



Christchurch

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## State of the nation

Welcome to the June edition of the Catalyst state of the nation. The month of June has so far supplied us with some of the craziest weather that New Zealand has seen for some time. All of last week we were warned about an impending polar blast heading up from the South that would cause havoc. Everyone suffered some wind, rain or snow but Wellington caught the brunt of the weather with winds of up to 180km per hour, driving rain and massive seas pounding the coastline. For much of the weekend parts of the city were without power as falling trees took power lines with them. This week we're hearing about farmers digging their flocks out of the snow and dropping feed via helicopter to the more remote areas of the South Island. In the mean time the North Island and Auckland copes with a mix of rain and sunshine, with the emphasis on rain. Not a typical winter in New Zealand but it's made for an entertaining month!

Outside of weather a number of things are happening that are shaping the way forward in New Zealand. Christchurch remains the focus of attention with the pressure building the longer the rebuild takes. Work in the civil sector has slowed during the winter months but this will pick up again in August. The red zone finally ceases to exist as of the end of this week leaving any last demolition projects as individual sites rather than

part of one large cordon. Final plans for some of the major projects (stadium, convention centre) are getting closer but are still delayed whilst land issues are being decided. Hopefully the government's threats to step in will get things moving and allow for something to be built soon! In Wellington a second major tunnel through Mt Victoria and a flyover were announced last week as part of a plan to reduce congestion in the



Source: John Kirk-Anderson, Fairfax NZ





## State of the Nation – article continued from page 1

city. Two major announcements are also due from the government this week regarding infrastructure. The first announcement concerns the cost of the major projects in Christchurch and who will be footing the bill; once decided we should see some significant movement with those cornerstone projects. The second is concerned with the Auckland Rail Loop Proposal, a project once dismissed by government which now looks like it may be embraced. If it gets the go ahead the \$2.86 billion project will mean a massive boost to the infrastructure market in Auckland. Follow the blog, [catalystrecruit.wordpress.com](http://catalystrecruit.wordpress.com), to see how any of these unfold!

In terms of the working landscape little has changed over the past month with winter slowing down any ongoing site work. In the civil sector the winter season is always quiet with a limited amount of work keeping companies ticking over. Most of my clients admit to be taking a breather in their recruitment efforts in preparation for a busier time ahead when the season starts in August and September. That said there are a number of major projects underway around the country and those involved will need to increase their staffing significantly in the near future. Contractors in Christchurch remain optimistic about work ahead with many of them expecting to hire as the year goes on. There is a desperate need for operators, drain layers and drainage foremen at the moment but only if candidates are on the ground in the city. If you are able to make the move then contact me and we can discuss your opportunities in more detail.

In certain sectors of the construction world things seem to be getting very busy. PQS companies and contractors are on the look out for quantity surveyors and are happily looking overseas to find suitable candidates. If you are looking for a QS or PQS role then you should already be speaking to Andy about what is happening on the ground. Project Management companies are seeing their workload increase and so are wanting to hear more from intermediate and senior Project Managers with good

commercial experience. Although the contractors are quiet at the moment they know that a massive workload is coming and they are trying to prepare as best they can. That wave of work is going to come quickly and so it's important that you start talking to Andy now in preparation.

The engineering consultants remain an interesting sector at the moment with wildly differing stories depending on who you talk to. An interesting article last week mentioned that many consultants had employed graduates to deal with smaller workloads outside of Christchurch. It was noted that as much as this was a good short term fix once the workload in other centres, such as Auckland, started to lift those graduates would not have the experience to cope and as such companies would have to start hiring in significant numbers. As ever the need for seismic structural and geotechnical specialists remains top of the list but if your specialism lies elsewhere you should still be talking to Mireille to get an update.

