



Christchurch

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State of the nation

Welcome to the January edition of the Catalyst State of the Nation and a Happy New Year to one and all. 2014 is under way and already we are closing in on February! January is an interesting time in New Zealand as schools remain shut for the summer holidays. Many people take extra leave to take family holidays and to make the most of the good weather. Add to that a significant number of statutory holidays during the few weeks of the year and things can be a little slow to get going. That said the positive mood from the end of last year seems to be continuing and we're bracing ourselves for a busy 2014!

As the demand increases it will not be long before our clients start considering international candidates so watch out – this could be your year. We will be increasing our contact with you through various methods so that we can highlight the opportunities in New Zealand as they become available. We will advertise jobs as usual at www.catalystjobs.co.nz, but we will also be asking you to provide more accurate information about your situation. This will be about two or three two minute emails asking you to confirm or change the contact details we already have for you.

We'll also be sending out emails highlighting specific roles and seeing if you are interested. To make this as relevant as possible – we will ask you a few questions about your experience – again this should take about 3 minutes, but it will ensure that you only receive emails about important stuff to you.

As Catalyst is the only true international sourcing company in NZ (the others just dabble), we are viewed by our clients as the experts, so we tend to receive the first calls. And – when we do submit CV's – they are considered very seriously. About stuff that is important to you.

Civil Contracting

For the first time in a long time, there appears to be a good pipeline of new work coming out, submitted tenders being evaluated and work on site or about to start. It is fair to say that this could be the busiest year for civil contractors since the start of the recession. A number of clients have already expressed their concern at the number of staff they'll need going forward and they see Catalyst as a key provider to help them sole that problem.

Of course this will progressively build up over the next 6 months. Nevertheless if you want to be involved contact me (Andrew) and arrange a time to speak with him to discuss your plans.

Building Construction

For 6 months now, Auckland, the engine room of New Zealand has been gaining momentum, with clients finally starting to look at overseas based candidates, but only at

those with firm plans to arrive. Those who are still in the UK (or elsewhere) thinking about it are still not being actively pursued, but in my opinion – it will not be long before this changes. With Auckland strong and with the massive amount of Construction work still to come in Christchurch, this will be the year the balance is firmly tipped in the overseas candidates favour.

If you want to beat the rush, contact Andy now – he will guide you through the process. At this stage – it is definitely up to the individual. Check with Andy first before planning a trip. He is keen to hear from QS's, Estimators, Site Managers and Project Managers about to arrive.

Engineering Consultants

The first weeks of 2014 have been busy. Clients are much more confident about 2014 as projects in Christchurch and nationwide gain momentum. Hence we have more vacancies to work on.

As usual seismic capable Structural Engineers from intermediate through to senior level for Christchurch and Wellington; Fire (Design) Engineers for various locations throughout the country; and Civil qualified Geotechnical (Design) Engineers with 4+ years experience for any of the main cities continue to lead the demand. As the major projects start gaining momentum, we expect an increase in the associated disciplines. Watch this space!

If you would like to have an initial conversation regarding your circumstance, then contact Mireille to get the ball rolling.

As always if you're planning a trip or a move to New Zealand we need to know now so that we can help. Get in touch with us to discuss your plans and we'll do everything we can to assist in the process. Remember to follow us on Linked In, the blog and via the job board!



NZ economy “Rock Star” status

New Zealand has been touted as the likely “rock star” of world economies this year. Economists expect New Zealand’s economy to grow at a faster rate in 2014 than it did before the global financial crisis.

HSBC Australia and New Zealand chief economist Paul Bloxham has given the Kiwi economy the “rock star” label and predicts economic growth will hit 3.4 per cent this year.

He said the Canterbury rebuild, the housing boom and strong dairy demand would help New Zealand outpace its developed market peers.

“We think the New Zealand economy is firing on all cylinders.”

The Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) imposed mortgage lending restrictions in October last year to try and cool the hot housing market.

But they “haven’t come to very much as an impact on the overall housing market”.

“They’ll have to lift rates to fix this problem.”

Bloxham said more Kiwis were returning from Australia which helped fuel economic growth.

