

# WOOLWORTHS LIMITED

A.B.N 88 000 014 675

26 November 2009

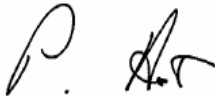
The Manager, Companies  
Australian Securities Exchange Limited  
Company Announcements Office  
Level 4  
20 Bridge Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: Woolworths Limited – Chairman’s Address - Listing Rule 3.13.3**

Attached is a copy of the Chairman’s Address to the 2009 Woolworths Limited Annual General Meeting being held today.

**For and on behalf of  
WOOLWORTHS LIMITED**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Horton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**PETER J HORTON  
COMPANY SECRETARY**

## **CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS TO SHAREHOLDERS**

### **COMPANY RESULTS**

THE BOARD OF WOOLWORTHS LIMITED IS PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO REPORT TO SHAREHOLDERS ANOTHER SET OF RECORD RESULTS IN A DIFFICULT AND UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT.

FOR THE 2008-2009 FINANCIAL YEAR, WOOLWORTHS ACHIEVED A NET PROFIT AFTER TAX OF \$1.8 BILLION – AN INCREASE OF 12.8% OVER THE PRIOR YEAR. THERE HAS BEEN A CONTINUOUS RELENTLESS FOCUS ON COST EFFICIENCIES TO BE EXTREMELY COMPETITIVE.

FOR SHAREHOLDERS, EARNINGS PER SHARE INCREASED BY 11.7% TO 150.7 CENTS AND THE DIVIDEND PER SHARE INCREASED BY 13% TO 104 CENTS.

WE WERE DELIGHTED TO WELCOME AN ADDITIONAL 35,000 SHAREHOLDERS TO OUR REGISTER DURING THE YEAR.

OUR OUTSTANDING MANAGEMENT TEAM, UNDER CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MICHAEL LUSCOMBE, HAS SHOWN REAL LEADERSHIP. THEY DID NOT LOSE THEIR FOCUS OR SENSE OF OPTIMISM IN TOUGH TIMES.

WE CONTINUED TO MAKE INVESTMENTS, TO CREATE NEW JOBS AND PUSH FORWARD WITH TRANSFORMATIONAL INITIATIVES.

## **GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT**

THROUGHOUT 2009, WOOLWORTHS HAS REMAINED ON A SOLID GROWTH TRAJECTORY IN ITS EXISTING AREAS OF BUSINESS.

OUR RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT TO ENTER THE \$24 BILLION HOME IMPROVEMENT SECTOR IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF A DECISION THAT WAS SOME YEARS IN PLANNING AND RESEARCH.

IN THE RECENT UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC CLIMATE WE HAVE CONTINUED OUR CAREFUL APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

OF CAPITAL AND OUR LEVEL OF GEARING. WOOLWORTHS IS MODERATELY GEARED AND OUR LACK OF RELIANCE ON EXTERNAL FUNDING HAS CERTAINLY BEEN A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE. WE WILL CONTINUALLY MONITOR OPTIONS INCLUDING NEW INVESTMENTS. IN THE INTERIM WE WILL RE-INVEST IN OUR EXISTING BUSINESSES AND MAINTAIN STRONG DIVIDENDS.

## **GOVERNANCE**

WE ARE CONSTANTLY MONITORING DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE TO ENSURE WE MEET ALL REQUIRED STANDARDS. THIS YEAR WE HAVE CONDUCTED A REVIEW OF BOARD PERFORMANCE USING EXTERNAL EXPERT ADVISORS. THIS REVIEW AFFIRMED THE COHESIVE AND EFFECTIVE NATURE OF THE WOOLWORTHS BOARD AND THE QUALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BOARD AND MANAGEMENT. WE ARE ALSO CAREFULLY PLANNING AHEAD FOR SUCCESSION AT BOARD AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT LEVELS.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

AS A LARGE AND DIVERSE ORGANISATION, WOOLWORTHS TAKES A VERY PROACTIVE APPROACH TO RISK MANAGEMENT.

THIS YEAR THE BOARD, THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE AUDIT COMMITTEE ALL COLLABORATED TO IMPLEMENT PRINCIPLE SEVEN OF THE ASX CORPORATE GUIDELINES WHICH SEEKS TO EMBED KEY COMPONENTS OF RISK OVERSIGHT AND RISK MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEMS WITHIN OUR CORE OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK.

## **A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS**

A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF MANAGING RISK OF COURSE, IS THE ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES ACROSS ALL OF OUR BUSINESS OPERATIONS. THIS ENABLES WOOLWORTHS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND ANTICIPATE A BROAD RANGE OF STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS AND TO

PREPARE AND PLAN FOR LIKELY CHANGES TO OUR TRADING ENVIRONMENT.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ADVENT OF AN EMISSIONS TRADING POLICY ARE PRIME EXAMPLES OF HOW WOOLWORTHS HAS SOUGHT TO ADOPT A FORWARD-LOOKING APPROACH BY IMPLEMENTING A RANGE OF AMBITIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL TARGETS.

OUR STRATEGY IS GLOBALLY ACKNOWLEDGED AS BEING WELL ADVANCED WITHIN OUR FIELD OF BUSINESS AND HAS PAVED THE WAY FOR BROADER SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES TO ENSURE WOOLWORTHS IS A BALANCED AND RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATION.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I WOULD LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO MY FELLOW BOARD MEMBERS FOR THEIR COMMITTED AND PROFESSIONAL APPROACH, AND TO THE WOOLWORTHS SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM FOR ANOTHER GREAT PERFORMANCE.

OF COURSE THE DELIVERY OF THESE RESULTS IS DUE TO  
THE DAILY EFFORTS OF OVER 191,000 PEOPLE  
THROUGHOUT THE WOOLWORTHS GROUP.

I WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ALSO THE SUPPORT OF  
OUR 400,000 SHAREHOLDERS.

THANK YOU