

Cleaning up Casuarina

CAMDEN SMITH

THE new owners of the Northern Territory's biggest shopping centre will focus on cleaning up crime and anti-social behaviour to improve security for store owners and shoppers.

There are 190 stores at Casuarina Square and more than 8 million shoppers visit every year but issues around customer safety and amenity often pop into discussion.

Sentinel Property Group executive chairman Warren Ebert acknowledges the size of



Warren Ebert

the challenge and has enlisted support from outside organisations to tackle crime.

"Certainly security is an issue," Mr Ebert said.

"I think that the issues are

quite clear, some of the unsavoury elements around here.

"That's a significant expense which is an added security you've got to have. You've got the unruly behaviour, which I don't think is particularly different here to what it is in any other parts of Darwin."

He said here was no comparison between Darwin and Sentinel's Brisbane home base.

"Nowhere near as bad. Nowhere near the issues there that there are here," he said.

"When there's s--t in the carpark overnight because there's no facilities I think peo-

ple can work out what the issues are there.

"It's not that there is not enough money spent. There's plenty spent but maybe not spent in the right areas.

"There's plenty of security but you're limited up here with the trespass laws because you can take people out one door and they walk back in the other.

"We've already had meetings with the police and we're going to have some more and with the government and City of Darwin.

"I know we're not going to

solve things overnight but whatever the current methods have been, clearly that's not working as well as I think anyone would like, so we've got a few ideas that we will be implementing very soon."

One measure could be the revival of a similar program to that formerly offered by the SHAK youth recreation and development centre in Bradshaw Tce.

"It was a place people could be taken to when they had issues and was run by the Red Cross," Mr Ebert said.

"That would assist in feed-

ing them, helping things out a bit. We understand that was underfunded so we're looking at getting something similar to that around here.

"Maybe we can work with some of the larger retailers. We want to work together to see how we can improve things.

"It's not easy and I understand that but there's got to be a better way. I've found the Territory government very approachable from the chief minister down and they've all said 'if there's anything we can do please call', so we certainly will be."