

NARGA under the stewardship of Ken Henrick, and the Presidency of John Cummings have been very active building sustainable relationships at a federal level with key politicians from both the Labor and Liberal parties. The key issues and activities NARGA have addressed have been associated with strengthening the Trade Practices Act in the areas of predatory pricing, creeping acquisitions and price discrimination to provide greater protection for small business to compete in the market place and of course the submission to the ACCC Inquiry into Grocery Pricing.

ALSA, led by Terry Mott as Executive Director and Mal Higgs as President has also been active in building sustainable relationships with key politicians at a federal level. Key issues that have been addressed are responses to the National Health and Medical Research Committee report, alcohol advertising and retailer alert, high ABV RTDs', alcohol warning labels, container deposit legislation, Alcopops tax and the Federal Government Alcohol Policy, to name a few.

The most important ALSA initiative this year has been the launch to industry of two campaigns are designed to set the same high standards of conduct for serving packaged liquor to the public around the nation. The "ID 25" and "Don't Buy It For Them" campaigns have been developed specifically for packaged liquor licensed outlets to use in their stores. The color scheme and the words deliver a consistent message to consumers of all ages, both at store level and in media advertising.

MGA has forwarded a number of submissions representative of the views of independent supermarkets to various state and federal government bodies over the past 12 months. Submissions and committee engagements included:

- The Australian Fair Pay Commission (AFPC) – Wages Increase Review / Junior Wage Review
- The Productivity Commission – Parental Leave
- The ACCC – Inquiry into Grocery Pricing
- Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) – Award Modernisation – Retail Awards prioritised
- Senate Economics Committee – Unit Pricing
- OH&S - National Harmonisation
- NSW – amendments to the Tobacco Act – removing Tobacco from display
- ACT - amendments to the Tobacco Act – removing Tobacco from display
- Victoria – Victorian Retail Planning Policy Review
- Victorian Liquor Licensing Commission – Liquor Control Advisory Committee
- Victorian Council of Small Business
- Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee
- Industrial Relations Victoria research project into work life balance in independent supermarkets

MGA has become better known to the media with radio stations and print media from around the nation seeking MGA's point of view on various issues facing independent supermarkets.

Initiatives

Independent Grocery and Liquor Supermarkets play a significant leadership role in their respective communities. Many global trends, concerns and issues are addressed in stores with conviction and passion. One such issue is the environment. MGA has issued a policy statement along with solutions to encourage consumers to reduce their usage of plastic shopping bags and for stores to save on their power costs. Color posters encouraging consumers to use "Green Bags" and for staff in store to "Save Power" have been designed and posted to the MGA website.

The Scanning Code Of Practice has been modified to suit independent supermarkets around Australia. MGA will take full responsibility for administration of this industry code.

Master Groccers Australia Insurance Services

Industry specific small, medium and large grocery and liquor supermarket insurance will be provided by Master Groccers Australia Insurance Services from 1st September 2008. After much rigor and due diligence over a long period of time, MGA has formed a strategic partnership with the Austbrokers Insurance Group to form this new industry insurance business. There are 88 branches around Australia able to provide our industry with the service our members would expect. MGA Insurance Services will have value for money insurance policies tailored for the specific needs of each business, and will also alleviate concerns over businesses currently being underinsured.

Packaged Liquor

Packaged Liquor is an essential department and business driver for many MGA members. Membership representation on various liquor bodies is currently a key MGA focus at both state and federal levels. As continued government and public scrutiny of the misuse and abuse of alcohol, as a source of harm to people and property escalates, members are required to be continuously rigorous and vigilant to comply with the "sale of packaged liquor rules and regulations" in each state. MGA will be improving its information support and services over the next 12 months to ensure members are kept fully abreast of initiatives and actions concerning their businesses.

Thank You

Finally, I wish to thank all industry stakeholders for their support and commitment to the growth of MGA. I particularly wish to thank the MGA board, led by Board President Rodney Allen, for their ongoing support and commitment to the MGA growth strategy as well as the dedicated management and staff of MGA who constantly commit to delivering service and support beyond members expectations.

Jos de Bruin