



## Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing, University of Canterbury meeting, and University of the Third Age Members Event, 4 April 2025

<b>Date:</b>	28 March 2025	<b>Priority:</b>	Medium
<b>Security classification:</b>	In Confidence	<b>Tracking number:</b>	0010628

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon James Meager Minister for the South Island	<b>Attend and speak</b> at the Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing event.  <b>Meet</b> with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canterbury.  <b>Attend and speak</b> at the University of the Third Age Members event.	4 April 2025

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Karl Woodhead	General Manager Strategy, Planning and Performance, Kānoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit (Kānoa)	Privacy of natural persons	
Cory Hagenaaars	South Island Lead Advisor, Kānoa	Privacy of natural persons	✓

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
N/A

Minister's office to complete:

☐ Approved

☐ Declined

☐ Noted

☐ Needs change

☐ Seen

☐ Overtaken by Events

☐ See Minister's Notes

☐ Withdrawn

Comments



## EVENT BRIEFING

### Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing, University of Canterbury meeting, and University of the Third Age Members Event, 4 April 2025

Date:	28 March 2025	Priority:	Medium
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### Purpose

To provide background and supporting information for your participation at the following events in Christchurch on Friday, 4 April 2025:

- Attending and speaking at the Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing event.
- Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Canterbury.
- Attending and speaking at the University of the Third Age Members event.

### Recommendations

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

- a **Note** the information in this briefing to support your attendance at the Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing event. Draft speech notes are included in this briefing.

*Noted*

- b **Note** the information in this briefing to support your meeting with the Vice-Chancellor of University of Canterbury.

*Noted*

- c **Note** the information in this briefing to support your attendance at the University of the Third Age Members event. Draft speech notes are included in this briefing.

*Noted*

Karl Woodhead  
**General Manager Strategy, Planning and Performance**  
Kānoa – Regional Economic Development & Investment Unit, MBIE

28 / 03 / 2025

Hon James Meager  
**Minister for the South Island**

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## **Annexes**

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**Annex One:** Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing event

**Annex Two** Draft speech notes for Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing event

**Annex Three** Questions and Answers for Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing event

**Annex Four** Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor, University of Canterbury

**Annex Five:** University of the Third Age Members event

**Annex Six:** Talking Points for University of the Third Age Members event.



## Annex One: Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing event

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1. On Friday, 4 April 2025, you will attend and speak at the Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing event (the Event), at Business Canterbury's offices, 57 Kilmore Street, Christchurch, from 9.30am to 11.00am.
2. The format for the event is a conference. You will speak for approximately five minutes on your vision and priorities for the South Island portfolio, followed by Hon Chris Penk who will speak on his priorities for the Small Business and Manufacturing portfolio. Following this, you will both join a panel discussion and questions and answers session.
3. A run-sheet for the event is included below:

Time	Event
9.30am	Guests arrive – tea and coffee on arrival.
9.35am	Leeann Watson, Master of Ceremonies (MC) will welcome guests and do introductions.
9.40am	Speech: Hon James Meager, Minister for the South Island, Introduction and South Island portfolio priorities.
9.45am	Speech: Hon Chris Penk, Minister for Small Business and Manufacturing, Introduction and Small Business and Manufacturing portfolio priorities.
9:50am	Panel Discussion (facilitated by MC) Focus areas: Attracting talent, investing in infrastructure, innovation and productivity, enabling policy/legislation.
10:10am	Questions and answers session with Hon James Meager and Hon Chris Penk.
10.30am	Closing remarks – MC. Morning tea and networking.
11.00am	Event concludes.

4. The event is held multiple times a year, bringing together business leaders from across Canterbury to network and hear from invited speakers.
5. This is the first Ministerial Briefing event for the South Island and Small Business and Manufacturing portfolios. This provides an opportunity to speak about your portfolio priorities and focus areas and engage with Canterbury business leaders to get an insight into what they see as the opportunities and challenges for the region.

## Background – Business Canterbury

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6. Business Canterbury (formerly The Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce) is the Chamber of Commerce for Canterbury businesses. It is a member-based organisation with the purpose of enabling and supporting a thriving business community across Canterbury<sup>1</sup> by providing advocacy and business support services, and connection primarily through networking opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> Sourced from: [cecc.org.nz/about-us](https://cecc.org.nz/about-us)

## Logistics

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7. You will be met on arrival by Leeann Watson (Chief Executive) and Privacy of natural persons from Business Canterbury.
8. The room will be set up conference style and you will be seated in the front row.

## Risks and mitigations

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9. No risks have been identified.

## Media

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10. Media have not been invited to attend the event.

## Contact



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Name	Position / organisation	Telephone
Leeann Watson	Chief Executive, Business Canterbury	<span>Privacy of natural persons</span>

## About the audience

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11. Approximately 70-80 attendees are expected to attend. Biographies of speakers and key attendees are below.

