



Australian National
Retailers Association

MEDIA RELEASE

ANRA is the voice of Australia's leading retailers

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Victoria loses its shopping mojo as retail figures flat

Australian retail posted a slow start to the Christmas build up, with no change in retail figures in November signaling the hoped for turn around in retail's fortunes is still some way off, Australian National Retailers Association (ANRA) CEO Margy Osmond said today.

Retail figures for November released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show a flat 0.0% outcome for the month, ending the upward trend in retail figures.

"This is a disappointing result for the sector after four successive months of retail trade growth. Even with a rate cut in November consumers held on to their additional cash and put it into savings rather than taking it into the shops.

"The cold start to the summer is reflected in a 0.4% drop in clothing, footwear and personal accessory retailing nationally and in the great bargains in that category in the sales season. Department stores also went down -0.1% in the run up to the critical Christmas trading season. Even food retailing, consistently the strongest part of the sector, had a poor showing in November, with the 0.02% rise the weakest result since May 2011.

"Retailers reported a slow start to Christmas shopping and these figures are in line with that anecdotal evidence.

"All the indicators suggested November would see another positive figure for the sector – consumer confidence was up, there was a rate cut and strong employment rates. But poor summer weather and the continued troubles in Europe on the TV every night have prompted shoppers to keep their purse strings firmly tied in fear of future problems closer to home.

However, the slow retail trade has not been experienced across the country. Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory all had positive results.

"While there were gains in those states, the drops in Victoria -1.1% and the ACT -1.9% were significant, bringing the total result down. Victoria, long the champion of the retail sector outside of resource rich states, appears to have lost its shopping mojo – with bad weather, falling house prices and continued concerns about Europe the most likely reasons for the change.

"The ACT also recorded its worst year on year result in a decade -3.2%.

"These results show the retail sector is still struggling and even small adjustments in Aussie families personal approach to shopping is having a big impact. We hope to see some improved figures from December," Mrs Osmond said.

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