



Fortnightly Report to the Minister for Auckland

For the period Monday 31 March to Sunday 13 April 2025

Date:	10 April 2025	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0012396

Ministers	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Simeon Brown Minister for Auckland	Note the contents of this briefing and discuss at the next officials meeting	N/A

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office	Privacy of natural persons	
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		✓

The following departments/agencies have contributed content
Ministry of Transport, Department of Internal Affairs and Housing and Urban Development

Minister's office to complete:

☐ Approved

☐ Declined

☐ Noted

☐ Needs change

☐ Seen

☐ Overtaken by Events

☐ See Minister's Notes

☐ Withdrawn

Comments

BRIEFING

Fortnightly Report to the Minister for Auckland

For the period Monday 31 March to Sunday 13 April 2025

Date:	10 April 2025	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0012396

Purpose

To provide you with a fortnightly report for the Auckland Portfolio for the period Monday 31 March to Sunday 13 April 2025.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) recommends that you:

Note the contents of this briefing and discuss at the next officials meeting.

Noted



Michael Quinn
Head of the Auckland Policy Office
10 / 04 /2025

Hon Simeon Brown
Minister for Auckland
..... / /



1. Auckland Portfolio Priorities

Topic/ Contact person	Comment								
Auckland Recovery									
Michael Quinn Head of the APO	Please see Annex One for the Auckland Council’s Recovery Weekly Report (week ending 1 April 2025).								
Privacy of natural persons									
Auckland Regional Deal									
	No updates available for this report.								
Auckland Transport CCO									
Karen Lyons Auckland Director Ministry of Transport	Transport, Resilience and Infrastructure Committee Meeting The Transport, Resilience and Infrastructure Committee (TRIC) met on Thursday 3 April 2025. Key transport items on the agenda were the draft Auckland Transport Statement of Intent (SOI), the regular Auckland Transport update and the Auckland Council submission on the Time of Use Charging bill. Auckland Transport Draft SOI <ul style="list-style-type: none">While the SOI is based on the current regulatory environment it specifically references supporting the governance reforms.The SOI is based on six areas, including improving network productivity, value for money, and effective governance for transport outcomes, making every interaction count, taking public transport from good to great, and core business activities.In the focus area ‘making every interaction count’, Auckland Transport have revised targets for 2025/26 and 2026/27 down for customer perceptions and up for local board satisfaction, to reflect where those scores are currently.For ‘taking public transport from good to great’, patronage targets have been revised down to be between 94 and 98 million over for 2025/26 as compared to the current target of 106.8 million.For ‘core business activities’, Auckland Transport have removed the emissions reduction measure and implemented a 90% target for capital programme delivery on time.The SOI will return to the TRIC in May.Some key measures are summarised in the table below.								
Privacy of natural persons									
	<table><tr><th>Measure</th><th>Jan25 Actual</th><th>24/25 Target</th><th>27/28 Target</th></tr><tr><td>Customer perceptions Auckland Transport listens and responds to Aucklanders’ needs</td><td>27%</td><td>33%</td><td>36%</td></tr></table>	Measure	Jan25 Actual	24/25 Target	27/28 Target	Customer perceptions Auckland Transport listens and responds to Aucklanders’ needs	27%	33%	36%
Measure	Jan25 Actual	24/25 Target	27/28 Target						
Customer perceptions Auckland Transport listens and responds to Aucklanders’ needs	27%	33%	36%						



Local board satisfaction with engagement	57%	47%	60%
Average travel time across the arterial network (10km journey)	22 min	24 min	23 min
Arterial productivity Average number of people moving per hour during the morning peak	29,349	28,000	32,000
Reliability: bus and ferry Percentage of services that start according to schedule	Bus 95.9% Ferry 97.3%	98%	98%
PT utilisation for frequent routes during peak	44.2%	49%	50%
Road maintenance Percentage of the sealed local road network that is resurfaced or rehabilitated	4.3% (6.5% year-end forecast)	6.5%	8.0%
Deaths and serious injuries on the road network in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland – targets are no more than	584	576	546

Auckland Transport Update

- New Zealand's largest ever tendered bus services contract was awarded in February to Ritchies. At \$1.068 billion over nine years, the contract will deliver expanded operations in the West and South of Auckland.
- Two raised safety platforms are being removed, one in Titirangi and one in Avondale. A further five, installed between 2018 and 2023 are being investigated to identify if modification or removal would be appropriate. Auckland Transport implemented improved design standards in 2024.

Time of Use Charging Submission

- TRIC approved the Council Group submission on the Land Transport Management (Time of Use Charging) Amendment Bill (the Bill).
- The submission supports the Bill in its objective to reduce congestion, the generally enabling approach to design of a scheme and the level of detail expected in the Order in Council.
- The Council Group do not support the governance and revenue frameworks.
- They do not see a sufficient role for local authorities stating that design and public consultation is being delegated to officials of a scheme board. They see that this will deter local elected member champions, which they see as being key to the success of schemes overseas. They recommend local authority approval prior to Ministerial sign-off.
- Auckland Council request greater equity of decision making on scheme boards between local authority and the New Zealand Transport Agency representatives or an independent chair. They also suggest an alternative to a scheme board and raise the



	<p>possibility of the new Auckland Regional Transport Committee providing scheme governance in the interests of simplifying governance structures in Auckland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Auckland Council would like automatic allocation of scheme revenues to all scheme costs, including essential complementary measures. They see that in addition to scheme capital and operating costs, public transport alternatives, mitigation of 'rat running' (drivers using other roads not included in the charge zone), appropriate exemptions and a public information campaign should be considered as scheme costs.
Law and Order	
	No updates available for this report.
Water Reform Update	
<p>Bex Sullivan Deputy Executive Director Water Services, Department of Internal Affairs</p> <p>Privacy of natural persons</p>	<p>Confidential advice to Government</p>



Confidential advice to Government

The Watercare Charter came into effect on 1 April 2025. In accordance with the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Act 2024 (the Preliminary Arrangements Act), Watercare have now submitted their final business plan to the Secretary of Local Government (the Secretary).

- The Business Plan is a requirement of the Preliminary Arrangements Act and outlines Watercare's challenges, service commitments and regulatory requirements. It explains how they will monitor and measure these commitments and details their infrastructure investment priorities to meet standards and improve efficiency. In addition, it covers funding strategies, revenue, pricing strategies, and their growth charging policy. It has been developed by Watercare with oversight and review by the Department working with the Commerce Commission.
- The submission of the final business plan concludes the role of the Secretary in preparing the Charter and reviewing the business plan. The Commerce Commission, acting as the Crown monitor for Watercare, will now monitor Watercare's compliance with the Charter and delivery on their business plan.

Relevant headlines from Watercare's business plan includes:

- Watercare estimates Auckland's population will grow by 13% (215,000 people) over the next 10 years.
- Watercare plans to spend \$13.8 billion on infrastructure over the next 10 years, \$6.8 billion of that on investments to support growth.
- Watercare's infrastructure investment programme is aligned with the Auckland Council's Future Development Strategy, which plans for staged growth around existing infrastructure.
- Key growth-related projects (over \$500 million cost over 10 years):
 - Huia water supply – \$1.12 billion.
 - Māngere wastewater treatment plant - \$1.11 billion.
 - Waitematā Water Quality Improvement Programme - \$876 million.
 - North Harbour 2 Watermain - \$785 million. Over the next 30 years 25 percent of Auckland's growth is expected to be served by this water main; 2,650 hectares of greenfield land is zoned for future urban development in the Unitary plan.
 - Waikato River water supply - \$760 million.
 - Rosedale wastewater treatment plant - \$660 million. This will more than double the capacity from 250,000 people served now to 578,000.
 - Southwest wastewater scheme - \$578 million.
 - South Auckland Wastewater Servicing Scheme - \$550 million.