	<p><b>Leeann Watson, Chief Executive Business Canterbury</b></p> <p>Leeann has been the Chief Executive of Business Canterbury since 2017.</p> <p>Prior to this role, Leeann was the General Manager of the Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce from 2000 to 2017.</p>
	<p><b>Laura Hill, General Manager, Business Canterbury</b></p> <p>Laura commenced her role as General Manager at Business Canterbury in 2024. Prior to this, she was a Business Manager at Learning People Global from 2017 to 2020, and National Operations Manager at Medifab from 2020 to 2024.</p>

	<p><b>Kiley Charteris, Partnership and Sales Manager, Business Canterbury</b></p> <p>Kiley Charteris has held the Partnership and Sales Manager role at Business Canterbury since 2024.</p> <p>Prior to this, Kiley was Business Director at Max Marketing from 2016 to 2017, and Director of Retail Product Development at ThreeSixty Sourcing Limited from 2017 to 2021 – both roles were based in Hong Kong.</p>
	<p><b>Tait Dench, Marketing – Communications and Advocacy Manager, Business Canterbury</b></p> <p>Tait took on the role Marketing – Communications and Advocacy Manager in May 2024.</p> <p>Tait previously worked for the New Zealand National Party as a Marketing and Communications Manager from 2022 to 2023, and was the Young Nationals Membership and Campaigns Coordinator from 2016 to 2017.</p>
	<p><b>Genevieve Thornley, Business Services Manager, Business Canterbury</b></p> <p>Genevieve has been in the Business Service Manager at Business Canterbury since June 2024. She was previously their Service Programme and Design Manager.</p> <p>Prior to this, Genevieve worked at AgResearch as a Funding Manager and Investment Leader.</p>
	<p><b>Grant McEwan, Finance Manager, Business Canterbury</b></p> <p>Grant was appointed to the Finance Manager position in 2024. Grant worked in various roles in the finance industry.</p> <p>Previously, Grant worked in various roles in the finance industry in Singapore and New Zealand.</p>
	<p><b>Maxine Muscroft, Executive Assistant, Business Canterbury</b></p> <p>Maxine joined Business Canterbury as an Executive Assistant in 2021.</p>

12. An attendee list as of 25 March 2025 is below.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Company</b>
Privacy of natural persons	LMAC New Zealand
	ChristchurchNZ
	Fraemohs Homes NZ Limited
	Ministry of Social Development
	2degrees
	Oxygen8 Consulting - Brian Elliott
	Enable Networks Limited
	Men at Work Traffic Management
	Men at Work Traffic Management
	Development West Coast
	Innate Furniture
	Westpac
	Business Canterbury
	Softsource vBridge
	New Zealand Trade and Enterprise
	Callaghan Innovation
	Business Canterbury
	Millpond
	Caliber Design Limited
	Caliber Design Limited
	Fraemohs Homes NZ Limited
	Ryan Recruitment
	2degrees
	Window Treatments NZ Ltd
	Slade Engineering
	Beca
	Ricoh
	ChristchurchNZ

Privacy of natural persons	NK Windows Ltd
	NK Windows Ltd
	Fraemohs Homes NZ Limited
	Biomolecular Interaction Centre
	Inovo
	Forte Health
	Callaghan Innovation
	Canterbury Seismic Instruments
	Kovacs Design Furniture
	Westlake Governance Limited
	Business Canterbury
	Ministry of Social Development
	Argus Group
	Inovo
	Slade Engineering
	Fraemohs Homes NZ Limited
	Pro-Manage Consulting

## Annex Two: Draft speech notes for Business Canterbury Ministerial Briefing event

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### INTRODUCTION

- I'm very proud to be the MP for Rangitata and the country's first Minister for the South Island.
- I am looking forward to working across central and local government and with regional stakeholders to ensure the huge potential of the South Island is realised.
- Today, I'll discuss how the recently introduced *Going For Growth* approach is a starting point for us. Through my role as Minister for the South Island, I want to make sure that the South Island economy gets its fair share of economic and job growth.
- Keeping the South Island economy moving and connecting the right people and resources together will help improve living standards and economic outcomes. We all know the potential of sectors in the South Island in contributing to this.
- I'd also like to discuss a bit more about my South Island portfolio and opportunities and challenges within Canterbury.
- There is a raft of untapped potential in our region and I'm looking forward to talking to you later on this morning about how we can work together to support this Government's goals.

### Going For Growth

- I'd like to start by briefly talking about the work this Government is doing to unlock New Zealand's potential and make our economy grow faster through our *Going For Growth* approach, which was released by the Minister for Economic Growth earlier this year.
- Economic growth is key to raising living standards, creating higher-paying jobs and delivering the vital infrastructure and public services New Zealanders want and deserve.
- Going for Growth sets out five pillars driving the push for economic growth – **developing talent; competitive business settings; promoting global trade and investment; innovation, technology and science; and infrastructure for growth.**
- Our economic potential will also be unleashed by fostering investment, innovation and risk-taking. Removing barriers and creating incentives empowers businesses to drive growth, ensuring market forces fuel prosperity.
- The South Island makes up 24 per cent of New Zealand's population and 22 per cent of the national GDP and will be key to helping achieve our *Going For Growth* goals. I'd now like to take some time to discuss some of the important Canterbury and South Island sectors that will contribute to our economic growth story.

### SECTOR-SPECIFIC TALKING POINTS

#### Food and Fibre

- In terms of what we want for the South Island, nothing is more important than the food and fibre sector. Food security is vital. It is vital in 2025. It is vital for the rest of the world. We all know its contribution to the economy down here – agriculture alone makes

up nearly 8 per cent of the South Island's GDP and this number has only grown over the years.

