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Government urged to listen to retailers rather than playing the blame game

The Coalition welcomes the release of the Productivity Commission's draft report into the Economic Structure and Performance of the Australian Retail Industry.

The Coalition urges retailers and consumers to examine the Productivity Commission's considered views in its draft report and to compare the findings with their experience and insights.

The Government must also display some good faith in considering the Commission's analysis rather than suggesting government policy has no influence on the retail sector's performance.

As if to simply show how out of touch the Government is, retailers have been subjected to another Bill Shorten attack of false claims about retailer attitudes to the internet and bizarre claims about *"expecting taxpayers to foot the bill when (retailers are) taking high profits"*.

Retailers are keenly embracing e-commerce and new business strategies to delight customers and deliver value at a time of great change in the sector and a strong consumer preference for Australia-based retailers, whether on-line or on High Street.

The Productivity Commission's draft report should prompt the Gillard Government to have a good hard look at itself and listen to retailers and recognise that a number of the draft recommendations that will support retail success and performance into the future involve areas of direct Government responsibility.

The Productivity Commission's draft recommendations of direct relevance to the Gillard Government include:

- the adequacy of ABS data collection and its ability to identify industry trends;
- grounds to lower the low value threshold to promote tax neutrality with domestic sales;
- the need to investigate new processing approach for low value imported parcels to significantly improve efficiencies;
- expanding the work plan of the National retail Tenancy Working Group;
- addressing difficulties calculating award wage rates; and
- impediments to efficient negotiation of enterprise-based arrangements.

The retail sector and national interest would be better served by the Government considering the Productivity Commission's draft recommendation in a sober and sensible way rather than having more of Bill Shorten's shrill attacks on retailers trying to deflect attention away from the Gillard Government's responsibilities and mishandling of the economy.

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