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RETAIL NZ WELCOMES POSITIVE RETAIL TRADE RESULTS FOR THE FINAL THREE MONTHS OF 2014 INCLUDING CHRISTMAS

Today's Retail Trade Survey results have been welcomed by Retail NZ. The Statistics NZ survey shows a 4.7 per cent rise in actual retail spending on the same quarter last year, with spending topping \$20billion for the first time.

Of the core retail categories, 'food and beverage services' and 'clothing, footwear and accessory retailing' had the strongest growth, indicating that many Kiwi retailers enjoyed a better Christmas than in previous years. Spending in Auckland and Canterbury outstripping the rest of the country.

"Christmas is the busiest trading period of the year and is hugely important for retailers. It's fantastic to see that hard work is paying off in most sectors", Retail NZ Chief Executive Mark Johnston said today.

Local retailers are facing increasingly tough competition from offshore firms but are holding their own. BNZ's Online Retail Sales Report for December report showed a 19% increase in spending from offshore merchants on the same month in 2013. The Retail Trade Survey does not include these transactions.

"Local retailers should feel encouraged, the results show that New Zealanders value the excellent customer service and quality products they offer. It also shows local retailers are adapting to the growth in online retailing", says Mr Johnston.

"It looks like investments in new digital channels and e-Commerce platforms are starting to pay off for the growing number of local retailers trading online. New Zealand business are moving with the times, innovating and adapting to deliver the best possible customer experience across multiple sales channels. New Zealand customers are also covered by the Consumer Guarantees Act which ensures protection should anything go wrong when they buy locally, either in-store or online."

Retail NZ has extended its Christmas #BuyKiwi social media campaign and is promoting the benefits of shopping locally, whether online or in-store, all year around.

"We're encouraging Kiwi stores and e-tailers to share their products on social media using the #BuyKiwi hashtag."