- The food and fibre sector is also a key contributor to the Government's goal of doubling the value of exports within 10 years.
- To help unlock this, we need to do more to support our agricultural sector in terms of supporting water storage. I'm talking about rules to make sure that irrigation and water storage become a permanent activity and that farmers don't need to jump through hoops and red tape to get access to sustainable levels of water so that they can grow the food and fibre that we need.

## **Tourism**

- Tourism is a key contributor to the national economy, being our second largest exporter behind dairy. And in Canterbury, tourism is a key driver of our economy, alongside agriculture, and manufacturing.
- The South Island accounts for 40 per cent of New Zealand's international tourism spend, 31 percent of the domestic tourism spend, and 43 per cent of the guest nights in the country are spent in the South Island.
- We need to work together to ensure that we maximise the tourism experience and spend in the South Island and in key areas of Canterbury that are seeing growing tourism levels, such as Mackenzie, Kaikōura and Hurunui.
- However, we must be strategic in how we plan for increasing tourism – we must do this in a way which meets the infrastructure needs and concerns, using things like the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy, using things like the general taxation pot and the funding that the Government provides.

## **Local Government/City and Regional Deals**

- This Government knows the future challenges facing local government relating to funding and financing. City and Regional Deals are one way we are looking to help local government and drive the Government's growth agenda.
- City and Regional Deals will be based on a 30-year vision with a ten-year strategic plan for a region to deliver shared objectives and outcomes between local and central governments.
- City and Regional Deals will be a vehicle for greater regional collaboration and coordination, improved certainty in local government decision-making, funding, and financing, promoting innovative and collaborative ways of working between central and local government, and ensuring resilient cities and regions.
- City and Regional Deals will seek to promote economic growth and productivity, delivering connected and resilient infrastructure, and improving the supply of affordable, quality housing.
- While Canterbury have not submitted a proposal for this round of consideration, I know the councils are working together on a future proposal and I look forward to hearing about what your region is planning and finding ways to work together with you to action these plans.

## Energy

- There are several South Island regions that are more exposed to energy affordability, security and resilience risks than other parts of New Zealand. This is exacerbated by natural hazard risks which threatens regional energy security and resilience.
- Energy security will be critical for Canterbury to address the challenges ahead, including water, food production and climate change. Energy has been identified as an opportunity in the Mayoral Forum's *Plan for Canterbury* – this will support the Canterbury region to foster partnerships to investigate barriers and harness opportunities to improve the region's energy security.
- Canterbury's high-country lakes provide water storage capacity that can enable more regional production. I know Environment Canterbury is looking to ways to harness hydropower options and improve Canterbury's contribution to New Zealand's security of electricity supply.

## Transport

- The South Island transport network is vast and includes around 5,000 kilometres of state highways and over 35,000km of local roads as well as over 1,500km of rail lines (consisting of two main lines, two secondary lines and several branch lines).
- Canterbury has by far the largest road network of any region in New Zealand, and maintaining this network is important to both connecting industry to ports and for wider road user safety.
- Canterbury's current transport network is made up of a number of nationally and regionally significant transport routes connecting people and communities in the region to the north, south and west.
- Network resilience is also a concern for Canterbury, with a range of natural hazard risks including river flooding, surface flooding, and coastal inundation.
- Communities, businesses, and the export economy rely heavily on a strong and robust transport network. This is critical for people to connect, move in and around the region, as well as for moving goods and produce to domestic and international markets.

## Linking back to Going For Growth

- For each of these sectors, I've talked a bit about how the Government is already taking action to support the *Going For Growth* approach.
- We know that Canterbury and the wider South Island can play a huge role in growing the economy and creating more job opportunities, especially with regards to our food and fibre export targets and growing our tourism industries.
- But we need to do more work, and we need to do it collaboratively – I am keen to work across multiple portfolios to understand more about the challenges and opportunities facing our region and the wider South Island.

## CLOSING REMARKS

- Having spoken a bit about my South Island portfolio and what actions this Government is taking to grow our economy, I'm keen to hear from you during the discussions we'll have later this morning.

- I am particularly interested in learning more about your broader priorities and aspirations for Canterbury, and the potential role you see in working collaboratively with Government to achieve these.

## **Annex Three: Questions and Answers for Business Canterbury**

13. Pre-submitted Questions: These questions are for the Minister for Small Business and Manufacturing but are here for your reference.

*Is there anything the Government can do to assist small business with access to affordable funding which is badly needed in manufacturing sector?*

*Are there any incentives or subsidies to encourage investment in advanced manufacturing and automation?*

*What is being done to ensure that environmental regulations do not make local manufacturing uncompetitive compared to offshore production?*

*How does the government plan to leverage Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to help New Zealand manufacturers expand their export markets?*

14. Anticipated questions and answers are below:

### **Minister for the South Island portfolio**

*What is your role as the minister for the South Island?*

- As Minister for the South Island, I play an advocacy role, helping to ensure that the issues facing the South Island are well understood by the Government. I am also focussed on helping to communicate the Government's work programme to South Island stakeholders.

