

SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

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NEW SOUTH WALES: ONE STEP CLOSER TO WIDESPREAD BOXING DAY TRADING

This week, the NSW Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet, tabled the [Retail Trading Amendment \(Boxing Day\) Bill 2017](#) in the Parliament to enable the continuation of widespread Boxing Day trade. It is anticipated that the Bill will be debated next week. The Bill comes following the completion of an independent review, led by Professor Percy Allan AM, into the two-year trial of widespread trading in 2015 and 2016 ([Shop Talk 18/8/17](#)). In his report, Professor Allan noted that people 'voted with their feet', and recommended that widespread trading continue subject to strict safeguards in relation to the coercion of staff and the retention of the requirement that retailers freely elect to trade. The Government accepted many of the review recommendations, but rejected the proposed imposition of minimum penalties for breaches by landlords and retailers, citing procedural fairness. The Bill retains the premise of maximum penalties as per the current legislation. In his second reading speech, the Treasurer said these reforms "...gave all parties more choice", with provisions to ensure that all staff must 'freely elect to work' and retailers have the choice to 'freely elect to open'. The independent review also recommended an information campaign in the lead up to Boxing Day to ensure that people are aware of their rights. The Shopping Centre Council has assured the Government that we will gladly work with them to ensure the smooth transition to widespread trading. Subject to the passage of legislation, there is also a keen interest that companies – SCCA members included – take measures to ensure that workers and retailers are aware of their rights.

FINANCIAL REVIEW RETAIL SUMMIT 2017: REINVENTING THE EXPERIENCE

The 2017 AFR Retail Summit will take place on 1 and 2 November at the Intercontinental Hotel in Sydney. The two-day program features over 35 speakers, including Senator Nick Xenophon, Myer CEO, Richard Umbers, and Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, Kate Carnell AO. More information and registration is available [here](#).

\$300 MILLION SMALL BUSINESS RED-TAPE REDUCTION GOES QUIET

An interesting component of the May 2017 Federal Budget was the announcement of a \$300 million small business red-tape reduction fund to be established under the auspice of a *National Partnership on Regulatory Reform* ([Shop Talk 12/5/17](#)). Media reports at the time also drew reference to an *Intergovernmental Agreement on Competition and Productivity-Enhancing Reforms* which, at the time, had not been signed by South Australia, Queensland or Victoria (Western Australia may have also reconsidered its participation following the recent change of Government). Curiously, all seems to have gone quiet on the implementation of this fund and Intergovernmental Agreement. There is a conspicuous lack of information available on what types of reform initiatives may get a run, and which governments are pitching for what funds. More than three months after the Budget, it is surprising that a key and valuable small business budget measure remains, seemingly, dormant. We will continue to monitor developments with interest to ensure positive outcome for landlords, with one potential reform opportunity being the long talked about harmonised disclosure statement. The Shopping Centre Council has sought clarification on the status of these initiatives.

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHES CONSUMER POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

The Victorian Government recently [announced](#) the establishment of a new Consumer Policy Research Centre (CPRC) which will be "dedicated to improving access, fairness and protections for Victorian consumers". Launched by Consumer Affairs Minister, Marlene Kairouz, the CPRC will replace the Consumer Utilities Advocacy Centre. Relevant areas of interest include the development of an annual consumer index/market health check, possibly akin to the current *Westpac-Melbourne Institute Survey of Consumer Sentiment*, and which will aim to provide a better understanding of the impact of the market on consumers. The Centre has a welcome aim to work with industry to develop "a stronger evidence base about what's actually occurring in the market".

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