

CANTERBURY  
Mayoral Forum

*A strong regional economy with resilient, connected  
communities and a better quality of life, for all.*

# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

## BOARD PACK

for

## Canterbury Mayoral Forum

Friday, 29 May 2026

8:30 am (NZST)

Held at:

Commodore Hotel

449 Memorial Avenue, Burnside, Christchurch

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# AGENDA

## CANTERBURY MAYORAL FORUM



<b>Name:</b>	Canterbury Mayoral Forum
<b>Date:</b>	Friday, 29 May 2026
<b>Time:</b>	8:30 am to 2:00 pm (NZST)
<b>Location:</b>	Commodore Hotel, 449 Memorial Avenue, Burnside, Christchurch
<b>Board Members:</b>	Nigel Bowen (Chair), Marie Black, Craig Rowley, Craig Mackle, Dan Gordon, Dr Deon Swiggs, Liz McMillan, Lydia Gliddon, Melanie Tavendale, Phil Mauger, Scott Aronsen
<b>Attendees:</b>	Justin Tipa, Tania Wati, Alex Parmley, Angela Oosthuizen, Bede Carran, Ben Bateman, Hamish Dobbie, Hamish Riach, Jeff Millward, Nigel Trainor, Steve Gibling, Maree McNeilly, Amelia Wilkins, Ann Fitzgerald
<b>Apologies:</b>	Dr Stefanie Rixecker, Will Doughty, Stuart Duncan
<b>Guests/Notes:</b>	David Perenara-O'Connell for Stefanie Rixecker; Peter Kearney for Will Doughty; Deputy Mayors Vicki Gulleford, Fiona Harris, Philip Redmond, Victoria Henstock, Big Red Shefford, Richard Wilson, Scott Shannon, Sandy McAlwee, Rit Fisher, Rebecca Ryan (Item 2.1); Jeremy Lightfoot (MCERT), Sarah Polaschek, Hemi Smiler, Warren Ulusele (DIA) (Item 2.1); Diane McDermott (Item 5.1); Jesse Burgess (Items 6.2, 6.3, 6.4)

### 1. Open Meeting

#### 1.1 Welcome, karakia and apologies 8:30 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

#### 1.2 Confirmation of agenda 8:35 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

#### 1.3 Minutes from the previous meeting 8:40 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

Supporting Documents:

1.3.a	Minutes : Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 20 Feb 2026	8
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#### 1.4 Action List 8:45 am (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

Supporting Documents:

1.4.a	Action List	19
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## 2. For Discussion

### 2.1 Local Government reform

8:50 am (70 min)

Nigel Bowen

Supporting Documents:

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2.1.a	CMF Local Government reform May 2026.docx	20
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## 3. KAI - Morning tea

### 3.1 Kai - morning tea

10:00 am (20 min)

## 4. For discussion and decision

### 4.1 Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan

10:20 am (60 min)

Hamish Dobbie

Supporting Documents:

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4.1.a	CMF Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan May 2026.docx	26
4.1.b	CMF Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Attachment 1 May 2026.docx	39

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### 4.2 Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028

11:20 am (30 min)

Hamish Dobbie

Supporting Documents:

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4.2.a	CMF Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028 May 2026.docx	45
4.2.b	CMF Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028 Attachment 1 May 2026.pdf	49
4.2.c	CMF Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028 Attachment 2 May 2026.pdf	77
4.2.d	CMF Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028 Attachment 3 May 2026.pdf	79

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## 5. For discussion

### 5.1 Regional Public Service Commissioner

11:50 am (15 min)

Diane McDermott

## 6. For discussion and decision

### 6.1 Canterbury Water Management Strategy update

12:05 pm (10 min)

Dr Deon Swiggs

Supporting Documents:

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6.1.a	CMF Canterbury Water Management Strategy update May 2026.docx	119
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### 6.2 Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update

12:15 pm (10 min)

Dan Gordon

Jesse Burgess, Chair Climate Change Working Group

Supporting Documents:

6.2.a	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update May 2026.docx	124
6.2.b	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update Attachment 1 May 2026.pdf	133
6.2.c	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update Attachment 2 May 2026.docx	134
6.2.d	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update Attachment 3 May 2026.pdf	144
6.2.e	CMF Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update Attachment 4 May 2026.docx	145

### **6.3 Regional Energy Workstream update**

12:25 pm (10 min)

Hamish Riach

Jesse Burgess, Chair Regional Energy Steering Group

Supporting Documents:

6.3.a	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update May 2026.docx	147
6.3.b	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Attachment 1 May 2026.pdf	153
6.3.c	CMF Regional Energy Workstream update Attachment 2 May 2026.pdf	154

### **6.4 Canterbury Regional Deal update**

12:35 pm (5 min)

Nigel Bowen

Jesse Burgess, Regional Deal working group

Supporting Documents:

6.4.a	CMF Canterbury Regional Deal update May 2026.docx	182
6.4.b	CMF Canterbury Regional Deal update Attachment 1 May 2026.docx	189

### **6.5 Chief Executives Forum report**

12:40 pm (5 min)

Hamish Dobbie

Supporting Documents:

6.5.a	CMF Chief Executives Forum report May 2026.docx	196
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## **7. For information**

### **7.1 Activities and Engagements February - May 2026**

Maree McNeilly

Supporting Documents:

7.1.a	CMF Activities and Engagements February - May 2026 May 2026.docx	198
7.1.b	CMF Activities and Engagements February - May 2026 Attachment 1 May 2026.pdf	200
7.1.c	CMF Activities and Engagements February - May 2026 Attachment 2 May 2026.docx	204
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## 8. General business

**8.1 General business** 12:45 pm (10 min)

**8.2 Meeting review** 12:55 pm (5 min)

**8.3 Closing karakia** 1:00 pm (5 min)

Kia tau te rangimarie ki runga I nga iwi o te ao  
Haumi e  
Hui e  
Taiki e

Let peace reign on all the people of the world  
Fixed  
Bound as one

## 9. Kai - lunch

**9.1 Lunch** 1:05 pm (30 min)

## 10. Close Meeting

### 10.1 Close the meeting

**Next meeting:** Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 28 Aug 2026, 8:30 am

# MINUTES (in Review)

## CANTERBURY MAYORAL FORUM



<b>Name:</b>	Canterbury Mayoral Forum
<b>Date:</b>	Friday, 20 February 2026
<b>Time:</b>	8:30 am to 12:30 am (NZDT)
<b>Location:</b>	Commodore Hotel, 449 Memorial Avenue, Burnside, Christchurch
<b>Board Members:</b>	Nigel Bowen (Chair), Craig Mackle, Craig Rowley, Dan Gordon, Dr Deon Swiggs, Liz McMillan, Lydia Gliddon, Marie Black, Melanie Tavendale
<b>Attendees:</b>	Alex Parmley, Angela Oosthuizen, Dr Stefanie Rixecker, Hamish Dobbie, Hamish Riach, Jeff Millward, Mary Richardson, Nigel Trainor, Steve Gibling, Will Doughty, Maree McNeilly, Amelia Wilkins, Ann Fitzgerald
<b>Apologies:</b>	Scott Aronsen, Phil Mauger, Justin Tipa, Tania Wati, Stuart Duncan
<b>Guests/Notes:</b>	Rit Fisher, Deputy Mayor Mackenzie District (for Mayor Scott Aronsen), Sir Brian Roche, Public Service Commissioner, Diane McDermott, Regional Public Service Commissioner (Item 3.1); Matthew Bacon, Amanda Thompson, Canterbury Planning Managers Group (Item 5.2); Jesse Burgess, Canterbury Regional Council (Items 5.4, 5.5, 5.6); Nick Leggett, Infrastructure New Zealand, Catherine Shipton, Simpson Grierson (Item 6.2)

## 1. Open Meeting

### 1.1 Welcome, karakia and apologies

The Chair welcomed participants and opened the meeting a karakia.

Apologies from Scott Aronsen, Phil Mauger, Justin Tipa, Tania Wati and Stuart Duncan were noted, with Rit Fisher, Deputy Mayor Mackenzie District attending the meeting for Mayor Scott Aronsen.

The Chair led an acknowledgement of Anne Munro, who passed away recently. Anne was a two-term Mackenzie District councillor, and Mayor from 2022. Anne was a member of the Canterbury Biodiversity Champions, both as a councillor and then Mayor.

A Mayoral Forum donation of \$300 towards a planting restoration project in the Mackenzie District in memory of Anne will be arranged.

### 1.2 Confirmation of agenda

The agenda was confirmed as presented.

Two items of general business were raised, however these were picked up in the discussion on item 2.1.

- does the Mayoral Forum need to meet more frequently to address the reform programme?
- funding requirements related to the legislative reform programme.

### 1.3 Minutes from the previous meeting

Canterbury Mayoral Forum 28 Nov 2025, the minutes were confirmed as presented.



## Decision

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2025 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**Decision Date:** 20 Feb 2026  
**Mover:** Craig Rowley  
**Seconder:** Craig Mackle  
**Outcome:** Approved

## 1.4 Action List

Due Date	Action Title	Owner(s)
30 Jun 2025	Action <b>Status:</b> On Hold	Maree McNeilly
30 Jun 2025	Action <b>Status:</b> On Hold	Nigel Bowen

## 2. For discussion and decision

### 2.1 Central Government reform of local government

#### *Simplifying Local Government proposal*

The draft Mayoral Forum submission on the Simplifying Local Government proposal was considered by Mayoral Forum members. Particular discussion related to paragraphs 24-27 and the Combined Territories Boards.

Chair Swiggs proposed changes to reflect that the majority of the Mayoral Forum does not support the Combined Territories Board undertaking the roles of the regional councillors.

Paragraph 24 – while there was not consensus on including point 24, members agreed to the proposed wording change, with the deletion of “beyond the issue of democratic mandate”.

Paragraph 26 – there was majority support for deleting the wording “which could be achieved by having regional council representation”.

It was noted that the wording in paragraphs 40-43 did not go far enough to emphasise the financial cost associated with reorganization, however no changes were proposed.

There was discussion around the table on the timing of legislation to implement the changes, however a number of members noted that work should get underway, regardless of the legislation. Forum members support preparatory work on scoping a work programme for implementing the Simplifying Local Government reform, and the Chief Executives Forum has been asked to start the scoping for this work.

It was noted that funding for this work has not been addressed, and funding from councils would need to go through their respective annual and long-term plans as individual councils are not in a position to fund this from existing budgets. One option that could be considered is regional council debt funding, however scoping of the work required would need to be completed first.

It was also noted that options for external support from Department of Internal Affairs should be explored.

#### *Resource Management Bills and Emergency Management Bill submissions*

It was noted that Mayoral Forum submissions on the Resource Management Bills and the Mayoral Forum and CDEM submission on the Emergency Management Bill have been lodged.



## Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. approved the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's submission to the Simplifying Local Government Proposal, with wording changes agreed at the meeting
2. received the summary from the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's January 2026 Workshops
3. noted the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's submissions on the Rates Target Model proposal, Natural Environment and Planning Bills, and Emergency Management Bill
4. noted that funding (quantity, scope and source) to address the simplifying local government proposal still needs to be identified and confirmed, and request the Chief Executives Forum to scope a work programme for implementation of the Simplifying Local Government proposal.

**Decision Date:** 20 Feb 2026  
**Mover:** Nigel Bowen  
**Seconder:** Dan Gordon  
**Outcome:** Approved



### Action

Chief Executives Forum to scope a work programme for implementation of the Simplifying Local Government reform

**Due Date:** 27 Apr 2026  
**Owners:** Hamish Dobbie, Maree McNeilly



### Action

Mayoral Forum to approach Department of Internal Affairs for support to progress the Simplifying Local Government proposal.

**Due Date:** 24 Mar 2026  
**Owners:** Maree McNeilly, Nigel Bowen

## 3. For discussion

### 3.1 Sir Brian Roche (Public Service Commissioner)

Sir Brian Roche (Public Service Commissioner) and Diane McDermott, Regional Public Service Commissioner, were welcomed to the meeting.

Diane outlined her role and noted the benefits of regular communication with the Mayoral Forum and the other regional forums, and that her office has been able to contribute to several CMF priorities and workstreams - energy, youth related projects and housing. Continuing to work together as a region is key.

Sir Brian provided a brief overview of his Public Service Commissioner role – statutory responsibility for the public service. His recent report on the state of the public sector tabled in parliament noted a need for public sector reform and system changes.

The concept of the Ministry of Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport was explained – there is no desire to undermine any of these functions, rather an aim to change “the machine” to improve engagement with an integrated and better resourced agency.

Sir Brian acknowledged the significant legislative reform underway and resulting workload for local government. If there are issues, questions CMF can send these via Diane and Sir Brian will do his best to “unlock the system”.

The power of a common voice from Canterbury was emphasised. The more unified the voice the stronger the case is.

CMF members raised the following questions/points

- Strong council relationships with central government agencies in Canterbury means the region can make a positive contribution to shaping legislation and policy. The practice of central government to only reach out to Auckland for opinion/input was noted
- The significant innovation happening in Canterbury, the increase in younger population and fast growth, sets a case for bringing central government staff back to Canterbury. Sir Brian noted a long term model for a strong centre and a distributed network away from Wellington
- Will regulators be bought into a single body? Sir Brian expressed the view that the country is over-regulated. Strong clear regulation is needed, and the public management system of regulation has evolved since it was established in the 1980/90's. He is raising options for models that are used internationally
- The unique nature of the Canterbury region was noted. While statistically Christchurch dominates, central government needs to recognize that Canterbury issues are broader than Christchurch alone. While acknowledging this, Sir Brian emphasized the importance of one strong "voice" for Canterbury, while recognising "local flavour"
- Support from Canterbury local government for Chatham Islands issues was offered
- What is Sir Brian's vision around data? Sir Brian acknowledged currently data is disaggregated, and the public service agencies don't share data. He considers greater data sharing is a priority, as disaggregation impedes the ability to serve
- New Zealand shouldn't be apologetic for being small – Singapore is a similar size and they celebrate it!

In acknowledgment of Sir Brian and Diane making time to speak with the Mayoral Forum gift vouchers for tree planting were presented.

## 4. KAI - Morning tea

### 4.1 Kai - morning tea

## 5. For discussion and decision

### 5.1 Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028

The vision, priorities and actions for the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2208, and the proposed elevator pitch, have been drafted based on the discussion at the Mayoral Forum workshop on 30 January.

Members were happy with the vision, priorities and action, however, want to see a much clearer and stronger elevator pitch.

There needs to be a clear ask in the pitch. This could be framed around common themes in the projects/programmes that councils have provided to Minister Meager at his request.

There was a recommendation to consider a one-page infographic with the details and statistics that would accompany the pitch.

Discussion on the draft included in the paper noted:

- less focus on retrospective matters
- seek input from Ngāi Tahu representatives
- emphasise need for central government investment and funding, and also other tools that can be utilised better to assist investment, examples such as Canterbury as a "special economic zone" or other policy settings

- Canterbury is poised for growth and can support the government's objectives
- acknowledge councils' financial investment in Canterbury, including in tourism and agriculture sectors, and the investment needed from central government
- stable and "credible" partner
- include examples of underinvestment
- align with Canterbury Ambition and Regional Deal work
- transport funding – require equitable level of funding and support for new funding tools.



### Action

Update the elevator pitch based on discussions and seek input from Mayoral and Chief Executives Forums' Chairs before circulating to both forums.

**Due Date:** 23 Mar 2026  
**Owner:** Maree McNeilly



### Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. confirmed the vision, priorities and actions for the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028
2. noted the draft elevator pitch to support the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028
3. noted the process to update and finalise a draft document for approval at the May 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting.

**Decision Date:** 20 Feb 2026  
**Mover:** Marie Black  
**Seconded:** Lydia Gliddon  
**Outcome:** Approved

## 5.2 Regional Spatial Planning update

Angela Oosthuizen, Chair of the Canterbury Policy Forum, introduced the paper which provides an update on the Chief Executive Forum (CEF) direction to the Canterbury Planning Managers Group to commence early preparatory work for a Regional Spatial Plan under the draft Planning Bill.

The CEF direction was to complete a targeted gap analysis against the Canterbury Spatial Planning Stocktake, and draft Terms of Reference for a regional Spatial Planning Committee and a supporting Working Group/Secretariat.

Matthew Bacon (Chair of the Canterbury Planning Managers Group) and Amanda Thompson (member, Canterbury Planning Managers Group) provided an update on how the Canterbury Planning Managers Group are progressing this work.

- while awaiting legislation to be enacted, the Planning Managers Group are preparing a high-level programme scope, supported by a draft high level work programme
- terms of reference for a regional Spatial Planning Committee and a supporting Working Group/Secretariat are being drafted
- the Group has undertaken a high-level targeted gap analysis of existing spatial strategies and mapped spatial layers with District Plan and the Regional Plan, across the region. There is mixed work across the region in these areas, and the Group is working through how this is likely to align with the new planning framework
- early engagement with Mana Whenua through the Papatipu Rūnanga Environmental Entities regarding the approach and process for this work. Once frameworks are in place further discussions with Ngāi Tahu will occur.

Several Chief Executives acknowledged the ambitious target that was set for the Planning Managers Group, noting that good progress has been made. It was also noted that to continue to progress this work appropriate funding needs to be identified.

It was recognized that while the legislation has not yet been passed there is clear direction for the regional spatial planning committee and options for this committee can be progressed now.

The Mayoral Forum requested that the Chief Executive Forum progress the work required on scoping a regional spatial plan committee, as per the requirements in the Planning Bill.



## Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. noted the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum has directed early preparatory work to enable Canterbury to be ready to meet proposed statutory obligations and timeframes for preparation of a regional spatial plan under the draft Planning Bill
2. noted the Canterbury Planning Managers Group is progressing, using existing staff resources, the tasks requested by the Chief Executives Forum, including:
  - i. a targeted gap analysis against the Canterbury Spatial Planning Stocktake to identify priority evidence, data, staffing, and coordination needs
  - ii. draft Terms of Reference for a regional Spatial Planning Committee under the Planning Bill and a supporting Working Group/Secretariat
3. noted the initiation of early engagement with Mana Whenua to inform the approach to regional spatial planning, including future governance and work programme options
4. requested the Chief Executives Forum prioritise development of options for establishing a Regional Spatial Planning Committee and accompanying terms of reference.

<b>Decision Date:</b>	20 Feb 2026
<b>Mover:</b>	Nigel Bowen
<b>Seconded:</b>	Dr Deon Swiggs
<b>Outcome:</b>	Approved

## 5.3 Canterbury Water Management Strategy

The paper was taken as read. Several points were noted:

- reference to Rangitata catchment in the recommendations should read Rangitata river
- local leadership groups are moving forward where there is agreement. The right membership is critical to the effectiveness of the groups
- clarification that the agricultural sector leadership group established to strengthen relationship and build shared understandings of groundwater quality issues was at request of industry, rather than a doubling up on the CWMS local leadership groups
- the nitrate issue and working with industry could form a new focus for the CWMS local leadership group
- drinking water - a request that the planned targeted engagement with private household suppliers include the relevant local territorial authority.



## Decision

That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. noted the update for October to December 2025 on work underway to implement the Canterbury Water Management Strategy
2. noted that the establishment of local leadership groups is progressing, with establishment hui held in six out of eight areas
3. noted that the Rangitata river will act as the boundary between the Ōrāri Temuka Ōpihi Pareora and Hakatere local leadership group areas, with the final status of the Rakaia and Ihutai catchments still to be confirmed by all relevant parties.

*Christchurch City Council abstained from voting on this item and requested that this be recorded in the minutes.*

**Decision Date:** 20 Feb 2026  
**Mover:** Liz McMillan  
**Seconder:** Marie Black  
**Outcome:** Approved

## 5.4 Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan update

Dan Gordon, Chair of the Climate Champions Group introduced the paper, with Jesse Burgess, Chair of the Climate Change Working Group, in attendance to support the discussion.

The Plan is now midway through Year 2, and meaningful progress continues amidst the changing regulatory environment.

A review of the Plan is being undertaken, including scope of actions, timeframes for key milestones, and anticipated associated expenditure. This will be presented at the May 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting for consideration.



### Action

Analysis of future funding and forecast expenditure for year 3 to be included in the review of the CCPP and presented at the May 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting. (Jesse Burgess)

**Due Date:** 1 May 2026  
**Owner:** Maree McNeilly



### Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. received the quarterly Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan implementation progress report and accompanying budget summary
2. noted the:
  - i. procurement of a regional natural and climate hazard and risk data inventory analysis, and
  - ii. request for information to test the market and complete the scoping of action 1.1, a regional natural hazard risk visualisation tool for use by councils to support climate adaptation and resilience planning
3. received the Emissions Reduction - Transition Risks and Opportunities Assessment summary report, noting the completion of sub-action 2.2 with this Deliverable
4. noted the analysis of the recently published National Adaptation Framework, and the alignment of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan to it and the broader suite of central government reforms
5. noted the Canterbury Climate Change Working Group will initiate a review of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan, bringing further advice to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum at its meeting in May 2026.

<b>Decision Date:</b>	20 Feb 2026
<b>Mover:</b>	Dan Gordon
<b>Seconded:</b>	Nigel Bowen
<b>Outcome:</b>	Approved

## 5.5 Regional Energy Workstream update

Hamish Riach introduced the paper, with Jesse Burgess, Chair Regional Energy Steering Group, in attendance to support the discussion.

It was noted that work is progressing at pace, including positive engagement with rūnanaga through the Papatipu Rūnanga Environmental Entities with the intention of having the Action Plan completed by 30 June 2026.

It was noted that the energy work will be a useful input for the regional spatial plan.



### Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. provided feedback on the revised draft Regional Energy Strategic Framework (Attachment 1) and supporting report Our Energy Future: A regional approach to energy in Waitaha | Canterbury (Attachment 2) by 2 March 2026
2. noted the intention to present the final draft Strategic Framework and supporting report to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum in May 2026
3. noted that committed or forecast costs for key activities in FY2025/26 total approximately \$56,607, and that it is proposed that the remaining unallocated funding be used to bring in external resourcing to support the delivery of the draft regional energy action plan / roadmap by 30 June 2026
4. noted that targeted engagement with stakeholders, mana whenua and community groups is ongoing.

<b>Decision Date:</b>	20 Feb 2026
<b>Mover:</b>	Dan Gordon
<b>Seconded:</b>	Dr Deon Swiggs
<b>Outcome:</b>	Approved

## 5.6 Canterbury Regional Deal proposal update

Nigel Bowen provided an update on preparation for a future Canterbury regional deal proposal. A Regional Deal Governance and Working Group has been established and a scope of work is being prepared.

While there is currently no further funding for this project post 30 June 2026, the development of the scope of work is being undertaken in a way that will enable aspects of the project to be picked up should resources become available in the future.

Mayoral Forum will meet with Business Canterbury to discuss the Canterbury Ambition work and the connections into the scoping for the regional deal proposal.

The newly released Connecting Canterbury: Strengthening Infrastructure for Growth White Paper highlights opportunities that could form a focus for any future regional deal.



### Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. noted the update on progress for the development of a scope of works for a regional deal proposal

2. approved the draft terms of references for the Regional Deal Governance and Working Groups.

**Decision Date:** 20 Feb 2026  
**Mover:** Nigel Bowen  
**Seconder:** Marie Black  
**Outcome:** Approved

## 5.7 Chief Executives Forum report

Hamish Dobbie presented the report, noting the progress on the Plan for Canterbury strategic workplan.



### Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. received the quarterly report from the Chief Executives Forum
2. noted updates on work under way or completed on the key actions in the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025.

**Decision Date:** 20 Feb 2026  
**Mover:** Nigel Bowen  
**Seconder:** Craig Mackle  
**Outcome:** Approved

## 6. For information

### 6.1 Activities and Engagements

This paper was taken as read.



### Decision

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum:

1. received the update on Canterbury Mayoral Forum activities, engagements and correspondence since the Forum's last meeting on 28 November 2025.

**Decision Date:** 20 Feb 2026  
**Mover:** Marie Black  
**Seconder:** Liz McMillan  
**Outcome:** Approved

### 6.2 Connecting Canterbury White Paper

The Chair welcomed Nick Leggett, Infrastructure New Zealand and Catherine Shipton, Simpson Grierson to the meeting to present the Connecting Canterbury: Strengthening Infrastructure for Growth White paper.

The growing Canterbury economy, which presents opportunities and challenges for the region, was the impetus for the White Paper

- opportunities to apply lessons learned through earthquake times to the future
- move from project by project to a more integrated approach to infrastructure, with coordinated actions
- key theme is connectedness – sharing knowledge, ideas, technology and processes
- proposed priority areas (for illustrative purposes), noting an opportunity to work together on replacing and future-proofing bridges and culverts

- infrastructure will be an enabler for regional spatial planning, and an important part of any future regional deal

Infrastructure New Zealand undertook engagement during the development of the paper with a range of leaders across Canterbury including Ngāi Tahu and industry.

Discussion noted:

- this is a worthwhile piece of work that sets up a good platform, and we need to work together to progress the ideas included in the white paper
- opportunities to test different funding tools
- rural/urban differing requirements and priorities
- the document has a strong Christchurch focus, some gaps include Timaru port, industrial areas outside of Christchurch, power generation
- the paper provides a platform to work together, and highlights opportunities to work together at scale
- funding models such as public private partnerships
- a need to move forward from a disaster/recover mindset – how is the conversation reframed so we address issues before the disaster?
- strong support for the inclusion of digital infrastructure in the white paper
- collective discussions about assets, rather than in silos
- critical to get good data, with a common baseline and be able to coordinate actions
- past issues with central government funding contribution for capital assets, but local communities then need to be able to afford to fund maintenance
- need to articulate return on investment
- financial discipline required to fund asset management and maintenance

A question was raised about who would be on the “Canterbury Infrastructure Coordination Group”, which is a quick win action in the White Paper. This group has not yet been formed.

## 7. General business

### 7.1 General business

The items of general business were covered in item 2.1

### 7.2 Meeting review

### 7.3 Closing karakia

## 8. Kai - lunch

### 8.1 Lunch

## 9. Road Safety Week Campaign

### 9.1 Road Safety Week Campaign filming

Filming was undertaken with the Mayoral Forum members following lunch and the close of the meeting.

## 10. Close Meeting

### 10.1 Close the meeting

**Next meeting:** Canterbury Mayoral Forum - 29 May 2026, 8:30 am

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Action List

## Canterbury Mayoral Forum



As of: 25 May 2026

### Action On Hold

The Chief Executive sub-group to report back to the Chief Executive Forum in July 2025 and the August 2025 Mayoral Forum meeting on options with regard to a regional building consent authority.

**Due Date:** 30 Jun 2025  
**Owner:** Maree McNeilly  
**Meeting:** 30 May 2025 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, 4.6 Future regional and local government for Canterbury

#### Latest Update:

At the 22 August 2025 meeting it was agreed that with the recent Ministerial announcement of significant changes to the building consent system, this work will be paused until details of the proposed legislative changes are known.

Ann Fitzgerald | 27 Aug 2025

### Action On Hold

#### Genetic Engineering national conversation

Chair to circulate summary information from William Rolleston to CMF members.

**Due Date:** 30 Jun 2025  
**Owner:** Nigel Bowen  
**Meeting:** 30 May 2025 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, 6.1 General business

#### Latest Update:

20 February 2026 Noted that this is not a priority at this time

Ann Fitzgerald | 24 Feb 2026

### Action Not Started

Chief Executives Forum to scope a work programme for implementation of the Simplifying Local Government reform

**Due Date:** 27 Apr 2026  
**Owners:** Hamish Dobbie, Maree McNeilly  
**Meeting:** 20 Feb 2026 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, 2.1 Central Government reform of local government

# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

**Date:** 29 May 2026

**Presented by:** Nigel Bowen, Chair

## Local Government reform

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide background information on the Simplifying Local Government proposal and provide the opportunity to discuss ways to progress a Head Start pathway for Canterbury.

### Recommendations

**That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:**

1. **notes the key points from the *Simplifying Local Government: Head Start pathway* released on 5 May 2026**
2. **agrees to progress a Head Start proposal for Canterbury to meet the Government's deadline of 9 August 2026**

### Simplifying Local Government: Head Start pathway

2. The Government consulted on a draft proposal for simplifying local government in November 2025. Following consideration of submissions [Simplifying Local Government: Head Start pathway](#) was released on 5 May 2026.
3. Key points from the Head Start Pathway (Attachment 1) are:
  - the Government will introduce a streamlined **Head Start pathway** for councils that are ready to develop and progress reorganisation proposals, with the aim of creating unitary authorities within a region through bespoke legislation. This process opened on 5 May 2026, and applications must be received by 9 August 2026
  - the Government will legislate for councils not progressing through Head Start to enter a compulsory **backstop process** after the 2028 election, ultimately moving towards unitary authorities. More detail on this is expected in 2027, informed by lessons from the Head Start and further advice from officials
  - **regional councillors will be replaced at the 2028 election** with an interim body (for example, a board of mayors, Crown commissioners, or a combination of both, to be confirmed later)

- a **rapid review of regional council functions** was completed and found functions, such as flood protection, biosecurity, public transport, and environmental management, are still best delivered at a regional or local scale, with transport requiring further consideration
  - any two or more territorial and/or unitary authorities, including cross-boundary groupings, may submit if they represent a majority of either the:
    - directly affected territorial authorities
    - population across directly affected areas
  - councils are expected to engage with mana whenua to ensure the continuation of effective relationships and that Treaty settlements are honoured through transition and within the new entities
  - the proposal states the most straightforward approach is for a single unitary authority per region, however proposals for sub-regional unitary authorities and potential cross-boundary proposals, may be considered where:
    - existing territorial authorities are combined, and regional council functions are transferred
    - the proposed arrangement would result in fewer local authorities overall
    - the proposed arrangements would deliver clearer accountability and effective delivery of key functions, including regional planning, transport, and catchment management
  - more than one unitary authority in a region is only likely to be approved if:
    - the region is large and has more complex issues
    - the proposal clearly meets the criteria and doesn't lead to the fragmentation of key regional functions where collaboration is required, such as catchment management
  - it is expected that all councils, including those participating in the Head Start pathway, will continue implementing the new planning system alongside any reorganisation activity. The relationship between the planning system implementation and the simplifying local government process is shown in Attachment 2.
4. The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) has indicated they will provide further detail in due course. The expectation is that DIA representatives will speak to this at the meeting.

## Opportunities

5. While there are no signals at this time what the compulsory backstop process will look like, the Head Start pathway from Central Government states that the most

straightforward approach is for all councils in a region to combine to form a single unitary authority.

6. It is understood that Canterbury is recognised as a large region with complex issues, but there are no current signals from Central Government on how the Backstop process would apply to Canterbury.
7. We have the opportunity to take ownership of this decision for Canterbury by considering our own Head Start proposal.
8. There is no indication that reform, albeit possibly in a different form, will not continue under a different government
9. Councils who chose not to opt into the Head Start process will enter a compulsory back stop process and change will be implemented after the 2028 local government elections

## **Cost, compliance and communication**

### **Financial implications**

10. No additional central government funding is expected to plan and/or implement the changes as a result of the Simplifying Local Government. Funding and financing of proposals will need to be covered from councils' existing budgets.

### **Risk assessment and legal compliance**

11. Simplifying Local Government: Head Start pathway is currently a proposal. In September 2026, Cabinet is expected to agree council Head Start proposals in principle, with legislation to be enacted in early 2028. Proposal implementation is expected to begin in May 2028, ahead of local elections in October, where votes will be cast based on the new entities.

### **Communication and engagement**

12. Communications and engagement will be determined following the outcome from the discussions at this meeting, however it is expected that each council will determine consultation needs as appropriate for their communities.

### **Next steps**

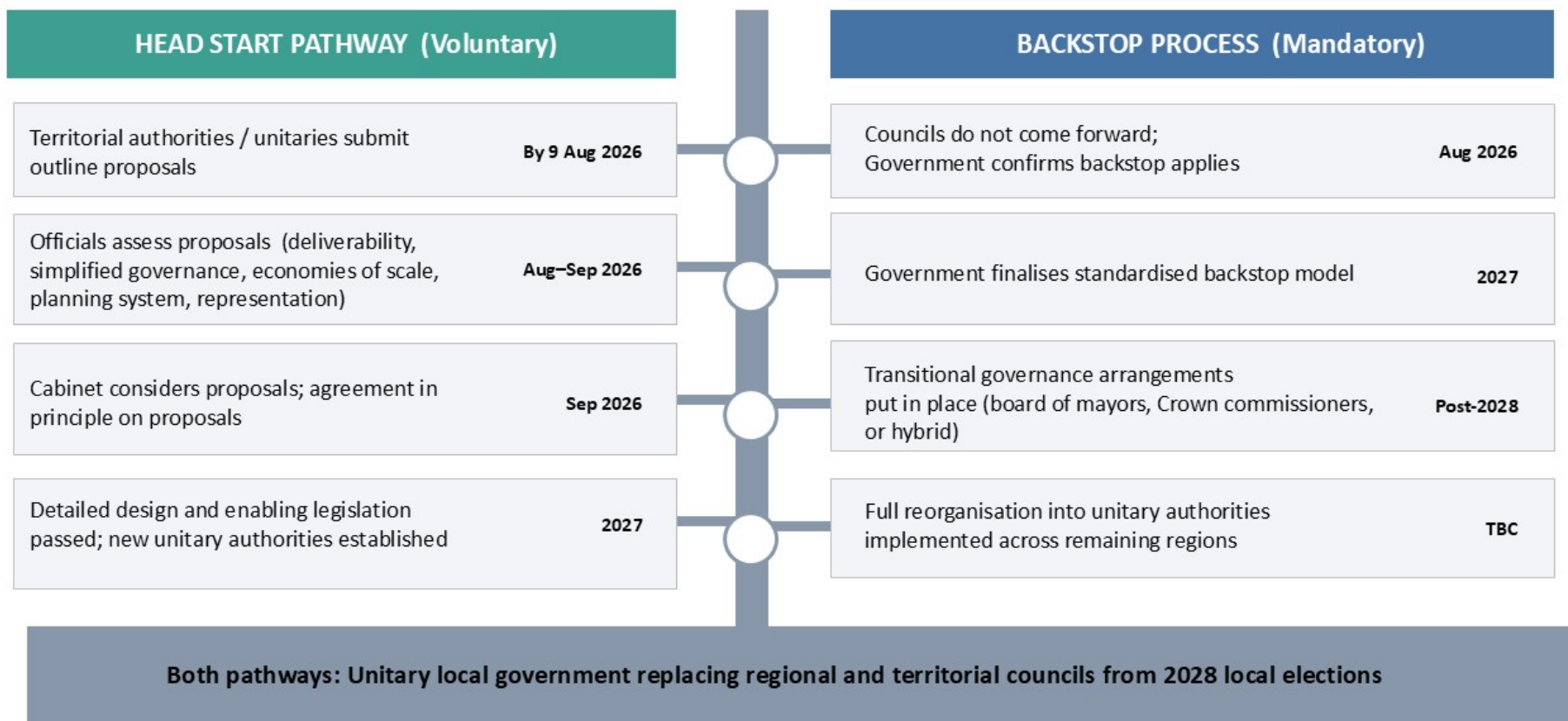
13. To be determined at this meeting.

### **Attachments**

- Attachment 1 – Head Start pathway timeline
- Attachment 2 – Timeline of Simplifying Local Government process alongside Regional Spatial Planning

- **Attachment 1: Head Start pathway**

## Reform pathways: Head start vs Backstop



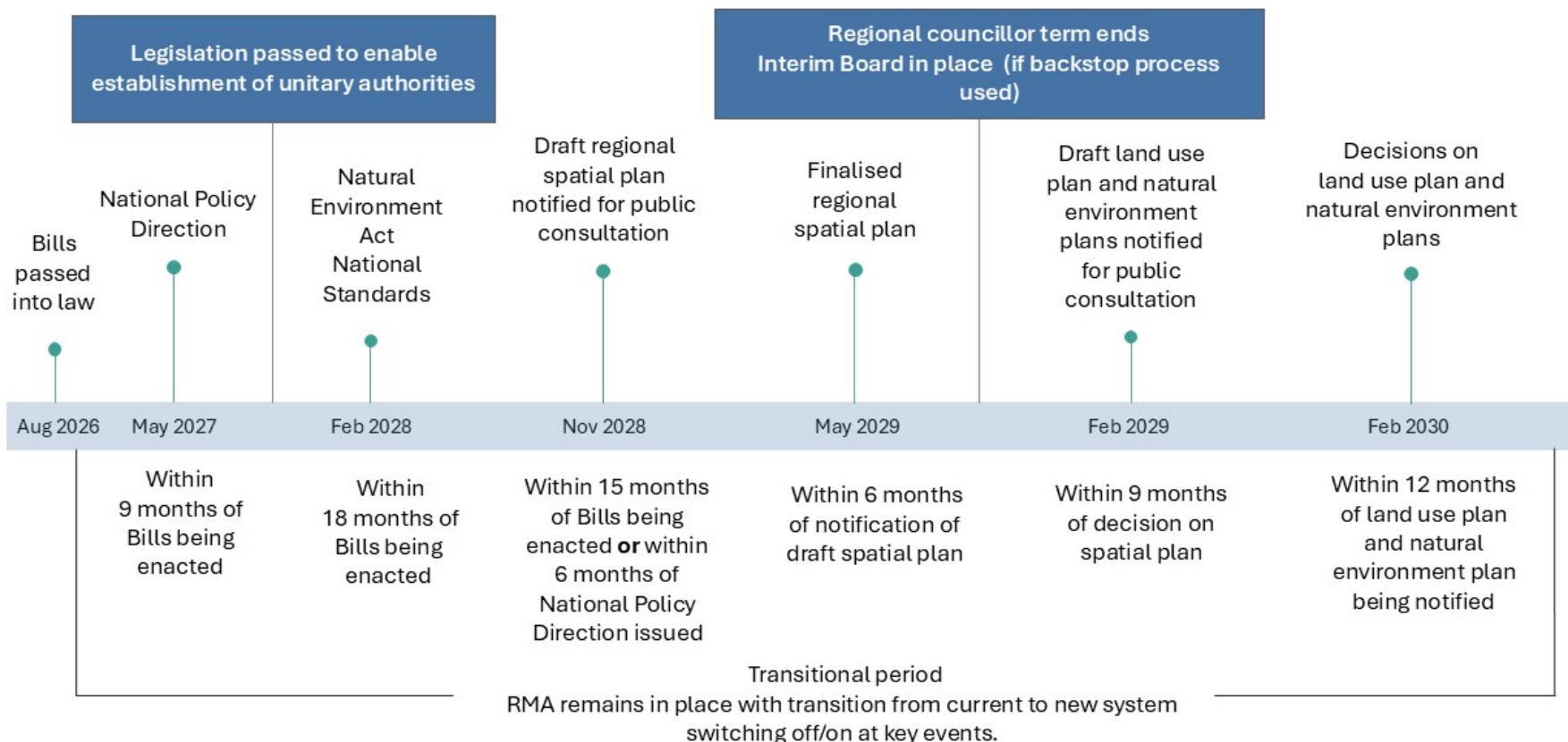
## Head start: Entry requirements & assessment criteria

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS		ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	
01	Proposal must be deliverable by the 2028 local elections	<b>Deliverability</b>	Can the proposal realistically be implemented in a timely manner?
02	Must involve 2 or more territorial and/or unitary councils voluntarily forming a group	<b>Simplifies local governance</b>	Does it genuinely reduce complexity and duplication and improve alignment?
03	Councils must demonstrate how proposals meet 5 key criteria	<b>Economies of scale</b>	Will it improve efficiency and deliver cost savings?
04	Must support and be compatible with the new planning system (RMA reform)	<b>Supports the new planning system</b>	Does it show clear support for implementing the new planning system?
05	Proposals to be submitted as outline only — detailed design comes later	<b>Maintains local voice</b>	Does it demonstrate fair and effective representation for communities, and balance urban/rural interests?

**Outline proposals due Sunday 9 August 2026. Decisions by Cabinet: September 2026**

- **Attachment 2** -RM reform implementation and Simplifying Local Government

## RM reform implementation timeline



# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

**Date:** 29 May 2026

**Presented by:** Hamish Dobbie, Chair Canterbury Chief Executives Forum

## Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the Canterbury Mayoral Forum with:
  - a. options for the governance and structure of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee, including a draft terms of reference
  - b. recommendations for programme leadership, hosting arrangements, and implementation approach
  - c. indicative budget and resourcing requirements, along with analysis of funding models

### Recommendations

**That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:**

- 1. agrees to establish the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee**
- 2. agrees the recommended governance option of representation from each council, mana whenua, central government appointments, and an independent chair**
- 3. agrees to seek endorsement from each council for the recommended option for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee, as part of the Process Agreement for the Regional Spatial Plan required under the Planning Bill**
- 4. agrees to the urgent establishment of an Independent Programme Director noting the offer from the Greater Christchurch Partnership to provide some capacity and capability to this function in the interim period**
- 5. agrees to host the independent Regional Spatial Plan Programme Director, the associated programme management office and secretariat in a Christchurch city-based office, noting that the options include Christchurch City Council and Canterbury Regional Council**
- 6. notes the indicative cost of \$7-10 million, which is a very early estimate and includes a level of councils' current resources and budgets**

7. **notes that further refinement of the budget and funding options still need to be worked through**
8. **agrees that all Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan work should proceed on a no-regrets basis, that will remain relevant under future institutional arrangements**
9. **notes the interaction between spatial planning, resource management reform and local government reform and associated risks.**

## **Key points**

2. The new Planning and Natural Environment Acts are expected to be enacted in the third quarter of 2026. It is expected that regions will need to notify their regional spatial plan within 15 months of enactment (prior to the 2028 local government elections).
3. There is strong consensus among the Chief Executives on the need to progress spatial planning urgently despite uncertainty from the proposed local government reform.
4. The preferred governance model for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee is for representation from all councils (Mayor/Chair) and mana whenua representation, along with central government appointments.
5. To avoid delays, the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan requires dedicated leadership from a programme director, who should be recruited as soon as reasonably practicable, noting that the Greater Christchurch Partnership has offered to provide some capacity to this function in the interim to foster progress.
6. The early estimated cost of \$7-10 million reflects a large one-off statutory planning programme. This figure includes an element of existing councils' resources and budgets.
7. There are a range of funding models available, including allocation as per the Regional Forums' Budget, allocation on a population basis, or debt funding through Canterbury Regional Council.
8. The Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan needs to be developed on a no-regrets basis that will remain relevant under future institutional arrangements.
9. There are a number of risks that will need to be managed due to local government reform, compressed timelines, and resource constraints. Central Government expects regional spatial plans to continue regardless of how regions proceed with local government reform.

## **Background**

10. The draft Planning Bill proposes mandatory preparation of a Regional Spatial Plan for each region. The Bill includes statutory timeframes that may require Canterbury to have

a spatial plan prepared and notified mid-2027 (subject to enactment of the Bill and national direction).

11. At the same time local government reform is progressing with the removal of regional councillors and a strong indication for unitary authorities. Local government reform is proposed to be enacted in time for the October 2028 local government elections.
12. This paper has been developed in relation to the current regional spatial planning framework proposed in the Planning Bill. There may be some changes between the Bill and the Act, however it is proposed that this work proceed on the basis of no-regrets, that can be modified as necessary to meet the requirements in the Planning Act, and remain relevant under future institutional arrangements.