*What the purpose of your portfolio?*

- The purpose of my role is to ensure that the South Island has a voice in Parliament. Currently there are only 16 South Island electorate MP's, compared to 48 in the North Island. I will make sure the voice of the South Island is heard in Government decision making so that the South Island economy gets its fair share of economic and job growth.

*How will you support communities and businesses in your role as Minister for the South Island?*

- I will support local communities and businesses by listening to the challenges they are facing or opportunities they see. I will ensure your concerns are heard by the relevant ministers. This will make sure South Island communities and businesses have a strong voice in parliament.

### **Infrastructure**

*What is the Government doing to support infrastructure planning and investment in the region?*

- In April 2024, Cabinet approved, as part of Budget 2024, allocation of \$1.20 billion capital funding for the Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF). This funding is intended to be spread out over three years, to capture future transformational infrastructure projects for the regions.

- I understand City and Regional Deals will also be a vehicle for greater regional collaboration and coordination, improved certainty in local government decision-making, funding, and financing, and see this as an avenue to have conversations about ensuring continuity of infrastructure in the regions.
- Any project proposals for the RIF from regions that become part of City and Regional Deals would still need to proceed through the agreed RIF application process for RIF funding consideration.

## **Housing affordability**

*How can Government help support our regions to establish more housing in our cities to meet our growth needs, make housing more affordable and attract talent to our businesses?*

- I am aware of the challenges of housing affordability in the region. Affordable housing and intensification are needed, especially when household incomes have not kept up with rent and mortgage costs.
- Through our Going For Growth plan, this Government is encouraging competitive business settings and removing regulatory barriers to drive economic growth. We will streamline the building consent system and, as you know, we have been working on the Fast-track Approvals Act and reforming the Resource Management Act.
- Planned amendments to land acquisition processes under the Public Works Act announced in March this year will also help get major housing projects underway faster by adding incentive payments for landowners who sell voluntarily and simplifying the objections process.
- In July 2024, Minister of Housing, Hon Chris Bishop, announced the Government's 'Going for Housing Growth' policy, which focuses on the fundamentals that have led to unaffordable housing for New Zealanders. Our programme of reform involves freeing up land for development and removing unnecessary planning barriers, improving infrastructure funding, and financing, and providing incentives for communities and councils to support growth.
- The first pillar of the Going for Housing Growth policy involves six changes to free up land for development:
  - The establishment of Housing Growth Targets for Tier 1 and 2 councils.
  - New rules requiring cities to be allowed to expand outwards at the urban fringe.
  - A strengthening of the intensification provisions in the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD).
  - New rules requiring councils to enable mixed-use developments in our cities.
  - The abolition of minimum floor area and balcony requirements.
  - New provisions making the medium density residential standards optional for councils.
  - We have made good progress on Pillar 1 which includes Housing Growth Targets for Tier 1 and 2 councils to "live-zone" 30-years of housing demand, making it easier for cities to expand, strengthening the intensification provisions in the NPS-UD, putting in new rules requiring councils to enable mixed-used development, and abolishing minimum floor areas and balcony requirements. Details about how Pillar 1 will be implemented will be announced in the coming months.

- The second and third pillars of the Plan will focus on:
  - Improving infrastructure funding and financing to support urban growth.
  - Providing incentives for global trade and investment to support growth.
- Additional details of Pillar 2 were announced at the end of February, and comprise five key changes to our funding settings:
  - Replacing Development Contributions with a Development Levy System.
  - Establishing regulatory oversight of Development Levies to ensure charges are fair and appropriate.
  - Increasing the flexibility of targeted rates.
  - Improving the Infrastructure Funding and Financing Act.
  - Broadening existing tools to support value capture.
- Essentially the Government is developing a flexible toolkit of mechanisms to ensure growth pays for growth. There is no funding and financing mechanism to suit all developments. But this flexible toolkit will help ensure a responsive supply of infrastructure.

### **Water infrastructure**

*There is a need for investment in water infrastructure, in particular storm and wastewater infrastructure, to unlock housing and commercial development, but many councils are struggling with the high costs of ageing water services and upgrades. What is this Government doing to support this critical large-scale investment?*

- This Government is taking action to support councils through our Local Water Done Well policy, which will empower councils to manage their water services by ensuring they can move water debt into new Council Controlled Organisations and increase borrowings against water revenue to 500 per cent.
- However, this Government is also focussed on introducing measures to ensure councils are getting back to basics and focussing on delivering core services and infrastructure, in line with ratepayers' expectations. This will include refocussing provisions of the Local Government Act to ensure councils are delivering the high-quality core services and infrastructure Kiwis expect, including potable water, stormwater, and wastewater infrastructure.

### **Cost escalation within large-scale infrastructure development**

*Potential infrastructure investors often express concern about cost escalations and the value of their investment in proposed infrastructure projects, and this can result in them looking to invest elsewhere rather than in the region. What is the Government doing to reduce cost escalations in the construction sector and encourage international investment?*

- Building costs have increased by around 41 per cent since 2019 and are consistently higher in New Zealand when compared to overseas jurisdictions such as Australia. High building costs have far-reaching economic and social consequences for New Zealanders, and the Government is focussed on reducing these costs.
- This Government knows that red tape is a contributor to cost increases. In response, this Government has committed to:

- Reforming the Resource Management Act 1991.
- Making changes to the Building Act 2004, so high quality building products that meet relevant overseas standards can be approved, lowering materials costs.
- Changing regulations under the Building Act 2004 to allow small changes to building plans without the need for a building consent amendment.
- For infrastructure projects receiving RIF funding, we will also be focused on ensuring projects have been appropriately scoped and costed to help minimise the risk of cost escalations.

