

arc AUSTRALIAN RETAIL COUNCIL

Leaders Forum 26

Brought to you by 

Wednesday 25 February – Thursday 26 February 2026 ICC Sydney

AGENDA

Don't miss this agenda-setting conference, with an exclusive line up of speakers you won't see anywhere else

DAY ONE, WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY

WELCOME TO ARC LEADERS FORUM 26

8.30 AM

Welcome to Country
Uncle Gary Ella

8.35 AM

Yidaki Performance
Raph Hatz, Dhinawan Yarn

8.40 AM

Welcoming Remarks
Kenny Heatley, Principal Media Advisor, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

8.45 AM

Chair's Address
Nicole Sheffield, Chair, ARC Board

8.55 AM

Opening Remarks
Chris Rodwell, CEO, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

9.05 AM

Presenting Partner Address
Robert Tedesco, Vice Present & General Manager of American Express Global Merchant Services Australia & New Zealand, American Express



GLOBAL TRENDS – AHEAD OF THE CURVE: GLOBAL INSIGHTS FOR AUSTRALIAN RETAIL

9.10 AM

Welcoming Remarks
Fleur Brown, Chief Industry Engagement & Marketing Officer, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

9.15 AM

Keynote: **Shape or Be Shaped?**
Slav Tabachnik, National Generative AI Transformation Partner, Deloitte

9.45 AM

Fireside Chat: **The Changing Face of QSR and Food in the Retail Sector 2026**
Hosted by: **Fleur Brown, Chief Industry Engagement & Marketing Officer, Australian Retail Council (ARC)**
In conversation with: **Shane Bracken, Managing Director Australia & New Zealand, Subway**

10.05 AM

Fireside Chat: **Shaping our Future and Embracing Change**
Hosted by: **Chris Rodwell, CEO, Australian Retail Council (ARC)**
In conversation with: **Fiona Hayes, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director, 7-Eleven Stores**

Audience Q&A with Fiona Hayes

MORNING TEA AND NETWORKING BREAK

10.30 AM – 10.45 AM



LEADERSHIP – SHAPING THE FUTURE OF RETAIL: CULTURE, CAPABILITY AND CHANGE

10.45 AM

Welcoming Remarks

Glenn Fahey, Chief Policy Officer & Chief Economist, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

10.50 AM

Fireside Chat: In Conversation with Aleks Spaseska

Hosted by: Chris Rodwell, CEO, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

In conversation with: Aleks Spaseska, Managing Director, Kmart Group

11.10 AM

Fireside Chat: Partnership That Delivers – Faster Options, More Choice

Hosted by: Gary Starr, EGM – Parcel, Post & eCommerce Services, Australia Post

In conversation with: Jere Calmes, Chief Executive Officer, THE ICONIC

11.30 AM

Fireside Chat: Authentic Leadership – Building Culture and Impact through People

Hosted by: Nathalie Rosette-Barber, Chief Operating Officer, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

In conversation with: Simone Van Veen, Chief Member Officer, Rest Super

11.45 AM

Fireside Chat: Leading for Strategic Transformation

Hosted by: Fleur Brown, Chief Industry Engagement & Marketing Officer, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

In conversation with: Scott Fyfe, Chief Executive Officer, David Jones

Audience Q&A with Scott Fyfe

LUNCH AND NETWORKING BREAK

12.10 PM – 1.00 PM

1.00 PM

Fireside Chat: The Fragmentation Tax: How Regulatory Inconsistency is Costing Australian Retailers and Households

Hosted by: Glenn Fahey, Chief Policy Officer & Chief Economist, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

In conversation with: Dr Adam Triggs, Partner, Mandala



CONNECTED COMMERCE – RETAIL MEDIA IN ACTION: WHERE BRANDS, DATA AND CUSTOMERS CONVERGE

1.20 PM

Welcoming Remarks

Fleur Brown, Chief Industry Engagement & Marketing Officer, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

1.20 PM

Panel: Trust, Attention and Influence – The Media Forces Shaping Retail In 2026

Hosted by: Darren Woolley, Chief Executive Officer, TrinityP3

In conversation with:

- Jane Huxley, Chief Executive Officer, Are Media
- Nathan Powell, Co-Founder, Product and Strategy Officer, Fabulate
- David Roddick, General Manager, Active International Australia
- Lizzie Young, Chief Executive Officer, Commercial Radio & Audio (CRA)

1.50 PM

Fireside Chat: AI Unleashed: Driving Faster Decisions and Superior Customer Outcomes

Hosted by: Fleur Brown, Chief Industry Engagement & Marketing Officer, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

In conversation with: Leslie Lorenz, Head of Retail Americas, Snowflake

2.10 PM

Fireside Chat: Signals, Strategy and Success: Unlocking Full-Funnel Impact with Retail Media 3.0

