



MEDIA RELEASE

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TIME FOR CHANGE ON SHOP TRADING HOURS LEGISLATION

Retail NZ has written to the Minister for Workplace Relations asking for the Government to amend or repeal the Shop Trading Hours Act, which restricts the ability of shops to open on Easter Sunday.

"In the 21st century, shop trading hours are effectively regulated by customer demand: shops open when it makes commercial sense to do so," Retail NZ's General Manager for Public Affairs, Greg Harford, said today. "We don't need the Government or councils telling people when they can and can't shop - because shops will only open if it makes sense for customers, employees and management.

"Retail NZ has asked Workplace Relations Minister Iain Lees-Galloway to repeal or amend the Shop Trading Hours Act to eliminate shop trading hours restrictions. In the 21st century, it's just not necessary for the Government or councils to be making decisions about whether to allow choice on Easter Sunday.

"There are no longer restrictions on most days of the year, but customer demand means that shops are *not* open 24/7, and are sometimes not even open on ordinary Sundays and public holidays. The majority of shops in downtown Wellington are typically closed on New Year's Day, and there are major hardware shops in some heartland towns that are not open on any Sunday at all, whether it's Easter or not. These closures are legitimate business decisions, and it is absolutely right that retail businesses are entitled to make their own choices about whether or not to open, just like any other business.

"Historically, the Government tried to ban shopping through regulation, but created a host of exemptions that created unfairness and disadvantage, both for individual retailers, and for whole communities. The last National Government completely failed the retail sector by delegating decision-making about whether shops can open to local councils. This has been an expensive and confusing exercise, which has just created further inequities.

"Retail NZ does not believe that Government restrictions on shops opening have any place in a modern pluralistic society, where any other business is free to open 24/7 any day of the year. The reality is that shops, like other businesses, won't open if it doesn't make sense; and New Zealanders don't need to be told by Government when they can and can't shop."

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