2. General Auckland Updates

Topic/ Contact person	Comment
Transport News	
Karen Lyons Auckland Director Ministry of Transport Privacy of natural persons	Parking Auckland Transport will be increasing parking prices by 50 cents per hour from 14 April, due to rising operational costs and high parking demand. Auckland Transport enforcement income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auckland Transport have identified that enforcement income from Special Vehicle Lanes (SVL's) and traffic infringements was lower than anticipated, due to higher compliance on the existing road network and delays in implementing new SVL's and enforcement technology. Stuff reported that Auckland Transport has issued \$19,768,200 of fines in the Queen Street Essential Vehicle Area, though only \$9,469,258 has been recovered through partial or full payment of the \$150 fine. This followed New Zealand Herald reporting that Auckland Transport has only collected 68% of bus and transit lane fines over three years, in part or in full.
World Dance Crew Championship 2025 - Event attendance opportunity	
Kylie Hawker-Green Manager, New Zealand Major Events MBIE Privacy of natural persons	The World Dance Crew Championship 2025 is taking place at the Due Drop Events Centre, 13 -19 April 2025. The event is a unique, homegrown arts and culture event on the New Zealand Major Events portfolio, that showcases street dance and engages with Māori, Pasifika and youth. The event will generate over 1,500 international visitors, from 10 different countries. The Minister for Tourism and Hospitality will be attending and presenting awards at one of the Championship Finals on Saturday 19 April 2025 (afternoon or evening session to be confirmed). Attendance opportunity: You have been invited to attend and speak at the Opening Ceremony on Sunday 13 April 2025, 5-7pm. You are also invited to attend any of the sessions throughout the event week in an informal capacity.
Confidential advice to Government	
Kylie Hawker-Green Manager, New Zealand Major Events MBIE	Free and frank opinions



Privacy of natural persons	Free and frank opinions
	Confidential advice to Government
Auckland Economic Update April 2025	
Andy Hill Director Auckland, MBIE Privacy of natural persons	<p>Auckland Council has published its monthly economic update for Auckland. The full report is attached at Annex Two.</p> <p>Highlights this month include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• median house price for the month of February 2025 was \$1,010,000 (in real* dollars: same as nine years ago (February 2016); similar to recent months; 5% lower than a year ago; 33% below the 2021 peak)• number of houses sold for the year ended February 2025 was 22,027: rising continuously for five months, 20% above the May



	<p>2023 trough, similar to 2017-2020, but 39% below the July 2021 peak</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• average weekly rent for the month of January 2025 was \$698 (in real* dollars: above recent months, but similar to one and two years ago; below most of 2017 to 2022). For the rest of New Zealand, the figure was \$652: rising due to seasonality, but above last January to reach a new record high• number of new dwellings consented in the year ended February 2025 was 13,773: slightly above the July 2024 turning point; 37% below the September 2022 peak; 9% below the 2019 pre-Covid peak• real* value of new non-residential buildings consented in the year ended February 2025 was \$2,338 million: falling continuously since June; 24% below a year ago; lowest since the 2020 trough and second-lowest since 2016; 32% below the 2022 peak• real* value of imports by Auckland seaports for the year ended February 2025 was \$29.9 billion, which was 4% lower than the year ended February 2024, but 15% higher than the 2020 Covid trough. For the rest of New Zealand, the figure was \$30.7 billion: 5% lower than a year ago, and 25% lower than their 2023 post-Covid rebound peak. For most of 2024, import values for Auckland and the rest of New Zealand were similar• consumer confidence (Westpac McDermott Miller Index) for the March 2025 quarter was 91.3: mid-range for 2020-2024, but below all of 2009 to 2019. A score of greater than 100 shows more optimism than pessimism <p><i>*real dollars/values are after adjusting for the effects of inflation each quarter, so a similar 'real' level means that a value rose at a similar rate to inflation.</i></p>
--	--

3. Ministerial items on hand

3.1 Upcoming significant meetings

Date and venue	Meeting and info
7 May 2025, 7:00 am Deloitte Centre	Auckland at 15: Shaping the next 15 years

3.2 Other Ministerial engagements related to Auckland

Date	Minister	Meeting Info
tbc	Hon Nicola Willis	Waterman Capital



3.3 Upcoming significant media and announcements

Timing	Announcement
None	

3.4 Upcoming briefings and aide memoire

Title	Date to Minister	Action for Minister	Key contact	Summary of paper/comment
BRIEFING-REQ-0012628 Event Briefing with Speech for the Auckland at 15 - Shaping the next 15 years	Speech- 23 April 2025 Event Briefing- 5 May 2025		Andy Hill Privacy of natural persons	To provide background information for your speaking engagement

3.5 Upcoming Cabinet papers

Title	Committee	Expected committee date	Key contact	Summary of paper/comment
Six-monthly report on the cross-government work programme in Auckland	ECO	tbc	Andy Hill Privacy of natural persons	Cabinet report back on the of consolidated central government work programme in Auckland

3.6 Official Information Act requests (Ministerial and Departmental for consultation)

Due to Minister's office	Statutory due date to requester	Ref	Requester	Organisation	Summary of request
15 April 2025		DOIA-REQ-0011008	Privacy of natural persons	Office of Hon. Carmel Sepuloni MP – Deputy Leader of the Opposition	Clarified request on 19 March 2025: Requesting for all the fortnightly reports since from October 2023 onwards.

3.7 Ministerial correspondence

Due to Minister's office	Ref	Correspondent	Organisation	Summary of Correspondence
None				



3.8 Proactive release

Date	Title	Comment
13 March 2025	BRIEFING-REQ-0010672 Proactive release of Auckland fortnightly reports and event briefings from 27 January 2025 to 28 February 2025	Requesting your approval to proactively release the proposed redactions of fortnightly reports and event briefings from 27 January 2025 to 28 February 2025. MBIE will release the information on the date your office will advise.
10 April 2025	BRIEFING-REQ-0012400 Proactive release of Auckland fortnightly reports and event briefings from 1 March to 30 March 2025	Requesting your approval to proactively release the proposed redactions of fortnightly reports and event briefings from 1 March to 30 March 2025. MBIE will release the information on the date your office will advise.



4 Auckland dashboards

Transport environmental scan																				
<div>Karen Lyons</div> <div>Director, Auckland, Ministry of Transport</div> <div>Privacy of natural persons</div>	Public transport patronage update																			
	For the fortnight 03 – 16 March 2025, public transport patronage totalled 4,169,448 boardings across the city’s public transport network.																			
	Patronage increased by 2% for this fortnight compared to the same period last year. Bus and ferry patronage increased by 2% and 9% respectively compared to the same period in 2024, while train patronage decreased by 3%.																			
	Public transport patronage for the year to March 2025 is 88.9 million boardings, an increase on the previous year’s total of 83.9 million boardings, but a decrease from the year to February 2025, of 89.3 million boardings. Across all modes, rail and bus patronage saw the largest annual increase of 7%, whereas ferry patronage has had the smallest annual increase, at 1%.																			
	At 88.9 million boardings, current annual patronage reaches 94% of Auckland Transport’s latest SOI target of 94.7 million annual PT trips for 2024/2025. It is 86% of the pre-COVID (February 2020) patronage of 103.54 million trips.																			
	<table><tr><th colspan="3">PT fortnightly patronage</th></tr><tr><th>Mode</th><th>03 – 16 Mar 2025</th><th>03 – 16 Mar 2024</th></tr><tr><td>Bus</td><td>3,371,553</td><td>3,293,554</td></tr><tr><td>Rail</td><td>659,225</td><td>676,389</td></tr><tr><td>Ferry</td><td>138,670</td><td>126,824</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>4,169,448</td><td>4,096,767</td></tr></table>		PT fortnightly patronage			Mode	03 – 16 Mar 2025	03 – 16 Mar 2024	Bus	3,371,553	3,293,554	Rail	659,225	676,389	Ferry	138,670	126,824	Total	4,169,448	4,096,767
	PT fortnightly patronage																			
	Mode	03 – 16 Mar 2025	03 – 16 Mar 2024																	
	Bus	3,371,553	3,293,554																	
	Rail	659,225	676,389																	
Ferry	138,670	126,824																		
Total	4,169,448	4,096,767																		
Data: AT Metro daily patronage report.																				
<table><tr><th colspan="3">PT monthly patronage</th></tr><tr><th>Mode</th><th>Feb 2025</th><th>Feb 2024</th></tr><tr><td>Bus</td><td>6,892,300</td><td>6,169,800</td></tr><tr><td>Rail</td><td>1,472,000</td><td>1,281,500</td></tr><tr><td>Ferry</td><td>491,400</td><td>526,000</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>8,855,800</td><td>7,977,300</td></tr></table>		PT monthly patronage			Mode	Feb 2025	Feb 2024	Bus	6,892,300	6,169,800	Rail	1,472,000	1,281,500	Ferry	491,400	526,000	Total	8,855,800	7,977,300	
PT monthly patronage																				
Mode	Feb 2025	Feb 2024																		
Bus	6,892,300	6,169,800																		
Rail	1,472,000	1,281,500																		
Ferry	491,400	526,000																		
Total	8,855,800	7,977,300																		
Data: AT Metro monthly patronage report.																				
<table><tr><th colspan="3">PT annual patronage</th></tr><tr><th>Mode</th><th>Year to March 2025</th><th>Year to March 2024</th></tr><tr><td>Bus</td><td>69,911,100</td><td>65,491,800</td></tr><tr><td>Rail</td><td>14,073,800</td><td>13,150,200</td></tr><tr><td>Ferry</td><td>4,928,900</td><td>4,874,400</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>88,913,800</td><td>83,516,200</td></tr></table>		PT annual patronage			Mode	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2024	Bus	69,911,100	65,491,800	Rail	14,073,800	13,150,200	Ferry	4,928,900	4,874,400	Total	88,913,800	83,516,200	
PT annual patronage																				
Mode	Year to March 2025	Year to March 2024																		
Bus	69,911,100	65,491,800																		
Rail	14,073,800	13,150,200																		
Ferry	4,928,900	4,874,400																		
Total	88,913,800	83,516,200																		
Data: AT Metro monthly patronage report																				
<i>Note: Numbers in the monthly and annual patronage numbers may not add up to the total exactly due to rounding.</i>																				



