

13 February 2025

Committee Secretariat
Justice Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington
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Crimes Legislation (Stalking and Harassment) Amendment Bill

1. Retail NZ is a membership organisation that represents the views and interests of New Zealand's retail sector. We are the peak body representing retailers across Aotearoa, with our membership accounting for nearly 70% of all domestic retail turnover. New Zealand's retail sector comprises approximately 27,000 businesses and employs around 220,000 Kiwis. We have consulted our membership in the preparation of this submission.
2. Retail NZ is supportive of the overall aim of this Bill, which will support retail employers' efforts to keep their staff as safe as possible, while they are at work, and when commuting to and from their workplace.
3. The retail workforce is diverse, with a range of roles from customer service to management, digital and data analytics, logistics, procurement, security, social media and marketing and many more. 58% of people in the retail and distribution sector are women, and 27% of employees are aged 15-24, much higher than the New Zealand population total of 15%.
4. These demographics are particularly vulnerable to stalking and harassment, and we welcome the Bill's attention to better respond to these behaviours.
5. Every day, retailers are dealing with threatening, violent or simply unpleasant members of the public who are trying to steal, assault staff, or damage their property. Deplorably, there are also instances where retail store owners and retail workers have faced instances of stalking, harassment and intimidation, both on store premises and online. These behaviours not only threaten the safety and wellbeing of owners and employees but also have the potential, if not managed appropriately, to undermine the ability of retailers to provide a safe shopping environment for customers.
6. While this Bill is not specific to retail, it will provide much-needed legislative support for our members who are victims of stalking and harassment.
7. Retail NZ is supportive of the overall aim of this Bill, as it will ensure that stalking and harassment offences are clearly defined and carry appropriate penalties. We hope that it will serve as a crucial deterrent against abusive behaviour and reinforce the message that threats, intimidation and persistent harassment - whether in person or via digital means - will not be tolerated in a retail environment or anywhere else in Aotearoa New Zealand.

8. Thank you for the opportunity to make a written submission, Retail NZ would like the opportunity to make an oral submission to the committee.
9. No part of this submission should be withheld under the OIA.

Ngā mihi nui



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