## **Energy**

*What is the long-term plan for energy?*

- As you will know, energy is a focus area for the Government.
- A modern, affordable, and secure energy system is fundamental to building a stronger and more productive economy. New Zealanders and businesses depend on affordable and secure energy, and increasingly expect their energy to be renewable. New Zealand's energy system has served us very well to date and our long-term energy outlook is positive.
- However, the energy system is changing. Throughout the world economies are seeking to lower emissions and to shift to renewable energy. This process is also underway in New Zealand. Industry, transport, and other energy users are beginning to switch from fossil fuel-based energy to renewably generated electricity and are wanting access to alternative fuels such as hydrogen and bioenergy.

## **Cost of energy**

*The cost of energy is rising everywhere, affecting businesses and the cost-of-living for many households. What is this Government doing to help alleviate energy cost pressures?*

- I know some regional businesses are struggling with the cost of electricity, and the closure of these businesses has real consequences for regions and communities.
- The recently released Government Policy Statement on Electricity has made it clear this Government expects the Electricity Authority to drive a more competitive, fuel agnostic, electricity sector that works in the long-term interests of consumers and avoid excessive prices.
- The energy system is also changing. Throughout the world economies are seeking to lower emissions and to shift to renewable energy. This process is also underway in New Zealand. Industry, transport, and other energy users are beginning to switch from fossil fuel-based energy to renewably generated electricity and are wanting access to alternative fuels such as hydrogen and bioenergy.
- In August 2024, the Government announced it will progress a series of reforms as part of the 'Electrify NZ plan' to make it easier and cheaper to consent, build and maintain renewable electricity generation as well as electricity distribution and transmission. These changes included:
  - Establishing a one-stop-shop fast track approvals and permitting regime.
  - Amendments to the Resource Management Act 1991 to speed up resource consenting.

- Stronger national direction for renewable energy.
- A new regime for offshore wind.
- Updated regulatory settings for electricity networks and new connections.

## **Productivity**

*What are the roadblocks to regional productivity that the Government has identified and what are they putting in place to overcome them?*

- Modern and fit-for-purpose infrastructure is vital for the prosperity of New Zealanders. It helps businesses lift productivity and build resilience to shocks and stresses. However, public infrastructure investment, particularly in our regions, is not happening at the scale or pace needed to make a noticeable difference in our productivity and resilience.
- The RIF seeks to partner with councils and others on tangible, transformational infrastructure projects in the sectors regions identified as key for its future growth and development.
- I know there are other challenges across the regions impacting their ability to grow, like worker availability and education.
- The Government's Going For Growth plan sets out five pillars driving the push for economic growth: developing talent; competitive business settings; promoting global trade and investment; innovation, technology and science and infrastructure for growth.
- Through our Going For Growth plan, we can overcome roadblocks to productivity and growth, backed with investment from central government and other investors. We have already worked on the RMA Reform and Fast-track Approvals Act and established the RIF to help work towards these goals.

## **Education opportunities**



*How is the Government ensuring regions are not restricted from growth due to a lack of support from educational investment?*

- The Government has proposed changes to the Vocational Education and Training system to make it more responsive to regional needs and ensure local people have the right skills for the current and future job opportunities.
- Consultation closed on 12 September 2024. The Ministry of Education reviewed submissions provided and found further consultation was required on apprenticeships and traineeships. The second round of targeted consultation closed on 21 February 2025. The Ministry of Education will review and summarise the submissions and provide advice to the Minister for Tertiary Education and Minister of Finance regarding next steps.

## Annex Four: Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor, University of Canterbury

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1. On Friday, 4 April 2025, you will meet with Cheryl de la Rey, Vice-Chancellor, University of Canterbury (UC) and Adela Kardos, General Counsel and Registrar from 11.30am to 12.15pm, at the UC Main Campus, 20 Kirkwood Avenue, Upper Riccarton, Christchurch.
2. MP for Ilam Hamish Campbell will be attending the meeting with you.

	<p><b>Cheryl de la Rey, Vice-Chancellor</b></p> <p>Professor Cheryl de la Rey has held the role of Vice-Chancellor, UC since 2019.</p> <p>Cheryl's career encompasses leadership roles in tertiary education in South Africa, including Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Cape Town and Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria.</p> <p>Cheryl has a degree in psychology and PhD in social psychology. She has published and edited work on issues relating to intergroup relations with a specific focus on gender.</p>
	<p><b>Adela Kardos, General Counsel and Registrar</b></p> <p>Adela Kardos, General Counsel and Registrar – Pourouki serves as the University Council Secretary and is the chief legal advisor to the University, since 2020.</p> <p>Her portfolio covers Governance, Legal, Policy and Information Management. She also supports the operation of the Vice Chancellor's Office.</p> <p>Prior to this Adela had a career in both private legal practice and almost 10 years as an in-house lawyer in the public sector.</p>

3. This meeting is an opportunity to be briefed on the contribution UC is making to local communities, key challenges and opportunities anticipated in the future, and how UC can align its expertise and resources with your vision and priorities for the South Island by the Vice-Chancellor.
4. You will also be briefed about High Country Stations by Adela.

