



New \$100 Million + Grocery Distribution Centre for Tas

Statewide Independent Wholesalers (SIW) has announced plans to develop a major state-of-the-art distribution centre in Tasmania.

The \$106 million infrastructure development in Launceston will provide Tasmania with a long-term efficient supply chain network to service supermarkets across the state.

SIW Chairman, Michael Kent, said the world-class 60,000 square metre facility would house the latest, safest and most efficient supply chain technology and would deliver optimal service to the 208 independent supermarkets throughout Tasmania.

SIW is a Tasmanian company jointly owned by Tasmanian Independent Retailers (TIR) and Woolworths Limited. SIW currently operates two major distribution centres in Launceston.

Mr Kent said Tasmania's food supply network was at capacity and the current system was less than optimal, with four distribution centres and an inefficient transport network.

"The strong Tasmanian economy in recent years has seen consumer spending increase by 7.7 per cent in the year to March 2008 and food retailing grew by almost 9 per cent

in 2007. These factors continue to push the supply chain network beyond capacity.

"This \$106 million investment in Tasmania's retail industry will see SIW develop a world-class distribution centre which will leverage world leading supply chain technology.

"The new facility will contain grocery, chiller, freezer and fresh produce products and employ the latest transport loading facilities and warehousing technology.

"The new Tasmanian distribution centre will enable SIW to introduce sophisticated transport management systems and logistics strategies to deliver a better service and keep costs low at a time when operating costs are rising."

Following the development, the SIW 4 existing distribution centres will be consolidated into one.

Mr Kent said combined the companies employed 8400 Tasmanians. Both companies had a strong history of employee retention and engagement of staff and the wellbeing of employees was a primary consideration.

"The Boards of the two companies have endorsed this project and I am delighted that we are now able to announce this major development for Tasmania, one that will revolutionise the food supply chain in this state."

"Importantly, our ongoing investment in the new distribution centre will create new jobs and benefits for Tasmanian consumers into the future," Mr Kent said.

GroceryChoice Does Not Help Small Retailers.

The Federal Government's new Consumer website, GroceryChoice is not providing realistic information according to many of its critics. The information is often out of date by the time it reaches the site, it gives free advertising to the major chain stores and it fails to identify promotional items and specific products.

Consumers are not really being serviced by this expensive Government initiative. Even if consumers are told that a major chain is offering a discounted item, they are not told whether the item is the same price in all of those stores. Also even where the site reveals that independent supermarkets have a cheaper price on an item the actual name of the supermarket is not provided. There are no benefits for independent supermarkets.

GroceryChoice may be aimed at assisting consumers to make sound economic decisions and increase competition but in its current form there are too many unfair flaws for small retailers and the Government needs to address these inequities.

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