



# SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

SHOPPING CENTRE  
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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## SUBMISSION ON DRAFT MELBOURNE METROPOLITAN PLANNING STRATEGY

The Shopping Centre Council recently lodged a [submission](#) on the Draft Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Strategy. This follows our submission on the 'Melbourne: let's talk about our future' discussion paper earlier this year ([Shop Talk, 11/4/13](#)). The Draft Strategy, referred to as 'Plan Melbourne', aims to guide and manage growth to 2050. We broadly support the Strategy, given its clear vision and direction for population growth, residential expansion, economic and employment growth, infrastructure provision and productivity. In a welcome move, the Strategy also focuses on retail issues, including retail floorspace growth and various proposed actions (which inevitably carry implementation risk) to facilitate growth within various activity centres. Our submission has focused on seeking improvement in two strategic aspects of the Strategy. The first relates to the new Structure Plan which redefines the current activity centres framework. Some existing centres appear to be downgraded to lower-order locations which could limit growth and investment opportunities where strong market fundamentals and location characteristics (such as public transport) already exist. We are seeking to ensure that the Strategy does not exclude such locations from future growth and investment and that there is flexibility for growth and expansion. The second issue relates to the proposed investigation of new 'value capture' funding mechanisms for certain infrastructure, which could result in a new property levy. In theory the uplift in property values from infrastructure investment could be captured by government, through taxation, to help fund the infrastructure. But the existing rating system (and the new fire services levy) already 'tax' improvements in land value and this would be 'double taxation'. While we have been assured that it is early days in the investigations, we are keen to ensure industry is closely consulted to ensure a fair, transparent and credible approach.

## NSW PLANNING REFORMS STREAMLINE EXTENDED CHRISTMAS TRADING HOURS

The NSW Government has announced changes to the [Exempt and Complying Development planning policy](#) to streamline approvals for low-impact development. This includes the ability for shopping centres located within a business zone to operate extended trading hours in the two weeks prior to Christmas without the need for planning approval. We understand that existing development consents which limit extended trading will be over-ridden. Unfortunately the streamlining provisions don't extend to delivery times and waste collection. The changes will be notified on [this website](#) tomorrow.

## COAG PULLS THE PLUG ON THE NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING SYSTEM

A brave attempt at microeconomic reform, by achieving greater labour mobility around Australia, ended last Friday when the Council of Australian Governments terminated the National Occupational Licensing System. NOLS was supposed to be a major outcome of the 'seamless national economy' initiative adopted by COAG in 2008 but instead NOLS fell victim to misinformation, state jealousies and the protection of vested interests. Instead the states and territories are to take over the task of trying to improve labour mobility across state borders, something they have failed to achieve in 113 years of Federation.

## RECOVERY OF COSTS OF ESSENTIAL SAFETY MEASURES IN VICTORIA

For some time there has been legal debate in Victoria about whether landlords can seek to recover, as an outgoing, the costs of complying with essential safety measures under the *Building Act 1993*. An original Law Institute Journal article suggested landlords could not recover the costs of compliance with the Act. This view has now been [challenged](#) in a further article, although the author suggests legislative clarification may be necessary.