



# SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

SHOPPING CENTRE  
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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## CATALYST REPORT ON SUSTAINABILITY IS JUST THE LATEST UNITED VOICE STUNT

Fortunately the media is tiring of stunts by United Voice in its long-running campaign against cleaning contractors in shopping centres ([Shop Talk 25/11/11](#)). The latest is a report by Catalyst, which describes itself as a "progressive policy network", claiming the commercial property sector is "failing to meet even modest sustainability benchmarks". This report gained very little media coverage although it did find its way into the *Financial Review* which didn't bother to ask basic questions. So who is Catalyst and why is it interested in the property sector? Well it's a body primarily funded by five trade unions, one of which is (surprise!) United Voice. Its management committee, not surprisingly given the source of its funding, comprises mainly union officials, one of whom is (surprise!) the National Secretary of United Voice. The Executive Director of Catalyst is a former long-serving official of (surprise!) United Voice. No prizes for guessing the catalyst for the Catalyst report.

What of the report which of course has not been peer-reviewed? The authors have done no original work, relying on company websites; did not seek to engage with relevant officials of the companies; and have ignored evidence which does not suit. One example is the claim that only three of the companies "made any statement in support of freedom of association", yet the *Code of Conduct for Fair Service Provision in Shopping Centres* ([Shop Talk 14/2/12](#)), agreed by all SCCA members, contains an entire section on freedom of association. Incidentally the report makes no mention of this Code of Conduct when discussing 'labour standards'. Perhaps that's because United Voice refuses to recognise the Code. United Voice's cleaning industry members must surely be asking: wouldn't it be better to spend our money preparing a detailed case for a wage increase to the Fair Work Commission ([Shop Talk 6/2/14](#)), rather than funding these silly media stunts.

## ROBYN HOBBS APPOINTED AS NEW NSW SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER

The NSW Minister for Small Business, Katrina Hodgkinson, has [announced](#) the appointment of Ms Robyn Hobbs OAM as the new NSW Small Business Commissioner. Ms Hobbs replaces the former Small Business Commissioner, Yasmin King, who resigned after she was not reappointed ([Shop Talk 30/1/14](#)). Ms Hobbs is currently the Manager Executive Support at the City of Parramatta and has previously had managerial roles with the City of Sydney and the Sydney Opera House. She begins her five-year appointment on 25 February 2014.

## Q'LAND VALUER-GENERAL TO INTRODUCE ELECTRONIC VALUATION NOTICES

The Queensland Valuer-General has advised that from March 2014 landowners in Queensland can elect to receive future annual or maintenance valuation notices via email. Those who choose to do so will have their email address recorded on the valuation roll as the 'address for service'. Land owners who do not opt in will continue to receive notices by post. Further details will be available on the [website](#) in March.

## PROPERTY COUNCIL ACADEMY LEASING FUNDAMENTALS COURSE ON 25 MARCH

The Property Council Academy has organised a two-day course on Leasing Fundamentals in Sydney on 25 March. The course includes a separate stream on retail leasing. Click [here](#) for details and register [here](#).

## AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR RETAIL STUDIES SEMINARS IN LATE FEBRUARY

The Australian Centre for Retail Studies will hold seminars later this month in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane on latest retail technology developments. Further details and registration are [here](#).