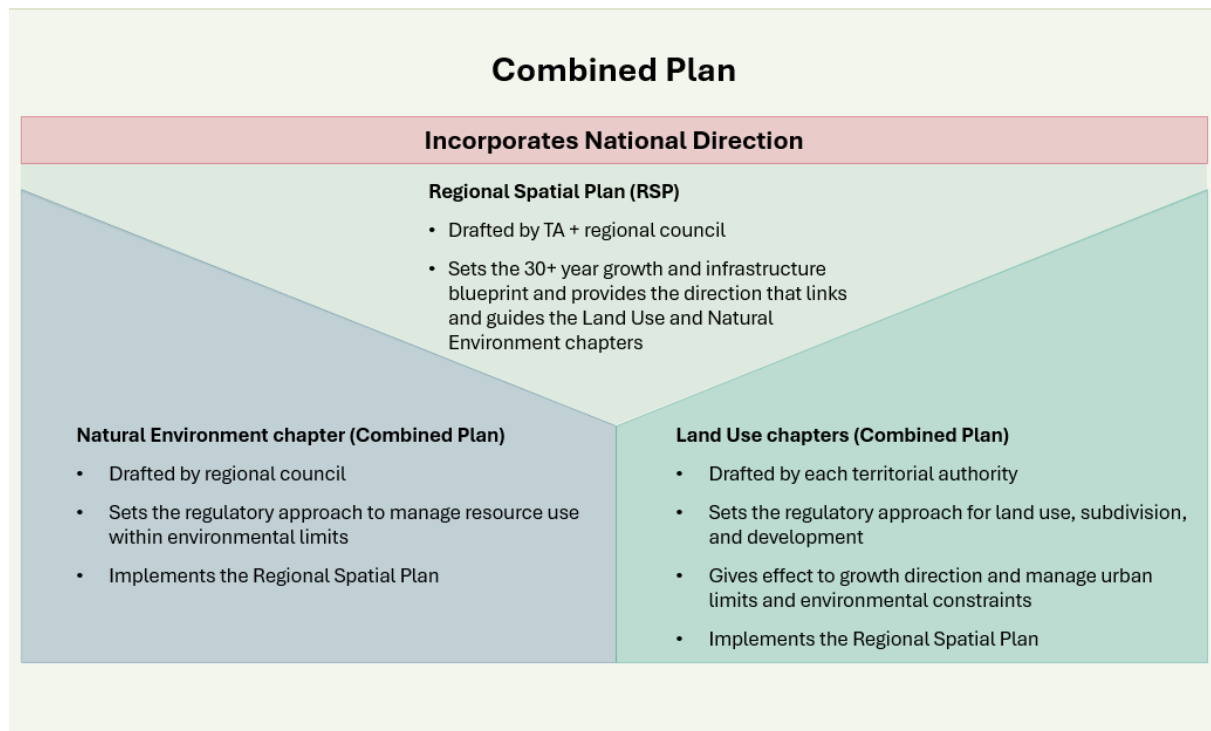
## **Resource Management Reform**

13. The resource management reforms include the enactment of two new bills – the Planning Bill and the Natural Environment Bill.
14. The existing Resource Management Act framework remains in place during the transition period, with provisions gradually switched off, as parts of the new system come into effect. Current regional and district plans, the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, and national RMA instruments remain the basis for consenting, compliance, and plan administration, but will not be carried into the new system as operative plans.
15. When the new resource management system becomes fully operative, the Resource Management Act ceases to apply, and existing Resource Management Act planning instruments cease to have legal effect. The operative framework will include new national policy direction, national standards, and a new regional combined plan.
16. Government material indicates that the transition period is expected to end in 2029-2030, with the new system fully operational from this date. The actual transition date for Canterbury will be set by Order in Council once the statutory requirements are met.

## **Combined Plan**

17. The Planning Bill (the Bill) requires a combined plan for each region. The combined plan consists of the regional spatial plan, the natural environment plan for the region and a land use plan for each district within the boundaries of a region (see figure 1). Due to the timing for the regional spatial plan to be notified, the boundaries in this context refers to the existing Canterbury local authority boundaries.
18. The Bill states that there must be a regional spatial plan for each region, and the boundary of the area where a regional spatial plan applies, must align with the boundary of the region to which the plan relates.
19. Current indications are that the regional spatial plan is to be notified within 15 months of enactment of the Planning Bill. At this stage, this is likely to occur before decisions on unitary arrangements for the Canterbury region are made, therefore the governance

and committee structures proposed in this paper are based on current regional boundaries.



**Figure 1: Combined Plan structure**

## Governance and Committee Structure

20. Under the Bill, the local authorities of each region must agree a Process Agreement that covers matters that in effect form the high-level scope and approach to the preparation of a regional spatial plan. Taken from the Bill itself, the matters it must cover include:
- a) *the key geographical areas, issues, and opportunities that the draft regional spatial plan will focus on:*
  - b) *the roles of each local authority in the process, including how the local authorities will work together:*
  - c) *how the local authorities will work with central government, including relevant agencies and Crown entities:*
  - d) *how the local authorities will work with other local authorities in adjacent regions:*
  - e) *how each local authority will ensure that its obligations or agreements under iwi participation legislation or agreements under that legislation, existing joint management agreements, or existing or initiated Mana Whakahono ā Rohe are upheld during the process:*
  - f) *how the spatial plan committee will consult iwi authorities in the region:*
  - g) *how the local authorities will work with infrastructure providers, development and sector groups, others with a strong interest in spatial planning, and communities.*

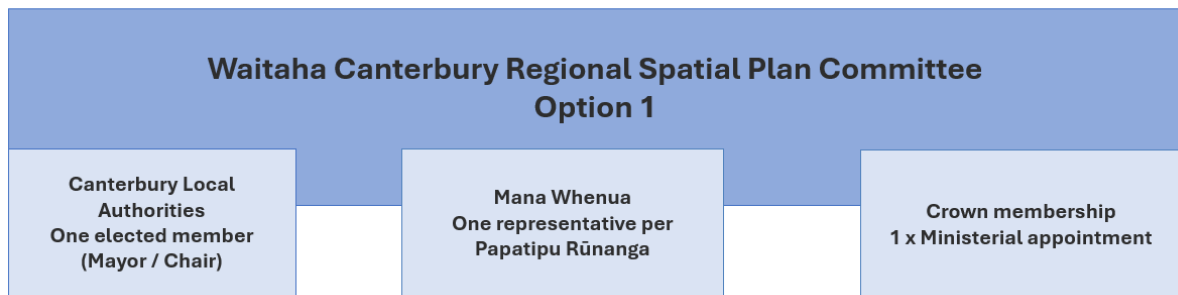
21. Based on the current interpretation of the Bill, the Process Agreement is intended to function as the framework for the spatial planning committee with clear alignment to its terms of reference.
22. The local authorities of each region must work together to provide terms of reference for a committee to perform or exercise the functions, duties, and powers of a spatial plan committee under the Planning Bill.
23. The spatial plan committee may be appointed in accordance with the Local Government Act 2002, or an existing committee established under legislation.
24. The spatial plan committee must appoint a chairperson and a secretariat in accordance with the regulations. It is proposed that an independent chair is appointed to lead the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee.
25. Irrespective of the option for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee, the Minister may appoint one member to the committee, and one or more additional members if the local authorities in the region agree to the additional members.
26. The following discussions on options for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee assume at least 1 Ministerial appointment.
27. The role of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee is set out in the draft terms of reference at Attachment 1, noting that there are several areas of the terms of reference that are unresolved at this time.
28. The key function is to prepare and consult on a draft regional spatial plan, recommend the draft regional spatial plan to all local authorities in the region for approval to publicly notify it, and then provide advice to the local authorities in the region on the independent hearing panel's recommendation on the draft regional spatial plan and review and amend the regional spatial plan for the region.
29. The final make-up of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee will need to be endorsed by all Waitaha Canterbury local authorities.

### **Option 1: Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee**

30. The first option proposed for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee is one elected member (Mayor/Chair) from each Canterbury Local Authority and one representative from each Papatipu Rūnanga (to be determined by mana whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu), along with the Crown appointment, see figure 2.
31. This option provides all councils with a voice at the table, gives strong legitimacy to the process, and provides direct representation.
32. This is the option preferred by the Chief Executives Forum.

## Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee Option 1

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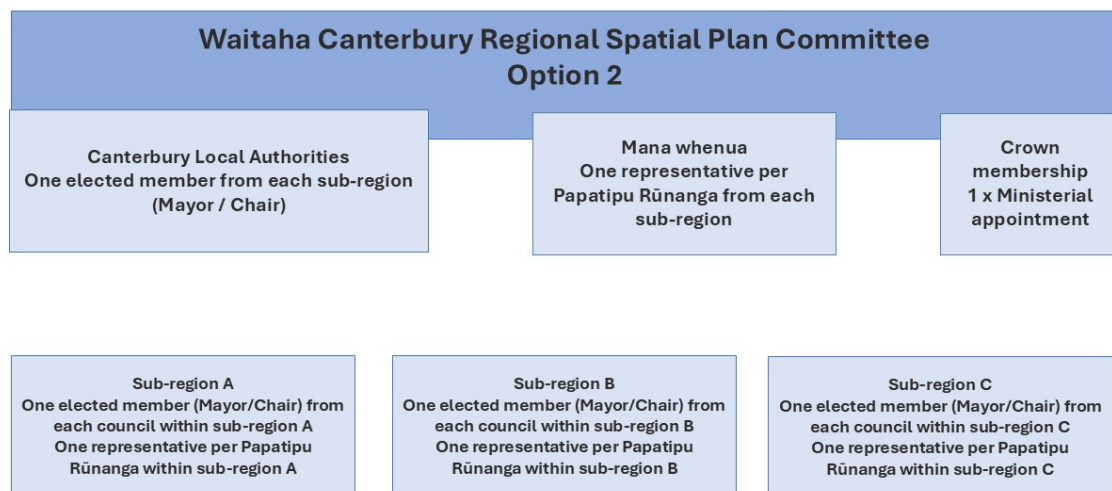


**Figure 2: Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee – Option 1**

### Option 2: Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee

33. The second option would see a sub-regional approach taken, with an elected member (Mayor/Chair) and a representative from Papatipu Rūnanga (to be determined by mana whenua and Te Rūnanga o Ngai Tahu) representing a sub-region of Canterbury on the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee, see figure 3 (noting that the number of sub-regions has not been pre-determined, three are shown for illustrative purposes only).
34. This option provides a smaller and potentially more streamlined Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee.
35. It would necessitate the establishment of processes to provide for sub-regional groupings to meet, consider and provide input into the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee, resulting in potential inefficiencies.
36. This approach may also result in uncertainty over sub-regional boundaries and is less likely to have wide-spread support from all councils.

## Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee Option 2



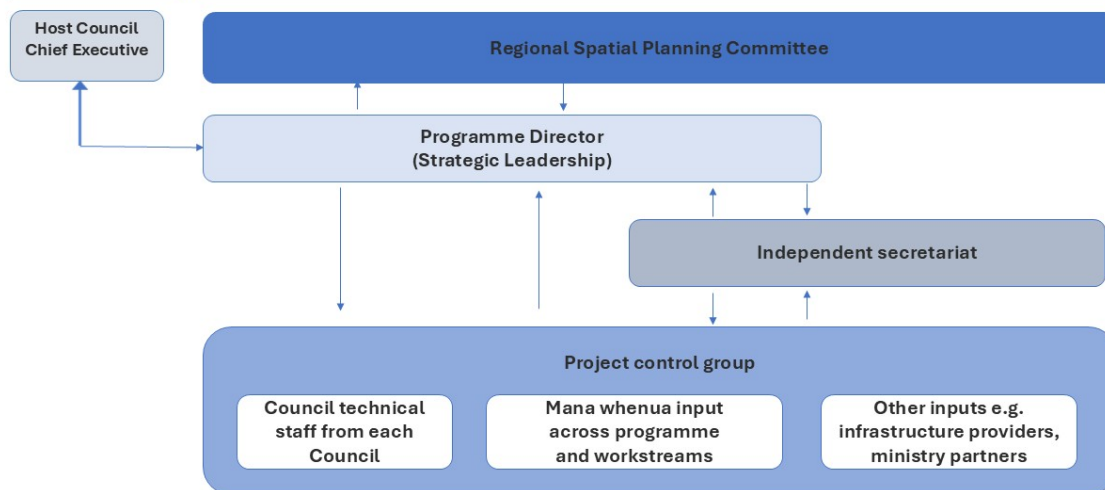
**Figure 3: Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee – Option 2**

### Proposed Governance Structure

37. To support the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee there is a need to establish the programme leadership as soon as practicable.
38. It is proposed that a Programme Director be appointed to provide this leadership
39. The Programme Director role would provide leadership for the complex, multi-organisational legislated programme of work. They would be required to work with all participating councils and mana whenua partners, governance bodies, technical leaders, and subject matter experts to build a shared spatial planning approach that is strategic, practical and which meets all the statutory requirements.
40. A draft proposed structure for the development of the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan is provided at figure 4.
41. It is considered that recruitment of the Programme Director should proceed immediately. In the interim, the Greater Christchurch Partnership has offered for their Director of the Greater Christchurch Partnership to undertake the role of Programme Director, in a limited capacity, alongside Partnership secretariat responsibilities. The specific level of resourcing of the Director's capacity and its duration is still to be assessed and negotiated. As the legislation will not be enacted until later in 2026, this offer of an interim position to initiate the establishment of programme management and leadership, provides the ability to get on with the work, while councils progress toward a long-term recruitment decision on the Programme Director role.
42. A host organisation will need to be agreed on for the Programme Director and Secretariat. Chief Executives have noted that this should be in Christchurch City and

could be at either Christchurch City Council or Canterbury Regional Council. There is no clear preference from Chief Executives on which council should host the Programme Director and Secretariat, however regardless of which entity hosts, the oversight and direction for the roles will come from the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee.

## Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Potential governance structure



**Figure 4: potential governance structure**

## Funding and resourcing

43. Initial scoping work from the Planning Managers has indicated a total budget of between \$7-10 million. This is not a confirmed budget or funding allocation.
44. The estimate is based on treating the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan as a new statutory planning programme, not as business-as-usual planning work.
45. The programme will require dedicated leadership, programme coordination, planning and policy resource, specialist input, evidence testing, mapping, mana whenua participation, engagement, legal support and integration with future land use and environmental planning instruments.
46. The estimate also reflects the scale of the evidence task. Existing council strategies, infrastructure plans, spatial plans, and technical information will provide a starting point, but they will need to be assessed for currency, consistency, spatial usefulness, and suitability for a statutory spatial plan.
47. Some councils will have stronger evidence bases than others so costs and resourcing implications will not fall evenly across the region.

48. It should be noted that this \$7-10 million estimate includes a level of councils' current budgets and resources, so it is not all new funding. For example, Canterbury Regional Council already has budget proposed in their annual plan for regional planning. Territorial Authorities will likely have planning budget identified in their annual plans.

### Funding allocation

49. Funding and budget options are still being worked through, however there are a variety of options for allocating the funding across councils.

50. The first is to use the current regional forums formula, which would result in an allocation across councils as follows:

Environment Canterbury	20.50%
Christchurch City	20.50%
Selwyn District	10.70%
Waimakariri District	10.70%
Ashburton District	9.80%
Timaru District	9.80%
Hurunui District	5.20%
Waimate District	3.90%
Waitaki District	3.90%
Kaikōura District	2.50%
Mackenzie District	2.50%

51. Should the allocation be determined using a population basis, the breakdown would be as follows:

	Population	Expected cost
Environment Canterbury	698200	
Christchurch City	419200	60.04%
Selwyn District	87600	12.55%
Waimakariri District	69800	10.00%
Ashburton District	37400	5.36%
Timaru District	49500	7.09%
Hurunui District	14350	2.06%
Waimate District	8450	1.21%
Waitaki District	2040	0.29%
Kaikōura District	4340	0.62%
Mackenzie District	5520	0.79%

52. Alternatively, there may be an option for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Work programme to be debt funded through the Canterbury Regional Council. This is not currently part of the Canterbury Regional Council Annual Plan discussions and would require consultation, additional to what has taken place. While this option may reduce immediate pressure on territorial authorities' budgets, with the costs potentially recovered from successor entities, the Long-term Plan is the next opportunity for the Regional Council to make this call, which is after when the bulk of the work is required.

53. It should be noted that territorial authorities are in a similar position, with respect to their annual plan and long-term planning processes, should additional territorial authority funding be required to support this work.
54. Given that some councils will already have planning budgets within their annual plans, initial funding may be available to get the work underway, subject to Council agreement. Future budget requests would take into consideration the timing of individual councils' contributions.
55. A key initial task for the proposed Programme Director would be to refine the funding and resourcing requirements for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan programme.

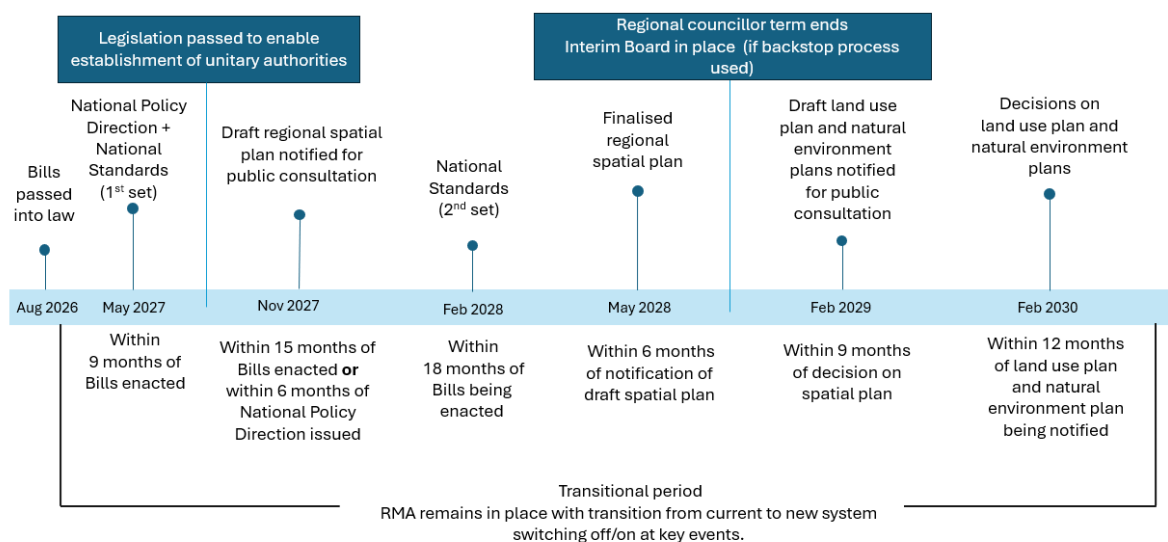
## **Independent Hearings Panel**

56. The Planning Bill separates the role of the spatial plan committee from the role of the Independent Hearings Panel.
57. The spatial plan committee is responsible for leading development of the draft regional spatial plan and progressing it to the point where local authorities approve it for public notification. It is the governance and plan-development body for the regional spatial plan.
58. The Independent Hearings Panel would be appointed by the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee for the submissions and hearings stage.
59. The role of the Independent Hearing Panel is to consider the material before it, hear submissions, and make recommendations. In making recommendations, the Panel may only consider the matters specified in the Bill, the options assessment report, any reports commissioned by or prepared for the Panel, and submissions received on the draft regional spatial plan. The Panel's report must set out its reasons for accepting or rejecting submissions, grouped into themes.
60. After the Independent Hearing Panel reports, the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee would provide advice to the relevant local authorities on the Panel's recommendations. The local authorities then decide whether to accept or reject each recommendation. If they reject a recommendation, they must decide an alternative solution, which must be within the scope of submissions. Local authorities must publicly notify their decisions, including which recommendations are accepted, which are rejected, the reasons for any rejection, and the alternative solution.
61. The Bill also provides for limited decision-making roles for the Minister and designating authorities. The Minister may make decisions on Panel recommendations that relate to specified central government infrastructure, assets, or matters of national interest. Designating authorities make decisions on recommendations relating to their proposed designations where those are included in the spatial planning process.
62. A key point to note is that the Independent Hearings Panel is not a second spatial planning committee. The Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee

develops and advances the draft regional spatial plan. The Independent Hearings Panel provides an independent hearings and recommendations process. The final decision on whether to adopt the recommendations of the Independent Hearing Panel remains with local authorities, except where the Bill gives a specific role to the Minister or a designating authority.

## Integration with local government reform

63. Local government reform may result in a number of unitary authorities across Canterbury and spatial planning boundaries may need to adapt to new structures.
64. The timing of the local government reform and spatial planning requirements is shown in figure 5.



**Figure 5: RM reform implementation timeline**

65. Work on the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan will need to proceed based on no-regrets so that it remains relevant under future institutional arrangements.

## Cost, compliance, and communication

### Financial implications

66. Indicative costs are between \$7-10 million, noting that this includes an element of current local authorities' budget and resources.
67. The funding method for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan still needs to be resolved, however initial funding could be available to get the work underway from council's existing planning budgets.

68. Budget implications are likely to have multi-year impacts across councils, depending on the funding model chosen to support the work. The details of this still needs to be worked through.

### **Risk assessment and legal compliance**

69. Key risks at this stage are:

- misalignment between the requirement for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan and local government reform processes
  - focus on no-regrets work
- resource and funding constraints
- tight timeframes
- fragmentation across councils
  - establish leadership early
  - maintain strong CE level coordination

### **Significance and engagement**

70. The Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan is of high significance across all local authorities, mana whenua, and stakeholders. It will be important to ensure clear and consistent messaging is provided as required.

71. The Regional Spatial Plan Committee must refer the draft Regional Spatial Plan to local authorities for approval for public notification, who must then decide whether to approve it for public notification.

### **Next steps**

72. Immediately following Forum (June 2026):

- confirm Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee preferred governance structure
- finalise Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee terms of reference, for inclusion in the Process Agreement for the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan required under the Planning Bill 2025
- begin Programme Director recruitment (noting the offer from the Greater Christchurch Partnership for interim support)
- confirm hosting arrangement
- commence initial regional spatial plan programme planning, led by Director Greater Christchurch Partnership (if approved)
- initiate development of Process Agreement for the regional spatial plan

73. Short term (June–September 2026):

- finalise funding model
- establish programme governance and PMO
- begin evidence and technical work
- finalise Process Agreement for the regional spatial plan in preparation for individual governance level approval
- support councils engaging in reform processes

74. Medium term (2026–2027):

- develop spatial plan on a no-regrets, future-focused basis
- undertake stakeholder and mana whenua engagement

75. Key dependency:

- work must remain adaptable to local government reform outcomes and planning legislation finalisation
- securing required approvals, resourcing, and budgeting for regional spatial planning in a timely manner.

## **Attachment**

- Attachment 1 - Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee draft terms of reference

## Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee

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### **DRAFT** Terms of reference (DATE 2026)

**The Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee (the Committee) is tasked to fulfil the statutory functions, duties, and powers required to prepare and maintain a Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan.**

### **Background**

1. Under the Planning Bill spatial planning will be mandatory for each region and must be developed collaboratively by all local authorities within the region, through a spatial plan committee. Central government involvement at the governance and working levels is provided for, and committee arrangements will need to uphold relevant iwi participation legislation and related arrangements.
2. Spatial plans will support planning for urban development and infrastructure within environmental limits and constraints, providing strategic direction for growth over a 30-year period. Spatial plans form part of the combined regional plan and must implement national instruments. Spatial plans will be implemented by land-use plans under this Bill, and natural environment plans under the Natural Environment Bill.
3. The spatial planning process is designed to support integrated decision-making between this Bill and the Natural Environment Bill, and integration of development planning with infrastructure planning and investment. Regional land transport plans under the Land Transport Management Act 2003 must be consistent with spatial plans, and long-term plans under the Local Government Act 2002 must help implement spatial plans.
4. Spatial plan committees are required to consult with iwi authorities and customary marine title groups in the region in preparing the draft spatial plan. They must also work with others with a strong interest in spatial planning for that region, including core infrastructure operators, development and community sector groups, and neighbouring local authorities during plan development. The committees must recommend the draft spatial plan to the region's local authorities for approval to notify it for public submissions.
5. Local authorities must establish an Independent Hearings Panel (an **IHP**) to hear public submissions on the draft spatial plan and make recommended changes. Local authorities must either accept IHP recommendations or decide an alternative solution that is consistent with the requirements of the Bill. The Minister and designating authorities also have a decision-making role in certain circumstances. Points of law appeals and limited merits appeals are available.

### **Context**

6. Under the Planning Act (to be enacted mid-2026) local authorities must maintain a regional spatial plan for the region.
7. The purpose of a Regional Spatial Plan is to:

- 7.1. set the strategic direction for development and public investment priorities in a region for a time span of not less than 30 years
  - 7.2. enable integration at the strategic level of decision-making under the Planning Act and the Natural Environment Act
  - 7.3. implement national instruments made under the Planning Act and the Natural Environment Act in a way that provides for use and development within environmental limits
  - 7.4. support a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure funding and investment by central government, local authorities, and other infrastructure providers
  - 7.5. promote integration of development planning with infrastructure planning and investment.
8. The Planning Act requires that a spatial plan committee is set up in each region. That committee may be either:
- 8.1. appointed in accordance with the Local Government Act 2022 (LGA); or
  - 8.2. an existing committee established under legislation
9. The Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee (the Committee) is a joint committee in accordance with the LGA and meets the requirements of a spatial plan committee under the Planning Act.
10. The Committee is supported by a secretariat as required under the Planning Act.

### **Committee membership [to be completed following CMF decisions]**

11. The Waitaha Canterbury Regional Spatial Plan Committee consists of:
  - 11.1. one representative from each Waitaha Canterbury local authority
  - 11.2. one representative from each Papatipu Rūnanga (as determined by mana whenua, and possibly Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu)
  - 11.3. one Ministerial appointment – under the Planning Act, the Minister may appoint a member to the spatial plan committee and may appoint additional members if the local authorities in the region agree.
12. Members may replace their representatives from time to time by providing written notice to the Committee confirming the amended appointment.
13. There is no provision for alternates. Other Partner representatives are welcome to attend and may seek speaking rights.
14. The Committee may invite other agencies or experts to present and participate in its discussions as the Committee considers appropriate.
15. The Committee will not be discharged at the point of each election period (in line with Clause 30(7) of Schedule 7 of the LGA 2002).

## Independent Chair and Deputy Chair

16. The Independent Chair will be appointed by the Committee and will continue in the role unless otherwise resolved by the Committee or upon a resignation being received.
17. The Independent Chair will chair the Committee and the Executive Level Steering Group.
18. Remuneration and contractual arrangements for the independent Chair will be agreed by the Executive Level Steering Group.
19. A Deputy Chair will be appointed by the Committee who shall be a voting member of the Committee. The Deputy Chair will continue in the role for the duration of the work of the Committee unless resolved by the Committee or upon a resignation being received.
20. There will be no remuneration for the Deputy Chair.

## Functions

21. The Committee will appoint a secretariat in accordance with the regulations.
22. The Committee, with support from the Secretariat, will prepare and make public a Process Agreement under the Planning Act that sets out:
  - 22.1. the key geographical areas, issues, and opportunities that the draft regional spatial plan will focus on
  - 22.2. the roles of each local authority in the process, including how the local authorities will work together
  - 22.3. how the local authorities will work with central government, including relevant agencies and Crown entities
  - 22.4. how the local authorities will work with other local authorities in adjacent regions
23. The Committee, with support from the Secretariat, will prepare a draft Regional Spatial Plan in accordance with the process agreement and the requirements of the Planning Act.
24. The Committee will decide whether to recommend the draft Regional Spatial Plan to local authorities for approval for public notification, then once approved, publicly notify the draft Regional Spatial Plan.
25. The Committee, with support from the Secretariat, will prepare and make public an options assessment report in accordance with the process agreement and the requirements of the Planning Act.
26. The Committee will assign an independent hearings panel to the draft Regional Spatial Plan.
27. The Committee, with support from the Secretariat, will prepare and provide any information requested by the independent hearing panel.
28. The Committee, with support from the Secretariat, will provide advice to the local authorities in the region on the independent hearing panel's recommendations on the draft Regional Spatial Plan.

29. If all local authorities in the region adopt the Regional Spatial Plan, the Committee, with support from the Secretariat, will make the Plan and supporting documents publicly available.
30. The Committee, with support from the Secretariat, will prepare and consult on a co-ordination plan.
31. The Committee will monitor and report on the coordination plan.
32. The Committee, with support from the Secretariat, will review the Regional Spatial plan as required.

### **Administrative arrangements**

33. A quorum consists of half of the members if the number of members (including vacancies) is an even number; or a majority of members if the number of members (including vacancies) is an odd number.
34. The standing orders of (host council) will apply to meetings of the Committee.

### **Voting**

35. Under the Planning Act decisions are to be reached by consensus. Consensus means unanimity or general agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition on any substantial issue. Committee members must do everything reasonably practicable to achieve consensus in their decision-making.
36. Voting shall be on the basis of the majority present at the meeting, with no alternates or proxies.
37. The Independent Chairperson:
  - 37.1. has a deliberative vote; and
  - 37.2. in the case of equality of votes, does not have a casting vote (and therefore the act or question is defeated and the status quo is preserved).
38. A member of a spatial plan committee appointed by the Minister has the same voting rights as a member appointed by the local authorities of the region, unless the Minister directs in writing at the time of appointment that the member:
  - 38.1. is a non-voting member; or
  - 38.2. may only vote on specified matters

### **Meeting frequency**

39. The Committee shall meet monthly, or as necessary and determined by the Chairperson in liaison with the Committee.
40. Notification of Committee meetings and the publication of agendas and reports shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of Part 7 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

## Dispute Resolution

41. The Planning Act specifies a dispute resolution process to be run by the Chairperson where consensus can't be reached. If a consensus is not reached and the dispute resolution process fails, the Committee must advise the Minister that a decision is required. The Minister may either make the decision or appoint an independent person to make the decision. The decision is binding and must be made publicly available.
42. The Minister can make decisions on recommendations where they will have an impact on central government infrastructure and on matters that will support or impact a matter of national interest. The Minister will notify the Committee of his or her intention to make a decision on such matters.
43. In all other cases it is the local authorities who make decisions on the independent hearing panel recommendations and publicly notify those decisions.

## Consultation

44. The Committee must consult with iwi authorities and any customary marine title groups in the region in preparing the draft regional spatial plan, and must comply with the consultation requirements applicable to joint committees under the LGA.

## Delegations

45. Establishing, and where necessary, amending, protocols and processes to support the effective functioning of the Committee and the Secretariat, including but not limited to those relating to the resolution of conflicting views, communications and public deputations.
46. Preparing communication and engagement material and publishing reports relevant to the functions of the Committee.
47. Commissioning evidence and other information, including that needed to develop the draft Regional Spatial Plan.
48. Undertaking engagement and consultation exercises in support of the terms of reference and functions of the Committee.
49. The Committee can make financial decisions within an agreed budget envelope.

## Financial delegations

50. The Committee can make financial decisions within an agreed budget envelope and as long as the decision does not trigger any change to the statutory plans prepared under the LGA 2002, the RMA 1991, or the LTMA 2003.

**Limitation of powers (to be updated to reflect the requirements of the Planning Act)**

51. In of itself the Committee does not have the authority to commit any Partner to any course of action or expenditure and its recommendations do not compromise the Partners' freedom to deliberate and make decisions.
52. For the avoidance of doubt, the Partners are under no obligation to accept the recommendations of the Committee.
53. In accordance with legislative requirements Partners will retain decision-making and other statutory responsibilities in relation to their functions and responsibilities under the LGA 2002, the RMA 1991, and the LTMA 2003.

**Review and amendment of these terms of reference**

54. The Committee will review its terms of reference...

Approved by *Canterbury region's local authorities, [DATE]*

Draft for discussion

# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

**Date:** 29 May 2026

**Presented by:** Hamish Dobbie, Chair CE Forum

## Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide a final draft Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026 – 2028 and associated 'elevator pitch' for the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's approval, along with the updated Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready document.

### Recommendations

**That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:**

1. **approves the final draft Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026–2028, and delegate final approval for any minor changes to the Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum for approval**
2. **approves the draft Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury elevator pitch, and delegate final approval for any minor changes to the Chair of the Canterbury Mayoral Forum for approval**
3. **notes the updates to Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready**

### Background

2. The Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement states that the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) will develop and lead implementation of a sustainable development strategy for the Canterbury region for the local government triennium 2025-2028. Since 2020, the strategy has been packaged as the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury (the Plan).
3. At the first meeting of the 2025-2028 triennium, the Mayoral Forum agreed to review and update the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025 for the 2025-2028 triennium.
4. At the February 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting the vision, priorities and actions for the Plan were confirmed. Mayoral Forum members also provided feedback on the draft 'elevator pitch' proposed to support Mayoral Forum advocacy.
5. The draft Plan and 'elevator pitch' have been developed taking into consideration the feedback from the Mayoral Forum and the March regional forum meetings.

6. To support the Plan, a draft three-year strategic workplan will be developed for implementation through the CE Forum.

## The Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury

7. The draft Plan is provided at Attachment 1. The Plan sets out how the Forum will work together to deliver collective advocacy and action for the region.
8. The significant reform that local authorities are facing with implementation of the new resource management system, major changes proposed to local government structures, changes through the emergency management legislation and funding and rating settings is set out at the beginning of the document.
9. The Plan includes 10 actions for the Mayoral Forum's leadership, facilitation and advocacy. Nine of the actions were confirmed by the Mayoral Forum at its February meeting.
10. The action to advocate for a centrally coordinated workforce skills and development plan was added following the March Economic Development Forum (ED Forum). At the ED Forum a paper was presented on workforce skills and development. A conclusion from the subsequent discussion was that there is a clear gap in this area and that, while there is not an appetite for developing a regional workforce skills and development strategy, it was important to continue advocacy for a national initiative in this space.
11. The Plan makes specific reference to the Canterbury Ambition work, led by Business Canterbury, and Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready, which outlines the key pillars for a future regional deal proposal: transport, housing, energy, infrastructure and innovation.

## The Elevator Pitch

12. The draft elevator pitch is provided at Attachment 2 for the Forum's consideration.
13. The elevator pitch has been developed to support Mayoral Forum advocacy and highlights the contribution that Canterbury makes to the national economy and articulates three clear asks of government:
  - We are investing in transport corridors that support efficient and uninterrupted movement throughout the region, building network resilience with strengthened connections. **We want our fair share of national transport funding.**
  - We are investing in flood protection for our communities to improve regional resilience. **We want permanent co-investment in flood protection schemes to continue this work.**
  - We are ready to maximise new opportunities, foster business growth and increase employment prospects for our communities. **We want workforce skills and development to match critical business needs.**

14. The pitch includes email contact details for all members of the Mayoral Forum, with phone numbers for the Chair and Deputy Chair.

## **World-stage ready**

15. Aspects of the development of the Plan and elevator pitch build on [Waitaha Canterbury World-stage ready](#) that was finalised in August 2025. Since then, the document has been updated to reflect the 2026-2028 Plan for Canterbury and the latest information available related to the five pillars.
16. The updated Waitaha Canterbury World-Stage Ready is provided at Attachment 3 and will be uploaded to the Mayoral Forum's website following this meeting.

## **Cost, compliance and communication**

### **Financial implications**

17. The costs associated with the production of the Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028 and elevator pitch are covered within existing budgets.
18. Any budget required for specific projects from the Plan for Canterbury will need to be approved by the Chief Executives / Mayoral Forum.

### **Communication**

19. Communications will be prepared to support engagement with audiences, as outlined in the Canterbury Mayoral Forum Communications and Engagement Plan, including central government ministers, members of parliament and Canterbury local authorities to socialise the Plan, supported by the updated Waitaha Canterbury World-stage ready.

## **Next steps**

20. The draft Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026 – 2028 will be updated to reflect feedback received today and design finalised. It will be uploaded to the Mayoral Forum website.
21. The draft Mayoral Forum's elevator pitch will be updated to reflect feedback received today and once finalised, will be circulated to members.
22. The updated Waitaha Canterbury World-stage ready will be uploaded to the Mayoral Forum website following this meeting.
23. All three documents will support ongoing leadership, collaboration and advocacy for Waitaha Canterbury and material will be prepared to support communication and engagement as identified in the Communications and Engagement Plan.

## **Attachments**

- Attachment 1 – Draft Mayoral Forum’s Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028
- Attachment 2 – Draft Mayoral Forum’s Elevator Pitch
- Attachment 3 – Waitaha Canterbury World-Stage Ready (May 2026)

Mayoral Forum's

# Plan for Canterbury

## Tā te Kāhui Koromatua Mahere mō Waitaha

2026-2028

DRAFT

***Ko Ngā Tiritiri o te Moana  
ngā maunga***

***Ko ngā wai huka ngā awa  
i rere tonu mai***

***Ko Ngā Pākihi Whakatekateka  
o Waitaha te whenua***

***Ko Marokura, ko Mahaanui,  
ko Araiteuru ngā tai***

***Tihei mauri ora!***

***The Southern Alps stand above***

***The snow-fed rivers  
continually flow forth***

***The plains of Waitaha extend out***

***To the tides of Marokura,  
Mahaanui and Araiteuru***

***Behold there is life!***



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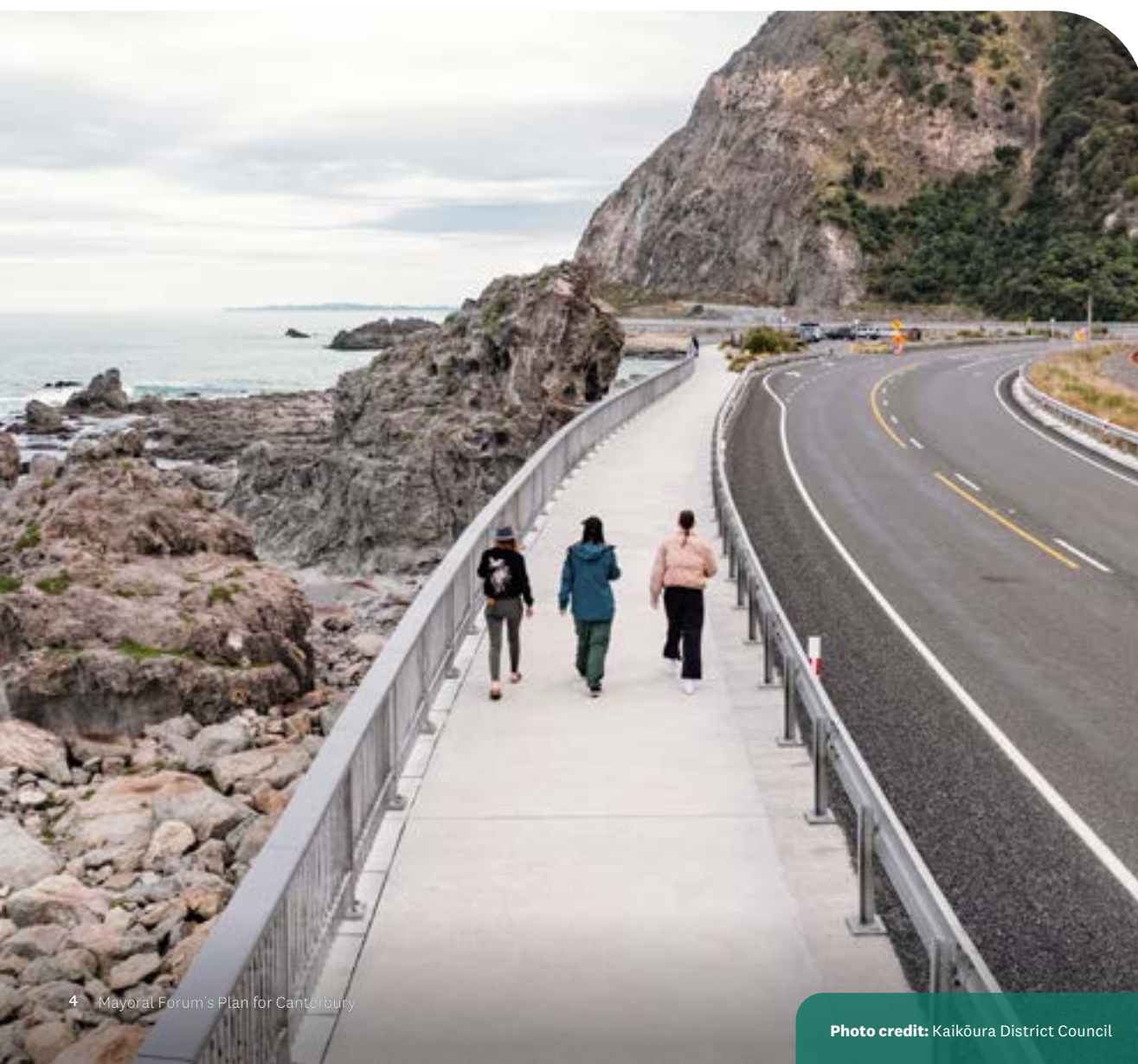
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# From the Chair Tā te Tiamana

**Waitaha Canterbury is in an enviable position to meet global and national challenges with our mix of unique environments, local businesses with a capacity for innovation, strong agricultural sector, and our capable and connected communities.**

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum has a vision for a strong, resilient, prosperous Canterbury, and we're clear on how to lead Canterbury through this time of major change.

We are all navigating central government's significant reforms to resource management, the local government system, the emergency management structure and the way essential local and regional council work is funded. Councils are adapting to these unprecedented changes, along with a myriad of global pressures, and we must continue to do so collectively.



We are grappling with the complexity of these interrelated reforms and are making tough decisions while delivering essential services to our communities. The Forum will continue to influence central government and be the unified voice for Canterbury as the central government's work continues.

Our Plan for Canterbury will supercharge the Canterbury region's key attributes as we build a future for all our communities and for future generations. Our collective actions, now, must have a real and measurable impact. This is crucial, as the region's population's high-growth projections indicate there will be 200,000 more people calling Canterbury their home by 2048.

Our big three priorities are clear: to achieve prosperity for all our communities, enhance sustainable environmental management, and ensure we can limit how climate change impacts our residents and infrastructure through clever and timely adaptative measures.

The Forum is acutely aware that our region's prosperity is not only economic; it's also social. Supporting mental health and social wellbeing, strengthening multi-agency work with the Public Services Commission involving youth, housing access, and equitable pathways for whānau will help lift all communities.

As we face an increased frequency of natural disasters, ensuring natural hazard preparedness and advocacy for proactive, long-term risk reduction is a key part of our region's resilience.

Energy security also plays a big part in our region's resilience. To move to a low-emissions future, the Forum will support the region to foster partnerships and advocate to improve our energy security and systems.

The Forum will also advocate with government for more investment in the transport network, and enable the protection of our biodiversity and pest management.

At the heart of delivering these outcomes are the relationships we build and nurture. Strong, respectful relationships with mana whenua (Ngāi Tahu and Papatipu Rūnanga), central government, Canterbury councils, the private sector, the business community, tertiary and research providers, and our wonderful communities are what make it all possible.

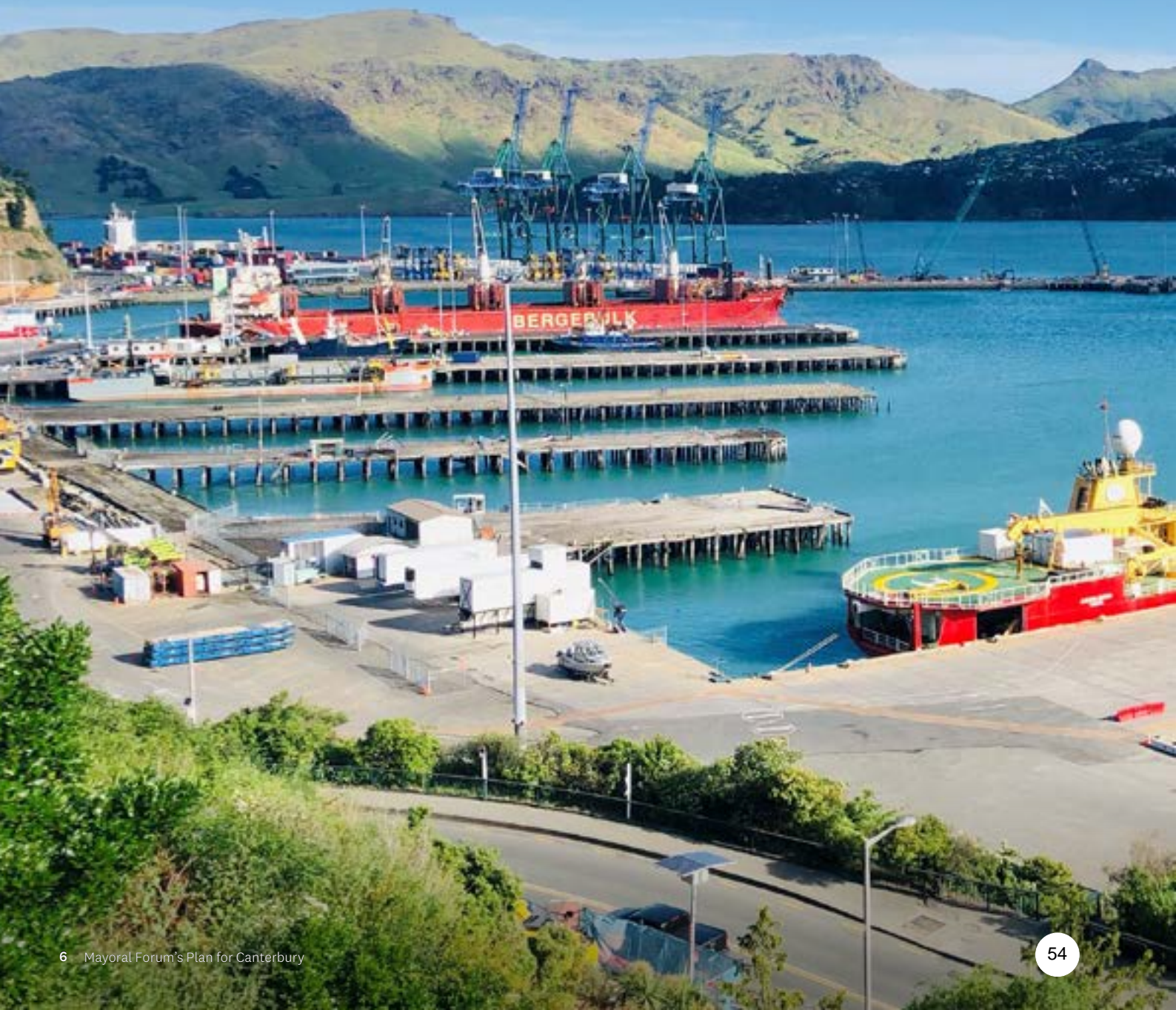
We will realise our vision by thinking regionally, not just locally. Collective purpose and confident leadership are paramount during this time of unprecedented change. The Forum will advocate for Canterbury and ensure that each community can see their district's identity in each workstream and regional decision.