Auckland housing update	
<p>Natasha Tod Director, Auckland, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development</p> <p>Privacy of natural persons</p>	<p>House price index and median house price (REINZ)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The House price index shows a slight movement (down 2.2% on January 2024)• Number of sales is up 1.3% since January 2024.• Median House Price is \$949,000, which is down 5.7% in the month of January 2025, and down 2.2% since January 2024. <p>HUD commentary:</p> <p>Auckland house prices fell slightly during 2024, in line with the national trend of no growth. Much of the price drop was in the first half of the year, with prices showing more variability in recent months as falling lending rates attract some buyers back into the market.</p> <p>Nationally, house prices are now around the same level as they were at the start of last year.</p> <p>The available inventory of houses for sale remains high and has grown in January, so buyers can afford to be more selective. This will moderate growth in house prices that accompanies interest rate cuts and limit the rate of house price growth through 2025.</p> <p>New dwelling building consents (Stats NZ)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New dwelling consents are down 2.0% compared to January 2024.• Total new dwellings consented annually since January 2024 is 13,921, which is down 9.1% compared to the previous year. <p>HUD commentary:</p> <p>New dwelling building consents in Auckland remained largely stable through 2024, but significantly lower than the 2021/22 boom.</p> <p>Existing projects are being completed faster than new projects are starting, and construction employment continues to fall. This will be exacerbated by the lag between consenting, financing and getting new projects underway.</p> <p>While build intentions are stable, construction activity is yet to rebound. However, longer term optimism in the sector is mounting, with an anticipated increase in building intentions and activity in the medium-term. The pace at which intentions and activity increases will depend on how much interest rates fall and how quickly existing newly built stock clears.</p> <p>Dwelling completions and new land parcels (Auckland Council)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 17,169 dwellings received code compliance certificates (CCC) annually since December 2023.• 872 new residential land parcels (under 5000m²) were created in January 2025 (up 1.2% compared to January 2024) <p>HUD commentary:</p> <p>Annual CCC issuance has decreased through the second half of 2024. This is expected to continue over the short-term, as building activity is expected to tighten further.</p>



	<p>Rental price index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0.6% decrease annually since November 2023 <p>HUD commentary:</p> <p>The overall rate of growth continues to slow as declining net migration reduces demand for rental properties. This is particularly prevalent in Auckland.</p> <p>Some short-term growth is expected as tertiary study resumes and international students return to study.</p> <p>The Rental Price Index (Flow Measure) has not been updated since November 2024 data was released due to upgrades to MBIE's tenancy bond-lodgement system. Work to integrate the new system's data is ongoing.</p>
--	--

Annexes

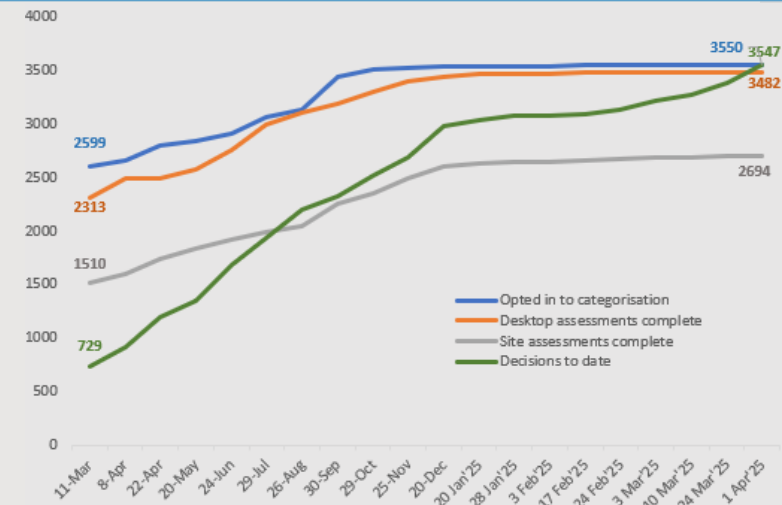
Annex One: Auckland Council Recovery Weekly Report

Annex Two: Auckland Economic Update – April 2025

Categorisation Stages

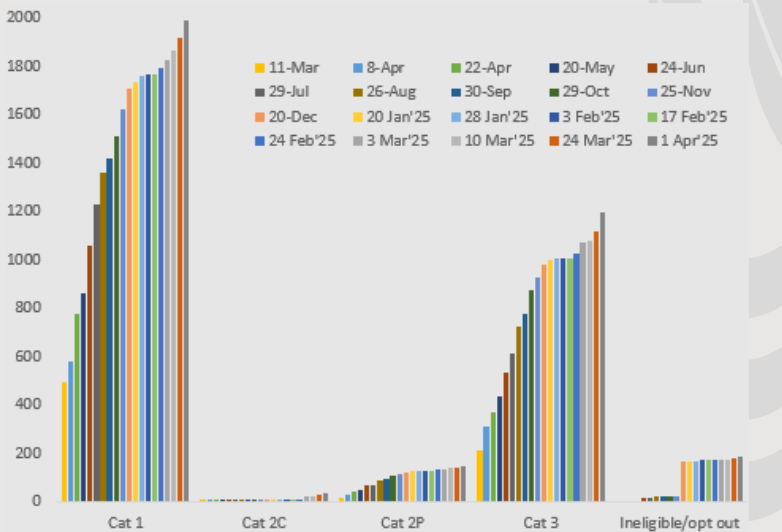
Stages	Initial Impacted properties	Opted in to Categorisation	Desktop Assessments Complete	Site Assessments Complete
Number of properties	7,389	3,550	3,482	2,694
Change from last week	no change	1	2	0

- Registrations have reached 3,550, exceeding the January 2025 forecast of 3,548 by 2 properties.
- This increase includes one property due to a late entry and one property resulting from data cleansing.
- There are still three properties pending final risk assessment categorisation.



Summary of Categorisation Progress

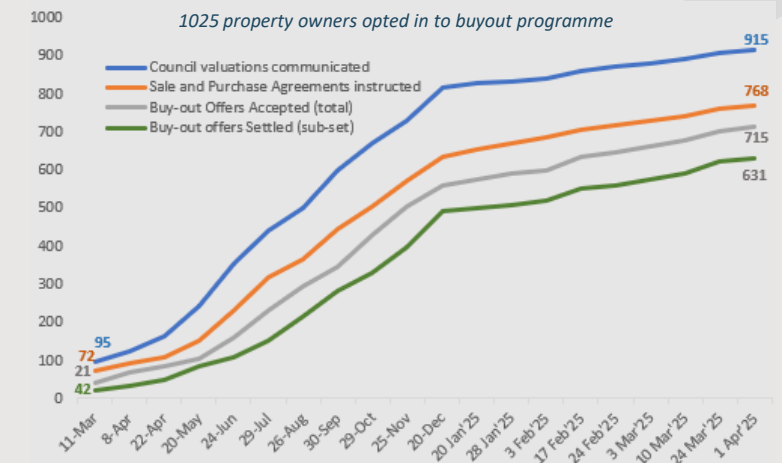
Final Categories 3,547 properties	Category 1	Category 2C	Category 2P	Category 3 Eligible for buyout	Ineligible/opt out
Number of properties categorised	1,989	32	147	1,195	184
Change from last week	71	6	6	79	3
Estimated Final Categories 3,548 (Jan'25)	1,984	38	141	1,215	170
% Decisions to date	100%	84%	104%	98%	



Category 3 Buy-outs in Progress

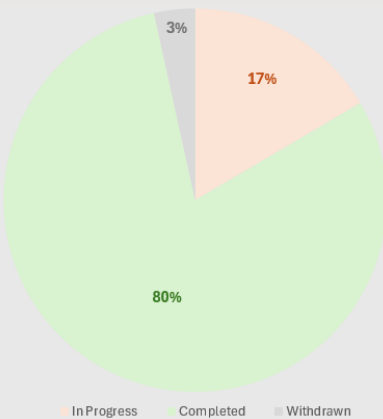
Stages	Council valuations communicated	Sale and Purchase Agreements instructed	Buy-out Offers Accepted	Buy-out Offers Settled
Number of properties	915	768	715	631
Change from last week	8	5	12	9
Buyout offers % based on 1,215 category 3 properties	75%	63%	59%	52%

