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MEDIA RELEASE

SCCA WELCOMES VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN ON ILLICIT TOBACCO

The Shopping Centre Council of Australia (SCCA) has welcomed the Victorian Government's introduction of stronger powers to combat the illicit tobacco trade, including new shop closure laws targeting businesses involved in the sale of illegal tobacco products.

Under the proposed legislation, Tobacco Licensing Victoria and Victoria Police will have the power to issue closure notices of up to 90 days for premises involved in illicit tobacco activity, with longer-term closure orders available through the courts.

Angus Nardi, Chief Executive of the SCCA said: "The Shopping Centre Council of Australia welcomes the Victorian Government's stronger enforcement powers to combat the illicit tobacco trade, including new closure orders that will help authorities swiftly target businesses engaged in illegal tobacco sales and the organised crime networks that profit from them."

"The illicit tobacco trade funds organised crime, undermines legitimate businesses and creates significant risks for the broader community," Mr Nardi said.

"These measures represent an important step in tackling organised criminal activity and protecting legitimate retailers.

Mr Nardi said the SCCA had consistently supported stronger regulatory and enforcement measures to address the illicit tobacco market.

"The introduction of closure powers, lease termination powers in certain circumstances, significant penalties and measures to hold those facilitating illegal activity accountable will strengthen the ability of authorities to take decisive action against offenders."

"The SCCA has worked closely with the Victorian Government, Victoria Police and other stakeholders on measures to address illicit tobacco and associated criminal activity, and having also engaged extensively with the Queensland Government on similar reforms, we are pleased to see Victoria making progress on a strong enforcement framework to tackle this growing issue."

"Shopping centre owners have a strong interest in ensuring their centres remain safe, lawful and welcoming environments for customers, retailers and staff."

"We look forward to continuing to work with the Victorian Government, Tobacco Licensing Victoria and law enforcement agencies on further measures to combat illicit tobacco and associated criminal activity."

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

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