Councils working together on regional issues and opportunities will deliver greater efficiency and better outcomes for our communities, now and into the future.



**Nigel Bowen**  
Chair

# Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury Tā te Kāhui Koromatua Mahere mō Waitaha



**The Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury sets out how the Forum will work together to deliver collective advocacy and action for the region.**

It outlines shared priorities, identifies where the Mayoral Forum can have the greatest impact, and guides engagement with central government and other key partners, ensuring Canterbury's voice is represented.



# Vision

## Te matawhānui

### The Mayoral Forum's vision for Canterbury is:

A strong regional economy with resilient, connected communities and a better quality of life for all.

### In this we echo the guiding whakataukī of Ngāi Tahu:

Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei – for us and our children after us.

### What we think this looks like for Canterbury:



Strong partnerships with mana whenua



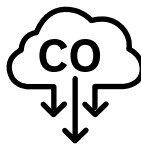
Accelerated sustainable and inclusive economic growth



Climate-resilient, future ready infrastructure



Diverse, affordable, quality housing and choices for a growing population



Equitable transition to a low-emissions, renewable energy future



A strong tourism sector supported by resilient infrastructure and appropriate regulatory funding tools



Working with the private sector on growth opportunities



A well-functioning local government sector



Great communities



# Our shared future

## Tō tātou anamata

**Waitaha Canterbury has world-class landscapes, thriving communities, and a spirit that inspires residents, welcomes visitors, and helps drive Aotearoa forward. Our region is the largest by land area, with diverse landscapes, abundant water (over 78,000 km of rivers and streams), and large areas of productive flat land.**

Canterbury has become a launch pad for global innovation, with strengths in agritech, aerospace, education and energy.

We have a strong agricultural sector, with innovative farmers and agribusiness making a significant contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

We are also a strong base for tourism, with the region featuring some of the most spectacular scenery, including mountains, braided rivers, lakes and beaches in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Waitaha Canterbury is a region with strong national and international connections, with the rare distinction of serving as the main gateway to Antarctica. Canterbury is home to the South Island's major international airport (Christchurch), a regional airport (Timaru), two seaports (Timaru and Lyttelton) and inland ports at Rolleston.

Through the Mayoral Forum, Canterbury's well-established structures and coordinated approach ensure our communities are well supported, connected, and heard. We will use this to our advantage to support discussions on addressing the drivers for change in Canterbury.

Our councils are facing significant challenges and change over the coming years. The impact of inflation, central government policies and addressing climate change resilience will influence the shape and functions of local government and the communities we serve. Each council may find this impacts them in different ways and by sharing knowledge and experience, we can get the best results for Canterbury.

### **A voice for Canterbury**

Having a strong local voice, through this time of unprecedented change, will help influence outcomes and ensure the continued success of our communities. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum will actively engage with central government to shape policies and programmes that support local communities, while championing the future of local government across the Canterbury region. We are committed to working alongside neighbouring Mayoral Forums and groups to build a collaborative governance future across Te Waipounamu South Island. As part of our advocacy work, the Mayoral Forum makes considered submissions on government reform programmes and other legislation to provide a whole-of-Canterbury view. This will continue as the term progresses.

### ***The Canterbury Mayoral Forum will actively engage with central government to shape policies and programmes that support local communities.***

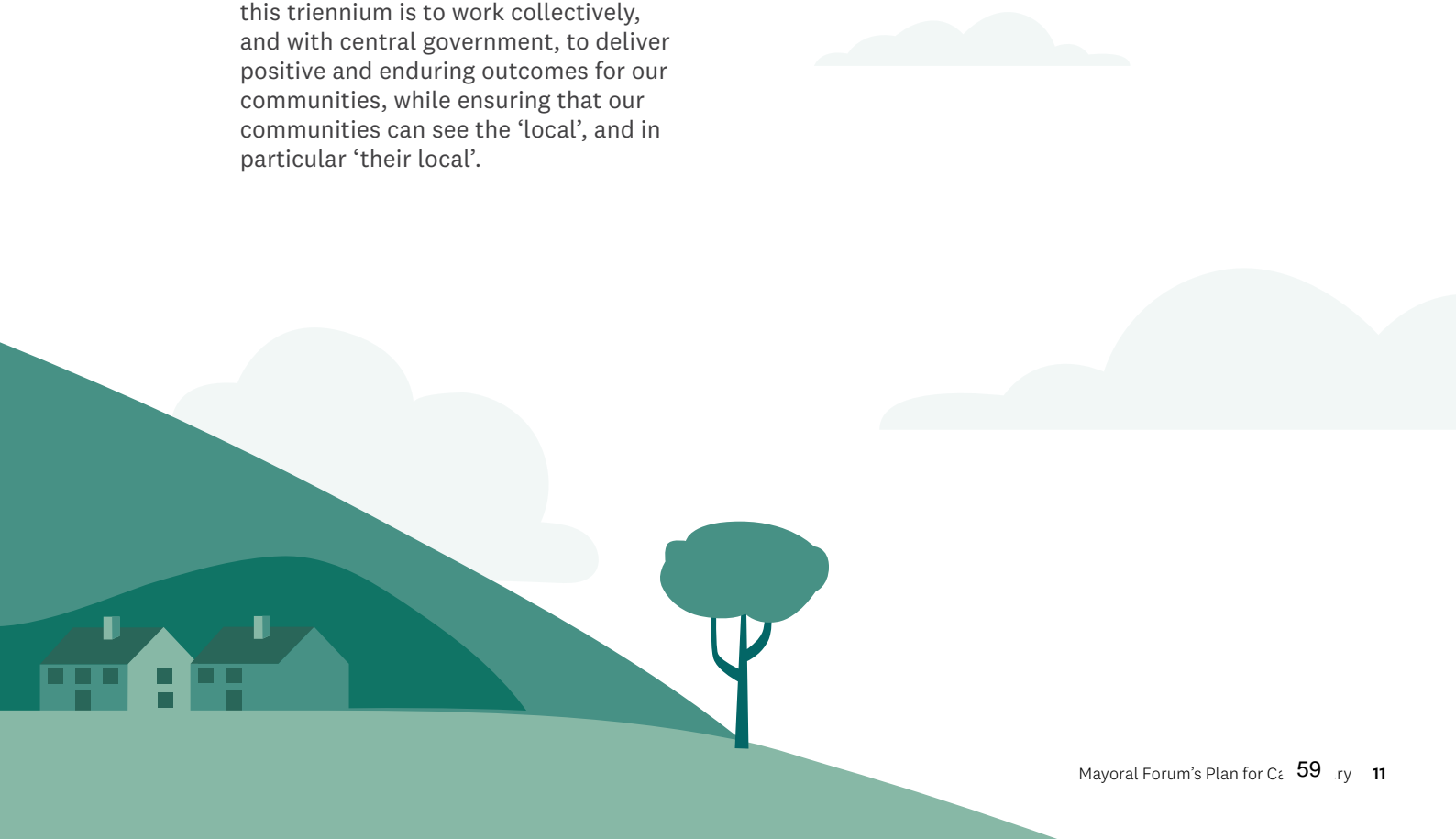
A key priority for the Mayoral Forum this triennium is to work collectively, and with central government, to deliver positive and enduring outcomes for our communities, while ensuring that our communities can see the 'local', and in particular 'their local'.

### ***Forum members strongly support the concept of localism and subsidiarity***

We have developed a vision and strategic objectives that acknowledge our strength as Canterbury. Forum members strongly support the concept of localism and subsidiarity, in that the function of governance and decision-making should be devolved to the level of government closest to affected communities.

Standing together for Canterbury, we celebrate a win for any part of the region as a win for the whole region. During hard times and when disaster strikes, we all pitch in to help.

A wise and balanced approach to sustainable development requires 'gifts and gains', recognition of our diverse interests and values, and focusing on agreement where we can, without pushing for consensus where it does not exist.



# A significant time to reform Kia whakaumutia

**Local government in Aotearoa New Zealand is entering a period of profound and simultaneous reform.**

Across 2025–2028, councils are expected to implement major changes to the resource management system, local government structure, emergency management legislation, and funding and rating settings – all while maintaining core services, supporting rapid population growth, and responding to increasing natural hazard risks.

For Waitaha Canterbury, a region defined by fast-growing urban centres, diverse rural communities, significant environmental assets, and a complex hazard profile, the scale and convergence of these reforms create both opportunity and pressure.

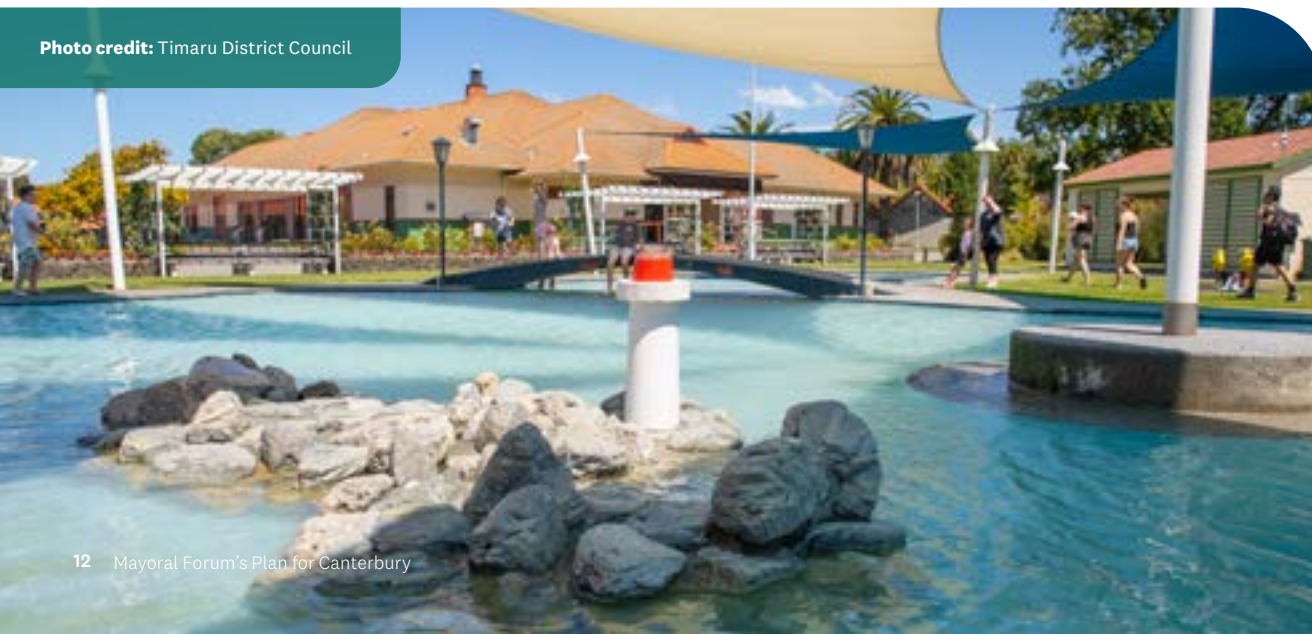
The Mayoral Forum recognises and is supportive of the Government’s objectives to improve system performance, strengthen accountability, lift economic productivity and deliver better long-term outcomes for communities. We acknowledge that aspects of the current system are under pressure and that change is required to address long-standing economic, environmental, and funding challenges.

The scale and pace of change across the reform programme will require careful management, and significant investment from communities and councils to transition to new statutory responsibilities. This means tough decisions lie ahead to both fund and implement the changes, while also providing the functions and services that our communities need and love.

Given the scale and breadth of the current reform proposals, a significant focus for the start of this triennium will be addressing the reform proposals, noting that the outcomes from these proposals will impact local government going forward.

***The Mayoral Forum will provide leadership for Canterbury through central government reforms, including supporting development of the regional spatial plan.***

Photo credit: Timaru District Council





# Our priorities Ō mātou aronga

To achieve its long-term vision, the Mayoral Forum has identified three priority areas for the Mayoral Forum's leadership, facilitation and advocacy in this local government term:

## Strengthening 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, coordinating strategies for housing our communities and maximising the opportunities presented by regional re-organisation.

## Sustainable environmental management of our habitats (land, air, water and ecosystems)

Focusing on land use and freshwater management in the face of significant reform.

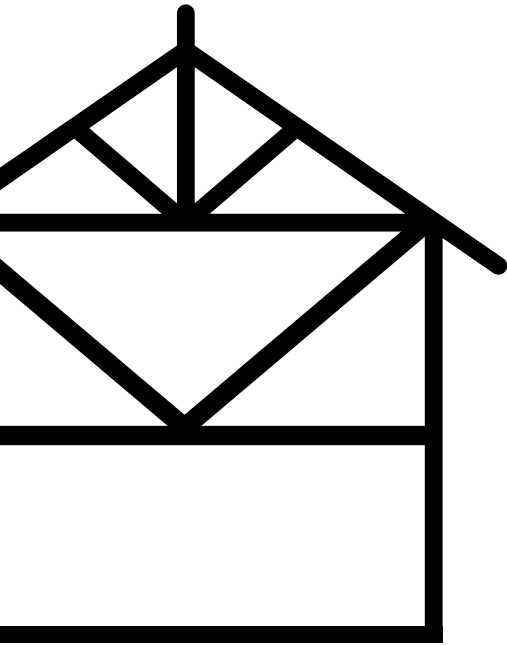
## Preparing communities for climate change

Working together on climate action planning, building community resilience, and making our infrastructure as strong as it can be.

We recognise all elements that impact our environment, communities and businesses are important. In determining our priorities, we considered the significant shift in operating context, how much we can realistically deliver or progress this term, and how best to balance time and funding with competing demands.

We have prioritised these three areas as we think this is where we can make the most impact while applying ourselves fully to the change in front of us.





# Strengthening shared prosperity for all our communities

## Te whakapakari i te tōnuitanga o te hāpori

**The Canterbury Ambition was developed by Business Canterbury, led by businesses in our region and supported by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum.**

Since September 2024, Business Canterbury, the Canterbury Mayoral Forum and local businesses have come together to form a shared ambition for our region. The progress we have made toward the goal of a shared ambition – in bringing the private and public sectors together from right across Canterbury – has created the conversations and conditions for alignment and clarity.

This Ambition outlines what sets Canterbury apart, and the key ingredients for Canterbury's long-term success. The Ambition is built on three interconnected pillars – Environment, Innovation, and Lifestyle. Strong businesses and strong communities are innately linked to our environment, our lifestyle, and our capacity for innovation.

Waitaha Canterbury is globally competitive, increasing trade and investment, and attracting top talent. The Canterbury Ambition shares this view, recognising that our strong businesses and cohesive communities are innately linked to our environment and lifestyle, and our capacity for innovation.

In August 2025 the Mayoral Forum published Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready, which provides a snapshot of the key pillars for a future Canterbury regional deal proposal: transport, housing, energy, infrastructure and innovation.

Shared prosperity across Canterbury focuses us on continually building on our economic strengths and developing emerging sectors. This includes growing, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, improvement of the transport network, coordinating strategies for housing in our communities, and maximising the opportunities presented by the current reform proposals.

Canterbury has many natural advantages, significant infrastructure, and a range of tertiary education providers and research institutes. We are well-placed for research-informed innovation in sustainable primary production, agricultural value chain, aerospace, biotech and precision medicine sectors, clean tech manufacturing and high-value manufacturing. This will lift productivity and the prosperity of our region.

Despite these advantages, Canterbury's GDP per person still lags behind the country as a whole, although the region contributes 13 percent of New Zealand's GDP. To lift wages and incomes, we need more jobs and skilled workers to fill them, through 'growing our own' but also by attracting and retaining newcomers. To build on our strengths, we need a sustained focus on the region's key industries, as well as an eye to emerging sectors. It is critical that we continue to consider future industry skills needs and plan for them.

Agriculture is the long-standing backbone of the Canterbury economy, playing a significantly more important role in Canterbury's economy than in Auckland or Wellington. It also generates a significant amount of economic activity from supporting industries including manufacturing, transport and warehousing, and financial and insurance services. Diversifying and adding value to our agricultural production, through innovative techniques or new technologies, improves market resilience and has the potential to reduce environmental impact.

Research and development not only supports agriculture, but also has Canterbury at the leading edge of aerospace.

Canterbury is home to a burgeoning aerospace industry because of its topography, infrastructure and proximity to international air and seaports.

The region's low air traffic, advanced manufacturing capabilities, and supportive regulatory environment make it ideal for testing and developing cutting-edge aerospace technologies.

An increasing number of local aerospace companies are contributing to solutions for global challenges such as climate change and sustainable propulsion. The industry is supported by a strong pipeline of engineering talent being produced by the University of Canterbury along with established links with academia and industry research and development.

***The Mayoral Forum will work with the region's Economic Development Agencies to encourage and advocate for economic development opportunities for investment in our regional economy***

***The Mayoral Forum will advocate for a centrally coordinated workforce skills and development plan to minimise known/forecast skill gaps through training pathways, foster business growth and support employment opportunities for Cantabrians and New Zealanders.***

## Transport

Our region has a vast transport network. It is how we connect with each other, within Canterbury, the South Island, the rest of the country and internationally. Transport strongly influences economic development, supporting supply chains that are critical for getting our exports to market and imports back to us. The system faces several challenges; historic underfunding in transport infrastructure and an increase in the number of severe weather events around the country mean that the transport network needs to be more resilient than ever. Climate change effects highlight the importance of reducing transport emissions and encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport where we can.

Maintaining and renewing our transport system to keep it fit for purpose requires significant investment; to maintain the existing network, develop new roading options, and support increased public transport.

Current funding sources from local authorities and the National Land Transport Fund will not meet current needs, particularly when faced with resilience issues.

It is estimated that \$11 billion is required over the next 10 years to materially impact the range of issues transport is facing in the region.

**Overcoming central government underinvestment**

Of significant concern to Canterbury is the chronic underinvestment by central government in Canterbury's transport network.

The 2024–2027 National Land Transport Fund invested only 5 percent of its budget in Canterbury, despite Canterbury having around 13 per cent of the country's population, producing around 13 per cent of gross domestic product, and up to 14 percent of vehicle kilometres travelled.

*The Mayoral Forum will advocate with government to address the chronic underinvestment by central government in Canterbury's transport network.*

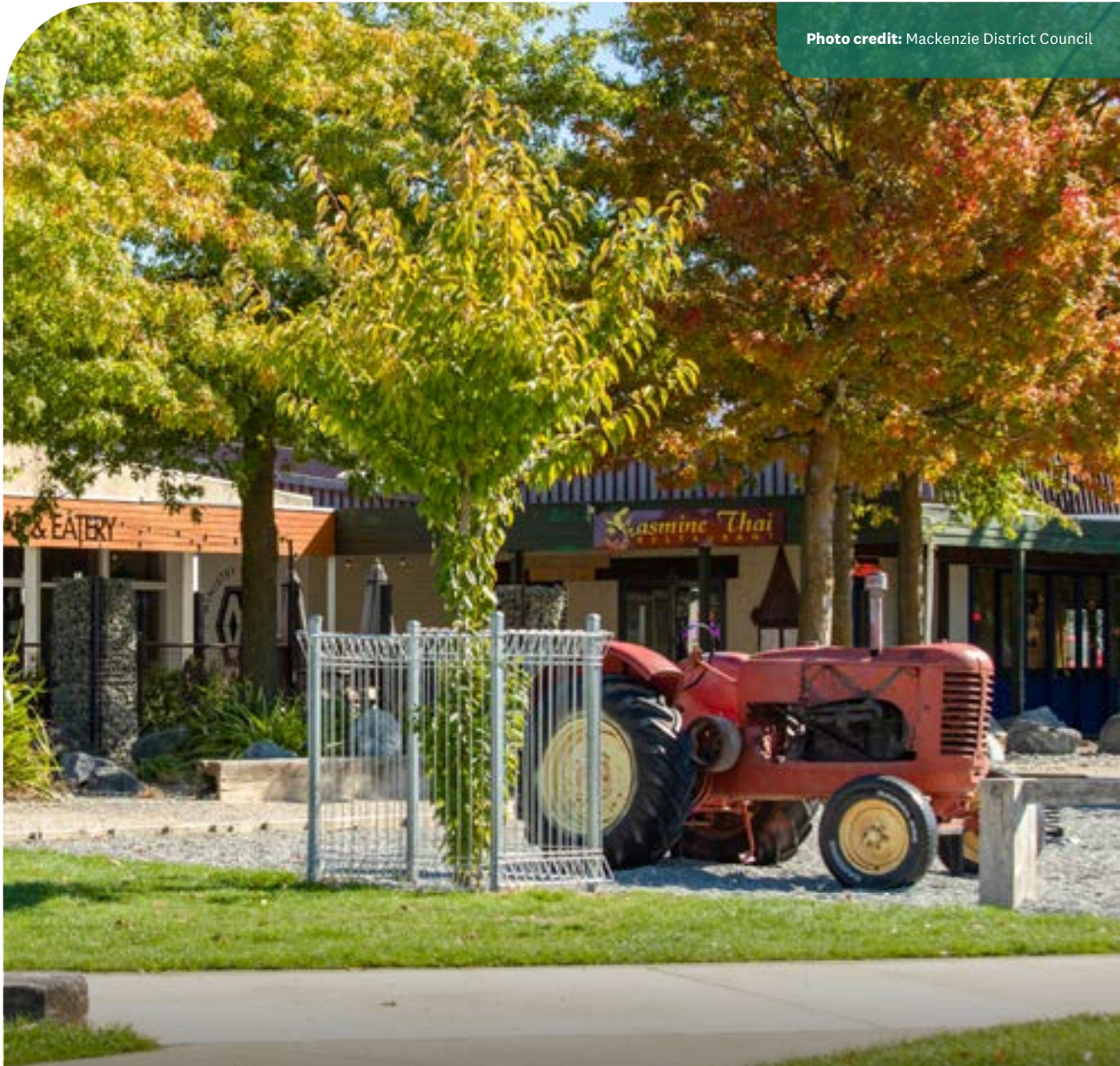


Photo credit: Mackenzie District Council

## Energy

Energy security is critical for Canterbury to be able to continue to pick up and support opportunities for the region. It is fundamental to our prosperity, resilience and wellbeing. It underpins our key sectors, from agriculture and manufacturing to tourism and emerging industries.

There are strong connections in Canterbury between energy, water, food production and climate change. There are opportunities to support diverse approaches, including new technologies in the energy sector, as renewable energies become an increasingly important part of responding to climate change risks.

Canterbury has a chance to be at the forefront of an energy transition to attract and retain talent, investment and technologies.

In 2024, the Mayoral Forum initiated the regional energy workstream. Phase One delivered the Canterbury Energy Inventory. The next stage is the finalisation of the strategic framework to provide the overarching structure and direction for Canterbury's regional energy strategy, setting out a shared vision, outcomes and strategic priorities for coordinated action.

The Regional Energy Strategic Framework acknowledges that our energy future is anchored in the strengths that define our region: our distinctive natural environment, a culture of innovation, and a sector committed to working collaboratively to deliver for our communities.

The Framework positions Canterbury as a leader in sustainable energy and recognises the region's significant role in the wider South Island and New Zealand energy landscape.

The next stage of work will translate the Strategic Framework into an action plan, a key part of a coordinated regional approach to energy.

***The Mayoral Forum will support the region to foster partnerships and advocate to improve our energy security and systems.***

## Our communities

Prosperity is also about looking after ourselves and each other, celebrating our diversity and taking pride in our common identity as Cantabrians. We know that the COVID19 pandemic exacerbated the demand for mental health services in Canterbury, which was already elevated following the 2010–2011 earthquakes and the 2019 terrorist attack. Hearteningly, in the 2023 General Social Survey, 80 per cent of Cantabrians rated their overall life satisfaction between 7–10 (on a scale where zero is completely dissatisfied and 10 is completely satisfied). This was higher than the national average, as well as higher than those in Auckland, but slightly lower than Wellington.

The Mayoral Forum works closely with the Regional Public Service Commissioner (RPSC). The RPSC brings central and local agencies together, strengthens collaborative approaches, and aligns national priorities with regional needs. This systemwide view supports coordinated action to progress economic growth and social wellbeing across the region.



**Focus areas for the three-year period for the regional public service include:**

- supporting children and young people in Canterbury to reach their full potential. Progressing a coordinated, multi-agency approach that targets areas where collective impact is greatest. This includes contributing to initiatives that improve school attendance and strengthen early intervention pathways.
- enabling and supporting region led economic and sustainability strategies by contributing to joint work programmes across skills development, regional deals, and strategic planning, supporting coordinated action and avoiding duplication.
- improving equitable access to safe, suitable, and affordable housing by supporting regional planning, contributing to systemwide solutions, and aligning efforts across agencies to address pathways to stable housing.
- enabling whānau access to services, resources, and healthy environments that support wellbeing, by strengthening collaboration across agencies and improving the coherence of support systems.

The Mayoral Forum has much to contribute to this work programme given how close local government is to its communities. We will continue to support and monitor progress in these critical priority areas.

**Community preparedness**

Canterbury is one of the country's most beautiful regions, however, it also must deal with a wide range of significant natural hazards and risks.

Bordered to the west by the Southern Alps and the Alpine Fault, which has a 75 percent probability of producing a magnitude 8+ earthquake in the next 50 years.

To the east our stunning coastline is at risk of tsunamis, with a 25 percent chance of a Hikurangi Subduction Zone event in the next 50 years. This alongside more frequent hazards such as floods, fires and other events means we need to be ready.

The Mayoral Forum wants to ensure that our communities are as prepared as possible for such an event and that people, homes, livelihoods and communities are protected from the worst impacts. The Mayoral Forum strongly supports the work of the Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Joint Committee in preparing for major natural hazard incidents.

# Sustainable environmental management of our habitats

## Toitū te taiao

Canterbury is New Zealand's largest region by land area. We have:



Past land-use decisions, agricultural intensification since the 1970s, and increased urbanisation have, put pressure on the region's rivers, streams and groundwater aquifers, and on indigenous biodiversity. We have sustained a focus on rebalancing human impact on our land and water through the development of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy, investment in flood resilience, and protecting and improving our indigenous biodiversity.

## Canterbury Water Management Strategy

In 2009, the Mayoral Forum launched the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) and continues to oversee its implementation.

Water is seen as an enabler for regional economic development. More recently the relationship between water, food production and energy security and how these elements are linked to community resilience have surfaced. Consideration of water issues also needs to take place in the context of impacts/influences of climate change and how this may shape water and land management decisions going forward.

National and regional freshwater policy has changed since the inception of the CWMS. The government consulted in 2025 on freshwater national direction policies. It is expected that more feedback will be requested early 2026 on a revised National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and National Environmental Standards for Freshwater.

These coming changes will likely have an impact on the CWMS with a shift towards greater centralised decision-making and a weakening of the protections, rights and interests afforded to iwi and hapū and reduced opportunities for mana whenua input into strategic decisions on resource management. However, the new local leadership groups established following a review of the zone committees, which support the delivery of the CWMS, provide a clear opportunity to continue local collaboration and support the transition through this change.

***The Mayoral Forum will continue oversight of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy.***

## Flood management solutions

Flooding is New Zealand's most frequent and costly natural hazard, and recent events across the country highlight the increasing scale and urgency of the challenge. Canterbury, with more than 78,000km of rivers and streams, remains particularly exposed to severe and repeated flooding, as demonstrated by the 2021 and 2025 Banks Peninsula events. Effective future flood management must take a holistic approach that integrates ecological and environmental considerations, whole-of-catchment management, spatial planning, managed retreat, building controls, and strong community preparedness.

The investment required to maintain and improve the resilience of existing flood protection schemes alongside new infrastructure work is substantial. Regional councils estimate a national funding shortfall of around \$150 million per year to ensure current schemes can continue to protect communities, infrastructure, and productive land. These schemes safeguard both local and national assets and underpin sustainable regional economies. Permanent co-investment in flood protection would shift the focus from costly disaster response and recovery to proactive, long-term risk reduction, delivering better outcomes and lower overall costs for the country. This partnership approach is essential to strengthening resilience, protecting communities, and enabling Canterbury and Aotearoa to adapt to a changing climate.

Te Uru Kahika, the representative body for Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa, has prepared a business case for central government co-investment in flood protection schemes. The outcome sought from these co-investment decisions would be New Zealanders having assurance that suitable 'fit-for-the-future', risk-aligned, climate change resilient and environmentally sensitive flood protection schemes are in place throughout New Zealand.

You can download the case for co-investment in flood management here.

***The Mayoral Forum will continue to advocate for enduring Central Government co-investment in river and flood management.***

### **Protecting our biodiversity and managing pests**

A key part of sustainable environments is also enabling flourishing biodiversity. Indigenous biodiversity in Aotearoa New Zealand is unique – many of our plants, birds, bats, insects, fungi, reptiles and fish are only found on our islands.

We have a collective responsibility to safeguard our biodiversity for present and future generations. As part of this, the Mayoral Forum supported the formation of the regional Biodiversity Champions in 2021, an elected member group with representatives from all of Canterbury's councils. The group works together to promote biodiversity and advocate for the role of councils and communities in weaving biodiversity through Canterbury's living and working landscapes.

With the revitalised Waitaha Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy adopted by the Canterbury Regional Council in late 2025, and many other Canterbury councils developing district biodiversity strategies, our group has an opportunity to support implementation by councils and promote collective and coordinated action towards a shared vision for biodiversity in the region.

Equally important is the work to manage pests to help protect livelihoods and biodiversity hotspots. Biosecurity in Waitaha Canterbury is focused on protecting our region's economy, cultural values, health, production, recreational spaces and indigenous biodiversity from pests and invasive organisms.

Biosecurity Advisory Groups, comprising community members, mana whenua and regional and territorial authority councillors provide advice and feedback on pest management work. They also act as biosecurity champions to prevent the spread of pests within communities, and help raise awareness of new and emerging biosecurity threats and promote community reporting of potential threats.

***The Mayoral Forum will support the Biodiversity Champions as a key conduit for a shared regional approach to biodiversity.***

***The Mayoral Forum will support the Biosecurity Advisory Groups as forums for working together to promote and encourage community involvement in pest management in Waitaha Canterbury.***

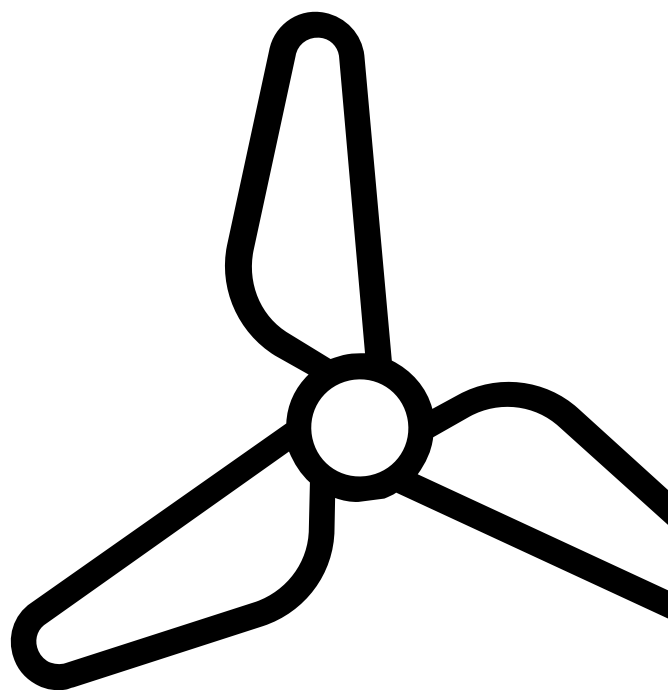
# A changing climate

## He āhuarangi hurihuri

**Responding to climate change is an immediate issue. We are already seeing its impacts in more frequent droughts, extreme weather events and flooding, coastal erosion, and increased fire risk. It affects our weather, health and wellbeing, natural environment, taonga species, mahinga kai, food production, biosecurity, infrastructure, and economy.**

Climate change, including the way in which we choose to respond, has systemic and intergenerational impacts. We choose to act now.

We're considering all options, and will follow through with the ones that will enable the most equitable transition to a low-emissions future and ways to adapt to change where it is inevitable. This gives us the best chance to consider the social, environmental and economic effects of our changing climate.



## **Our response to climate change so far**

We have worked together to form a bold plan to collectively address some of the biggest climate change issues impacting Canterbury. The result? The Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.

Launched in 2024, and leaning on the findings of the Canterbury Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022, the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan sets out how we work together, and with others, to support our transition to a thriving, climate resilient, low-emissions region.

The Plan has 10 actions. The actions focus on understanding climate risks, reducing emissions, adaptation planning, and using nature-based solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change. It also includes supporting Papatipu Rūnanga with their climate action, integrating climate change considerations into council processes, and identifying and leveraging co-funding and financing opportunities for climate adaptation and resilience.

We are coming to the end of the second year of implementation of the action in the Climate Partnership Plan. Progress on key actions includes:

- data inventory to support the development of a regional visualisation tool for use by councils to support climate adaptation and resilience planning.
- completion of the Emissions Reduction Strategic Overview.
- completion of a review of current climate adaptation work across the region to determine gaps, needs, barriers, and support required for councils for climate adaptation planning.

- completion of the Ecosystem Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment providing a comprehensive evidence base for the blue green network – the first of its kind in New Zealand.
- completion of a monitoring and evaluation plan.

Significant work is being progressed across the remaining actions in the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan. As a collective, we will follow the data and national direction to ensure our climate response puts us in a position to address the challenges for our communities.

***The Mayoral Forum will oversee implementation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.***

# Nurturing important relationships

## Whiria te tangata

**Maintaining positive and enduring relationships with mana whenua, the business community, central government, and our wider communities will play a key part in achieving our goals this term.**

In working alongside mana whenua, a joint understanding of what partnership means will be important. The Mayoral Forum wants to grow its collaboration with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu as the Treaty partner in the region, as well as with the 10 Canterbury Papatipu Rūnanga. We will explore what enabling mechanisms are available to assist the 10 Rūnanga with engaging and collaborating with us on the key issues for our region and communities.

The Mayoral Forum recognises the need to work across business, government at all levels, mana whenua and communities. Engaging with key influencers across the region and beyond to work collectively to address the drivers for change in Canterbury is one way to create more prosperity for our communities and businesses.

**Strong relationships with Ministers and Members of Parliament (MPs) is a focus for us. We achieve this through:**

- leveraging our individual relationships for the benefit of the whole region.
- actively making the most of opportunities to engage with Ministers and our local Canterbury-based MPs.
- utilising our relationships with regional public sector officials.
- taking opportunities, such as the Review into the Future for Local Government process, to demonstrate the value and importance of local government.
- showcasing our successes and the resulting benefits to NZ Inc.

The Government's policy announcements about regional/city deals affords us the opportunity to demonstrate the importance of Canterbury to New Zealand's economic prosperity and the significance of fit-for-purpose infrastructure to future-proof our agricultural and tourism industries.

Our relationships with the business community and tertiary education providers are also crucial to achieving some of our economic development and climate resilience aspirations. We need to work closely with industry groups and representative organisations to understand what the issues are so we can target our advocacy appropriately.

Finally, we don't underestimate the importance of our relationship with our communities. Engaging Canterbury's communities in our work, and the work of local government more widely can only serve to strengthen local democracy.

One of the key things we can do is highlight and promote the importance of local government to everyday lives. People use a range of council services each and every day, from when they turn on the shower in the morning, use the transport network to get to work or school, borrow a library book, use a swimming pool or simply walk around a park.

Canterbury is a great place to live and work. We believe focusing on the areas covered in this Plan will help us achieve more, both for us in the present, and for those who come after us.



**Back row L-R:** Liz McMillan (Ashburton), Scott Aronsen (Mackenzie), Dan Gordon (Waimakariri), Craig Mackle (Kaikōura), Phil Mauger (Christchurch), Lydia Gliddon (Selwyn)

**Front row L-R:** Craig Rowley (Waimate), Marie Black (Hurunui), Nigel Bowen (Timaru), Dr Deon Swiggs (Canterbury Regional Council), Melanie Tavendale (Waitaki)

## Who is delivering this Ngā kaikawe i te kaupapa

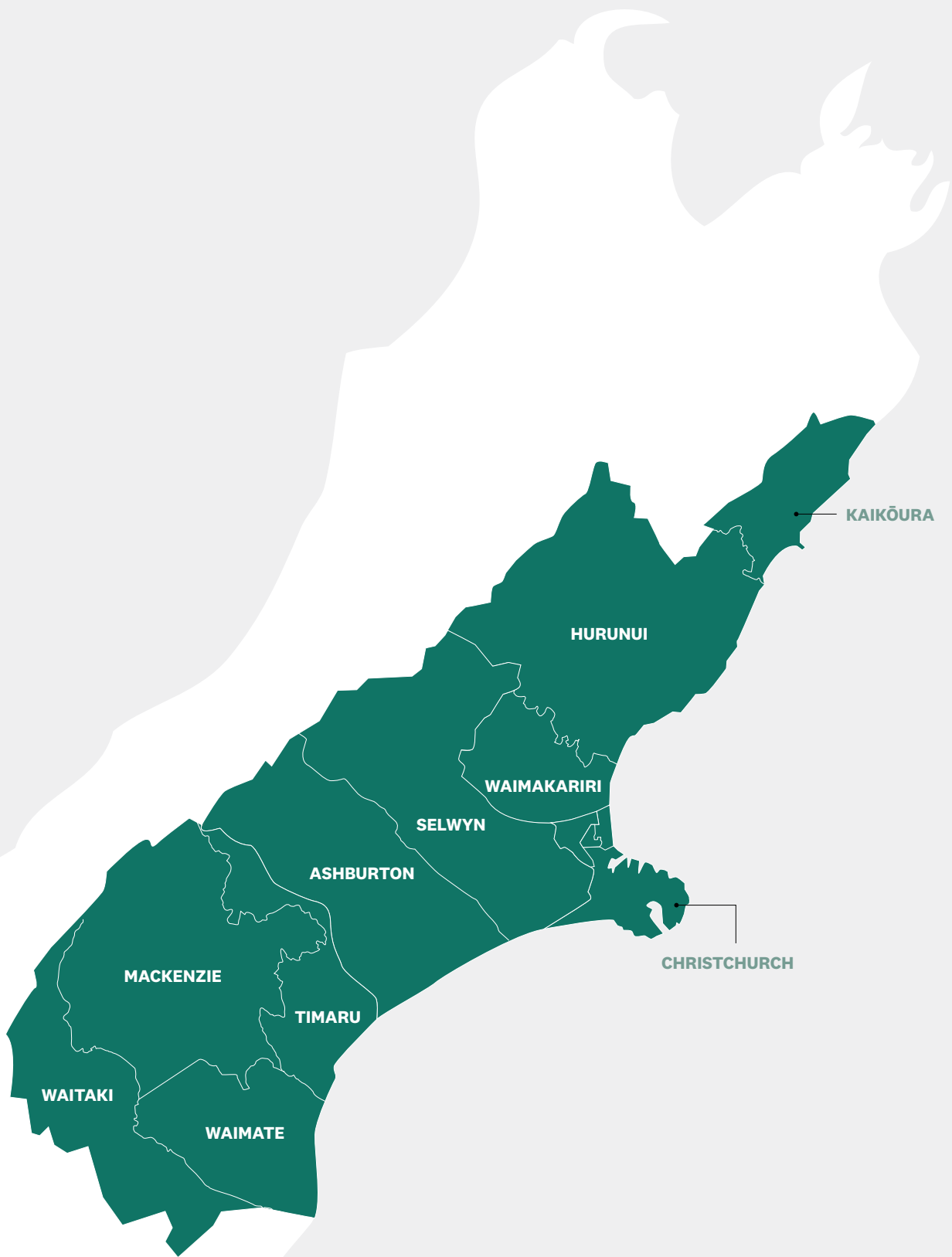
**The Canterbury Mayoral Forum includes the Mayors of the 10 territorial authorities in Canterbury and the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council.**

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum brings together the region's leaders to work collectively on the issues that matter most to our communities. Established under the Canterbury Local Authorities' Triennial Agreement, the Mayoral Forum provides a mandate for local authorities across Canterbury to collaborate, lead, and advocate for the region.

**Through the Mayoral Forum, Canterbury's local authorities work together to:**

- stand together and speak with 'one strong voice' for Canterbury and its communities.
- identify shared priorities and challenges and foster co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration to address them.
- support regional economic and social development through leadership, facilitation and advocacy.
- work together, and with central government and other key sector leaders in Canterbury, to meet community needs and expectations in the most efficient and cost-effective way for ratepayers.

The Mayoral Forum is supported by the Canterbury Chief Executives Forum and five regional forums: Policy, Corporate, Operations, Economic Development and Communications and Engagement. A permanent secretariat, hosted by the Canterbury Regional Council, provides coordination and continuity for this work.





# Canterbury Mayoral Forum



*Canterbury is on the move – we’re globally competitive, attracting top talent, partnering with business and community and delivering the strongest economy in New Zealand.*

We want to keep lifting incomes and increasing opportunities for Waitaha Canterbury and Te Waipounamu.

**The Canterbury region significantly contributes to national GDP and is poised for further economic and population growth.**

Government has an important role to play in this through its ongoing commitment to help fund projects. This means we can meet our communities’ immediate needs while preparing for a highly productive future.



*Waitaha Canterbury is the largest region in New Zealand*

- **44,508** km<sup>2</sup> land area
- **4,700** lakes
- **78,000** km of rivers and streams
- And home to about **700,000** people – 13% of New Zealand’s population

*We have:*

- An international airport and a regional airport
- **Two** seaports and freight hubs
- World-class tertiary institutions
- Waitaha Canterbury has **16%** of the national roading network, with vehicle kilometres travelled at **14%** (nationally)
- We contribute over **12%** of the national GDP and **15%** of total exports
- But only receive **5%** from the National Land Transport Fund

***Timely and direct investment will supercharge regional and national economic growth and promote prosperity.***

We are investing in transport corridors that support efficient and uninterrupted movement throughout the region, building network resilience with strengthened connections.

***We want our fair share of national transport funding.***

We are investing in flood protection for our communities to improve regional resilience.

***We want permanent co-investment in flood protection schemes to continue this work.***

We are ready to maximise new opportunities, foster business growth and increase employment prospects for our communities.

***We want workforce skills and development to match critical business needs.***

# Let's talk!



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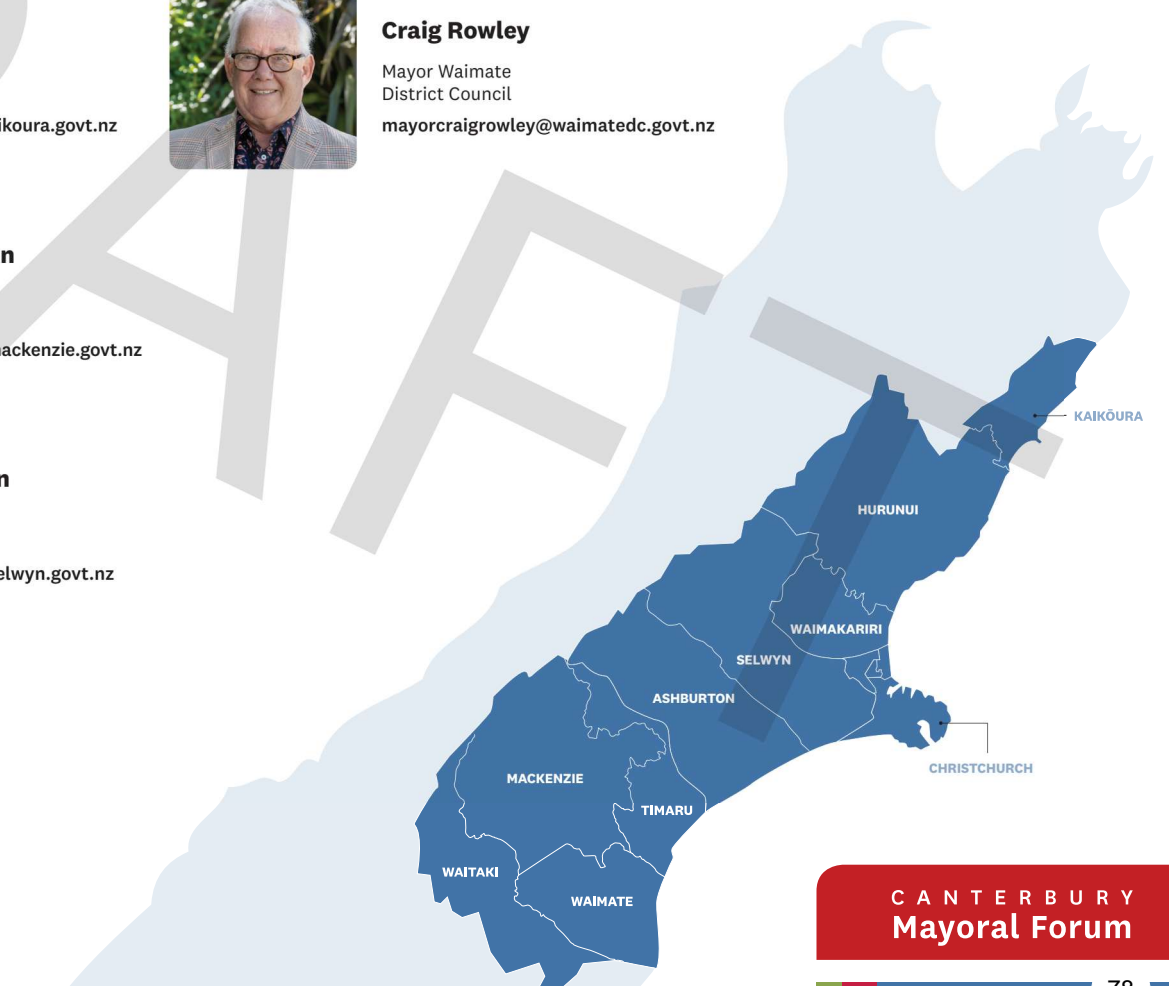
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Waitaha Canterbury

# World-stage ready

Doing business with us

MAY 2026

# DRAFT

CANTERBURY  
Mayoral Forum



# Foreword

**The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is excited about what's to come for our region.**

**Waitaha Canterbury is on the move – we're becoming globally innovative, increasing trade and investment as well as attracting top talent. All of this comes from the recognition that our strong businesses and cohesive communities are innately linked to our environment, our lifestyle, and our capacity for innovation.**

To ensure we continue our upward trajectory, we must optimise the five key pillars that will supercharge our economy: Transport, Housing, Energy, Infrastructure and Innovation. Doing so sets the foundation for future growth and positions the region to capitalise on a central government or other funding opportunities.

