

JUST SEVEN HOURS

Why everyone will benefit from retail trading reform

NOVEMBER 2026

Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA

Ticking along: The case for change

In every other State, businesses have considerable freedom and flexibility to open whenever they like. However, in Western Australia, businesses are caught up in complex web of antiquated and confusing rules, which dictate what products can be sold, and when they can be bought.

The world has changed since 2012, but our retail trading hours have not. For example, the last time trading hours changed in Western Australia:

- The Apple iPhone 5 was first released.
- Construction had only just started on Elizabeth Quay.
- The Burswood Dome hosted the Beach Boys for its last show.
- Uber was two years away from launching in Perth.
- Korean singer PSY released his song, Gangnam Style.

In Perth, retailers can't open until 11am on a Sunday. By contrast, in Margaret River and in Sydney, the same retailer can open when they decide they want to.

In Perth, a local hardware shop can sell light bulbs but not light fittings, outdoor lighting but not indoor lighting, wood-fire heaters but not gas heaters, indoor TV antennas but not outdoor TV aerials, and kitchen sinks but not dishwashers.

Our system is a quarter of a century old and based on the principles of the English 1677 Sunday Observance Act. These rules create lost opportunity for businesses, who also risk costly penalties if they get it wrong.

The fine for trading outside hours? Up to $25,000 for repeated breaches of the Act.[1]

While WA pushes for more international tourism to WA and Perth, we continue to see restrictive shopping hours that have tourists leaving with the money intended to be spent here in their pockets.

We are proposing a commonsense change: the complete removal of regulations that set out prescribed products, and to increase the hours for general retail by seven hours a week.

We propose that the State Government **trial our commonsense approach to trading hours for five years.** This will provide sufficient data for an informed decision on whether to expand shopping hours to the rest of the Perth metropolitan area.

CCIWA's Common Sense proposal for Reform

	Current rules	Proposed changes
Monday-Friday	8am-9pm, Friday late night shopping	No change
Saturday	8am - 5pm	8am - **9pm**
Sunday	11am - 5pm	**8am** - 5pm
Public Holidays	11am - 5pm	**8am - 6pm**
Regulations	The Government dictates each product that certain types of stores can and cannot sell to consumers	**Allow businesses to decide what they sell and when**

[1] WA Government. Retail Trading Hours Act 1987.

Why does WA need retail trading reform?



BUSINESSES SHOULD HAVE THE CHOICE ON WHEN AND WHAT THEY SELL

Businesses should have the ability to decide what and when they trade to customers. **These laws and regulations are complex and confusing and have not been updated for more than 20 years.**



ACTIVATION OF HIGH STREETS

With many local high streets and a growing number of mixed used developments across Perth, **additional trading hours will help smaller businesses and activate spaces**.

In Sydney, for example, diverse options of mixed retail, hospitality, and other shopfronts have reinvigorated the evening to late night trading economy and injected new life into highstreets.



WE MARKET WA INTERNATIONALLY FOR VISITORS YET THEY CAN'T GO AND SPEND IN WA SHOPS

Perth is a global city, yet from 5pm on a Saturday, a tourist would not be able to do any shopping until 11am the next morning, reducing what they may spend and impacting Perth's competitiveness as a holiday destination.



FOOT TRAFFIC FOR SMALLER BUSINESSES

In retail leasing, large retailers are anchor tenants who lure much of the foot traffic to a shopping centre or precinct. A premium is paid by smaller leaseholders be closer to the front doors of the large retailer. **By providing more opportunity to open, smaller tenants will see more foot traffic.**

Business and the Public Support Additional Trading Hours

Despite the common misconceptions – the Western Australian public and businesses continue to agree that retail trading hours need to be expanded.

WA HOUSEHOLDS

WA consumers continue to call for extended retail trading hours. **More than 4 out of 5 (82%)** respondents to CCIWA's September 2025 Consumer Confidence survey did not oppose extended retail trading hours.

More than 6 in 10 (65%) agree that it would be more convenient for them if all retailers could open earlier on a Sunday.

This evidence is clearly visible when you consider the lines of people waiting to get into a local supermarket before opening time on a Sunday.

WA BUSINESSES

WA Businesses continue to support extending retail trading hours, with **less than 20% opposing the change** when asked in CCIWA's March 2026 Business Confidence survey.

