

# SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

THURSDAY 11 AUGUST 2016

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## VICTORIAN REVIEW OF ELECTRICITY LICENCE EXEMPTION FRAMEWORK

The Victorian government has released a Draft Position Paper on the review of its [exemption framework in relation to the requirement to hold an electricity licence](#). The Paper outlines updated policy positions, which applies to shopping centres, and covers issues such as exemption categories, consumer protections, pricing and dispute resolution. With the Australian Energy Regulator progressing with a national framework in recent years, it is shame the Victorian Government hasn't made a significant effort to substantially transition to this national framework (despite its effort to align certain issues with the AER framework). Submissions are due on 29 August 2016 and a Final Position Paper is due later this year.

## FEDERAL TAX REFORM UNIT TO BE WOUND UP; REFORM EXPECTATIONS MOVE ON

It was reported last week that the Federal Government's Tax White Paper Unit is to be wound up. The Government embarked on a comprehensive tax review in early 2015, with the release of a Discussion Paper and the receipt of submissions ([Shop Talk 1/4/15](#) & [9/7/15](#)). It is no secret that the national debate on this issue then flip-flopped through a change in Prime Minister and Treasurer, an early budget and an election campaign. The report of the post-election demise of the White Paper Unit, combined with the statement currently on the tax reform website that the "Australian Government will put a tax reform package to the people before the next election", appears to confirm that tax reform will be contained to that announced in the May budget. With tax reform apparently parked for the time being, reform expectations shift to the progress of implementing the recommendations made by the Harper Competition Policy Reform Panel. Prior to the election, Australia's leaders agreed to "...develop a new competition and productivity enhancing reform agreement..." for consideration at the next COAG meeting. We hope that this reform agenda, which could drive greater liberalisation of retail trading hours, does not go the way of the national tax debate.

## FINALISED SENATE COUNT THROWS SPOTLIGHT ON LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The recent finalisation of the Senate make-up has thrown a spotlight on the progress of the Government's legislative priorities, not least of which is the proposed re-establishment of the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC). There is still speculation as to whether the Government will have the numbers in a joint sitting of the Parliament, with negotiations with the new Senate crossbench reportedly ongoing. Interestingly, a number of retailer groups have recently expressed support for the ABCC, citing a concern between the cost of shopping centre construction and a flow through to leasing costs "and directly to the bottom line of retail businesses". The SCCA has supported the re-establishment of the ABCC, particularly given our members' \$10 billion national development pipeline.

## VICTORIAN SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER NOT SEEKING REAPPOINTMENT

In a media statement issued yesterday, the Victorian Small Business Commissioner, Geoff Browne, announced that he will not be seeking reappointment when his five year term ends on 7 October 2016. He reportedly advised the Minister for Small Business, the Hon Phil Dalidakis, of his decision last week. One of the Commissioner's noted achievements is stopping an increasing trend in disputes between landlords and tenants, which is an important function of the Office. We wish Commissioner Browne the best in his future endeavours.

## ANOTHER RECORD YEAR FOR SCCA MARKETING AWARD NOMINATIONS

A big thank you to SCCA and non-SCCA members for the 172 entries to this year's [SCCA Marketing Awards](#). This is a solid increase from last year's record of 149 nominations. The extensive judging process will now commence, with finalists being announced on 1 September. The awards will be presented at a Gala Dinner in Sydney on Thursday 27 October 2015. Tickets for the Dinner are now available to purchase [here](#).

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