Focusing on these five pillars, and getting them right, requires continued partnership between local government and the private sector, who will ultimately enable the ambition, and further, meaningful engagement with central government and mana whenua.

This document, World-stage ready, is both a stake in the ground and a view to our prosperous future. We can unlock our region's vision through true regional cooperation along with government regulation and funding.

We all have a role, both regionally and nationally, in accelerating the economic growth of Waitaha Canterbury while safeguarding our social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing.

Waitaha Canterbury is ready. Our region has forecast population increase from 687,100 people to about 900,000 (high growth projections) by 2048, we're increasingly competitive, investment-attractive, and future-focused. Our region has the ingredients to offer a high quality of life and attract even more top talent to support sustained growth and investment.

This doesn't just benefit Waitaha Canterbury but the rest of New Zealand, too.



Nigel Bowen  
**Chair, Canterbury Mayoral Forum**

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# Growth meets opportunity

**Waitaha, the Canterbury region, is not just a strong regional player, it's a launchpad for global innovation, trade, and talent. With strengths in agritech, aerospace, education, manufacturing, medtech, and clean energy, the region is competing and collaborating internationally.**

The region offers stable governance, a skilled workforce, and a collaborative ecosystem. Canterbury is not preparing to be relevant – it already is. We're exporting ideas, talent, and technology to the world.

This document sets out the opportunity to invest in a region that's already delivering results and scaling fast, which means Canterbury is not only a beneficiary of national policy, but a driver of it.

Over the past year, the Canterbury Mayoral Forum, Business Canterbury, and the private sector have come together to form a shared ambition for Waitaha Canterbury. The progress we have made toward the goal of a shared ambition has created the conversations and conditions for alignment and clarity.

This ambition outlines what sets Canterbury apart and the key ingredients for Canterbury's long-term success. It stems from the recognition that strong businesses and strong communities are innately linked to our environment, our lifestyle, and our capacity for innovation.

It provides a clear and credible foundation for future growth. More importantly, it gives us a common starting point and a platform for continued partnership between local government and the private sector, who will ultimately enable the ambition, and for further engagement with government and mana whenua.

Canterbury is a place where public-private partnerships thrive and where infrastructure is being built for the next generation. Our region's connections to mana whenua, natural landscapes, and strong community values make it a unique and authentic place to live, work, and grow.

As Canterbury evolves, so too will the ambition for our region. But what won't change is our commitment to making Canterbury one of the best places in the world to test ideas, grow businesses, and build a great life.



## Purpose of this document

This document intends to ensure Canterbury is ready for opportunities to strengthen the partnership between central and local government, mana whenua, and the private sector, for the continued economic advancement of Waitaha Canterbury, Te Waipounamu South Island, and Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is strongly aligned on this ambition.

We are committed to doing our part and working with government, mana whenua, and the private sector on the priorities for Canterbury's long-term success. Together we can super-charge our region's growth and productivity, deliver much needed infrastructure, and increase the supply of quality and affordable housing; while safeguarding our social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing, and increasing our region's economic contribution to Aotearoa New Zealand.

To achieve this, there are some fundamental pillars we must get right:

1. Transport
2. Housing
3. Energy
4. Infrastructure
5. Innovation.

This *Waitaha Canterbury: World-stage ready* document focuses in on these pillars. It builds on work we have already done as a region and recognises the role government can play in backing our ambitions. They are areas we have advanced our shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges we face, and our priorities for action. We are now well placed to accelerate in these areas.

The intention of this document is not to cover every element for our region's success – we know there are other areas we need to collectively address as a region. Water availability and use, food and fibre, tourism, a skilled workforce and employment, and technology, are just some examples. This work will continue to happen alongside our work on the five key pillars.

# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

## - collaborating to get things done

**The Canterbury Mayoral Forum includes the Mayors of the 10 territorial authorities in Canterbury and the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury).**

The Forum provides a mechanism for Canterbury's local authorities to:

- stand together and speak with 'one strong voice' for Canterbury and its communities
- identify shared priorities and challenges and foster co-operation, co-ordination, and collaboration to address them
- advance regional economic and social development through leadership, facilitation, and advocacy
- work together, and with central government and other key sector leaders in Canterbury, to meet the needs and expectations of our communities at the lowest possible cost to ratepayers.

### **Plan for Canterbury**

The Plan for Canterbury 2026-28 sets out the Mayoral Forum's focus across three priority areas:

1. Strengthening shared prosperity for all our communities
2. Sustainable environmental management of our habitats
3. Preparing communities for climate change

The Forum's work to progress the 'Shared prosperity for all our communities' priority area has focused on building on the region's economic strengths and developing its emerging sectors; growing, attracting, and retaining a skilled workforce; improving the transport network; and coordinating strategies for housing our communities.

**Waitaha Canterbury: World-stage ready** builds on the momentum generated by this work.

### **Our objectives**

The Mayoral Forum's strategic objectives for Canterbury include the following:

- accelerate sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- build climate-resilient, future-ready infrastructure
- enable diverse, affordable, quality housing and choices for a growing population
- transition to a low-emissions, renewable energy future
- strengthen the tourism sector through supporting infrastructure and regulatory and funding tools
- partner with mana whenua and the private sector on growth opportunities
- safeguard social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing.

# Our shared ambition

**Powerful partnerships and decisive leadership are super-charging Canterbury’s growth, innovation, and productivity, while also defending the high-quality lifestyles we value across the region. We are a big region of diverse sub-regions – targeted collaboration and action can further unlock the unique strengths of each of our communities.**

**Canterbury is the home of opportunity – where the environment, innovation, and quality of life thrive together.**

**Canterbury’s unique advantage**

What sets Canterbury apart is that success here doesn’t come with the familiar trade-offs. You can succeed in business and raise a family, all while enjoying one of the most affordable, high-amenity lifestyles in the Southern Hemisphere.

Few growing regions in the world can claim that and even fewer can sustain it. But that’s Canterbury’s challenge, and opportunity.

**Well-connected and doing business**

Canterbury boasts one of New Zealand’s most diverse and connected business communities in the country. With a global city at our doorstep, an international airport, two deep-water ports, and two leading universities driving research and innovation, we’re connected and aligned in a way that few regions can match.

Because we are so well connected and aligned across business, mana whenua, the education sector, and civic leadership, we can move independently, confidently, and at pace.

**A diversified regional economy**

Our deep roots in agriculture and engineering have laid the foundation for a thriving innovation ecosystem. Today, Canterbury is home to some of New Zealand’s most exciting growth sectors, including advanced manufacturing, aerospace, smart tourism, and other hi-tech industries.

These industries are drawing in global investment, attracting top talent, and contributing to prosperity across the region and up and down New Zealand.

**We’re ready to launch**

To accelerate this momentum, we must act now. This means investing ahead of demand in infrastructure, particularly around energy and connectivity. We must protect and evolve our competitive advantage in housing affordability and lifestyle. We must also modernise and align the regulatory settings that enable us to innovate, attract investment and grow, as we continue to enhance our reputation for solving the world’s big problems here.

Canterbury is growing and ready now. We’re already leading and shaping the next chapter of New Zealand’s story – a chapter where innovation and growth is underpinned by liveability and the environment.

**Priority 1**



Investing ahead of demand in energy and connectivity infrastructure.

**Priority 2**



Protecting and advancing our competitive advantage in affordable housing and lifestyle.

**Priority 3**



Enabling innovation by ensuring regulation is fit for the future and aligned across the region.

# Our context

## Our region

Canterbury extends from Kēkerengū, north of the Waiau Toa Clarence River, to the Waitaki River catchment in the south; and from the snowcapped peaks of Kā Tiritiri o Te Moana, the Southern Alps, to Kā Pakihi Whakatekateka o Waitaha, the Canterbury Plains. It is the largest region in New Zealand by land area, making up almost a third of the South Island.

Canterbury boasts incredible natural history and cultural heritage. It is renowned for its stunning landscapes; diverse ecosystems; large swathes of flat, arable land; and abundant water. Its unique geography and environments provide numerous opportunities, such as for primary industries, renewable energy and tourism, but also pose risks. The impacts of major earthquakes and flooding events in our region are well documented.

Water is at the heart of Canterbury's story. It is a taonga central to all life in the region, having an important relationship with our food production, energy security, resilience, and economic development; and playing a unique role in the traditional economy and culture of Ngāi Tahu.

Canterbury is home to a diversity of people and places – from high growth urban areas to provincial and rural districts, all with their own special value.

Close to 700,000 people call the region home – 13 per cent of the national population. It is the most populous region in the South Island and second most populous in New Zealand, and one of the fastest growing regions in the country. Canterbury's strong growth is projected to continue, with high growth projections suggesting around 900,000 people could be living in the region by 2048 – 280,000 more than was recorded in 2018.

Most of Canterbury's residents live near the coast. 82% of the population live in Greater Christchurch – the second largest urban centre in New Zealand – which encompasses the major urban areas of Christchurch City and the Selwyn and Waimakariri Districts (e.g. Christchurch, Rolleston, Rangiora, Kaiapoi and Lincoln). Greater Christchurch represents one of six Urban Growth Partnerships across New Zealand, in recognition of its share of the national population (more than 10 per cent) and its focus for urban growth and economic productivity.

Timaru and Ashburton are also key urban areas in Canterbury; while a number of other smaller townships, such as Amberley, Waimate, Kaikōura, and Fairlie, play an important role as service centres for their surrounding rural communities.

Our vast region is linked by expansive transport networks, including the largest road network in New Zealand. These networks provide important connectivity within the region and beyond.

Canterbury is the main gateway to the South Island, possessing a major international airport (Christchurch), a regional airport (Timaru), two seaports (Lyttelton and Timaru), an inland port at Rolleston, and a rail hub at Fairton. Being well connected to the rest of New Zealand and the world makes the region a significant hub for freight and tourism. Christchurch is also one of just five Antarctic gateway cities in the world, serving as a key access point for Antarctic expeditions.

Significant visitor numbers come to Canterbury to experience all that the region and the wider South Island have to offer. Canterbury has some of New Zealand's key epicentres for tourism, from Aoraki Mount Cook in the Mackenzie, to Hanmer Springs in Hurunui, to the world-renowned tourism offerings of Kaikōura – and all the charming bits in-between.

Canterbury also has a history of being at the forefront of education, research and innovation, which it continues to foster today. The region is home to three leading universities, a regional polytechnic, and the largest public library in the South Island. It also has the largest tertiary, research and teaching hospital in the South Island, and is a key contributor to the work of our national public research organisations.

Together, these institutions play a central role in supporting Canterbury's thriving innovation ecosystems and the unique opportunities we have in exciting growth sectors.

## Ngāi Tahu

Ngāi Tahu holds rangatiratanga over more than 80% of Te Wai Pounamu, including Canterbury. Ngāi Tahu is made up of whānau and hapū that hold traditional authority over specific areas and comprises descendants from five primary hapū: Kāti Kūrī, Ngāti Irakehu, Kāti Huirapa, Ngāi Tūāhuriri, and Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki, as well as those of Ngāti Māmoe and Waitaha.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, established under the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996, is statutorily recognised as the representative tribal body of Ngāi Tahu Whānui. Its membership comprises 18 Papatipu Rūnanga, each holding mana whenua and mana moana within their takiwā. Te Rūnanga manages, advocates for, and protects the collective rights and interests of Ngāi Tahu as mana whenua.

The modern relationship between Ngāi Tahu and the Crown is underpinned by three core documents: Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement 1997, and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 (NTCSA). These documents establish a legal framework for the relationship between Ngāi Tahu and the Crown.

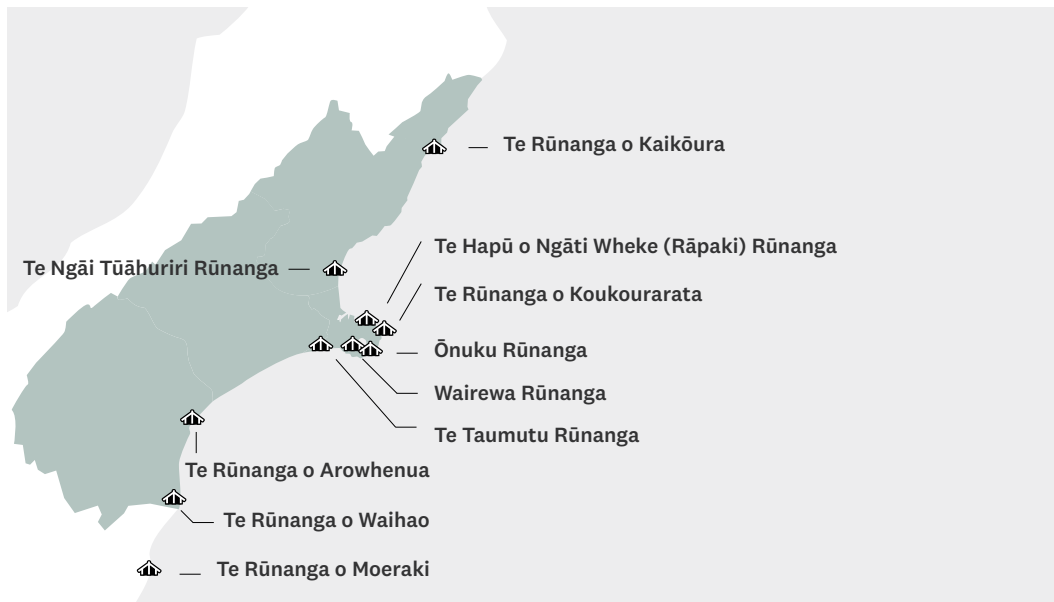
As outlined in the Deed of Settlement and NTCSA (section 6 (7)), the Crown formally apologised for its failure to acknowledge Ngāi Tahu rangatiratanga and mana over South Island lands. This apology recognises Ngāi Tahu as tāngata whenua and affirms their rangatiratanga within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā.

Rangatiratanga reflects Ngāi Tahu’s ability to autonomously manage its affairs for the benefit of its whānau and communities. While often exercised alongside the Crown’s kāwanatanga, Ngāi Tahu’s rangatiratanga stands as a cornerstone of their governance and decision-making within their takiwā.

The Ngāi Tahu Settlement marked a turning point, initiating a “new age of cooperation” between the Crown and Ngāi Tahu. This commits the Crown to developing policies and plans affecting the Ngāi Tahu takiwā, interests, or rangatiratanga in collaboration with Ngāi Tahu.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (Declaration of Membership) Order 2001 lists the Papatipu Rūnanga that make up Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and their takiwā. It is acknowledged practice that consultation on local matters occurs through Papatipu Rūnanga.

The 10 Papatipu Rūnanga in Waitaha Canterbury are:



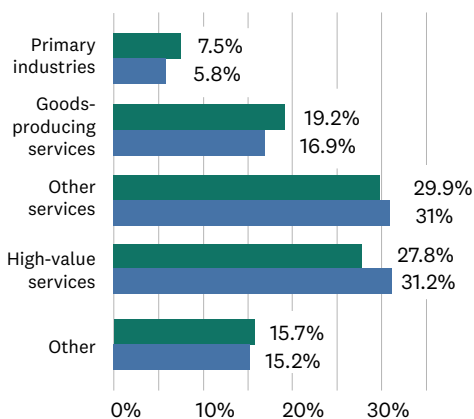
## Our economy

Canterbury’s economy is marked by its diverse and resilient structure – and business makeup – and it is making it one of New Zealand’s most dynamic regions. Agriculture remains a foundational pillar, especially in rural sub-regions, new and emerging aerospace, food and fibre, complemented by strong performance in manufacturing, construction, health care, retail, and a growing tech sector. This mix of primary industries and advanced services in manufacturing and application of technology helps Canterbury maintain steady growth – even as the national economy faces headwinds.

The region contributes over 12 per cent of New Zealand’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and accounts for 13 per cent of national employment, with nearly 349,000 filled jobs across sectors. Notably, Canterbury’s exports are dominated by food manufacturing – dairy, meat, and cereals – while its top employers include health care, education, and technical services. This economic diversity not only buffers the region against downturns but also positions it to lead in innovation and sustainable development.

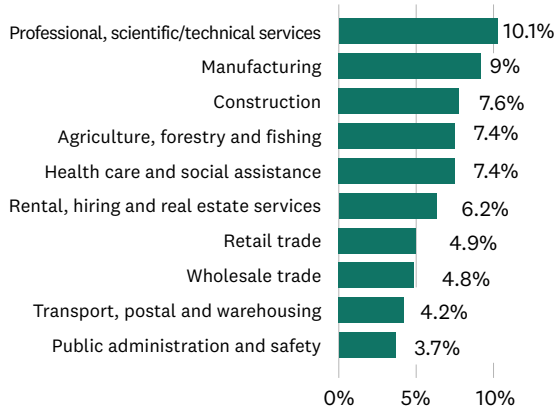
### Economic structure by broad sector, 2025

% of total, year to March 2025



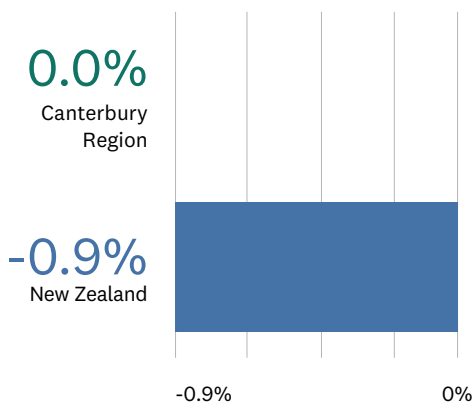
### Ten largest ANZIC Level 1 industries, 2025

% of total, year to March 2025



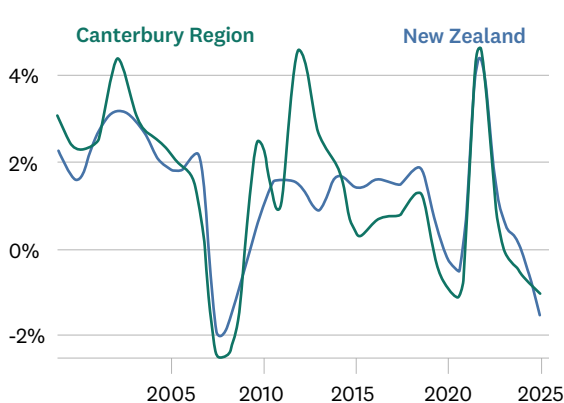
### Gross domestic product growth, 2025

Annual average % change, year to March 2025



### GDP per capita growth 2025

Annual % change, March years



Source: Infometrics, Regional Economy

GDP is a key economic indicator that measures the value of goods and services produced in a region. Canterbury is currently growing faster than the national economy; this is a trend that has been consistent in the post Covid economy.

Canterbury as a region has substantial opportunities to grow future industries that solve global problems. These industries are future-focused and will drive an increase in productivity, should the region be able to build credible strategies and develop the core enabling infrastructure.

## Gross domestic product

March years, 2025 prices

Year	Canterbury Region			New Zealand		
	Level (\$m)	% Change (annual average)	Absolute change (annual average) (\$m)	Level (\$m)	% Change (annual average)	Absolute change (annual average) (\$m)
2000	27,222.10			22,7838.90		
2005	34,101.10	4.4	1,424.80	27,6676.60	4.1	10,872.00
2010	36,910.40	-0.4	-139.90	29,9680.60	0	-120.10
2015	43,031.10	4.4	1,832.20	33,8361.80	3.8	12,447.50
2020	48,673.90	1.7	797.40	39,7723.70	2.3	9,031.70
2021	48,628.30	-0.1	-45.60	39,6766.70	-0.2	-957.00
2022	51,366.60	5.6	2,738.30	41,3824.00	4.3	17,057.30
2023	53,059.70	3.3	1,693.10	42,7667.00	3.3	13,843.00
2024	53,896.10	1.6	836.40	43,5420.20	1.8	7,753.20
2025	53,918.80	0	22.70	43,1676.70	-0.9	-3743.50

### Future-proofing global agriculture with bold innovation in food, fibre, and agritech

Canterbury is emerging as a globally relevant nexus for solving agricultural challenges through innovation. The region's strategic blend of primary production, advanced manufacturing, and cutting-edge agritech is redefining how food and fibre systems can be both productive and sustainable. At the heart of this transformation is a powerful support ecosystem – anchored by government investment in the new Public Research Organisation in Lincoln (Selwyn District) – which fosters collaboration between researchers, entrepreneurs, and industry. This confluence of science, technology, and policy positions Canterbury not just as a regional leader, but as a catalyst for global change in how we grow, process, and sustain the planet's agricultural future.

### Elevating our offering to become a premium tourism destination

Canterbury has a compelling opportunity to elevate its tourism sector by developing a premium visitor offering that aligns with the region's broader economic development strategy. With its dramatic landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and world-class food and wine experiences, Canterbury is well-positioned to attract high-value travellers seeking immersive and sustainable experiences. The region is shifting from being a gateway to elsewhere, toward becoming a destination in its own right. By investing in infrastructure, storytelling, and regional connectivity, alongside more user pays regulatory tools, Canterbury can unlock greater seasonal spread, longer stays, and increased visitor spend – driving economic growth while preserving the region's unique identity.

### Becoming a globally significant aerospace region, for research test and evaluation

Canterbury is set to become a global hub for aerospace research and testing by 2035, as outlined in the Waitaha Canterbury Aerospace Strategy. With ideal skies, low air traffic, and strong industry-academic partnerships, the region aims to generate over \$1 billion annually, support 1,500+ jobs, and achieve net-zero operations for half of its aerospace companies. Anchored by Tāwhaki and the University of Canterbury, it's positioning itself as a future-focused centre for aerospace innovation and sustainable flight.

### Building an innovation ecosystem, for sustainable transport that solves global problems

Canterbury aspires to be an innovation engine for sustainable fuels and logistics, with the University of Canterbury leading research in hydrogen, smart supply chains, and low-emission transport. Fabrum's advanced liquid and gaseous hydrogen technologies are unlocking zero-emission solutions for aviation and freight – once seen as hard to decarbonise. With nearly 100 per cent renewable energy, test sites at Christchurch Airport, and hydrogen stations in Invercargill and Christchurch, the region is building future-ready infrastructure that could redefine flight, freight, and fuel across the South Island, New Zealand and beyond.

*Infometrics (2026)*

## Waitaha Canterbury: By the numbers

### Water and land

- **44,500km<sup>2</sup>** – largest region in New Zealand by land area (17% of NZ total)
- **78,000km** of rivers and streams and 4,700 lakes and tarns
- **70%** of New Zealand's groundwater
- **800km** of coastline and 11,600km<sup>2</sup> of coastal marine area
- **21%** of New Zealand's highest quality soils
- **63%** of New Zealand's irrigated land area
- **19%** of the total area farmed in New Zealand

### People

- **698,200** – 55% of South Island's population and 13% of New Zealand's population
- **82%** of the region's population lives in Greater Christchurch
- **1.6%** – annual average growth between 2018 and 2023 (1.4% for NZ overall)
- **901,500** people – projected population by 2048 (high growth scenario)
- **12%** of people are affiliated to an iwi (24,500 affiliated with Ngāi Tahu)
- **25%** of people were born overseas (e.g. Asia, UK and Ireland, and Australia)

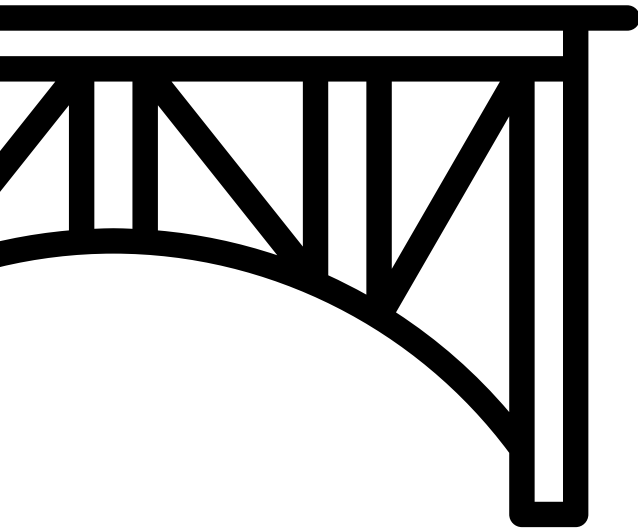
### Housing

- **\$718,899** – average house value (82% of NZ's average house value)
- **6** – house value to income (6.5 for NZ overall)
- **36%** – mortgage payment proportion of income (39% for NZ overall)
- **70%** of households own or partly own their home
- **\$516** – average weekly residential rent (\$577 for NZ overall)

### Economy

- **\$54 billion** of GDP – second largest economy in New Zealand (12.5% of NZ total)
  - **10.1%** – Professional, scientific and technical services
  - **9%** – Manufacturing
  - **7.6%** – Construction
  - **7.4%** – Agriculture, forestry and fishing
  - **7.4%** – Health care and social assistance
- **82,400** businesses and **368,500** filled jobs
- **\$147,600** – GDP per filled job (\$149,200 for NZ overall)
- **\$15.6 billion** of exports (15% of NZ total)
- **\$5.8 billion** of dairy product exports – highest exporter for the region
- **441,000** overseas visitor arrivals into Christchurch Airport
- **190,000** cruise ship passengers and crew visit Canterbury ports
- **\$4.2 billion** of tourism expenditure
- **7.7%** of filled jobs are in the tourism sector (6.5% for NZ overall)





**Canterbury's connectivity and resilience are critical to its economic success and wellbeing, and its role as the gateway to the South Island. Investing ahead of demand in transport infrastructure and services is essential to supporting growth, building resilience, strengthening supply chains, and ensuring efficient links across the region and beyond to national and global markets.**

# Pillar 1: Transport

## Canterbury's transport context

- Expansive road and rail networks, including the largest road network in the country (1,330km of state highways, 14,630km of local roads, and 650km of rail network).
- Deteriorating network conditions due to historic underinvestment and increased traffic volumes associated with population and economic growth.
- Significant investment in maintenance and renewals is needed, especially given the impacts from more frequent and intense weather events.
- Significant resilience issues from a range of natural hazards – highest number of 'extreme' or 'major' risks of any region in New Zealand.
- Heavy reliance on bridges for river crossings on critical freight and visitor routes (1,900 bridges on the transport network).
- Congestion is becoming an increasing issue, particularly in Greater Christchurch.
- Extensive public transport network in Greater Christchurch (buses and ferries), an on-demand service in Timaru, and Community Vehicle Trusts across the region.
- Gateway to the South Island for people and freight, benefiting from an international airport, regional airport, two seaports, an inland port, and a rail hub.
- Accounts for almost half of all the total freight movements in the South Island, reflecting its role as a strategic freight and logistics hub, and major market.

## Increased maintenance and resilience of the network

Significant increases in the level of investment in road maintenance, operations and renewals are proposed in Canterbury, representing at least 40 per cent of the planned transport investment by central and local government in the next decade. This investment aims to both maintain existing levels of service and address deferred maintenance on parts of the network.

Greater resilience of Canterbury's transport infrastructure is extremely important to securing regional and national supply chains. The impacts of Canterbury's transport network being disrupted were well illustrated by the flooding of the Rangitata River in 2019, which effectively cut the South Island in two; and the Kaikōura earthquake in 2016, which closed SH1 and the Main North Line for an extended period and forced significant detours to be taken.

Canterbury's bridges are a significant transport network resilience risk and one that is reaching a critical point. There are over 1,900 bridges in the region, many of which are ageing and at increasing risk from intensifying natural hazard events. The pipeline of bridge infrastructure projects will be fundamental to securing the resilience, connectivity, growth and productivity of Canterbury and the wider South Island. This infrastructure pipeline is of national significance.

Examples of key bridge projects either underway or planned in Canterbury include the Second Ashburton Bridge in Ashburton (a Road of Regional Significance), Pages Road Bridge in Christchurch, Conway Bridge in Hurunui, Skew Bridge in Waimakariri, and the Elephant Hill Stream Bridge SH82 and North Waihao SH82 in Waimate.

### **Enhanced public transport that unlocks growth and development**

Greater Christchurch is rapidly growing and congestion is becoming an issue. Without significant investment to support transport choices, there will be more congestion, longer journey times, increases in vehicle emissions, and impacts on the region's growth and productivity. Public transport must play a role in moving more people, more efficiently, and unlocking the full development potential of our urban areas.

Greater Christchurch's public transport investment programme, referred to as PT Futures, will achieve higher frequency services, and realigned and improved routes. It will improve journey times and reliability, increase access to key growth areas and destinations, and remove barriers for people using public transport. Some of the programme is already being delivered, while some parts will take more time and be subject to funding.

These public transport improvements will pave the way for Mass Rapid Transit (MRT). MRT is a city shaping project that will transform Greater Christchurch's public transport network and urban form. MRT will run on dedicated corridors where public transport will be prioritised, enabling a higher speed service. The routes will connect Christchurch's central city with key centres in the north and south-west, and will support significant growth and development.

The MRT project has been included in the draft National Infrastructure Plan, recognising its national importance, value for money, and capable of being successfully delivered.

### **Efficient freight networks supported by strategic freight infrastructure**

Protecting and enhancing strategic freight routes and infrastructure so that freight can move freely and reliably is essential to the region's productivity and competitiveness. The future of Canterbury's freight network will need to have an optimal mix of modes (i.e. freight moved by road, rail, air, and sea) to ensure goods are transported in an efficient, timely, and climate conscious manner. This will help achieve maximum value from our network.

An extensive study is underway to better understand the movement of freight in the South Island and support informed infrastructure planning and investment. The outputs of the study will support central and local government to make decisions that maximise the value of supply chains and ensure the transport system serves our communities as best as possible. The study is being overseen by the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group.

## Key opportunities

What we are doing	What we need from government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing the <b>Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-34</b>, which prioritises around \$10 billion of transport activities proposed for the region over the next 10 years.</li> <li>• Commencing work on the <b>Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan 2027-37</b>.</li> <li>• Delivering <b>Roads of National Significance and Regional Significance</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Belfast to Pegasus Motorway and Woodend Bypass</li> <li>◦ Second Ashburton Bridge</li> <li>◦ Canterbury Package – Rolleston Upgrade, Halswell Upgrade, Brougham Street Upgrade, and rural intersections</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reviewing the <b>Canterbury Regional Public Transport Plan</b> to ensure it reflects recent changes and sets a compelling vision for public transport.</li> <li>• Implementing the key moves and directions set out in the <b>Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan</b> and <b>Greater Christchurch Transport Plan</b>.</li> <li>• Delivering key improvements to Greater Christchurch’s bus routes and services through the <b>PT Futures programme</b>.</li> <li>• Progressing the planning and design of a <b>MRT system for Greater Christchurch</b>, with a current focus on route protection and moving toward a detailed business case.</li> <li>• Undertaking an extensive study to better <b>understand the movement of freight in the South Island</b>, in order to inform infrastructure planning and investment.</li> <li>• Exploring options for an integrated <b>bridge renewal programme</b> for the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To recognise the transport priorities for Canterbury in the <b>Government Policy Statement on land transport</b>, including public transport in Greater Christchurch.</li> <li>• To enable <b>greater certainty, flexibility and support for local transport decision making</b>, particularly regarding baseline levels of investment that can be delivered without bespoke arrangements.</li> <li>• To establish <b>regional transport funding allocations</b> that reflect the use of the network, using vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) as the proxy for revenue collected from road users in the region.</li> <li>• To empower local authorities to develop and implement a wider range of <b>funding tools and solutions</b>.</li> <li>• To ensure a more <b>integrated approach to funding allocation</b>, making better use of the collaboratively developed priorities in Regional Land Transport Plans.</li> <li>• To better <b>align the timing of transport planning and funding</b> processes.</li> </ul>
<h3>Key funding and investment tools</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional allocations for transport funding</li> <li>• Road tolling and congestion charging</li> <li>• Land and development value capture mechanisms</li> <li>• Public-private partnerships and other co-investment models</li> <li>• Proportion of international visitor levy for regional infrastructure</li> <li>• User-pays models (e.g. accommodation levies) to fund infrastructure</li> <li>• Other legislative tools</li> </ul>	

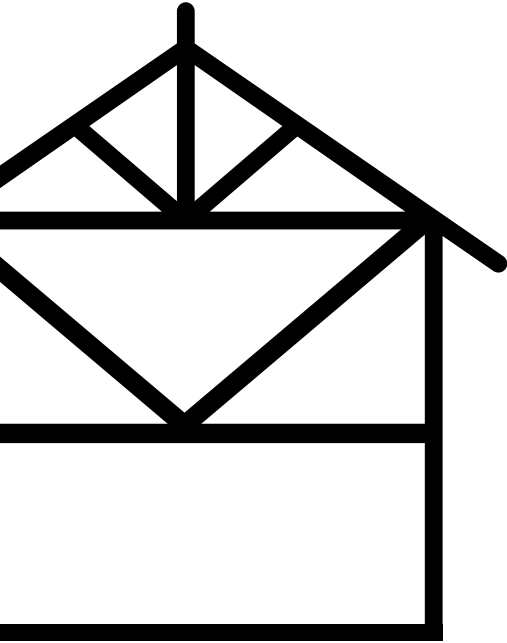
### Regional allocations for transport funding

There is an opportunity to enable greater certainty, flexibility and support for local transport decision making in New Zealand, particularly for baseline levels of investment that can be delivered without bespoke arrangements. High trust, long-term funding agreements, rather than contestable funding, would reduce the cost of funding allocation services and achieve greater value for money in the sector.

Regional funding allocations that reflect the use of the transport network, using VKT as a proxy, would provide a more transparent basis for high-level funding allocations. It would ensure road users receive the benefit for what they pay.

The table below shows that most regions are already receiving a level of investment that broadly aligns with their share of national VKT – Canterbury being the clear exception.

Region	2013 Population	2018 Population	2023 Population	2023 GDP	2023 VKT	2024-27 NLTP
Northland	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Auckland	33%	33%	33%	39%	31%	31%
Waikato	10%	10%	10%	9%	Unknown	7%
Bay of Plenty	6%	7%	7%	6%	Unknown	8%
Gisborne	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Hawke's Bay	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%
Taranaki	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%
Manawatū / Whanganui	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%
Wellington	11%	11%	10%	12%	9%	13%
Marlborough / Nelson / Tasman	3%	3%	3%	1%	3%	2%
West Coast	1%	1%	1%	1%	Unknown	1%
Canterbury	13%	13%	13%	13%	14%	5%
Otago	5%	5%	5%	4%	Unknown	3%
Southland	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%



**Protecting and enhancing Canterbury's housing affordability and high amenity lifestyle is vital to it maintaining its competitive edge, particularly in the face of rising growth pressures. These strengths offer a high quality of life, attract top talent, and support economic growth, helping to retain and boost the region's population, workforce, and investment appeal.**

## Pillar 2: Housing

### Canterbury's housing context

- One of the fastest growing regions in the country and projected to grow to a population of around 900,000 by 2048 (based on a high growth scenario).
- Accounts for approximately 20% of new dwellings consented in New Zealand, with the region's share consistently increasing over the last five years.
- Decreasing household sizes due to an ageing population, family formation happening later, and a diverse workforce often looking for smaller accommodation.
- Housing stock does not match the population diversity – multi-unit consents have increased but standalone houses still make up about 85% of housing stock.
- Housing is more affordable than others part of the country – average house value to household income ratio in Canterbury is 6.1, compared with 6.5 nationally.
- Home ownership rates are increasing and sit at close to 70% of households.
- Housing stress is also increasing, with those spending more than 30% of their income on housing increasing.
- Short-term rental accommodation is affecting housing supply – 5,000+ homes estimated to be available on accommodation sites.
- Public housing supply has increased but is not keeping pace with the need, and the housing register of people who need this public housing is increasing.

### Increased housing diversity and more choice

Canterbury needs a wide range of housing types and tenures that suit the unique needs of the region's population. This includes having more affordable and accessible homes to meet the needs of smaller households, youth, and students, and a broader range of housing choices for older people to age in their existing communities. This requires having different sizes, densities, and tenures of homes.



The region would also benefit from more resilient urban form in our urban settings, and suitable development patterns that are responsive to a range of natural hazard risks and supported by a functional infrastructure network.

### **Increased long-term rental availability and affordability**

Canterbury needs a wider range of suitable long-term rental options, and the cost of renting needs to be more affordable for more people.

This requires minimising the impacts of short-term rentals for tourism on the rental market and meeting the growing and changing needs of our communities with long-term rental availability. Suitable temporary housing for seasonal workers also needs to be available, in collaboration with businesses that provide

seasonal work, so that the housing provided across the region supports our economic growth and diverse industries. Public housing supply in the region will also need to increase to better align to the need, with suitable provision of emergency and transitional housing.

### **Fit-for-purpose policy and regulation**

Policy and regulation need to support the right type of houses to be delivered in the right places and is enabling of wider infrastructure benefits across the region.

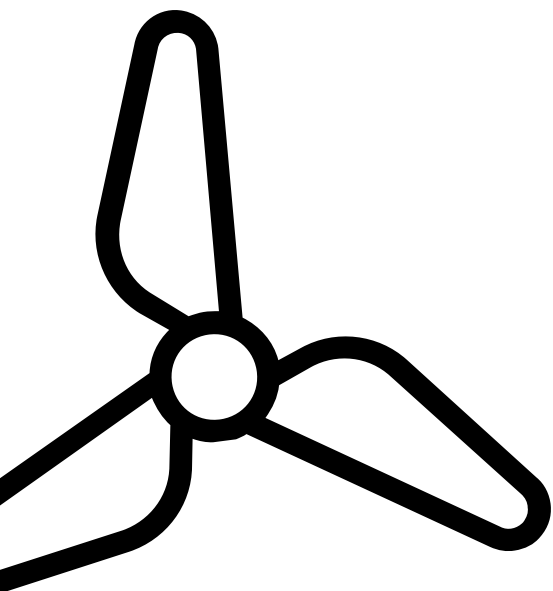
This requires data gaps to be addressed to ensure a suitable evidence base for making housing policy and regulation decisions is available. These decisions will support suitable housing in both urban and rural environments and will ensure consistency around how policy is applied and interpreted by all those involved in the delivery of housing across the region.

## Key opportunities

What we are doing	What we need from government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have finalised the <b>Waitaha Canterbury Regional Housing Strategic Plan</b>, which identifies the priorities for Canterbury’s local authorities to focus its efforts.</li> <li>Sharing information between Canterbury’s local authorities about ways to <b>incentivise affordable and diverse housing options through partnerships</b> with developers and funders.</li> <li>Implementing the <b>Joint Housing Action Plan for Greater Christchurch</b> in collaboration with partners to address four key gaps in the private market – emergency, social and affordable housing, and lack of 1-2 bedroom homes.</li> <li>Exploring ways to better <b>coordinate between housing and related service providers and community groups</b>, to better understand the range of housing needs and issues facing different communities.</li> <li>Investigating ways to <b>support older person’s housing diversity</b>, especially in areas outside of urban centres.</li> <li>Exploring a coordinated approach to <b>engaging with the build-to-rent sector</b>.</li> <li>Undertaking further work to identify what support is needed to <b>assist employers to take an active role in housing their workers locally</b>.</li> <li>Investigating ways to <b>support mixed income multi-generational housing solutions</b>.</li> <li>Undertaking early work to support <b>regional spatial planning</b>.</li> <li>Implementing the key moves and directions set out in the <b>Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan</b>.</li> <li>Collaborating with partners to unlock the potential of <b>Greater Christchurch’s Priority Areas</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To <b>enable the delivery of mixed-tenure housing</b> over the next five years, 100 Income Related Rent Subsidy (IRRS)/Operating Supplement (OS) places are provided through a flexible fund, which will be supported by funding tools such as subsidies and infrastructure cost assistance to unlock social and affordable housing.</li> <li>The specific settings suggested for change include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and amend settings related to leasing, zoning, and covenants.</li> <li>Review and amend the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD), specifically identifying and revising policies that hinder local housing objectives.</li> </ul> </li> <li>To <b>return the Goods and Services Tax (GST)</b> to councils, and also return the GST on public and affordable housing projects when delivered by Mana Whenua or Community Housing Providers, in order to accelerate growth and alleviate debt ratio pressures.</li> <li>To <b>enable controls and current and additional visitor levies</b> (both central and local) that help address the strain on housing and infrastructure, recognising the impact of short-term accommodation on housing, and regulatory and funding assistance.</li> <li>To <b>enable land and development value capture mechanisms</b> that generate a funding stream for partners to assist in responding to housing affordability challenges associated with growth.</li> <li>For government to <b>fund its role in providing social and affordable housing</b> in response to the challenges of growth. This includes directly providing housing or supporting the Community Housing Provider sector through subsidies and supplements to deliver a mix of social and affordable housing products.</li> </ul>

Key funding and investment tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return of GST on new builds to local councils</li> <li>Land and development value capture mechanisms</li> <li>Public-private partnerships and other co-investment models</li> <li>Proportion of international visitor levy for regional infrastructure</li> <li>User-pays models (e.g. accommodation levies) to fund infrastructure</li> <li>Housing policies, community housing trusts</li> <li>Other legislative tools</li> </ul>





**Canterbury's abundant renewable energy resources position it to lead New Zealand's energy transition. By investing in innovation and infrastructure, the region can support national decarbonisation goals, drive economic growth, and unlock new energy markets, while ensuring confidence in energy supply, security, and long-term affordability for households and businesses.**

## Pillar 3: Energy

### Canterbury's energy context

- Large region with an abundance of water, sun and wind, meaning it is well placed to play a leading role in New Zealand's successful renewable energy transition.
- Significant contributor to New Zealand's renewable electricity generation – all large-scale electricity generation in the region is renewables based.
- Key role in meeting the country's increasing energy demand – New Zealand's electricity demand is projected to increase by up to 82% by 2050.
- 11 major hydro power stations with generation capacity of 1,795MW – Benmore hydro-station is the second largest in New Zealand.
- Three large-scale solar arrays, the most installed rooftop solar of any region in the country, and numerous solar proposals in the pipeline.
- 19 active Transpower projects (as at May 2025), proposing to add over 4,500MW of new generation capacity in Canterbury and South Canterbury.
- Reducing fossil fuel use is a key challenge in the energy transition, as the region is still heavily reliant on fossil fuels for transport and industry.
- Other key challenges include managing investment, accessing capital, managing peak capacity issues in a changing climate, and supporting community and consumer understanding.

### Economic development and energy are intrinsically linked

The demand for renewable energy will increase in the context of decarbonisation and industry growth. To support industry, there must be confidence in energy supply, security, and affordability. Canterbury has the potential to be at the forefront of the energy transition away from fossil fuels to more renewable sources, as evidenced by the queue of renewable projects in the pipeline. This would generate significant economic opportunities for the region.

The opportunity to invest in renewable infrastructure, innovation in clean technologies, and the development of new energy markets would positively impact Canterbury through job creation, technological advancement, and supporting industry growth and diversification. Transitioning the region's energy system to prioritise renewable sources would also foster economic development through localised energy production, which is currently focused on grid-scale solar but with opportunities in wind, hydrogen, biomass and biofuels.

