



MEDIA RELEASE
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EASTER SUNDAY A SUCCESS BUT NATIONAL RULES STILL NEEDED - NEW REPORT

[A new report by Retail NZ](#) shows that Easter Sunday trading was a success this year in those Council districts where shops were allowed to open, with the rights of shop workers and customers well-protected if they didn't want to work or shop.

"Nearly 60 per cent of Councils had voted to allow retail businesses to make their own decisions about opening on Easter Sunday ahead of Easter this year, but because most of the big cities were refusing to permit choice, only around a third of retail shops were allowed to exercise their right to choose," Retail NZ's General Manager for Public Affairs said today. "Districts where trading was permitted saw the economic benefits of choice, with Marketview reporting a 23 per cent increase in spending compared to Easter Sunday last year. This has been beneficial for retail businesses in places from the Far North District down to Southland, with particularly strong trading reported by retailers in Dunedin on the back of the Ed Sheeran concerts.

"There is strong customer demand for shopping on Easter Sunday. Despite the ban on most shops opening in most main cities, research by Nielsen shows 50 per cent of New Zealanders undertook some form of commercial activity on Easter Sunday, including 62 per cent of people aged 25-39. Shopping is increasingly a social and family pastime, and one that customers increasingly want to be able to do on Easter Sunday, either online or in-store. Research also shows that public opinion is moving against Nanny State-style regulation of shopping hours, with 69 per cent of Kiwis saying that they don't think the Government should make shops close on religious holidays, or don't care either way".

Retail NZ research also shows that shop workers are able and willing to exercise their right to refuse to work on Easter Sunday, says Mr Harford. "A survey of Retail NZ members shows that 8 per cent of businesses which opened had employees that exercised their legal right to say no to working on Easter Sunday. Shop workers are the only employees who have the right to say no to work, and it's interesting to see that, while big city councils like Auckland have refused to allow shops the choice to open on Easter Sunday, Auckland Council facilities like swimming pools, zoos and museums were nonetheless open. Unlike shop workers, Council employees have no legal right to turn down work on Easter Sunday.

"Despite the partial success that was Easter Sunday 2018, the situation remains very confusing for shoppers, tourists and retailers. In the lead-up to Easter, nearly half of retailers didn't know whether they were legally able to open their

store. It is time for the new Labour-led Government to end the nonsense around Easter Sunday shopping. In the 21st century, Kiwis don't need Government or Councils to tell them when they can shop. We are asking the Government to repeal the restrictions on opening shops, while noting the rights of shop workers to say no to work are specially protected under the law".

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