

Canterbury Mayoral Forum achievements 2022-25

This report provides a summary of progress and the overarching achievements of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum at the end of the 2022-25 local government term.

Regional forums

The Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement 2022-25 mandates the work of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum, Chief Executives Forum, and other regional and sub-regional forums and working groups. The regional forums generally meet quarterly.

As agreed in the Triennial Agreement, Environment Canterbury hosts a permanent regional forums secretariat to support the work of the Mayoral Forum, resourced from the regional general rate.

Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025

In April 2023, the Mayoral Forum launched its [2023-25 Plan for Canterbury](#). The 2023-25 Plan is a revised and updated version of the plan for the previous triennium. Members agreed that the vision and values of the earlier Plan were still relevant; however, the key priority areas and actions required refreshing to account for changes in the economy, government policy, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Plan for Canterbury sets out the Forum's priorities for the triennium. It summarises the interests and priorities of local government leaders for Canterbury and provides a basis for conversation and partnership with Ngāi Tahu, Central Government, the business and community sectors.

The Plan sets out the Mayoral Forum's vision for Canterbury; sustainable development with shared prosperity, resilient communities and a proud identity. To expand on this, our vision is that in Canterbury, all of us together:

- care for our natural resources to secure both present and future opportunities
- create shared economic prosperity so no one is left behind
- nurture caring, hope and kindness, standing strong together to withstand and adapt to challenges and change
- celebrate our diverse identities – and take pride in our common identity as Cantabrians.

Mayors standing together for Canterbury.

Secretariat, E: secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz W: www.canterburymayors.org.nz
C/- Environment Canterbury, PO Box 345, Christchurch 8140 T: 03 345 9323

There are three key priority areas on which the Forum's work was based this term. These are:

- **sustainable environmental management of our habitats** (land, air, water and ecosystems), focusing on land use and freshwater management
- **shared prosperity for all our communities** – focusing on building on our economic strengths and developing emerging sectors, growing, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, improving the transport network and coordinating strategies for housing our communities
- **climate change mitigation and adaptation** – reducing our carbon footprint, working together on climate action planning, building community resilience and making our infrastructure as strong as it can be.

The Forum has developed an action plan to address these priority areas, where nine key actions have been identified and make up the work programme for the triennium. Delivery of this work programme is overseen by the Chief Executives Forum, which reports quarterly to the Mayoral Forum.

The Forum completed a review of the Plan for Canterbury in early 2024 to ensure it reflected the approach required to engage with the new Government and enabled the Forum to be well-prepared for discussions on regional/city deals. As a result of the review, the Plan was refreshed in a number of areas. This included minor changes to the wording of some of the actions, a new action on energy under the shared prosperity priority area, updates to reflect current government policies (where these had changed from the previous Government) and opportunities for the Mayoral Forum to lead discussions on the drivers for change in Canterbury.

Sustainable environmental management of our habitats

The Mayoral Forum will continue oversight of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy, taking into consideration the changing national and regional policies, along with the relationship between water, food production and energy security.

The Mayoral Forum has maintained active oversight of the implementation of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS), receiving regular and comprehensive reporting on progress.

In August 2023, the Forum launched a review into the CWMS, and particularly zone committees. In May 2025, the Forum endorsed a shift to a new model, bringing together leaders from territorial authorities, rūnanga and Canterbury Regional Council to strike a balance between regional consistency and local flexibility, with each group deciding how best to engage with their communities and stakeholders.

The review also led to a change to the geographic boundaries of zone committees to better reflect key waterway catchments, resulting in eight rather than 10 areas. The new groups are expected planned to be up and running in 2026.

The Mayoral Forum continues to support the Te Uru Kahika – Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa business case for permanent co-investment from the Government in river management for flood protection, with an updated version presented to the Government in 2022.

The Forum advocated for the business case at meetings with a range of Ministers in May 2023, and in briefings to the new Government following the 2023 General Election.

Some funding to assist with flood resilience work was received by Canterbury Regional Council as part of Budget 2024. This funding supports upgrades to critical and aged flood management infrastructure across the region to make it more resilient to the changing climate, as well as further work on the Rangitata flood resilient programme and projects in South Canterbury.

