



Venture Timaru

DISTRICT - ECONOMIC & TOURISM AGENCY

Dear <<First Name>>

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Its been tough – but brighter times ahead

As we were recently reported on saying in the Timaru Herald, the past 12–18 months have been among the toughest in recent memory for many South Canterbury businesses. A slowing national economy, rising costs, and winter trading conditions have combined to put real pressure on local industry and small business alike.

Despite these challenges, there are good reasons to be optimistic. We are now heading into a traditionally busy processing season, with strong prospects for meat and dairy supported by improved international prices. Our district's strength lies in its diverse economy, and this breadth gives us resilience.

It's also encouraging to see a few local projects moving forward — the redevelopment of the Theatre Royal and the Aorangi Stadium upgrades are now underway, alongside some new facilities and premises being constructed or renovated in Washdyke e.g. the Farmers Mill expansion. These are visible signs of momentum and confidence returning to right across the district - with some exciting things bubbling away in Temuka and Geraldine also.

Looking ahead, we firmly believe the worst is behind us. We have a lot going for us — a collaborative industry environment, an enterprising workforce, central location, well serviced and an unbeatable lifestyle and so much more. We just need to ensure we continue to focus on enhancing capability, access and resilience to key economic enablers such as:

- core infrastructure networks (transport, power, digital & water)
- human capital and workforce (skills & training, labour availability, and health & wellbeing)
- business and investment environment (regulatory settings, access to capital and cost competitive land availability)

There is clear interaction between these enablers – e.g. infrastructure + skilled workforce + responsive regulation = investor and business confidence.

Venture Timaru continues to advocate strongly for a collective and purposeful move to an amplified “can do” approach across all we do in the District. Now more than ever is the time for us all, from business to investors to regulators and developers, to “swing the innovative and progressive dial” and ask ourselves: **“Is this good for our District?”** and if the answer is yes, then work together on **“How do we make it happen?”**.

Yes this is a version of Peter Blake's question to his staff during an America's Cup campaign being “Will it make my boat go faster?”, but on reflection what's the alternative? Let's be bold, proactive, and encourage and back those that want to make a change.

With this collective focus, we can only then best position ourselves to make this great district of ours even better.



South Canterbury businesses come together for Aerospace Strategy

We recently hosted an aerospace workshop at Fraser Park, bringing together local businesses to explore how our region can play a significant role, contributing to the Waitaha Canterbury Aerospace Strategy. Facilitated by Emma Renowden - Aerospace Cluster lead from ChristchurchNZ, the session was a chance to introduce the newly launched strategy to South Canterbury stakeholders and begin conversations on the opportunities ahead.

This isn't new territory for us, as our region has already been a part of some exciting aerospace projects, including [Project Loon with Google X \(high-altitude balloon internet\)](#), [Wisk autonomous electric aircraft testing](#), Dawn aerospace testing at Glentanner Station and Boeing beyond-visual-line-of-sight testing.

During the workshop, we highlighted some of South Canterbury's strengths and assets that show our potential in this sector, from our aerospace-friendly conditions – clear weather, low air traffic and large areas of relatively uncontrolled airspace - to the infrastructure we already have in place, including our port and airports, adjacent developable land, strong data/GPS speeds and good road access.

"This unique combination means South Canterbury is already a proven testbed for autonomous and sustainable aerospace technologies, with major potential to play a complementary role alongside Christchurch and all of Canterbury in delivering the regional strategy," said Emma Renowden.

Building on the workshop, the group agreed to finalise a regional stocktake and build a database of business capability across South Canterbury.

The next steps will then focus on developing a marketing plan that showcases our infrastructure, businesses and talent, as well as storytelling around the history of aerospace innovation in the region.

Alongside this, we will continue raising awareness and upskilling key stakeholders, and establish a regional working group to maintain the momentum and alignment with the Canterbury Aerospace Leadership Group.

Looking ahead, we're excited to keep sharing South Canterbury's aerospace story, highlighting our strengths and building interest in this evolving sector.

