



MEDIA RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT ACTION NEEDED ON \$1 BILLION RETAIL CRIME PROBLEM SAYS RETAIL NZ DISCUSSION PAPER

Retail crime is a growing problem. It costs the country around \$1 billion a year in losses, and with a greater risk of violence than ever, Retail NZ is calling on the Government to adopt a three-point Action Plan to help stop criminal offending.

"Retail crime is a serious problem for retailers, consumers and the economy as a whole," Retail NZ's General Manager for Public Affairs Greg Harford said today. "Retailers are already working to prevent and deter crime, but retail crime is growing, becoming more menacing and more violent. Criminal gangs are increasingly active in retail crime, and urgent steps are needed to deal with this societal problem.

"In the three point action plan we're announcing today, Retail NZ is calling for the establishment of a national Retail Crime Taskforce within the Police; a social change programme to encourage respect for the law; and the introduction of an infringement notice penalty regime for petty offences.

"There is a real issue around Police responsiveness to retail crime. Police can achieve real success when resources are available to allow officers to focus on specific outcomes. The establishment of a Retail Crime Taskforce within the Police would require dedicated funding, and targets for retail crime reduction. We believe that this is an essential first step to ensure that the Police is in a position to respond effectively to retail crime".

Mr Harford says that retail crime is part of a broader social problem relating to anti-social behaviour. "There is a perception in some parts of the community that theft and other anti-social behaviour is acceptable, but we

need to be teaching everyone in society that it is important to respect both people - and property. A social change programme is needed to generate understanding that theft is simply not acceptable.

Retail NZ is also calling for new penalties for retail crime. "Theft as part of an organised crime group needs to be treated extremely seriously and robust prison terms should apply to those committing crimes for a gang or syndicate. At the same time, we recognise that many people drift into organised crime gangs because they have been able to get away with petty theft without any consequences. Prosecutions through the Courts are cumbersome, and we therefore propose the introduction of an infringement-style offence for petty theft. This will ensure that there are real consequences for people starting their life of crime, and act as a deterrent to repeat offending.

"Retailers are already taking significant steps to manage crime, but we need Government support and social change to achieve fundamental improvements. We're calling on the Government and all political parties to support our action plan for change".

You can download the Retail NZ discussion paper [here](#). For further information, please contact:

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