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State of the nation

Welcome to the Catalyst state of the nation for March. It is hard to believe but Easter has come and gone; the sound of New Year resolutions breaking was deafening as people nibbled away at their chocolate goodies! Although officially autumn down here in the Southern Hemisphere the sun continues to shine and as I write, the sun is shining on Auckland and the temperature is sitting at a steady 23 degrees. As the UK shivers in the snow (sorry), much of New Zealand is still working under drought conditions with little respite anticipated until later in April. As agriculture is one of New Zealand's biggest industries, the sunshine isn't necessarily good news for everyone and some farmers are being hit hard – with a predicted \$2 Billion hit to the economy..

Two weeks back the team visited Christchurch to meet up with clients and candidates that we have placed in the area. The mood among the clients was mixed with many of them optimistic of the work ahead but frustrated by the length of time it takes to get all of their ducks in a row and everything moving. Many of the civil contractors maintained that they were ticking over but not as busy as they would like to be. One contractor spoke of February projects being delayed until May and the unreliable flow of work. They have three projects due to start in June but are anticipating that all three will be pushed back to the second half of the year. Outside of Christchurch we are starting to see some activity in the civil sector with two major projects given the green light in the past few weeks. Hopefully this is an indication of things to come and by the second half of the year we should see some significant activity in the industry.

The construction sector is still recovering from the collapse of Mainzeal although most of their projects have now been re-allocated to other contractors by the receivers. Over the past month most of our clients have focussed their attention on securing the key employees within the 400 construction staff that lost their jobs. The building companies are reasonably quiet across most of the country with the odd project requiring recruitment of local candidates. Christchurch however is a different matter. The companies we spoke with were very busy with business as usual work – and work outside of the official rebuild zone. Senior Project Managers seemed to be a regular requirement, but those receiving interviews will either need to be here – or have a very strong link to the area. Recruitment has not stretched itself to the

full on search for international talent at this stage. Once the actual rebuild work starts – there will be a significant increase in activity and the message we provide will be very different. Suffice to say that the builders are predicting a very big second half of the year.

The PQS and Professional Project Management sector does however look a lot better with clients actively searching for key personnel to be involved with projects now at the planning and design stages. Both Andy and Sam will be very keen to hear from specialists in these two sectors as they have clients interviewing and hiring as we speak throughout the country.

The engineering consultants still remain quiet with offices throughout the country distributing the work for Christchurch but the open request remains for geotechnical specialists and structural engineers with seismic experience; anyone with experience in these fields needs to contact Mireille to discuss opportunities.

On the whole it has been a strange start to the year in all sectors. Information from those in the know indicates that there is an awful lot happening behind the scenes in Christchurch and as such there is heightened anticipation of significant activity later in the year. Virtually all of our clients have indicated that any lift in work will leave them short of staff and so we are as keen as always to hear from those of you keen to make the move. If you're planning a visit or making a permanent move, please get in touch and we'll discuss a plan and any opportunities with you before you get here. Follow us on Linked In and keep your eye on the blog and the new Christchurch website, www.christchurchrebuild.co.nz.



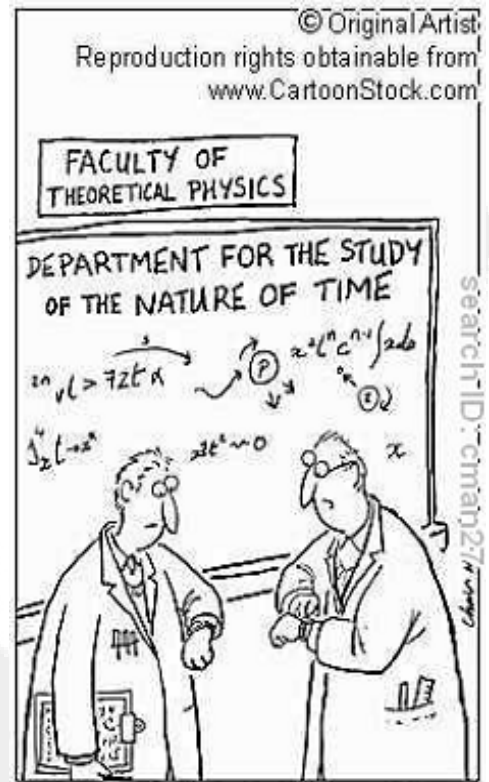
Spring forward or fall back, it all comes down to hemisphere!

