



Media release

RETAIL NZ WELCOMES AGGRAVATED ROBBERY PACKAGE

Retail NZ has welcomed the Government's announcement of a \$1.8 million fund to help small high-risk retail businesses combat aggravated robberies.

"Aggravated robberies are a real concern for retailers, particularly those operating in the small convenience store sector," Retail NZ's General Manager for Public Affairs, Greg Harford, said today. "These small stores, which often provide a valuable community service without the cashflow to invest in expensive security systems, have been increasingly targeted by aggressive and sometimes armed criminals seeking to make off with high value goods. Retail NZ is delighted that the Government is taking this issue seriously and making funding available to support security improvements in these stores.

"Under the Government programme high risk stores will be able to apply for co-funding to install new security equipment such as alarms, fog cannon and other deterrence measures. This is good news, and we hope that it will discourage criminals and anti-social elements from undertaking their criminal acts.

"Overall, retail crime is a serious issue - costing the country around \$1 billion a year. Aggravated robbery is particularly problematic because it puts the health and safety of business owners, employees and customers at risk. The funding announced today is a good start towards dealing with this, but dealing with the bigger picture of retail crime ultimately requires the public to recognise that all crime is

unacceptable. We know that petty crime is a gateway to bigger, organised and aggravated crime, and we think it's important that the Government and the Police also deal with petty criminals before their life of crime becomes aggravated.

"Retail NZ recently published a three point action plan for dealing with retail crime, in which we proposed the establishment of a specialist Retail Crime Taskforce, a social change programme to make it clear that crime is not acceptable, and the introduction of an infringement style offence to help manage low-level crime more effectively and ensure that there are real consequences for first-time petty offenders before they become aggravated robbers".

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