

22 April 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

SCCA WELCOMES INCREASED POLICE RESOURCES AND STRONGER POWERS TO TACKLE ILLICIT TOBACCO IN VICTORIA

The Shopping Centre Council of Australia (SCCA) has welcomed the Victorian Government's latest investment in policing and community safety, including significant new funding to boost frontline resources, enhance police capability, and strengthen enforcement against illicit tobacco.

The SCCA said the measures represent a positive step in strengthening frontline policing and ensuring officers are better equipped to respond to crime in busy community environments, including shopping centres.

Angus Nardi, Chief Executive of the SCCA said: "Shopping centres are among the most visited public spaces in the country, and strong police visibility plays a critical role in keeping customers, workers and businesses safe.

"We welcome further investment that gets more police back onto the frontline, supported by the tools and resources they need to respond quickly and effectively."

"Additional Protective Services Officers (PSOs) are a welcome boost, particularly given their visible presence and proven role in deterring anti-social behaviour across high-traffic locations, including shopping centres as part of *Operation Pulse*," he said.

The SCCA also acknowledged the Government's focus on tackling illicit tobacco and associated organised criminal activity, building on the Government's recent commitment to introduce stronger laws targeting illicit tobacco, including proposed shop closure powers and measures enabling landlords to take action against non-compliant operators

New legislative powers announced in March together with additional resources, represent a significant and necessary step forward in tackling the growing problem of illicit tobacco.

"Illicit tobacco is not a victimless issue, it is linked to broader organised crime and has real impacts on legitimate retailers and community safety," Mr Nardi said.

"The additional \$13.4 million investment, alongside tougher enforcement measures such as closure powers and provisions enabling landlords to terminate non-compliant tenancies, is a critical step forward.

"Stronger enforcement powers are an important step in disrupting these activities and supporting law-abiding businesses."

The SCCA emphasised the importance of continued collaboration between government, police, and the retail property sector to address evolving safety challenges.

"We look forward to continuing to work constructively with the Victorian Government and Police to ensure shopping centres remain safe, welcoming places for the community."

The SCCA is the national industry group for major shopping centre owner and operators.



CONTACT: Luke Sikora, Head of Stakeholder Engagement, SCCA, 0423 437 166