## Background on University of Canterbury

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5. The University of Canterbury or Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha, was founded in 1873 and is New Zealand's second oldest university. It has approximately 22,205 students, of which 1,549 are international students.
6. UC offers 120 qualifications in more than 150 subject areas. UC particularly excels in subjects such as Engineering (especially Civil and Structural), Geography, Linguistics, and various social sciences.

## Background on High Country Stations

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7. High Country Stations are vast, elevated pastoral lands, primarily in the South Island, characterised by tussock landscapes and are often used for farming sheep, cattle, deer or alpaca.
8. Many High Country Stations are owned by the Crown, and leased to runholders, while others are situated entirely on private land.
9. The High-Country stations (Elfin Bay, Greenstone and Routeburn) were bought on the open market by the Crown in the early 1990s at the request of Ngāi Tahu and placed in the Land Bank for use in a settlement. The land will be leased back in perpetuity to the Department of Conservation at a peppercorn rental for conservation purposes<sup>2</sup>.

### Challenges

10. Wilding pines are a major issue in Canterbury's High Country, threatening native ecosystems, reducing water availability, increasing fire risk, and taking over farmland. Originally planted for erosion control and timber, species like Douglas fir and contorta pine spread uncontrollably due to wind dispersal.
11. High country stations have faced stricter water regulations due to concerns over rising nitrate levels in drinking water. While the current limit is 11.3 mg/L NO<sub>3</sub>-N, some experts advocate lowering it due to potential health risks. Farmers in the High Country Stations are having to adopt sustainable practices to reduce nitrate runoff. Balancing agriculture and water safety remains a key issue for high country stations.
12. Another issue the High Country Stations face, is that the price of wool has significantly dropped from the peak of \$6.74 per kilo in 2016 to 4.77 per kilo in 2023<sup>3</sup>. Low wool prices mean shearing costs often exceed wool income, forcing some farmers into losses. Many are shifting to forestry or beef farming, reducing sheep numbers and altering land use. Overgrown land and pest issues are rising as grazing declines. While fine wool prices are stable, strong wool struggles, leaving high country farmers in financial hardship.

## Risks and mitigations

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13. No risks have been identified.

## Logistics

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14. You will be met on arrival by Privacy of natural persons to the Vice Chancellor, on arrival at the Maatariki Building in UC's main campus. She will accompany you to the Vice Chancellor's office.

Name	Position/Organisation	Contact
Cheryl de la Rey	Vice Chancellor, University of Canterbury	<span>Privacy of natural persons</span>

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<sup>2</sup> Sourced from [High Country Stations | Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu](#)

<sup>3</sup> Sourced from [Average export price for New Zealand wool - Figure.NZ](#)

## Annex Five: University of the Third Age Members Event

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1. On Friday, 4 April 2025, you will attend and speak at the University of the Third Age Christchurch (U3A Ōpāwaho) Members event, from 5.30pm to 6.30pm, at St Mark's Anglican Church, 101 Opawa Road, Opawa.
2. The format for the meeting is conference style. You will speak for approximately 10-15 minutes on your vision and priorities for the South Island portfolio, followed by questions from the attendees.

## Background



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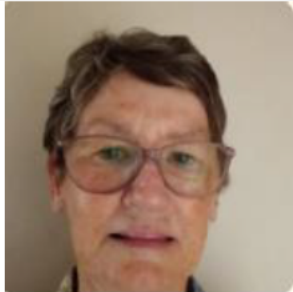

3. The University of the Third Age (U3A) was established in France in 1968. The organisation is a worldwide initiative aimed at encouraging and supporting individuals aged 55 years and older (including those who are semi-retired or retired), to remain mentally, socially, and physically active. U3A provide opportunities for lifelong learning, social interaction, and engagement in educational and creative activities. It organises a variety of activities, including talks, workshops, courses, outings, and social events.
4. U3A has established groups in countries including the United Kingdom, Ireland, The United States of America, and New Zealand.
5. The U3A Ōpāwaho branch was established in December 2024. Ōpāwaho is the Māori name for the Heathcote River, which flows though the Opawa area. The group holds monthly member events, inviting guest speakers to talk about a range of issues.

## About the audience

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6. Approximately 120-150 members from U3A Ōpāwaho, along with members from other branches U3A Pegasus and U3A Porthills, are expected to attend. Biographies of key committee members are below.

