Federal Government and Woolworths sign landmark employment agreement

- ‘Fresh Start’ agreement to create jobs, develop training opportunities and advance careers at Australia’s second largest private employer

- Signed today by the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Prime Minister of Australia and Grant O’Brien, CEO Woolworths Limited

The Federal Government and Woolworths Limited will today sign a landmark agreement to work together to create jobs and opportunity for thousands of Australians within the country’s leading retail group.

The ‘Fresh Start’ agreement will see the Federal Government and Woolworths collaborate in a structured and aligned way in order to help facilitate employment, workplace participation and skills training right across the country by creating single points of contact for recruitment, pre-employment programs and skills enhancement.

The agreement will focus on three key priorities:

1. Recruitment for new stores, new growth businesses such as Masters Home Improvement and new fields such as online retail. Last year Woolworths announced its intention to create 10,000 new retail jobs this financial year. Currently there are 2,171 existing vacancies

2. Advancing workplace participation for people with diverse backgrounds including indigenous workers, people with a disability, older workers and the long term unemployed through targeted employment programs. Woolworths is committed to having a diverse workforce that reflects the make-up of Australian society. Last year the company launched its Reconciliation Action Plan which included full-funded programs to increase employment of indigenous Australians

3. Building the skills and competencies to develop a long term career in retail through coordinated access to formal and informal training and certification programmes including apprenticeships. In 2011 Woolworths employed 1713 apprentices and 3418 trainees.
Woolworths Limited CEO Grant O’Brien said: “Both Woolworths and the Australian Government recognise the importance of job creation and workplace participation, and we are pleased to now have those mutual goals cemented under this historic agreement. Whilst retail is going through a challenging phase, it is a highly people-oriented industry where you really can start on the shop floor and work your way up. From my own perspective, a job opportunity 22 years ago in a Tasmanian supermarket has given me a wonderful career. Woolworths has gone from a single shop in 1924 to a company that employs 190,000 people across Australia and New Zealand from every walk of life. Whether someone is looking for a long term career, a technical skill, a casual job or just the chance to have a go, we can provide them and now, by working with the Government, we will be far more effective in matching people to opportunity.”

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Press Conference

Sunday 1st April
Commences 10.30am
Woolworths Supermarket, Spitfire Road, Majura Park (Canberra Airport retail park)

For further information:
Clare Buchanan 0404 829033