The Forum met with the Minister of Climate Change in June 2024 and reiterated the importance of co-investment support for the full range of projects in the business case.

The Mayoral Forum will continue to support the Biodiversity Champions as the key conduit for a shared regional approach to biodiversity, facilitating work across the region on the revitalisation of the Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy and the development of a regional biodiversity monitoring framework.

The Mayoral Forum supported the continuation of a working group of Canterbury councillors to increase governance-level engagement on biodiversity issues and opportunities across all Canterbury councils this term. This group, the Biodiversity Champions Reference Group, responds to a need for local government to work closely together to implement new national direction for biodiversity and support the revitalisation of the Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy. The Biodiversity Champions continue to provide updates to the Forum on its work as required.

Shared prosperity for all our communities

The Mayoral Forum will continue to advocate with the Government for immigration and skills policies that work for Canterbury

The Mayoral Forum advocated for skills and immigration policies that work for Canterbury when it travelled to Wellington in May 2023 to meet with a range of ministers. This message was reinforced in briefings to new Government ministers following the 2023 General Election.

The Economic Development Forum initiated work to bring together a labour market insight into the skill needs of Canterbury businesses. The Forum is also working together to identify a set of regional economic development priorities. Both pieces of work will inform some key actions on economic development for the region, and allow the Canterbury Mayoral Forum to better target its advocacy on skills and immigration with the Government.

The Mayoral Forum will continue to encourage, support and advocate for research and investment in diversifying and adding value to our agricultural production

The Mayoral Forum advocated for investment to add value to our agricultural production when it travelled to Wellington in May 2023 to meet with a range of ministers. This was reiterated in briefings to new Government ministers following the 2023 General Election.

The Forum also advocated for investment in new agricultural technologies as part of its submission on the Government's second emissions reduction plan in August 2024.

The Mayoral Forum will support the region to foster partnerships, investigate barriers and harness opportunities to improve our energy security and systems in ways that maximise benefits for our community, economy and environment

To ensure our region is prepared to take opportunities on energy, the Forum has completed the [Canterbury Energy Inventory \(8mb PDF\)](#) and [summary document \(443kb PDF\)](#). The inventory:



- provides a shared picture of Canterbury's energy futures to inform more consistent strategic planning, investment, and partnerships across industry, councils, central government, the Mayoral Forum and Greater Christchurch Partnership
- provides an evidence base to inform regional, sub-regional and local governments energy processes
- help to identify regional priorities to support discussions about regional or city deals
- support regional input into central government energy work programmes.

The next steps, currently underway, will focus on developing a clear, coordinated regional energy strategy to support industry, drive decarbonisation, enhance energy resilience, and unlock new growth opportunities.

The Mayoral Forum will advocate with government to review transport funding legislation to better empower local authorities to develop local funding solutions

The Mayoral Forum advocated for a refreshed approach to transport funding when it travelled to Wellington in May 2023 to meet with a range of ministers. This was reiterated in briefings to ministers following the 2023 General Election, and again at a meeting with the Minister of Transport in July 2024.

The Forum supported a project being undertaken by the Canterbury Regional Transport Committee to improve the transport planning and funding system for Canterbury, and the institutions and mechanisms that support the investments in the Regional Land Transport Plan (local roads, public transport, state highways, and transport planning activities).

The main outcome sought from the project is to improve the certainty of funding for proposed activities to enable longer term, more strategic transport planning in Canterbury. While the project does not aim to increase total funding or seek funding for specific activities, this may be a secondary outcome. Project recommendations have been incorporated into business as usual.

The Mayoral Forum will develop a regional housing strategy that will identify the range of housing issues affecting communities across the region and a pathway forward to improve them

The Mayoral Forum began work to develop a housing strategy in 2023. An officer-level steering group was set up to lead the work, with support from housing and urban development experts The Urban Advisory.

The [Waitaha Canterbury Regional Housing Strategic Plan \(2.9mb PDF\)](#) (the Plan) outlines the current state of housing in Canterbury and provides a summary of the drivers and core housing issues across the region. The Plan identifies three key housing priorities and the Mayoral Forum's

commitment to address these. The Plan includes ways in which central government can support the actions taken in Canterbury,

The final Waitaha Canterbury Regional Housing Strategic Plan will be presented to the August 2025 Mayoral Forum meeting for approval. Actions and next steps from the Plan will be incorporated into the work currently being undertaken in preparation for a future Canterbury Regional Deal.