	<p><b>Yvonne Boulton, Chair, U3A</b></p> <p>Yvonne trained as a Registered Nurse at Dunedin Hospital and spent five years overseas living in England and South Africa, before returning to New Zealand in 1973.</p> <p>Her career spanned 53 years, 30 of which were working in healthcare for the elderly, focusing on education and rehabilitation. She was one of the founders of accreditation for healthcare services.</p> <p>Yvonne has been a member of U3A since 2019.</p>
	<p><b>Roger Chapman, Vice Chair, U3A</b></p> <p>Roger Worked as a Medical Laboratory Scientist in Pathology at Christchurch Hospital. He has worked in Australia and New Zealand in both the private and public sectors.</p> <p>In the mid 1990's he changed his focus to Information Technology in Pathology and for 15 years was IT Manager at Medlab South.</p>

	<p><b>Vivienne Allan, Communications and Event Organiser, U3A</b></p> <p>Vivienne was a former journalist. She moved to Christchurch with her husband and family in 1989, working for the Christchurch City Council until 1993 when she moved into the health sector.</p>
	<p><b>Bev Woods, Treasurer, U3A</b></p> <p>Bev spent the majority of her working life in business administration, predominately in accounting for a small business.</p>
	<p><b>Linda O'Reilly, Membership, U3A</b></p> <p>For most of Linda's working life she held various Executive Assistant roles.</p> <p>Linda also worked as a professional photographer and lived in England for 20 years.</p>

## Risks and mitigations

- No risks have been identified.

## Logistics

- You will be met on arrival at St Mark's Anglican Church by Vivienne Allan, Communications and Event Organiser, U3A Ōpāwaho.

Name	Position/Organisation	Contact
Vivienne Allan	Communications and Event Organiser, U3A Ōpāwaho	Privacy of natural persons

- The room will be set up conference style, with attendees seated facing the front of the room/lectern.
- Vivienne will introduce you and invite you up to the lectern to speak.
- Following your speech there will be questions from the attendees.

## Communications / Media

Media have not been invited to attend.

## Annex Six: Talking Points for University of the Third Age Members Event

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### INTRODUCTION

- I'm very proud to be the MP for Rangitata and the country's first Minister for the South Island.
- I am looking forward to working across central and local government and with regional stakeholders to ensure the huge potential of the South Island is realised.
- Today, I'll discuss how the recently introduced *Going For Growth* approach is a starting point for us. Through my role as Minister for the South Island, I want to make sure that the South Island economy gets its fair share of economic and job growth.
- Keeping the South Island economy moving and connecting the right people and resources together will help improve living standards and economic outcomes. We all know the potential of sectors in the South Island in contributing to this.
- I'd also like to discuss a bit more about my South Island portfolio and opportunities and challenges within Canterbury.
- There is a raft of untapped potential in our region and I'm looking forward to talking to you later on this morning about how we can work together to support this Government's goals.

### NATIONAL ACTIONS

#### Going For Growth

- I'd like to start by talking about the work this Government is doing to unlock New Zealand's potential and make our economy grow faster through our Going For Growth approach, which was released by the Minister for Economic Growth a few weeks back.
- Economic growth is key to raising living standards, creating higher-paying jobs and delivering the vital infrastructure and public services New Zealanders want and deserve.
- Low inflation, low interest rates and good fiscal management create the conditions for growth. Stability in these settings provides certainty for businesses and households, supporting their investment and long-term decision-making.
- With this in mind, Going For Growth sets out five pillars driving the push for economic growth.
- The first pillar is **developing talent**. New Zealand has a flexible labour market, high rates of employment, relatively open borders and, historically, a well-performing education system. But we do face significant challenges: school achievement and attendance are dropping in comparison with countries New Zealand competes with, and we face challenges in attracting, training and retaining talent.
- The Government wants to maximise the potential of New Zealand's most powerful asset – its people. This means raising the earnings potential of New Zealanders and their living

standards. It also means ensuring businesses can access the people needed to help them compete globally and grow.

- Our second pillar is **competitive business settings**. Well-designed regulatory settings provide a predictable environment that promotes competition and one where businesses are confident to employ more staff, invest, innovate and enter new markets. This drives growth that benefits all New Zealanders.
- New Zealand lags behind its international counterparts in its competition settings and these settings need updating. Our country also has inadequate competition in several key markets such as the banking, grocery and electricity sectors, impacting productivity and cost of living for all New Zealanders, including Cantabrians.
- The third pillar of Going For Growth is **promoting global trade and investment**. New Zealand's economy is export-oriented, with the food and fibre sectors and tourism significantly contributing to foreign currency earnings.
- The Government has a target to double the value of New Zealand's exports by 2034 and is committed to attracting greater high-quality investment to raise productivity and drive economic growth in New Zealand.
- It goes without saying Canterbury has a big role to play in driving New Zealand's export sectors. Canterbury has the country's largest agriculture sector, second largest tourism spend and one of only two long-haul international airports. I know growing tourism and agritech further are key opportunities for the region.
- Science and innovation systems are critical to boosting the number of knowledge-intensive, internationally connected firms, and that's why **innovation, technology and science** has been prioritised as our fourth pillar.
- Using new ideas, knowledge and technology to develop better ways of doing things helps the New Zealand economy grow. Having more businesses investing in technologies and innovation will create higher-paying jobs for New Zealanders and diversify the economy into new industries and markets.
- Canterbury makes a significant contribution to innovation, technology and science: manufacturing, including advanced manufacturing is one of the region's largest sectors and there is the opportunity to develop this further. The region has also played a key role in the spectacular development of the space and advanced aviation sector in the last ten years.
- The final pillar of our plan is **infrastructure for growth**.
- Well-planned infrastructure supports the efficient and sustainable movement of people, goods, and information, and facilitates trade and investment while also improving living standards.
- New Zealand's infrastructure deficit is limiting productivity and higher living standards. Addressing our infrastructure deficit could increase real GDP by as much as 0.8 per cent in the long term.
- Moving back to the South Island, we know work down here is key to achieving what the Government is targeting with *Going For Growth*. Tourism and primary industries are huge contributors to both Canterbury's economy and the national economy, and I'm keen to

work together with stakeholders to find out ways we can continue to grow these industries.

