



Christchurch

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## State of the nation

Welcome to the Catalyst state of the nation for May 2013. Winter has officially arrived in New Zealand and the skiers are all planning weekends at the slopes. As you read this Dunedin has received its first dump of snow, a sign of what's to come for the rest of the South Island. Auckland tends to have a wet winter with the thunder and lightening testament to that. It got so dark during the storm this morning that the street lights came on again and yet an hour later the storm has passed and the sun is shining-typical Auckland!

The past week or two has seen another lift in activity in certain sectors as companies prepare themselves for busy times ahead. More encouraging is that the activity isn't purely centred in and around Christchurch but is starting to be seen in other parts of the country such as Auckland and Wellington. Although still in the early stages this activity is adding to the positive mood within the industry at the minute.

Quantity Surveyors have been in demand for some months now with both contractors and PQS firms so Sam has been actively sourcing and interviewing candidates for the sector; both locally and overseas. This level of activity looks likely to continue for the foreseeable future and so anyone with a quantity surveying background needs to contact Sam sooner rather than later.

Clearly in preparation for upcoming work the construction sector is now making tentative moves to hire new people. Both the contractors and professional project management companies are indicating specific needs from both the local and overseas market. At the moment the focus seems to be on Project Managers and Site Managers but in time this will grow to incorporate other disciplines so get in touch. Andy's other focus is on the scaffolding business which is already crying out for people and will only get busier as construction picks up; again if you're interested in making the move then contact Andy straight away.

Mireille continues to look for geotechnical engineers and structural engineers with seismic experience for the

engineering sector. Although still a little quiet there is a good deal of talk about workloads ahead and Mireille has her finger on the pulse of what's happening. If you're keen to make the move or just want to know more information specific to your expertise then contact Mireille and she will happily help you out.

The arrival of winter brings its own unique challenges within the civil sector and so most of the civil contractors are catching their breath before the new season starts in September. Encouragingly though there are a number of large projects starting in the next 6 months outside of Christchurch and so it's hoped that the second half of the year will be busy in the civil sector. Companies are still looking to the local market if they can but there is now a realisation that they won't be able to meet all of their requirements this way. Needless to say Phil will be spending his mornings talking to UK based candidates in preparation for the lift in activity; get in touch with him if you want to know more.

As you can see it's a mixed bag of activity in New Zealand at the minute but the fact that other regions are waking up is really encouraging. Indications are that the end of this year and the start of 2014 will be the beginning of a very busy time within the construction and infrastructure sectors and so more than ever we encourage you to get in touch. Let us know if you're planning a visit or have a definite move under way so that we can prompt our clients and help in any way we can. As always you can follow us through Linked In and the blog and please do keep in touch.



## Catalyst Blog – reaches 400

### - It does exactly what it says on the tin!

I remember a few years back in the UK a number of adverts for Ronseal wood stain that included the phrase “it does exactly what it says on the tin”; a phrase that has since become commonly used in all circles. This phrase can apply to Catalyst Recruitment; first and foremost our job is to recruit candidates for positions in New Zealand. The thing is there’s more to us than that and from the very start we wanted to add more to the process. We realised early on that there was more to moving to New Zealand than just finding a job; in fact, if that was the only focus then the process became more risky for both the client and you the candidate!

The answer was information; informed candidates make the right decisions for the right reasons and subsequently are prepared for the journey ahead. We try many ways to get this information across including the newsletter you’re reading at the moment, through our Linked In groups, through our website and through our blog; and it’s the blog that’s the main focus here.

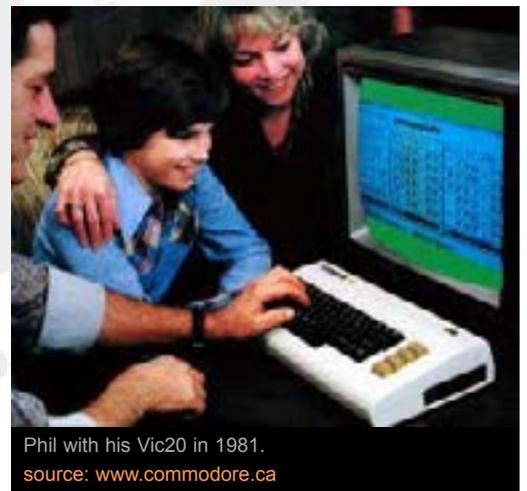
Phil created and continues to look after the blog and admits that before he started he’d hardly ever visited a blog, let alone post regularly to one! Never the less with a list of detailed instructions (from a mate who is into blogging) he made his first tentative steps into the blogosphere (I’ve heard it’s called that!). As time went on the instructions were no longer needed and new skills such as posting videos were being incorporated! At this stage I do appreciate that any slightly attentive 10 year old can now complete what I do with the blog but for an IT phobic 42 year old male I’m happy with my lot. When you consider my only experience of computers at a young age was getting my name to endlessly repeat on the computer monitors in Dixons or seeing my uncles Commodore Vic20 in glorious Technicolor (8 different colours if I remember correctly), I don’t think I’m doing too bad!

