

# Summer season last for long-established retail store

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Owners of Taranaki's retailing institution CC Wards have decided it's time to close the doors.

Now in their 50s, Roslyn and Murray Holyoake have owned the historic three-storey building and business for 30 years.

After informing their staff, they announced yesterday to the *Taranaki Daily News* they will close down at the end of the summer season.

"It's time to finish and get off the treadmill. We will have the luxury of looking after ourselves and have some fun. We're really excited," Mrs Holyoake said.

Taranaki Chamber of Commerce general manager Judith Gilmer said the closure would be a loss for the city.

"We don't like to see long-established businesses closing," Ms Gilmer said.

The couple had many associations and links throughout the city.

"They have been good supporters of the business community for many, many years and it will be very sad to lose that," Ms Gilmer said. "Roz has also been involved in retail associations, working together for the betterment of the city."

The building sits in a prime location in the central business district of New Plymouth and has a Historic Places Trust listing.

The shop specialises in wedding attire, high-end women's clothing, accessories, hosiery and lingerie.

There are no plans to sell the business as a going concern. Once it is closed by about March next year, it will cease trading.

The plan is to bring the building up to the required earthquake standards and the decision would then be made whether to tenant it or sell, the couple said.

The decision was timely, Mrs Holyoake believed.

The concept of a large department store had had its day to be replaced by boutique-style shops.

And with competition heating up through internet shopping, it



**"Off the treadmill":** Murray and Roslyn Holyoake have decided to close the doors on their city retail store after 30 years in the business.

Photo: CAMERON BURNELL/FAIRFAX NZ

was becoming more difficult to attract the retail dollar. "Everything has its lifespan," she said.

Mr Holyoake will continue running the family's property interests in New Plymouth.

"We will always have a base here. I'll be his office girl," Mrs Holyoake quipped.

But the excitement of a new lifestyle is mixed with nostalgia.

Mrs Holyoake became emotional when she spoke of contacting her long-standing suppliers this week to tell them of the closure.

"But it's quite a relief it's out in the open now," she said.

Their 20 staff were all aware of the situation and were pleased for the couple.

"Everyone's got five months'

notice. They are neat ladies. Most of them have other options and quite a few will be retiring."

The message to those who have already ordered wedding frocks was that these were secure and other brides-to-be will still be able to get full service.

"We are ringing all the brides to let them know there will be no problems with gowns."

One unique side of the business, supplying bras for women who have had mastectomies, would continue, Mrs Holyoake said.

"We have a staff member who will continue with that in a stand-alone business."

The couple was also keen to offer their support to anyone who wished to set up boutique businesses selling the top 10 labels

they have on offer. "The opportunity is there if anyone wants to chat to us. We have very good labels and a wonderful local customer base."

The business grew from a small drapery store first established in 1893 by Charles Cameron Ward. The Holyoakes bought the store from CC Ward's sons in 1983 when Mrs Holyoake was just 22.