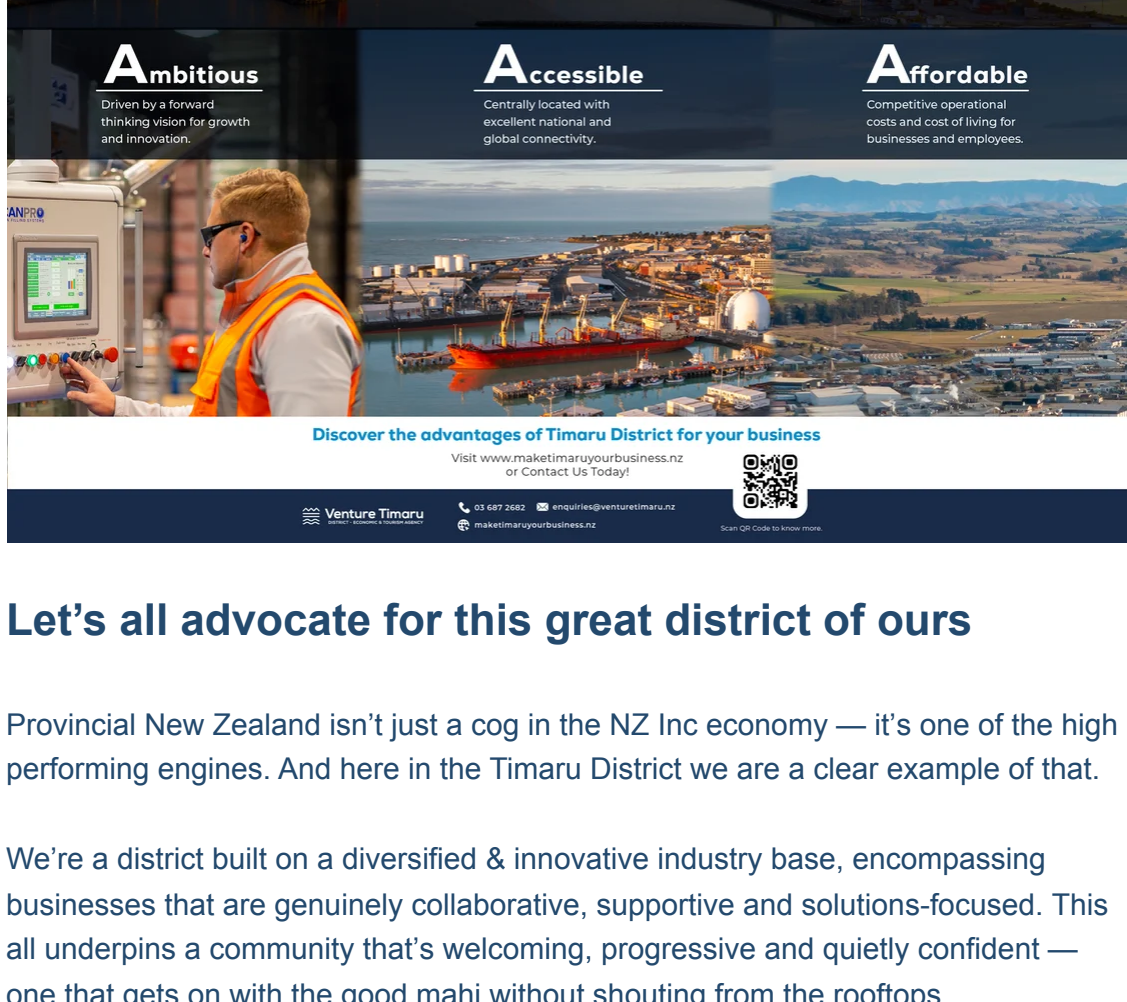


Kia ora

Welcome to our March news update.

- **Let's all advocate for this great district of ours**
- **Timaru economy shows resilience and renewed economic momentum**
- **Hear the latest insights from Infometrics Chief Economist Brad Olsen**
- **New tourism businesses approved for Qualmark**
- **Join us for the first aerospace meeting of 2026**
- **New autumn and winter marketing campaign**



Let's all advocate for this great district of ours

Provincial New Zealand isn't just a cog in the NZ Inc economy — it's one of the high performing engines. And here in the Timaru District we are a clear example of that.

We're a district built on a diversified & innovative industry base, encompassing businesses that are genuinely collaborative, supportive and solutions-focused. This all underpins a community that's welcoming, progressive and quietly confident — one that gets on with the good mahi without shouting from the rooftops.

Layer on quality schools, accessible healthcare, and the very best of natural New Zealand right on our doorstep — "one hour surf to snow" — and you've got a lifestyle that's hard to beat and even harder to leave.