A move towards government surplus in the 2015 financial year had been “in the works for quite a while.”

“While that could act as somewhat of a drag, it’s not enough to stop New Zealand being the rock star economy of 2014.”

Bloxham said HSBC expected interest rates to rise from 2.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent this year to slow the housing market.

Source:

Laura Walters, *The Press*

Welcome to the boom of 2014

Financial experts are united - next year could be a golden one for the New Zealand economy with all signs pointing to a prosperous 2014.

Commodity prices are booming, businesses are at their most confident in 20 years, the economy is among the world’s fastest growing, jobs and wages are predicted to rise and that confidence is filtering through to consumers who are starting to open their wallets.

New Zealand’s GDP growth was at its highest in four years in the last quarter at 3.5 per cent on the previous year - higher than Australia (2.3 per cent), the US (1.8), Britain (1.5) and Japan at 2.4 per cent.

Compared with Australia, once our largest trading partner but recently overtaken by China and whose economic growth outside the mining sector has relatively flatlined, our positive outlook is more stark.

However, living up to their billing as experts in the dismal science, economists are also quick to warn against overconfidence, pointing out that no boom lasts forever.

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Auckland economy set to sparkle

Prospects best for seven years on back of labour, housing construction and manufacturing activity: economist.

Auckland's economic prospects look the best in seven years, based on labour, housing construction and manufacturing activity.

Geoff Cooper, Auckland Council's chief economist, released his **latest economic quarterly update** today showing that the city's growth projections were the best since before the global financial crisis in 2008.

The quarterly, headlined High Hopes for 2014, outlined how many different aspects of Auckland had been strong performers lately and the NZIER's Quarterly Survey of Business Opinion showed rising optimism.

"The Auckland economy continues to gain momentum through the final quarter of 2013 and enters 2014 on a solid footing," Cooper said.

Auckland's annual GDP growth of 2.4 per cent last year was strong.

"This is a measure of transactions happening in the Auckland economy and it shows that people are starting to see opportunities, particularly in the house building area," Cooper said.

"We're starting to see more development and the GDP figure signals improving employment conditions around the corner."

Strong building activity was another indicator of the city's big economic recovery. Last year, consents were granted for 5647 new residences in Auckland, a big share of the 14,138 consents granted nationally.

"Residential building activity was 29 per cent higher in the September quarter of 2013 compared to the same quarter of 2012. November is a standout month for dwelling consent approvals - 779 new dwelling consents were approved, the highest monthly figure since 2006. Consents in the three months to November were 11.5 per cent higher than the three months to August, while annual consents surpassed 6000 for the first time since 2008," Cooper said.

Building activity volumes were gaining momentum, up 24.4 per cent year-on-year in the September quarter in real terms.

Consenting activity typically leads a big building upturn by about six months so the strong run of consents being issued during the last two quarters of last year would lift building activity volumes further throughout the first half of this year, Cooper said.

"While such housing activity is welcomed, significantly more is needed to make a dent in Auckland's housing affordability."

Aucklanders were also optimistic that the good times would continue, Cooper said.

"Business confidence is currently riding high on the back of the pick-up in domestic demand, with investment and employment intentions both firming in the December quarter," he said.

This sense of cautious optimism was widely held, suggesting that growth might become increasingly broad-based in the near term.

Consumer confidence rebounded in the December quarter, probably reflecting the housing market's resilience, he said.

Aucklanders' pre-Christmas shopping splurge boosted the retail sector and business surveys show retailers were increasingly optimistic about the outlook for trading conditions.

Employment prospects look good.

"The unemployment rate was unchanged at 6.7 per cent in the September quarter and employment growth remains sluggish. However, forward indicators point to an improved labour market performance in the first half of 2014 and real wages growth remains solid," Cooper said, noting how Aucklanders were earning \$1135 a week real wages in the second quarter of last year rising to \$1145 a week in the third quarter.

Households had remained relatively financially cautious last year, largely because of their views of the labour market, but hiring intentions had firmed.

Moody's Investors Service said New Zealand's economy and the Government's books were on the mend after taking a hit from a protracted recession and the Canterbury earthquakes.