NB: % based on revised Category 3 forecast number of 1,215 properties



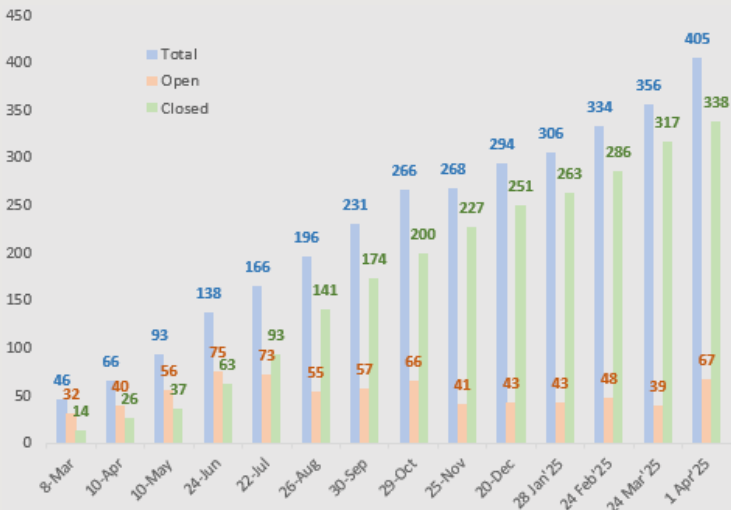
Special circumstances applications, Disputes / Category reviews

Case status – 405 total requests

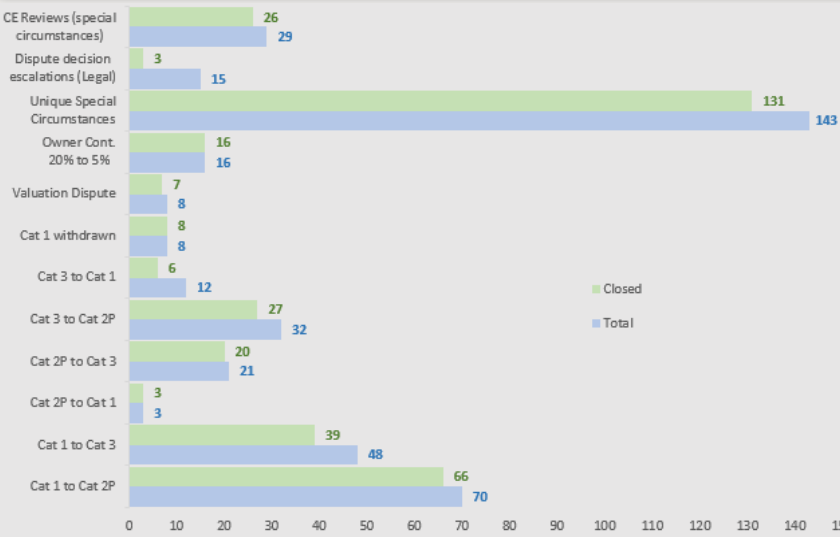


Reporting approach updated:
Total requests now treats a CE review as a new case

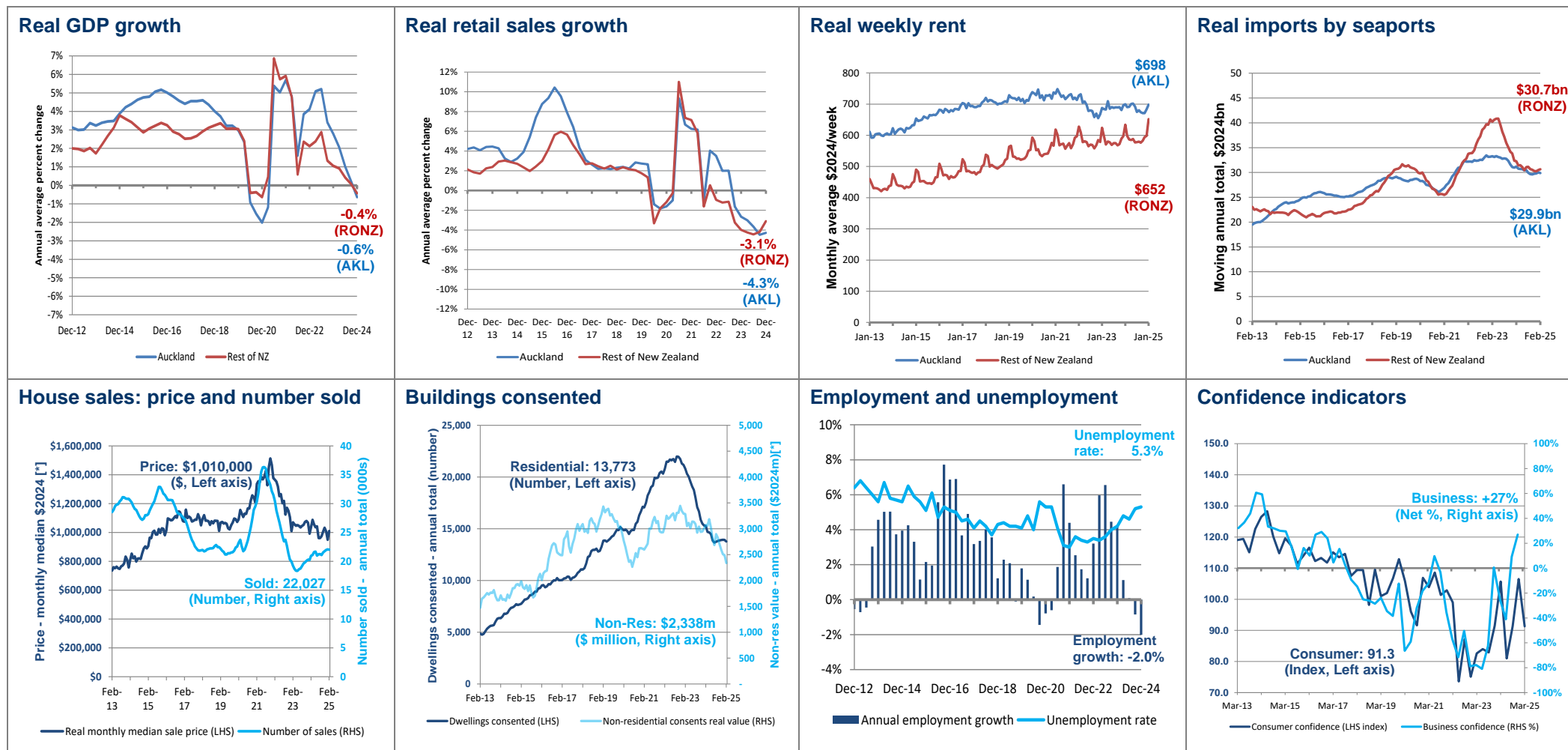
Monthly – total vs open and closed cases



Total vs closed cases – 405 requests breakdown to date



Auckland Economic Update – April 2025

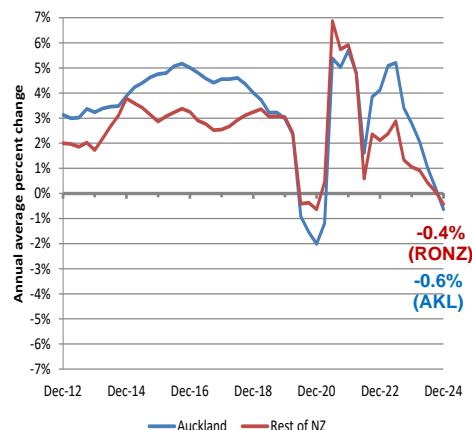


Note: Data is the latest available as at the start of the month, and is for the Auckland region, unless otherwise stated. This is a summary page only. All data sources and technical notes are provided on the next two pages.

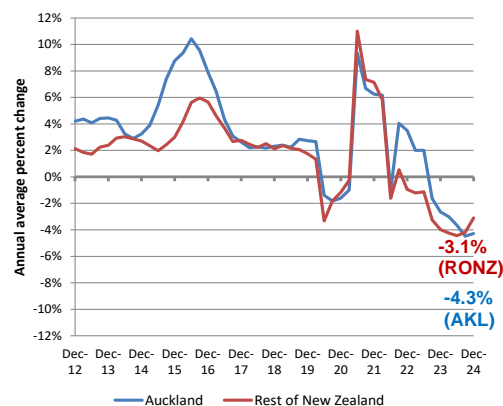
Disclaimer: The information in this document is provided in good faith, however, Auckland Council disclaims any liability whatsoever in connection with any action taken in reliance of this document, for any error, deficiency, flaw or omission contained in it.