More than half of businesses (53%) believe that both weekdays and weekends should have extended shopping hours.

At a time when small businesses face challenging cost pressures, it is critically they have the ability to work in a way that helps them the most.

CITY OF ALBANY 2024 RETAIL TRADING SURVEY

A 2024 non-binding survey in the City of Albany showed 4 in 5 surveyed supported extended trading hours for Sundays. There was similar support for extended trading hours on weekdays.

Across three different platforms, more than 11,000 people and businesses responded.

City of Albany Survey results	
Business supporting Sunday Trading to be introduced	76%
Youth supporting Sunday Trading to be introduced	81%
Business supporting Extended Weekday Trading	75%
Youth supporting Extended Weekday Trading	86%

Business support was similarly strong, with 76% supporting extending trading hours.

These results show that the Western Australian public and businesses alike want more choice.

Surely the Rules are Not that Complex?

WA's trading rules are governed by 13 pages of legislation, with various requirements or conditions dependent on what a store sells, the size and employment types. This introduces a few anomalies if you want to run a retail business in WA.

First, **restrictions on opening hours do not apply to hospitality premises**, such as cafés bars, restaurants, **or retail stores north of Shark Bay**, the 26th parallel.

For example, small retail shops are excluded from WA's retail trading legislation and can operate 24/7. These shops are owned by up to six people who operate no more than four retail premises, in which up to 25 people work at any one point in time (not including apprentices).

For everyone else, there are two main categories of retail shops, each governed by different sets of regulation:

1. General retail shops

These are retailers with more than 25 people working at any one time, and are owned by more than six people who operate more than four stores.

They cannot open outside the following hours:

- Monday – Friday: 8am-9pm
- Saturday: 8am-5pm
- Sunday: 11am-5pm
- Public Holiday: 11am-5pm

2. Special retail shops

If a shop falls into this category, it is allowed to trade from 6am to 11:30pm every day of the year.

To find out if a business is eligible, the owners will need to check another eight pages of regulation to determine what individual goods and services the shop can sell. Some items haven't been updated in more than 20 years.

What happens if you don't get it right? This is where it gets more problematic for WA retailers.

There are serious penalties for businesses if this confusing jumble of regulations are breached.

Fines for each breach of laws or regulations will escalate from $5,000 for first offence to more than $25,000 for a fourth offence.

For the eight pages of regulation, you will face similar penalties.

TALK ABOUT CONFUSING.