Activity is only going to increase in New Zealand over the next 6 months and as such there will be opportunities for those of you who want to make the move. As mentioned before this lift in activity will come quickly and so it's essential to be prepared; although there may not be a role today there certainly could be one next week. To that end get in touch via email or telephone to discuss your plans, let us know what you want to do and we'll help in any way possible to make it happen. It's also vitally important to keep your eyes on the job board, [www.catalystjobs.co.nz](http://www.catalystjobs.co.nz), as all of our jobs go on there. If you see a job that interests you ring or send us an email and we'll be happy to discuss it further. Finally if you have plans to visit New Zealand or you have an arrival date then let us know in advance so we can put things in place for you. Most of our candidates who arrive permanently have secured a role within 2 weeks of their arrival because they gave us plenty of warning. Help us make New Zealand work for you!





## Strong progress in Crown CBD purchases

The Crown has negotiated agreements to purchase almost two-thirds of the central Christchurch land area required for the city's anchor projects.

Agreements are now in place for 63 per cent of the land needed for the Convention Centre Precinct, the East Frame, the Bus Interchange, the Justice and Emergency Services Precinct and the Metro Sports Facility.

Across the wider portfolio of rebuild projects, agreements are in place for almost 44 per cent of the land required. The total agreed purchase price stands at \$231.6 million.

The Crown is buying the properties to allow for construction of the anchor projects outlined in the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan. Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Gerry Brownlee says the projects will revitalise the central city.

"To build these new projects we first need to purchase the necessary land, complete any demolitions that are required, and then do the physical building.

"We are already seeing this building work take place on the early stages of Te Papa Ōtākaro/Avon River Precinct."

Minister Brownlee says the Crown's approach is to create "willing-buyer, willing-seller" scenarios. Two independent valuers provide advice to the Crown in the negotiations.

Christchurch Central Development Unit Director Warwick Isaacs says, to date, the Crown has not had to use its powers of compulsory acquisition.

"We're still working positively with land owners and have a firm commitment from the Crown to progress the purchase of central business district properties for our priority anchor projects," he says.

"We realise it's a big step for land owners and we're trying to enter commercial negotiations with them in a respectful and fair manner."

Hereford Holdings Operations Manager Anna Liddell says the Antony Gough-owned company decided early on to be proactive in the purchase process.

"We went into it with a positive attitude: 'This is inevitable. Let's aim for a win-win here'."

Hereford Holdings met with CERA officials to understand the purchase process. When they started negotiating, both parties had valuations which ended up being exactly the same in one instance, and very close in another. Mrs Liddell says the process was "very straightforward".

The sale price agreed for each property reflects specific property features such as location, geological conditions, state of any buildings, the value to the purchaser of any reports and consents obtained by the seller, environmental conditions, insurance and any tenancies.

For public details of sales completed by late May, visit: <http://bit.ly/18YYAth>

When several properties owned by Antony Gough were purchased by CERA for priority projects, Antony was able to pool resources for his Hereford Holdings development 'The Terrace' (sketched here), which is in the initial phases of the consenting process.

Source: Invest Christchurch, Newsletter from the CCDU



## Visitor arrivals jump, Aus migration falls

An influx of Australian and Chinese visitors pushed May arrival figures to a record high while the number of Kiwis moving to Australia has dropped to a three-year low.

That's according to the latest data from Statistics New Zealand, which showed 153,000 visitors arrived in New Zealand in May, up from the 141,000 level it had been hovering around for much of this year.

The gain was driven by more visits from Australian and Chinese travellers, up 8000 and 3900 respectively.

Meanwhile, the country chalked up a net migration gain of 1700 for the month, the highest level in three-and-a-half years.

That was primarily due to only 1900 people moving to Australia in May on a seasonally adjusted basis, the smallest net loss since July 2010, and well down on the 3600 net loss peak in September 2011.

Auckland, Canterbury and Otago were the only regions that had net gains of international migrants.

Canterbury in particular saw strong gains, up 2600 in May compared to a net loss of 2500 in the same month a year ago when the region was still struggling in the aftermath of the February 2011 earthquake.

Source: Fairfax NZ News, Jason Krupp, 24 June 2013



## Flexibility seen as key to Kiwis' good work-life balance

New Zealand workers are happier and have a better work-life balance compared with other countries, a recent study shows.

The Regus work-life index study released today shows New Zealand is seven points ahead of the global average when it comes to the way Kiwi workers balance their work and home lives.

The study, which has been published for the second year running, is based on the views of 26,000 professionals in more than 90 countries.