**A regional approach to energy**

There is significant support from stakeholders for a more joined-up regional approach to energy in Canterbury that aligns and coordinates with the goals and priorities of central and local government, industry, and communities. Shaping the energy future in Canterbury will help unlock the benefits of economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social development.

Energy cannot be looked at in isolation, as it intersects with transport, housing and urban development, infrastructure, regional skills and

immigration, water, climate change, industry, food production, community wellbeing, and more. A regional approach to the energy system would enable the many co-benefits of the energy transition to be realised. Aligning around a compelling vision will help attract partners and provide certainty for the necessary investment.

A multitude of pathways are being explored as part of the energy transition. Clear progress has been made in some areas, for example the electrification of vehicles; heat pump technology; proposed large waste-to-energy projects; grid-scale solar farms; and local solutions, such as using wastewater to heat public buildings. Other possibilities are emerging but still have an infrastructure cost barrier or a degree of uncertainty as to whether they will succeed.

A shared approach will help the region navigate the energy transition collectively. Given that Canterbury plays a significant role in New Zealand's energy system, future planning will also consider the impacts on the South Island and the rest of the country.

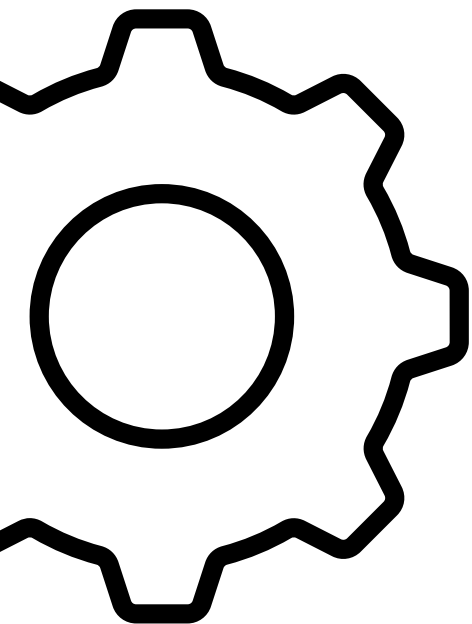
**Key opportunities**

What we are doing	What we need from government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed the <b>Canterbury Energy Inventory</b> – the first comprehensive overview of the region's energy landscape.</li> <li>Developing a regional approach to energy that will support industry, drive decarbonisation, enhance energy resilience, and unlock new growth opportunities.</li> <li>Undertaking early work to <b>support regional spatial planning.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To partner with local government, mana whenua and the energy sector on the <b>development of a regional approach to energy for Canterbury.</b></li> </ul>

Key funding and investment tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public-private partnerships and other co-investment models</li> <li>Proportion of international visitor levy for regional infrastructure</li> <li>User-pays models (e.g. accommodation levies) to fund infrastructure</li> <li>Other legislative tools</li> </ul>







**Canterbury is ready to lead the next chapter of New Zealand's story. The region has proven delivery capability and wants to partner on strategic investments – across transport, energy, social, digital, and flood resilience infrastructure – to boost productivity, strengthen communities, and deliver long-term value for the country. Our collective ambitions rely upon resilient and connected infrastructure.**

## Pillar 4: Infrastructure

### **Canterbury's future will be built on the strength of its infrastructure**

Infrastructure is the cornerstone of Canterbury's prosperity, liveability, and resilience. As a fast-growing region and the South Island's economic engine, Canterbury plays a vital national role. Its long-term success relies on resilient, reliable and connected infrastructure that links people, goods and ideas across the region, the South Island, New Zealand, and the world.

We must invest ahead of demand peaks – maintaining and upgrading what we already have, while planning for new infrastructure that will underpin further economic growth and productivity, and support regional equity. Long-term, strategic planning backed by sustainable funding and smart regulation is essential to delivering a future-focused infrastructure pipeline.

### **Social infrastructure**

Infrastructure must support the systems that sustain daily life – housing, education, and health – as well as enable the industries that power our economy.

Canterbury's infrastructure is critical to building liveable and prosperous communities across the region, in both urban and rural settings. Investment in hospitals, schools, three waters, public facilities, and shared spaces strengthens health and wellbeing outcomes, improves education access, and fosters social cohesion. They are basic building blocks for a growing and thriving region that we simply must get right.

Tertiary education institutions serve as regional anchors. They attract students, research, and investment; fuel innovation; and provide the skilled workforce needed to deliver large-scale infrastructure. Canterbury has high performing universities and polytechnic, including the University of Canterbury, Lincoln University, the University of Otago Medical School, and Ara Institute of Canterbury. We must continue to leverage and build on their success.

### **Digital infrastructure**

Digital connectivity is also essential. Reliable broadband and mobile networks are critical for education, employment, health services, and commerce – particularly in our rural areas. Digital infrastructure must be prioritised alongside other infrastructure to ensure no community is left behind. New Zealand's geographic isolation in the world only serves to emphasise the strategic importance of staying at the forefront of digital technologies and innovations.

### **Flood resilience infrastructure**

Flood resilience infrastructure is also critical to Canterbury's safety, resilience, and long-term economic productivity. With multiple significant braided rivers, including the Waimakariri, Rakaia, and Rangitāta, the region faces major flood risk across urban and rural areas. Well-maintained stopbanks, floodways, and drainage systems protect lives, homes, farmland, and nationally important infrastructure from increasingly frequent and severe weather events.

Climate change is raising the stakes. Extreme rainfall, sea-level rise, and catchment volatility demand modern, adaptive flood protection systems.

Co-investment between local and central government now will prevent disruption and loss in the future.

### **A long-term, strategic approach to infrastructure**

Long-term, strategic infrastructure planning is essential to Canterbury's ambition. It will support the region to deliver the right infrastructure and services in the right places at the right times. Our aim is to build an integrated, future-ready infrastructure pipeline that enhances our economy, protects and strengthens our communities, and contributes to national prosperity.

To achieve this, there are three key enablers that we can focus on:

- **Regional spatial planning**

Spatial planning coordinates land use planning and infrastructure investment. It helps to coordinate infrastructure development between sectors and ensures that infrastructure is well used, and its negative effects are managed. Spatial planning involves central and local government, mana whenua, infrastructure providers, and the private sector.

Canterbury is progressing early work to support regional spatial planning, ahead of any requirements for spatial planning under the new resource management system.

- **Streamlined regulation and consenting**

Consenting for infrastructure can be a major hurdle to effective infrastructure provision, both in time and in cost (as much as 16 per cent of project costs can be for consenting). We must modernise and align our regulatory settings to remove unnecessary blocks on infrastructure delivery and unlock investment, while continuing to manage interactions with surrounding land uses and any negative impacts on our natural environment.

- **Sustainable funding and financing**

Total infrastructure investment will continue to increase with population and economic growth. Canterbury's local authorities are ready to partner with central government, mana whenua, and the private sector to co-fund infrastructure. We must ensure that the right tools and mechanisms are in place so that our critical infrastructure can be funded in a sustainable way.

With a strong vision, proven delivery record, and collaborative leadership, Canterbury stands ready to deliver a bold infrastructure pipeline that aligns with regional and national priorities.

## Canterbury's major infrastructure projects

**The following provides examples of major infrastructure projects either proposed, in progress or recently completed in Canterbury.**

### Transport

- Roads of National and Regional Significance, including:
  - Belfast to Pegasus Motorway and Woodend Bypass (Waimakariri)
  - Second Ashburton Bridge (Ashburton)
  - Canterbury Package – Rolleston Upgrade (Selwyn), Halswell Upgrade (Christchurch), Brougham Street Upgrade (Christchurch), and rural intersections
- Major bridge renewal projects, such as Pages Road Bridge (Christchurch), Conway Bridge (Hurunui), Skew Bridge (Waimakariri), and the Elephant Hill Stream Bridge SH82 (Waimate) and North Waihao SH82 (Waimate)
- Greater Christchurch Public Transport (PT) Futures programme
- Greater Christchurch Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system
- Tāwhaki National Aerospace Centre.

### Energy

- Kōwhai Park (Christchurch) – 230ha, 150MW solar farm
- Lauriston Solar Farm (Ashburton) – 93ha, 47MW solar farm
- Mt Cass Wind Farm (Hurunui) – 95MW wind farm
- Lodestone Clandeboye (Timaru) - 28MW solar farm
- Darfield Solar and Energy Project (Selwyn) - 117MW solar farm.

### Health

- Christchurch hospital upgrades.

### Education

- New primary schools in Prebbleton (Selwyn), Lincoln (Selwyn) and Halswell (Christchurch), and additional classrooms across various Christchurch schools.

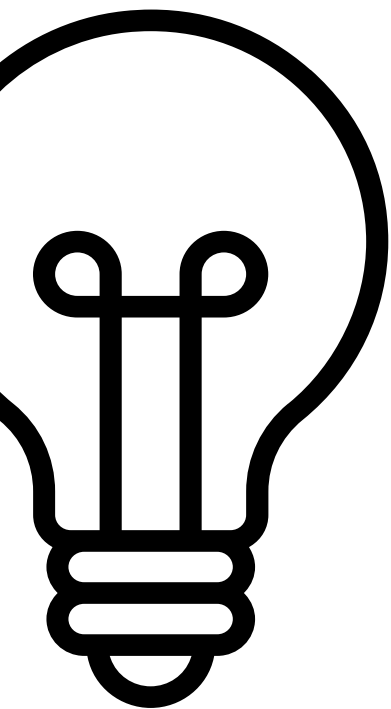
### Flood protection

- Flood resilience and recovery work, covering the Waiau, Ashley/Rakahuri, Waimakariri and Rangitata rivers, as well as a region-wide planting and berm management project.

### Other

- Te Pae (Christchurch Convention Centre)
- Parakiore Recreation and Sport Centre (metro sports facility)
- Christchurch multi-use arena, One NZ Stadium Te Kaha
- Court Theatre in Christchurch
- Upgrades and new builds at the three Christchurch prisons.





**Canterbury is a powerhouse of innovation, with businesses and people who combine ingenuity, resilience, and a solutions-focused mindset to meet both local, national and global challenges. From advanced manufacturing and agritech to aerospace, renewable energy, digital technologies, and food innovation, the region is home to enterprises that consistently punch above their weight in creating products and services that compete internationally.**

## Pillar 5: Innovation

### Canterbury's innovation context

- A highly skilled workforce that has capacity and ambition to be at the forefront of New Zealand's next wave of innovation-led growth
- Anchored by a diverse economy and a strong base of research and development expertise, Canterbury's innovation ecosystem is underpinned by leading tertiary institutions, cutting-edge research hubs, and collaborative industry clusters
- Businesses here are renowned for their collaborative spirit, leveraging cross-sector partnerships to solve complex problems and unlock new opportunities
- Emerging sectors include space and aerospace technologies. Anchored by the Waitaha Canterbury Aerospace Strategy, the region aims to generate \$1 billion in economic impact by 2035 and create 1,500 high-value jobs
- A leader in sustainable agrifood production where technology-driven efficiencies are reshaping global supply chains
- Home to nationally and internationally recognised biotech leaders producing top quality products for use in therapeutic, cell culture, microbiology, and immunology applications around the world
- Rapidly emerging as a national hub for clean tech manufacturing, powered by near-100% renewable electricity and a surge in solar generation. Lauriston Solar Farm generates 100 GWh annually, powering ~13,000 homes. Kōwhai Park Solar Farm: A 170 MW solar farm beside Christchurch Airport, expected to generate 290 GWh annually—enough to power 36,000 homes
- Recognised as a national centre of innovation in specific sectors of national priority.

### Our people drive innovation

Innovation in Canterbury is people-powered. Our communities have a proven ability to adapt, diversify, and lead in the face of change – qualities that were forged in response to both natural and economic challenges.

Canterbury has become a launchpad for global innovation, with strengths in agritech, aerospace, education, and clean energy – the region is competing and collaborating internationally. What's also fuelling Canterbury's can-do approach are our private-public partnerships, a strong relationship with mana whenua as well as our unique natural landscapes and diverse communities.

## Spotlight on Canterbury innovation

### Aerospace

The region's low air traffic, advanced manufacturing capabilities, and supportive regulatory environment make it ideal for testing and developing cutting-edge aerospace technologies. We are positioned to pursue the development of a nationally recognized physical Aerospace Hub Aotearoa, anchored in Canterbury.

#### Key features:

- **Strategic Vision and Investment**
  - Waitaha Canterbury Aerospace Strategy
  - Focus on sustainability, innovation, and global competitiveness
  - Globally competitive companies in operation
- **Tāwhaki National Aerospace Centre**
  - Located at Kaitorete Spit beside Lake Ellesmere (Te Waihora)
  - Joint venture between hapū and the Crown
  - Offers permanent test flight airspace and R&D facilities
- **Academic and talent pipeline**
  - University of Canterbury produces top-tier engineering graduates
  - Strong links between academia and industry for R&D and workforce development
- **Events and Collaboration**
  - Annual New Zealand Aerospace Summit connects innovators, investors, and global partners
  - Joint events with Canterbury Tech to foster cross-sector innovation
- **Regulatory advantage**
  - Low air traffic and streamlined regulations support rapid testing and deployment
  - Emphasis on contributing to solutions for global challenges like climate change and sustainable propulsion.

### Biotech and precision medicine sectors

Christchurch's Te Papa Hauora Health Precinct is a strategic partnership between Canterbury's major tertiary education and health institutions, working together with representation from Ngāi Tūāhuriri. These institutional anchors recognise that collectivising their interests in the Canterbury health system creates a range of opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

Movement of key businesses to Te Papa Hauora brings cutting-edge therapies closer to New Zealand patients, but also catalyses the emergence of an immunotherapy innovation cluster, drawing together research, clinical expertise, and commercial biotech under one collaborative ecosystem. We have the opportunity to pilot an initiative to trial improved procurement pathways for health tech companies into HealthNZ, ACC and Pharmac.

#### Key features:

- **Strategic Partnerships**
  - Strong ties with the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research
  - Collaboration with local hospitals and universities for translational research
- **Te Papa Hauora Health Precinct**
  - Multi-institutional hub combining health care, academia, and innovation
  - Facilitates clinical trials, workforce development, and biotech commercialisation
- **Talent and Research Pipeline**
  - University of Otago (Christchurch) and University of Canterbury provide biomedical and engineering talent
  - Opportunities for PhD and postdoc research in immunology, oncology, and cell therapy
- **National impact**
  - Reduces reliance on overseas CAR-T treatments, improving access and affordability
  - Positions Christchurch as a leader in personalised medicine and biotech manufacturing
- **Cluster potential**
  - Opportunity to attract startups, investors, and global biotech firms
  - Shared infrastructure and regulatory support for scaling immunotherapy innovations
- **Health equity focus**
  - Potential to improve cancer outcomes for Māori and underserved populations.



## Clean tech manufacturing

Canterbury is rapidly emerging as a national hub for clean tech manufacturing, powered by near-100% renewable electricity and a surge in solar generation. The region's strengths in advanced engineering, composite materials, and precision manufacturing are being harnessed to develop technologies that reduce emissions across aviation, transport, and industrial sectors.

With world-class research from the University of Canterbury and strategic coordination across industry and government, Canterbury is building a future where clean fuels and climate-positive technologies are designed, tested, and exported from Christchurch.

Key features:

- **Renewable Energy Backbone**
  - Canterbury's electricity grid is nearly 100% renewable, with hydro and rapidly expanding solar
  - Lauriston Solar Farm generates 100 GWh annually, powering ~13,000 homes
  - Kōwhai Park Solar Farm: A 170 MW solar farm beside Christchurch Airport, expected to generate 290 GWh annually—enough to power 36,000 homes
- **Fabrum and Hydrogen Coalition Leadership**
  - Fabrum develops cryogenic hydrogen systems, composite tanks, and refuelling infrastructure for aviation and transport
  - Hydrogen Coalition aligns industry, academia, and government to coordinate infrastructure, policy, and investment
  - Together, they enable real-world hydrogen trials, including Christchurch Airport's hydrogen-powered ground operations
  - Opportunity to co-invest in the Canterbury Hydrogen Precinct to support scale-up of a hydrogen ecosystem to enable commercial attraction and investment in hydrogen innovation in heavy industry and aviation
- **Decarbonising aviation**
  - Clean tech manufacturing supports hydrogen-powered aircraft and airport vehicles
  - Fabrum's technologies enable onboard storage, rapid refuelling, and cryogenic management
  - Coalition strategy includes scaling hydrogen aviation hubs and integrating with global networks
- **University of Canterbury innovation**
  - Leads the HINT Project with German Aerospace Centre to model hydrogen energy systems
  - Research informs manufacturing strategies for aviation fuels, industrial decarbonisation, and energy resilience
- **Advanced manufacturing capabilities**
  - Regional expertise in precision engineering, automation, and composite materials
  - Facilities produce fuel systems, refuelling infrastructure, and zero-emission propulsion components
- **Strategic Advantages**
  - Renewable-powered manufacturing reduces lifecycle emissions and attracts global investment
  - Synergies between energy, aerospace, and biotech sectors foster cross-industry innovation
  - Canterbury positioned as a climate-tech export hub with scalable infrastructure and talent.

## Agri value chain

Canterbury is redefining its agricultural value chain through a powerful blend of science, sustainability, and strategic collaboration. Anchored by the newly established New Zealand Institute for Bioeconomy Science Public Research Organisation and the research excellence of Lincoln University, the region is shifting from volume to value—focusing on climate-smart production, regenerative systems, and high-value exports.

Innovative companies in Canterbury are leading the charge, integrating environmental stewardship with market-driven innovation. Together, they're building a future where Canterbury's food and fibre sector is globally competitive, locally grounded, and environmentally resilient.

### Key features:

- **Primary Sector PRO**
  - A new regional body coordinating strategy across agriculture, food, and fibre
  - Focuses on innovation, sustainability, and Māori enterprise leadership
  - Acts as a catalyst for collaboration between industry, iwi, and research institutions
- **Lincoln University leadership**
  - National centre for agribusiness education and research
  - Offers specialised programmes in agribusiness value chains, land management, and food systems
  - Home to the Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit (AERU), which informs policy and market strategy
- **Value chain transformation**
  - Shift from commodity exports to branded, traceable, and environmentally certified products
  - Emphasis on storytelling, provenance, and consumer trust in global markets
  - Integration of digital tools, emissions tracking, and supply chain transparency
- **Māori enterprise and land stewardship**
  - Ngāi Tahu Farming exemplifies indigenous leadership in sustainable land use
  - Māori agribusinesses play a key role in shaping ethical and regenerative value chains
- **Environmental innovation**
  - Focus on reducing agricultural emissions, improving soil health, and enhancing biodiversity
  - Research into alternative proteins, low-emissions livestock systems, and circular nutrient flows
- **Strategic Advantages**
  - Canterbury's scale, climate, and infrastructure support diverse agricultural systems
  - Strong links between research, industry, and iwi enable rapid innovation and adoption
  - Positioned to lead New Zealand's transition to a climate-smart, high-value food economy.

## Key opportunities

What we are doing	What we need from government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing an investor- grade position for the Waitaha Advanced Aerospace Innovation Hub at the National Airforce Museum in Wigram.</li> <li>Continuing to engage with NZDF on the benefits of ensuring any Defence Technology Accelerator complements and leverages regional infrastructure, capability and initiatives in Canterbury, particularly in relation to delivering to the National Defence Industry Strategy’s priorities in aerospace and future transport.</li> <li>Piloting initiatives in local schools in partnership with the central government agencies to encourage students to consider STEM careers, with an initial focus on Aerospace.</li> <li>Working alongside stakeholders to establish a clinical validation pilot for local healthtech companies to test pathways into health procurement.</li> <li>Delivering ongoing support for BioOra as it opens its Car-T cell manufacturing facility and support the building of a world-leading CAR-T immunotherapy hub for research, treatment and medical tourism.</li> <li>Continuing to participate in EU-led initiatives such as Horizons EU on Hydrogen research and development and scale-up opportunities for New Zealand cleantech companies.</li> <li>Delivering ongoing support for the creation of the Canterbury Hydrogen Precinct including a hydrogen electrolyser at Christchurch Airport and gaseous hydrogen production and refuelling in Rolleston, Selwyn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition of the alignment of the Waitaha Canterbury Aerospace Strategy with the New Zealand Space and Advanced Aviation Strategy 2024-2030.</li> <li>Investigation into co-investment in the Innovation Hub build.</li> <li>Support for the Hub with airspace and operational approval and regulatory frameworks as necessary, to support aerospace innovation, research and development.</li> <li>Active engagement with Canterbury, through ChristchurchNZ, on specific initiatives for Canterbury to participate in the Defence Technology Accelerator.</li> <li>Based on the outcome of the pilot, consider rolling out the initiatives to other areas in New Zealand.</li> <li>Active engagement on a clinical validation pilot in Christchurch to remove barriers to local healthtech procurement.</li> <li>Work with Canterbury to identify other opportunities for central government procurement and regulatory frameworks to provide significant advantages to local innovation.</li> <li>Continuous funding for BioOra Car-T cell therapy to support the transition from clinical trials to manufacturing.</li> <li>Co-funding the cost of gaseous hydrogen production at Rolleston as a critical part of the Canterbury Hydrogen Precinct.</li> <li>Co-funding the development of a pilot project to test the investment mechanism prototype.</li> </ul>

Key funding and investment tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investing in the development of a prototype investment mechanism to support the transition of traditional economic sectors to a more regenerative future</li> <li>Public-private partnerships and other co-investment models</li> <li>Proportion of international visitor levy for regional infrastructure</li> <li>User-pays models (e.g. accommodation levies) to fund infrastructure</li> <li>Other legislative tools</li> </ul>



# Funding and investment tools

**There are a wide range of funding and investment tools that central and local government can pull from the toolbox to achieve the priorities outlined in this document. While far from being an exhaustive list, some of the key tools that Canterbury wishes to further explore are summarised in the table below.**

	Transport	Housing	Energy	Infrastructure
Return of GST on new builds to local councils		✓		✓
Road tolling and congestion charging	✓			✓
Land and development value capture mechanisms	✓	✓		✓
Public-private partnerships and other co-investment models	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proportion of international visitor levy for regional infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional allocations for transport funding	✓			✓
User-pays models (e.g. accommodation levies) to fund infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓
Housing policies, community housing trusts		✓		
Co-investment in flood and river resilience infrastructure				✓
Other legislative tools	✓	✓	✓	✓

# Next steps

**Waitaha Canterbury: World-stage ready** has outlined the **Canterbury Mayoral Forum and Business Canterbury's** shared ambition for Waitaha Canterbury, and some of the fundamental elements for its long-term success.

The intention is to show why Canterbury is primed to leverage opportunities to strengthen the partnership between central and local government, mana whenua, and the private sector. It intends to be a catalyst for productive discussion and collaboration between partners.

To continue this work, we welcome input from a range of partners, sectors, and stakeholders.

Not least this includes each Canterbury local authority, Papatipu Rūnanga, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, health and tertiary education

sectors, the private sector, infrastructure providers, and communities.

This region-wide input and cooperation will be essential to developing our collective story and unique value proposition for Canterbury. This exciting work will be undertaken during the next local government triennium, starting after the local elections in October 2025.

## Continuing to progress a joined-up approach for Canterbury

There is a wide range of work already underway or planned that will continue to progress our regional priorities.

- We are advancing discussions about **regional spatial planning** and how we might best approach this work in Canterbury.
- We are undertaking a full review of the **Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan**, identifying our transport priorities for the 2027-37 period (being progressed by the Canterbury Regional Transport Committee).
- We are progressing work on a **regional approach to energy**, building on the recently completed regional energy inventory for Canterbury.
- We have finalised the **Waitaha Canterbury Regional Housing Strategic Plan**, which identifies the priorities for Canterbury's local authorities to focus its efforts.
- We are implementing the **Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan**, including identifying pathways to transition to a low-emissions region.
- We are implementing the key moves and directions from the **Greater Christchurch Spatial Plan**, including progressing the planning and design of the **Greater Christchurch MRT system**, and delivery of the **Greater Christchurch Joint Housing Action** (being progressed by the Greater Christchurch Partnership).
- We are extending our **understanding of the South Island freight system** to support more informed infrastructure planning and investment (being progressed by the South Island Regional Transport Committee Chairs Group).
- We are supporting the vision set out in the **Waitaha Canterbury Aerospace Strategy**, which outlines a clear pathway to transform our aerospace sector into a global leader and a \$1 billion contributor to the economy by 2035.
- We are working with **Business Canterbury** to ensure collective vision and ambition led by private sector and enabled by local and central government.



# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

**Date:** 29 May 2026

**Presented by:** Dr Deon Swiggs, Chair Canterbury Regional Council

## Canterbury Water Management Strategy update

### Purpose

1. This paper provides the Canterbury Mayoral Forum with a Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) implementation update, including on the work occurring across all Councils and Papatipu Rūnanga to establish CWMS leadership groups.

### Recommendations

**That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:**

1. **notes the update for January to March 2026 on work underway to implement the Canterbury Water Management Strategy**
2. **confirms ongoing commitment to the establishment of local leadership groups**

## Central government context update

### Simplifying Local Government update

2. The Government announced on 6 May 2026 further updates following its Simplifying Local Government review. The Government has confirmed that, following its rapid review, current regional council functions will not be centralised. These include:
  - Flood protection
  - Emergency management
  - Biosecurity
  - Environmental regulation
  - Public transport.
3. Note, this review excluded functions that are already under consideration as part of Government's Resource Management work programme.
4. It was also confirmed that regional councillors will remain in office until the October 2028 local government elections. This means that Canterbury Regional Council remains fully in place to support Canterbury through this critical period of delivery and reform.

5. Government also announced two pathways (called 'head start' and 'backstop') which would move all councils in New Zealand towards becoming unitary authorities, either by 2028 in the case of councils using the head start process or from 2028 in the case of other councils.
6. A shift towards unitary authorities across Canterbury will have substantial implications for regional freshwater and natural resource management. Specifics of these changes and consequences for the CWMS will depend on decisions by Canterbury councils, further announcements, and the concurrent progression of ongoing Resource Management Reforms. Additionally, the implications for newly or soon-to-be established water service delivery organisations will need to be carefully considered.
7. Given the governance and organisational structure of Canterbury councils will change as a result of the Simplifying Local Government announcements, some Mayors, Rūnanga Chairs and Councillors have expressed the value of bringing people together through local leadership groups while reform progresses, while others have questioned the value in continuing to progress this work at this time.
8. Staff advise that despite the changing context, local leadership groups will provide a key mechanism for progressing freshwater outcomes across key partners and with the community. Stopping their establishment now risks creating more uncertainty and reduced coordination of on-the-ground work contributing to place-based CWMS outcomes. Note, these groups and their membership can be adapted to whatever new governance model or models may be established in Canterbury following the Simplifying Local Government process.
9. Given the uncertainty created by the Simplifying Local Government announcements, staff recommend the Mayoral Forum reiterate their commitment to the establishment of local leadership groups within this new context. This would provide clarity for Canterbury councils, Papatipu Rūnanga and staff participating in this process.
10. Further analysis of the implications from national reform on the CWMS will be provided as more detail and clarity become available.

### **Resource Management (Stock Exclusion) Amendment Regulations 2026**

11. The Government released the Resource Management (Stock Exclusion) Amendment Regulations 2026, which will come into force on 7 May 2026. These changes will remove the need to exclude non-intensively grazed beef cattle and deer (i.e. those that are not break-feeding, grazing annual forage crops or irrigated pasture) from natural wetlands that support threatened species.
12. Dairy cattle, dairy support cattle, pigs and intensively grazed deer and cattle must still be excluded from natural wetlands. Where regional council plan rules are more stringent than the regulations, plan rules prevail over the regulations.
13. Changes to the Stock Exclusion Regulations (Regulation 17) will not directly impact on Canterbury Regional Council's consenting practices, as it does not issue consents

under those regulations. Regional stock exclusion rules in the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) continue to apply where they are more stringent than these regulations, and where applicable this may still make stock access prohibited or require a consent to be obtained.

14. There are circumstances where LWRP rules are more stringent. For example, access to wetlands by non-intensively farmed stock is permitted provided it does not result in conspicuous change in colour or water clarity, pugging or de-vegetation exposing bare earth, while in Selwyn Te Waihora, livestock are to be excluded from wetlands in the Cultural Landscape / Values Area.
15. The Government had also consulted on broad changes to freshwater national direction (the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 and the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater 2020) in mid-2025. These changes are now expected to be progressed under the new planning system, once the two bills replacing the Resource Management Act 1991 have been enacted.

## **Progress on CWMS leadership groups**

### **Establishment hui**

16. Initial hui have now been held in six out of eight leadership group areas with representatives from territorial authorities, Papatipu Rūnanga, and the regional council to progress establishment of each group. Core parties have yet to meet formally for the Rakahuri Waimakariri and Waihora leadership group areas.
17. In the January to March quarter, leadership group establishment hui were held with representatives from territorial authorities, Papatipu Rūnanga, and the regional council for the following four areas:
  - Clarence/Waiiau Toa – Kaikōura
  - Hurunui Waiiau
  - Whakaraupō – Te Pātaka
  - Hakatere.
18. An establishment hui for Waitaki – Waihao was held in April. Initial hui are being planned for the coming months in the remaining three leadership group areas, namely Ōrāri Temuka Ōpihi Pareora, Rakahuri Waimakariri and Waihora. To support these efforts, staff engagements and/or council briefings were held with Selwyn District Council and Waimakariri District Council in April, and with Timaru District Council in May.
19. It is intended that leadership groups be set up in two tranches starting from June, with member nominations being sought closer to groups commencing operation. A first tranche will be led by the Clarence/Waiiau Toa – Kaikōura Leadership Group following core parties' agreement to final components of a draft collaborative agreement on 20

April. Formal approval of the agreement is planned for June, and several other groups are expected to complete collaborative agreements by mid-year.

### **Potential adjustments to leadership group areas**

20. Discussions have continued between relevant parties concerning likely boundary adjustments for two catchments. These are:
- *The Rakaia catchment* – Mayors McMillan and Glidden agreed that the Rakaia catchment be split and the Rakaia River act as the boundary between the Hakatere and the Waihora leadership group areas. This was discussed with Selwyn District Councillors on 16 April but is still to be tested with Papatipu Rūnanga.
  - *The Ihutai catchment* – The status of the catchment requires further discussion with councils and Papatipu Rūnanga, with a possibility that this catchment sit as a standalone leadership group. However, establishment hui are still progressing for the Rakahuri – Waimakariri and the Whakaraupō – Te Pātaka leadership groups, which are the two leadership group areas on either side of the Ihutai catchment.
21. Pending further direction from the Mayoral Forum, Canterbury Regional Council staff will continue to work with key parties to progress establishment of all leadership groups in 2026.

### **2030 CWMS Targets and updated reporting framework**

22. Canterbury Regional Council staff are progressing work to consolidate the 2030 CWMS Targets to align them with the reported 2025 Targets and provide clearer measures and a more streamlined framework to prioritise action and demonstrate improvement. This work aligns with the CWMS reporting framework update, which was endorsed by the Mayoral Forum in August 2025.
23. A workshop was held with the Canterbury Operations Forum on 16 March 2026 to discuss a draft set of consolidated 2030 CWMS Targets, review a proposed updated CWMS reporting framework, and help guide the next steps of this work. It was agreed that the Operations Forum will receive a progress update ahead of the outcomes of this work being presented to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum by August 2026.
24. Work is now underway to refine the draft set of consolidated 2030 CWMS Targets and updated CWMS reporting framework. This includes incorporating feedback from Canterbury Regional Councillors, the Operations Forum, and territorial authority staff.
25. Both the 2030 CWMS Targets consolidation and reporting framework update will continue to be informed by the current national resource management system reforms.

### **Interim approach to Action Plan funding**

26. Canterbury Regional Council's 2024–34 Long-Term Plan provides community incentive funding for local environmental projects, including the implementation of CWMS Action Plans. For 2025/26, \$500,000 is allocated to fund these Action Plans.
27. For the 2025/26 year, the CWMS Budget is distributed via a contestable application process focused on projects delivering towards the CWMS and existing Zone Committee Action Plans. Applications closed on 15 February 2026.
28. Overall, 65 applications requesting more than \$1 million were considered, with an expectation that at least 30 per cent of total project costs are funded through other sources or in-kind support. Funding in full or part has been allocated to 37 projects across all zones. Recipients were notified and then publicly announced in mid-May, and more detail can be found here: [Community funding | Environment Canterbury](#).

### **Next steps**

29. Pending Mayoral Forum direction, Canterbury Regional Council staff will continue to work with core parties in each leadership group area to progress establishment of the new groups and commence first meetings where appropriate. Concurrently, staff will progress the CWMS 2030 Targets consolidation and updated reporting framework in collaboration with key partners, including through the Operations Forum.

# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

**Date:** 29 May 2026

**Presented by:** Mayor Dan Gordon, Chair Climate Champions Reference Group  
Jesse Burgess, Convenor Canterbury Climate Change Working Group

## Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Implementation Update

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to:
  - a. present the transition to low emissions draft strategic framework for approval, along with draft initiatives currently under investigation (Action 2)
  - b. advise the completion of the Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for Waitaha Canterbury's Ecosystems (Action 4.1)
  - c. present the implementation progress and budget summary report for quarter 3 of year 2 (FY25/26)
  - d. provide an update on the strategic review of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan, including advice on the forecasted budget requirements for year 3 of implementation.

### Recommendations

**That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:**

- 1. approves the draft strategic framework for the Low Emissions Transition Plan (Action 2)**
- 2. notes the completion of the Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for Waitaha Canterbury's Ecosystems (sub-action 4.1), and that this will be published on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website**
- 3. receives the quarterly Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan implementation progress report and accompanying budget summary for quarter 3, year 2**
- 4. approves the carry forward of \$519,724 from the year 2 CCPP budget (FY 25/26) to year 3 (FY 26/27)**
- 5. maintains the planned council contributions for year 3 (FY 26/27), totalling \$540,143, subject to the outcome of the strategic review to be presented at the August 2026 Mayoral Forum meeting**

**6. notes the outcomes and recommendations of the strategic review will be reported to the August Mayoral Forum meeting**

## **Key points**

2. The Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (CCPP) is nearing completion of its second year of delivery with progress made across several key actions. Overall, expenditure is tracking below forecast, primarily reflecting the planned sequence and timing of delivery, including procurement and capacity considerations. As a result of the rapid financial assessment, completion of some activities is would be best phased into year 4. Recommendations will be presented to the Mayoral Forum in August with completion of the strategic review.
3. Work to develop the draft strategic framework for the regional low-emissions transition plan (Action 2) is complete and is presented for Mayoral Forum consideration and approval. Work continues in parallel on proposed actions and initiatives that will form the final plan.
4. Canterbury councils' current regional subscription to the Local Emissions Data Platform (Action 2) is due to renew by the end of June 2026 following a one-year trial. A structured review of the trial, assessing councils' uptake and value for money, is under way. The Chief Executives Forum has delegated the decision on whether to renew the subscription for a further year to the Policy Forum, and this will be considered at the Forum's June meeting with receipt of the review and recommendations.
5. The Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for Canterbury's Ecosystems (Sub-action 4.1) is complete. This spatial assessment – the first of its kind nationally – provides a robust evidence base to inform the development of the blue green network plan and marks the completion of sub-action 4.1.
6. A strategic review of the CCPP is underway to determine whether actions remain fit for purpose in a shifting policy and operating environment, including budgets for ongoing subscription and licence fees, timeframes, and in-kind resource requirements. The review is being undertaken through a lens of local government change to ensure CCPP outputs support preparing for the transition or are fit for purpose under multiple future structures.
7. A rapid analysis of year 3 forecast expenditure indicates while there have been delays to delivery in years 1 and 2, action leads have outlined key milestones and spend that require carry forward of year 2 underspend. The need to maintain the full year 3 council contributions is subject to the outcomes of the strategic review.

## **Background**

8. The Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (CCPP) was approved by the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) in August 2024.

9. The CCPP is nearing the end of the second year of implementation and has confirmed funding from all Canterbury councils until the end of the 2026/27 year through 2024–34 Long Term Plans.
10. Delivery to date has demonstrated the value of the partnership approach. Key foundational work has been completed, including the regional Transition Risks and Opportunities Assessment, delivery of New Zealand’s first spatially explicit Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for Ecosystems, and the development of a shared evidence base and emissions inventory platform, supporting emissions reduction and adaptation planning across the region.
11. Several CCPP actions are inherently complex, multi-stage and long-term in nature. Key actions such as the risk visualisation tool (Action 1), the regional low-emissions transition plan (Action 2), Adaptation Planning (Action 3) and the Blue-green Network Plan (Action 4) require significant upfront scoping, technical analysis, data development, engagement, and alignment with national policy settings before full delivery can occur. Sequencing these activities carefully has been necessary to manage delivery, financial and reputational risk, align with council capacity, and ensure that resulting outputs are fit for purpose and usable by councils.
12. The Climate Change Working Group is undertaking a strategic review of the CPPP which will be presented to the Mayoral Forum in August 2026. This review will consider budgets, any ongoing tool subscription or licensing options, timeframes, and in-kind resourcing requirements. The review is being undertaken through a lens of local government change to ensure CCPP outputs support preparing for the transition or are fit for purpose under multiple future structures.

## **Action 1: Understanding Risks – Developing a risk visualisation tool**

### ***Sub-action: 1.1. Develop a Canterbury-wide visualisation tool for climate and natural hazard risks***

13. Preliminary scoping for the regional risk tool was completed in December 2025. The Resilience Explorer tool (REX) was identified as the preferred option due to its strong modelling capabilities, and support from Christchurch City Council (CCC) and Waimakariri District Council who already use the tool and have renewed their contracts for a further five years. The risk tool is expected to deliver clear strategic value for money by enabling consistent, evidence-based risk assessments across councils.
14. A contract is in place with Urban Intelligence, the provider of REX, to assess data sufficiency, including existing district-level risk data that are foundational to developing a minimum viable product for a risk tool. This work will also identify critical data gaps that need to be addressed, along with indicative development costs, ongoing licensing costs, and timeframes. Findings will be provided to the Canterbury Policy Forum in June, alongside the strategic review.

15. Development of the risk tool is planned for year 3, pending the recommendations to come from the strategic review. This is contingent on the availability and sufficiency of data held by councils, and councils' willingness and capacity to engage, provide the required data, and be onboarded into the tool.
16. Staff are exploring flexible regional licensing to reflect councils' varying readiness, enabling more advanced functionality where capability exists, and a minimum viable option where it does not. It is likely that ongoing access to the tool will require an annual licence fee, an indication of which is currently being sought from the supplier. Funding for this is yet to be determined.

## **Action 2: Emissions Reduction**

### ***Sub-action: 2.3. Developing a regional low-emissions transition plan***

17. The regional low-emissions transition plan is intended to provide a coordinated regional approach to emissions reduction within local government statutory responsibilities. It will not replace current council initiatives, but rather strengthen alignment, clarify priorities, and support coordinated implementation across Canterbury.
18. Recent work has focused on drafting the plan's strategic framework and emissions reduction initiatives. It was informed by the 2021 regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory, the Transition Risks and Opportunities Assessment, and stakeholder and youth engagement undertaken in late 2025 and early 2026.

### ***Draft low-emissions transition plan strategic framework***

19. The draft strategic framework guiding the regional low-emissions transition plan is presented in Attachment 1. It is based on the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan's strategic direction and aligned to related regional work, including the development of the Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan 2027-37 and the Mayoral Forum's Regional Energy workstream. It has been reviewed and endorsed by the Canterbury Policy Forum at its March meeting, and considered by the Chief Executives Forum at its May meeting.
20. While chief executives endorsed the framework, the Forum provided feedback that the principle 'urgent' was unclear. To ensure clarity on this point, staff have replaced this principle with 'timely'. The revised phrasing more precisely conveys the intent of the principle that climate actions must be undertaken within appropriate timeframes to effectively support Canterbury's emissions reduction and adaptation efforts. The word 'timely' also better reflects a deliberate, planned approach to climate action, reinforcing that progress should be both prompt and well-sequenced to achieve meaningful outcomes across the region.

### ***Development of potential emissions reduction initiatives for the transition plan***

21. Alongside the strategic framework, work to develop emissions reduction initiatives across five key areas has continued. A number of these initiatives are dependent on

central government policy and direction, and councils' ability to act will be shaped accordingly. The five areas, and the scope of action within local government's role and statutory responsibilities, are:

- **Transport:** support vehicle decarbonisation, explore pricing and regulatory levers to encourage low-emissions vehicle uptake, promote mode shift
- **Energy transition:** support households and high-emitting industries to decarbonise, incorporate energy demand and infrastructure planning into regional planning processes, and investigate bioenergy supply chain opportunities in Canterbury
- **Agriculture and land use:** promote low-emission farming practices, strengthen farm advisory partnerships, build emissions literacy among landowners, support on-farm sequestration and biodiversity outcomes
- **Waste and circular economy:** promote reuse and repair behaviour, improve construction material recovery, and increase organic waste diversion from landfill
- **Cross-sector enablers:** coordinate funding mechanisms, provide advocacy and regulatory support, drive education and behaviour change initiatives, integrate nature-based solutions across sectors.

22. In March 2026, the Canterbury Policy Forum agreed that these draft initiatives should be discussed and tested through a combination of targeted discussions with councils' budget holders, briefings with elected members, and continuing engagement via regional forums structures. This engagement is under way and will include a workshop with the Climate Champions Reference Group in June. The engagement will be completed by August 2026 when refined emissions reduction initiatives and implementation options will be brought to the Chief Executives' Forum for review, prior to consideration by the Mayoral Forum.

#### ***Sub-action 2.1: Local Emissions Data Platform initiative***

23. Canterbury councils are trialling the Local Emissions Data Platform (LEDP), a nationwide collaboration providing a yearly emissions inventory, data visualisations, and a policy scenario modelling tool to support staff in understanding district emissions, meeting voluntary reporting needs, and planning emissions reductions using a consistent regional methodology. All participating councils access the platform under a single regional subscription costing \$70,600 per year, ending in October 2026 with confirmation of renewal required by end of June 2026.

24. A structured review of the first subscription year trial is underway to assess council uptake and value for money across Canterbury councils. The Chief Executives Forum has delegated the decision on whether to renew for another year to the Canterbury Policy Forum, which will consider this matter at its June 2026 meeting.

## **Action 4: Nature-Based Solutions**

### ***Sub-action 4.1: Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for Waitaha Canterbury's Ecosystems***

25. A comprehensive Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (the Assessment) for Waitaha Canterbury's ecosystems has been completed on behalf of the CMF by Wildlands Consultants Ltd, marking the completion of sub-action 4.1. The Assessment will shortly be published on the Mayoral Forum website.
26. This is the first spatially explicit assessment of its kind in New Zealand and provides a robust, reproducible evidence base for understanding ecosystem exposure, vulnerability and risk under future climate scenarios. It assesses the exposure of 765 ecosystems to ten different climate hazards at mid- and late-century time periods and under two climate change scenarios, as well as nine different aspects of sensitivity and adaptive capacity for each ecosystem, which combine into a vulnerability score. Exposure and vulnerability are then brought together to indicate the level of risk each ecosystem may face in a changing climate.
27. Pending results of the CCPP strategic review, the next step is to use the Assessment to inform the development of a Blue-Green Network Plan (Action 4.2) by identifying priority ecosystems and tailored management responses.

### **CCPP implementation progress update**

28. The progress update for quarter 3, year 2 is included in Attachment 2 and an overview of the phases and deliverables of key actions is provided in Attachment 3. Progress continues to be made across the majority of actions, albeit at different paces, and collaboration between councils remains strong.
29. Since the last update to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum in February 2026, the risk profile for several key actions has improved. Actions 1 (Risk Visualisation Tool) and 4 (Blue-Green Network Plan), which were previously at risk of not being delivered within the agreed timeframes due to project complexity (specifically, requirements that must align with upcoming legislation and agreement from councils on a consolidated approach for regional tools) and resourcing constraints are now largely back on track.
30. Detail on action-level risks is provided in Attachment 2. These risks continue to be monitored closely and are being actively managed.

### **Strategic review**

31. In February 2026, the Mayoral Forum was advised that a review of the CCPP would commence in March by the Climate Change Working Group to support delivery in the third year. The Mayoral Forum requested the review also include an analysis of future funding and forecast expenditure for year 3 to be presented in May 2026.

32. The CCPP is currently being implemented in a changing policy and operating environment with national reforms across local government, resource management, emergency management, climate adaptation and emissions reduction altering the context in which councils operate.
33. The review under way assesses whether current CCPP actions remain relevant, appropriately prioritised, and aligned with legislative changes, national direction, funding and staff resource availability.
34. The review is being led internally to ensure continuity, speed of delivery and strong contextual understanding. As part of the process, the Climate Change Working Group met on 5 May to discuss and workshop relevant matters to help inform analysis.
35. Results and recommendations arising from the review will be provided to the regional fora in the June-August meeting round.