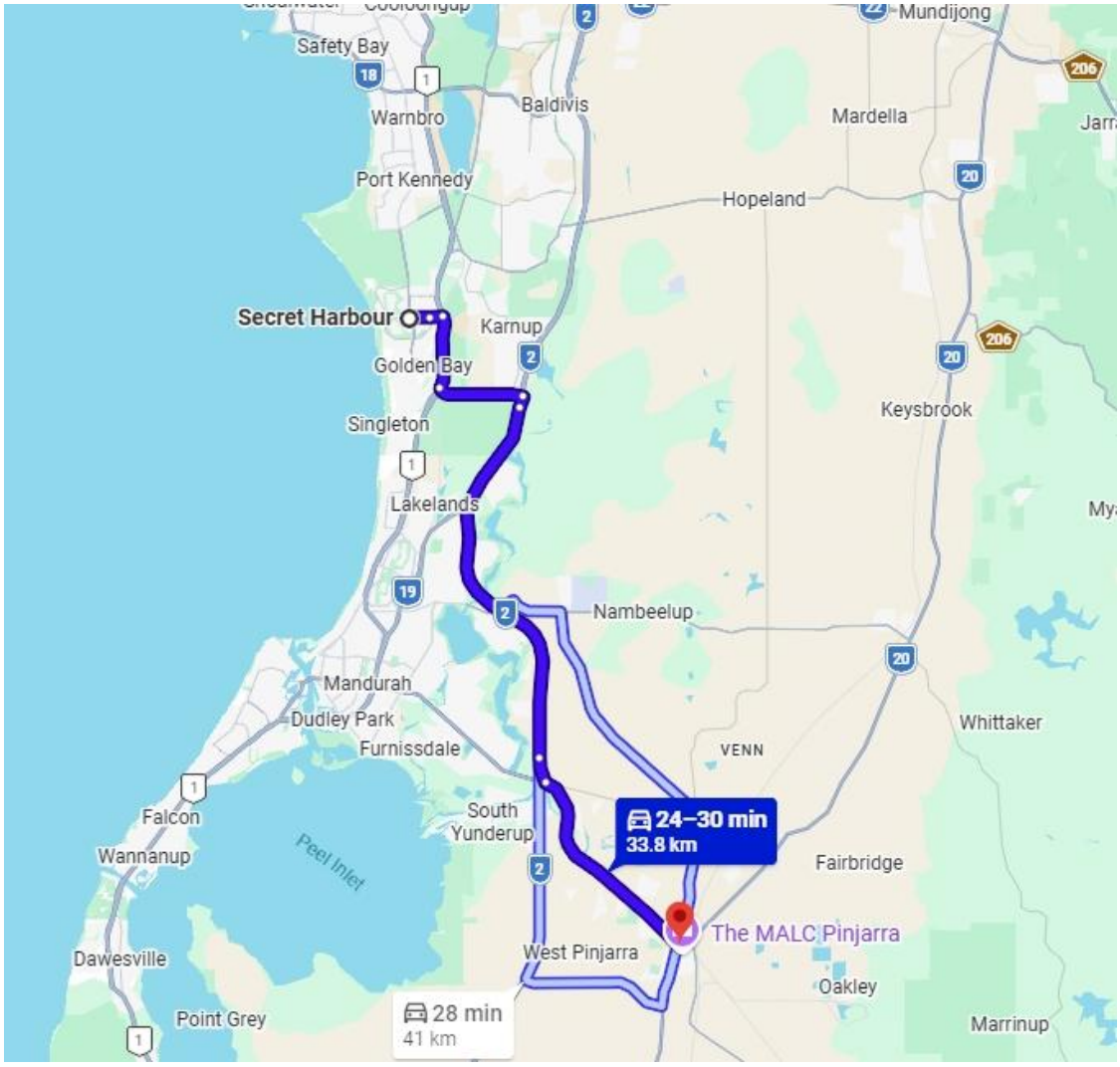
The big divide: Mapping WA's retail trading laws

It is useful to look at some of Perth's outer suburbs to highlight how pointless WA's restrictive retail trading hours are.

Secret Harbour

If you live in Secret Harbour, on Perth's southern suburban fringe, you can drive 25 minutes to Pinjarra (where the supermarket opens at 8am) to your grocery shopping and get it all home – all before the supermarket in your suburb is allowed to open its doors at 11am.

Figure 1: Map of Secret Harbour to Pinjarra



That's great news for the smaller retailers in Pinjarra, who will be able to sell coffees, pastries and newspapers. But it's bad news for retailers in Secret Harbour, and for the consumer who craves convenience.