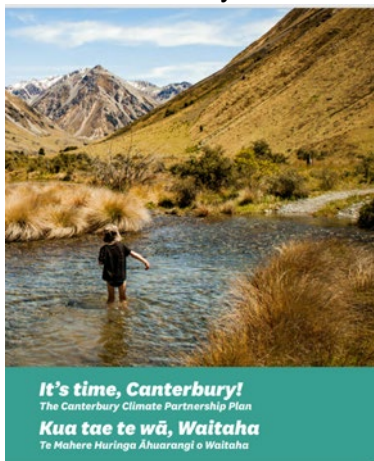
Climate change mitigation and adaptation

The Mayoral Forum will oversee the completion of the Canterbury-wide Climate Change Partnership Plan, which will confirm a collaborative vision for regional adaptation planning, and 'urgency assessment' to support prioritising climate actions, and a funding plan laying out a regional/aligned approach for accessing finance for climate actions in Canterbury

The regional Climate Change Working Group established by the Chief Executives Forum in 2017 continues to address climate change adaptation for Canterbury. This local government term, the focus has been to develop the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (CCPP).

To provide governance support for the development of the CCPP, the Mayoral Forum established a cross-regional group of councillors, the Canterbury Climate Action Planning Reference Group. This group provided governance advice, input and feedback on the CCPP as it developed.

The [Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan \(4.4mb PDF\)](#) is now complete, and is now being delivered. The CCPP sets out a vision for a thriving, climate resilient, low-emissions Canterbury. There are six key outcomes and objectives sought through delivery of ten primary actions and



supporting sub-actions. Eight principles have been developed which underpin its implementation. These are the values by which we will approach collective climate action in Canterbury. The actions in the Plan are fully funded through councils' Long-Term Plans.

Launch of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum launched the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan in December 2024 with an event at the Christchurch Town Hall.

The Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan is a comprehensive strategy developed by all 11 councils in Canterbury to address climate change and builds a sustainable, resilient, and low-emissions future. Guest speaker Dr Rodd Carr, former chair of the Climate Change Commission noted that the plan shows the contribution local leaders can make by working with communities to achieve an inclusive and affordable transition. Climate Change Minister, Hon Simon Watts, said councils have a deep understanding of their communities making them an essential player in





Pictured at the launch, from left, Mayor Marie Black, Dr Rod Carr, Mayor Nigel Bowen, Mayor Neil Brown, Minister Simon Watts, Mayor Anne Munro, Mayor Phil Mauger, Chair Craig Pauling and Mayor Dan Gordon

efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change, and it is welcoming to see Canterbury councils leading the way with a united, coherent, and enduring approach driving regional action to tackle the challenges of climate change.

Implementation for year 2 of the CCPP is now underway.

Other initiatives

The regional forums undertake a range of “business as usual” initiatives as well as supporting the Plan for Canterbury. These initiatives include:

- health and safety collaboration
- collaboration on stormwater, wastewater and drinking water
- co-ordination of natural hazard risk management
- continuing to build on the Canterbury Maps shared service
- collaboration in procurement, contract management and other corporate services
- collaboration and sharing information on communications and engagement best practice
- regional leadership and support for strategic information and records management
- regional economic development
- collaborating on regional submissions
- collaborative resource management planning and decision-making.

Waitaha Canterbury – World-stage ready

Key pillars for Waitaha Canterbury’s Regional Deal proposal

In response to central government’s regional deal initiative the Canterbury Mayoral Forum has initiated work to set the foundations for a future Canterbury Regional Deal proposal. The Forum has been working with Business Canterbury, and the private sector to come together to form a shared ambition for the region.

The [Waitaha Canterbury World-stage ready document \(3mb PDF\)](#) the foundations to move towards a long-term regional deal proposition for Canterbury, and sits with and alongside Business Canterbury’s work on the Canterbury Ambition.

The priorities covered in the *World-stage ready* document focus on transport, housing, energy, infrastructure, and innovation – all critical pillars needed to underpin and unlock Canterbury’s future. The document also highlights important areas and sectors that are critical to the future of the region and will likely form workstreams for the incoming Mayoral Forum.