The index shows New Zealand is ahead when it comes to work-life balance at 127 points, up one point from 2012.

This compares with a global average of 120, with the United States on 117, Australia at 116, and Germany on 101.

Nearly 80 per cent of New Zealanders said they believed they achieved more at work compared with last year, but only 44 per cent said they spent more time working.

Nearly 70 per cent of those surveyed said they enjoyed work more this year, with 74 per cent feeling happier about the amount of time they spent at home or with family.

Regus Asia-Pacific director John Henderson said work-life balance was an issue businesses needed to be wary of.

"It's a well-known fact that overworked, tired employees lead to less productivity and it can be easy to forget that workers have a life outside of the office."

The index showed other countries could benefit from picking up some tips from the Kiwi working culture, Henderson said.

Equal Opportunities Trust chief executive Bev Cassidy-Mackenzie said the results were consistent with the increase in diversity she had seen in New Zealand workplaces. More use of technology had allowed more people, especially parents, to split their work between home and the office, she said.

Kiwi workplaces had been forced to become more flexible to find ways to make the most of employees' skills and productivity potential.

"We have to be more innovative because we are smaller . . . It's something we are quite proud of."

Employers were starting to acknowledge employees' skills and what they could bring to a role, rather than forcing them to adapt to a set role with set hours, she said.

"Employers have to embrace diversity like they never have done before."

This often meant granting staff more in terms of flexibility, rather than salaries, Cassidy-Mackenzie said.

The research also showed 59 per cent of New Zealanders took on extra duties during the recent global economic slowdown.

However, only 46 per cent said their companies were helping to reduce commuting times.

While New Zealand is doing well, China came in ahead on the index at 136. Brazil, India, and Mexico also rated higher than New Zealand.

Cassidy-Mackenzie said she was surprised by these results, but they could reflect the size of the countries and the sample of people surveyed.

Henderson said employees should be part of the work-life balance discussion through one-on-one "catch ups" with bosses.

"Though achieving the right work-life balance is largely up to the employer, it also needs to come from the employee," he said.

Source: The Press, Laura Walters, 26 Jun 2013

## 169 major commercial projects underway across city

The total value of work for major commercial building consents issued in the city (that is, projects worth more than \$1 million each) has reached \$611.5 million over the past 61 weeks. The figures include 169 projects that have been granted building consent. Forty-two of the projects are within the four avenues, with a collective build value of \$185 million.

For more information about the building and resource consent process in Christchurch city, visit [www.ccc.govt.nz/goahead](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/goahead)

Source: Invest Christchurch, Newsletter from the CCDU

## If it looks to good to be true...

As a recruiter I spend much of my day talking at length to candidates and clients which means I get to hear my fair share of horror stories. A Christchurch based client of mine was telling me his latest horror story last week and he was furious with what had happened; I'll tell you the repercussions later in this piece! New Zealand is a small country compared to many and reputation is everything; apparently we have only two degrees of separation over here and word travels fast! To that end Catalyst was created on the foundations of being honest to both our clients and candidates; you may not always like the answer but you'll know it's the truth. Unfortunately the same can't be said for all who work in our industry.

The earthquakes in Christchurch and the subsequent rebuild (still not really going yet) have attracted recruiters from all over the world, just like the boom times in Australia and Dubai in the past. It's amazing how many companies who once specialised in recruiting accountants have now become specialists in the construction sector overnight! I'm also amazed at the number of offshore recruiters who are suddenly hiring for New Zealand. For most of the candidates we deal with a move to New Zealand means relocating to the other side of the planet, the furthest point away from the UK. To consider that kind of move using a recruiter who probably hasn't even been here and has no relationship with New Zealand companies is astounding!

An easy way to spot these recruiters is by looking at the salaries they suggest; most are highly inflated and totally unrealistic. You're not going to get an expat salary in New Zealand (this isn't a new Dubai), what you will get is a good salary in line with your experience and what you earned in the UK. Moving to New Zealand is a lifestyle choice that many have made and are now enjoying. A number of our clients have already black listed UK based recruiters for advertising NZ positions without even making contact with the client first. The reason they were spotted was because the salaries they advertised were sometimes two or three times greater than what a candidate would really get in New Zealand.