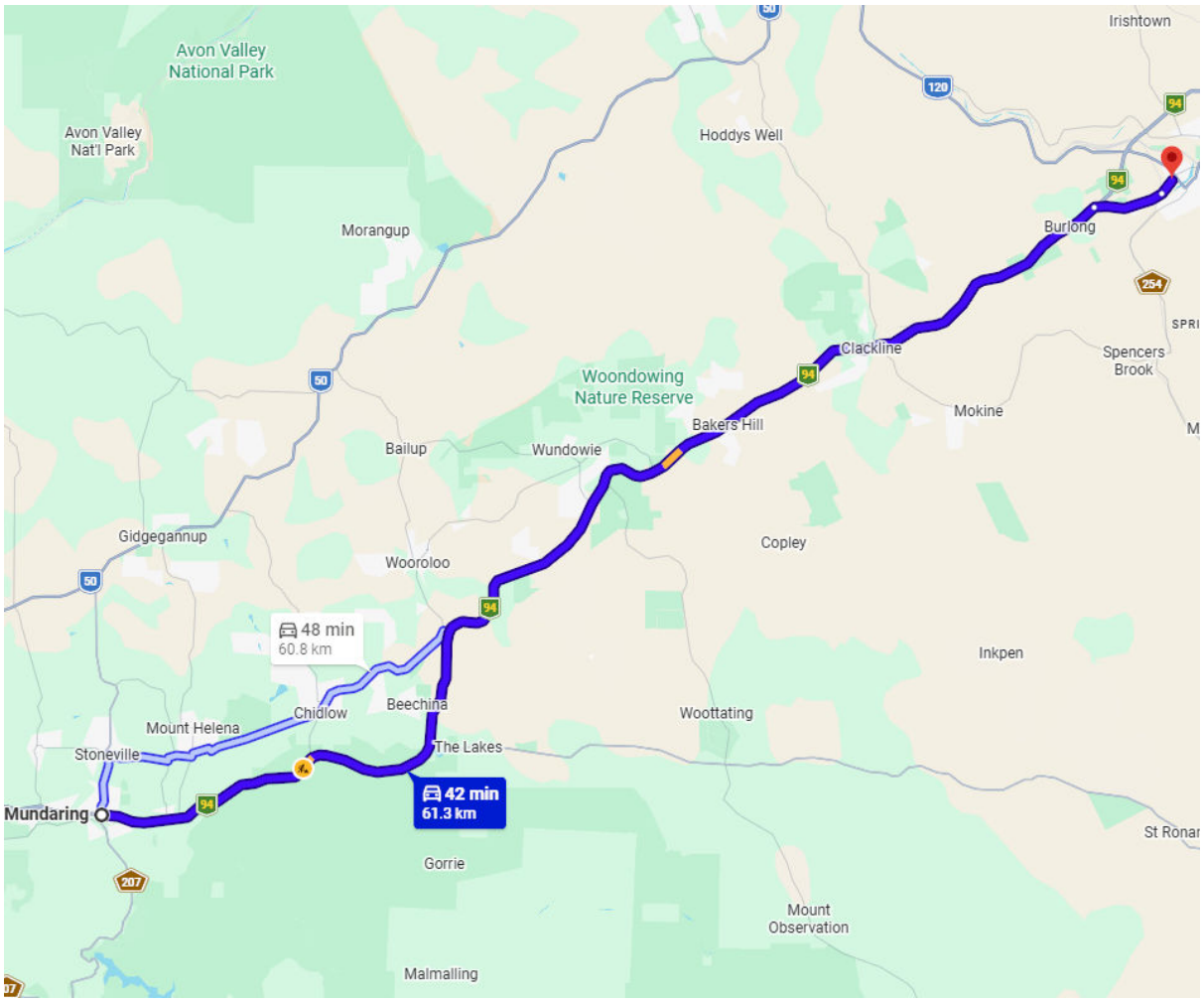
ALL THIS DOES IS PUT YOUR LOCAL SHOP AT A DISADVANTAGE.

Perth Hills

It is a similar story for many businesses in the eastern sections of Perth Hills, ranging from Mundaring to Wooroloo.

Retail businesses in Mundaring are at a distinct disadvantage compared with Northam, which is **just 42-48 minutes away** and allows 8:00am trading on Sundays.

Figure 2: Map of Mundaring to Northam



A historical change: 2010 reforms which unlocked productivity

In 2010, the WA Government moved to update retail trading hours through commonsense reform. Prior to the reform, opening hours in WA were:

	Monday to Wednesday, and Friday	Thursday	Saturday	Sunday	Public Holidays
Pre October 2010	8:00am to 6:00pm	8:00am to 9:00pm	8:00am to 5:00pm	Closed	Closed
Regulations: The Government dictates each product that certain types of stores can and cannot sell to consumers					

Due to these policy settings, from 2007-10, WA's retail trade was much weaker than the rest of Australia:

- Retail Employment growth was **-5.8% in WA**, compared to **-1.8% nationally.**
- Retail Sales growth was **8.7% in WA**, compared to **13.5% nationally**.
- Gross income across the retail sector was **0.19% in WA**, compared to **12.8% nationally**.

This spurred change. The Western Australian Government **created several trading precincts to show the benefits of Sunday trading and allowed Monday to Friday shopping hours to extend to 9pm.**

Previously, shops were only allowed to open until 6pm, with the exception of Thursday night late night trading.

By August 2012, the WA Government expanded Sunday shopping to 11:00am to 5:00pm throughout the entirety of the Perth Metropolitan region.

	Monday to Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Public Holidays
From August 2012	8:00am to 9:00pm	8:00am to 5:00pm	11:00am to 5:00pm	11:00am to 5:00pm
Regulations: The Government dictates each product that certain types of stores can and cannot sell to consumers				

After these changes, small and medium sized businesses grew within the retail sector, and the overall income of retail trade businesses grew significantly.