Engaging with Central Government

Visit to the Beehive March 2023

Early in the triennium the Canterbury Mayoral Forum travelled to Wellington and met with nine Government Ministers, and their staff. Key areas of advocacy included seeking permanent co-investment in flood protection schemes for the region, immigration and skills policies that work for Canterbury, greater collaboration on an integrated approach to transport funding and supporting Canterbury's continued economic development and emergency management.



CMF members with Hon Megan Woods at the Beehive

A number of Ministers noted that Canterbury is well placed to lead the way on many of the challenging issues facing our communities, largely because of the influence of the Forum's one strong voice for Canterbury and how well the councils work together for the good of the region.

Minister Megan Woods says Canterbury is a thriving region. "It is always valuable to get decision makers from Local and Central Government in the same room to talk about issues effecting local communities and come up with practical solutions together."

Central Government election 2023

Leading into the 2023 General Election, Forum members met with representatives from the National, Labour, Greens and ACT parties putting forward to all of them the value of Canterbury to the national economy and the willingness of the Forum to work with Central Government to achieve our priorities for the region.

Canterbury Regional Growth Summit

In March 2025 the Canterbury Mayoral Forum hosted Ministers Shane Jones, Casey Costello and Mark Patterson, along with Canterbury businesses and the tertiary sector at the Canterbury Regional Growth Summit.



MCed by Mayor Nigel Bowen, Chair Canterbury Mayoral Forum, guests heard from Minister Jones Leeann Watson from Business Canterbury introduced the joint work with the CMF on a joint vision for growth for the region and other presentations covered aerospace, transport, food security/agriculture; tourism, river resilience and energy and included speakers from Tāwhaki and Fabrum, along with Mayors Dan Gordon, Neil Brown, Karen Morgan, Craig Mackle, Sam Broughton, and ECan Deputy Chair Deon Swiggs.

CMF members with Minister Mark Patterson, Minister Shane Jones, Minister Casey Costello

Other Ministerial meetings

In June and July 2024 the Mayoral Forum met with Ministers Simon Watts, Mark Mitchell, Chris Bishop and Simeon Brown. These meeting discussions covered climate change, emergency management, housing, infrastructure funding, resource management reform, city and regional deal opportunities, funding and financing of local government, and transport. These conversations continued with Ministers on a number of opportunities throughout the triennium.



CMF members with Minister Mark Patterson



CMF Members with Minister Simon Watts



CMF members with Minister Simeon Brown, Hamish Campbell (MP Ilam), and Vanessa Weenink (MP, Banks Peninsula)

In February 2025, Hon James Meager, Minister for the South Island attended the Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting. Discussions were wide ranging, covering regional deals, local water done well, value of the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, transport funding, water storage, tourism growth and some of the challenges for high tourist spots with low rating bases, local government funding constraints and river protection work.



Pictured, from left: Karen Morgan (Mackenzie District), Gary Kircher (Waitaki District), Craig Rowley (Waimate District), Neil Brown (Ashburton District), Nigel Bowen (Chair CMF, Timaru District), Dan Gordon (Waimakariri District), Minister James Meager, Sam Broughton (Selwyn District), Marie Black (Deputy Chair CMF, Hurunui District), Craig Pauling (Environment Canterbury), Craig Mackle (Kaikōura District), Phil Mauger (Christchurch City).

In July 2025 Forum members met with Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality.

Standing together for Canterbury

Joint advocacy ('one strong voice for Canterbury') has been a strength of the Mayoral Forum. Appendix 1 summarises Mayoral Forum engagement and advocacy since local body elections in October 2022.

The Mayoral Forum made a large number of submissions on a wide range of topics this term. Where possible, the Mayoral Forum took the opportunity to speak in support of the submission.