This brings me back to my Christchurch client who had gone through a good interview with a candidate and

was looking to offer him a job. When they started talking money it came out that the recruiter who had found the candidate had been advertising the role with a wage 50% higher than what my client paid. Needless to say the candidate wanted the inflated salary and subsequently refused the market rate he was offered. The problem for the candidate is that he'll go through this process a number of times before he starts to believe the client not the recruiter and by then he will have missed out on some excellent opportunities. The client was furious because he had wasted his time and lost out on a good candidate through no fault of his own. Needless to say he emailed every contact in his address book (it's a long list) and told them what had happened and that they shouldn't use the recruiter again! There are only two reasons why a recruiter would inflate salaries, they either don't know what they're doing or they're trying to cash in and fleece a client; neither of which benefit you the candidate! As I said earlier reputation is everything in New Zealand a lesson that recruiter has learnt the hard way.

This all brings me to my main point; as a candidate you have to be careful about the recruiters you work with. There are a lot of good ones out there but there are also a lot of bad ones as well. A few simple rules; look at their industry experience; look at their location and remember the old adage, *if it looks to good to be true then it probably is!*

## Next stop for Bus Interchange

The detailed design brief and business case for Christchurch's new Bus Interchange could be complete by the middle of August. CCDU Project Director John O'Hagan says consultants appointed in mid-June will develop the design brief and business case, and

recommend procurement options for the delivery of the anchor project. Construction could begin as early as March 2014.

Source: Invest Christchurch, Newsletter from the CCDU



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# John Kindness

## Case study of moving to NZ

Current Employer: GHD – Christchurch

Although John had been receiving the Catalyst monthly newsletters since the beginning of March last year, by the time he contacted Catalyst in September he and his wife Annemieke had progressed far down the track in their preparation for immigration. They had already completed their medicals and put their applications in for their police checks. All with the mindset to make a move happen quickly and effortlessly just as soon as a suitable position for John was found. John wanted to contribute to the rebuild of Christchurch so Catalyst arranged interviews with GHD who felt he would make a great addition to the SCIRT (Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team) team and an offer was duly made and accepted. John and Annemieke arrived in New Zealand at the beginning of January – there were certain time pressures as Annemieke was in the later stages of her pregnancy – any later and she may not have been able to fly!

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

It was something I'd been planning at the back of my mind for about 8 years, after graduating from Uni I stayed in the UK to gain experience before moving to New Zealand. The upcoming birth of my son helped focus the mind and push me to get things in order and move to Christchurch.

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

Yes, it is similar in many ways to the UK, but is more open with wide roads and many parks. The work environment is great and family and team orientated. I expected a few more aftershocks but all the construction works were anticipated. I didn't expect most houses to be single glazing with little installation and frequently just one heat pump to heat the entire house (no central heating).

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

I now drive to work, as opposed to taking the bus in the UK, and I spend more time outside (especially during the summer earlier in the year).

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

Moved out a year earlier.

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

We knew the housing (renting and buying) situation in Christchurch was competitive but not how extreme this is. For renting there are about 30 people attending

each viewing and application forms are frequently submitted within the hour. Prices have also risen a lot since the earthquakes and it is difficult to find places to rent if you have pets (even though there is a huge pet ownership in New Zealand), Christchurch/Auckland are more expensive than many places in the UK. Without help from the SIRVA rep (provided by the company I joined) we probably wouldn't have been able to find a decent place to rent (it still took 4 weeks).

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

You have to just push through all the paperwork and keep chasing people to make sure it happens, research New Zealand specifically where you are moving to, but be ready to adapt once you get here. Also try to get a job before you come over, bare in mind the extra housing difficulties if you bring pets and consider getting a resident visa if you have the time and want to buy a house within the first two years of being in New Zealand.

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

Definitely, the settling in process took a few months but the entire family is now happily settled in.

#### Useful Facts:

1st Contact to interview	228 days
1st Interview to offer	38 days
Offer to arrival	52 days
Time since arrival	168 days