



SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

SHOPPING CENTRE
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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[Archive](#)

SGS REPORT OUTLINING THE BENEFITS OF ACTIVITY CENTRES POLICIES

As part of our second submission on the Productivity Commission's recent [Benchmarking Report into Planning, Zoning and Development Assessment](#), we commissioned *SGS Economics and Planning* to prepare an independent report on the benefits of activity centres policies, which have come under attack in recent years from some retail companies seeking a competitive advantage over others ([Shop Talk 19/5/11](#)). The criticism is often self-serving, poorly informed, and pursued under the guise of 'improving competition'. It is clear from [SGS's final report](#) that no other planning approach provides the broad range of net community benefits, including retail competition benefits, as the activity centres approach. This includes evidence in relation to reduced vehicle kilometres travelled, labour productivity enhancement, and the efficient utilisation of infrastructure and resources. These benefits are all consistent with principles, goals and objectives under the Federal Government's [National Urban Policy](#) released on 18 May. One of the 'leading practices' recommended in the Commission's Final Report (to be considered by COAG this year) focused on activity centres, which highlights the need for less prescriptive zones and allowable uses, emphasising this would facilitate "new retail (and business) formats to locate in existing business zones without necessitating rezonings and other changes to council plans to accommodate various business models".

THE HUNTER REGION OF THE PROPERTY COUNCIL DISCUSSES NEW MARKETOWN

The Property Council's Hunter Division is holding a luncheon on 8 July featuring the new Marketown shopping centre, soon to open in Newcastle. Click [here](#) for further details and to register.

WA GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES FURTHER TINKERING WITH TRADING HOURS LAW

The Western Australian Government has [announced](#) further tinkering with the [Retail Trading Hours Act 1987](#) with [legislation](#) to expand the number of staff that 'small retail shops' – which do not have any trading hours restrictions – are allowed to employ without losing their unrestricted trading hours privileges. Section 10(3) of the Act specifies the criteria for a 'small retail shop' and one of those requires that "not more than 13 persons . . . work in the retail shop at any one and the same time". The Government proposes to increase the number of staff from 13 to 18. The Government has claimed this will benefit around 7,000 retail shops and will enable them to be defined as 'small retail shops' and therefore to trade for extended hours, including on Sundays and public holidays, if they wish to do so. This is very doubtful. Many of the shops which would benefit from this change, if it passes the Parliament, are located in shopping centres. Since the proposed change will do nothing to enable major retailers and chain retailers to trade on Sundays, it will still be uneconomic for owners to open these shopping centres on Sundays.

NRA APPLICATION FOR STUDENTS HOURS GRANTED BY FAIR WORK AUSTRALIA

This week, Fair Work Australia handed down a draft determination to grant the [National Retail Association's \(NRA\) application](#) to reduce the minimum engagement period for secondary school students to one and a half hours. This is a positive and sensible outcome, which will benefit the entire retailing sector, and comes from committed leadership and campaigning from the NRA on this issue since October last year (in partnership with the Victorian Government and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry). The SDA opposed the application. Well done to the NRA!