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## Joint statement on use of facial recognition technology in retail settings

The undersigned major New Zealand retailers strongly support the use of fair and accurate technology to protect our workers and customers. We support the option for retailers to use Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) to reduce harm and proactively combat retail crime.

Our teams face high rates of verbal and physical abuse from repeat offenders who pose a risk to our employees, customers and other visitors to our stores. They are often responsible for significant violence, stock loss or damage. We are firmly of the opinion that FRT, when used fairly and accurately, can be a valuable intervention to help keep customers and employees safe. It is a powerful and effective tool alongside other crime prevention resources such as security guards, fog cannons, staff training, body cameras, panic alarms, CCTV and other technology solutions.

We acknowledge Foodstuffs North Island for their leadership in trialling this new technology, and also the oversight provided by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner in assessing FRT's suitability for use in New Zealand.

The trial clearly showed that the technology made a measurable impact in reducing crime, and improving safety in stores. A survey of 1000 New Zealanders found 89% support the use of FRT if it reduces harm by 10%.

Keeping our people safe at work and keeping our customers safe is of paramount importance.

A significant proportion of retail crime is committed by repeat offenders. It is these recidivist offenders that we are able to target with FRT.

FRT offers the opportunity for us to quickly identify individuals of interest as they enter the store. Staff and/or security personnel are then able to respond quickly and decide how to manage each situation. Intervention is not required for every situation but FRT helps our teams to prevent or de-escalate incidents and offences.

We recognise that technology must be used in a fair and accurate way. Guardrails are needed to support customers' privacy, and to guard against potential bias and discrimination. We collectively make a commitment to work with Retail NZ to develop best practice to ensure FRT is used only to keep our people safe, and in line with our obligations under the Privacy Act.

The use of FRT in the right settings with the right controls will provide positive benefits and outcomes for customers, retailers and workers, while not impeding on the privacy of New Zealanders. The vast majority of customers will be able to go about their business as usual and will in fact be safer in those stores where FRT is used.

For further information or interviews, please contact Retail NZ Chief Executive Carolyn Young on 021 449 452 or email [Carolyn.young@retail.kiwi](mailto:Carolyn.young@retail.kiwi)



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