



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 15 April 2026

Bunnings' first stores switch on facial recognition technology

Bunnings has this week switched on facial recognition technology (FRT) at its first New Zealand stores - Te Rapa and Hamilton South - marking the start of a phased rollout to improve safety for team members and customers.

The move, [announced last month](#), will help protect team members and customers, and reduce serious harm and high-value theft by repeat offenders.

Bunnings New Zealand General Manager, Melissa Haines said this was an important development for Bunnings' team and customers.

"Threatening incidents in Bunnings' New Zealand stores have more than doubled over four years, from 303 to 697, and repeat offenders now account for 34 per cent of all threatening incidents, up from 26 per cent in 2022. This is the problem FRT is designed to address.

"Our number one priority is keeping our team and customers safe. FRT is an additional tool that helps us address the rising problem of violent, threatening and abusive behaviour and high value theft, identify serious repeat offenders and act early to prevent incidents," Ms Haines said.

"FRT will complement existing safety initiatives such as team member training, security guards, body-worn cameras and serious incident response processes."

The rollout is being introduced in phases to ensure the right safeguards, privacy settings and processes are in place, and it follows a thorough assessment process.

Bunnings has engaged with team, customers, and the community to inform its approach, with a focus on responsible use, safety and transparency.

Bunnings also worked with a Māori digital sovereignty expert to guide its approach to the rollout, and incorporated tikanga Māori considerations into its processes. This includes bilingual signage, culturally specific misidentification pathways, and dedicated training for team leaders.

Community engagement, including with Māori communities, will be ongoing during the phased rollout.

Independent research has found strong public support for the technology. Nine in 10 respondents (93%) said they supported FRT if it improved safety by more than 10 per cent, while fewer than one in ten (7%) opposed it. Support is strongest when people understand how FRT works and the safeguards in place.

More information is available at [Facial Recognition Technology - Bunnings New Zealand](#)

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For media inquiries, please contact media@bunnings.co.nz