

SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

4 OCTOBER 2019

[SUBSCRIBE HERE](#)

MODERN SLAVERY FINAL GUIDANCE FOR REPORTING ENTITIES RELEASED: LESSEES' ACTIVITIES EXEMPT

Last week, the Commonwealth Government released its final Guidance for Reporting Entities under the *Modern Slavery Act 2018*, which explains what entities need to do to comply with the Act, including whether the Act applies (or not) to certain activities ([ShopTalk 29/6/18](#)). The Act establishes a requirement for 'reporting entities' (i.e. commercial and not-for-profit entities with annual consolidated revenue of at least AU\$100 million) to publish a 'Modern Slavery Statement' on a public register, outlining modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains. Pleasingly, the Guidance states that "landlords and lessors are not required to report on modern slavery risks associated with the operations and supply chains of lessees". The Guidance expressly notes that leasing includes the leasing of retail shops. In other words, where a shopping centre lessor is captured by the Act they are not required to report on their lessees' activities.

UPDATED VICTORIAN RETAIL LEASES INFORMATION BROCHURE ISSUED

The Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) has issued an updated [Retail Leases Information Brochure](#), which follows changes made late last year ([ShopTalk 9/11/18](#)). The Brochure forms part of a landlords' obligations under section 15 of the Victorian *Retail Leases Act 2003*, in which a landlord must provide the Brochure and a copy of the proposed lease at the commencement of lease negotiations. The Brochure includes a checklist to guide tenants through key aspects of a lease, as well as answers to some frequently asked questions. More information is available on the VSBC [website](#).

VICTORIAN LIGHTWEIGHT PLASTIC BAG BAN TO TAKE EFFECT 1 NOVEMBER

Victoria's [Environment Protection Amendment Act 2019](#), which bans lightweight plastic shopping bags, will commence on 1 November 2019 ([ShopTalk 20/10/17](#)). The ban applies to any person or business that sells goods in trade or commerce – including online stores and markets. More details can be found [online](#), including information to assist retailers in the transition.

MODERATE REBOUND IN SEASONALLY ADJUSTED RETAIL TRADE ACCORDING TO LATEST ABS FIGURES

The latest release ([August 2019](#)) of the monthly ABS Retail Trade data indicates that the overall month-on-month (m-o-m) trend estimate increased by 0.1 per cent, down from (a revised) 0.2 per cent in July 2019. In trend terms, Retail Turnover increased by 2.3 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y), down from (a revised) 2.5 per cent in the prior corresponding period (pcp). In seasonally adjusted terms across the six ABS retail categories, the strongest growth was recorded for 'Clothing, footwear and personal accessory' retailing on a m-o-m basis (1.8 per cent), as well as on a y-o-y basis (4.9 per cent). In seasonally adjusted terms, Retail Turnover increased by 0.4 per cent in the month of August 2019, up from (a revised) -0.0 per cent in July 2019. On a y-o-y basis, Retail Turnover increased by 2.6 per cent, up from 2.4 per cent in the pcp. According to the latest figures from the Westpac-Melbourne Institute Index of Consumer Confidence report, consumer sentiment was recorded at 98.2 in September 2019, down from 100.0 the prior month. Westpac noted that the "consumer mood has lapsed" and that there was "continued pressure on family finances" as well as "concerns about the near term outlook". The strongest jurisdiction in seasonally adjusted terms was Victoria (up 4.5 per cent), whilst the weakest was Western Australia (up 1.2 per cent).

CITY OF SYDNEY DRAFT LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT OUT FOR CONSULTATION

The City of Sydney is [exhibiting](#) its *City Plan 2036- draft Local Strategic Planning Statement* until 11 October 2019. The Plan sets out the City's 20-year planning use vision and links state and local strategic plans (e.g. the Greater Sydney Commission's Eastern District Plan) with the City's planning controls ([ShopTalk 23/3/18](#)). The Plan envisions a green, global and connected City and sets Planning Priorities for infrastructure, liveability, productivity, sustainability and implementation. Importantly, the Plan considers 'retail centres' as part of the City's growth and notes the sector as a part of making great, liveable places, through supporting centres and high streets. It also envisions retail as part of planning more walkable and connected neighbourhoods. The Shopping Centre Council will monitor this issue.

[PREVIOUS ISSUES](#)