### **Year 2 CCPP budget allocation and Year 3 forecast**

36. A summary of the actual, committed, and forecast expenditure is provided in Tables 1 and 3 of Attachment 2.
37. The total available budget for year 2 is \$858,510, comprising council contributions of \$741,049 and a year 1 carry-forward of \$117,461.
38. For this financial year (FY2025/26), total expenditure to date is \$231,531. Total contractual commitments to 30 June 2026 are currently \$107,254.
39. In February 2026, the Canterbury Mayoral Forum directed staff to undertake a rapid analysis of CCPP future funding and forecast expenditure for year 3 to provide councils with an early insight on the indicative financial positions for FY 2026/2027. The outcomes of the strategic review will determine if this is all required, and invoices for year 3 will be sent in September.
40. The method, assumptions, limitations, and detailed findings are set out in Attachment 4. Forecast expenditure is provided in Attachment 2.
41. The analysis indicates a projected underspend of \$519,724 at the end of year 2. This is primarily due to delivery sequencing and timing for Action 1 (risk visualisation tool) and Action 4 (blue-green network plan), rather than any change in agreed scope.
42. These two actions have required substantial upfront scoping, evidence development, engagement, and alignment before delivery can occur. As a result, delivery has shifted, with some year 3 expenditure now expected to fall beyond FY2026/27. The rapid financial review anticipates that \$285,000 (of an available \$294,611) is more appropriately phased into year 4, subject to confirmation and approval through the strategic review process.

43. It is recommended that:
- the year 2 underspend (\$519,724) is carried forward into year 3; and
  - councils maintain the previously agreed year 3 funding contributions (\$540,143) until we have determined next steps following the strategic review.
44. This approach:
- preserves the value of prior investment and enables completion of work that is now well scoped and ready for delivery
  - maintains delivery momentum while aligning expenditure with realistic delivery timeframes
  - provides flexibility to incorporate the outcomes of the CCPP strategic review, including any recommendations to re-sequence or better integrate actions.
45. With the potential carry forward from year 2 of \$519,724, plus year 3 contributions of \$540,143, there is a total of \$1,059,867 available in the year 3 budget.
46. A final funding recommendation will be provided to the August 2026 Chief Executives and Mayoral Forum meetings following completion of the strategic review.
47. Subject to approval, councils will be invoiced for year 3 contributions in September 2026.

## **Canterbury Climate Champions Reference Group**

48. The Climate Champions Reference Group met for the first time this term on 23 March 2026. Members received an overview of the CCPP from the Implementation Manager. The Group will meet again in June to workshop potential emissions reduction initiatives for the transition plan for Action 2.

## **Risk assessment and legal compliance**

49. No legal compliance risks have been identified for the recommendations provided in this paper.
50. Not endorsing the recommendations to carry forward year 2 and maintain year 3 council contributions risks limiting the ability to complete actions that are already largely scoped and reduce the value of prior regional investment.
51. Further commentary on risks associated with individual actions is provided in the quarterly progress report (Attachment 2).

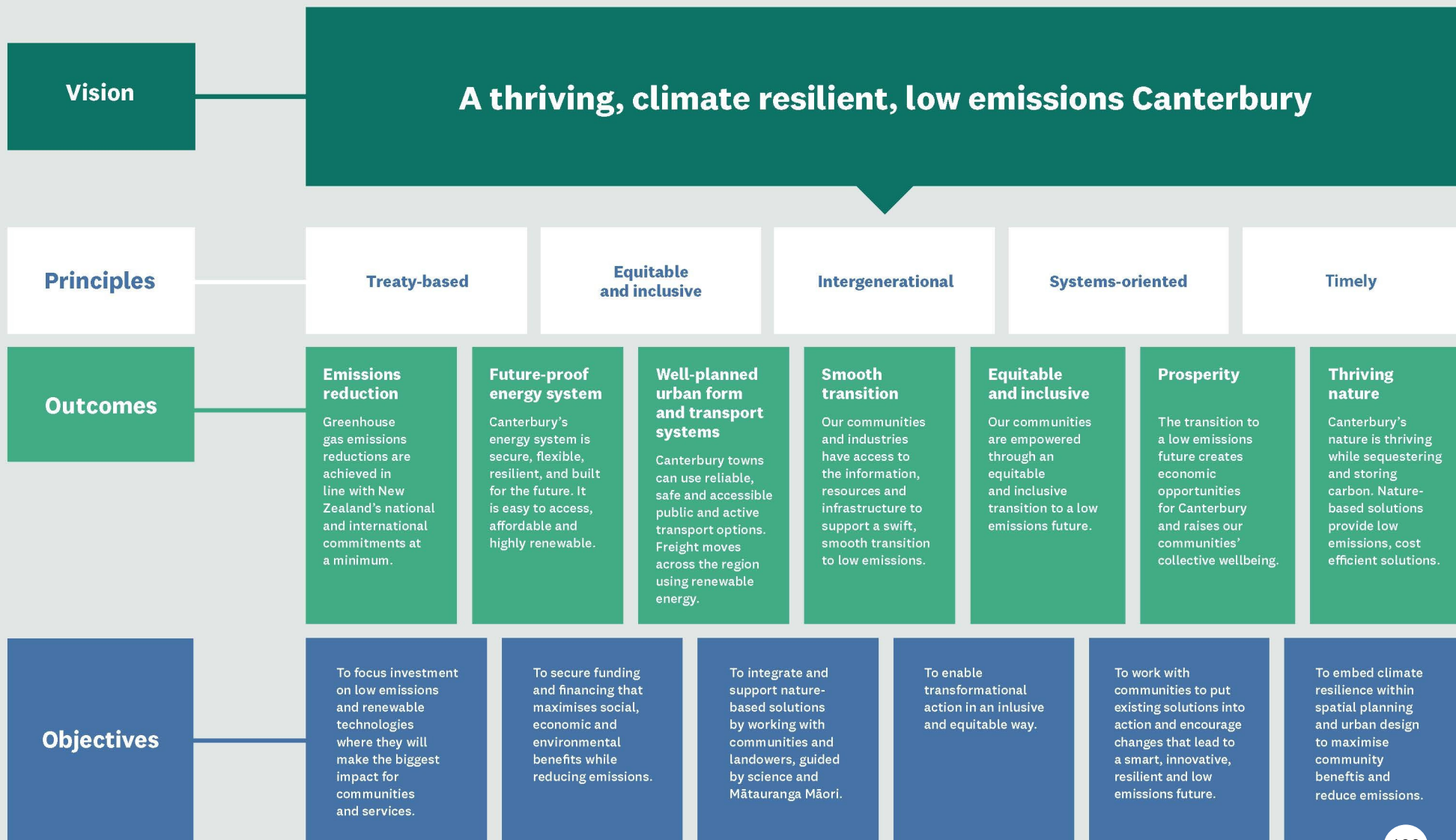
## Next steps

52. For Action 1: the Data Sufficiency Review will be completed by 30 June 2026 and options for tool development will be provided to the Chief Executives and Mayoral Forums in August.
53. For Action 2: the results of the evaluation of the LEDP trial will be presented to the Policy Forum to support a decision on whether to continue the tool subscription for a further year. The project team will engage with council staff and the Climate Champions Reference Group on the draft emissions reduction initiatives, reporting back to regional fora in June – August 2026.
54. For Action 4.1: guidance on the practical application of the Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for Waitaha Canterbury's Ecosystems will be provided to councils, along with access to the GIS layers once transferred to Canterbury Regional Council.
55. For Action 4.2: The draft scope for the Blue-Green Network Plan will be completed by the consultant by 30 June 2026, and recommendations on next steps will be provided to Chief Executives and Mayoral Forums in August.
56. The findings and recommendations of the strategic review will be provided to the Policy Forum in June prior to consideration by the Chief Executives and Mayoral Forums in August.

## Attachments

- Attachment 1 - Draft transition to low-emissions strategic framework
- Attachment 2 - CCPP Implementation Progress Report
- Attachment 3 - Deliverables Plan of Key Actions Y1-Y3
- Attachment 4 - Rapid Financial Analysis

## The Canterbury transition to low emissions strategic framework - DRAFT



## Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Implementation Plan Quarterly Progress Report: May 2026

**Overall summary:** The CCPP is undergoing a strategic review to be presented to the Mayoral Forum in August. The review will consider whether current CCPP actions remain relevant, appropriately prioritised, and aligned with legislative changes, national direction, funding and staff availability. The CCPP is progressing well overall, with the majority of actions advancing as planned. Some deliverables may require timeframe extensions into year 4 due to earlier delays, dependencies, and upcoming legislative changes; however, the programme remains on track for delivery within the approved budget envelope.

A small number of actions carry low-level risks, primarily due to residual uncertainties, previous resource constraints, and legislative changes.

Financial forecasting is currently tracking below the allocated budget as a result of now-resolved delays and past resourcing constraints. Any underspend is requested to be carried forward into Year 3 to enable completion of planned actions.

### Status

<b>On track</b>
<b>Some risks, needs close attention</b>
<b>Off track, needs immediate attention</b>
<b>Not yet started / on hold / completed</b>

### Action Progress Summary

Action Theme & Primary Action	Sub-actions & Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)	Upcoming Deliverables & Key Dates
<b>1. Understanding Climate Risks and Improving Resilience</b>  <u>Primary action:</u> Understand climate hazards and risks in Canterbury to support evidence-based decision making and improve regional resilience.	<u>Sub-action 1.1</u> Risk visualisation tool  <b>Lead:</b> Selwyn District Council.	On track	Work continues toward the development of a regional climate risk tool, with the Resilience Explorer by Urban Intelligence identified as the preferred option. Staff across councils received an online demonstration of the alternative tool, Riskscape, as a comparator to the Resilience Explorer. A contract is now in place with Urban Intelligence to assess existing data sufficiency, to identify data gaps required to develop the risk tool, and inform estimated development timeframes, costs, ongoing licence fees and options. Options for progressing with a tool will be presented to the CEs and Mayors at the August 2026 meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early findings from Data Sufficiency Review presented to CPF, including estimated development costs, timeframes, and ongoing license fees: 19 June 2026</li> <li>• Data sufficiency review completed: 30 June 2026</li> <li>• Interim insights from Data Sufficiency Review presented to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CPF: 19 June 2026</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Options for next steps presented to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CEF: 3 August 2026</li> <li>○ CMF: 28 August 2026</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<u>Sub-action 1.2</u> Climate change risk and urgency assessment  <b>Lead:</b> Canterbury Regional Council	Not yet started		

Action Theme & Primary Action	Sub-actions & Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)	Upcoming Deliverables & Key Dates
<p><b>2.Emissions reduction</b></p> <p>Primary action: Work together across the region to build equitable, inclusive pathways, targets, and key actions to support New Zealand’s commitments towards global greenhouse gas emissions reduction.</p>	<p><u>Sub-action 2.1</u> Develop greenhouse gas emissions inventories and identify transition pathways.</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Canterbury Regional Council</p>	<p>Minor risk to timeframes</p>	<p>Testing of the emission reduction models is still underway by Canterbury councils as part of the Local Emissions Data Platform (LEDP) initiative, a NZ-wide council collaboration aimed at improving consistency in greenhouse gas emissions inventories and scenario/pathway modelling. Delays from Kinesis, the LEDP lead, in progressing the trial have affected councils’ ability to fully test the tool. Christchurch City Council (CCC) has also begun a parallel evaluation of LEDP to support a decision on whether to continue trialling the platform for a further year. A decision is required in June whether to renew, or the trial will lapse in October 2026. Emissions data is currently being gathered from councils for the Financial Year 24/25 community emissions inventory, coordinated by Environment Canterbury, and is due in February 2027.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing of LEDP emissions reductions models: October 2025 – October 2026</li> <li>• CCC review of LEDP platform: February-May 2026</li> <li>• Advice on whether to continue current LEDP trial for a further year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approval on whether to continue with trial delegated to Policy Forum: 19 June 2026</li> <li>○ CEF and CMF: updated August 2026</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Regional GHG emissions inventory (district level) for FY 2024/25 led by LEDP completed: June 2026</li> <li>• Updated Regional emissions inventory for FY 24/25 led by Canterbury Regional Council completed: February 2027</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Sub-action 2.2</u> Regional transition risk and opportunities assessment</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Canterbury Regional Council</p>	<p>Completed Oct 2025</p>	<p>The Assessment will be uploaded to the Mayoral Forum website.</p>	
	<p><u>Sub-action 2.3</u> Regional low emissions transition strategy plan</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Canterbury Regional Council</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>Following the transition risks and opportunities assessment, which evaluated 57 transition opportunities, stakeholder and youth engagement was carried out in late 2025 and early 2026 to inform action development. A draft strategic framework has since been developed and endorsed by CPF in March 2026 and CEF in May 2026. Draft emissions reduction actions &amp; initiatives are now being designed and tested with council budget holders before sharing with Climate Champions Reference Group for feedback over the next few months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft strategic framework presented for approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CMF: 29 May 2026</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Socialise draft transition to low emissions actions with budget holders: May – August 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Workshop with the Climate Champions Reference Group: June 2026</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Transition to low emissions actions received for endorsement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CPF: 19 June 2026</li> <li>○ CEF: 3 August 2026</li> <li>○ CMF: 28 August 2026</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Final transition to low emissions plan received for approval: July-August 2027</li> </ul>

Action Theme & Primary Action	Sub-actions & Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)	Upcoming Deliverables & Key Dates
<p><b>3.Adaptation planning</b></p> <p>Primary action: Support best practice approaches for local adaptation planning with communities</p>	<p><u>Sub-action 3.1</u> Best practice approach for adaptation planning and implementation by councils in Canterbury</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Hurunui District Council</p>	<p>Minor risk to timeframes and uncertainty on upcoming deliverables</p>	<p>The situational analysis for adaptation planning is nearing completion. It is currently missing engagement with Papatipu Rūnanga, in conjunction with Action 6, and requires further refinement. This work will inform future activities under this action.</p> <p>The focus of this action may shift in response to upcoming legislative changes, which will be assessed as part of the Strategic Review of the CCPP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with Papatipu Rūnanga: TBC</li> <li>• Situational analysis of adaptation planning report &amp; Recommendations for next phase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CPF: 18 September 2026</li> <li>○ CEF: 19 October 2026</li> <li>○ CMF: 20 November 2026</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>4.Nature Based Solutions</b></p> <p>Primary action: Facilitate the development of a Canterbury Blue-Green Network to increase natural capital, indigenous biodiversity and offer nature-based solutions to climate change effects</p>	<p><u>Sub-action 4.1</u> Ecosystem climate change risk and vulnerability assessment</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Environment Canterbury</p>	<p>On track - Closing</p>	<p>The ecosystem climate change risk and vulnerability assessment has been completed and will be presented to the Mayoral Forum in May 2026. This signals completion of this action. A guidance document for councils outlining practical application advice and limitations of the current assessment is in its final stages. Risk and vulnerability report, GIS data and supporting guidance will be shared with councils after this work is received by the Mayoral Forum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecosystem climate change risk and vulnerability assessment received by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CMF: 29 May 2026</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Guidance document completed: May 2026</li> <li>• Ecosystem climate change risk and vulnerability report, GIS data and supporting guidance shared with councils: June 2026</li> </ul>
<p><u>Sub-action 4.2</u> Blue-Green Network plan for Canterbury</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Waimakariri District Council</p>	<p>Some risks to timeframes due previous delays, resource constraints, dependency on action 1</p>	<p>The Canterbury Blue-Green Network (BGN) inventory and supporting document outlining the data and potential next steps are nearing completion. Delays in finalisation are due to feedback outstanding from several councils. A contract is now in place with Boffa Miskell for the scoping of the blue-green network plan with early recommendations to be provided in June to CPF.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoping of BGN Plan completed – 30 June 2026</li> <li>• BGN Inventory, Literature Review and recommendations for procurement of the BGN Plan received by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CPF: 19 June 2026</li> <li>○ CEF: 3 August 2026</li> <li>○ CMF: 28 August 2026</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><u>Sub-action 4.2a</u> Collaborate with key stakeholders to provide guidance on Blue-Green infrastructure placement and hazard resilience investment</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Waimakariri District Council</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>A meeting was held on 12 February 2026 with CCPP Lead and Lincoln University (LU) to discuss the Blue-Green Network pilot project the university has been undertaking with Selwyn District Council.</p> <p>LU shared their approach and methodology and in future will share their learnings and opportunities. The next steps are to provide the spatial layers generated from the Ecosystem risk and vulnerability assessment to Lincoln University to incorporate in their BGN mapping of the study area and to test applicability of the information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up meeting to discuss the identified learnings, opportunities, and usability of Ecosystem Risk and Vulnerability data: date TBC</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Sub-action 4.2b</u> Collaborate and align with Greater Christchurch Partnership and key</p>	<p>On track</p>	<p>Collaboration with the Greater Christchurch Partnership (GCP) is ongoing. GCP has been consulted on the draft Canterbury Blue-Green Network inventory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No upcoming deliverables or key dates at this stage.</li> </ul>	

Action Theme & Primary Action	Sub-actions & Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)	Upcoming Deliverables & Key Dates
	stakeholders to deliver a Blue-Green Network  <b>Lead:</b> Waimakariri District Council		In November 2025, GCP advised that no further progress had been made on their Blue-Green Network Plan action due to other work programme priorities and ongoing GCP reviews.	
	<u>Sub-action 4.2c</u> Investigate the feasibility of establishing Blue-Green infrastructure on council-owned land  <b>Lead:</b> All councils	Not yet started		
<b>5.Climate Change Education and Advocacy</b>  <u>Primary action:</u> Support community understanding about the local impacts of climate change and promote individual and collective climate action	<u>Sub-action 5.1</u> Continue to develop the “It’s Time, Canterbury” initiative  <b>Lead:</b> Canterbury Regional Council	Risk to scope and timeframes	A review of the <i>It’s Time, Canterbury</i> platform has been undertaken in response to identified issues, including its unclear purpose, limited resourcing, inconsistent council buy-in, the risk of mixed or duplicated climate messaging across the region, and uncertainty about whether the platform is the appropriate vehicle to support the CCPP. A report summarising the key findings of the review has yet to be finalised. Recommendations on next steps will be considered as part of the strategic review of CCPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCWG review report of It’s Time, Canterbury: June 2026</li> </ul>
	<u>Sub-action 5.2</u> Produce communications materials with CDEM that integrate climate action and resilience to natural hazards  <b>Lead:</b> Canterbury Regional Council	Risk to delivery due to resource constraints	Work to produce the communication materials has not progressed with CDEM due to lack of staff capacity. Meeting scheduled with newly appointed CDEM Community Resilience Advisor week beginning 25 <sup>th</sup> May. Resource requirements will be assessed as part of the strategic review of CCPP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No upcoming deliverables or key dates at this stage.</li> </ul>
<b>6.Supporting Papatipu Rūnanga</b>  <u>Primary action:</u> Support papatipu rūnanga with climate action at place and provide continuing	<u>Sub-action 6.1</u> Understand the climate action requirements of papatipu rūnanga across Canterbury  <b>Lead:</b> All councils	Minor risk to timeframes pending progress of sub-action 6.2	Engagement approach pending response from rūnanga Chair – see below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No upcoming deliverables or key dates at this stage.</li> </ul>

Action Theme & Primary Action	Sub-actions & Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)	Upcoming Deliverables & Key Dates
<p>opportunity for their involvement with the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.</p>	<p><u>Sub-action 6.2</u> Support councils to work in partnership with papatipu rūnanga on climate action planning</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Canterbury Mayoral Forum Secretariat</p>	<p>Next steps considered as part of Strategic Review</p>	<p>A letter will be sent to papatipu rūnanga Chairs providing an update on CCPP implementation progress and inviting space to participate in or contribute to actions of interest to them. Response will determine next steps and engagement to support sub-action 6.1.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter to be sent from Mayoral Forum Chair to papatipu rūnanga Chairs once the outcome of the strategic review is known: September 2026</li> </ul>
<p><b>7.Integrating climate change considerations in council processes</b></p> <p><u>Primary action:</u> Work collaboratively to build local government capability and enhance its capacity to adapt to the climate change challenges it faces</p>	<p><u>Sub-action 7.1</u> Integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation considerations across all council business</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Ashburton District Council</p>	<p>Some risk to delivery due to tight timeframes</p>	<p>Following confirmation of the project scope, advice on embedding climate change considerations into Long Term Plans (LTPs) has been identified as the most significant opportunity to influence council decision-making. Participation in the next Aotearoa Council Climate Network (ACCN) event is being planned to support councils to better understand how to embed climate change considerations into their LTP processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation on ACCN webinar on climate change considerations into LTPs: June 2026</li> </ul>
<p><b>8.Climate Funding and Financing</b></p> <p><u>Primary action:</u> Identify co-funding and financing opportunities for climate adaptation and resilience.</p>	<p><u>Sub-action 8.1</u> Advocate to central government for funding to be made available for the climate-related actions</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Christchurch City Council</p>	<p>Next steps considered as part of Strategic Review</p>	<p>Progress with this action has been constrained by an evolving political context, pressure on councils to reduce expenditure, reduced central government support, contested external funding, limited staff capacity, and challenges in evidencing financial returns on adaptation. Next steps for this action will be assessed as part of the Strategic Review of CCPP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of funding options to support work following implementation of CCPP actions: TBC</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Sub-action 8.2</u> Explore the feasibility of a Canterbury Climate Commitment</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Canterbury Mayoral Forum Secretariat</p>	<p>This sub-action was completed</p>	<p>The project was ceased following initial investigations.</p>	
<p><b>9.Monitoring and Evaluation</b></p> <p><u>Primary action:</u> Monitor and report on progress</p>	<p><u>Sub-action 9.1</u> Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation plan</p>	<p>Paused</p>	<p>A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework was developed in September 2025 and agreed by the action leads and the working group. This action has since been on hold due to staff capacity constraints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendations for year 3 and onwards: August 2026</li> </ul>

Action Theme & Primary Action	Sub-actions & Lead	Status	Commentary (scope, budget, timing, risks)	Upcoming Deliverables & Key Dates
towards achieving the actions and outcomes of the Partnership Plan.	<b>Lead:</b> Environment Canterbury		Implementation reporting is already in place and occurs quarterly as part of the CCPP update to regional fora. Next steps will be assessed as part of the Strategic Review of CCPP.	
<b>10.Implementation</b>  <u>Primary action:</u> Assemble an implementation team to ensure the successful delivery and implementation of the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan.	<b>Lead:</b> Environment Canterbury (with action leads)	On track	A strategic review of CCPP actions has commenced to ensure they remain relevant, prioritised, and aligned with emerging national policy, legislation, funding settings, and sector conditions. Recommendations from a rapid financial review were approved by the Chief Executives and will be presented to the Mayoral Forums on 28 May. Further recommendations will be provided at the August Chief Executive and Mayoral Forum meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCPP review: February – August 2026</li> <li>• CCPP review recommendations:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Endorsement by CPF: 19 June 2026</li> <li>○ Approval by CEF: 3 August 2026</li> <li>○ Approval by CMF: 28 August 2026</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Updated Project Implementation Plans post-CCPP review approval: July/August 2026 (tentative)</li> </ul>

### Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Budget Summary 2024-2027

1. The CCPP budget will be reviewed in line with the recommendations that follow the strategic review in August. The following details represent the budget at quarter 3, 2026.
2. The CCPP budget approved by the Mayoral Forum (excl. GST) is \$190,140 for year 1 (Y1), \$741,049 for year 2 (Y2), and \$540,143 for year 3 (Y3) (Table 2). Due to invoicing errors, \$165,340 was received in Y1. The resulting Y1 underspend of \$117,461 was carried forward, increasing the Y2 budget to \$858,510 (Table 3).
3. Allocation of the budget across actions (Table 1) continues to evolve as implementation progresses. Current forecasts indicate that total expenditure will remain within the approved budget envelope (Table 3), assuming that any unspent funds are carried forward to the following financial year. Table 1 summarises expenditure to date (green), committed expenditure (red), and forecast expenditure (black) across actions.
4. In Y2, \$231,531 has been spent to date. A further \$107,254 is already committed. Total expenditure by the end of Y2 is forecast at \$338,786, which is lower than expected due to earlier delays to Actions 1 and 4, now largely back on track. It is recommended that the underspend of \$519,725 be carried forward to Y3, and Y3 council contribution are maintained at \$540,143, resulting in a total Y3 budget of \$1,059,868. The rapid financial analysis indicated a potential sequencing of spend into Y4 to enable completion of the actions, however, this is to be confirmed through the strategic review currently underway.

**Actual Staff Time Reporting – hours/month**

	<b>January 2026</b>	<b>February 2026</b>	<b>March 2026</b>	<b>April 2026</b>
CMF Secretariat	0h	5h	2.5h	1.25h
Kaikōura District Council	2h	7h	0h	3.5h
Hurunui District Council	3h	20.75h	27h	33.25h
Waimakariri District Council	13h	33.5h	59h	62.5h
Christchurch City Council	2h	35h	41h	30h
Selwyn District Council	4h	20h	20h	25h
Ashburton District Council	0h	0h	0h	1h
Timaru District Council	2h	4h	2h	4h
Mackenzie District Council	0h	5h	0h	Not reported
Waimate District Council	0h	0h	0h	0h
Waitaki District Council	0h	3h	3h	2h
Canterbury Regional Council	222.5h	260h	290.5h	439h

**Table 1: Detailed breakdown of expenditure to date, contractual commitments and forecast for Year 2 and Year 3 (excl. GST)**

Action	Deliverable	Expenditure to date Y2	Committed Forecast Y2	Previous Committed Forecast Y3	Updated Committed Forecast Y3	Notes about updated forecast for Y3, pending results of strategic review	Updated Forecast Y4	Notes about updated forecast for Y4 (pending results of strategic review)
1.1	1.1 Risk Visualisation tool: Preliminary scoping report	\$4,000.00	\$0	\$0	\$0	No change	-	
	1.1 Risk Visualisation tool: Tool development	\$0	\$48,000.00	\$350,000.00	\$300,000.00	Refined estimates indicate a potential reduction of \$50k in estimated costs.	\$50,000.00	\$50k could be used to complete data gaps for the risk tool. Alternatively, it could be used to part-fund the ongoing regional licence fee (cost to be confirmed) which will need additional funding through LTPs if approved.
2	2.1 Emissions Reduction: GHG Emissions modelling pathway tool subscription	\$70,600.00	\$0	\$70,600.00	\$70,600.00	No change	-	
	2.2 Emissions Reduction: Assessment	\$43,478.26	\$0	\$0	\$0	No change	-	
	2.2 Emissions Reduction: stakeholder facilitation	\$7,875.00	\$0	\$0	\$0	No change	-	
	2.2 Emissions Reduction: stakeholder catering	\$623.20	\$0	\$0	\$0	No change	-	
	2.3 Emissions Reduction: Regional low emissions transition plan	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$29,000.00 + \$25,000	\$29,000.00	Defer \$25k to Y4 to support the launch and implementation of the transition plan, which will occur after the plan is delivered in Y3.	\$25,000.00	To support the launch of the transition plan and implementation of the actions, including engagement.
3	3.1 Best practice approach for adaptation planning	\$0	\$0	\$20,000.00	\$30,000.00	Originally funded through in-kind staff time only. Some funding has been allocated to engagement and workshops	-	
4	4.1 Ecosystem Risk Assessment: Final risk and vulnerability assessment	\$69,521.73	\$0	\$0	\$0	No change	-	

Action	Deliverable	Expenditure to date Y2	Committed Forecast Y2	Previous Committed Forecast Y3	Updated Committed Forecast Y3	Notes about updated forecast for Y3, pending results of strategic review	Updated Forecast Y4	Notes about updated forecast for Y4 (pending results of strategic review)
	4.2 Develop a Blue-Green Network plan and guidance: Scope for procurement	\$0	\$27,500.00	\$0	\$0	No change	-	
	4.2 Develop a Blue-Green Network plan and guidance: Development	\$0	\$0	\$300,000.00	\$200,000.00	Development of the BGN plan is expected to extend into Y4; therefore, costs have been split across Y3 and Y4.	\$100,000.00	To complete development of the BGN plan and guidance.
	4.2.c Feasibility of establishing Blue-Green infrastructure on council owned land	\$0	\$0	\$80,000.00	\$0	Moved \$80k to Y4, as feasibility work for the BGN plan will occur in Y4, following completion of the plan.	\$100,000.00	Refined estimates suggest an additional \$20k may be required to deliver the feasibility work.
6	Understand the climate action requirements of papatipu rūnanga	\$0	\$0	\$30,000.00	\$50,000.00	No change	-	
9	Monitoring and evaluation indicators and plan	\$0	\$0	\$30,000.00	\$20,000.00	Collation of baseline data is expected to commence at the end of Y3 and continue into Y4; therefore, the budget has been split across Y3 and Y4.	\$10,000.00	To complete monitoring and evaluation and the reporting process. Additional funding may be required in Year 4
10	Project Manager (0.6 FTE)	\$15,433.08	\$11,754.48	\$76,540.80	\$65,606.40	Refined forecast	-	
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$231,531.27</b>	<b>\$107,254.48</b>	<b>\$1,011,140.80</b>	<b>\$765,206.40</b>		<b>\$285,000.00</b>	

**Table 2: Revenue (2024-2027): Canterbury Council Financial Contributions**

Council	CMF ratios	Y1 LTP (\$)	Y1 LTP (\$)	Y2 LTP (\$)	Y3 LTP (\$)	Total Y1-Y3 LTP (\$)	Total Y1-Y3 LTP (\$)**
Canterbury Regional Council	20.5%	38,950.00	33,791.74	151,700.00	110,700	301,350.00	\$296,191.74
Christchurch City	20.5%	39,000.00	33,913.04	152,000.00	110,000	301,000.00	\$295,913.04
Selwyn	10.7%	20,330.00	17,678.26	79,180.00	57,780	157,290.00	\$154,638.26
Waimakariri	10.7%	20,330.00	17,678.26	79,180.00	57,780	157,290.00	\$154,638.26
Ashburton	9.8%	18,620.00	16,191.30	72,520.00	52,920	144,060.00	\$141,631.30
Timaru	9.8%	18,620.00	16,191.30	72,520.00	52,920	144,060.00	\$141,631.30
Hurunui	5.2%	9,880.00	8,591.30	38,480.00	28,080	76,440.00	\$75,151.30
Waimate	3.9%	7,410.00	6,443.48	28,860.00	21,060	57,330.00	\$56,441.74
Waitaki	3.9%	7,500.00	6,521.74	29,609.00	21,903	59,012.00	\$58,033.74
Kaikōura	2.5%	4,750.00	4,130.43	18,500.00	13,500	36,750.00	\$36,130.43
Mackenzie	2.5%	4,750.00	4,130.43	18,500.00	13,500	36,750.00	\$36,130.43
<b>TOTAL budget</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>190,140.00</b> PLANNED	<b>\$165,339.54</b> RECEIVED	<b>741,049.00</b> RECEIVED	<b>540,143.00</b> TO BE INVOICED Aug. 2026	<b>1,471,332.00</b> PLANNED	<b>1,446,531.51</b> **WITH ACTUAL \$ RECEIVED IN Y1

**Table 3: Summary of Budget, Actuals, Commitments, and Forecast.**

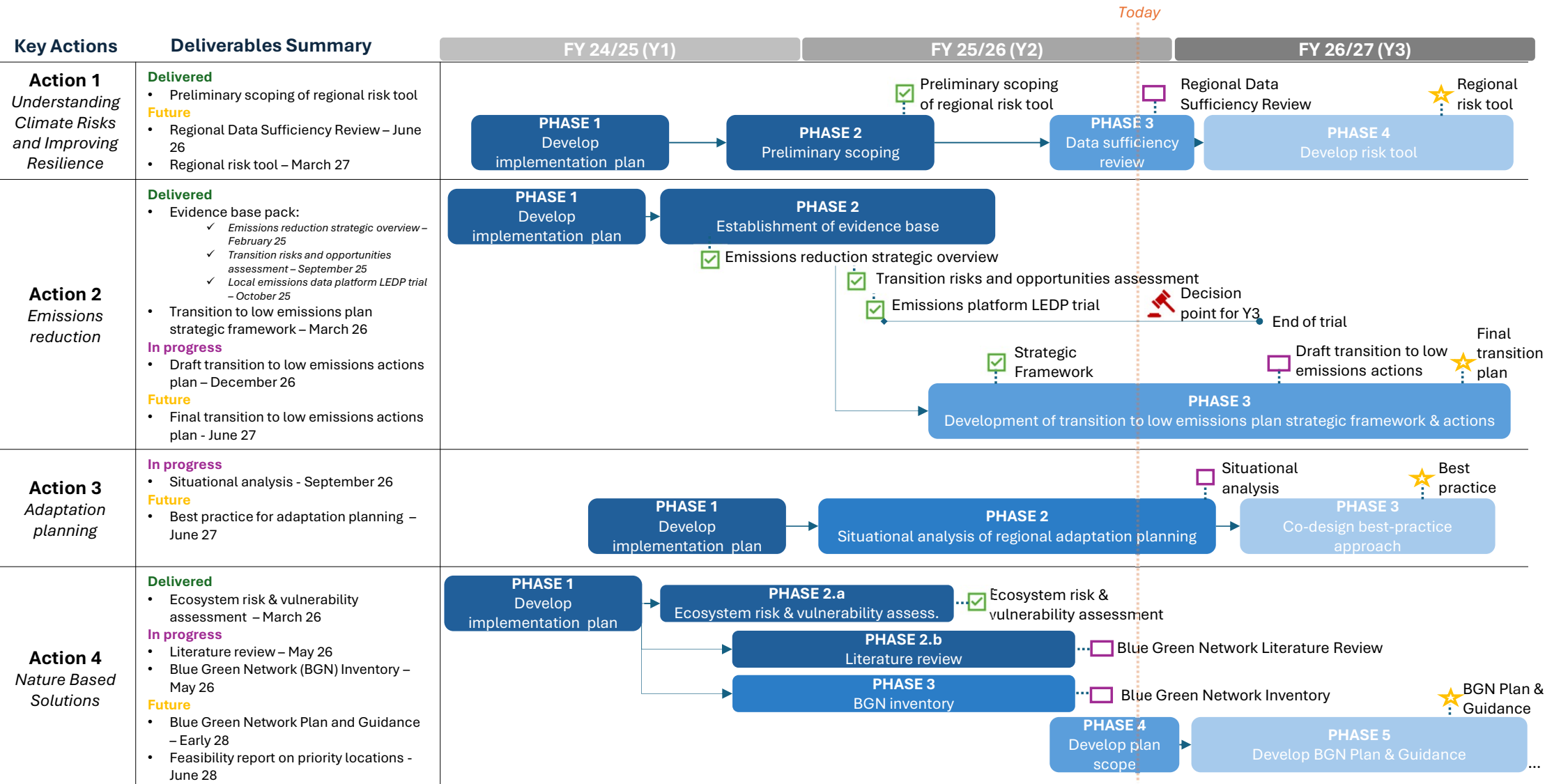
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 4
<b>Approved budget</b>	\$190,140.00	\$741,049.00	\$540,143.00	\$0	\$1,471,332.00
<b>Actual budget received and expected</b>	\$165,339.54	\$741,049.00	\$540,143.00 (to be confirmed in August)	\$0	\$1,446,531.54
<b>Adjusted budget (inc. carry-overs)</b>	\$165,339.54	\$858,510.25 (Inc. carry-over from Y1)	\$1,059,867.50 (Inc. carry-over from Y2)	\$294,661.10 (Inc. carry-over from Y3)	-
<b>Expenditure</b>	\$47,878.29	\$231,531.27	-	-	-
<b>Forecast</b>	-	\$107,254.48	\$765,206.40	\$285,000.00	-
<b>Total costs</b>	\$47,878.29	\$338,785.75	\$735,206.40	\$285,000.00	\$1,436,870.44
<b>Underspent</b>	\$117,461.25	\$519,724.50	\$294,661.10 (expected)	\$9,661.10 (expected)	

# CCPP Phases & Deliverables of Key Actions

NB: Phases and deliverables for FY 26/27 (Y3) to be confirmed following the CCPP Strategic Review.

Phases: Completed Underway Future

Deliverables: ✔ Delivered  In progress ★ Future



## **Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan – Rapid Financial Analysis**

### **(Attachment to 29 May 2026 Mayoral Forum paper)**

#### **Purpose**

1. This attachment provides assurance to the Mayoral Forum on the approach of the rapid financial analysis undertaken to inform the year 3 forecast expenditure on key Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan (CCPP) actions. Detailed financial information is provided separately in Attachment 3, with a summary included in the briefing paper.

#### **Overview of Approach**

2. A targeted, time bound financial review was undertaken to confirm current delivery assumptions and forecast expenditure for year 3 of the CCPP. The approach was designed to be proportionate to the timeframe available while providing a reliable basis for recommendations to the Chief Executives' and Mayoral Fora.
3. The analysis:
  - focused on key actions (Actions 1–4 and Action 6), where the majority of expenditure is concentrated;
  - confirmed expected scope, delivery sequencing and forecast expenditure based on current commitments; and
  - was subject to internal review to test deliverability, timing and consistency with overall programme capacity.
4. While not a substitute for the forthcoming strategic review, this approach was sufficient to assess near term financial risk and funding adequacy.

#### **Governance and Quality Assurance**

5. To ensure reliability, forecasts were:
  - developed in discussion with relevant action leads, reflecting current procurement, delivery and dependency assumptions; and
  - reviewed by the Project Manager, Implementation Manager and the Convenor of the Canterbury Climate Change Working Group, providing cross-action and governance-level oversight.
6. This provided confidence that the forecasts are realistic, aligned with approved scopes, and achievable within known delivery constraints.

#### **Key Findings**

7. The analysis indicates that:

- total forecast expenditure remains broadly aligned with previously agreed funding envelopes;
  - no funding shortfall is identified for Year 3, pending confirmation through the strategic review;
  - however, not all Year 3 budget is expected to be spent within the 2026/27 financial year due to the practical sequencing of several complex, multi-stage actions.
8. Approximately \$285,000 is anticipated to be more appropriately phased into Year 4, reflecting dependencies between planning, engagement, and implementation stages rather than any reduction in scope or delivery ambition. This will be fully assessed and recommendations provided following completion of the strategic review. Full financial detail is set out in Attachment 3 of the briefing paper.

### **Implications**

9. Based on the rapid financial analysis and noting that recommendations will be provided following the strategic review:
- existing funding is sufficient to support planned delivery in Year 3 and phase the final delivery of several key actions to year 4;
  - staff consider there is a strong case to maintain previously agreed year 3 funding arrangements; and
  - current action delivery can proceed as planned, subject to confirmation through the upcoming strategic review of the CCPP.

### **Limitations and Next Steps**

10. This rapid financial analysis provides an interim view based on current commitments and known timelines. It does not reassess the overall strategic alignment or prioritisation of actions, or funding requirements beyond 30 June 2027.
11. These matters will be addressed through the broader strategic review currently underway, which will provide a more comprehensive basis for future decision-making by Chief Executives and Mayoral Fora in August 2026.

# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

**Date:** 29 May 2026

**Presented by:** Hamish Riach, Chair, Economic Development Forum  
Jesse Burgess, Chair, Energy Strategy Steering Group

## Canterbury Regional Energy Workstream

### Purpose

1. This paper presents the revised Regional Energy Strategic Framework and supporting report for consideration and endorsement. It also provides an update on the development of the draft Regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap.

### Recommendations

**That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:**

1. **endorses the revised Regional Energy Strategic Framework and supporting report, noting that further refinements may arise from ongoing engagement with mana whenua**
2. **provides any feedback on the revised Regional Energy Strategic Framework and supporting report, by 12 June 2026**
3. **notes that a Scope of Work for the Regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap has been developed, with the draft Action Plan / Roadmap scheduled for delivery by June 2026**
4. **notes that targeted engagement with stakeholders, mana whenua and community groups is ongoing**
5. **notes that the final Regional Energy Strategic Framework and Regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap will be brought back to the Canterbury Mayoral Forum for consideration and approval in the second half of 2026.**

### Background

2. In 2024, the Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) initiated the regional energy workstream. The workstream is led by the Economic Development Forum and overseen by the Energy Strategy Steering Group, a sub-group of Forum members.
3. Waitaha Canterbury plays a key role in New Zealand's energy future as both an enabler of the energy transition and a significant energy-producing region. Building on the region's major hydro infrastructure and growing renewable energy opportunities, including solar, has the potential to support resilience and fuel security while also creating opportunities for economic growth, investment, and innovation.

4. Phase One of the energy workstream delivered an energy inventory, providing the first comprehensive overview of the region’s energy landscape. The Canterbury Energy Inventory and accompanying summary infographic were approved for publication by the Mayoral Forum on 30 May 2025. At the same meeting, the Forum endorsed the continuation of the regional energy work through a phased and staged approach (as outlined in Table 1), with each stage building on earlier work. The energy workstream has now progressed into Phase Two: the development of a regional energy strategy.

Phase	Regional approach to energy		Progress
<b>One – Develop a regional energy inventory</b>	Energy Inventory for Canterbury (Year 1 – FY24/25)		Complete
<b>Two – Develop a regional energy strategy</b>	<b>Stage 1:</b> Strategic Framework (Year 1 – FY25/26)		Nearing completion
	<b>Stage 2:</b> Roadmap or Action Plan (Year 2 – FY26/27)		In development
	<b>Stage 3:</b> Comprehensive energy strategy and implementation plan (Year 2/3+)		Not yet started

Table 1 – Phased approach to Regional Energy Workstream

## Regional Energy Strategy update

### Strategic Framework development

5. Significant progress has been made on the development of the Strategic Framework. The revised draft Strategic Framework and supporting report are provided as Attachments 1 and 2 to this report.
6. In December 2025, the draft Strategic Framework and supporting report were shared with stakeholders for feedback. The draft Framework was also provided to community groups interested in energy, as well as disability, youth, and older persons’ advocacy groups, together with a short online survey and an invitation to kōrero. In addition, the project team engaged Mahaanui Kurataiao to facilitate and support discussions with Te Pātaka o Rākaihautū Banks Peninsula Papatipu Rūnanga, whose insights have informed refinements to the Strategic Framework. Efforts to engage with other Papatipu Rūnanga and Papatipu Rūnanga Environmental Entities (PREEs) are ongoing, with initial connections also made to date with Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura, Whitiōra (Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga), and Aoraki Environmental Consultancy (Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua).

7. Most feedback received was supportive of the overall direction, while also offering constructive input and identifying opportunities to strengthen the framework. Key themes arising through feedback included:
- affordability: a number of responses identified energy affordability as a key issue, and some emphasised the need for a fair and equitable energy transition for all and a greater focus on people and community outcomes.
  - electrification and sector transition pathways: some stakeholders sought stronger, more explicit emphasis on electrification, clearer infrastructure implications, and practical transition pathways for industry, freight, agriculture, and process heat.
  - resilience: feedback identified resilience and reliability as central to Canterbury's energy future, alongside the requirement for secure and enduring infrastructure and improved energy security and resilience for marae, papakāinga, and wider communities.
  - implementation and partnerships: several stakeholders were looking for clearer prioritisation, timelines, funding pathways, and delivery mechanisms, including stronger partnerships with rūnanga and support for rangatahi development and local capability building.
  - funding pathways for households and community initiatives: a key theme raised by community groups was the need for practical funding mechanisms to support energy efficiency improvements and community energy and innovation initiatives.
  - reducing emissions: the importance of emissions reduction was raised, with opportunities identified across sectors, including approaches that align with ecological limits.
8. The project team has carefully considered all feedback and incorporated changes to the Strategic Framework and supporting report where appropriate. Amendments have also been made to improve clarity, consistency of language, and overall readability. A foreword has been drafted for inclusion, and the plan-on-a-page and supporting report have undergone a design process to align with the look and feel of the Regional Energy Inventory and other Mayoral Forum documents.
9. It is recommended that the Mayoral Forum endorses the revised draft Strategic Framework and supporting report and provides any feedback by 12 June 2026. As noted above, while there have been early conversations with some Papatipu Rūnanga that have helped to inform and shape the current draft Strategic Framework, there are still considerable efforts required to engage with all Rūnanga across the region. These efforts are ongoing and will continue over the coming months. Further refinements are likely to arise through those discussions. Following this engagement, it is proposed that the final Strategic Framework be brought back through the regional forums alongside the Regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap in the second half of 2026. Subject to final endorsement, the Framework and Action Plan would be made available on the Mayoral Forum website, alongside the previously published Energy Inventory.

## Regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap development

10. Stage 2 will translate the agreed Strategic Framework into an implementable Regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap. This has been strongly supported by stakeholders. Development of the Action Plan / Roadmap is underway and will run concurrently with finalisation of the Strategic Framework.
11. A Scope of Work for the Action Plan / Roadmap has been developed. The key deliverable for this phase of work is a regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap that identifies:
  - priority actions and initiatives
  - sequencing and timing
  - responsible and supporting agencies
  - dependencies and enabling requirements
  - governance and implementation considerations
12. The project team has commenced the development of draft actions informed by the Regional Energy Inventory and aligned with the Strategic Framework. An early draft of the Regional Energy Action Plan has been prepared to support discussions with key stakeholders, community groups, and mana whenua, with engagement meetings now underway. The development of actions, including their scope, sequencing, resourcing, and delivery responsibilities, will continue to be refined through ongoing engagement and feedback.
13. The team is working to ensure alignment with the emerging Emissions Reduction Plan and other related regional workstreams, including the Regional Land Transport Plan, regional deal and investment prospectus foundational work, and the [Canterbury Ambition](#).
14. To support delivery of the draft Regional Energy Action Plan by 30 June 2026, external expertise has been engaged to undertake a technical peer review of the document.

## Cost, compliance and communication

### Financial implications

15. Delivery of the regional energy workstream relies heavily on in-kind resourcing. For the remainder of FY 2025/26, approximately 1.5 FTE of in-kind resourcing has been confirmed, drawn from the Regional Public Service, Canterbury Regional Council (two staff), Kaikōura District Council and, more recently, Christchurch City Council.
16. Committed and forecast costs for key activities in FY2025/26 total approximately \$78,600, within an overall budget of \$87,000 for this workstream. To date, \$33,100 of funding has been spent or committed in the current financial year. This funding has been allocated to support engagement activities and provide external project support,

including a technical peer review of the draft Action Plan. Estimated additional costs for key activities to 30 June 2026 – including engagement, and strategic advisory services – total approximately \$45,500.

17. It is anticipated that the existing funding will be sufficient to complete the Strategic Framework and develop a draft Action Plan / Roadmap by 30 June 2026. Finalisation of the Action Plan / Roadmap would then be completed using internal in-kind resources.

### **Significance and engagement**

18. A wide range of stakeholders, including councils across the region, the energy sector, industry, major energy users, Ngāi Tahu Holdings, academics, and central government agencies such as the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, have engaged positively with the regional energy work.
19. A light-touch, targeted engagement approach was developed to invite feedback from community groups interested in energy, as well as disability, youth, and older persons' advocacy groups to inform the Strategic Framework and Action Plan / Roadmap.
20. The project team is taking steps to engage with all Papatipu Rūnanga across the region, including exploring opportunities for PREEs to support mana whenua engagement, consistent with direction from the Mayoral Forum. To date, two hui have been held, facilitated by Mahaanui Kurataiao Limited and attended by representatives from Te Pātaka Banks Peninsula Papatipu Rūnanga, to discuss the development of the Strategic Framework and Action Plan / Roadmap. Efforts to engage with other Papatipu Rūnanga are ongoing, noting that initial connections on this work have now also been made with Whitiōra, Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura, Aoraki Environmental Consultancy, and Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua.
21. Engagement will continue over the coming weeks to inform the development of the Action Plan / Roadmap. This will include ongoing engagement with stakeholders, community groups, and mana whenua to help shape, test, and refine the proposed actions.

### **Next steps**

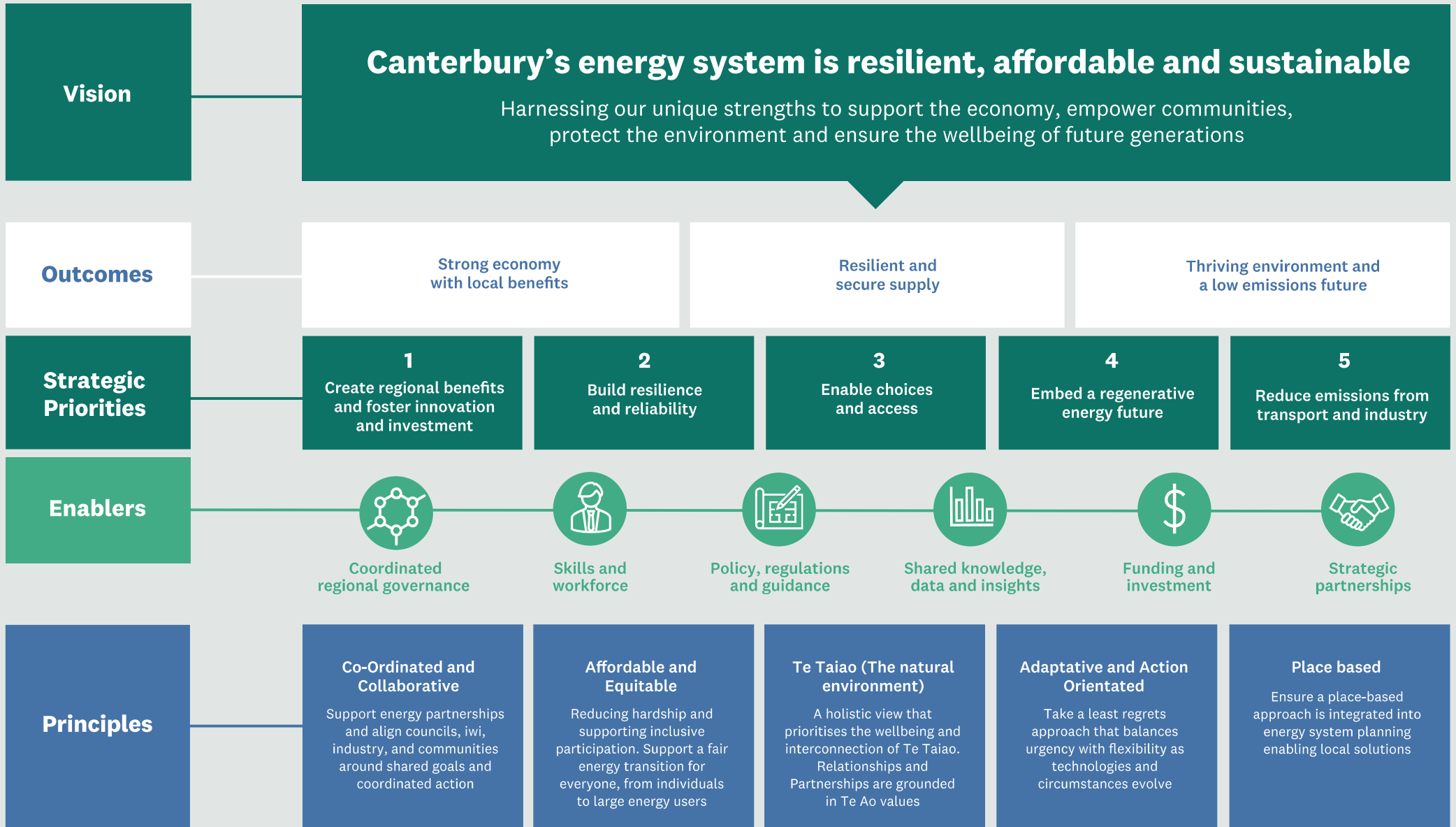
22. Key next steps include:
  - finalising the draft Strategic Framework and supporting report, subject to feedback from the Mayoral Forum and mana whenua input and refinement
  - continued development and refinement of the Regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap, with the aim of having a completed draft by June 2026
  - continuing engagement with stakeholders and mana whenua to inform development of the Regional Energy Action Plan / Roadmap.

## **Attachments**

- Attachment 1: Revised Draft Regional Energy Strategic Framework
- Attachment 2: Revised Draft Strategic Framework supporting report – Our Energy Future: A regional approach to energy in Waitaha | Canterbury

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# The Canterbury Energy Strategic Framework - plan on a page



# Our energy future:

A regional approach to energy  
in Waitaha Canterbury

# Te pungao ki Tua:

He tirohanga ā-rohe ki te pūngao  
i Waitaha

MAY 2026

DRAFT

CANTERBURY  
Mayoral Forum

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# Foreword

## Kupu takamua

**Energy is fundamental to Waitaha Canterbury's prosperity, resilience, and wellbeing. It underpins our key sectors, from agriculture and manufacturing to tourism and emerging industries. It is critical to support investment, productivity, and sustainable economic growth across the region. Just as importantly, reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy enables our communities and whānau to thrive, supporting warm homes, essential local services, and equitable access to opportunity.**

The strategic importance of energy is reflected across key regional initiatives. It is identified as one of five pillars in the Canterbury World-stage Ready future regional deal foundational document and a key priority within the Canterbury Ambition, developed in partnership by Business Canterbury.

As Canterbury grows and evolves, so too do the opportunities and challenges associated with how we generate, distribute, and use energy. Ensuring security of supply – particularly in the context of increasing electrification, climate variability, and system constraints – building business confidence, reducing emissions, and supporting thriving communities are interconnected priorities. The choices we make now will shape not only our environmental footprint, but also our long-term economic competitiveness and resilience.

This Strategic Framework sets out a coordinated regional response to these challenges and opportunities. It signals Canterbury's collective commitment to plan ahead, align effort and work in partnership across local government, industry, energy providers, mana whenua, central government agencies, and the wider community. The valuable input and support of these stakeholders has strengthened both the ambition and the practicality of this Framework.

Canterbury is uniquely positioned, with abundant renewable resources, innovative businesses, and strong community leadership. By working together, we can harness these advantages to build a secure, affordable, and resilient energy system – one that supports a future-focused regional economy and unlocks lasting benefits for communities, businesses and industry across Canterbury.

I thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this Framework and look forward to the collective action that will follow.

**Mayor Nigel Bowen**  
Chair, Canterbury Mayoral Form



# A regional approach to energy in Canterbury

## He tirohanga ā-rohe ki te pungao i Waitaha

**Energy is a critical lifeline – it underpins the economy and is essential to our way of life.**

Canterbury's regional approach to energy has been initiated through the Canterbury Mayoral Forum and its Plan for Canterbury 2023-2025. The Plan for Canterbury recognises that energy security will be critical to support opportunities for the region. It also highlights that renewable energy will become an increasingly important role in responding to climate change risks, and that Canterbury has an opportunity to be at the forefront of an energy transition to attract and retain talent, investment, and technologies.

**The Canterbury Mayoral Forum made a commitment to supporting the region to foster partnerships, to investigate barriers, harness opportunities to improve our energy security and systems in ways that maximise the benefits for our community, economy and environment**

## The regional approach to energy has three integrated components:

<b>Energy Inventory 2025</b>	<p>A comprehensive overview of Canterbury’s energy landscape – this forms the evidence base for future work and is now available on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website.</p>
<b>Strategic Framework</b>	<p>Establishes a shared regional vision, outcomes, and priorities, and sets the strategic direction needed to capture the benefits of the energy transition while addressing associated challenges.</p>
<b>Action Plan / Roadmap</b>	<p>Translates the strategy into delivery by identifying and prioritising practical actions to deliver on the energy goals for the region.</p>

### Strategic Framework

This Regional Energy Strategic Framework positions Canterbury as a leader in sustainable energy and recognises the region’s significant role in the wider South Island and New Zealand energy landscape. It is presented as a high-level ‘plan on a page’, with additional detail set out in this report.

The Strategic Framework is intended for a broad audience. It supports coordinated decision-making, investment, and collaboration across the region, acting as a shared reference point for councils, organisations and partners working toward a common energy future. It aims to shape a collaborative energy future for Canterbury – benefiting individuals, communities, and industry alike.

The Strategic Framework is designed to be adaptive rather than static. It will evolve over time in response to shifting public expectations, emerging technologies, and changing energy demands.

## Key drivers of the Strategic Framework

### The energy landscape is changing

New Zealand, like many countries, is at a major transition point – moving toward low- or zero-carbon energy and shifting from a centralised supply model to a more distributed system. Growing electricity demand adds further pressure. A regional strategy will help Canterbury navigate this transition and respond in ways that best support our communities and

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### Unlocking economic, environmental and social benefits

The energy transition presents substantial opportunities. With a clear, committed plan, Canterbury can capture these benefits locally and achieve the right balance between protecting the environment and promoting economic growth.

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### Energy and economic growth are intrinsically linked

Reliable energy is critical to supporting existing industry and attracting new investment. Confidence in the region's direction and security of supply has direct implications for job creation, business prosperity and regional economic resilience.

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### Coordination is essential

Energy planning must be aligned with existing plans and strategies. Energy intersects with nearly every aspect of regional development – including planning, economic growth, climate adaptation and resilience, environmental sustainability, transport, industry, and urban development.

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### Supporting people and communities

Energy is woven into every part of modern life. To support families, communities, businesses and industries across Canterbury, the region requires a well-functioning, reliable, and equitable energy system and a well-managed energy transition is essential.

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### Implications for agriculture and the rural sector

Canterbury's strong rural and agricultural base contributes significantly to national GDP. Regional energy planning must consider agricultural production, alignment with emissions reduction efforts, and opportunities for coordinated investment in rural energy solutions.



## Who we've connected with and what we've heard

The Strategic Framework has been shaped by the aspirations and perspectives of the energy sector, communities, iwi, industry, academia, and local and central government. It brings together diverse views and priorities. While consensus is not always possible, there is a strong willingness to collaborate to create a shared direction for Canterbury's energy future. Key messages include:

- **Energy is broader than electricity** – Canterbury's future requires a whole-system approach that considers all forms of energy.
- **Electrification is driving change** – electricity and electrifying processes represent the areas of greatest change and opportunity.
- **Hydropower is Canterbury's energy superpower** – the region hosts some of the largest hydro-electric schemes in New Zealand, making a significant contribution to the national grid. That means we can also be vulnerable during dry years.
- **Biomass potential** – Canterbury is uniquely positioned to leverage biomass as part of a sustainable energy mix.
- **Regional decisions have wider impacts** – decisions here have impacts for neighbouring regions, the wider South Island, and New Zealand as a whole.
- **Multiple futures are possible** – outcomes will depend on national demand and supply, population growth, new technologies, and geopolitical developments.
- **A sustainable energy future affects everyone** – from households paying power bills, farmers managing irrigation costs, and small businesses keeping the lights on, to community groups and large energy users.
- **An energy future for Canterbury needs to be enduring** – stable, long-term settings are important to withstand political change and provide investment certainty.

## Ngāi Tahu

Māori have interests across all parts of the energy system. The role of natural resources in Māori culture, values, and worldview (Te Ao Māori) is deeply rooted in the concept of kaitiakitanga (guardianship), where land, water, and energy sources are entities with mauri (life force) that must be respected, sustained, and managed for future generations. Ensuring energy is reliable and resilient is particularly important for marae, which often serve as emergency response hubs for their communities. Alongside this, many Māori entities are actively exploring investment opportunities in renewable energy and emerging technologies, positioning iwi as key partners in shaping Canterbury's energy future.

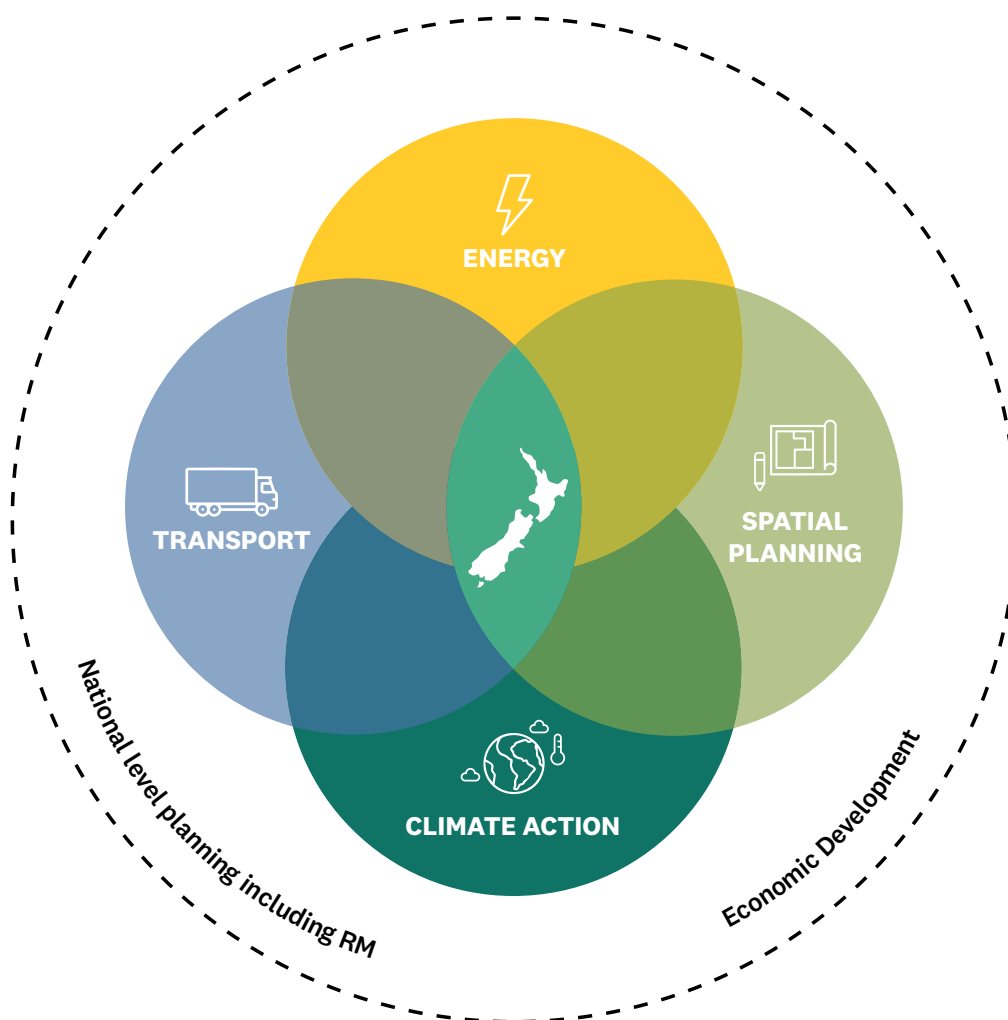
To shape the future of energy in Waitaha Canterbury, concentrated efforts need to be undertaken to build positive and enduring relationships with mana whenua. Ngāi Tahu holds rangatiratanga over more than 80 per cent of Te Wai Pounamu South Island, including Waitaha Canterbury. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, established under the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996, is statutorily recognised as the representative tribal body of Ngāi Tahu Whānui. There are ten Papatipu Rūnanga in Canterbury who hold mana whenua over their respective takiwā (area, territory):

- Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura
- Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga
- Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke (Rāpaki) Rūnanga
- Te Rūnanga o Koukourārata
- Ōnuku Rūnanga
- Wairewa Rūnanga
- Te Taumutu Rūnanga
- Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua
- Te Rūnanga o Waihao
- Te Rūnanga o Moeraki

*Early conversations with some rūnanga have helped to shape the draft Strategic Framework. Further and ongoing dialogue will remain important as the regional energy work progresses.*

# Interconnections Ngā hononga

Energy is closely connected to other regional priorities related to transport, climate action and spatial planning. Progress in one area can accelerate outcomes in others, but the overlap and interconnections also highlight the need for coordinated prioritisation to maximise impact, avoid duplication, and ensure that limited resources deliver the greatest benefit for Canterbury’s communities.

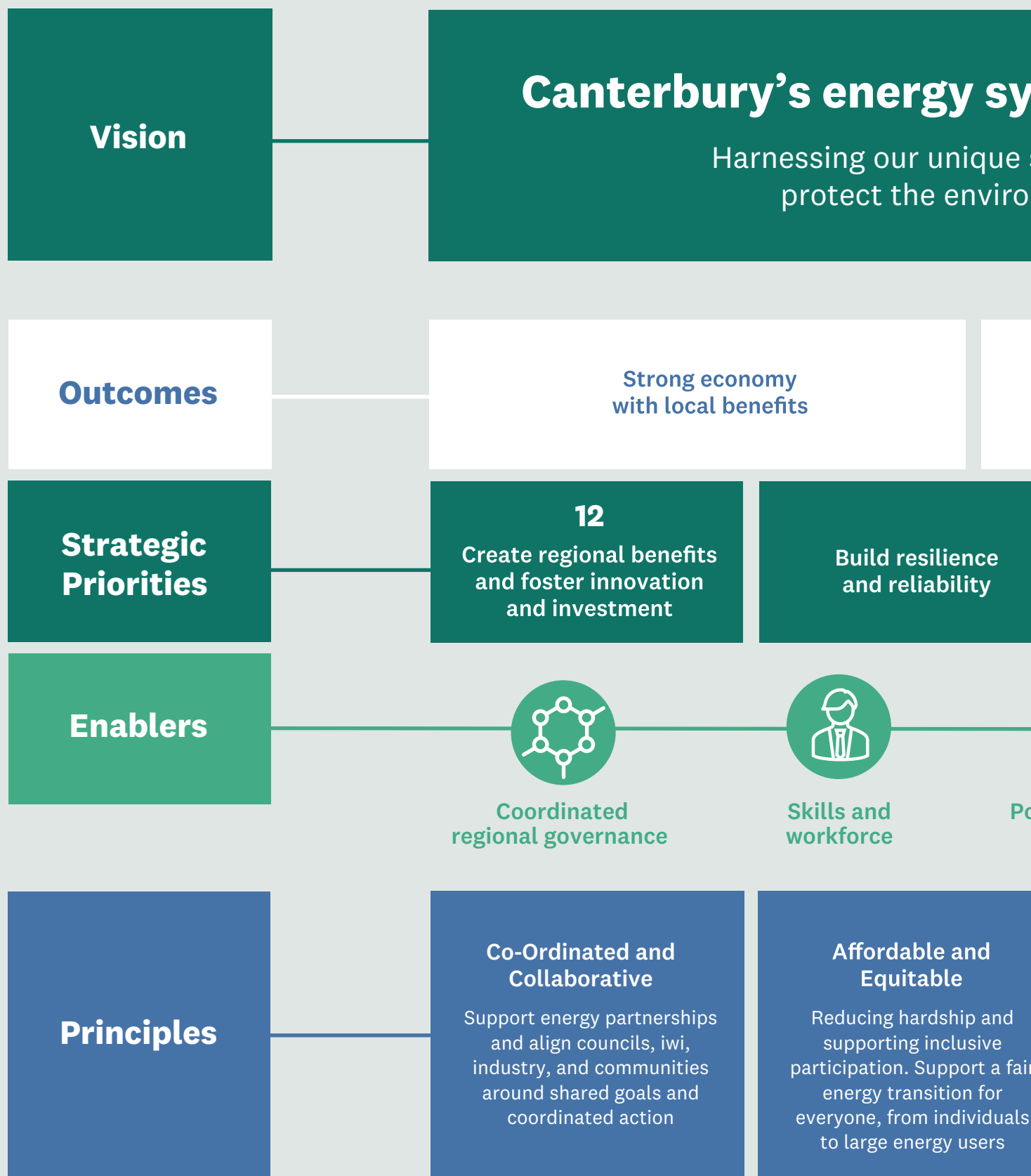


Energy and its interconnection with...	Key Information
 <p><b>Climate action</b></p>	<p>The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is advancing regional emissions-reduction work through the Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan 2024–27<sup>1</sup>. One of the actions commits partners to working together across the region to build equitable, inclusive pathways, targets, and key actions that support New Zealand’s global greenhouse gas emissions-reduction commitments. Progressing both workstreams in a way that is aligned will ensure that energy-focused actions are integrated with wider regional climate priorities.</p>
 <p><b>Transport</b></p>	<p>The transition to a lower-emission transport system in Canterbury will have significant impacts on the demand for energy – increased demand for electricity, hydrogen, and other low-emission fuels will require supporting infrastructure and investment. The Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan 2024 – 34 supports the transition by prioritising intermodal freight, public transport, and active travel to reduce fossil fuel reliance while also recognising the broader transport system changes that will be required. Looking ahead, businesses and households will likely rely on a combination of electric, hydrogen, and biofuel-powered vehicles. Heavy freight faces considerable challenges as it looks to lower emissions, including limited availability of heavy vehicle charging infrastructure, high costs of converting heavy freight fleets, and uncertainty around fuel pathways and future technologies.</p>
 <p><b>Spatial planning</b></p>	<p>Regional spatial planning creates a significant opportunity to integrate energy planning into long-term land use decisions. Spatial plans could guide where renewable energy infrastructure (e.g. solar or wind farms, EV charging stations, community batteries) can be located. Spatial planning can also promote alignment between land use and energy demand and supply, particularly in areas with high distributed energy resources potential, reduce regulatory barriers, and support the establishment of Renewable Energy Zones.<sup>2</sup> There is also opportunity to influence urban form through spatial planning and reduce car dependency and lower fuel demand.</p>

1 Canterbury Mayoral Forum, Canterbury Climate Partnership Plan Kua tae te wā, Waitaha 2024-2027

2 Renewable Energy Zones: National Consultation 2022, Transpower, p.4.

# The Canterbury energy strategic framework - plan on a page



# Te anga o te rautaki pūngao o Waitaha – te mahere

## System is resilient, affordable and sustainable

strengths to support the economy, empower communities, environment and ensure the wellbeing of future generations

Resilient and secure supply

Thriving environment and a low emissions future

35

Enable choices and access

4

Embed a regenerative energy future

Reduce emissions from transport and industry



Policy, regulations and guidance



Shared knowledge, data and insights



Funding and investment



Strategic partnerships

### Te Taiao (The natural environment)

A holistic view that prioritises the wellbeing and interconnection of Te Taiao. Relationships and Partnerships are grounded in Te Ao values

### Adaptative and Action Orientated

Take a least regrets approach that balances urgency with flexibility as technologies and circumstances evolve

### Place based

Ensure a place-based approach is integrated into energy system planning enabling local solutions

# Vision and outcomes

## Ngā matawhanui me ngā hua

### **Vision: Canterbury's Energy System is resilient, affordable and sustainable**

Harnessing our unique strengths to support the economy, empower communities, protect the environment and ensure the wellbeing of future generations

**Canterbury's energy future is anchored in the strengths that define our region: our distinctive natural environment, a culture of innovation, and a sector committed to working collaboratively to deliver for our communities. By building on these advantages, we can create an energy system that is resilient, affordable, and sustainable – positioning Canterbury to lead the way in a changing energy landscape.**

#### **Resilient and secure supply**

Resilience means building an energy system that can adapt as technologies evolve, electricity demand grows, geopolitical landscapes change, and climate pressures intensify, while withstanding shocks – from extreme weather to earthquakes and global disruptions. By broadening our generation mix, modernising networks, and using energy more intelligently, we can strengthen supply across both urban and rural Canterbury and reduce exposure to future risks.

#### **Strong economy with local benefits**

Affordable and reliable energy underpins jobs, innovation, and investment, supporting households, businesses, and communities. Investment in distributed generation, demand-side tools, and smart infrastructure can lower costs, expand access, increase equity, and unlock regional opportunities through new industries and skilled employment.

#### **Thriving environment and a low-emissions future**

Sustainability drives down emissions, protects the environment, and enables growth that benefits future generations. It also empowers communities to participate in and benefit from the energy transition through local projects, emerging technologies, and pathways for skills development. With Canterbury's capacity to adopt and test new solutions, the region is well-positioned to lead in demonstrating innovative approaches that accelerate the shift to a low-emissions future.

This Strategic Framework provides a clear path forward for an energy system that supports a strong economy, vibrant communities, and a climate-resilient, low-emissions future for Canterbury.

# Strategic priorities

## Ngā aronga rautaki

A clear, coordinated plan is essential to position Canterbury to meet its energy needs now and into the future. Five strategic priorities have been identified as critical to achieving this. These priorities are closely interconnected, and progress in one area will strengthen outcomes in others. Successfully advancing these priorities will require innovative funding and financing mechanisms, strong partnerships, and ongoing education and upskilling across the region.



# Strategic Priority 1 - Create regional benefits and foster innovation and investment

**What this means:** Prioritise investment, jobs, talent pipeline and economic opportunities that keep value in Waitaha Canterbury. Support research, training, new technologies, and smart infrastructure that drive economic opportunity and emissions reduction.

**Canterbury is uniquely positioned to lead New Zealand's energy transition due to its abundant natural resources – sun, wind, and water – and its role as a major contributor to South Island economic activity.**

## **Why this matters:**

- There are opportunities to build strong regional relationships and strategic partnerships across the energy sector – including with key infrastructure and market organisations such as Transpower, electricity distribution businesses, and generators – as well as community-council partnerships that support locally led energy initiatives, alongside public-private and private-private partnerships that are collaborative rather than competitive.
- Empowering local solutions through grassroots and community-led initiatives can make a tangible difference in advancing the regional energy transition.
- Building international partnerships and innovation ecosystems can create long-term benefits for Canterbury's economy, knowledge base, and energy innovation.
- Ensuring pathways for energy jobs, from field technicians to engineers, is essential for both current and future needs. This includes attracting and growing the right talent, creating 'green jobs' and providing opportunities for people to work locally on their whenua.
- University of Canterbury, Lincoln University, and Ara Institute all have energy expertise that support energy research, innovation and workforce development.
- Emerging frameworks like Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) offer opportunities to coordinate energy development across districts, ensuring that Canterbury retains its regional advantages while embracing new technologies and investment models.<sup>3</sup>





# Strategic Priority 2 - Build resilience and reliability

**What this means:** Invest in infrastructure, innovation, and smarter networks to ensure Waitaha Canterbury's energy system is diverse, secure, flexible, and future-ready. Consider the energy needs for adaptation and resilience for emergency hubs, maraes, and other critical facilities that support community response and recovery.

**Resilience is a critical priority for Canterbury's energy system, which faces increasing risks from climate change, natural hazards, and infrastructure vulnerabilities.**

## Why this matters:

- The region's energy networks face risks from extreme weather, sea level rise, and earthquakes.
- Reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels strengthens long-term resilience by lowering exposure to supply disruptions and price volatility.
- Energy security extends beyond electricity; liquid fuels for transport, freight, emergency response, and industry, are also critical, and supply disruptions pose significant risk.
- Energy demand is changing in amount, type, and timing, and the electricity grid may require additional services to maintain reliability.
- Secure, reliable infrastructure and transparent network planning are needed so communities and industry can plan for the future with certainty.
- Coordinated leadership and action is essential to ensure resilience and reliability.
- Local energy solutions must align with national frameworks.
- Investments in Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and distributed generation, such as rooftop solar, can improve reliability and reduce dependence on centralised systems.<sup>4</sup>
- Climate resilience must be integrated into all future energy planning, informed by the work of the Canterbury Civil Defence Emergency Management Group.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.39.

<sup>5</sup> Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.38.

# Strategic Priority 3 - Enable choices and access

**What this means:** Empower communities, businesses, iwi and individuals through energy education and partnerships so everyone can participate in and benefit from an affordable, sustainable energy system – with expanded energy options and local energy initiatives.

**Improving energy literacy, partnership opportunities, and access to energy options is essential for communities, businesses, and iwi to participate in and benefit from Canterbury's energy system.**

## **Why this matters:**

- Communities, businesses, and iwi face varying levels of access to energy knowledge and resources, which can limit participation in the energy transition and reduce opportunities to benefit from local energy solutions, lower costs, and innovative approaches.
- Rapid changes in technology and evolving energy markets are reshaping Canterbury's energy landscape, creating both opportunities and challenges for households, businesses, and communities.
- Up-front costs, perceived complexity, and limited awareness can discourage households and businesses from adopting efficient, renewable, or innovative energy solutions.
- Community energy initiatives provide practical, locally led ways to lower costs, build resilience, and keep benefits within communities. Building knowledge and skills will support informed energy choices and help ensure Canterbury's transition is inclusive, locally led, and innovative.





# Strategic Priority 4 - Embed a regenerative energy future

**What this means:** Ensure energy choices safeguard the environment, restore ecosystems, reduce waste, and strengthen the circular economy with the right balance of sustainability and te taiao (the natural environment) to enable sustainable and healthy options for future generations.

**We must embed sustainability in energy decisions to protect ecosystems, restore habitats, and ensure a healthy environment for future generations.**

## **Why this matters:**

- Canterbury is moving toward a more regenerative energy future, with growing investment in renewable generation, circular energy systems, and emerging technologies such as hydrogen and biofuels.
- Large-scale renewable and waste-to-energy, including organic waste processing, are already demonstrating how circulate approaches can strengthen the region's energy system.
- Developing circular pathways for energy technologies will be increasingly important to reduce waste and support a long-term regenerative energy system.
- These technologies offer opportunities but also come with uncertainties, including supply-chain and implementation challenges that affect how quickly they can contribute to Canterbury's transition goals.
- Protecting te taiao (the natural environment), including valued landscapes, mahinga kai, and taonga species, remains essential as Canterbury expands its renewable and circular energy systems.
- A fair and inclusive transition is critical, so that the shift to new energy technologies and systems does not increase energy hardship and communities, businesses, and iwi can access reliable, affordable energy.

# Strategic Priority 5 - Reduce emissions from transport and industry

**What this means:** Accelerate the transition of Waitaha Canterbury's transport and industrial sectors to low-emission energy through multiple energy options, efficiency measures, and support for innovation and investment.

**Shifting Canterbury's transport and industry to low-emission energy opens opportunities for innovation, economic growth, and progress toward a low-carbon future.**

## Why this matters:

- Transport and industry are major energy users and significant contributors to emissions.<sup>6</sup>
- Electrification is one of the most immediate and scalable pathways to reduce emissions and support the low-carbon transition.
- Canterbury is well-positioned to lead innovation, with local companies and research partners advancing hydrogen technologies, and exploring opportunities in synthetic aviation fuels, and electric freight solutions.<sup>7</sup>
- Industrial process heat offers a major decarbonisation opportunity, with coal-dependent operations able to reduce emissions through electrification, biomass, and heat pump technologies.<sup>8</sup>
- Emerging technologies offer new opportunities, but up-front costs, infrastructure gaps, and knowledge barriers can slow adoption.
- Canterbury's renewable energy resources and grid capacity can support the shift if investment is well targeted and coordinated.
- Collaboration across industry, local and central government, iwi, and communities is essential to align action, share investment, and realise economic, social, and environmental benefits for the region.

6 With fossil fuels powering approximately 98% of the national vehicle fleet and 91% of Canterbury's regional fleet

7 For example Fabrum and the Hydrogen Aviation Consortium

8 Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.27.



# Enabling success

## Mairangatia te angitu

Below is a brief description of the enablers we expect will be needed to shape a regional approach to energy. This list and the descriptions are not exhaustive – they will shift and change as needed.



### Coordinated regional governance

Clear leadership, collaboration, and accountability across agencies to drive collective action.



### Skills and workforce

Building the capability and capacity needed to deliver an energy future that improves economic resilience and community wellbeing. Canterbury's energy future will be built by people – engineers, tradespeople, planners, and innovators.



### Policy, regulations and guidance

Ensuring supportive national and regional policy settings to enable timely, consistent energy action.



### Shared knowledge, data and insights

Accessible, trusted information to guide decisions, track progress, and share learning. Drawing on national and international expertise will strengthen Canterbury's ability to apply whole-of-system energy planning approaches and support informed local decision-making.



### Funding and investment

Targeted and coordinated investment to unlock opportunities and innovation.



### Strategic partnerships

Collaborative relationships across sectors and communities to accelerate progress, unlock innovation and facilitate scale.

# Guiding principles

## Ngā mātāpono

A resilient, affordable and sustainable energy system for Canterbury will be shaped not only by infrastructure and investment, but by the principles that guide our decisions. These principles reflect the values of our communities and the aspirations of our region. Together, they underpin how we will work collectively to build an energy system that supports the wellbeing and prosperity of people and places for generations to come.

### Coordinated and Collaborative

Support energy partnerships and align councils, iwi, industry, and communities around shared goals and coordinated action.

### Affordable and equitable

Reducing hardship and supporting inclusive participation. Support a fair energy transition for everyone, from individuals to large energy users.

### Te taiao (the natural environment)

A holistic view that prioritises the wellbeing and interconnection of Te Taiao. Relationships and partnerships are grounded in Te Ao values.

### Adaptative and action orientated

Take a least regrets approach that balances urgency with flexibility as technologies and circumstances evolve.

### Place based

Ensure a place-based approach is integrated into energy system planning enabling local solutions.

# Where to next? Ki hea atu?

**Canterbury is still reliant on fossil fuels in the transport, industrial, and agriculture sectors. However, it is well-positioned for the energy transition, with abundant solar, wind, and hydro resources, particularly through the Waitaki hydro scheme.<sup>9</sup>**

There is a broad set of opportunities for shaping the energy future in Canterbury and while this strategic framework sets the scene and identifies some of the priorities - it is the next step of developing the action plan/road map that will matter the most.

# 1

## **Building relationships and encouraging partnerships**

There is a willingness in Canterbury to work together in partnership to achieve shared goals, scale impact, attract investment and share the risk.

# 2

## **Determining actions**

We'll work together to co-develop the actions that sit underneath the strategic priorities with a focus on which ones we think will make the most positive difference for the region.

# 3

## **Bundling and streamlining**

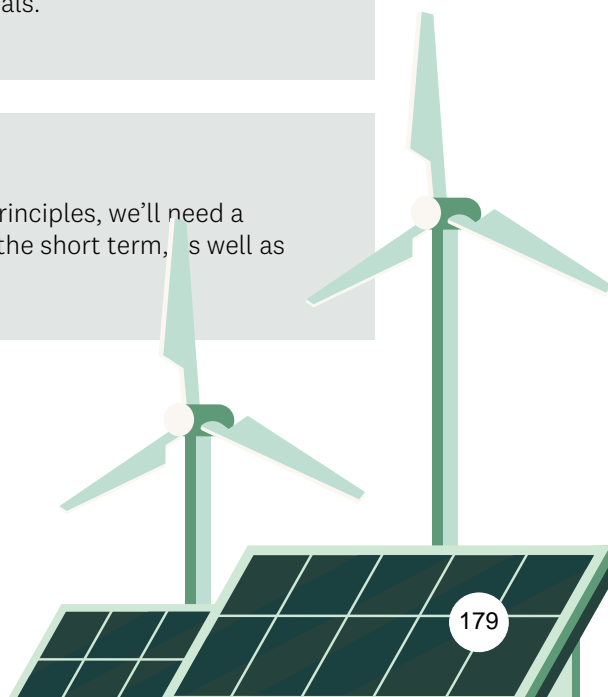
We'll look at how to bundle together actions and streamline how we work towards the same or similar goals.

# 4

## **Prioritising action**

In alignment with the action-oriented principles, we'll need a focus on what we can get going with in the short term, as well as planning for the long-term.

<sup>9</sup> Canterbury Energy Inventory 2025, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, p.13.







# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

**Date:** 29 May 2026

**Presented by:** Hamish Riach, Chair Economic Development Forum  
Jesse Burgess, Regional Deal working group

## Canterbury Regional Deal update

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on progress for the development of a scope of works for the regional deal proposal, and an analysis of the Auckland and Western Bay of Plenty Deals and their implications for Canterbury.

### Recommendations

**That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:**

1. **notes the update on progress for the development of a scope of works for a regional deal proposal**
2. **agrees to progress steps 1-5 of phase 1 of the scope of work with working group in-kind resources, as they are available**
3. **notes staff analysis of the Auckland and Western Bay of Plenty Deals and their implications for this work**

### Background

2. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) submitted an Expression of Interest in a future Regional Deal for Canterbury to the Minister for Local Government in December 2024, followed by a letter in February 2025 to state this work is progressing.
3. A sub-group of the Canterbury Economic Development Forum (CEDF) developed the foundational document [Waitaha Canterbury World-stage ready: Key pillars for Canterbury's Regional Deal proposal](#). This work was supported by a governance sub-group from the Mayoral Forum and included Business Canterbury. This document was approved by the Mayoral Forum in August 2025, subject to the inclusion of a fifth pillar – Innovation, and minor corrections.
4. Alongside this foundational work, the Mayoral Forum worked with Business Canterbury to engage the private sector on its vision for Canterbury. The result of this engagement was the [Canterbury Ambition](#), which was launched in February 2026. Aspects of this have been incorporated into *Waitaha Canterbury World-stage ready*, noting that World-stage ready has been updated and is discussed in Item 4.2.

## Development of a Canterbury Regional Deal

5. The Mayoral Forum confirmed its intention to continue with the development of a Canterbury Regional Deal proposal at the November 2025 meeting. A Governance Group meeting was held on 30 January 2026 to discuss whether the development of a regional deal should be prioritised at this time and if so, what direction should be provided in the framing of a scope of works.
6. As in-kind resource has been committed until 30 June 2026, and no additional funding is required to develop the scope of works, it was agreed to proceed with development of a potential scope of work to support future work. It is recommended that the regional deal work be considered as an investment prospectus<sup>1</sup> to support conversation across the political and private spectrum, and that can be actioned in a modular way, meaning sections can be progressed in time as priorities and funding shift.
7. The intention is to position Canterbury as best we can to both a national and international audience.

### Scope

8. It was agreed at the November 2025 Mayoral Forum meeting that the development of the scope of work will be completed using in-kind resources from the Working Group, with Canterbury Regional Council holding the pen.
9. For the most part this work will be managed through the Waitaha Canterbury Regional Deal Governance and Working groups, Economic Development and Chief Executives Forums, with final sign-off by the Mayoral Forum.

### Draft scope of works

10. The draft scope of works (Attachment 1) is built around the core features of project purpose, key deliverables, funding and resourcing, governance and reporting arrangements, communications and engagement, provision for endorsement / agreement from member councils, and ways to progress workstreams independently so progress is still achieved while balancing competing demands.
11. The proposed regional investment prospectus would be organised around a fixed set of priority investments with enduring strategic value to the region (the core proposal), supported by one or more sets of investments that could be added to or subtracted from the prospectus (thematic packages).
12. The core proposal would be the 'all-weather' prospectus to present to all interested audiences. Different thematic packages could be added to the core proposal depending on the audience and any changes to local, regional, or national priorities.
13. There are several ongoing changes across central and local government which could impact the scope of this project.

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<sup>1</sup> Noting that investment may relate to funding, finance, regulation, legislation, and or policy

14. It is considered that it is still prudent to take the time needed to develop a prospectus for Canterbury that is robust, enduring, and supported by the evidence that will give private and government partners the confidence to invest in the region.
15. As an interim step it is proposed to utilise in-kind resources, as they are available, to progress steps 1-5 of Phase 1 of the scope of work and report back to the Mayoral Forum in August.
16. As noted in item 4.2 we have undertaken minor updates on the *World-stage ready* document to strengthen its ability to support advocacy.

## **Analysis of the City and Regional Deals signed to date**

### **The Auckland Deal**

17. On 10 April 2026, the [Auckland Deal](#) was signed between central government and Auckland Council. The Auckland Deal is based on a partnership between the two parties, and sets out expectations for how they will work together over the next 10 years across a range of key issues.
18. As noted in media coverage of the Auckland Deal and in Government statements, the Deal contains few new financial commitments from central government, totalling under \$11 million. In several areas being positioned as upgrades, such as the place-based partnership for Drury, the Deal simply collates separate pieces of work that were already underway or unfunded initiatives still at the planning stage.
19. The Deal does not firmly commit Government to any policy direction or to provide Auckland Council with new revenue tools. For instance, while Government will “consider the accommodation policy levy” and “work with Auckland Council to explore Auckland specific settings for key mode and behaviour tools” like tolling or time-of-use charges, it can still decide to leave all of those settings unchanged. The enforceability of the specific items in the Deal will likely depend on good faith from central government.
20. The question of asset recycling has also been left unresolved. Auckland Council has committed to explore asset recycling on a case-by-case basis, where it is seeking new central government funding above BAU. However, public statements and the framing of the relevant section of the Deal indicate that Auckland Council will consider alternative revenue streams like business levies, targeted rates, or IFFA levies before its assets.
21. Overall, the core theme and main value proposition of the Auckland Deal is formalising an enhanced relationship between central government and Auckland Council, through the long-term Partnership for Growth. This is intended to provide a single coordinating framework for Auckland’s interactions with different areas of government.

22. This is reflected in the Deal's detailed governance arrangements. These include formal oversight and accountability mechanisms<sup>2</sup>, a commitment to regular meetings between the Mayor and Prime Minister (and other responsible Government Ministers), and formal connection points with government agencies working on policy and regulatory levers across the Deal's focus areas. All of these raise Auckland's profile.
23. The Auckland Deal is presented as the basis of an enduring relationship. The ten-year implementation timeframe, which includes a five-year review, mitigates the risk a change of Government could pose to the Deal.

