

SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

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GST LOW VALUE THRESHOLD BILL DEBATED IN FEDERAL PARLIAMENT

The [Treasury Laws Amendment \(GST Low Value Threshold Bill 2017\)](#), which seeks to close the GST loop-hole for goods purchased from overseas which cost less than \$1,000 ([Shop Talk 24/2/2017](#)), this week passed the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament. While the Labor Opposition expressed support for closing the 'Low Value Threshold' loop-hole, in his contribution to the Parliamentary debate, the Shadow Treasurer, Chris Bowen, outlined that Labor would be seeking amendments to the Bill in the Senate. In addition to proposing a delayed implementation date of 1 July 2018 (as opposed to the currently proposed 1 July 2017), the Opposition will also seek to require the Government to engage the Productivity Commission to undertake a review of the proposed model of GST collection – a vendor registration model – with the Commission to report “in good order” (by around October this year). This is to, in effect, allow for further amendments to the legislation prior to July 2018 if recommended by the Commission and agreed to by the Parliament. In his explanation, the Shadow Treasurer noted that, while he “commend(s) the principle of the legislation to the House”, the Government’s “very poor attempt at the details of the implementation” had lost it the opportunity of bi-partisan support. In his contribution to the Parliamentary debate, the former CEO of the National Retail Association (NRA), and now Liberal Member for Brisbane, Trevor Evans commented on the proposed 1 July 2018 implementation date, stating “...the perfect is being the enemy of the good”. Mr Evans also dismissed the Opposition’s proposed Productivity Commission review, describing it as a “review to tell us what we already know”. Reflecting on when he became NRA CEO, Mr Evans noted that closing this loop-hole was one of three priorities described to him by the retail industry. He also, quite rightly, notes that one of the purposes of the Bill is to deliver an important tax integrity measure, another being “fairness and a level playing field for Aussie businesses”. The Bill has now been introduced into the Senate. There is only one more sitting week prior to 1 July 2017.

INQUIRY INTO THE ROLE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES

A federal Parliamentary committee has been charged with [inquiring](#) into the Australian Government’s role in the development of cities. It’s a good question, the answer to which remains vague despite the Government’s strong push into this space in recent years, including the appointment of an Assistant Minister for Cities and the release of a *Smart Cities Plan* ([Shop Talk 5/5/16](#)). While the Terms of Reference of the inquiry acknowledge the “primacy of state, territory and local government in the areas of planning and service provision...”, they then go on to detail that the committee will examine “...what planning tools, models, indicators and alternate funding options would be required to inform an assessment of the liveability, sustainability and resilience of different scenarios of urban settlement across Australia...”. The Committee running the inquiry, the Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities, most recently completed an inquiry into so-called value-capture infrastructure funding ([Shop Talk 9/12/16](#)). Considering the Federal Government’s apparent enthusiasm for the concept, having already released a value-capture Discussion Paper for stakeholder feedback ([Shop Talk 2/12/16](#)), it is likely that this new inquiry will, again, entertain ‘innovative’ infrastructure funding models in the context of a broader cities agenda. Submissions in response to the inquiry are due on 31 July 2017.

INQUIRY INTO CERTAIN PRACTICES OF THE TOW TRUCK INDUSTRY IN QUEENSLAND

Consultation has closed on an independent investigation commissioned by the Queensland Minister for Roads, Road Safety and Ports, Mark Bailey, into tow truck operations, specifically in private car parks. The Shopping Centre Council has lodged a submission. While the inquiry has been established following recent media attention surrounding ‘rogue’ tow truck operators, the Terms of Reference do consider the circumstances of towing vehicles from private car parks. We will continue to engage in this process to ensure there are no knee-jerk responses which may impact well managed shopping centre car parks.

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