

Media Release

Surveys Demonstrate Strong Commitment to Future of Christchurch

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Invest Christchurch, the investment facilitation service of the Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU), has released the results of three quantitative studies into the attitudes of Christchurch businesspeople, the wider Christchurch community and New Zealanders as a whole towards the economic future of the region and the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan.

The purpose of the studies is to inform local, national and international investors of aggregated investment intentions as well as the likely stability of the Christchurch workforce and consumer base.

The three studies were of:

- 400 randomly selected business owners or managers from the greater Christchurch region, including from the manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail trade, healthcare, professional services, transport, tourism, education, arts and agriculture sectors
- 500 randomly selected residents of the wider Christchurch area
- 750 randomly selected New Zealanders

They were commissioned by CCDU immediately prior to the release of the Recovery Plan on Monday 30 July and carried out by UMR Research Ltd from Tuesday 31 July.

The manager of Invest Christchurch, Sheila McBreen-Kerr, said the surveys indicate that Christchurch businesspeople, the wider Christchurch community and New Zealanders as a whole are strongly committed to the future of the region and the rebuild of the central city.

"Our businesses, young people and wider community plan to stay, they are united behind the blueprint plan, and they overwhelmingly think it is a good time to invest in Christchurch," she said.

"Investors – whether existing Christchurch landowners, other New Zealand investors, businesses and developers, or international investors – can have confidence that the people who know Christchurch best are bullish about its future, are united behind the central city blueprint and plan to remain in the region to be part of that exciting future."

The surveys indicate:

- Awareness of the central city plan is near-universal, with 99% of Christchurch businesspeople, 95% of Christchurch residents and 88% of New Zealanders reporting awareness
- Support for the plan is high, with 74% of Christchurch businesspeople, 56% of Christchurch residents and 52% of New Zealanders reporting they support it

- Support for the plan among those who report they know a lot or fair amount about it is still higher, at 82% of Christchurch businesspeople, 66% of Christchurch residents and 53% of New Zealanders
- Opposition to the plan is very low, with only 7% of Christchurch businesspeople, 13% of Christchurch residents and 17% of New Zealanders reporting they oppose it
- 78% of Christchurch businesspeople and 61% of Christchurch residents believe things in Christchurch are heading in the right direction, higher than the benchmark of 51% of New Zealanders who think things in New Zealand are heading in the right direction
- 73% of Christchurch businesspeople, 61% of Christchurch residents and 50% of New Zealanders believe it is a good time to invest in the city
- 97% of Christchurch businesspeople and 88% of Christchurch residents plan to keep living in the Christchurch region over the next few years, higher than the benchmark of 86% of New Zealanders who plan to keep living in the same area over the next few years
- Among people under 30, many of whom travel overseas as part of a traditional New Zealand “overseas experience”, 77% of Christchurch residents plan to continue living in the region over the next few years, higher than the national benchmark of 74%
- Remarkably, over 20% of Christchurch businesspeople want to locate their businesses in the new Central Business District, despite the sample being heavily weighted towards manufacturing, construction, and wholesale and retail trade. This is more than the estimated 17% of Christchurch businesses that were in the CBD prior to the earthquake. In the professional, scientific and technical services sector, 44% want to locate in the new CBD.

The business survey was carried out between 31 July and 6 August, the residents' survey between 31 July and 1 August and the nationwide survey between 2 and 6 August. They have margins of error of $\pm 4.9\%$, $\pm 4.4\%$, and $\pm 3.6\%$, respectively.