Tourism spending shows international boost off back of campaigns

Latest figures for tourism spending show the Timaru District has recorded an 18% jump in international spending in June, on the back of involvement in two campaigns targeting international visitors.

Through the Regional Tourism Boost Fund (RTBF) campaigns – Venture Timaru Tourism has been part of two campaigns, one targeting the North American market, and the second focusing on East Coast Australia. Both have been in market for the last 2-3 months. The aim of both campaigns has been to increase visitation in shoulder and winter periods, through to end of September. Currently, figures for June now show a pleasing surge in international spending for Timaru District. However it is noted that these appear to be day visitors, not staying overnight.

US spenders accounted for 29% of the spending, and Australians were 22%. The international spending also offsets a small 2% drop in the domestic spending for the period.

Christchurch Airport arrivals surge

Meanwhile, Christchurch Airport has recorded its strongest winter in years, with international arrivals from Australia increasing 36% year on year (YOY). Airport officials attributed the surge to strong demand and targeted marketing by the Central South Island collective campaign. The \$600,000 "Winter Different" campaign targeted the Australian eastern seaboard and included a range of digital and outdoor media, and Webjet as a conversion partner.

[See the tourism data](#)



One more week to SCOFF!

SCOFF is into its final week, and you have until Sunday, 21 September to get out and SCOFF.

This is the sixth year of SCOFF (South Canterbury Outstanding Food Festival) which has evolved into one of the South Island's premium food festivals, encompassing the Timaru, Waimate and Mackenzie districts.

This year there are 45 fabulous eateries involved and 20+ producers and manufacturers. Plus there is the chance to win fabulous prizes - it's simple! All you need to do is go to a participating eatery, order their SCOFF special and either tag SCOFF on socials or fill out an entry form. Details of the prizes are [here](#) - including \$1000 worth of Air New Zealand vouchers.

A great gauge of the impact of SCOFF, is that our website analytics shows over the past 30 days there have been 55,000 page views, and those visiting the site looked at 6.4 pages each, which clearly shows they are browsing the specials.

SCOFF is an initiative of Venture Timaru, supported by Mackenzie District Council, Waimate District Council, Hospitality NZ, 100% Pure NZ Honey and Air New Zealand.

Find out where to SCOFF



Timaru's CBD has a fresh new identity, 'The Exchange'

This new identity is part of a bigger effort to bring new life to Timaru's CBD.

In 2023, a Business Improvement District (BID) was officially formed to bring together building and business owners with a shared goal to take a proactive, collaborative approach to rejuvenating our CBD and improving economic outcomes for the area.

The BID was approved by CBD building owners and formally adopted by the Timaru District Council as part of the 2024 Annual Plan. The Council began collecting BID levies through its rates system, officially establishing the BID as an operating entity. Members contribute through an annual levy, which funds key

priorities outlined in the BID's strategic plan - from branding and marketing to events and enhancing the overall CBD experience.

The Timaru CBD Group acts as the facilitator of the BID, and since its formation, great progress has already been made. Now entering its second year, the BID has successfully launched The Exchange.

A key part of this new direction is the website: www.theexchangetimaru.co.nz. It's a comprehensive guide to shopping, dining and exploring Central Timaru, featuring a full catalogue of local businesses, current promotions, and the popular Meet the Locals section – which shines a spotlight on the people behind the shopfronts. These are the passionate business owners and operators who help make Timaru's CBD a vibrant and welcoming place.

The Exchange is all about celebrating our local identity, building confidence in the CBD, and encouraging the community to keep supporting local. It's also a signal to visitors, investors, and new businesses that Timaru is open for business – and proud of what it has to offer.

The name The Exchange draws from Timaru's strong trading history, but it also represents what's happening here today – an ongoing exchange of ideas, business, relationships, connection, and culture.

At the centre of the brand is a bold, interwoven "X" – a simple, bold logo that symbolises unity, movement, and the way we're all connected. It's about working together, looking forward, and building a strong future for our CBD.

Let's back local,

Please check out the website to rediscover local shopping and what's happening at The Exchange – right here in the heart of Timaru.

Visit the Website

Ngā mihi nui

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