The ATM Industry Association, a global not-for-profit trade association with over 11,000 individual members in at least 70 countries, has today praised the on-going provision of cash access and services through ATMs on a 24 x7 basis throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as means of preserving the right of Australians to choose their own favourite payment methods for food, medicine and other emergency provisions.

“Cash is still safe to use in Australia and around the world ensuring we have a resilient payment system which is fair to all demographic groups in Australia,” said Sandra Smith, ATMIA’s Asia Pacific Executive Director. “Our industry is providing frontline services in this crisis to ensure the freedom to choose is kept alive.” Smith referred to a recent statement by Christian Hawkesby, assistant governor of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand who stated “there are no recorded cases of any person contracting COVID-19 after touching banknotes and there is zero scientific consensus indicating that banknotes pose any special threat as a transmitter of coronavirus infections.”

“The last thing we need during this crisis is misinformation, fear-mongering and panic,” added Mike Lee, CEO of ATMIA, President of the ATM Security Association and Chairperson of the Consortium for Next Gen ATMs. “Like millions around the world, I have continued to use cash and cards during the lockdown to buy food and medicine for my family.”

The message is clear: by maintaining effective social distancing, regular washing of hands and avoiding touching your face we can stop the spread. The WHO has emphasised that cash is not a transmitter of COVID-19, and we must not allow sensationalism or fear mongering to hurt the vulnerable and undermine the stability of our payment system,