



Media release
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AUCKLAND COUNCIL DECISION ON EASTER CHOICE "DEEPLY DISAPPOINTING" - RETAIL NZ

Retail NZ is deeply disappointed that Auckland Council has nearly unanimously rejected the possibility of consulting on an Easter Sunday Trading Policy.

"Today's decision shows that Auckland Council is not really interested in supporting business or consumer choice, and that it isn't interested in creating a level playing field for businesses across the Auckland region," Retail NZ's General Manager for Public Affairs said today. "It is absurd that retail businesses in provincial districts like the Far North, Rangitikei and Clutha are allowed to make their own decisions about whether or not their businesses open on Easter Sunday, while those in Auckland, our biggest city have been denied that choice by the Auckland Council.

Mr Harford dismissed suggestions that allowing businesses to open on Easter Sunday would undermine worker rights. "The law is quite clear that no employee can be forced to work on Easter Sunday, and no business can be forced to open. Retail workers have special protections under law to say no to working on Easter Sunday - and in fact have greater rights than workers in hospitality, logistics, healthcare, government, or any other sector - because there are no special protections in place for any group except retail employees.

"In a statistically representative survey for the Auckland Council, 55 per cent of Aucklanders said that they would like to see more

shops open on Easter Sunday, and research by Nielsen for Retail NZ shows that 57 per cent of Aucklanders shopped or did some other sort of activity on Easter Sunday, despite the restrictions which disadvantage particular kinds of retail businesses. Any shop in Parnell Road is allowed to open, but not on Queen Street or in Manukau; local grocery stores can open, but not supermarkets; and hardware shops with garden centres inside them have to close while separate garden centres can open and benefit from that.

"In today's decision, Auckland Council has turned down the opportunity to level the playing field for retail businesses across Auckland, and has shown that it has significantly less friendly to consumers and businesses than most other councils around the country."

For further information, please contact:

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