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MEDIA RELEASE

SCCA WELCOMES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S RENEWED FOCUS ON HARMONISING RETAIL TENANCY FRAMEWORKS

The Shopping Centre Council of Australia (SCCA) has welcomed the Federal Government's renewed focus on harmonising retail tenancy frameworks across Australia, saying well-designed reform could deliver meaningful productivity benefits for retailers, landlords and small businesses.

The Federal Government announced in the May 2026 Federal Budget that it would pursue the harmonisation of state and territory retail tenancy frameworks as part of its Productivity Package, with the aim of making it easier for businesses operating across jurisdictions and reducing regulatory costs and duplication.

Angus Nardi, Chief Executive of the SCCA said: "Retail lease legislation is an area where greater harmonisation could reduce unnecessary cost, complexity and delays, and therefore enhance productivity," Mr Nardi said.

"We've already had early discussions with the Government about this proposed reform and appreciate their early engagement with us."

"The retail industry has also already come together and discussed where harmonisation could deliver the greatest practical benefit, including drawing on lessons learned from previous attempts at national consistency and what is working well across Australia today."

"We look forward to continued discussions with our retail industry colleagues on where reform could deliver the great productivity benefits."

The SCCA believes the most achievable opportunities are likely to be practical and procedural, rather than changes to issues that relate to the commercial terms or mediation and dispute resolution. Potential areas for greater consistency include harmonised disclosure statements and streamlined processes for multi-tenancy transactions.

Mr Nardi said successful reform would depend on close engagement with those directly affected by retail leasing legislation.

"We are the only group that consistently engages on retail lease legislation across all jurisdictions, and we also oversee the only current 'harmonised' retail tenancy instrument, being the SCCA Casual Mall Licensing Code of Conduct, which is authorised by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), and applies to short-term 'pop-up' retail premises."

"The Code, which has been in place since 2007, demonstrates that national consistency in this area is achievable, and we believe it offers a useful platform for the work ahead."

"We also know deeply what doesn't work, including the retail rent relief code during COVID-19 where ourselves and the retail industry developed an agreed national code, but it ended up being an amended federal code, and then a quagmire of state regulations. The industry's 14-page code, comprising 11 sections, and 2,624 words, ended up being regulated differently across Australia's jurisdictions blowing out into 217 sections 50,840 words."

"As a partner throughout, there is a real opportunity to remove unnecessary red tape and deliver sensible harmonisation," Mr Nardi.

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

SHOPPING CENTRE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

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