Hosted by: Willie Pang, Country Manager, Amazon Ads

In conversation with:

- Kasey Jamison, Head of Endemic Ads, Amazon Ads
 - Marni Crookes, Digital, Media and Content Director, Mars Pet Nutrition ANZ
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AFTERNOON TEA AND NETWORKING BREAK

2.30 PM – 3.00 PM



IMPACT – PURPOSE, PLANET AND PROFIT: SUSTAINABLE RETAIL IN PRACTICE

3.00 PM

Welcoming Remarks

Kenny Heatley, Principal Media Advisor, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

3.05 PM

Keynote: Sustaining BCorp in an AI World

Christelle Young, Managing Director, T2 Tea

3.20 PM

Panel: Waste Not: Retail's Role In a Sustainable Future

Hosted by: Ryan Swenson, Founder & Managing Director, InPact Advisory

In conversation with:

- Scott Edwards, Associate Director Sustainability, Coca-Cola Europacific Partners Australia
- Alice Kuepper, Head of Sustainability, Winning Group
- Richard Pittard, Chief Sustainability Officer, Australia Post

3.50 PM

Fireside Chat: **Energy as a Strategy – A Fireside Conversation with Coco Republic**
Hosted by: **Gareth Mann**, Managing Director, **MTA Energy**
In conversation with: **Tim Schaafsma**, Chief Executive Officer, **Coco Republic**

4.10 PM

Fireside Chat: **Circularity In Action: Risk, Return and Retail's Next Chapter**
Hosted by: **Ainsley Simpson**, Chief Executive Officer, **Seamless**

In conversation with:

- **Rebecca Hard**, Group Retail CEO, **The Sussan Group**
- **Angela Winkle**, Chief Customer Officer, **RM Williams**

4.30 PM

Day One Closing Remarks:

Chris Rodwell, CEO, **Australian Retail Council (ARC)**

ARC LAUNCH CELEBRATION

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF CELEBRATION, CONNECTION, AND COCKTAILS AS WE TOAST THE LAUNCH OF THE AUSTRALIAN RETAIL COUNCIL – A UNITED VOICE FOR RETAIL.

4.35 PM

DAY TWO, THURSDAY 26 FEBRUARY

8.00 AM

Opening Remarks

Chris Rodwell, CEO, **Australian Retail Council (ARC)**

8.10 AM

Keynote: **Inside the World's Best Stores: What Winning Retailers Do Differently**

Trent Rigby, Director, **RC Advisory**

8.25 AM

Panel: **Landscape for Leaders – Economic, Consumer and Community**

Hosted by: **Fleur Brown**, Chief Industry Engagement & Marketing Officer, **Australian Retail Council (ARC)**

In conversation with:

- **Kosmos Samaras**, Director, Strategy and Analytics, **RedBridge Group Australia**
 - **Trent Rigby**, Director, **RC Advisory**
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RETAIL INNOVATION – THE NEXT FRONTIER: TECHNOLOGY AND IDEAS TRANSFORMING RETAIL

8.55 AM

Welcoming Remarks

Fleur Brown, Chief Industry Engagement & Marketing Officer, **Australian Retail Council (ARC)**

9.00 AM

Fireside Chat: **From AI to Experience – The Next Frontier In Retail**

Hosted by: **Chris Rodwell**, CEO, **Australian Retail Council (ARC)**

In conversation with: **John Gaultier**, Managing Director, **Officeworks**

9.20 AM

Fireside Chat: **The Future Is Smart – But Still Human: Balancing AI Ambition with Retail Reality**

Hosted by: **Liana Kohn-Gardner**, Vice President Merchant Partnerships A/NZ, **American Express**

In conversation with:

- **Vanessa Matthijssen**, Partner, Strategy Consulting and National Consumer Products Lead, **Deloitte**

9.50 AM

Keynote: **Generative and Agentic AI In Action: Lessons from Amazon and Beyond**

Vince Koh, Global Head of Digital Commerce, **Amazon Web Services (AWS)**

10.05 AM

Fireside Chat: **Assembling the Retail Experience of Tomorrow: Inside the Omni-Future of IKEA**

Hosted by: **Fleur Brown**, Chief Industry Engagement & Marketing Officer, **Australian Retail Council (ARC)**

In conversation with: **Sharon Mc Vicker**, Omni Area Manager, **IKEA Australia & New Zealand**

MORNING TEA AND NETWORKING BREAK

10.25 AM – 10.40 AM

10.40 AM

Panel: **The Magic of Experience – Lessons from Retail, Sport and Media to Delight Customers**

Hosted by:

- **David Campbell**, Partner, **Egon Zehnder**
- **Glenice Maclellan**, Partner, **Egon Zehnder**