Retail trade businesses with 1-19 employees grew from 54% of all retail trade businesses in June 2008, to 57% of all retail businesses in WA in June 2014.

Figure 3: Retail Trade Businesses with 1-199 employees Before and after deregulation[2]

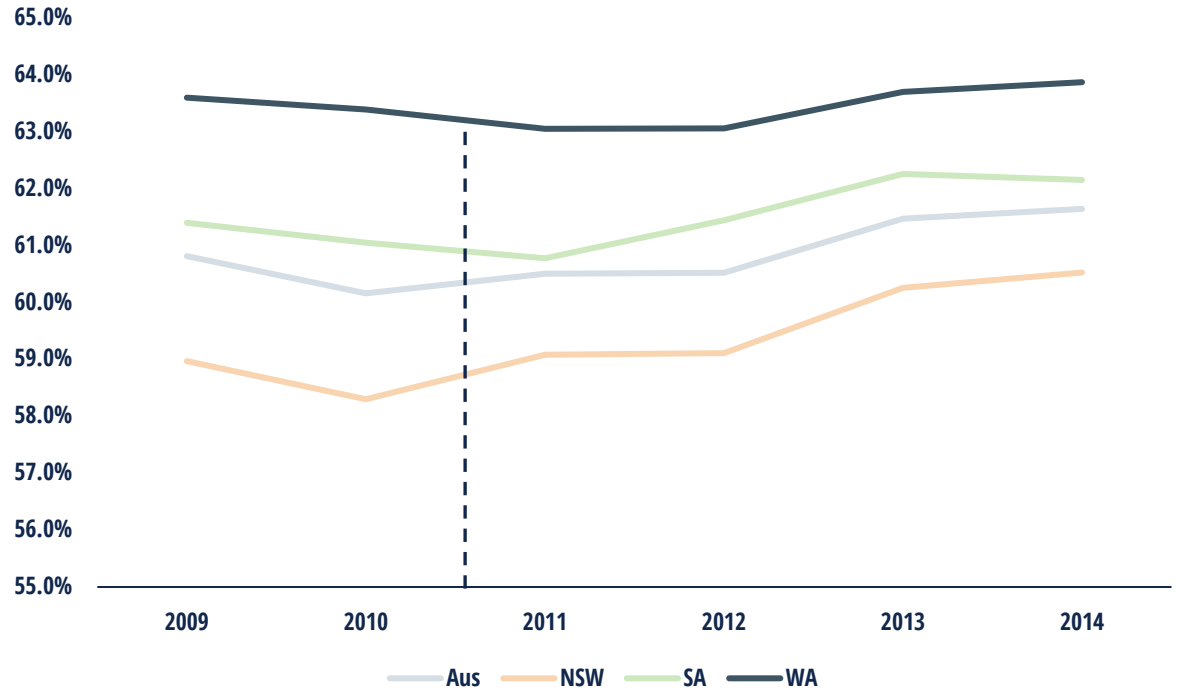
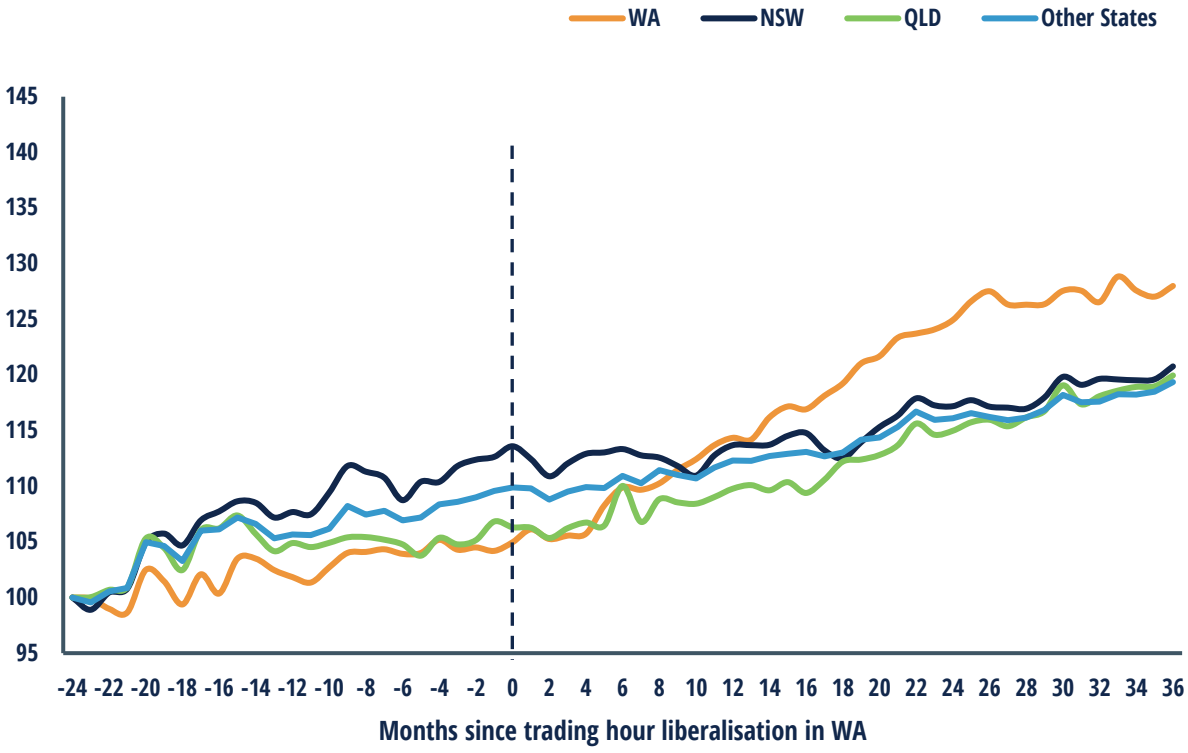