In addition to formal submissions, the Mayoral Forum corresponded with and met with a significant number of central government Ministers and officials, and key stakeholders

Appendix 1

Submissions

Date	Audience	Subject
2 Dec 2022	Ministry for Primary Industries	Submission on National direction for plantation and exotic carbon afforestation
17 Feb 2023	Environment Committee (Parliament)	Submissions on the Natural and Built Environment and Spatial Planning Bills
28 Feb 2023	Future for Local Government Review Panel	Submission to the Review into the Future for Local Government
10 Mar 2023	Environment Committee (Parliament)	Hearing to present Mayoral Forum submissions on Natural and Built Environment and Spatial Planning bills
20 Jun 2023	Climate Change Commission	Submission on draft advice to inform the strategic direction of the second emissions reduction plan
14 Sept 2023	Ministry of Transport	Joint submission with the RTC on the draft 2024 Government Policy Statement on Land Transport
1 Nov 2023	Environment Committee (Parliament)	Submission on the Inquiry into Climate Adaptation
3 Nov 2023	Governance and Administration Committee (Parliament)	Joint submission with the CDEM joint committee on the Emergency Management Bill
2 Apr 2024	Ministry of Transport	Joint submission with the RTC on the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024
19 Apr 2024	Environment Committee (Parliament)	Submission on the Fast-Track Approvals Bill
31 May 2024	Climate Change Commission	Submission on Aotearoa New Zealand's 2050 emissions reduction target and the fourth emissions budget (2036– 2040)
18 Jun 2024	Waka Kotahi NZTA	Joint submission with the RTC on proposed changes to emergency works investment policies
16 Jul 2024	Finance and Expenditure Committee (Parliament)	Hearing to present Mayoral Forum submission on climate adaptation inquiry with committee members
22 Aug 2024	Ministry for the Environment	Submission on second emissions reduction plan discussion document
25 Oct 2024	Department of Internal Affairs	Submission on Local Government (Natural Hazard Information in Land Information Memoranda) Regulations [2025]
6 Dec 2024	Ministry for the Environment	Submission on shaping Aotearoa New Zealand's 2035 international climate change target
20 May 2025	National Emergency Management Agency	Joint submission with CDEM on strengthening New Zealand's emergency management legislation
5 August 2025	New Zealand Infrastructure Commission	Submission on Draft National Infrastructure Plan
15 Aug 2025	Ministry for the Environment	Submission on Going for Housing Growth: providing for urban development in the new resource management system discussion document
27 Aug 2025	Governance and Administration Committee	Submission on Local Government (Systems Improvements) Amendment Bill

Meetings

Date	Audience	Subject
11 May 2023	Ministers of the Crown	Meetings with nine Government ministers on the Plan for Canterbury and issues of mutual interest
1 Jun 2023	National Party Canterbury-based MPs	Working dinner between Mayoral Forum and National Party Canterbury-based MPs
2 Jun 2023	Government Canterbury-based MPs	Working lunch between Mayoral Forum and Government Canterbury-based MPs
24 Aug 2023	MP Simon Court, ACT	Mayoral Forum working dinner with MP Simon Court, ACT
25 Aug 2023	Green Party Canterbury-based MPs	Working lunch between Mayoral Forum and Green Party Christchurch-based MPs
11 Jun 2024	Minister Simon Watts	Meeting to discuss climate change matters
13 Jun 2024	Minister Mark Mitchell	Meeting to discuss emergency management matters
2 Jul 2024	Minister Chris Bishop	Meeting to discuss infrastructure, housing, and resource management reform
12 Jul 2024	Minister Simeon Brown	Meeting to discuss local government and transport matters, including regional/city deals
30 Aug 2024	Canterbury-based Coalition MPs	Working lunch with Government Coalition MPs to discuss issues of mutual interest for Canterbury
4 Oct 2024	Hon Simon Bridges	Meeting with Simon Bridges in his capacity as Chair New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi to discuss transport funding
14 Feb 2025	Minister Meager	Meeting with Minister to discuss priorities for the South Island
27 Feb 2025	Minister Bishop	Meeting to discuss housing, infrastructure, RMA reform and transport
10 Mar 2025	Martin Keogh, Regional Deputy Chief Executive HealthNZ	Meeting to discuss health matters in the Canterbury region
20 Mar 2025	Minister Simon Watts	Meeting to discuss climate change, energy, and local government matters
28 Mar 2025	Ministers Shane Jones, Mark Patterson and Casey Costello	Canterbury Regional Growth Summit
17 Jul 2025	Minister Upston	Meeting to discuss tourism funding, policy levers, infrastructure and social license
15 Sept 2025	Commissioner of Police Richard Chambers, Deputy Commissioner Mike Pannett, Superintendent Tony Hill	Meeting to discuss the changes proposed to Canterbury policing

