

29 SEPTEMBER 2021

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Shopping centres prepare to welcome back all customers and COVID-safe Santa**

The Shopping Centre Council of Australia (SCCA) can confirm that Santa Claus is coming to town.

With the Government of ACT, NSW and Victoria releasing targeted dates and roadmaps for the reopening of all retail and hospitality premises, the SCCA is working hand in hand with the industry and public health agencies to ensure a COVID-safe return to the shops.

“Christmas is the season that shopping centres and all of retail looks forward to, and coming out of lockdowns in ACT, NSW and Victoria, that sense of anticipation is even stronger than ever,” SCCA Executive Director Angus Nardi said today.

“Shopping centres have remained open throughout the pandemic. We know from ongoing experience that when lockdowns and restrictions on retail ease, there is a strong rebound in customer demand as people return to shop, meet with friends, enjoy time with their family and celebrate.”

The SCCA and industry has detailed industry COVID-safe plans and guidance on issues such as general operations, food courts, children’s rides, the wearing of face masks and Santa photos.

“We are well prepared to welcome the community back to shopping centres as lockdowns lift and shoppers and retailers gear up for Christmas. Our industry wants to assure the community that their health, wellbeing and safety remains our highest priority.”

“We’ll be making sure the much loved tradition of Santa Photos are staged in a COVID-safe way, so this wonderful family tradition can continue in 2021.”

“To provide community assurance, we are today releasing our *Shopping Centres: COVID Safe Reopening Protocol* which outlines the framework, key principles and measures that our industry has continued to operate under across all jurisdictions.”

The Protocol outlines the following 4 key principles:

1. *Community and Customer Messaging*
2. *Partnerships*
3. *COVID-Safe Measures & Staff Well-being*
4. *Public Health Orders & Guidance*

Specific ongoing COVID-Safe measures include regular cleaning and disinfecting of communal areas and surfaces, frequent communications on public health changes and the provision of PPE equipment to all staff.

“As more of our retailers reopen their doors and as we enter the Christmas trading period, we are asking our customers to continue to practise COVID Safe principles. The *Shopping List of COVID-Safe Practices* we are asking customers to adhere to include:

- *Plan your journey – (e.g. avoid peak times; plan which shops you want to visit).*
- *Check-in with QR Codes – where required (e.g. in-centre; in-store).*
- *Wear a face mask – unless an exemption applies.*
- *Physically distance – when moving through the centre and queuing.*
- *Treat staff with respect*

“Our COVID-Safe industry operations group has worked throughout the pandemic to share insights, best practice and learn lessons for our robust and live-tested COVID-Safe plans,” said Mr Nardi.

“We also ask our customers to treat retail and shopping centre workers, and other customers, with courtesy and respect.”

“We remind customers that abusive, violent and anti-social behaviour towards workers and other customers is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.”

The current trajectory for retail opening is following a similar pattern to the 2020 trading season, with all retailers within Australian shopping centres open for regular trading through Christmas and Boxing day. With COVID-Safe practices, SCCA members look forward to another successful Christmas season.

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## **ATTACHED**

*SCCA SHOPPING CENTRE: RETAIL REOPENING PROTOCOL*

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# SHOPPING CENTRES: COVID-SAFE REOPENING PROTOCOL

## SHOPPING CENTRES ARE AT THE HEART OF AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES.

70% of Australians live within 5km of a shopping centre, and just under 90% live within 20km.

Shopping centres have remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as public places and to enable the community's access to retailers and services such as supermarkets, pharmacies, medical clinics, allied health and food and grocery outlets.

Some shopping centres have hosted COVID-testing and have vaccination hubs.

To ensure the ongoing wellbeing of staff and customers, our industry has maintained detailed COVID-19 safe plans and operations including on general shopping centre operations (e.g. common-mall areas, bathrooms, loading docks, maintenance of essential safety measures such as air-handling systems and fire-safety systems) through to specific areas such as food courts and activities such as Santa Photos.

Our industry has a national COVID-Safe operations group that meets regularly to share insights and best practices, learn lessons, and we engage with government bodies such as public health, police, health and safety regulators; along with other partners.

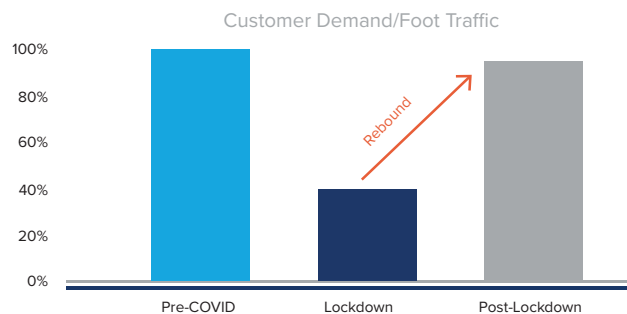
Our industry maintains close engagement with relevant public health and other agencies to ensure we remain aware of and compliant with public health orders and other guidance.

