

Friday 11 April 2025

Ōpōtiki District Council
108 Saint John Street
Ōpōtiki 3122
New Zealand

By email: info@odc.govt.nz

Tēnā koe,

Restaurant Association of New Zealand submission on the Ōpōtiki District Council Easter Sunday Shop Trading Policy Review 2025

The Restaurant Association of New Zealand (the Restaurant Association) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the Ōpōtiki District Council Easter Sunday Shop Trading Policy Review 2025.

Since 1972, the Restaurant Association has worked to offer advice, help and assistance in every facet of the vibrant and diverse hospitality industry, covering the length and breadth of the country. We're passionate about our vibrant industry, which is full of interesting, talented and entrepreneurial people.

The Restaurant Association's priorities for Easter Sunday Shop Trading policies are in strong support of enabling shops to open during Easter Sunday. This is for the following reasons:

- The choice to open a business for trade should rest with the business owner, not local or central government.
- Employees have the ability to refuse work on Easter Sunday without any repercussions to the employment relationship.
- There should be a consistent approach to Easter Sunday Shop Trading policies, enabling national operations to open across the country.

Ōpōtiki District Council proposal

The Restaurant Association supports the Council's proposal to re-adopt an Easter Sunday Shop Trading Policy with no significant difference to the 2017 policy. In particular, the Restaurant Association supports the Council's current policy maintaining the ability for shop owners to choose to open on Easter Sunday if they wish to do so.

Employer and employee rights

The choice to open during Easter should ultimately rest with the business owner, especially when acknowledging the impact of ongoing economic challenges. Employee protections are maintained under the *Shop Trading Act 1990*, ensuring staff who do not wish to work on Easter Sunday are able to refuse work.

Easter Sunday is not a public holiday, and the primary reason for restricted trading is based on religious ideology. Removing these restrictions aligns with the principles of economic freedom and choice, and modernising our collective approach to Easter Sunday trading will only help to support economic growth.

Consistent approaches to Easter Sunday Trading

It is important to send a clear message to both visitors and residents that our towns and cities are open for business, and the Restaurant Association believes there should be a consistent approach to Easter Sunday Shop Trading policies which enable shops to open during Easter Sunday across the country.

It is our view that all territorial authorities should adopt a local Easter Sunday Trading policy that allows shops to open on Easter Sunday. This would also allow 'brick-and-mortar' shops to have greater alignment with online shop trading, which is not currently restricted (outside of same-day deliveries in some circumstances).

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on your review of the Easter Sunday Shop Trading Policy. We would be happy to discuss any part of this submission in more detail, and to provide any assistance that you may require.

Ngā mihi nui,



Marisa Bidois
Chief Executive