retail* is about making respect towards workers in retail settings part of everyday life. Whether someone is working in a shopping centre, serving customers at a supermarket, refueling a vehicle, cleaning a food court or working as a security guard, they deserve to be treated with kindness. By bringing this message to thousands of shopping centres and retail locations across Australia, we are working together to encourage better behaviour and help create safer, more respectful workplaces."

Professor Trent Twomey, National President of The Pharmacy Guild of Australia said: "Everyone deserves to come to work and return home feeling safe. Community pharmacists and their teams are deeply embedded in local communities, supporting patients and families every day. This campaign is an important reminder that we can all do better in treating one another with kindness and respect, helping build stronger communities and safer workplaces for all Australians."

Chris Rodwell, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Retail Council said: "Every retail worker deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. It's especially busy at this time of the year. There's no excuse for forgetting your manners in the rush. Being courteous to a retail worker can make more of a difference than you realise. A smile, a thank you or a little patience on a busy day can go a long way. We all have our bad days, but no retail worker deserves your temper. They are somebody's family or friend. They deserve to go home safe and feeling ok, not weighed down by abuse. This busy shopping season let's remember the person behind the counter. A little kindness makes the experience better for everyone and can mean the world to the person serving you."

Theo Foukkare, Chief Executive Officer of AACS said: "The 80,000 frontline staff across the convenience industry serve 20 million customers in communities all around Australia every week. They all deserve to feel safe and respected at work. AACS is proud to support *Be Kind in Retail* and its call for a kinder, safer Christmas for all retail workers."

Bryan de Caires, Chief Executive Officer of ASIAL said: "There is absolutely no excuse for violence, aggression, intimidation or abuse towards security officers, cleaning staff and retail workers. They deserve dignity, respect and the right to go to work without fear of being threatened or assaulted. It is time for the community to stand together and send a clear message: violence is never acceptable, and everyone has a responsibility to treat frontline workers with respect. Every worker deserves to finish their shift safely and return home to their family."

Kim Puxty, Chief Executive Officer of BSCAA said: "The people who clean, secure and maintain our retail spaces often start before the doors open and finish long after they close, many of them as contractors in someone else's workplace. On behalf of our members across cleaning, security and facilities services, I encourage everyone to offer a simple thank you, a little patience and a smile, because they make a real difference and respect is something we all share responsibility for. BSCAA is proud to support *Be Kind in Retail* this Christmas."

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS:

- **The campaign will run from Wednesday 4 November (day after Melbourne Cup) to Thursday 24 December 2026** – covering the busy Christmas shopping period
- **2,700+ locations – 400+ participating shopping centres, 650+ participating bank branches, 1,650+ participating fuel and convenience outlets (approx. 750 7-Eleven, & approx. 900 Viva Energy Retail (OTR & Reddy Express), 50+ participating cinemas** – covering all jurisdictions
- **7,600+ digital screens** – ensuring wide community reach.
- **$10M+ commercial advertising value** – reflecting the coalition's steadfast dedication.

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