In conversation with:

- **Catriona Noble**, NED, **Football Australia**
 - **Craig Tiley**, CEO, **Tennis Australia**
 - **Belinda Rowe**, NED, **Sky NZ**, NED, **Sydney Swans**, NED, **Temple & Webster**
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RESILIENT RETAIL – RETAIL UNDER PRESSURE: CRIME, CYBER THREATS & RESILIENCE

11.20 AM

Welcoming Remarks

Amy Lucas, Senior Workplace Relations Consultant, **Australian Retail Council (ARC)**

Angie Egnes, Senior Workplace Relations Consultant, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

11.25 AM

Fireside chat: **Leading Through Retail Crime: Balancing Safety, Service, and Resilience**

Hosted by: **Chris Rodwell**, CEO, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

In conversation with: **Andy Hitchen**, Executive General Manager of Retail, Optus

11.45 AM

Keynote: **Designing Out Retail Crime: From Defensive Hardening to System-Level Collaboration**

Prof Michael Townsley, Professor, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University

12.00 PM

Panel: **Retail Resilience: Systems, Safety & Shared Responsibility**

Hosted by: Miles Langford, Policy Advisor – Risk & Resilience, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

In conversation with:

- Assistant Commissioner Jason Weinstein APM, NSW Police Force
- Sarah Faorlin, Head of Acts of Violence & Aggression, Woolworths Group
- Prof Michael Townsley, Professor, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University

12.30 PM

Keynote: **Preventing Psychosocial Harm In Retail**

Dr Byron Keating, Professor and Co-Lead, Vulnerability Research Group, Queensland University Technology (QUT)

LUNCH AND NETWORKING BREAK

12.45 PM – 1.30 PM



RETAIL TECH – AI UNLEASHED: FROM SUPPLY CHAIN TO STOREFRONT

1.30 PM

Welcoming Remarks

Gary Mortimer, Professor of Consumer Behaviour and Retail Marketing, Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

1:35 PM

Keynote: **How Retail will Harness the Power of Next Generation 2D Barcodes**

Maria Palazzolo, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, GS1 Australia

1.50 PM

Fireside Chat: **Preparing for Agentic Commerce – The End of Retail as We Know It**

Hosted by: David Phillips, Partner, Deloitte Digital

In conversation with: Roger Dunn, Principal Consultant, Retail Media & AI Commerce Consultancy

2.10 PM

Panel: **Putting AI to Work: Empowering Teams, Customers and Operations**

Hosted by: Gary Mortimer, Professor of Consumer Behaviour and Retail Marketing, Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

In conversation with:

- Mark Cripsey, Chief Digital & Technology Officer, Wesfarmers Health
- Harshu Deshpande, Vice President, Product and Engineering Lead, Publicis Sapient
- Rachael McVitty, Chief Customer Officer, Bunnings Group

AFTERNOON TEA AND NETWORKING BREAK

2.40 PM – 3.00 PM



CUSTOMER & BRAND – THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY: ENGAGING CUSTOMERS, BUILDING BRANDS

3.00 PM

Welcoming Remarks

Alethea Eckersley, Director Member Relations, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

3.05 PM

Keynote: **From Transactions to Trust: The New Economics of Experience**

Michele Levine, Chief Executive Officer, Roy Morgan

3.20 PM

Panel: **What Customers Are Telling Us about the Sensory Reality of Physical Retail**

Hosted by: Fleur Brown, Chief Industry Engagement & Marketing Officer, Australian Retail Council (ARC)

In conversation with:

- Emma Beardsley, Autism Consultant Research & Practice, Aspect
- Marcelle Harrison, Head of Diversity & Inclusion, Kmart Group (Kmart & Target)
- **Natalie Phillips-Mason**, Founder and Chief Ally, Inclusive Change
- Natalie Warren-Smith, General Manager – Customer and Marketing, Stockland

3.50 PM

Fireside Chat: **In Conversation with Alice Champion**

Hosted by: **Louise Heath**, Partner, M&A Consulting Services, Deloitte

In conversation with: **Alice Champion**, Head of Retail Operations, LUSH

4.10 PM

Day Two Closing Remarks:

Chris Rodwell, CEO, Australian Retail Council (ARC)



GET YOUR TICKETS

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

If you'd like to work alongside us and make a positive difference to the Australian retail industry, please get in touch. We'd welcome the opportunity to understand your vision and develop a program where you will receive the maximum exposure and benefit from your investment.

[Learn more](#)

Acknowledgement of Country

ARC acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to their elders past and present, and recognise Australia's First Nations' peoples as Australia's first traders with a sophisticated network of trading paths that have facilitated the exchange of goods, knowledge and culture for millennia.

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RETAIL
COUNCIL

Let's talk shop

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