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NSW GOVERNMENT IMPOSES A NEW TAX ON LAND TRANSFERS

The Shopping Centre Council of Australia is supporting the Property Council of Australia's campaign against the NSW Government's proposed new tax, [announced last week](#), on land and property title registrations. The new 'ad valorem' tax, which will be on top of existing taxes such as stamp duty and land tax, will form part of the 8 June state budget, and significantly increase the current flat rate of \$190 for all land and property registrations, including shops and shopping centres. For a \$1 million property, the charge will increase to \$1,000; for a \$10 million property, \$23,690; for a \$100 million property, \$248,690. The Government has justified the tax, and forecast \$90 million a year revenue, on two fronts: firstly, for new document security measures to guard against property fraud, and secondly, to support a fund to compensate victims of fraud. These justifications are nonsense. A new security system has been implemented in recent years (and there's no evidence that an upgrade will cost \$90 million), and the existing compensation fund only pays out claims of around \$5 million per annum. It is nothing more than a blatant revenue grab. The NSW Opposition has announced that it opposes the tax.

SENATE COMMITTEE REJECTS RICHMOND AMENDMENT BILL

The Senate Economics Committee has recommended the Senate reject the *Trade Practices Amendment (Material Lessening of Competition – Richmond Amendment) Bill 2009* ([Shop Talk 16/4/10](#) and [5/2/10](#).) The Committee found no case had been made that there was a problem with the 'substantial lessening of competition' test for mergers and acquisitions in section 50(1) of the *Trade Practices Act*. The Committee also rejected the Bill's proposal to prohibit a firm with substantial market share from acquiring shares or assets that has the effect of lessening competition.

ACT GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES SUPERMARKET SITE RELEASES

The ACT Government, in a further development of its Supermarket Competition Policy, has announced a package of site releases for new supermarkets in Dickson, Kingston, Casey and Amaroo. The Government announcement includes measures to specifically advantage local supermarket owner Supabarn and specifically discriminate against Woolworths. The Institute of Public Affairs has now taken up the point we have previously made ([Shop Talk 9/10/09](#)) that such direct intervention in the market for supermarkets, as well as delivering less revenue for Canberra's taxpayers, will mean customers of such protected supermarkets will probably end up paying higher prices for groceries. The IPA commented this week that "like all forms of protection, it comes with a cost. And in this case the pinch will be felt by less access for Canberra's families to cheaper groceries". The ACT Government should leave supermarket competition policy in the hands of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

RETAIL WORLD 2010 CONFERENCE IN MELBOURNE IN JUNE

[Retail World 2010](#), the largest international retail conference in the Asia Pacific region, will be held at the Melbourne Convention Centre on 16 & 17 June. Special delegate registration pricing can be obtained via Robin@acevents.com.au.

LATEST EDITION OF E-DIRECTIONS NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE

The latest edition of Directional Insight's *e-Directions* newsletter is now available [here](#). This includes a link to the comprehensive report on shopper behaviour which the company undertook for AMP Capital Shopping Centres in February 2010.