Mayor Len Brown laid down a challenge to business, council and government officials at a three-day growth forum this week, saying the city's amalgamation delivered big opportunities. Brown cited the Wynyard Quarter innovation precinct, public private partnerships, more commercial sponsorships, an economic and investment hui to assist iwi using settlement proceeds, and the Central Rail Link as examples of such opportunities.

Justin Kean, research and consultancy director at Jones Lang LaSalle in Auckland, said the value of investment buildings sold last year was back to pre-global financial crisis levels, with sales of more than \$2 billion last year and the biggest deals were in Auckland.

Housing sector

Annual residential building consents

- Auckland 5647 NZ 14,138

Annual house sales

- Auckland 31,833 NZ 48,707

Average private rent

- Auckland \$448 a week
- NZ \$314 a week

Source:

Geoff Cooper, Auckland Council

Progress of transport projects

Big strides are expected this year on five key projects to improve travel to, from and around Auckland. Transport reporter Mathew Dearnaley looks at progress.

Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4



Image 5



1. Western Ring Route (Image 1)

The Southwestern motorway extension (southbound) connecting to SH1 at Manukau.

Cost to complete: \$2.5 billion

Developer: New Zealand Transport Agency

Completion: 2017-2019

What it is: A 47km string of motorways from Manukau to Albany, forming a seamless alternative to State Highway 1 and the harbour bridge.

For What has been done and what remains to be done... click here... <http://nzh.tw/11193923>

2. AMETI Auckland-Manukau Eastern Transport Initiative (Image 2)

Cost: \$1.5 billion (Possibly+\$600m to \$1b for western extension to Onehunga)

Developer: Auckland Transport (with Transport Agency subsidies)

Completion: 2030, although the Government says that is unacceptable and wants faster progress.

What it is: A package of transport projects from Glen Innes to Botany including new roads, bus ways, cycleways and an upgraded bus-rail interchange at Panmure, to foster economic development around the Tamaki River.

Without rail east of Tamaki River, a key aim is to feed passengers to Panmure station from a busway running initially from Pakuranga and, ultimately, from Botany.

A new road north from Mt Wellington Highway, initially to Morrin Rd, Stonefields, but later to be extended to Merton Rd, Glen Innes, will divert some traffic from Panmure before that suburb's large and difficult roundabout can be demolished and replaced by a signalised intersection.

A flyover of Ti Rakau Drive, from Reeves Rd in Pakuranga to the Southeastern Highway, should encourage more commuter and commercial traffic to use the Waipuna Bridge over the Tamaki River. The aim is to take pressure off Panmure Bridge, which will be widened for the busway between Panmure, Pakuranga and Botany, leaving existing lanes for local traffic.

An extension of AMETI, an east-west road freight corridor between Mt Wellington and Onehunga, is being teed up for an accelerated start after the Government last year pledged support. Opponents such as the Greens say money should be spent instead on a new freight railway line into Auckland's industrial heartland.

For What has been done and what remains to be done... click here... <http://nzh.tw/11193923>

3. Waikato Expressway (Image - Photo / Stephen Barker)

The Mangaharakeke Drive section of Waikato Expressway, north of Te Rapa opened in Dec 2012.

Cost: \$2 billion

Developer: New Zealand Transport Agency

Completion: 2019

What it is: 102km four-lane, dual carriageway from Bombay Hills to about 4km south of Cambridge (bypassed). Runs east of Hamilton, Ngaruawahia and Huntly. 6km shorter than existing route and will reduce travel between Hamilton and Tirau by 35 minutes. A boost to the "golden triangle" economic powerhouse of Auckland, the Waikato and the Bay of Plenty.

For What has been done and what remains to be done... click here... <http://nzh.tw/11193923>

4. Rail electrification (Image 4 - Photo / NZ Herald)

First electric rail passenger services will start end-April between Onehunga and Britomart.

Cost: \$1.14 billion

Developer: KiwiRail and Auckland Transport

Completion: July 2015

What it is: Electrification and re-signalling of 85km of Auckland's rail network between Britomart and Papakura in the south, and Swanson in the west - \$500m (KiwiRail). Purchase of 57 new three-car electric trains and construction of a \$100m depot for a 12-year maintenance contract to Spanish train-builder Cas - \$641m (Auckland Transport).

