

SHOP TALK

ISSUES AND NEWS AFFECTING THE AUSTRALIAN SHOPPING CENTRE INDUSTRY

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NSW GOVERNMENT COMMITS TO CONTINUE WIDESPREAD BOXING DAY TRADING

Last week, the NSW Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations, Dominic Perrottet, [announced](#) the Government's commitment to continue widespread Boxing Day trading, in line with the recommendations of the [independent review report](#) of the *Retail Trading Act* which was tabled in Parliament. This was a review of the reforms which commenced in 2015 to enable widespread trading on Boxing Day in 2015 and 2016 ([Shop Talk 12/11/15](#)). Professor Percy Allan AM, a former NSW Treasury Secretary, undertook the review, ([Shop Talk 7/4/17](#)). Professor Allan's report recommends that Boxing Day continue to be a trading day subject to safeguards and protections for both workers and retailers, including statutory penalties, and also appropriate industry consultation to better ensure compliance with both the spirit and letter of the law. The Treasurer has stated that "after a two-year trial and a comprehensive review, we now know there is clear support for giving all retailers the option of opening their doors on one of the biggest trading days of the year, provided staff are given a free choice as to whether they will work or not". It is pleasing that the 'key findings' of the report cite Shopping Centre Council reasoning that: (1) "Boxing Day in 2015 and 2016 was one of the most popular shopping days of the Christmas/New Year festive season", and (2) "Deregulating trading on Boxing Day does not appear to have detracted from retailing activity on other trading days following Christmas". Our analysis highlighted two simple metrics: (1) customer demand, and (2) retailer participation. With appropriate safeguards, whereby workers can't be forced to work and retailers can't be forced to open, it's hard to argue against this reform on objective grounds. Anyone in breach of requirements would be subject to fines. Further, at a time when consumer preferences are evolving, it is critical that the retail industry is able to respond to meet such demand. At the end of the day, no one forces people to shop, or shops to open. The Amendment Bill is due to be tabled shortly, and will likely need the support of cross-bench members in order to pass the Legislative Council.

FINAL SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND REGIONAL PLAN RELEASED AFTER LENGTHY CONSULTATION

The Queensland Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad, has [announced](#) the finalisation of the updated *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017 - ShapingSEQ*. The review of the SEQ Regional Plan has been underway for over 12 months, with a draft Plan having been released for comment in late 2016 ([Shop Talk 4/11/16](#) & [24/3/17](#)). The final Plan has retained a proposal to establish a Centres Review Working Group to "lead, manage, and conduct a review of SEQ's regional activity centres network to identify priority centres as a focus for infrastructure investment". We have made representations to the Queensland Government seeking to ensure that we are involved in the activities of the Working Group. The Plan also explicitly seeks the investigation of "new ways of funding infrastructure in SEQ" and, in this context, directly references "value capture and other innovative funding mechanisms". This is also noted as being a medium-term priority, and is further evidence that the value capture bandwagon continues to move forward ([Shop Talk 3/3/16](#)).

QLD GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES RETAILER TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR PLASTIC-BAG BAN

The Queensland Government has announced a [Retailer Transition Program](#), in partnership with the National Retail Association, in relation to its ban on certain plastic bags (which could include shopping centre-issued bags) from 1 July 2018. The program includes advice, resources and workshops for affected businesses.

QLD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS ELECTRICITY BILL ON NATIONAL REGULATION BE PASSED

A Queensland Parliamentary Committee has recommended the passage of the [Electricity and Other Legislation \(Batteries and Premium Feed-in Tariff\) Amendment Bill](#) ([Shop Talk 14/1/17](#)). The amendments enable alignment and the implementation of new national regulatory arrangements, made under the National Electricity Rules, which commence on 1 December 2017, to better facilitate access to competition for embedded network customers.

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