## **SOUTH ISLAND AND CANTERBURY**

### **Food and Fibre**

- In terms of what we want for the South Island, nothing is more important than the food and fibre sector. Food security is vital. It is vital in 2025. It is vital for the rest of the world. We all know its contribution to the economy down here – agriculture alone makes up nearly 8 per cent of the South Island's GDP and this number has only grown over the years.
- The food and fibre sector is also a key contributor to the Government's goal of doubling the value of exports within 10 years.
- Canterbury will be a key contributor to this plan – we know the importance of dairy and meat product exports for the regional economy.
- To help unlock this, we need to do more to support our agricultural sector in terms of supporting water storage. I'm talking about rules to make sure that irrigation and water storage become a permanent activity and that farmers don't need to jump through hoops and red tape to get access to sustainable levels of water so that they can grow the food and fibre that we need.

### **Tourism**

- Tourism is a key contributor to the national economy, being our second largest exporter behind dairy. And in Canterbury, tourism is a key driver of our economy, alongside agriculture, and manufacturing.
- The South Island accounts for 40 per cent of New Zealand's international tourism spend, 31 percent of the domestic tourism spend, and 43 per cent of the guest nights in the country are spent in the South Island.
- We need to work together to ensure that we maximise the tourism experience and spend in the South Island and in key areas of Canterbury that are seeing growing tourism levels, such as Mackenzie, Kaikōura and Hurunui.
- However, we must be strategic in how we plan for increasing tourism – we must do this in a way which meets the infrastructure needs and concerns, using things like the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy, using things like the general taxation pot and the funding that the Government provides.

### **Local Government/City and Regional Deals**

- This Government knows the future challenges facing local government relating to funding and financing. City and Regional Deals are one way we are looking to help local government and drive the Government's growth agenda.
- City and Regional Deals will be based on a 30-year vision with a ten-year strategic plan for a region to deliver shared objectives and outcomes between local and central governments.

- City and Regional Deals will be a vehicle for greater regional collaboration and coordination, improved certainty in local government decision-making, funding, and financing, promoting innovative and collaborative ways of working between central and local government, and ensuring resilient cities and regions.
- City and Regional Deals will seek to promote economic growth and productivity, delivering connected and resilient infrastructure, and improving the supply of affordable, quality housing.
- While Canterbury have not submitted a proposal for this round of consideration, I know the councils are working together on a future proposal and I look forward to hearing about what your region is planning and finding ways to work together with you to action these plans.

## Energy

- There are several South Island regions that are more exposed to energy affordability, security and resilience risks than other parts of New Zealand. This is exacerbated by natural hazard risks which threatens regional energy security and resilience.
- Energy security will be critical for Canterbury to address the challenges ahead, including water, food production and climate change. Energy has been identified as an opportunity in the Mayoral Forum's *Plan for Canterbury* – this will support the Canterbury region to foster partnerships to investigate barriers and harness opportunities to improve the region's energy security.
- Canterbury's high-country lakes provide water storage capacity that can enable more regional production. I know Environment Canterbury is looking to ways to harness hydropower options and improve Canterbury's contribution to New Zealand's security of electricity supply.

## Transport

- The South Island transport network is vast and includes around 5,000 kilometres of state highways and over 35,000km of local roads as well as over 1,500km of rail lines (consisting of two main lines, two secondary lines and several branch lines).
- Canterbury has by far the largest road network of any region in New Zealand, and maintaining this network is important to both connecting industry to ports and for wider road user safety.
- Canterbury's current transport network is made up of a number of nationally and regionally significant transport routes connecting people and communities in the region to the north, south and west.
- Network resilience is also a concern for Canterbury, with a range of natural hazard risks including river flooding, surface flooding, and coastal inundation.
- Communities, businesses, and the export economy rely heavily on a strong and robust transport network. This is critical for people to connect, move in and around the region, as well as for moving goods and produce to domestic and international markets.

### **Linking back to Going For Growth**

- For each of these sectors, I've talked a bit about how the Government is already taking action to support the *Going For Growth* approach.
- We know that Canterbury and the wider South Island can play a huge role in growing the economy and creating more job opportunities, especially with regards to our food and fibre export targets and growing our tourism industries.
- But we need to do more work, and we need to do it collaboratively – I am keen to work across multiple portfolios to understand more about the challenges and opportunities facing our region and the wider South Island.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

- Having spoken a bit about my South Island portfolio and what actions this Government is taking to grow our economy, I'm keen to hear from you during the discussions we'll have later this evening.
- I am particularly interested in learning more about your broader priorities and aspirations for Canterbury, and the potential role you see in working collaboratively with Government to achieve these.