In time with the move into spring or autumn (depending on your hemisphere) we thought it best to remind everyone of the clock changes in the UK and New Zealand.

The UK clocks sprung forward one hour on March 31st meaning that New Zealand and the UK will be 12 hours apart; your 8pm will be our 8am. A week later on April 7th (just to keep it confusing) the New Zealand clocks fall back an hour meaning there is then only an 11 hour difference between the two countries. Subsequently your 8pm is our 7am leaving us only a small window to speak with you in the UK before it gets too late in the evening. More than ever we shall be getting into the office early and grabbing our first coffee so that we make those calls and to discuss your move to New Zealand!



"You got it wrong again.
It's spring ahead, fall back."



Isn't it 'Spring back, fall forward'?

Easter time in New Zealand

By the time you read this, most New Zealanders will be enjoying what will be the last long (4 day) weekend on the calendar for the foreseeable future. Our next long weekend won't be until we celebrate the Queen's birthday in mid-winter (1st weekend in June).

As summer draws to a close (and what a wonderful summer it has been) Easter weekend is usually occupied with last trips to the bach (Kiwi holiday home) or other NZ based holiday destinations, time spent at the beach, or if staying at home; on the domestic front getting stuck in to the gardening and getting the last of those long been planned but constantly put off DIY jobs finally completed and struck off the to-do list.

Good Friday and Easter Sunday are two of only 3.5 days

(Christmas day and the morning of Anzac Day being the others) when almost all shops are required to be closed under the NZ Shop Trading Hours Repeal Act 1990. With only the potential liability of a fine of \$1000 for opening on a restricted trading day, and with the Easter weekend traditionally being a weekend of domestic chores for those who don't go away, most gardening and DIY centres openly flaunt those regulations as it undoubtedly is one of their best trading weekends of the year – so well worth the fine!



Earthquake shakes Auckland

Some thought it was a truck hitting their house. Others thought someone had knocked on the door with a heavy hand, some felt their whole building rock, wobble or shake. Quite a few didn't feel a thing! A "moderate" 3.9 magnitude earthquake struck Auckland a couple of weeks ago and was the biggest since February 2007 when a swarm of quakes rumbled the city. The tremor, which struck at 4.05pm on Sunday 17th March, was five kilometres deep and was centred 15 kms north-east of the city. It was the second one that day, the first was further north and somewhat deeper.

This was a rare event, but illuminates the fact that the whole of NZ is affected by seismic activity. No major damage was reported but cracks appeared across some roads in the city. Many took to Twitter to confirm the quake, including larger than life internet entrepreneur Kim Dotcom who denied it was his fault. The tremors have encouraged some Aucklanders to stock up on Civil Defence emergency supplies, taking the quake as a warning to be prepared.

Small earthquakes are not unusual for Auckland, or indeed anywhere else in NZ. For those who might be put off the idea of NZ due to this and the much larger and

more destructive quake in Christchurch two years ago, here are some stats from Geonet.

Last year there were over 17,000 quakes in NZ. Of these, only 2 were over 6 magnitude. The majority, just shy of 10,000, were 2-3 magnitude which means they were scarcely felt, weak tremors. Last month there were just over 1000 quakes of 3 magnitude or less across both islands.

If this still doesn't sound like much reassurance, the fact that there have been just over 30 earthquakes (of 3 magnitude or less) in the UK in the past 50 days might do!

Source: NZ Herald, GeoNet, British Geological Survey.



Personal and Business Insurance Specialist

Insurance is like a parachute, unless it is strapped on and in place before it is needed, you are in deep trouble! This article is designed to give information and hopefully guidance to get your 'parachute' ready. After 25 plus years of helping clients get ready, and some of them have used their 'parachute' to get through some tough experiences, our Seven Steps for Purchasing Insurance booklet have made the choosing and updating of their insurance easier to understand and keep current. I hope this helps to get your 'parachute' ready.