### **The Western Bay of Plenty Deal**

24. On 14 May 2026, the [Western Bay of Plenty Deal](#) was signed between central government and the Western Bay of Plenty sub-region (comprising Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, and Bay of Plenty Regional Council).
25. This Deal has many similarities with the Auckland Deal. It is based on a partnership between central government and the sub-region that builds on existing collaboration and governance mechanisms, and sets expectations around how they will work together on key issues over the next 10 years.
26. The areas of focus are also similar. The Western Bay of Plenty Deal signals Government support for projects that had generally already been identified but are still in their early stages. It also highlights key sectors as targets to diversify the sub-region's economy. As with the Auckland Deal, some of these, like horticultural technology and niche and high-value manufacturing, may overlap with sectors important to Canterbury.
27. However, there are material differences. The partnership in the Western Bay of Plenty Deal focuses on coordinating investments in a few specific sectors and enabling the sub-region to provide advice to decision-makers, rather than an enduring step-change in the relationship with central government like that signalled in the Auckland Deal.
28. Some of the accountability mechanisms are less specific than those in the Auckland Deal. It does not include the Auckland Deal's commitments to regular Mayor-level meetings with the Prime Minister or other Ministers, and does not commit the Responsible Ministers and Mayors and Chair to the same six-monthly meetings to discuss progress under the Deal.
29. The Māori economy receives a greater degree of focus than in the Auckland Deal. Tangata whenua have identified four key areas (social procurement, housing and papakāinga, land leasing, and public infrastructure) in Western Bay of Plenty where Māori entities could play an active role.
30. A significant difference is the matter of asset recycling. Unlike the Auckland Deal, the Export Growth initiative of the Western Bay of Plenty Deal commits the sub-region to

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<sup>2</sup> The Deal sets a six-month deadline to prepare an Implementation Plan which will clearly define how and when the initiatives in the Deal will be delivered, who will be responsible for their delivery, and key milestones, metrics, and reporting requirements.

investigate an asset recycling programme. The proceeds of any sales will, together with Crown uplift above baseline funding, support a set of agreed partnership projects to improve productivity along State Highway 2.

31. The use of alternative financing tools does not appear to be considered an option for these specific projects<sup>3</sup>. Where these tools are considered as options to fund other projects, the Deal does not consider sub-region-specific settings as in Auckland. The range of tools considered by this Deal is also narrower.
32. While the Deal does not strictly commit Western Bay of Plenty to asset recycling, it sets a stronger expectation than the Auckland Deal that the proceeds of asset sales will be considered a prerequisite for any new Crown funding for certain infrastructure projects.

### Implications for Canterbury

33. Neither Deal rules out Government investment into complementary initiatives in other regions. Outside a small number of named and funded projects, nothing in either Deal automatically guarantees that Auckland or Western Bay of Plenty priorities will be selected or funded ahead of other regions. In general, projects listed in both Deals will remain subject to standard government funding decisions and processes.
34. However, the formalisation of the Auckland-Government relationship does raise the profile of Auckland relative to other regions. This is reflected in other low-cost / high-impact commitments like the recognition of Eden Park as “New Zealand’s national stadium” and pre-inclusion of key Auckland transport projects into the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS).
35. This impression is reinforced by a comparison with the Western Bay of Plenty Deal. While that Deal has also secured commitments to include transport projects, it does not give Western Bay of Plenty the same access to Government decision-makers as Auckland. The differences between the two Deals indicate that central government may not regard either Deal as the sole template for any Regional Deal in Canterbury.
36. Canterbury may also be affected where there are overlaps between these two Deals and the priority areas outlined in *World-stage ready* and *Canterbury Ambition*. For example, the “recognition of the national importance of Auckland as a centre for innovation” and “areas of regional specialisation” in Western Bay of Plenty could affect the recognition of the nationally significant contribution Canterbury firms make to niche / high-value manufacturing and the innovation economy.
37. Canterbury may also stand to benefit from increased Government focus on the sector as a whole. The Deal’s promised work on policy and regulatory settings to support the growth of the innovation economy, and to attract investment to Auckland, could have positive downstream effects elsewhere in New Zealand. Similar benefits could accrue in

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<sup>3</sup> The language in that section (initiative 5, page 7) is quite deliberate - alternative tools are mentioned as options for initiatives 3, 4, and 8, but not for initiative 5. The intent would appear to be to make asset sales a prerequisite (not an option) for Crown to co-fund these two specific projects.

sectors like tourism, housing, and transport. The Western Bay of Plenty Deal may also encourage government to seek Māori economic development opportunities elsewhere.

38. Overall, the Deals are not zero-sum equations and do not support initiatives within Auckland or Western Bay of Plenty by removing resources from other regions. They do not make Canterbury worse off and could offer indirect benefits. However, it is prudent to continue advocating strongly for Canterbury's interests given the closer relationship Auckland now enjoys with central government.

## **Budget**

39. At this stage no future budgets have been identified, and progress is proposed to rely on Working Group members in-kind resources, as they are available.

## **Risk assessment and legal compliance**

40. There is no legal obligation to pursue a regional deal proposal.
41. If the project is discontinued, or significantly reduced in scope, there may be a reputational risk for the Mayoral Forum. The Mayoral Forum has indicated to the Minister of Local Government that the region wants to progress a future regional deal with government, and work with the private sector.
42. There is a risk if this work does not proceed that Canterbury may be overlooked in future opportunities to capitalise on local and central government alignment, and opportunities to position Canterbury as best we can to a national and international audience. This could manifest as a missed opportunity for significant investment in Canterbury's future.
43. The development of the scope of work is proceeding in a way which allows progress, subject to budget and resource availability.

## **Communications and engagement**

44. A Communications & Engagement Plan is identified in the draft scope of works as a key output of the first phase of the project.
45. Engagement will be required with a range of partners, sectors and stakeholders in the development of a future regional deal. This includes, but is not limited to, each Canterbury council, Papatipu Rūnanga, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, health and tertiary education sectors, private sectors, key infrastructure providers, and the community.
46. An element of this engagement may be picked up through councils' usual engagement processes; however, other elements will be bespoke and will be included in detailed scoping for the project.
47. In time, as the scoping work progresses into development of a full proposal, specific engagement and endorsement from each Canterbury council will be sought. This will be incorporated into the scope of works and project plan for next steps.

## **Next steps**

48. Subject to discussion and feedback from Mayoral Forum, staff will continue to initiate steps 1-5 of Phase 1 of the scope of work to develop a regional investment prospectus and report back to the August Mayoral Forum.

## **Attachment**

- Attachment 1: draft scope of works to develop a regional investment prospectus for Waitaha Canterbury

# Scope of Works: Developing a Regional Investment Prospectus for Waitaha Canterbury

## 1. Introduction and background

The Strategic Framework for Regional Deals announced by the Government in August 2024 provided regions with the opportunity to partner on key economic development issues. Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed to develop City and Regional Deal (CRD) agreements with Auckland, Queenstown Lakes, and Western Bay of Plenty.

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) submitted an Expression of Interest in a future CRD for Canterbury to the Minister for Local Government in December 2024. A sub-group of the Canterbury Economic Development Forum (CEDF) developed the *Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready* document as a foundation for a CRD proposal. This document was supported by the *Canterbury Ambition* document produced through the Mayoral Forum's work with Business Canterbury on the private sector's vision for the region.

The Mayoral Forum approved the *World-stage Ready* document in August 2025. In November 2025, the Mayoral Forum confirmed its intention to continue developing a Canterbury Regional Deal proposal, and agreed a structure and approach to progress the work.

This Scope of Work outlines the process, deliverables, and timelines for the development of a credible, evidence-based investment prospectus for Canterbury suitable for partnering with Government and other private or public investment audiences. Because this piece of work is not expected to deliver an investment-ready proposal within the term of the current Government, it is intended to cover a broader range of audiences than the existing Regional Deal framework.

## 2. Context

### The CRD framework

The CRD framework outlines the Government's approach to partnership with local government. It focuses on issues that affect economic development and productivity, infrastructure, and housing, and defines regions as integrated economic areas. This framing puts a premium on geographic and economic cohesion, and the quantifiable economic benefits of partnership. The three proposals signed to date are scheduled to proceed to completed Deals by October 2026.

### Structural changes to local government

In November 2025, the Government announced its proposal to simplify local government with the formation of Combined Territories Boards (CTBs). Under the proposed model, starting in mid-2027 the mayors of city and district councils would assume the regional governance role

currently exercised by regional councillors. This would begin a two-year transition period to the CTB model, with each CTB using this time to develop a regional reorganisation plan setting out the services and functions of the region's councils, proposals to improve their delivery, and the future of each CTB. Consultation on the initial proposal closed in February 2026.

Because the final form of the model will not be confirmed until the legislation passes, it is difficult to project how exactly these changes could affect the development of a regional investment prospectus. For the sake of planning, this scope of work assumes that while some form of change from the status quo will occur in the near to medium term, there will still be a place for a regional deal/investment prospectus for Canterbury. This scope of work will be updated to reflect any changes to the proposed reforms as they become clearer.

#### Regional spatial planning

Regional spatial planning is a collaborative exercise to produce an evidence-based, long-term (30+ years) future-focused strategy to guide growth, development, and change in a specific geographic area. Spatial plans go beyond traditional land-use planning to integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes that influence the nature and function of places; in particular, infrastructure.

The Government has already identified the connection between regional spatial plans and its CRD framework. Because the development of a spatial plan for the Canterbury region will result in a single, long-term narrative supported by a region-wide consensus, the priorities and key projects that need to be covered by the regional investment prospectus are likely to flow organically from the regional spatial plan. The sequencing of this work programme will therefore need to consider the development of the regional spatial plan and avoid duplication.

#### Local approaches to regional economic development

The Mayoral Forum structures provide Canterbury with a strong and dense network of regional forums, relative to other regions in New Zealand. These have supported the development of a core body of work which provide a solid starting position for this project. They include strategic vision-setting and priority identification (*Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready, Canterbury Ambition, Canterbury Regional Economic Development Strategy*), more targeted pieces on major investments with wider region-shaping impacts (e.g. Mass Rapid Transit, Canterbury Regional Energy Strategy), and planning documents local authorities already deliver as part of their core functions (e.g. Regional Land Transport Plan, Long-Term Plans).

### **3. Purpose**

The purpose of this work is to develop a region-wide investment prospectus for Canterbury that positions the region to a range of national and international audiences. The prospectus should be organised around a fixed set of priority investments of enduring strategic value to the region which would be presented to all possible audiences (the core proposal), and supported by one

or more sets of investments that can be added to or subtracted from the prospectus (thematic packages), depending on the audience and changing local, regional, or national priorities.

## 4. Scope

### Phase 1

Phase 1 of this work will deliver a stocktake of existing economic development strategies and proposals, an initial investment narrative for Canterbury, and a preliminary assessment of the evidence base that supports the investment narrative. The outputs of this phase will provide the foundation for, and help to scope, later phases of the project. The Phase 1 scope includes:

1. In-depth review and summary of the priorities identified in the *Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready* and *Canterbury Ambition* documents.
2. Development of a communications and engagement plan to govern engagement with partners, sectors, and stakeholders across the duration of the project.
3. Identification and high-level review of other regional, sub-regional, and other plans and strategies that align strongly with the priorities identified by the in-depth review.
4. Development of an initial regional investment narrative and the core set of investment themes the prospectus will be organised around, informed by these documents and their common priorities.
5. Early scoping of the evidence base that these documents provide for regional investment in Canterbury and identification of the key gaps that will need to be filled during subsequent stages.
6. Targeted engagement with partners and other key regional stakeholders beyond those included in the working group (see section 8, **Governance and reporting**).

### Phase 2

Phase 2 of this work, the development of the core proposal which provides the enduring investment narrative for Canterbury, will build on the foundations set by the Phase 1 stocktake. This is likely to use the five pillars identified by the *World-stage Ready* document and the priorities set out in the *Canterbury Ambition* document as starting points. The Phase 2 scope includes:

1. Identification of the set of investment opportunities that should be included in any investment prospectus for Canterbury, based on alignment with the identified strategic priorities, existing commitments from regional partners and stakeholders, and the strategic importance of these investments.
2. Identification of the primary constraints that are preventing Canterbury from realising the potential of those opportunities.
3. Development of prioritisation criteria to support sequencing of investments and provide transparency around decision-making.

4. Categorisation of investments into the core themes identified in Phase 1, to allow decision-makers and prospective investors to see the shape of the portfolio and provide a basis for comparison in later phases.

### **Phase 3**

Phase 3 will develop and refine the broader opportunities that are of strategic interest to Canterbury and could be attached to the core proposal as part of an investment agreement. The opportunities will then be grouped into a set of thematic packages for different audiences or timings. This may include filling any evidence gaps that are identified or, if resources are insufficient for this, highlighting these for future work.

The Phase 3 scope is likely to involve the development of the thematic investment packages and identification of their alignment with the core investment narrative and themes. It will also build on the evidence base identified in Phase 1 by setting minimum evidence requirements for the wider range of investments in the thematic packages, and highlighting areas for further work to fill evidence gaps. By necessity, the scope of this phase will need to be finalised once earlier phases are complete.

### **Out of scope**

- Delivery/implementation of specific initiatives.
- Procurement and implementation decisions beyond what is needed to prepare credible opportunity descriptions.
- Broad public engagement beyond what is necessary to develop the core proposal and identify thematic packages. However, engagement with partners and other key stakeholders within Canterbury (mana whenua, councils, industry / private sector) will be needed to ensure the final product is supported by a broad regional consensus. Some engagement with central government may also be necessary to maintain alignment with broader policy settings.

## **5. Deliverables**

Phase 1 will deliver:

- A high-level literature review of the economic development work undertaken to date in Canterbury, in the form of a report that identifies common themes which can be used as the basis of the core proposal; and
- Informed by the above, an initial investment narrative outlining the priority areas for Canterbury, the rationale for selecting them, and a summary of the evidence base and information sources available for each area.

Phase 2 will deliver:

- An indicative **core proposal** comprising the cornerstone projects that should be included in any comprehensive investment case presented to the Government or other investors in future, organised around the key investment themes developed in Phase 1;
- A report outlining the core proposal, as well as the key constraints and obstacles to these opportunities, and any information gaps that have been identified which should be addressed to strengthen confidence in investment in these areas; and
- An engagement plan to support further development of the core proposal alongside interested regional partners, and engagement with central government and industry on the prospectus.

Phase 3 will deliver:

- One or more **thematic packages** of investments that can be added to the core proposal, and which align with the overarching investment narrative; and
- A case for further work to develop and refine the evidence base for the core proposal and thematic packages, where necessary.

## 6. Key tasks and timeframes

It is expected that this project will extend across more than one financial year, given the complexity and likely breadth of engagement required. The specific tasks and timeframes are subject to change as the overall project develops.

This table outlines the initial assumptions around how this work may be able to be progressed in-house, subject to staff availability and Mayoral Forum approval on the scope of works.

Project phase / task	Indicative timeframe
Phase 1: Initial stocktake and develop core investment narrative	6 months
1. In-depth review of core strategic documents and summary of priorities	2 months
2. Development of a communications and engagement plan	2 months
3. Identification and review of other plans and strategies that align with priorities in the core strategic documents	3 months
4. Initial assessment of the evidence base provided across the documents in Tasks 1 and 2	3 - 4 months
5. Development of the core investment narrative and core investment themes	5 months
6. Targeted engagement with partners and other priority regional stakeholders on the development of the core investment narrative and themes	6 months
Phase 2: Build the core proposal and scope the evidence base	9 - 12 months
1. Develop core proposal	9 - 12 months

a. Identify cornerstone projects	3 months
b. Organise projects around investment pillars / priorities	3 months
c. Refine and confirm core proposal based on outputs of 1a and 1b	6 - 9 months
2. Develop and refine the evidence base to support the core proposal	9 - 12 months
Phase 3: Develop thematic packages and strengthen the evidence base	>12 months
1. Group opportunities into thematic packages	TBC
2. Develop thematic packages to a state where they can be attached to the core proposal	TBC
3. Fill in evidence gaps where feasible and necessary to support the thematic packages	>12 months

## 7. Resourcing and budget

In recognition of the fiscal constraints facing project sponsors, it is assumed that the starting position for this work is a nil budget, and that any work will take place using in-kind resourcing covered by participating organisations' baselines.

Under this assumption, the focus will be on completing the minimum outputs for each phase of work before proceeding to the next phase. Any additional work that requires further budget for external resources will only be able to proceed if resources are available once the core proposal has been delivered.

## 8. Governance and reporting

The Mayoral Forum approved terms of reference at its meeting of 20 February 2026 which provided for the following governance structure:

1. A Governance Group comprising the Chair of the Mayoral Forum, the Chair of Canterbury Regional Council, the Mayors of Selwyn, Waimakariri, and Hurunui Districts, and the Chief Executive of Business Canterbury.
2. A Working Group comprising representatives from the Canterbury Economic Development Forum: Canterbury Regional Council, ChristchurchNZ, Venture Timaru, Mackenzie District Council, Enterprise North Canterbury, and Kaikōura District Council.
3. **[To be confirmed]** *Detailed provisions will also be required for Mayoral Forum signoff and endorsement or approval from councils and key partners.*
4. **[To be confirmed]** *Mana whenua engagement and governance arrangements will be needed to confirm where and how the partnership should be approached in the context of this project, in addition to what would otherwise take place through targeted engagement with other key regional stakeholders.*

## 9. Risks

### Reforms to local government and project scope

**[To be confirmed]** *The reform of local government is underway and there is a broad risk resulting from the wide range of potential impacts that different proposed changes could have on this project. The exact nature of these changes is expected to become clearer as the reform proposal progresses in early-to-mid-2026 and this scope of works will be updated to provide more detail on this risk as details are made public.*

### Other national developments

A general election has been called for Saturday, 7 November 2026. Any change in Government could in turn result in changes to the proposed reforms to local government, or other policies of the current Government that have implications for this project.

DRAFT

# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

**Date:** 29 May 2026

**Presented by:** Hamish Dobbie, Chief Executives Forum

## Chief Executives Forum report

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to report on the work of the regional forums since the last Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting on 20 February 2026.

### Recommendation

**That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:**

1. receives the quarterly report from the Chief Executives Forum

### Regional Forums activity

2. Since the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's February 2026 meeting:
  - the Communications and Engagement Forum met in person on 13 March
  - the Corporate and Operations Forum met in person on 16 March
  - the Economic Development and Policy Forums met online on 20 March
  - the Chief Executives Forum (CE Forum) met on 4 May 2026 and held an additional meeting on 11 May.

### Chief Executives Forum

3. Key agenda items discussed at the 4 May meeting are noted below. Each of these items have been included in the Mayoral Forum's agenda
  - Regional Spatial Planning
  - draft Mayoral Forum's Plan for Canterbury 2026-2028 and accompanying elevator pitch
  - Canterbury Water Management Strategy
  - Canterbury Climate Change Partnership Plan
  - Canterbury Regional Deal update
  - Canterbury Energy workstream
  - an update from the Regional Public Service Commissioner

4. The agenda for the 11 May meeting covered Central Government's Simplifying Local Government proposal and requirements to progress Regional Spatial Planning for Waitaha Canterbury, both of which are also on the Mayoral Forum's agenda.
5. Chief Executives will meet next on 3 August 2026.

# Canterbury Mayoral Forum

**Date:** 29 May 2026

**Presented by:** Secretariat

## Activities and Engagements February – May 2026

### Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of activities, engagements, and correspondence since the last Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting on 20 February 2026.

### Recommendation

**That the Canterbury Mayoral Forum:**

1. **receives the update on Canterbury Mayoral Forum activities, engagements and correspondence since the Forum's last meeting on 20 February 2026.**

### Background

2. A number of activities, meetings, submissions and correspondence occur between Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) meetings. This paper summarises these in one place for the Mayoral Forum's convenience.

### Meetings and engagements

3. There have been no additional meetings since the February quarterly meeting.

### Correspondence

4. Incoming correspondence
  - letter from Cheryl Meadows, Kaiapoi, Waimakariri Council ratepayer and resident dated 8 May 2026 regarding local government reform/possible Greater Christchurch merger (Attachment 1)

### Submissions

5. Submissions lodged since the February 2026 meeting include:
  - [CMF Submission Simplifying Local Government Feb 2026](#) (Attachment 2)

6. Deputy Chair Marie Black spoke in support of the Mayoral Forum submission on the Resource Management Natural Environment and Planning Bills - 18 March 2026
7. Submissions are generally available on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website: [www.canterburymayors.org.nz](http://www.canterburymayors.org.nz).

## Briefings

8. Mayor Nigel Bowen (Chair CMF) and Maree McNeilly (Regional Forums Secretariat) provided a briefing to Kāikoura District Council (February 2026).

## Media Release

9. There have been no proactive media releases since the February 2026 meeting. There have been four responses to media enquiries (Attachment 3):
  - Mayor Bowen (Chair CMF) responded to a media enquiry regarding regional deals
  - Mayor Bowen (Chair CMF) responded to a media enquiry regarding Simplifying Local Government
  - Approved by Mayor Bowen, Senior Strategy Manager at Canterbury Regional Council, Cameron Smith, responded to two media enquiries on the Canterbury Water Management Strategy and local leadership groups.
10. Proactive media releases are generally available on the Canterbury Mayoral Forum website: [www.canterburymayors.org.nz](http://www.canterburymayors.org.nz).

## Attachments

- Attachment 1 – letter from Cheryl Meadows
- Attachment 2 – CMF Submission Simplifying Local Government Feb 2026
- Attachment 3 – responses to media enquiries

# Local Government Reform / Possible Greater Christchurch Merger

To: Mayor, Councillors, Chief Executive and relevant council staff

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Subject: Key safeguards and alternatives for any Greater Christchurch / Canterbury reorganisation proposal

## Executive summary

I am writing as a concerned local ratepayer regarding the current local government reform process and the possibility of a merger or unitary authority structure involving Christchurch City Council, Selwyn District Council, Waimakariri District Council, and some or all Canterbury regional council functions.

I understand the argument for better regional coordination. Christchurch, Selwyn and Waimakariri are already highly connected through commuting, housing growth, transport, flood systems, environmental management, public transport, civil defence, and long-term infrastructure planning.

However, a full merger would also create serious risks that should be openly addressed before any council supports a proposal. These risks include financial cross-subsidy, Christchurch earthquake legacy liabilities, loss of local asset control, reduced rural and small-town representation, environmental governance concerns, and unclear Ngāi Tahu / mana whenua decision-making arrangements.

Affected communities deserve more than a simple yes/no debate. Any reform should be based on transparent modelling, clear local protections, and a genuine comparison of alternative models.

## Local assets and service protection

A merged council could improve regional planning for shared infrastructure, but it could also dilute attention on local assets. Selwyn and Waimakariri assets must not become secondary priorities within a larger structure where Christchurch's scale and population naturally carry greater weight.

Local assets that should be explicitly protected include:

- rural roads, unsealed roads and local bridges
- township halls, libraries, pools, reserves and community facilities
- stormwater, drainage, flood protection and local resilience assets
- parks, walkways, sports facilities and public amenities
- local service centres and customer-facing council support
- growth infrastructure in towns such as Rolleston, Lincoln, Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend and Pegasus

Any reform proposal should distinguish clearly between local assets and genuinely regional assets. Local assets should remain funded and governed locally unless there is a clear regional benefit.

## Christchurch earthquake legacy and infrastructure liabilities

Christchurch enters any possible merger from a different position because of the long-term infrastructure and asset impacts of the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. This does not reflect poorly on Christchurch; it simply means Christchurch has a unique post-disaster financial and infrastructure context.

Before any merger is considered, there should be an independent and transparent audit of:

- each council's debt and the purpose of that debt
- the condition of local and regional assets
- remaining earthquake-related repair obligations
- deferred infrastructure renewals
- water, wastewater, stormwater, transport, flood protection and community facility liabilities
- which assets are local, which are regional, and which are mixed-use
- how existing targeted rates, water charges and development contributions would be treated

Legacy debt and earthquake-related costs should be ring-fenced to the area that incurred them unless a clear, evidence-based regional benefit can be demonstrated. Selwyn and Waimakariri ratepayers should not be placed in a position where they effectively subsidise Christchurch-specific earthquake legacy costs, metropolitan assets, or any historic underinvestment unrelated to their communities.

## Financial safeguards

The financial structure of any merger is likely to determine whether the public views the reform as fair, or as a transfer of rating burden between communities. Before any proposal is endorsed, councils should publish staged modelling that shows the impact on households, businesses, rural ratepayers and targeted-rate areas.

The following safeguards should be treated as non-negotiable:

- no forced rates harmonisation without staged modelling and public disclosure
- ring-fencing of legacy debt by council area unless regional benefit is proven
- transparent treatment of water, wastewater, stormwater and flood protection charges
- separate reporting of transition costs, including IT, staffing, legal, restructuring, rating-system and planning-system costs
- clear rules for development contributions and growth-related infrastructure
- local rating areas or targeted rates where assets and services are local rather than regional

A larger council is not automatically a cheaper council. Transition costs can be substantial, and any claimed savings should be independently tested.

## Environmental governance and regional functions

There are strong arguments for better regional coordination on environmental matters. Rivers, aquifers, flood plains, wetlands, public transport networks, coastal hazards and climate risks do not stop at council boundaries.

A reformed structure could improve catchment-wide planning, flood protection, climate adaptation, regional transport, biodiversity, freshwater management and urban growth decisions.

However, environmental regulation must not become weaker or more politically vulnerable if regional functions are absorbed into a larger unitary council.

Council should seek clear guarantees that environmental monitoring, compliance, science advice and enforcement will remain independent, properly funded and protected from short-term development pressure.

## Ngāi Tahu / mana whenua role

Ngāi Tahu and mana whenua involvement in land, water, mahinga kai, rivers, wetlands, Te Waihora, coastal areas and environmental planning is important and expected. Any reform model must address Treaty obligations clearly and respectfully.

However, the governance model must be explained plainly to the public from the outset. Residents should be told:

- who provides advice
- who votes
- who makes final decisions
- what decision-making powers, if any, are attached to those roles
- how mana whenua input is incorporated into environmental and planning decisions
- how Treaty obligations are met while maintaining democratic accountability

If these roles are not clearly defined, the public debate risks being derailed by confusion or by arguments carried over from the Three Waters debate. Clarity is essential.

## Local democracy and representation

In any full Greater Christchurch merger, Christchurch's population size would naturally dominate decision-making unless strong safeguards are built in. Waimakariri and Selwyn residents need assurance that they will not lose meaningful representation or local control.

If local boards or community boards are proposed, they should have real delegated powers, transparent local budgets and authority over genuinely local assets and services. Advisory boards without meaningful decision-making power would not be enough.

Rural communities, small towns and fast-growing satellite towns should have guaranteed representation in any governance design.

## Alternative model: Greater Christchurch / Canterbury regional authority

Council should push for proper consideration of alternatives to a full Christchurch-Selwyn-Waimakariri merger. One possible alternative is a stronger Greater Christchurch or Mid Canterbury regional authority that takes over or coordinates ECan-style regional functions while leaving local councils intact for local services and local assets.

Such a model could cover functions that genuinely cross district boundaries, including:

- flood protection
- regional transport planning
- public transport
- freshwater and catchment management
- environmental regulation
- civil defence and emergency management
- climate adaptation
- regional growth planning

This may achieve many of the practical benefits of reform without fully dissolving local councils or exposing smaller communities to the risks of debt blending, asset dilution and loss of local representation.

## Relationship to Three Waters concerns

The current reform process may well be viewed by many residents through the lens of the Three Waters debate. Many ratepayers objected to losing local control over assets, unclear accountability, large regional structures and uncertainty over governance.

A council merger or unitary authority model could be perceived as achieving similar outcomes by a different route unless councils are very clear about asset ownership, local control, rates impacts and democratic safeguards.

Council should therefore avoid presenting reform as a simple efficiency exercise. The public will want to know exactly what happens to local assets, local debt, local rates, environmental governance, water-related responsibilities and local representation.

## Requested council position / safeguards

I respectfully ask Council to advocate for the following before supporting any reorganisation proposal:

1. Full independent debt and asset-condition audit before any merger decision.
2. Ring-fencing of Christchurch earthquake legacy costs and local council legacy debt.
3. Clear separation between local assets and genuinely regional assets.
4. No forced rates harmonisation without staged modelling and public disclosure.
5. Protection for rural roads, drainage, bridges, local halls, libraries, reserves and township facilities.
6. Strong local boards with real delegated budgets and powers.
7. Clear public explanation of Ngāi Tahu / mana whenua governance, advisory and decision-making roles.
8. Environmental regulation protected from political or development pressure.
9. Public comparison of full merger, unitary authority, regional authority and strengthened collaboration options.
10. Transparent transition-cost reporting, including IT, staffing, legal, restructuring, rating-system and planning-system costs.

## Closing statement

I am not opposed to sensible reform. There are areas where regional coordination could clearly be improved. However, reform must not become a rushed exercise where bigger is assumed to mean better without proper financial, environmental, democratic and local-asset protections.

Before any major structural change is supported, affected communities deserve clear modelling, honest risk assessment, and genuine alternatives.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl Meadows

Kaiapoi

Waimakariri Council Ratepayer and Resident

## CANTERBURY Mayoral Forum

*A strong regional economy with resilient, connected communities and a better quality of life, for all.*

20 February 2026

Department of Internal Affairs

Via online platform: <https://consultations.digital.govt.nz/simplifying-local-government/proposal>

Tēnā koutou

### Canterbury Mayoral Forum Submission on Simplifying Local Government proposal

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1. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum (Mayoral Forum) welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission on the Simplifying Local Government proposal.
2. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum comprises the mayors of the ten territorial authorities in Canterbury and the Chair of the Canterbury Regional Council, supported by our Chief Executives. The purpose of the Forum is to promote collaboration across the region and increase the effectiveness of local government in meeting the needs of Canterbury's communities.
3. All Canterbury councils actively participate in the Forum: the Kaikōura, Hurunui, Waimakariri, Selwyn, Ashburton, Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate, and Waitaki District Councils, the Christchurch City Council, and the Canterbury Regional Council.
4. This submission has been developed with input from all our members and focuses on matters of general agreement in the proposal. Our council members are also making individual council submissions on these matters, and we ask that the Department carefully consider each of these.

#### ***Mayors standing together for Canterbury.***

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

## Introduction

5. The Mayoral Forum recognises and is supportive of the Government’s objectives to improve system performance, strengthen accountability, lift economic productivity, and deliver better long-term outcomes for communities. The Mayoral Forum acknowledges that aspects of the current system are under pressure and that change is required to address long-standing economic, environmental, and funding challenges.
6. The scale and pace of change across the reform programme will require careful management, and significant investment from communities and councils to transition to new statutory responsibilities. This submission should also be read alongside the Mayoral Forum’s submissions on the broad suite of reforms currently under consultation; including the Planning Bill, Natural Environment Bill, Rates Target Model proposal and the Emergency Management Bill.

## Canterbury context

7. Canterbury is the largest region in New Zealand with a land area of 44,500 sq. km extending north of Kaikōura to the Waitaki River in the south, and from Te Pātaka-o-Rākaihautu Banks Peninsula to Aoraki Mount Cook. Within the region are diverse and iconic landscapes and ecosystems, including alpine and high-country tussock habitats, major lakes, and globally significant braided river systems.
8. Canterbury is the second largest region in terms of population, and in the year ended June 2025, Canterbury was the fastest growing region. The population of the Canterbury region is close to 700,000, and includes Christchurch, the second largest urban area in New Zealand. The population is unevenly distributed across Canterbury and the ten territorial authorities, with most of the population (77%) in the greater Christchurch urban area.
9. Five of ten fastest growing districts in New Zealand were in Canterbury, and our region has forecast population to increase to about 900,000 by 2048.
10. Waitaha Canterbury lies wholly within the Takiwā of Ngāi Tahu whānui, with 10 of the 18 Papatipu Rūnanga holding interests within our regional boundaries.
11. Canterbury boasts one of New Zealand’s most diverse and connected business communities in the country. With a global city at our doorstep, an international airport, two deep-water ports, and two leading universities driving research and innovation, we are connected and aligned in a way that few regions can match.
12. Manufacturing and agriculture are the ‘twin engines’ of Canterbury’s economy, but there is diversity between the industry compositions of Canterbury’s sub-regions. For example, primary industries accounted for the smallest proportion in the whole Canterbury region compared with 25.3% in the region excluding the Greater Christchurch area. In some districts,

tourism is a significant component of the economy – tourism is 42.5% of Mackenzie’s total employment. Emerging innovative economies include aerospace.

13. It is within this broad context that this submission has been developed.

## **Case for change**

14. The Mayoral Forum agrees that an evidence-led approach to determining how functions are delivered across Canterbury is timely and has the potential to deliver benefits for communities and ratepayers. However, the proposal put forward by Government is not wholly supported by the Mayoral Forum in its current form.

15. The Mayoral Forum recognises the critical role that local government has in supporting and building strong, healthy, and prosperous communities. We strongly support the concept of localism and subsidiarity in that the function of governance and decision making should be devolved to the level of government closest to affected communities.

16. The current system has a number of challenges, not least of all:

- i. highly prescriptive legislative framework for local government, with increasing responsibilities, unfunded mandates and complex changes that happen quickly
- ii. current structure and funding system constrains local government’s ability to govern, deliver and fund services to their communities in an environment of limited revenue and increasing costs
- iii. the demand on infrastructure that comes with growth, the challenge adapting to climate change and responding to the increasing frequency and intensity of weather events.

17. The Mayoral Forum supports simplification where it genuinely improves clarity of roles, accountability, and delivery outcomes.

18. The changes presented in this proposal must be robust and well thought through in their implementation to ensure local governance and government systems are fit for purpose for the next 30-40 years.

## **Central and local government relationship**

19. A genuine central and local government partnership, founded on mutual respect and trust is critical to how local government, central government and communities are effectively integrated to deliver genuine wellbeing outcomes.

20. The Mayoral Forum believes that local and central government need to work collaboratively for the communities we serve, noting the critical part each plays in providing safe, healthy, and productive environments.

21. Whether our funding comes from taxes or rates, we are supporting the same people and the same communities.
22. We welcome a more deliberate conversation about how we could work collectively to design a fit for purpose and contemporary public sector for our communities and how the various layers of local and central government, the roles we play and functions we respectively deliver play out for our communities.
23. The challenges associated with funding pressures and the central and local government relationship should be addressed as a priority, working together to establish co-investment opportunities and sustainable local government financing and funding mechanisms. Local government financial viability is being challenged, and our ability to invest in 'core services' reduced through the unfunded or underfunded mandates from central government.

### **Combined Territories Board**

24. The majority of the Mayoral Forum does not support the Combined Territories Board (CTB) simultaneously undertaking the roles of the regional councillors. Members feel there is insufficient capacity for the CTB to assume regional councillor responsibilities while also developing the regional reorganisation plan (RRP) and implementing the new resource management regime, while continuing to lead their territorial authorities.
25. The Mayoral Forum supports the establishment of the combined territories board (CTB) to develop the regional re-organisation plan(s) (RRP).
26. The Mayoral Forum also notes that given the changes imposed by the resource management reforms, it is critical that the CTB fully understands regional council functions.
27. The Mayoral Forum wants to work together, with mana whenua and Central Government, to get the best outcomes for Canterbury.

### **Combined Territories Board – voting**

28. Determining the process for voting on the CTB is complex and challenging. Proportional voting is not seen as resolving underlying representation or legitimacy concerns, neither was a single vote system. Clarity of purpose for the CTB is seen as more important than setting voting mechanism too early in the process.
29. The Local Government Commission should play a key role in determining final voting structures, and we agree that different matters may have different voting systems.

### **Mana Whenua, Treaty Settings, and Māori outcomes**

30. The Mayoral Forum is of the view that partnership with mana whenua needs to be embedded from the outset. Treaty partnership should shape how functions are assessed, how outcomes are defined and how decision-making settings are designed.

31. Any arrangements, whether transitional or in the new system, should not weaken existing Canterbury settings, including current Ngāi Tahu representation arrangements and established partnership mechanisms.
32. The RRP must demonstrate how Treaty settlement commitments administered by councils will be upheld, and how Māori outcomes and kaitiakitanga are supported across environmental, infrastructure and planning functions.

### **Functional review**

33. The Mayoral Forum supports the proposed functional review, starting with an assessment of what functions are required, how they are currently delivered, how well they are performing and at what scale they are best placed. This approach provides a stronger foundation for reform and is consistent with the Mayoral Forum's view that form should follow function.
34. The functional review should identify where delivery is fragmented, where capability is duplicated, where outcomes are inconsistent and where coordination failures produce unnecessary cost or risk.
35. Different functions may be best delivered at different scales, including metropolitan, sub-regional, regional, local, shared service, or national, and the process should be explicitly designed to identify the right scale for each, rather than defaulting to region-wide solutions.
36. Care needs to be taken that the review is comprehensive enough to support the development of the re-organisation plans for enduring outcomes for our communities.

### **Timing of re-organisation**

37. The Mayoral Forum has concerns with the timing of the proposal and the development of the re-organisation plans, particularly in relation to the 2028 local government elections.
38. There is a view that the development and finalisation of any RRP should not straddle a local election cycle, for two main reasons. First, momentum will be key to delivering these reforms in an orderly way. Local elections will necessitate a 'distraction' from developing the RRP for a period and – depending on the results – could result in a change of direction for its content (including needing work to be re-completed).
39. Second, there is a risk that a local election straddling the development of the RRP could undermine electoral integrity and public participation, especially if it will be implemented partway during the following triennium. In the 2028 elections – if a partially completed, yet to be finalised RRP, looms to take effect during the following triennium – there is likely to be voter confusion on what they are voting for, and what candidates can expect to represent and/or confidently campaign on.

## Financial cost associated with reorganisation

40. The Mayoral Forum is concerned about the lack of analysis and information on how the Simplifying Local Government proposal will be resourced and funded, particularly given the scale and uncertainty of costs to transition and implement other cost of the reforms in this proposal.
41. Transitional costs must be identified early, quantified realistically, and supported by clear funding mechanisms. These costs should not be underestimated or left to ratepayers without transparent support settings, including how costs will be shared, who will fund what and how central government requirements will be funded.
42. At a time when councils are exercising financial discipline in response to community signals and rate-capping proposals, whilst also facing climbing costs for infrastructure and service delivery, it is expected that central Government would in part fund set up costs to alleviate a cost burden on local government.
43. The Mayoral Forum would not favour any outcomes where reform results in unfunded mandates, hidden cost transfers, or opaque cross-subsidisation that is not justified by demonstrable regional benefit. Transitional funding and cumulative costs of the suite of local government reforms need to be considered. Funding these changes conflicts with, and distracts from, the intent of the Local Government (System Improvements) Bill to focus on core services.

## Link with other government reforms

44. There are several government reforms currently underway, and the Mayoral Forum would like to see stronger alignment between the multiple changes that are either in process or being mooted. The two Resource Management bills, the Emergency Management bill, the Rates Target Model and Simplifying Local Government proposals, and implementing local water done well, will all change how things operate at a local government level.
45. Poor alignment of the major reforms leaves our communities vulnerable. Quick change with limited consideration quickly becomes redundant, uncertainty of outcomes or direction leaves ratepayers and voters confused and frustrated, and the associated costs will continue to rise. These costs are inevitable, despite a rates cap, and in some way will be borne by the ratepayer, likely through increased user charges and/or reduced services.

## Business As Usual

46. The proposal raises significant questions and uncertainty about councils' business as usual over the next several years.
47. Councils have begun planning their next Long-Term Plan (LTP) 2027-2037. This is a significant undertaking involving considerable cost and resource for all our councils and built on a number of assumptions.

48. Some of our Canterbury councils are legislatively required to complete a Representation Review in 2027 for the 2028 elections. How could this be credibly undertaken in light the of the development of the RRP?
49. Councils are also delivering on their current LTPs and Annual Plans that have been through extensive public consultation with their communities. Re-organisation has not featured in these to date.
50. The Mayoral Forum is concerned about how Audit NZ's processes will take the reform proposals and legislation changes into consideration. We will be required to meet the audit requirements of the legislation that is in force at the time, but the new legislation may change the focus of our Plans.

## Conclusion

51. The Canterbury Mayoral Forum thanks you for the opportunity to make this submission on the Simplifying Local Government Proposal.
52. The Mayoral Forum would be very happy to expand on any points covered in this submission. Please contact our secretariat, Maree McNeilly at [secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz](mailto:secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz) or on 027 381 8924.

Nāku iti noa,nā



**Nigel Bowen**  
**Chair Canterbury Mayoral Forum**  
Mayor Timaru District Council

### **Attachment 3 – Responses to media enquiries**

#### **4 March 2026 – Regional Deal**

##### Response to Blayne Slabbert, The Press

What changed in the last few months that led you to reframe the deal as an “investment prospectus”?

When you say “national and international audience”, who do you actually mean — and what do you want from them?

What are the top two or three priorities you think Canterbury should put up first?

How will the projects be funded? Will you look at PPPs, levies or something else?

Do you have a goal to lock in a deal before the 2026 election, or is this a longer negotiation?

##### **Please attribute to Canterbury Mayoral Forum Chair and Timaru District Mayor Nigel Bowen:**

The Canterbury Mayoral Forum is in the very early stages of discussing a future regional deal proposal. Our initial thoughts go beyond a regional deal, and we are thinking about how we can leverage greater investment into the future of Canterbury from national and international opportunities. Our region has the ingredients to offer a high-quality of life and attract even more top talent to support sustained growth and investment.

Nothing has been decided as we are just scoping the work, but it is a topic of discussion for future meetings.

Last year, we delivered the Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready document, which looks at focus areas for a possible regional deal with the Government. Our proposition is driven by five key pillars – transport, housing, energy, infrastructure, and innovation.

We see both a potential future regional deal and the World-stage Ready documents as opportunities to strengthen the partnership between central and local government, mana whenua, and the private sector for the continued economic advancement of Waitaha Canterbury and New Zealand as a whole. Both national and international investments are important to strengthening our region.

As we are only in the scoping stage of a potential regional deal, we have yet to settle priorities and funding options. Any will be considered.

The regional deal is part of a broader, ongoing conversation. We are focused on getting the right outcome, and we’ll continue to progress the work to ensure this is the case.

An update on the draft scope of work for a possible regional deal will be presented at the Canterbury Mayoral Forum meeting in May.

You can see the Waitaha Canterbury World-stage Ready document [here](#). If there is anything within the document you’d like to discuss further, I’d be happy to chat.

## 17 April 2026 – Local Leadership Groups

### Response to David Hill, Local Democracy Reporter

Just wanting to follow up, what is the latest in the development of the new local water leadership groups? I understood Kaikōura was close to finalising its arrangements - has that happened? Also, is there any progress in Waimakariri and Hurunui?

Kia ora David,

Thank you for your email and subsequent media enquiry. Please attribute the following response to Senior Strategy Manager Cameron Smith.

Progress continues on establishing Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) Leadership Groups across the region. In the Clarence/Waiau Toa – Kaikōura catchment, core parties are reviewing a final draft collaborative agreement, with formal sign-off expected in May. An establishment hui has been held in Hurunui – Waiau Uwha, with further updates expected in the coming weeks.

In Rakahuri-Waimakariri, discussions are also now underway, including a briefing with Waimakariri District councillors later this month. Subject to the outcome, work will move towards holding the first establishment hui with core parties.

Elsewhere across the region, several leadership groups are on track to begin meeting from mid-year, with others following later in the year.

## **21 April 2026 – Canterbury Water Management Strategy**

### Response to Jonathan Leask, Local Democracy Reporter

Kia ora Jonathan,

Thank you for your email and subsequent media enquiry. Please attribute the following response to Senior Strategy Manager Cameron Smith.

Work is progressing to transition from the former water zone committees to new local leadership groups.

In the Hakatere (Ashburton) catchment, core parties have met twice and agreed to continue towards a collaborative agreement. Further detail is being worked through at staff level, including resolution of the Rakaia catchment's final status alongside the Waihora group. Once confirmed, the collaborative agreement can be finalised, with a possible establishment and first formal meeting by mid-year.

For Waihora (Selwyn), Selwyn District Council received a constructive briefing on 16 April. The next step is to organise the first establishment hui with all core parties.

Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) funding continues to support action on the ground, including \$500,000 per year through the Action Plan Fund for community projects, with this year's successful projects to be announced shortly. Savings from disestablishing zone committees largely relate to honoraria, and any future arrangements will be settled through collaborative agreements.

All new leadership groups will be established within existing CWMS funding as per Council's Long-Term Plan.

## 12 May 2026 – Simplifying Local Government

### Response to Jonathan Leask, Local Democracy Reporter

We have adjusted the agenda and are giving priority to the reform conversation. We have also invited Deputy Mayors/Chair to attend to help with reporting back to elected members.

I am hopeful we can build some consensus on what a Canterbury proposal could look like. There are obviously differing views across Mayors and Councils, however if local government does not engage constructively in this process, there is a real risk that decisions about Canterbury's future could ultimately be made for us from Wellington.

**From:** Jonathan Leask <[jonathan.l@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:jonathan.l@theguardian.co.nz)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, 12 May 2026 11:04 am

**To:** Mayor Nigel Bowen - Timaru <[nigel.bowen@timdc.govt.nz](mailto:nigel.bowen@timdc.govt.nz)>;  
[secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz](mailto:secretariat@canterburymayors.org.nz)

**Subject:** May 29 meeting

Kia ora Nigel

Just a question on amalgamations and next mayoral forum meeting.

The assumption being that the next meeting agenda will have one item on it - a discussion on amalgamation proposals so the councils of Canterbury can get on the same page to deliver proposals by the deadline?

As chair, are you confident there can be consensus for new boundaries or is Canterbury at risk of being re-drawn from Wellington?