Figure 4: Retail Sales Before and After Liberalisation – WA Index = 100, 24 months prior to liberalisation[3]



[2] CCIWA analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics data
[3] CCIWA analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics data

Busting the Myths on Retail Trading Reform

CLAIM 1: The only businesses that benefit from deregulated trading hours are the big supermarkets and department stores.

CCIWA analysis of data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows no negative relationship between the relaxation of shopping hours, and the proportion of small businesses present within an economy. Importantly, data from the Productivity Commission showed that small retail business participation rates of around 90% in both regulated and deregulated States and Territories, suggesting that there is little impact from trading hour changes to small business participation.

In WA, even while deregulating trading hours, we continued to lead the Australian mainland with more than 63% of businesses in retail trade being smaller operators. From the last change to trading hours in 2012, the share has risen to nearly 64%.

CLAIM 2: Businesses that don't want it will be forced to open.

Businesses will make a decision that works for them. We see this during the weekday, where many businesses close before 9pm such as bakeries and butchers. Both the recent City of Albany Survey, and CCIWA Business Confidence Survey shows consumers and businesses support greater flexibility.

In our Business Confidence Survey, businesses with less than 10 staff who have the ability to already trade unrestricted, only 1 in 5 would oppose additional trading hours. Examples of this in WA include the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River where unlimited trading is possible, yet businesses have continued to set their own hours. Importantly, Landlords cannot force WA businesses to open if they do not want under WA law – with significant penalties attached.

CLAIM 3: Some retailers are already not opening at 9am.

Giving more hours as an option does not mean businesses are required to open, but we want to give retailers a choice to do so, should they and their customers want that.

The Shires of Augusta-Margaret River, Busselton, Denmark, and Dunsborough have less population than Perth yet have either completely deregulated trading hours, or more deregulated than Perth, and continue to have small retail traders.

Conclusion

Perth's antiquated and outdated retail trading hours make it harder to do business.

It creates scenarios where customers can drive just 25 minutes away to shop at a competitor who has unrestricted trading hours all because you are located in the Perth Metropolitan Region.

It is time for Perth retail businesses to have the opportunity that regional businesses have in deciding when they want to open and what they want to sell.

CCIWA's common sense proposal gives businesses that freedom and flexibility, and will ensure that they have full choice on what they want to sell and when they sell it.

- An **extra three hours** on Saturday.
  An **extra four hours** on Sundays and Public Holidays.
- Fewer restrictions on what WA businesses are allowed to sell.

We strongly urge the WA Government to implement a trial of longer trading hours in the CBD, to produce clear data on the benefits to businesses and consumers.