For What has been done and what remains to be done... click here... <http://nzh.tw/11193923>

5. AT Hop Card - Integrated public transport ticketing (Image 5)

Cost: \$100m

Developers: Auckland Transport and the NZ Transport Agency

Completion: March 31

What it is: A rechargeable "tag on, tag off" electronic ticket for seamless travel on trains, ferries and most of the region's public buses, supported by a back-office clearing house which the Transport Agency hopes will ultimately be used by schemes in other cities.

For What has been done and what remains to be done... click here... <http://nzh.tw/11193923>



Work kicks off on justice precinct

John Key turns sod on huge Christchurch project.

Two high-powered digs into central Christchurch land marked the start of the biggest multi-agency government project in New Zealand's history.

Prime Minister John Key and Justice Minister Judith Collins simultaneously turned the sod in the centre of what will be the city's new justice and emergency services precinct - the first major public building to be built in Christchurch since the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011.

It will be one of nine anchor projects the Government said would start construction this year.

More than 20,000 cubic metres of soil - the equivalent of eight Olympic-sized swimming pools, will be excavated from next week. It will be mixed with 2500 tonnes of cement and placed back into the ground on top of a heavy-duty 1.2 metre-thick concrete base.

Representatives of the city's justice and emergency services community attended with Courts Minister Chester Burrows and Christchurch Central MP Nicky Wagner.

The new precinct will house about 1100 staff and be the regional headquarters for the Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Police, Department of Corrections, New Zealand Fire Service and St John. It will also be the city's Civil Defence base.

The precinct is expected to be fully operational by mid-2017.

Meanwhile, Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee said another eight anchor projects will also start construction in 2014.

They were the bus interchange, retail precinct, health precinct, South Frame public realm, the performing arts precinct, North Frame and Margaret Mahy Amazing Place, the innovation precinct and the Metro sports facility.

The convention centre concept is also taking shape with proposals from prospective operators due to be evaluated in March.

Brownlee said "roughly" three-quarters of the land needed for the convention centre precinct was now owned by the Crown and he hoped the area would be cleared by August.

Source:

Glenn Conway, www.stuff.co.nz

Photo: ccdu.govt.nz





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Andrew Shepherdson Case study of moving to NZ

Current Employer: Synergine

Andrew first approached Catalyst in March 2012. He was interviewed by Catalyst over a year later as roles became available July 2013. Andrew was interviewed twice by the client 19th and 20th September - first by phone and the next day by Skype. Andrew secured an offer and arrived in New Zealand raring to go on 25th November.

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

Concerns over future work in the UK, and wanting a better future with prospects for our children, and to be part of the rebuilding of a new city ultimately.

Has New Zealand lived up to your expectations?

NZ and the Kiwis have far exceeded our expectations. My wife, kids and I absolutely love the country.

How has your life changed since moving to New Zealand?

The work life balance is totally different to the UK. You are encouraged to live life to the full. It's not all a bed of roses, there are cultural differences, but all I can say is try it if you are genuinely interested.

What one thing would you have done differently?

We should have gained further understanding of immigration processes, although we have had great help from our NZ immigration officer.

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

The house rental situation in NZ is a minefield. Do your homework on areas to live in. Have an idea what you would like NZ to offer you. Get a relationship going with a reputable rental agency, register with them to get to know the market.

What advice would you pass to someone commencing the process?

Register with a good recruiter who knows NZ, and who understands your area of expertise. Be aware that delays happen, especially with immigration. We sorted all our immigration, health checks, and police checks ourselves; it's not for the faint hearted but well worth it. Liaise with your recruiter and NZ immigration if you are unsure, they are invaluable.

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

We cannot believe where we live, it is so beautiful. We know we have done the right thing; my only regret is that I never came years ago.

Useful Facts:

1 st contact to interview:	563 days
1 st interview to offer:	5 days
Offer to arrival:	67 days
Time since arrival:	67 days