At Venture Timaru, we're unapologetically being "professionally predatory" in attracting new businesses that will help diversify, strengthen and future-proof our local economy. We know what we're good at, we know where the opportunities are, and we're actively backing those who want to be all they can be and so much more.

That said we can't do this alone – we need your help. To grow the prosperity and diversity of the Timaru District we all need to be strong advocates to people and businesses not already here. So....through your personal or business connections if you are aware of a business of any shape or size that could, or more importantly should, be here in this great district of ours, please get in touch we'd love to hear from you.

We believe the best outcomes come when we work together. Whether you're making a warm introduction, sharing the campaign, or simply reminding others why Timaru District is the smart and obvious choice for business – every connection helps.

Let's make Timaru District their business – and ours.

For context check out our "Make Timaru District your Business campaign" 🗣️

[View the campaign](#)

Timaru economy shows resilience and renewed economic momentum

Timaru District's economy is showing clear signs of resilience and renewed momentum, with the latest Infometrics Quarterly Economic Monitor highlighting improving conditions across several key indicators.

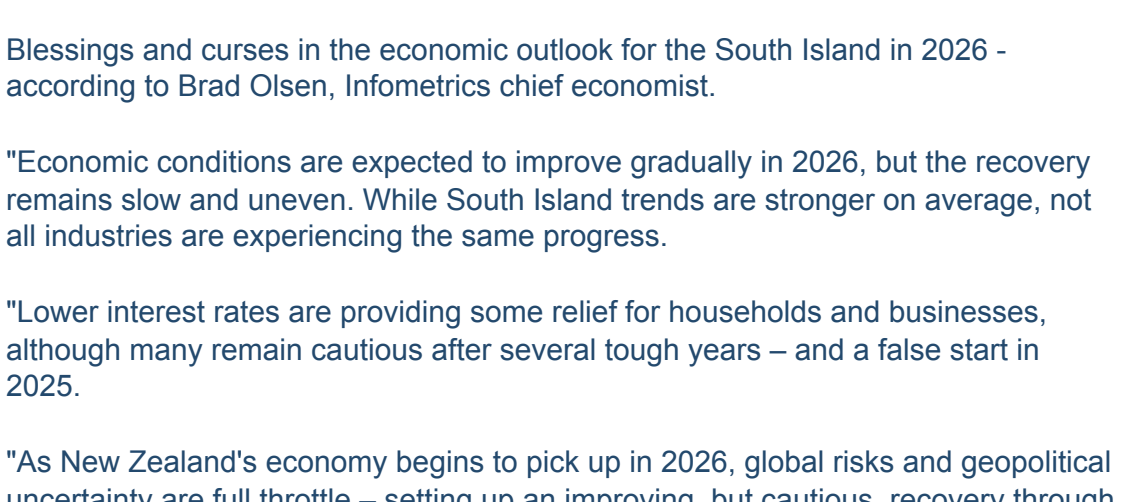
The district continues to compare favourably with other provincial regions, underpinned by its diversified and export-focused food and fibre processing base. The report points to strengthening agricultural commodity prices and improving sentiment across the livestock sector — a critical driver of the regional economy.

South Canterbury's advantage lies in its ability to process product at scale. We don't just produce food — we add value to it here. From meat and dairy to vegetable, seafood and beverage processing, improved commodity prices quickly translate into plant throughput, employment and freight activity.

Beyond agriculture, the Infometrics data also shows encouraging signs in retail spending, employment levels and visitor activity, alongside stabilising business confidence. Construction remains steady, and consumer spending trends suggest households are beginning to regain confidence after a more constrained period.

South Canterbury's diversity gives us a degree of insulation. We're seeing momentum build, and that positions the district well relative to many comparable provincial economies.

[Read the full report](#)



Hear the latest insights from Infometrics chief economist Brad Olsen

Blessings and curses in the economic outlook for the South Island in 2026 - according to Brad Olsen, Infometrics chief economist.

"Economic conditions are expected to improve gradually in 2026, but the recovery remains slow and uneven. While South Island trends are stronger on average, not all industries are experiencing the same progress.

"Lower interest rates are providing some relief for households and businesses, although many remain cautious after several tough years – and a false start in 2025.

"As New Zealand's economy begins to pick up in 2026, global risks and geopolitical uncertainty are full throttle – setting up an improving, but cautious, recovery through the year."

Find out more from Brad about his insights at this breakfast event - questions are welcome! Don't miss out, reserve your spot by Friday, 20 March.

[Purchase tickets](#)

New tourism businesses approved for Qualmark

We're delighted to report that we have 12 tourism businesses in our region that have now received Qualmark accreditation. This tally has been boosted in the last month with two new operators gaining approval – Big Rock Adventures and Holme Station Homestead.

The Qualmark programme is New Zealand's official tourism quality assurance system, run through Tourism New Zealand. It independently assesses tourism businesses across areas such as customer experience, safety, environmental sustainability, and operational standards, awarding a recognised rating that signals credibility and professionalism.

