



United Retail Federation

Serving Members Australia Wide™

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Atheist Prime Minister Should Not Dictate Mary MacKillop Merchandise Laws

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Scott Driscoll, National President of a peak national industry body representing the retail and small business sector for over 120 years, the **United Retail Federation**, has said that Prime Minister Julia Gillard's decision to intervene in the commercial use of a religious Saint's name and the sale of Mary MacKillop merchandise was "Stalinist" and extreme.

"This is a time for all Australians to be very proud and respect what a fellow Australian in the form of Mary MacKillop represents to our nation, which does include her story being celebrated to the world and in some instances that does essentially involve a commercial element," Mr Driscoll said.

"What is concerning is that a self declared Atheist Prime Minister has dramatically decided that such a level of Government intervention is acceptable. It smacks of State control and restriction of trade and expression that is more at home in Stalin's Russia than Australia in 2010.

"What's next...will we see Buddha, Muhammad, Amun or the Witches of Eastwick converted to contraband?"

"I have today written to Pope Benedict to implore him to intervene and make contact with Prime Minister Gillard so that Mary MacKillop's name can again be "owned" by the people, not restricted in its use by a Government.

"It would be a disgrace if we got to a position where people wishing to purchase items of symbolism or commercial materials were forced to source goods online out of China to celebrate Mary MacKillop, rather than domestically in the home of this great Australian.

"The Government should not unduly preclude the purchase of Mary MacKillop merchandise or any commercial recognition that would play a part in the celebration of this significant event," Mr Driscoll said.

For further comment call Scott Driscoll on 0413 831 045.