The blog continues to be regularly updated and this week reached the milestone of 400 articles. That’s 400 different articles relating to the civil, infrastructure and construction from all corners of New Zealand. 400 different pieces of information that allow a better understanding of the

industry in New Zealand (good and bad) so that our candidates can make better informed decisions. So if you’re already following the blog you know what I’m referring to; if you’re not following, you are missing out! Just follow the link below and click follow in the bottom right hand corner and every new article will be sent to your email address; it’s that simple!

<http://catalystrecruit.wordpress.com/>

To finish I shall make a slight change to the slogan used as a title for this piece. Catalyst Recruitment “they do exactly what they say on the tin, and some!”



Phil with his Vic20 in 1981.

source: [www.commodore.ca](http://www.commodore.ca)



John Selkirk/FairfaxNZ

In agreement: Auckland mayor Len Brown flanked by Housing Minister Nick Smith and Prime Minister John Key at Hobsonville Point in Auckland.

## The Auckland Housing Accord

### Housing agreement could trigger \$20 billion Auckland housing boom

Great news was announced on 10th May as the Government stepped in to the fray regarding the ever tightening Auckland housing market. With prices rising some 14% last year – something has to be done. With the Auckland Council struggling to put together a plausible plan of action – other than build tower blocks. This is a course of action which no Aucklander wants – I mean – when you live in the 4th best city in the world – why would you want to change the nature of the place? Especially as the intensification plan would only increase pressure on existing services which are not receiving enough investment as it stands – with council preferring to spend money on vote winning projects, like the Auckland rail loop.

With house prices rising and council faltering - the Government could not stand back and allow the Auckland Council to stall. Essentially – land prices have escalated – simply because it has been so costly to push consents through the council process. The Auckland Housing Accord will push through an extra 40,000 home consents over three years. It's backers say it will quickly increase the supply and affordability of housing in the country's biggest city. The accord would override housing restrictions put in place by Auckland's former councils.

The legislation was introduced in this year's Budget and will create special housing areas. The Auckland Council and the Government had initially been on different pages when it came to residential development in Auckland, but the deal signals some agreement has been reached. New developments of more than 50 dwellings will be able to be approved in six months compared to the average of three years.

Housing Minister Nick Smith said the city needed to grow both up and out. "It is good news for Auckland families wanting access to more affordable houses to buy and rent. It's a stretch, but it's achievable."

Auckland is projected to grow by a million people over the next 30 years, but at present just 50 new homes are being completed a week, or 2600 a year – a fraction of the 13,000 new homes needed each year to keep up with growth.

The plan sets out to build more than 400,000 new homes in Auckland over the next 30 years, both through urban intensification and by building in rural areas. The three-year accord sets a target of 9000 extra houses consented in the first year, 13,000 in the second and 17,000 in the third. Smith said it represented \$20 billion in building projects. On average, only 3600 homes have been consented annually for the past four years.

Brown said too many families struggled to find quality affordable housing. Affordable housing in Auckland would be between \$200,000 and \$550,000, he said. The accord is subject to council agreement and legislation being passed by Parliament.

Source: Fairfax NZ

“New Zealand also had a lot of job openings in the construction industry, meaning finding work would be very easy.”

## Jamie Ross

### Case study of moving to NZ

Current Employer: March Construction

Jamie (from Canada) made the conscious decision to enter Civil Engineering so that he could eventually travel and work outside of his home country. Having completed plenty of research, Jamie decided that New Zealand, and in particular Christchurch, was where he wanted to move to. Jamie made contact with Phil and booked a flight over to New Zealand. In the mean time, Phil arranged an interview with March Construction in Christchurch who made him a job offer less than three days after the initial interview. Jamie started in the position of Site Engineer a couple of days later.

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

I am single and moved here by myself. It really only took a couple days to decide where I was going to move to. I knew I wanted to travel and work, and I knew I wanted to go to a country that spoke predominantly English. Between those countries, New Zealand had a climate similar to Canada (not as cold, but never too hot either) Like Canada, the people are very nice and open minded. New Zealand also had a lot of job openings in the construction industry, meaning finding work would be very easy.

#### Has New Zealand lived up to your expectations?

Yes it has. I am enjoying the climate, I travel as much as I can and enjoy the beautiful areas this country has to offer. Kiwis are extremely nice people and will go out of their way to help someone out.

#### How has your life changed since moving to New Zealand?

I do feel more relaxed since moving to New Zealand. Although my job keeps me very busy during the day, Kiwis move at a slower and much more relaxed pace than Toronto did.

#### What one thing would you have done differently?

Study the coffee terms better. A large Double Double does not exist here.

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

I wish I would have known my job would be site based, I brought a decent amount of office clothes that I could have left and saved room for other items I decided to leave behind.

#### What advice would you pass to someone commencing the process?

There is a housing shortage in Christchurch at the moment. Set yourself up temporary accommodations for a couple months while you settle down and find a place to live.

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

Being single, I feel I have made the right move for me. Talking to many of the internationals that work with my company, and there is a lot of them I have heard from all of them that they love it here and have no regrets about moving their family here.

