

Media Release

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Recognising retail excellence in challenging times - 2009 ARA Australian Retail Awards nominations now open

Nominations are now open for the ARA Australian Retail Awards which celebrate the best major retailers, smaller owner-operated stores and retail innovation, as well as the achievements of young retail talent across the country.

Australian Retail Association (ARA) Executive Director Richard Evans said there were two categories currently open for nomination – the **ARA Young Retailer of the Year** and **Independent Retailer of the Year**.

“After over 12 months of reduced consumer demand and falling retail sales, the ARA Australian Retail Awards are a great opportunity for retailers to receive recognition for some outstanding performances and displays of ingenuity, innovation and business nous during an extremely difficult trading period,” Evans said.

“During the economic downturn, both consumer and retailer confidence have suffered some severe blows, but industry recognition for a job well done will offer a much deserved boost for savvy retailers.

“Smaller retailers in particular have been working hard to adjust to reduced consumer demand and the Independent Retailer of the Year award is an opportunity for local governments, Retail Traders Associations (RTAs), Business Enterprise Centres and Chambers of Commerce to recognise and reward their best performing retailers.

“Retail is the largest employer of young people in Australia and the ARA Young Retailer of the Year award is a chance for companies to showcase their best young talent on a national stage – after all, the future of the industry is driven by the enthusiasm and spirit of young employees.

“Retailing provides an excellent career track for young Australians and positive role models provide incentive for young Australians to consider a retail career, ultimately assisting recruitment to the sector,” Evans said.

Nomination registrations for Independent Retailer of the Year and ARA Young Retailer of the Year close on 15 June 2009. Other ARA Australian Retail Awards Categories include the Retail Innovation of the Year (President’s Award) and the industry’s top honour – the Australian Retailer of the Year - with industry-voted category winners to be announced in the coming weeks.

The ARA Australian Retail Awards program is designed to recognise the outstanding achievements of individuals and organisations in the growth and development of their businesses and their contributions towards retailing in Australia. Award categories in 2009 include Independent Retailer, Retail Innovation, ARA Young Retailer and Retailer of the Year. **For further information and nomination forms please visit www.australianretailawards.com.au or contact 1300 368 041 or awards@retail.org.au**

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