***“The shopping centre industry wants to assure the community that their health, wellbeing and safety remains our highest priority.”***

This is particularly important as we approach the 2021 Christmas trading period, and lockdowns and restrictions are scheduled to ease in certain jurisdictions.

We know from ongoing experience that when lockdowns and restrictions ease, there is a strong rebound in customer demand as people return to shop, meet with friends, enjoy time with their family and celebrate.

This is illustrated by customer demand analysis below:



The safe movement of customers and people are a long-standing and core part of shopping centre operations.

We have a detailed understanding how people enter (e.g. walk-in, vehicular, loading docks, via public transport), move through and congregate within our centres, including at different times of the year, days of the week and times of day.

We also have a focus on customers that may have special needs and require assistance.

We adapt our COVID-safe measures accordingly, noting that each shopping centre is different including issues such as location, size, number of storeys, configuration (open-air / enclosed), customer visits, customer access points, tenancy mix, operating hours, car-parks, loading docks and co-location such as with public transport facilities.

While several jurisdictions and hundreds of shopping centres continue to operate 'as normal', we look forward to welcoming the community back to shopping centres in places currently subject to lockdowns and tight business restrictions.

**Angus Nardi**  
Executive Director  
September 2021

The shopping centre industry has the following key messages for the community and our partners and key stakeholders:

## 1. We are COVID-safe and the community's health, wellbeing and safety remains our highest priority.

Our industry has maintained detailed COVID-Safe plans and operations including ongoing monitoring and following public-health orders.

Our industry operates under the following framework which illustrates our key operating principles in all jurisdictions, along with key (but not exhaustive) measures and activities.

### COMMUNITY & CUSTOMER MESSAGING

- Plan your journey - plan where you want to shop, meet friends and relax
- Treat shopping centre and retail staff and other customers with courtesy and respect
- Check-in with QR code at centre and in-store
- Wear a face mask, unless an exemption applies
- Physical distancing including when moving through the centre and queuing



### PARTNERSHIPS

- Open and frequent communication with retailers and service providers on public health orders and key issues
- Ongoing engagement with retailers on issues such as store trading, reopening and queue management
- Engage with government on key policy and public health issues
- Engage with compliance agencies, such as police and health and safety regulators
- Assist when required with contact tracing in the event a COVID-positive person visits a centre



### COVID-SAFE MEASURES / STAFF WELL-BEING

- Ongoing implementation of COVID-Safe plans to ensure the health, wellbeing and safety of staff and customers
- Regular cleaning and disinfecting of key areas and surfaces (e.g. food courts and common areas)
- PPE provided to all relevant staff
- Centre-staff including security guards continue to monitor customer movement and any crowding
- Regular check-ins with staff on their well-being including monitoring any anti-social customer behaviour towards them
- Ongoing maintenance of essential safety measures such as air-handling systems, exit doors, smoke alarms and sprinkler systems



### PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS & GUIDANCE

- Actively monitor and review public health orders and ongoing guidance
- Follow public health orders, and implement any changes through COVID-Safe plans
- Actively monitor ongoing government messaging to the community including in relation to COVID-Safe practices
- Monitor any risks to staff, contractors and community for any aspect of centre visits and trade



## 2. We are supporting SMEs including through rent assistance, store trade and their reopening

Our industry has supported small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) with more than \$2 billion in rent relief, and this assistance continues.

The largest level of financial assistance has been, and continues to be, SMEs affected by government restrictions such as hairdressers, cafes and restaurants.

Our industry also supports SMEs that may need assistance in operating takeaway, click and collect (e.g. parking bays for customer pick-up), the reopening of their stores after a period of closure and centre promotion and marketing.

## 3. We ask that customers are COVID-safe and treat staff and fellow customers with courtesy and respect

Customers should plan their journey, such as avoiding peak times and planning where they want to shop, meet with friends and relax.

Customers should ensure they check-in with QR Codes, wear a face mask, physically distance from others and ensure that they treat staff and fellow customers with courtesy and respect.

Aggressive, violent and anti-social behaviour towards staff or other customers will not be tolerated.

## COVID-SAFE SHOPPING LIST



Plan your journey



Check-in with QR codes



Wear a mask



Physical distancing



Treat staff with respect



# YOUR COVID-SAFE SHOPPING LIST



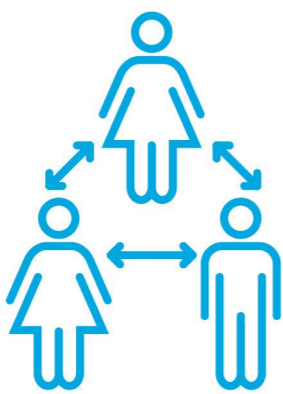
**Plan your journey**



**Check-in with QR codes**



**Wear a mask**



**Physical distancing**



**Treat staff with respect**

