



MEDIA RELEASE

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RETAIL NZ WELCOMES NATHAN GUY BILL ON FOOD CONTAMINATION

Retail NZ has applauded National MP Nathan Guy for proposing a Member's Bill that will create stronger penalties for deliberate food contamination.

"Following on from the many recent incidents in Australia involving needles in fruit, and copycat in New Zealand, Retail NZ and the Food and Grocery Council have asked the Government to create a specific criminal offence relating to grocery sabotage," Greg Harford, Retail NZ's General Manager Public Affairs said today. "While the Government has not responded to our request, Retail NZ is delighted that National's Nathan Guy has proposed a Member's Bill to deal with this issue.

"It is essential that New Zealanders have confidence in the food and grocery sector, including at a retail level. Indeed, our export sector and our economy are dependent on public confidence in food safety being maintained. The recent needle issues, and the baby formula threats a few years ago demonstrate how vulnerable our food sector is to criminal activity. While industry is doing its bit to safeguard security, we believe it is essential that there is a specific criminal offence dealing with this issue.

"The recent needle incidents have imposed massive costs on retailers and led to enormous wastage of food. Sabotaging food is a form of economic terrorism, and needs to be treated as such.

"The Australian Commonwealth Government has already made it a specific offence to tamper with food, and has recently moved to strengthen the penalties associated with food terrorism. We think that it is important for New Zealand to follow suit, and to send a clear message to would-be criminals that sabotaging our nation's food supply will not be tolerated."

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