Letters

Date	Audience	Subject
30 Nov 2022	Environment Committee (Parliament)	Advocacy letter to request longer submission period for local government to consider the Natural and Built Environment and Spatial Planning bills
27 Feb 2023	Minister of Local Government	Letter to advocate for pause in three waters reform until Review into the Future for Local Government is completed

Date	Audience	Subject
16 Mar 2023	Minister for the Environment	Letter to advocate for exemptions for councils from paying levies on relocating waste from closed landfills
1 Jun 2023	National Party Canterbury-based MPs	Working dinner between Mayoral Forum and National Party Canterbury-based MPs
2 Jun 2023	Government Canterbury-based MPs	Working lunch between Mayoral Forum and Government Canterbury-based MPs
7 Jul 2023	Minister of Transport	Joint letter with Regional Transport Committee advocating for release of GPS Land Transport as soon as possible
19 Oct 2023	Prime Minister	Letter of congratulations and invitation to the Prime Minister to meet with the Mayoral Forum in November 2023
9 Nov 2023	Canterbury-based MPs	Letters of congratulation to 18 Canterbury-based MPs following the General Election
1 Dec 2023	Kaiwhakahaere o Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu	Letter congratulating Justin Tipa on becoming Kaiwhakahaere and inviting him to attend Mayoral Forum meetings
6 Dec 2023	Minister Simeon Brown	Invitation to meet to discuss Regional/City Deals for the Canterbury region
8 Mar 2023	Papatipu Rūnanga chairs	Letter providing update on development of Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan
5 Sep 2024	Minister Reti	Invitation to meet to discuss health matters in the Canterbury region
27 Sep 2024	Papatipu Rūnanga chairs	Advising finalisation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan and an invitation to the launch of the document
21 Nov 2024	China Southern Airlines	Letter supporting the airline recommencement of flights to and from Christchurch airport
18 Dec 2024	Minister Watts	Letter submitting the Canterbury Mayoral Forum Expression of Interest in a Regional Deal
6 Jan 2025	Papatipu Rūnanga chairs	Update on development of a Regional Energy Inventory for Waitaha Canterbury and a Waitaha Canterbury Regional Housing Strategic Plan, and inviting input
20 Jan 2025	Minster Meager	Invitation to meet with Canterbury Mayoral Forum in his capacity as Minister for the South Island
27 Jan 2025	Minister Bishop	Invitation to meet with Canterbury Mayoral Forum in his capacity as Minister of Transport
28 Jan 2025	Minister Upston	Invitation to meet with Canterbury Mayoral Forum in her capacity as Minister of Tourism and Hospitality
28 Jan 2025	Minister Watts	Invitation to meet with Canterbury Mayoral Forum in his capacity as Minister of Energy and Minister of Local Government
18 Feb 2025	Ministers Penk,Potaka and Brown	Letter advocating for funding for wildling conifer control funding
28 Feb 2025	Minister Watts	Letter advising CMF progress on preparation of a regional deal for Canterbury
28 Mar 2025	Ministers Shane Jones, Mark Patterson and Casey Costello	Canterbury Regional Growth Summit
8 April 2025	Papatipu Rūnanga chairs	Invitation to partner with the Forum on the development of a Canterbury Regional Deal

Date	Audience	Subject
9 Apr 2025	Ministers Upston, Willis and Potaka	Letter advocating for the \$65 increase in the International Visitor Levy to be distributed to local authorities, and an invitation to meet with Forum members
19 May 2025	Papatipu Rūnanga chairs	Letter inviting discussion on the Business Canterbury/ Mayoral Forum Economic Priorities work which complements the Canterbury Regional Deal preparation
15 Aug 2025	Hon James Meager, Minister for the South Island	Invitation to be guest speaker at the workshops for a transition to a low-emissions future
27 Aug 2025	Police Commissioner Richard Chambers	Invitation to meet to discuss the proposed changes to policing in Canterbury
8 Oct 2025	Minister Upston, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality	Mayoral Forum feedback on Tourism Growth Roadmap