



National Retail Association

MEDIA STATEMENT

28 July, 2011

Young Tamworth retailer awarded as Australia's best

Tamworth retail manager Jennifer Skeahan-Heugh has been recognised as Australia's Young Retailer of the Year, fighting off tough competition from around the nation to claim the prize.

Ms Skeahan-Heugh triumphed from among 23 finalists aged between 18 and 25, from every mainland state. Almost 100 young retailers employed by many of Australia's iconic retail brands entered the competition. This number was then narrowed to 23 finalists who presented at an NRA event held in Sydney yesterday.

She is the General Merchandise Manager from Kmart in Tamworth. She is 23. She wins a place on the Westfield World Retail Study Tour, valued at \$16,000.

Under her watch, some Kmart departments in Tamworth have recorded triple digit growth, and registered a 60 per cent increase in customer compliment cards for outstanding customer service, National Retail Association executive director Gary Black said Ms Skeahan-Heugh was a great example of a young person carving out an outstanding career in retail trade.

"Through her professional development and her work record, Jennifer has shown a genuine commitment to her customers, her employer and her own career in retail," Mr Black said.

"She is currently completing a Bachelor of Business double major in human resource management and management. She has also undertaken a number of internal management training programs with Kmart.

"At the aged of 23, Jennifer has already ensured herself a long and successful career. She is living proof of the value of retail as a stepping stone for young Australians into prosperous careers.

"For many school leavers, a retail job is their first step on the road to professional success. More importantly Jennifer Skeahan-Heugh's success demonstrates that not does retail build the critical employability skills for the majority of young people in Australia, it also offers an unmatched diversity in career options including operations management, merchandising, store design and layout, public relations, IT, HR, marketing and sales, product safety, and fashion innovation.

"The National Retail Association is proud to support career development in Australia's retail sector, and is greatly encouraged by the emergence of so many talented and motivated young professional in the ranks of Australian Retailers. Jennifer Skeahan-Heugh is this year's standard bearer for Australia's young retail professionals"

The NRA is Australia's largest and most representative retail organisation with more than 3000 members and affiliates located across all states and territories. Its membership includes the majority of Australia's national retail chains and extends across the retail take-away food and fast food sectors.

Gary Black and Jennifer Skeahan-Heugh are available for interviews. Photographs are also available on request. Contact Malcolm Cole, CBC Group Media and Public Affairs, on 0408 612 603.