



Amart Furniture Pty Ltd
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Ms Carolyn McNally
Secretary
NSW Department of Planning and Environment
320 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000

18 May 2018

Dear Ms McNally

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF RETAIL ("THE PAPER")

I am the General Manager, Property for Amart Furniture ("Amart") and write on behalf of Amart in response to the request for submissions to the Paper.

Amart is a national retailer of furniture, bedding, manchester, homewares and floor coverings which was founded in Queensland in 1970.

Amart is proud to be a member of the Large Format Retail Association ("LFRA").

Amart recently opened its 62nd store (in Wagga Wagga) and has ambitions to more than double its store numbers in the next 10 years.

Amart currently employs close to 2,000 people across the country – approx. 410 in New South Wales in 15 stores and our distribution centre at Minto. Amart is targeting to open 48 stores in New South Wales. Each new store will employ approx. 23 people. However, issues with the definition of bulky goods and the availability of appropriately zoned land generally, is frustrating our efforts and means we have little option but to direct resources to other states where the planning regimes are clearer and applied more consistently. So yes, New South Wales is missing out!

One of the main issues we have is the ability of local Councils to apply their own interpretation of the current rules and guidelines which creates great uncertainty and is undoubtedly a major restriction on the development of large format retail.

Amart fully endorses and strongly supports the LFRA submission to the Paper.

While the definition of 'specialised retail' will provide much needed clarity when it comes to what goods can be sold by Large Format retailers, it does not address the bigger issue, which is the lack of supply of appropriately zoned land. So, this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency and Amart requests that the New South Wales Government simplify the definitions of the Business Zones and in so doing, increases the availability of land available for large format retail uses.



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Like many of our fellow retailers, Amart is concerned that the Paper does not have sufficient regard to the findings of the Retail Expert Advisory Committee (REAC) in its Independent Recommendations Report of June 2017, in particular the 8 key retail drivers, and strongly believes that this needs to be addressed.

We are also very concerned that the Greater Sydney Commissions plans do not in any adequate way address the needs of the large format industry, particularly in terms of the supply of adequately zoned land, and indeed create significant barriers to entry that are likely, in practical terms, to be unworkable.

Finally, we are strongly of the view that the notion of floor space caps is flawed because it fails to allow for evolution of the sector and should not be entertained.

Yours sincerely

Richard Champion

General Manager, Property

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