All enquiries please contact the author Ross Wilson, Economic Analyst, Strategic Advice and Research Unit: Ross.wilson@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

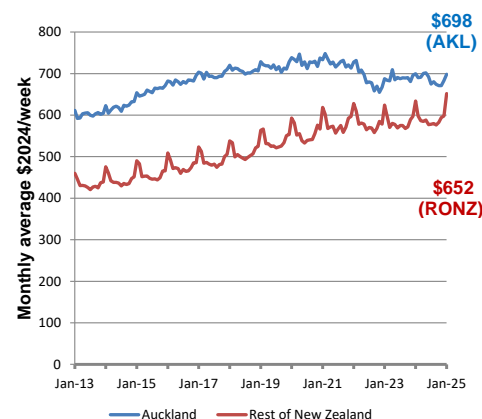
Real GDP growth



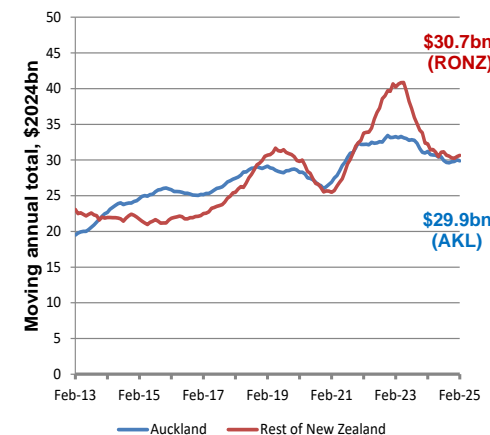
Real retail sales growth



Real weekly rent



Real imports by seaports



Auckland's real* Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the year ended December 2024 was 0.6% lower than for the year ended December 2023; in the rest of New Zealand, the annual change was 0.4% fall (see notes). Both growth rates were: below most periods since 2010; falling since mid-2023; lower than recent population growth; nearly as low as the Covid-related trough of 2020; above the GFC-related trough of 2009.

Real* retail sales for the year ended December 2024 were 4.3% lower than for the year ended December 2023; in the rest of New Zealand, the annual change was a 3.1% fall. Both growth rates were among the lowest since 2009 (just after the Global Financial Crisis), even including the 2020 Covid lockdowns. Both growth rates have been falling since late 2022, although the rate for rest of New Zealand recovered slightly in late 2024.

The average weekly rent for the month of January 2025 was \$698 (in real* dollars: above recent months, but similar to one and two years ago; below most of 2017 to 2022). For the rest of New Zealand, the figure was \$652: rising due to seasonality, but above last January to reach a new record high, following over three years of mainly seasonal increases. "Real rent" changes are relative to CPI inflation, so a similar "real" level means rents rose at a similar rate to inflation.

The real* value of imports by Auckland seaports for the year ended February 2025 was \$29.9 billion, which was 4% lower than the year ended February 2024, but 15% higher than the 2020 Covid trough. For the rest of New Zealand, the figure was \$30.7 billion: 5% lower than a year ago, and 25% lower than their 2023 post-Covid rebound peak. For most of 2024, import values for Auckland and the rest of New Zealand were similar, both slowly falling then rising slightly.

* Real GDP refers to GDP in constant 2022 dollars, to remove inflation.

Lockdowns due to Covid-19 affect results for 2020 onwards. Covid-19 lockdown level 3 began on 23 March 2020.

Latest and historical real GDP figures are modelled estimates, and subject to revision.

Source: Infometrics, Regional Economic Profile/Quarterly Economic Monitor.

* Real retail sales have been calculated by converting previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI), to remove inflation.

Note: These figures exclude non-retail activity captured elsewhere in the retail sales survey.

Source: Stats NZ, Retail Sales (quarterly); Stats NZ, CPI (quarterly); Auckland Council calculations.

* Real rents have been calculated by converting previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI), to remove inflation.

Note: Dwelling size and quality may vary over time. Rent is for new rental bonds lodged each month with Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, for housing tenancies with private sector landlords (so excludes state housing). Data covers only new bonds, so excludes existing leases from earlier periods whose rent has not changed, or has changed but with no revision to the bond. It also excludes new leases where no bond is lodged. Data is subject to minor revisions.

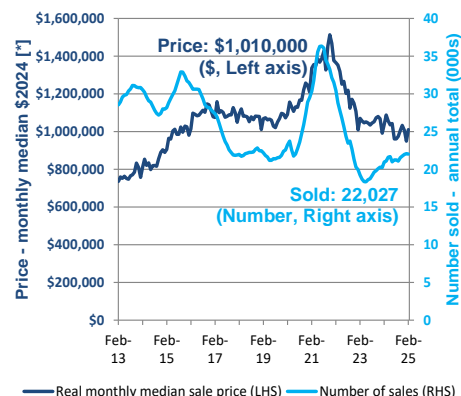
Source: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Regional Rental Prices (monthly); Stats NZ, CPI (quarterly); Auckland Council calculations.

* Real import values have been calculated by converting previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI) for tradables, to remove inflation

Note: Import values are cost including freight (CIF). Auckland seaports consist of Port of Auckland on the Waitemata Harbour near the CBD, and Port of Onehunga on the Manukau Harbour (domestic only, no imports); both are owned by Ports of Auckland Limited (POAL).

Source: Stats NZ, Overseas Cargo Statistics-imports-value \$ CIF (monthly); Stats NZ, CPI Tradables (quarterly); Auckland Council calculations.

House sales: price and number sold



The median (not average) sale price of houses sold in Auckland in the month of February 2025 was \$1,010,000 (in real* dollars: same as nine years ago (February 2016); similar to recent months; 5% lower than a year ago; 33% below the 2021 peak).

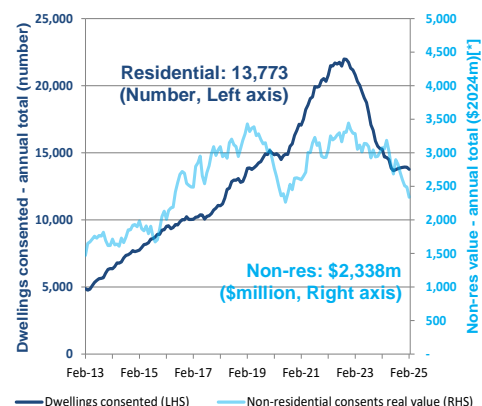
The total number of houses sold in Auckland in the year ended February 2025 was 22,027: rising continuously for five months, 20% above the May 2023 trough, similar to 2017-2020, but 39% below the July 2021 peak.

* 'Real' prices for previous months are calculated by inflating previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars, using the quarterly consumer price index (CPI).

Notes: The data for 'houses' covers actual sales during the period. Size and quality may vary over time. 'Houses' includes all dwelling types (eg apartments and flats), not just free-standing houses, but excludes sales of undeveloped land. 'Price' is real* actual sale price (not just listed). REINZ revises recent data each month for numbers sold (usually slightly upwards) and prices.

Source: Real Estate Institute of New Zealand (REINZ), Monthly Property Report (monthly – from website); Stats NZ, CPI (quarterly); Auckland Council calculations.

Buildings consented



The total number of new dwellings consented in Auckland in the year ended February 2025 was 13,773: slightly above the July 2024 turning point; 37% below the September 2022 peak; 9% below the 2019 pre-Covid peak.

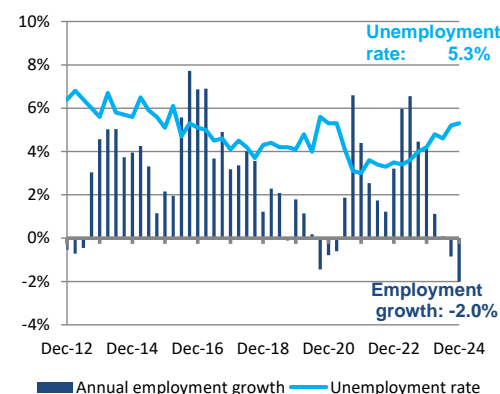
The real* value of new non-residential buildings consented in Auckland in the year ended February 2025 was \$2,338 million: falling continuously since June; 24% below a year ago; lowest since the 2020 trough and second-lowest since 2016; 32% below the 2022 peak.

