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Tuesday, 30 June 2009

Prof. Neil Rees
Chairman
Vic Law Reform Commission
GPO Box 4637
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

By email: law.reform@lawreform.vic.gov.au

Dear Prof Rees,

Re: Surveillance in Public Places Consultation Paper

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important consultation paper.

The Property Council of Australia represents the broad interests of the property industry. The Property Council is the largest and most influential industry organisation within its sector and has in excess of 2000 member companies throughout Australia, with approximately 500 of those in the Victorian Division, representing property assets of over \$300 billion nationally.

Retail centres, and commercial building zones use close circuit television (CCTV), particularly larger retail areas like shopping centres and strip malls, therefore our members have a strong interest in this inquiry.

Of particular concern to our members is the suggestion in this paper that further controls on the use of CCTV should be considered (beyond those existing regulations which already exist for workplace privacy).

The Property Council vigorously opposes a new regulatory regime that would discourage or restrict the use of CCTV in large retail centres, shopping centres and strip malls beyond those controls that currently exist in the Crimes Act.

The Voice of Leadership

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**PROPERTY
COUNCIL**
of Australia



With the assistance of the Shopping Centre Council of Australia, we have compiled a list of the benefits of CCTV cameras.

1. Helping locate lost children, the disabled and those suffering dementia;
2. Responding to emergencies or terrorist incidences;
3. Providing evidence of criminal activity;
4. Providing exculpatory evidence;
5. Preventing and defending against fraudulent claims;
6. Youth diversion from the criminal justice system

As noted earlier the Property Council could not support a new regulatory regime which would discourage the use of CCTV cameras in large retail centres, shopping centres and strip malls.

The Property Council in coalition with the Shopping Centre Council does not believe that there is any need to establish a new government body to control and/or monitor CCTV use.

To conclude, if the government chooses to impose regulation on the use of CCTV it will serve as a disincentive to the installation and use of CCTV. Such an outcome would undermine government and private sector efforts to ensure public safety in places of mass gatherings, such as shopping centres.

Therefore, we believe the Commission should recommend that the Victorian Government further assist businesses and places of mass gathering to increase the installation and proper use of CCTV for public safety and other legitimate business purposes.

I look forward to the outcome of this discussion paper and would welcome the opportunity to comment further in future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Cunich". The signature is written in a cursive style with large, flowing letters.

Jennifer Cunich
Executive Director