



SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

SHOPPING CENTRE
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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[Archive](#)

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT TABLES INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES REFORM BILL

The Queensland Government tabled the [Sustainable Planning \(Housing Affordability and Infrastructure Charges Reform\) Amendment Bill 2011](#) in Parliament this week, which aims to give effect to the infrastructure charges reforms announced by Premier Anna Bligh on 12 April ([Shop Talk 14/4/11](#)). The Bill will be debated, and likely passed, in late May, with the reforms to commence from 2 July.

We have previously noted the new regulated maximum retail infrastructure charge of \$180 per m² of gross floor area will do little to make projects feasible. Positive measures, however, include the three-year moratorium on the local function charge for state roads. Another positive will be the establishment of a new Major Projects Office to "help ensure economically significant projects are navigated through the development assessment process". We are urging the Government to establish the office as soon as possible to deal with major retail projects. Unfortunately, in another development this week, Brisbane City Council [announced](#) its current 35% discount on charges will be phased out ahead of time, expiring on 24 June.

Meanwhile claims by local councils in Queensland that lower infrastructure charges will leave them broke should be treated with extreme scepticism. The Productivity Commission has found that in Queensland, the average planning expenditure by local council per DA (a key governance measure) is \$10,477, by far the highest of any state, the closest being NSW with \$3,022. Victoria has managed to impose a much lower infrastructure charges regime on retail developments in that state and Victorian councils are not going broke. The latest Victorian Auditor-General's report on the financial sustainability of councils, found that of 79 councils, 74 were low risk and no metropolitan council was identified as high risk.

STEVEN SEWELL IS THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE SHOPPING CENTRE COUNCIL

Steven Sewell, Chief Executive Officer of Charter Hall Retail REIT, has been [elected](#) the new Chairman of the Shopping Centre Council of Australia. Michael Gorman, Managing Director of CFS Retail Property Trust, has been elected Deputy Chairman. Steven Sewell, who has been Deputy Chairman since 2008, replaces Robert Jordan, Managing Director, Australia and New Zealand, Westfield Group, who has stepped down following the completion of his three-year term of office.

ACT GOVERNMENT BANS USE OF LIGHT WEIGHT PLASTIC BAGS FROM 1 JULY 2011

The ACT Government has [banned](#) the supply of some polyethelene plastic bags (i.e. the light weight plastic bags usually used by supermarkets, grocery stores and take-away food stores). The ban begins on 1 July 2011 but there will be a four-month transition process. After 1 November 2011 no banned plastic bag can be supplied by a retailer and penalties up to \$5,500 for individuals and \$27,500 for companies will apply. The [Plastic Shopping Bags Ban Act 2010](#) requires retailers to offer alternative bags and also to display signs informing customers of the changes during the transition period. Further details can be obtained by emailing: environment@act.gov.au.

GALA AWARDS DINNER ON 18 MAY FOR AMP/BRW AUSTRALIAN RETAILER OF YEAR

Meet the best of the best in Australian retail at the new *Australian Retailer Of The Year Awards 2011*, sponsored by AMP Capital Shopping Centres and BRW magazine. The awards cover a range of categories including new retailer; innovation; sustainability; marketing; and use of technology. Click [here](#) to register for the Gala Dinner on 18 May in Sydney when the winners will be announced.