* 'Real' values for previous months have been calculated by inflating previous quarters' dollars to the latest quarter's equivalent dollars, using the capital goods price index (CGPI) for non-residential buildings

Note: Projects consented are not necessarily commenced or completed. "New" refers to new buildings (i.e. excludes alterations and additions). Residential number is new dwellings consented, which will exceed new residential buildings as some buildings have multiple dwellings; similarly, it will differ from new residential building consents issued, as some consents are for multiple buildings.

Source: Stats NZ, Building Consents (monthly); Stats NZ, CGPI (quarterly); Auckland Council calculations.

Employment and unemployment



The number of people employed in Auckland in the quarter ended December 2024 was 2.0% lower than in December 2023 quarter: the sixth quarter in a row of falling annual growth rates despite population growth.

The unemployment rate in Auckland in the quarter ended December 2024 was 5.3%: the highest-equal quarter since the 2020 Covid lockdowns, and above most of 2017 to 2024, but still lower than 2009 to 2015 and late 2020.

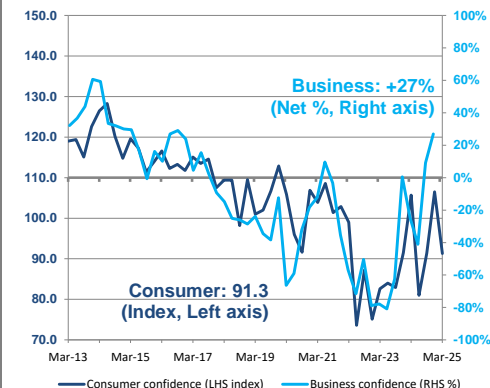
Note: Covid-19 lockdowns began on 23 March 2020, plus wage subsidies, which both affect official unemployment.

Employment data is rebased by Stats NZ each quarter to match latest revisions of historic population estimates.

Both datasets are from a survey (HLFS) so are subject to error margins. Respondents define their own employment status. The survey covers all people aged 15+, so includes school pupils 15+ and people over 65, who might or might not have - or be actively seeking - a job.

Source: Stats NZ, Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) (quarterly).

Confidence indicators



In Auckland, the Westpac McDermott Miller Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) for the March 2025 quarter was 91.3: mid-range for 2020-2024, but below all of 2009 to 2019.

The NZIER QSBO in Auckland for the December 2024 quarter (March 2025 not yet available) showed a net 27% of businesses expecting the general business situation to improve over the next three months – the highest quarter since 2016, and the highest December since 2014.

Note: Left axis is for CCI (consumers: index). For the CCI, a score of greater than 100 shows more optimism than pessimism. Re-scaled 18/9/2024.

Right axis is for QSBO (businesses: net %). The QSBO calculates a net figure as (% of businesses expecting an improvement) minus (% expecting a worsening). QSBO data used here is not the seasonally adjusted version.

Source: Westpac McDermott Miller, Regional Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) (quarterly – published, but proprietary); New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER), Quarterly Survey of Business Opinion (QSBO) (quarterly – by subscription).



AIDE MEMOIRE

Talking points for Meeting with Mayor Brown

Date:	10 April 2025	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0012654

Information for Minister(s)

Hon Simeon Brown

Minister for Auckland

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Michael Quinn	Head of the APO	Privacy of natural persons	
Andy Hill	Director Auckland		✓

The following departments/agencies have contributed content

Ministry of Transport, Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Business Innovation & Employment (Immigration, Tourism and Auckland) and the Auckland Policy Office.

Minister's office to complete:

☐ Approved

☐ Declined

☐ Noted

☐ Needs change

☐ Seen

☐ Overtaken by Events

☐ See Minister's Notes

☐ Withdrawn

Comments



AIDE MEMOIRE

Talking points for Meeting with Mayor Brown

Date:	10 April 2025	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0012654

Purpose

To provide you with talking points for your meeting with Mayor Brown at 4:00pm on 10 April 2025.

Andy Hill
Director Auckland
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment

10 / 04 / 2025

Background

1. You are meeting with the Mayor of Auckland at **4:00pm, Thursday 10 April 2025**.
2. You have requested talking points on the following topics:
 - Transport Governance Reform
 - Transit Visa
 - Bed Night Visitor Levy Update
 - Meeting with Governing Body
 - Regional Deal
 - Proceeds of Crime Fund

Talking points

Free and frank opinions

Free and frank opinions



Free and frank opinions

Free and frank opinions

Annex One: Newsroom article on visa-free transit issue

Govt refusing visa-free transit for Chinese is 'CIA bullshit', says Akld mayor

By Jonathan Milne

21 March 2025

Immigration minister Erica Stanford's response was 'the dumbest letter I ever got', says Wayne Brown

Chinese airlines have promised to launch routes through Auckland to South America; Chinese goods would be shipped through bonded warehouses; the city's GDP would double or treble – and all it would take, says Wayne Brown, is to signal the country's openness to trade by removing visa requirements for Chinese travellers.

The Auckland mayor says he won the conditional assurances from airlines and exporters on his trade trip to China late last year – for instance, Guangzhou-based China Southern Airlines executive vice president Qu Guangji told him the airline would fly via Auckland to Brazil's São Paulo, the biggest city in the Western Hemisphere. So too Sichuan Air.

But the Government, like those of other US-aligned countries, has declined to reciprocate the visa-free travel that China now offers New Zealanders.

Brown and Christopher Luxon attended a Government House meeting last year with the Chinese Premier, at which Li Qiang announced New Zealanders would be allowed visa-free entry for 30 days to China.

"The Prime Minister should have got up and said, That's a great idea. I'll match it. But he wasn't paying attention, or missed it or something or other."

The mayor followed up that meeting with a two-week trip to São Paulo then to China, where he visited Haikou, Shanghai, Ningbo, Chengdu, Nansha and Guangzhou. He met the governors of Hainan, Sichuan and Guangdong – leaders who he says won't even bother meeting with New Zealand Government ministers.

On his return, he reported back to council on the "unwarranted bureaucratic transit visa nonsense".

And he penned a letter to Immigration Minister Erica Stanford, arguing first to remove the requirement for Chinese travellers to pay for a visa just to stop at the airport for a few hours before getting on another plane to the Pacific or South America.

The second step would be for New Zealand to reciprocate the 30-day visa-free policy with China, making it much easier for Chinese holidaymakers to come here.



EVENT BRIEFING

‘Auckland at 15’ event

Date:	30 April 2025	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0012628

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Simeon Brown Minister for Auckland	Note the contents of this briefing	6 May 2025

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Andy Hill	Director Auckland	Privacy of natural persons	
Michael Quinn	Head of the Auckland Policy Office		✓

The following departments/agencies have been consulted

Minister's office to complete:

☐ Approved

☐ Declined

☐ Noted

☐ Needs change

☐ Seen

☐ Overtaken by Events

☐ See Minister's Notes

☐ Withdrawn

Comments



EVENT BRIEFING

‘Auckland at 15’ event

Date:	30 April 2025	Priority:	Medium
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0012628

Purpose

You have agreed to speak at the ‘Auckland at 15’ event which starts at 7.00am on Wednesday 7 May 2025. The event will be held at the Deloitte Centre, Level 20, 1 Queen Street, Auckland Central.

This briefing provides logistical details about the event. You have agreed to deliver a speech and join the first discussion panel.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment recommends that you:

- a **Note** the contents of this briefing ahead of your attendance at the ‘Auckland at 15’ event on 7 May 2025.

Noted

Michael Quinn
Head of the Auckland Policy Office

30 April 2025

Hon Simeon Brown
Minister for Auckland

..... / /

Logistics

1. The event will be held on Wednesday 7 May 2025 between 7am and 10am at the Deloitte Centre, Level 20, 1 Queen Street, Auckland Central.
2. The event is hosted by the Committee for Auckland, Auckland University of Technology, Deloitte and the Helen Clark Foundation.
3. Approximately 140 senior guests are expected, including business and community leaders, civic leaders and former politicians.
4. Upon arrival you will be met by Mark Thomas (Director, Committee for Auckland) and Mark Spencer (Chair, Committee for Auckland), who will accompany you to the venue and introduce you to key hosts.
5. You have been invited to participate in *Panel One – Legacy and Progress* and to deliver an opening address followed by a panel discussion facilitated by Jack Tame and Melissa Chan-Green.
6. The event will be recorded for potential public release and media coverage.

