



MEDIA RELEASE  
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## DCC SHOULD CLOSE DOWN FOR EASTER SUNDAY

Retail NZ has challenged the Dunedin City Council to put its money where its mouth is and close down all its services on Easter Sunday.

"Yesterday's Council Hearings Committee decision to ban most shops from being able to choose to open on Easter Sunday is deeply disappointing and completely hypocritical," Greg Harford, Retail NZ's General Manager for Public Affairs said today. "The decision was apparently made in order to force retail workers to have a day off, despite the fact that the Council's own facilities, such as Moana Pool and events venues are generally open for business, with Council employees at work.

"Easter Sunday is not a public holiday. Under the law, shop workers have special protections and have a specific legal right to decline work on Easter Sunday, but these protections do not apply to those who work for the Council, or its subsidiaries, who can be required by their employer to work any time on any day.

"If the Dunedin City Council wants the city to close down on Easter Sunday, then it should be consistent and close down all Council-owned operations as well."

Mr Harford said yesterday's decision was doubly disappointing, given the success of Easter Sunday shopping in Dunedin this year. "Dunedin was pumping this year as a result of locals staying in the city to attend the Ed Sheeran concerts, as well as there being influx of visitors from around the country. Many local residents appreciated the opportunity to socialise in the shops with friends and family, as well as to attend to their shopping.

"The new shopping ban will be in force for many years to come, preventing Dunedin from making the most of future stadium events and cruise ship visits, inconveniencing locals and visitors alike. It will also give some commercial businesses which have an historic exemption from the ban, an advantage over others. The absurdity is that, under the law, there is a host of outdated exemptions. For example, a garden centre can open on Easter Sunday, while a hardware shop with a garden centre attached is banned from opening its doors; a convenience store on Princes Street is allowed to open, but not a supermarket. A bookshop can open at the airport, but not on George Street. These rules and regulations were designed decades ago and no longer suit the needs of 21st century consumers or retailers.

"Retail NZ hopes that the Dunedin City Council will overturn the Hearings Committee decision at its meeting next month and continue to have a policy that allows - but does not require - shops to open on Easter Sunday if they wish to do so."

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