CASE STUDY 1: RETAIL TRADING HOURS DEREGULATION IN QUEENSLAND

In 2017, Queensland introduced large scale deregulation of trading hours across the State.

The amendments swapped 99 trading hour provisions for six, extended trading hours in South-East Queensland from 7am to 9pm Monday to Saturday, and in regional Queensland from 7am to 9pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 6pm on Saturday.

Trading hours for Sunday and public holidays were standardised across Queensland from 9am to 6pm.

BEFORE

Five years prior to de-regulation of trading hours in Queensland, the Queensland economy was weak compared to the national average:

	Queensland	Australia
Full time Retail Employment growth **prior** to deregulation	-1.0%	6.0%
Total employment growth **prior** to deregulation	8.7%	8.8%
Retail Sales growth **prior** to deregulation	14.5%	21.6%

AFTER

Despite the hysteria that retail trade deregulation would weaken Queensland, the results five years after deregulation were:

	Queensland	Australia
Retail Employment growth **post** deregulation	9.7%	3.1%
Total employment growth **Post** deregulation	12.9%	10.7%
Retail Sales growth **post** deregulation	39.4%	33.7%

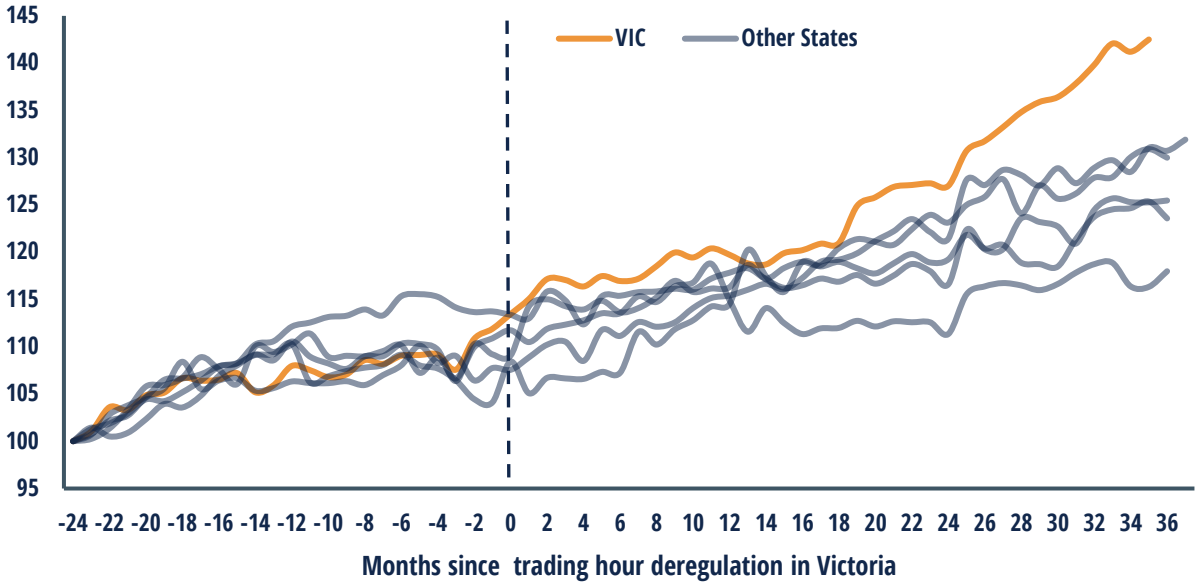
CASE STUDY 2: RETAIL TRADING HOURS DEREGULATION IN VICTORIA

In November 1996, Victoria fully deregulated their retail trading hours to 24 hours, with the only exception being they can't open on Christmas Day, Good Friday, and ANZAC Day prior to 1:00pm.

Despite all the hysteria that deregulating trading hours would cause at the time, the results three years after deregulation were positive, showing growth in retail sales and Gross Mixed Income for retail trade businesses.

	Victoria	Australia
Retail Sales growth 3 years **prior** to deregulation	15.0%	21.0%
Retail Sales growth 3 years **post** deregulation	25.0%	15.0%
Gross Operating Surplus & Gross Mixed Income for Retail Trade 3 years **Post** Deregulation	10.8%	1.9%

Figure 5: Retail Sales Before and After Deregulation – Victoria. Index = 100, 24 months prior to deregulation[4]



[4] CCIWA analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics data

Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA

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