‘Auckland at 15’ event

7. This event marks the 15th anniversary of the creation of Auckland Council. It reflects on the rationale for the Auckland governance reforms and the progress that has been made since 2010. The event is also intended to generate debate about the opportunities for the next 15 years.
8. The event consists of four themed panel sessions interspersed with video clips featuring prominent Aucklanders. The four panel sessions are:
 - i. Panel One: Legacy and progress
 - ii. Panel Two: What makes a city successful?
 - iii. Panel Three: Fit for the future
 - iv. Panel Four: The next 15 years

Your speaking role

9. You will deliver a seven-minute opening address as part of Panel One, setting the scene for the following panels. Your opening address will be followed by an address by Mayor Wayne Brown.
10. A draft speech is attached at **Annex One** and has been framed to:
 - i. Acknowledge the original purpose of the reforms without over celebrating or critiquing the past.
 - ii. Emphasise Auckland’s continuing importance to New Zealand’s performance.
 - iii. Highlight opportunities and challenges for the future.
 - iv. Signal the need for a shift in focus from structures to delivery.
 - v. Reinforce the government’s practical commitment to Auckland’s continued progress.
11. Following your address, you will join a panel with former Prime Ministers Rt Hon Helen Clark and Rt Hon Sir John Key, and Mayor Wayne Brown.

12. The panel facilitators will draw on pre-supplied panel questions to guide the panel discussion. Questions will also be informed by questions from the audience via Slido. Suggested responses are included at **Annex Two**.
13. Further information on the Panel programme is attached at **Annex Three**.

Speech and approach

14. The event brings together influential Auckland leaders and is designed to reflect on the Super City's legacy while setting a forward agenda for further action.
15. Your speech provides a factual assessment of Auckland's progress since amalgamation and sets a forward-looking agenda for delivery and governance improvements.
16. The speech acknowledges Auckland's challenges without focusing on the past, and positions the government's role in a practical, outcomes focused way, appropriate to the audience and the setting.
17. The speech includes your feedback on the election of councillors at large and the role of Local Boards.
18. The first half of the speech is focused on reflection (why Super City, progress and challenges) and the second half is focused on the future (delivery, governance improvements and partnerships).

Risks and mitigations

19. We have not identified any risks associated with this event.

Communications/Media

20. We have not been advised of media but expect the event to be recorded and for the NZ Herald to cover the event.

Contacts

Name	Position / organisation	Telephone	Will meet you on arrival
Mark Thomas	Director, Committee for Auckland	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Mark Spencer	Chair, Committee for Auckland		

