



SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

SHOPPING CENTRE
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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NEW VICTORIAN FIRE LEVY DISCRIMINATES AGAINST SHOPPING CENTRES

The Victorian Government has [announced](#) the details of the proposed fire services property levy, to fund the metropolitan and country fire authorities, to operate from July 2013. The new levy will be collected by councils, through rate notices, and will comprise a fixed component (\$200 for non-residential properties and \$100 for residential) plus a variable component based on a fixed percentage of the capital improved value (CIV) of the property (land and buildings). The existing insurance-based levy will not be charged after 1 July 2013. Regrettably the new levy will not be imposed on motor vehicles, despite the fact that vehicles cause around 10% of fire incidents. [Fact sheets](#) on the new levy are available here.

The Government has hailed the new levy as a fairer system because it removes the penalty on those who prudently insure their properties. The levy is far from equitable, however, for investors in commercial property, who are mainly people saving for and living out their retirement. With no ceiling on the variable component of the new levy, improved properties will pay a disproportionate share of the new levy. Most shopping centres will be paying substantially more to fund the fire services and one shopping centre faces a potential increase of nearly 1,100%. Some shopping centres will be paying more to fund fire services than they pay in land tax, despite the fact that these centres are already highly insured and will remain so. Shopping centres (and commercial offices) also invest heavily in fire suppression systems and spend a significant amount each year maintaining these systems. The new fire services levy will therefore mean these centres face a triple burden (insurance, disproportionate levy, fire systems), despite being very low fire risks. This inequity must be addressed by the Government before the scheme is finalised.

ROCKINGHAM AND MANDURAH FOLLOW PERTH'S LEAD ON SUNDAY TRADING

It was inevitable that, once Perth gained Sunday trading, this would lead to surrounding regions moving quickly to bring their own trading hours into line with the capital. The WA Government has announced that the special holiday resorts of Rockingham and Wanneroo would also begin year-round Sunday trading from 26 August, the same day that Sunday trading began for all Perth shops. The Government has also gazetted Sunday trading (from 10am to 5pm) for Mandurah, from the same date, as well as trading (from 8am to 6pm) on most public holidays. These join the more than 20 other regional areas in WA which allow Sunday trading. See the Fact Sheet [here](#) and the Q&As [here](#).

QUEENSLAND MOVES TO CHANGE DATE OF QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY AND LABOUR DAY

Last year the then Queensland Government, following a review of the Holidays Act, moved observance of the Queen's Birthday from the second Monday in June to the first Monday in October. The new Government has now introduced [legislation](#) to restore the Queen's Birthday public holiday to its old date (second Monday in June) and to move the Labour Day public holiday from the first Monday in May to the first Monday in October. The Government has argued this better breaks up the concentration of public holidays in the first half of the year and aligns these two holidays with other States, NSW. The changes will operate from 2013.

RETAIL FUNDAMENTALS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE IN ADELAIDE

The Property Council is running a course on Retail Fundamentals in Adelaide on Mondays, 10 and 17 September, 2012. Further details and registrations are available [here](#). Register online [here](#).