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Department of Industry, Science and Resources
Manufacturing
Industry Innovation and Science

via email: batteries@industry.gov.au

ARA SUBMISSION REGARDING AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL BATTERY STRATEGY

The Australian Retailers Association (ARA) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment to the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, as part of its consultation regarding Australia's National Battery Strategy (the Strategy).

The ARA is the oldest, largest and most diverse national retail body, representing a \$400 billion sector that employs 1.3 million Australians – making retail the largest private sector employer in the country. As Australia's peak retail body, representing more than 120,000 retail shop fronts and online stores, the ARA informs, advocates, educates, protects and unifies our independent, national and international retail community.

We represent the full spectrum of Australian retail, from our largest national and international retailers to our small and medium sized members, who make up 95% of our membership. Our members operate across the country and in all categories - from food to fashion, hairdressing to hardware, and everything in between.

By way of background, many of our members sell batteries as part of their retail offering and others sell electronic products that contain batteries. Our largest members are also supportive of the B-cycle program for the collection and recycling of used batteries.

The ARA is committed to supporting the retail sector in its transition to net zero emissions as evidenced by our [Climate Action Plan](#). Clearly, a smooth transition to the net-zero, circular economy of the future will be reliant on battery technology that is safe, reliable and easy to recycle.

The ARA strongly supports the development of the National Battery Strategy to encourage domestic manufacturing and enhance Australia's competitive advantage in terms of natural resources.

The retail sector has an interest in ensuring that batteries sold in Australia - for consumer or business use - meet appropriate product safety standards and can be disposed of in an environmentally-friendly manner at the end of life, at least cost to business.

In principle, we also believe that the Strategy should support safe and sustainable innovations that minimise any potential harms and/or risks to both the environment and consumers.

The ARA therefore makes the following recommendations in relation to the development of the Strategy.

1. The Strategy must be consistent with relevant Australian and international standards in relation to battery product safety. Retailers need to be confident that batteries sold in Australia meet safety standards so they can be used reliably and safely by consumers.
2. The Strategy should encourage innovation to ensure improved safety around the use, storage and recycling of all battery types. We believe that special attention must be paid to lithium-ion batteries, noting the current investigation by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) into the safety of these batteries. We are confident that further research and developments will ensure improvements to technology, improving performance and safety.

3. The Strategy needs to enable the safe and sustainable recycling of batteries, through an integrated Product Stewardship Scheme (PSS) that supports the transition to the circular economy. This scheme should build on programs delivered to date, with expanded coverage and strengthened governance mechanisms to ensure the continued viability of the B-cycle scheme. Investment will also be required to provide the necessary infrastructure and technology to support safe collection and sustainable recycling that is widely accessible to businesses and consumers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Department. We look forward to further engagement as discussions progress on this important initiative.

Any queries in relation to this submission can be directed to our policy team at policy@retail.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Zahra
Chief Executive Officer