#### Useful Facts:

1st Contact to interview	138 days
1st Interview to offer	3 day
Offer to arrival	Already in NZ
Time since arrival	112 days



## NZ VS AUSTRALIA – Who is winning?

Mike Hosking had [a great editorial on NewstalkZB](#) this morning.

The numbers don't appear to lie or in this case even mislead – there are fewer people leaving for Australia. Not just that, there are more people coming here from all over the world. This is from Stats NZ yesterday.

Let's look at Australia first. This was always going to happen given Australia was always going to end up in the sort of trouble it has. When we panic about the people leaving the country the way we did a year back, we were made to feel like we were inferior and any number of TV shows couldn't wait to line up the endless parade of people saying things like "there are more jobs over there" or "there is more money over there" or "NZ doesn't offer me anything". Or other TV shows would line up comparison couples – one in Sydney, one in Wellington – and they'd compare shopping lists and school fees and weather forecasts. It turned into this dumb sort of game where NZ came second and we're supposed to feel stink.

Australia has had a dual economy. Although the mining industry was doing well, it isn't now. The city led economy has been poor for years in Australia. The government over there, both at state level and federal have a lot to answer for. There is a reason why state Labour governments have been slaughtered at the polls.

But the bit that was never discussed, because to be frank it wasn't all that PC, was just who was it that was leaving. In any given migration flow you have people coming for jobs, families transferring, young people trying a country out. But the numbers spike or sink on the other lot and they're the lot that got all the attention. They're the flighty lot, they're the transient ones. To be frank I am not sure they're of a great deal of use to either country. Transience in my mind indicates you're not up to much, you're not planted anywhere. There isn't a lot of family and there aren't a lot of ties to keep you in any one place.

Perhaps a little harsh.

For most of us, migration would be a once in a lifetime decision. It would be a massive thing to leave family and work and lifestyle and friends. But so many of the stories told were people who seemed to just get fed up, couldn't find work so were off to look in Queensland. That is why it's no surprise to see the numbers stalling now given Australia has hit the old debt wall.

I moved my family to Melbourne from Wellington, and back again a year later. Australia is not all it is cracked up to be.

There is no doubt that, as things currently stand, we are a better prospect. I'd always take this country over Australia, but right now we are winning hands down.

But then we come to the other statistic. The net migration from all over the world is up. More people arrive than leave and as a result we're growing. You know why – because we're good. People don't truck in from half way round the globe because they've got nothing else to do.

If we could spend a bit more time trying to look at this place from an outsider's point of view, you'd start to see what they see. They see paradise, they see opportunity, they see a place they're prepared to uproot all they know and have built and give it a go at the bottom of the world.

We are a winning formula, and the numbers prove it.

**Mike Hosking** is a [New Zealand](#) television and radio journalist and presenter. He currently works as the weekly Breakfast host on radio station [Newstalk ZB](#).

Source: - [Posted on Whaleoil.co.nz on May 22, 2013](#)





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## How Catalyst has slowly changed

What has a recession and devastating earthquakes done to the dynamics of recruitment in New Zealand? This is not a salary survey that tells you a Project Engineer earns anywhere between \$50,000 and \$125,000 depending on experience. I mean after all – does a broad sweeping salary survey actually provide *you* – the individual with any useful information?

This is just a quick analysis of some changes we have noticed in the locations where people have been securing jobs through Catalyst.

Before Phil and I set up Catalyst – I used to run the New Zealand operation of one of those so called Global Recruitment Companies. You know – they have offices around the world in every city in every country. A brilliant money making mechanism, but the focus was on quantity – not quality (i.e. number of calls made – not quality of calls, Cv's sent – not the ratio of cv's sent to interview, all that sort of stuff) anyway – all boring stuff really. The point of the matter is that I have been doing this recruitment thing in NZ – with a focus on bringing technical professionals into the country for the last 17 years and unsurprisingly – since the recession and the earthquakes – I have noticed some changes.

Pre recession and earthquakes – it was generally accepted that the ratio of where we placed people was along the lines of

- 65% Auckland
- 15% Wellington
- 10% Christchurch
- 10% the rest of the country

Between the times of the recession starting (in NZ) and the Earthquakes

- 56% Auckland
- 7% Wellington
- 15% Christchurch
- 22% the rest of the country

The ratios altered a little due to our reliance on roads of national significance (Tauranga and Hamilton)

Not surprisingly - since the earthquakes occurred there has been a massive shift of focus from Auckland to Christchurch with the Christchurch Rebuild playing a major part

- 28% Auckland
- 6% Wellington
- 58% Christchurch
- 8% the rest of the country

We also took a quick look at the sectors in which the placements had been made and found a bit of a swing from placements with Consultants to placements with Construction companies in Christchurch. Consultant placements have dropped from 66% to 54%, while construction placements have grown from 11% to 21%

So – there you have it – our business is slowly swinging towards the Construction activity in Christchurch – which makes sense because the Christchurch Rebuild is slowly starting to get going.