Tourism New Zealand will only promote Qualmark businesses internationally, and therefore it is important for our region to have range of Qualmark accredited business. The Qualmark accreditation helps to enhance our destination's overall reputation, ensures consistent visitor experiences, supports sustainable tourism practices, and helps attract higher-value travellers who seek quality-assured experiences.

We currently have the following line up of Qualmark tourism businesses, and are working with another two businesses to get their accreditation:

Activity operators:

- Te Ana Māori Rock Art Tours
- Geraldine Farm Tours
- The Raptor Experience
- Big Rock Adventures
- NZ Travel Adventure
- Adventure Horse Trekking

Accommodation providers:

- The Vicarage Geraldine
- Holme Station Homestead
- Ngā Whare Mānatu
- Bay Viaduct Motor Lodge
- Bay City Motor Lodge
- Harbourview Motel

[Read more about Qualmark here](#)

Join us for the first aerospace meeting of 2026

If you're working in manufacturing, engineering, automation, technology, and exploring aerospace opportunities, this session is for you.

The first South Canterbury Aerospace Meeting of 2026, will be held on Wednesday 18 March from 10am–1pm at the Venture Timaru Boardroom.

We are fortunate to be joined by a strong line up of guest speakers, each respected in their field: David Wright (Asteria Engineering), Scott Spooner and Roland Sommer (SPS Automation). They will share valuable insights drawn from real-world experience spanning engineering, manufacturing, automation and aerospace-aligned development.

This session builds on the exploratory meeting held last year, where we discussed whether a local strategy was needed and how South Canterbury could begin to position

itself in the aerospace sector.

What became clear from those conversations is the importance of maintaining continuous engagement to keep momentum strong and to support our region's transition toward participation in the aerospace industry.

Please let us know if you're able to attend by emailing tania@venturetimaru.nz

[View the meeting agenda](#)

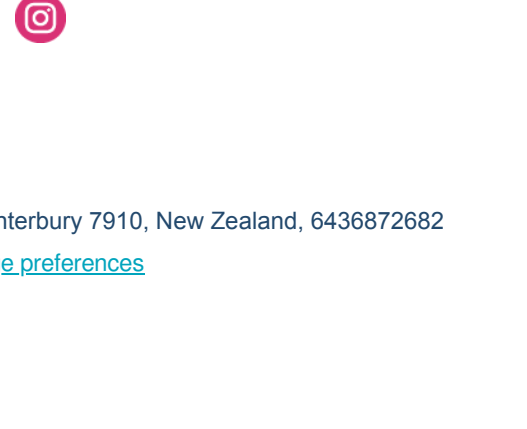
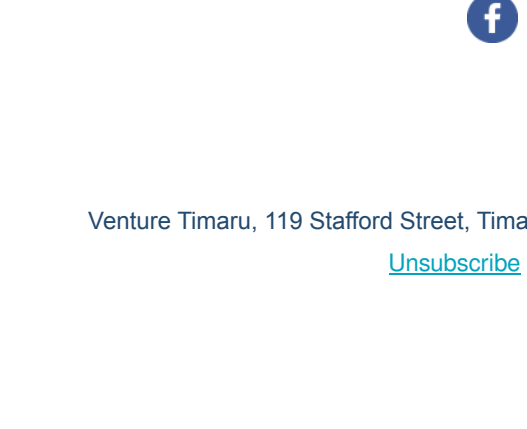
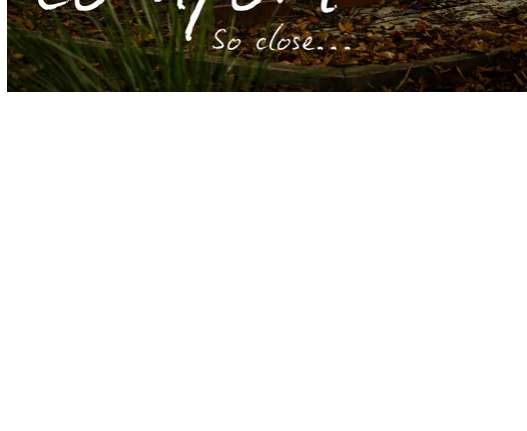


New tourism autumn and winter campaign

The new Timaru District autumn/winter 2026 visitor marketing campaign is now live, **So much, So close.**

The campaign is positioning the region as an accessible, high-value addition to South Island itineraries. It aims to encourage slower, more immersive travel patterns, inviting visitors to extend their stay in the Central South Island rather than transiting directly from Christchurch to Mackenzie and Queenstown.

Here are some samples of the campaign imagery:



Ngā mihi nui,

Nigel Davenport

Kaiwhakahaere Matua / Chief Executive

Send free email today

HubSpot