

SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

FRIDAY 15 JUNE 2018

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VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES FINAL SMALL BUSINESS ACTION STATEMENT

The Victorian Government has [announced](#) that they will pursue measures to cut red tape and help the growth of small business. This week, the Minister for Small Business, Philip Dalidakis, released the final [Small Business Regulation Review \(Retail Sector\) Action Statement](#) which includes a number of proposals specific to retail leasing (a [Detailed Descriptions](#) document accompanies the Action Statement). It is noted in the Action Statement that “respondents to the small business survey identified retail leasing as the fifth most costly area of regulation for business”. In the context of “making retail leases fairer and easier to understand”, the Action Statement includes proposals to 1) extend the timeframe with respect to the provision of the proposed lease and disclosure statement before a lease is entered into, 2) change notice and rent setting requirements in the context of a lessee exercising a lease option, and 3) introducing a timeframe within which a bank guarantee must be returned to a tenant upon satisfaction of their obligations under the lease. While recent reforms in NSW introduced a two month timeframe within which bank guarantees must be returned ([Shop Talk 23/6/17](#)), the Action Statement proposes ‘consistency’ with the timeframe in the Australian Supplier Payment Code, which is 30 days. The Shopping Centre Council will engage with the Government on the detail and implementation of these proposals. In an accompanying media statement, the Minister stated that the package of reforms “...will make it easier to do business and give small businesses a greater chance of success – that’s good for our economy and good for local jobs”. Interestingly, the Victorian’s Government’s reform agenda is being delivered with the support of \$76.8 million from the Commonwealth Government’s National Partnership on Small Business Regulatory Reform initiative ([Shop Talk 15/9/17](#)). Until recently, this fund had apparently been underutilised, but this announcement comes only weeks after the Western Australian Government indicated in the context of their 2018-19 Budget their intention to also leverage the fund ([Shop Talk 18/5/18](#)).

QUEENSLAND BUDGET RELEASED: LAND TAX INCREASES LOCKED IN

Increases to applicable land tax rates in Queensland, which were first announced during the Palaszczuk Government’s 2017 re-election campaign, were reflected in the forecast land tax-take detailed in this week’s Queensland [Budget](#), Jackie Trad’s first as Treasurer. Applying from the 2018-19 financial year, an increased tax rate of 2.5% will apply to the portion of an owner’s taxable landholdings that exceed \$10 million. It is understood that [more information](#) will be available from 1 July 2018. The Shopping Centre Council will monitor these changes.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LOWER HOUSE PASSES GIFT CARD REFORM BILL

The South Australian Parliament’s lower house has passed a bill regarding gift card reform ([Shop Talk 18/5/18](#)). The Amendment Bill proposes a minimum three-year expiry date on most gift cards sold in that jurisdiction. The ultimate passage of this bill will deliver on one of the new Government’s 100-day election commitments. South Australia’s proposed regulation is moving ahead of consultation on a potential national approach to the regulation of gift cards, with Federal Treasury having issued for comment earlier this year a [Consultation Regulation Impact Statement](#) outlining a number of options for reform ([Shop Talk 4/5/18](#)).

ACT CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME WILL BEGIN ON JUNE 30

The ACT Government has confirmed that it will begin its Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) on 30 June, giving ACT residents a 10 per cent refund on eligible drink containers. The scheme will begin with six collection points and grow to 18 by July 2019. This follows the scheme that began in NSW in late 2017 ([Shop Talk 1/12/17](#)). While shopping centres are generally identified as desirable locations for container refund points, the Shopping Centre Council’s position is that participation in a scheme is (and should remain) voluntary and agreed on a commercial basis.

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