Relevance

The most essential consideration when buying insurance is 'how relevant is it to your situation?' E.G. – If there is a mortgage, insurance is needed to ensure if you die the debt is paid off or the mortgage is continually paid if you become sick.

Amount of Cover

Decide how much cover is needed for each type of scenario. E.G. - Life Cover is to protect your family against your early exit – think about funeral costs, paying off short term debt, credit cards, hire purchase, the mortgage, funds to educate, etc.

Beneficiaries

Who should receive the proceeds? Will the "right amount be going to the right people at the right time?" This is very important to consider as it is assumed it will happen once they are insured. Not so! Carefully consider ownership of the policy to ensure the proceeds get to the right people.

Insurance Company

It is important to be insured with an insurer that has a good reputation. Each insurer has a financial strength rating giving you the confidence the insurer will be there should a claim be needed.

The Claim

Claiming for anything is a difficult experience especially if you are sick and have a major need for surgery or lost income to replace. Naturally it is better to have someone on your side to be your Advocate but if you have to deal with this on your own ask the insurance company: what process they have for a claim : what information is needed : who will be looking after the claim : what timeframe are there for the claim to be completed?

Annual Review

Life changes – so a review of your insurance is recommended at least every 1 to 2 years as it is important to keep your cover relevant. Insurance products also change. The only way to keep up to date is to review your cover – there may not be change required but at least you are kept up to date.

Using an Adviser

The two things you should look for when choosing an Adviser to help you in the insurance world, which can be confusing, is Knowledge and Experience – Knowledge of the products available in the market and experience in negotiating insurance cover on your behalf.

Conclusion

I hope this gives you an insight on how to set up and look after your insurance 'parachute' for you, your family and your business.



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Graeme Fletcher

Case study of moving to NZ

Current Employer: SKM Consulting

Graeme (originally from the UK) was working in Bahrain when he first made contact with Catalyst in March 2012. He and his wife (also an Engineer) were looking for a better environment in which to raise their young daughter and had concluded that New Zealand could offer them that. Catalyst enabled an interview with SKM in June and a job offer followed shortly thereafter. Graeme commenced with SKM in the senior position of Team Leader – Structural Engineering in their Wellington branch in August of 2012.

What inspired you to consider moving with your family to New Zealand?

We were already expats from the UK / Ireland living in the Middle East but wanted somewhere more family orientated, with a better family / work balance and generally more like home. We were also driven by the demand for engineers and the opportunity to work on the Christchurch rebuild.

Has New Zealand lived up to your expectations?

Definitely, however paying tax again has been a very hard adjustment!

How has your life changed since moving to New Zealand?

Yes, I (generally) have a better work to life balance and see more of my daughter than I did before. We spend a lot more time outdoors and spending time together as a family. Wellington is a great city to live in for family activities each weekend, eating out as a family and all of the beaches. It is also a much cleaner place to live; our daughter had a lot of health issues with the heat and the dust in the Middle East which have gone now. .

What one thing would you have done differently?

I would have spent more time getting to know the city before picking somewhere to live, first house was overpriced and probably not the best, too keen to get out of temporary accommodation.

What one thing do you wish you had known about before moving?

The cost of furniture and electronics here, some items are very expensive if you are coming from the UK and we would have bought these items and shipped them beforehand if we had known.

What advice would you pass to someone commencing the process?

Be sure this is where you want to be long term, the price of flights home and the travel time really limits your ability to go back and forth. We went home at least 3 times a year in the Middle East, now it will be once every 18 months! Professionally, read up on seismic design and the differences between the NZ codes and Eurocodes. You need to be prepared to be on a steep learning curve as the codes, design methodology, etc are very different.

Looking back with hindsight, do think you have made the right move for you and your family?

Most definitely.

Useful Facts:

1st contact to interview	86 days
1st Interview to offer	13 days
Offer to arrival	52 days
Time since arrival	216 days

