



SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

SHOPPING CENTRE
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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[Archive](#)

VIC GOVERNMENT DELIVERS SNEAKY, UNFAIR FIRE LEVY INCREASE IN BUDGET

The Victorian Coalition Government has delivered a sneaky 15.8% (\$88 million) increase to the Fire Services Levy in its first [Budget](#) this week. This levy increase wasn't even mentioned in Treasurer Kim Well's Budget speech. One year ago, in his response to the previous Government's 2010 Budget, Mr Wells was rightfully damning of the inequitable nature of the Levy, even citing the "considerable evidence that the existing system is inequitable and unfair". The Government is committed to transitioning the existing insurance-based scheme to a property tax-based scheme, to commence on 1 July 2012, but this final grab to significantly increase the taxation baseline flies in the face of Mr Well's previous logic and any test of fairness or good taxation principles. With a Government position paper due in the coming weeks on the transitioning to a property-based tax, we hope that more equitable options will be put on the table. Commercial property owners, who already subsidise the uninsured (and will continue to be insured), and who have low fire risk and incidences, should not continue to shoulder a disproportionate funding burden. All who benefit from fire services (property owners, vehicle owners and farmers) should make a fair contribution.

NEW DISABILITY ACCESS PREMISES STANDARDS COMMENCED ON 1 MAY 2011

The new national building accessibility standards for people with a disability, has commenced operation. The *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010* will apply to any application for a building approval for a new public building or modifications to, or extensions of, an existing public building ([Shop Talk 19/3/10](#)). These buildings include shopping centres, shops, car parks and cinemas. Copies of the new Premises Standards and other information are available [here](#).

WA COMMERCIAL TENANCY (RETAIL SHOPS) AMENDMENT LEGISLATION

The Western Australian Parliament is still debating the two Bills amending the WA *Commercial Tenancy (Retail Shops) Agreements Act* ([Shop Talk 24/3/11](#)). The [Small Business and Retail Shop Legislation Amendment Bill 2011](#), to establish a Small Business Commissioner who will also have responsibility for mediating retail tenancy disputes, has now passed the Legislative Assembly and has been introduced into the Legislative Council. Debate on the [Commercial Tenancy \(Retail Shops\) Agreements Amendment Bill 2011](#) has commenced in the Legislative Assembly but has not yet concluded. Labor has foreshadowed an amendment to this Bill to establish a lease register. This is unfortunate given that the Government has found there was limited industry support for this initiative and that it was exploring other ways to achieve greater lease transparency ([Shop Talk 21/4/11](#)). Parliamentary debate on both Bills will resume after the WA Parliament resumes on 17 May 2011.

ROD SIMS NOMINATED AS THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE ACCC

The Federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan, has [nominated Rod Sims](#), currently Chair of the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, as Chairman of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, replacing Graeme Samuel, who is stepping down. The nomination has to receive majority support from the States and Territories.

URBIS RETAIL PERSPECTIVES APRIL 2011 EDITION RELEASED

The April 2011 edition of the *Urbis Retail Perspectives* is now available [here](#) and contains a useful analysis of trends in retail sales. This issue also looks at internet retail sales and the implications this has for shopping centre owners.