



SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

SHOPPING CENTRE
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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*** SPECIAL EDITION ***

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CODE OF CONDUCT TO ENSURE FAIR TREATMENT OF SHOPPING CENTRE CLEANERS

A Code of Conduct governing the fair treatment of cleaners in shopping centres has been signed by the Shopping Centre Council of Australia (SCCA), representing major shopping centre owners and managers, and the Building Service Contractors Association of Australia (BSCAA), representing cleaning contractors. The [Code of Conduct for Fair Service Provision in Shopping Centres](#) builds on and replaces the SCCA [Principles for Fair Contracting](#), which were adopted in November 2006.

The Code of Conduct aims to provide a safe, clean, convenient and respectful working environment for cleaners working in shopping centres and reflects current and emerging industry best practice. In co-operatively developing the Code, both the SCCA and the BSCAA reviewed other relevant standards, both in Australia and overseas, and took advice from the St James Ethics Centre, although the Code is not endorsed by or approved by the centre.

The Code covers a wide range of issues including the payment of fair wages, benefits and entitlements; the provision of a safe and hygienic working environment; observance of responsible employment standards; compliance with applicable laws and standards on working hours; proper occupational health and safety standards; prohibition of bullying, harassment and discrimination; ensuring freedom of association; and consultation regarding workplace change.

The new Code will be used in future cleaning contracts issued by SCCA members and cleaning contractors will be required to demonstrate their ability to adhere to the specific provisions of the Code. In evaluating tenders for cleaning contracts, SCCA members will have regard to the Code and a contractor's ability to comply with the provisions of the Code. This will include contractors disclosing information that will allow SCCA members to verify that the terms and conditions of contracts are being met.

In addition, the Code requires contractors to establish procedures and mechanisms to encourage compliance with the Code by all hired subcontractors, as well as establishing monitoring procedures and mechanisms to investigate complaints. The Code will be kept under regular review by a Code Administration Committee, with equal representation from the SCCA and the BSCAA, and with an independent Chair.

In releasing the Code today, both the SCCA and the BSCAA called on United Voice to cease its current industrial campaign, which unfairly targets major shopping centres. The industrial campaign also penalises responsible cleaning contractors who, in addition to creating valuable jobs, already abide by Fair Work Australia's rules and pay their employees proper award rates and entitlements, including penalty rates (see special edition of [Shop Talk 25/11/11](#)). The undertakings in the new Code go beyond the minimum industrial requirements and fully address any concerns the union might have about fair treatment of cleaners.

The Chairman of the SCCA, Mr Steven Sewell, said today: "We don't believe there is any basis for the union to keep singling out shopping centre owners or their retailers in its campaign." The President of the BSCAA, Mr Terry Corby, added: "The union's constant accusations of poor working conditions and unclean shopping centres are simply a smoke screen for demanding unsustainable wage increases which cannot be absorbed, particularly in this current environment."

Both the SCCA and the BSCAA have consistently maintained that if United Voice believes there is a case for increased wages in the cleaning industry, then this should be pursued through the processes established by Fair Work Australia, which is the independent umpire established by the Federal Government to ensure the payment of fair wages and working conditions.