Annexes

Annex One: Speech

Annex Two: Suggested Questions and Answers

Annex Three: Panel Programme

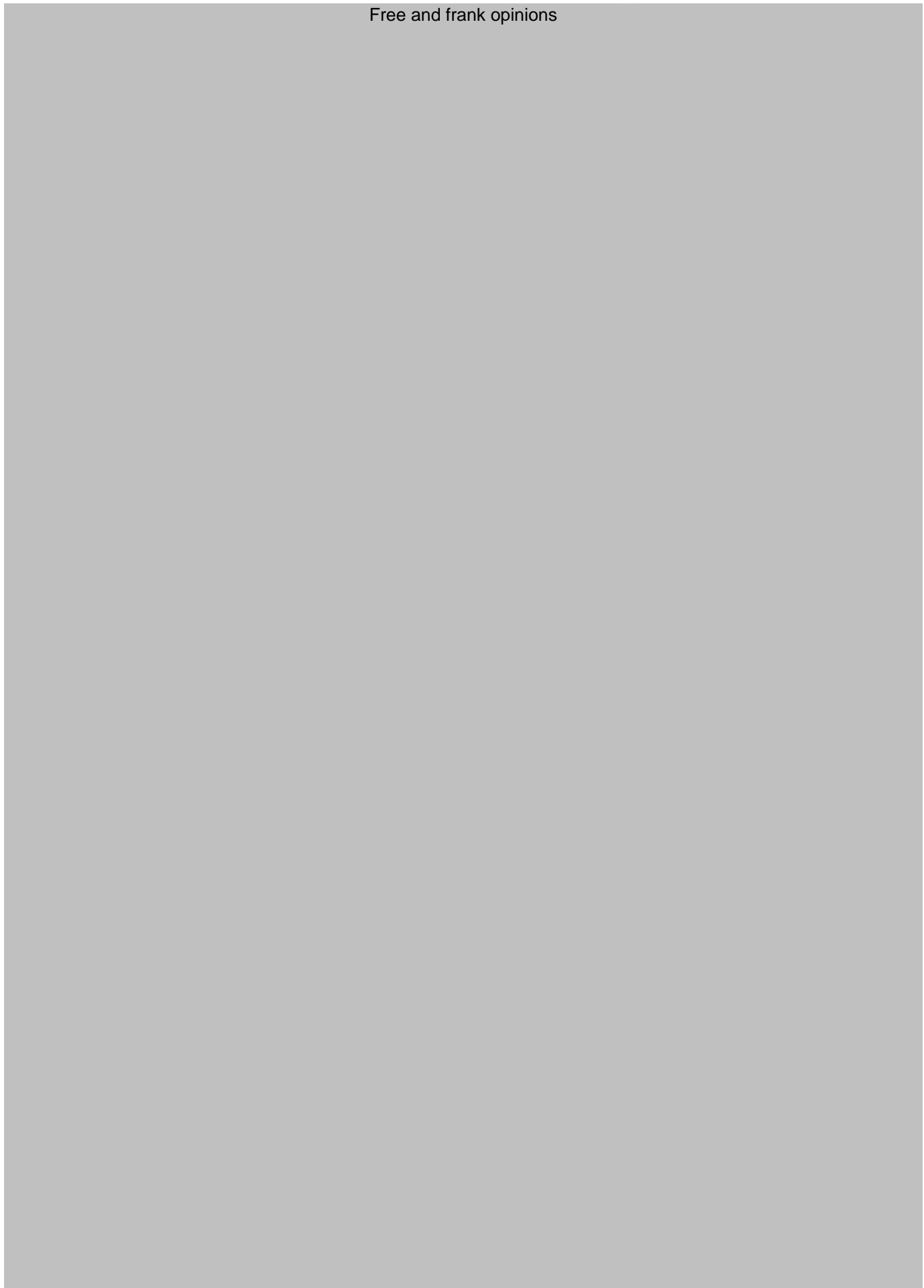


Free and frank opinions



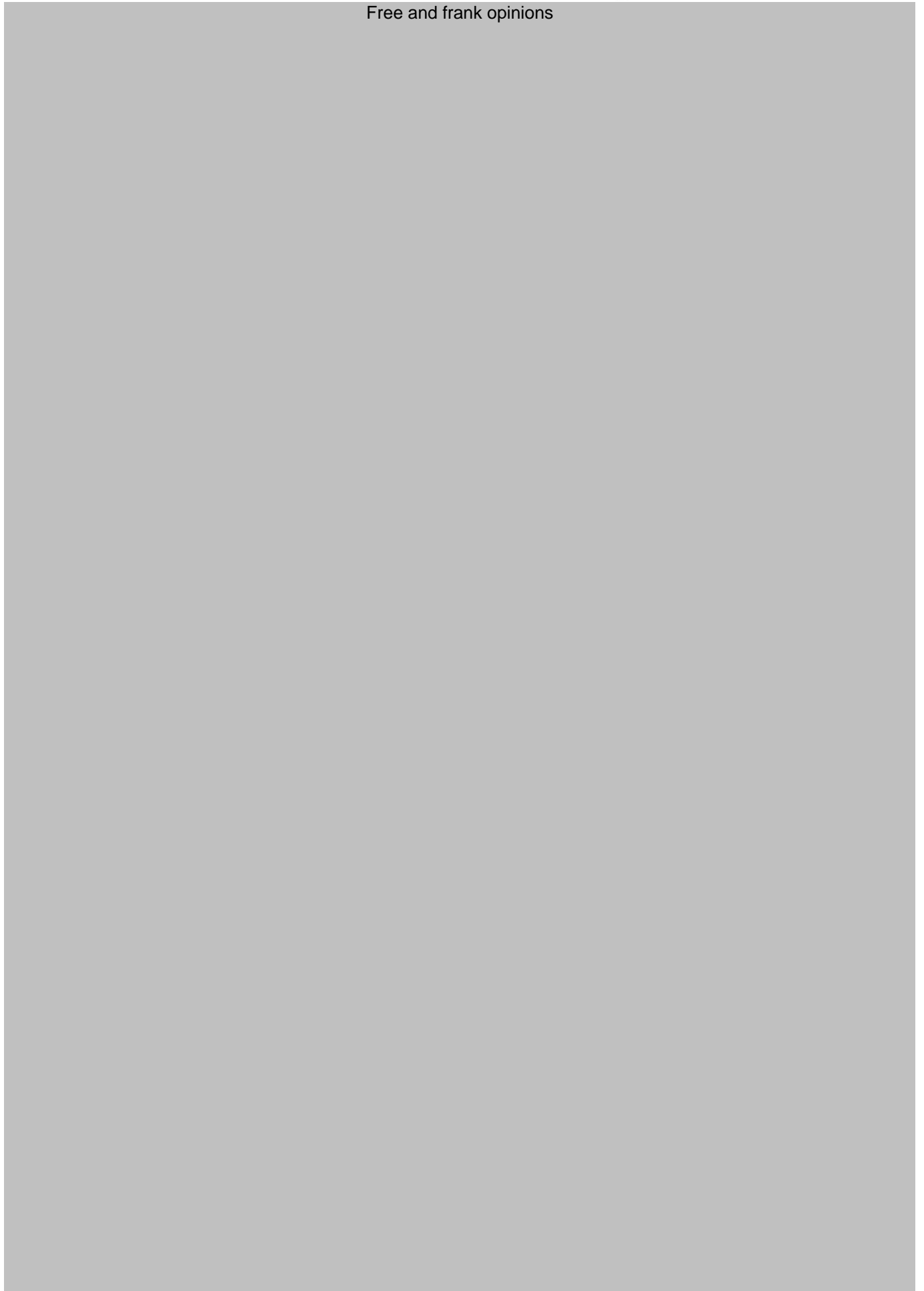


Free and frank opinions



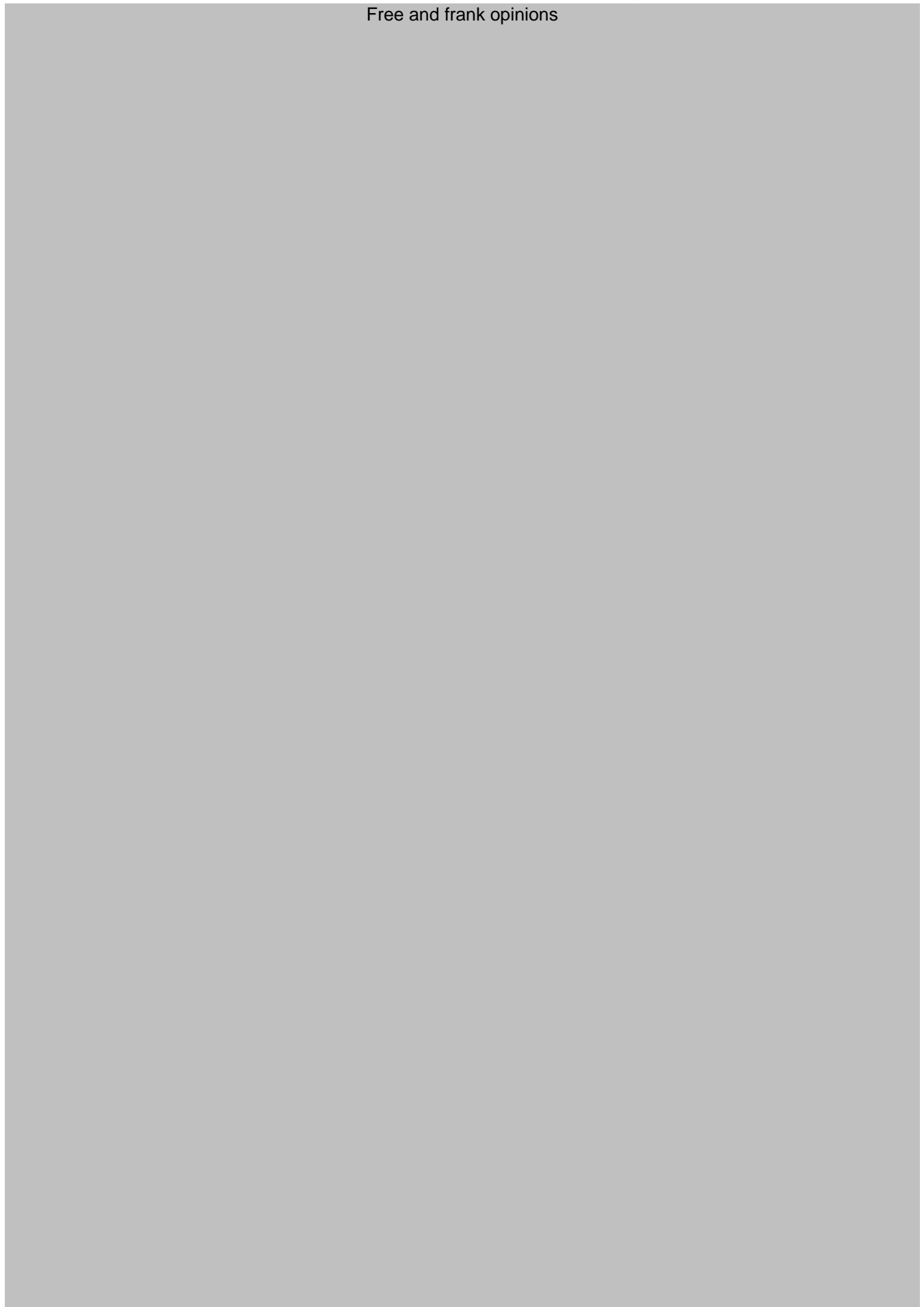


Free and frank opinions





Free and frank opinions





Free and frank opinions





Free and frank opinions



Annex Three: Panel Programme

Panel One - Legacy and Progress

Set the stage by reflecting on the rationale for Auckland's Super City creation and assessing the tangible progress made. Provide high-level political, historical and strategic insights. Address how central and local government have been working and what needs to change. Frame the what's worked/what hasn't to ground later panels.

- **Hon Simeon Brown**, Minister for Auckland
- **Mayor Wayne Brown**, Mayor of Auckland
- **Rt Hon Helen Clark**, former Prime Minister
- **Rt Hon Sir John Key**, former Prime Minister

Issues to be addressed:

- Why was the Super City formed?
- What key progress has it made and what are the key opportunities you see?
- How should political leaders in local and central government work more effectively to make greater progress?

Panel Two – What makes a city successful?

Gain insights from Auckland peer cities to define what success in city making looks like and where Auckland should focus/prioritise. Bring an external and international perspective to inform Auckland's experience. Relate best practice to the New Zealand context.

- **Professor Paola Boarin**, Co-founder and Co-director Future Cities Research Hub, University of Auckland
- **Rt Hon Graham Quirk**, Former Lord Mayor of Brisbane, and Infrastructure Australia Board Member
- **Mary Rowe**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Urban Institute

Issues to be addressed:

- What makes comparable international cities succeed? What are the key drivers of city achievement?
- What have Auckland's leading peers done? What aspects of city leadership and planning are most important? How to prioritise where to focus?
- What is particularly relevant in a New Zealand context and where should Auckland concentrate its city making?

Panel Three - Fit for the Future

Purpose: *MC introduction*

Identify the major shifts shaping Auckland's future and assess how well-prepared the city is to respond. Incorporate perspectives on culture and diversity, environment/ climate, funding, infrastructure and growth/population, innovation and technology.

- **Ngarimu Blair** – Deputy Chair, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Trust; Director, Whai Rawa Ltd
- **Geoff Cooper** – Chief Executive, NZ Infrastructure Commission; former Chief Economist, Auckland Council
- **Lisa Hind** – Head of Sustainability, Precinct Properties
- **Alliv Samson** – Co-founder and Co-CEO, Kami

Issues to be addressed:

- What are the most critical long-term trends Auckland must prepare for? (climate, indigeneity/demographics, infrastructure, technology)
- How resilient is our infrastructure and civic fabric? Where are the greatest risks?
- What shifts in investment, innovation, partnership and the way we work will be needed to future-proof Auckland?
- How can we more effectively integrate digitisation, indigeneity/diversity, sustainability, into long-term planning?

Panel Four - The next 15 years

Bring together the insights from previous panels and the experience of these panellists to define the core elements of a refreshed Auckland agenda. After 15 years of the Super City, this panel will outline what must change — in values, leadership, and delivery — to accelerate progress over the next 15 years. The session will draw on issues related to Auckland's future direction, economy and sustainability.

- **Simon Bridges** – CEO, Auckland Business Chamber
- **Izzy Fenwick** – Founder, Futureful, Co-chair, Rangatahi Advisory Panel, Koi Tū; Guardian, Aotearoa Circle
- **Ranjna Patel** – Co-founder and Director, Tāmaki Health; Co-founder, Gandhi Nivas
- **Professor Damon Salesa** – Vice Chancellor, Auckland University of Technology

Issues to be addressed:

- How do we lead differently and more inclusively - build more effective partnerships with more enduring and actionable plans?
- How can we innovate and transform economically, and grow the skills and knowledge needed?
- How can we grow resiliently and sustainably with more Aucklanders thriving?
- What are the bold city priorities Auckland should commit to owning and delivering?