



10 April 2017  
Media release

## MOMENTUM BUILDING ON EASTER SUNDAY SHOPPING BUT BIG CITIES LEFT BEHIND

Retail NZ says it is heartened that more than a third of all local councils have now adopted policies that permit shops in their districts to open their doors on Easter Sunday and says that momentum is on the side of a more liberal approach towards shop trading hours.

“A new law late last year allowed local councils to permit shops within their districts to open on Easter Sunday, if they wished to do so, in order to serve customers. We are really pleased that 25 councils around the country have so far adopted such a policy, and we’re optimistic that others will be looking at the issue ahead of Easter 2018,” Retail NZ’s General Manager for Public Affairs, Greg Harford, said today. “It is mostly business-friendly councils in heartland New Zealand that have moved quickly, while the big cities such as Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin have yet to consider the issue formally. The Government didn’t give councils much time to consider the issue ahead of Easter this year, so we expect those who haven’t already done so will look at the issue over the next 8-10 months.

“The great thing about the new law is that councils are in a position where they can give choice to businesses, employees and shoppers, knowing that everyone’s right to a day off on Easter Sunday is secure. Under the legislation, it is illegal to force anyone to open their business, or to force anyone to work in a shop on Easter Sunday. However, adopting a local shop trading hours policy allows councils to support those shops that do want to open their doors to customers. It also levels the playing field by taking away loopholes that, for example, allow a garden centre to open, but not a hardware store that contains a garden centre. Cafés and other businesses are already allowed to open, even if they choose not to, and in an era where many customers will be shopping online from home, it does seem odd not to allow local shops the same choice as other businesses.

“Easter Sunday is not a public holiday so if a shop is closed most retail employees will be required to take a day’s annual leave, or a day without pay. Adopting a local shop trading hours policy means that councils are effectively allowing employees to choose when they want to take their holidays rather than being forced to take a day’s leave in April each year. Additionally, many people are travelling around New Zealand over Easter, and it seems unreasonable for shops to be banned from serving those customers.”

Mr Harford said that even if shops were allowed to open, he expected many would

choose not to do so. “Whether a shop opens on Easter Sunday will be an individual decision for shopkeepers, taking into account the availability of their employees and customer demand. Not all shops are open all the time now, including on public holidays and Easter Sunday this year will be no different.”

For further information, please contact:

Greg Harford

GM Public Affairs

Retail NZ

027 243 2842

[greg.harford@retail.kiwi](mailto:greg.harford@retail.kiwi)

#### NOTE TO EDITORS

The Councils that have so far adopted a local shop trading hours policy are:

Carterton

Central Otago

Clutha

Far North

Grey District

Hauraki

Kaikoura

Kaipara

Kawerau

Marlborough

Masterton

Napier

New Plymouth

Opotiki

Queenstown-Lakes

Rangitikei

Rotorua

Southland

South Taranaki

South Wairarapa

Stratford

Thames-Coromandel

Waikato

Wairoa

Waitomo