

24 June 2026
Governance and Administration Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington
ga@parliament.govt.nz

Retail NZ submission: Better Regional Boundaries 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 30,000 businesses and employs around 222,000 Kiwis.
2. Retail NZ consulted our membership in the preparation of this submission.
3. Retail NZ is supportive of the intent of the Bill to ensure regional boundaries are consistent across government agencies and local government, to eliminate confusion, inconsistencies, and ensure New Zealanders are getting adequate access to public services. However, work needs to be done to ensure it does not make it more difficult for people to access services, or worsen the quality of services, as a result of this change. There also needs to be clarity within this Bill as to how these new boundaries will be decided, and by who.
4. Retail NZ is largely supportive of the move to make all regional boundaries the same across all levels of government and among all public agencies. No one should miss out on accessing services just because of where they live, nor should it be complicated and confusing for people to understand in which region they lie.
5. We understand there are some places in New Zealand which lie near regional boundaries which come under one territory for one service, and another for others. For example, Kaikoura lies in the Canterbury Health District and comes under the Canterbury Regional Council boundary, yet it is covered by the Tasman Police District. It would make things simpler for all New Zealanders, including retailers, if there was just one regional boundary line.
6. We see this Bill as a positive move to improve consistency among agencies and local areas, and it makes it clear which services are available to people in what region, and which local by-laws, duties, charges etc. apply.
7. However, we do hold some concerns about what unintended consequences this change could cause. Unfortunately, not all services in New Zealand are currently delivered equally. For example, some health districts or policing regions are better-resourced than others. Work needs to be done in advance of any decision about where the boundaries will be drawn to ensure that when they are implemented, New Zealanders will not find themselves worse-off in terms of the quality of service they will receive.
8. Similarly, work must be done in advance of any change to ensure New Zealanders will not have to travel further to access public services than they do currently. New Zealand has many rural populations, and it is important that they are not disadvantaged as a

result of any boundary changes. The Committee should consider allowing for communities near regional boundaries to access public services in either territory, and ensure appropriate measures are put in place around information-sharing and security of information to ensure this is possible and painless.

9. The Bill states that it is hoped “*that this will drive regional approaches, with shared hubs in small towns where departments work together at a single point of access to serve our communities*”. We agree such hubs would be of great benefit to our smaller towns, but without explicit direction and funding to ensure these are set up, we are concerned that small towns may instead miss out. We recommend this expectation for regional service hubs to be established in smaller communities be included in the Bill.
10. Retail NZ is supportive of the five-year timeframe to implement this Bill if passed. However, we recommend rather than expecting government agencies and departments to work together to align boundaries with guidance from the Public Service Commissioner, that instead an independent working group lead this work under the guidance of the Commissioner, and require this group to undertake thorough consultation with government departments, agencies, service providers and the public. This will ensure all considerations are taken into account equally and independently, and the timeframe is adhered to.

Conclusion

11. Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.
12. Retail NZ can see the benefits of such an alignment of boundaries, but we do have concerns around how it would be practically implemented. We would like to see the Bill include provisions for the independent and thorough management of such a change to ensure the intent of the Bill is achieved.
13. Retail NZ is happy to discuss any aspect of this submission further and would like the opportunity to make an oral submission to the committee.
14. No part of this submission should be withheld under the OIA.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Young

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

carolyn.young@retail.kiwi