



SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

SHOPPING CENTRE
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION LOOKS INTO BARRIERS TO BUSINESS ENTRIES/EXITS

The Federal Treasurer, Joe Hockey, has tasked the Productivity Commission with undertaking an inquiry into barriers to business entries and exits. The inquiry's [Terms of Reference](#) seek appropriate options to reducing barriers associated with 'transfers and subsidies to businesses, including import barriers' and 'time spent on and cost of complying or dealing with government regulation, licensing and bureaucracy', among other issues. In a [media release](#) announcing the inquiry, it is noted that the inquiry is 'about increasing competition, improving Australia's productivity and building a more flexible and resilient economy'. The Productivity Commission is preparing an issues paper for release this month. They will then receive submissions and undertake public hearings throughout 2015 before providing Government with a final report in August 2015. It is likely that there will be overlap between the Productivity Commission's deliberations and the recommendations contained in the Competition Policy Review Panel's final report to Government, which is due in March 2015 ([Shop Talk 20/11/14](#)). Issues around trading hours and planning and zoning are expected to feature prominently. We will be preparing a submission for the inquiry.

QUEENSLAND PLANNING BILL TABLED IN PARLIAMENT LAST WEEK

The Queensland Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Jeff Seeney, introduced the [Planning and Development Bill](#) into Parliament last week. In our submission on the Draft Bill, we expressed our strong support for the Bill, including the Government's attempt to strip back its planning legislation and the retention of code assessment. Much of the detail will be embodied in the Regulation and related instruments. We will continue to engage with the Government as this important reform progresses.

ACCC WARNS ELECTRICITY ON-SELLERS TO PASS ON CARBON TAX SAVINGS

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has written to the Shopping Centre Council to [outline the obligations](#) under the *Competition and Consumer Act* for embedded network operators that on-sell electricity to pass on cost savings to their customers as a result of the carbon tax repeal. The ACCC has advised that this obligation applies irrespective of whether cost savings have been provided to the embedded network operator in the form of lower prices (from the electricity retailers) or refunds or adjustments to electricity bills. Those who breach this obligation may be liable under the new section 60C (Price exploitation in relation to the carbon tax repeal) of the Act. In a [media statement](#), the ACCC states that it has extended its focus to electricity on-selling as part of its ongoing monitoring of the carbon tax repeal. Its focus to date has included electricity retailers, natural gas and local council rates. We have indicated to the ACCC that we are willing to work with them and assist in their investigations on this issue.

VICTORIAN CABINET ANNOUNCED FOLLOWING LABOR ELECTION VICTORY

New Victorian Premier, Daniel Andrews, has announced his Cabinet. The Treasury portfolio will be held by Tim Pallas, Consumer Affairs by Jane Garratt, Small Business by Adem Somyurek and Planning by Richard Wynne. The former Planning Minister, Matthew Guy, has been elected as Leader of the Opposition.

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RETAIL PROPERTY INDUSTRY

Congratulations to the Cohen Group's Burnside Village which [won](#) the Gold Award at the Property Council of Australia's 2014 SA Retail Property Awards. Malcolm Creswell, Regional Manager for the Scentre Group, was awarded the W.J. McCallum Award for significant contribution to the industry in SA. Shaun Skipper, of Novion Property Group, was named the Ken Cooney Young Achiever of the Year.