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MEDIA RELEASE

Shopping Centre Council asks customers to continue to follow COVID Safe measures and treat retail workers with courtesy and respect

The Shopping Centre Council of Australia (SCCA) has welcomed Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews' reopening of retail and encouragement for Victorians to shift from a "stay home" to a "stay safe" model as the state transitions to the further easing of restrictions from tomorrow.

"We want to assure the community that our industry is prepared to continue providing COVID Safe and secure environments guided by public-health principles", SCCA Executive Director, Angus Nardi, said

Victorian shopping centres have remained open throughout the pandemic period, providing an essential service such as access to supermarkets, fresh food and pharmacies.

With other key retail industry groups such as the *National Retail Association (SDA)* and *Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA)*, the SCCA released a *COVID-19 Retail Recovery Protocol* on 1 May 2020 which outlined simple, practical and public-health led measures being taken by shopping centres and retail outlets.

The SCCA has continued to engage with the Victorian Government on key issues, and has also developed more detailed industry COVID Safe Plans and guidance on issues such as food courts, face masks and Santa photos as part of the lead-up to Christmas.

"As more of our retailers reopen their doors and as we enter the Christmas trading period, we ask our customers to continue to practise COVID Safe principles, such as not visiting a centre if they have COVID symptoms, practising social distancing particularly when queuing, wearing a face covering and using hand-sanitiser", said Mr Nardi.

"We also ask our customers to treat retail and shopping centre workers with courtesy and respect as they continue to serve the community and provide safe retail environments, and remind customers that abusive and violent behaviour towards retail workers is unacceptable and will not be tolerated".

The SCCA will continue to engage with and assist the Victorian government to provide the best possible co-ordination of measures to protect public health, including the continued welcoming of Victoria Police into our centres.

"The visible presence of Victoria Police in shopping centres has been incredibly positive for community assurance and safety. We strongly support their ongoing presence and engagement", said Mr Nardi.

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