

Kia ora koutou,

There's plenty of positive momentum across the Timaru District, with the latest figures showing 2% economic growth in the year to June, ahead of national growth of 1.7%. Our diverse economy, strong primary sector and growing tourism activity continue to provide a solid foundation, and maintaining that diversity and resilience is key to our future growth.

In this update, we look at two sectors with exciting potential – aerospace and agritech, including our new Aerospace Capability Prospectus and an upcoming visit from six UK agritech innovators. We also introduce our new Venture Timaru website, with more economic insights, sector information, reports and practical resources to help businesses understand our economy and plan for growth.

Supporting the businesses already here is a core part of building a resilient economy set up for sustainable growth. As we prepare for the upcoming cruise season, our tourism team is also supporting local operators who are interested in developing cruise tours, as well as existing tour operators looking to attract cruise passengers. Our Cruise Ready Workshop will provide practical insights into the cruise sector, how to work with cruise lines and what it takes to create and deliver experiences that appeal to cruise visitors.

We want to understand what's driving your business, as well as the challenges or roadblocks that may be holding you or your industry back. Our role is to advocate for business, make connections and help you access the right people, information and support. So, if there's an opportunity or challenge we can help with, please reach out to [our team](#).

Naku noa,
Nigel Davenport
Venture Timaru, CEO

Economic & Business Updates

Latest figures show economic growth

Strong primary sector returns and widespread growth across most industries are contributing to a positive 2% lift in GDP for the Timaru District in the year to June, ahead of national GDP at 1.7%.

It has been a good year for many of our farmers, with lamb prices up 30% and beef prices increasing by 27%. These positive returns, alongside another successful year in dairy have a flow-on effect throughout the wider community.

Tourism economic activity is also tracking positively, with visitor spending growing by 4.7% over the past year and guest nights increasing by 4.9%.

The figures released by Infometrics show consumer spending is up 3.4% well above the national increase of 0.6%, showing households are spending more on day-to-day items, although larger purchases, such as new cars, remain more subdued. New dwelling consents also remain light across the region.

Overall, the economic report shows our district is recovering better than many parts of New Zealand and well positioned for longer-term growth.

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)



Showcasing South Canterbury's aerospace capability at the global Aerospace Summit in October

This October, Venture Timaru will be attending the New Zealand Aerospace Summit in Christchurch, where we will launch our new South Canterbury Aerospace Capability Prospectus. The Summit brings together aerospace businesses, innovators, investors, researchers and industry leaders from New Zealand and around the world, providing an important opportunity to showcase South Canterbury as part of the wider Canterbury aerospace ecosystem. Businesses involved in the South Canterbury Aerospace Strategy Group are being invited to join us at the Summit to help promote the capability and expertise represented across our region.

Local businesses attending the Summit will also have the opportunity to take part in a delegation visit alongside international aerospace leaders, visiting aerospace businesses across Christchurch. This is an excellent opportunity to make new connections; better understand the opportunities emerging within the sector and explore where South Canterbury businesses can find their place in this growing industry.

Developed in partnership with the South Canterbury Aerospace Strategy Group, the Capability Prospectus highlights the businesses, skills and expertise that already exist across South Canterbury. It is an important tool for helping us tell our region's aerospace story, build connections and create opportunities for local businesses. We're also keen to hear from other businesses interested in learning more about the sector and becoming part of the network as it continues to grow.

[SC AEROSPACE CAPABILITY PROSPECTUS](#)

Bringing international agritech innovation to Timaru

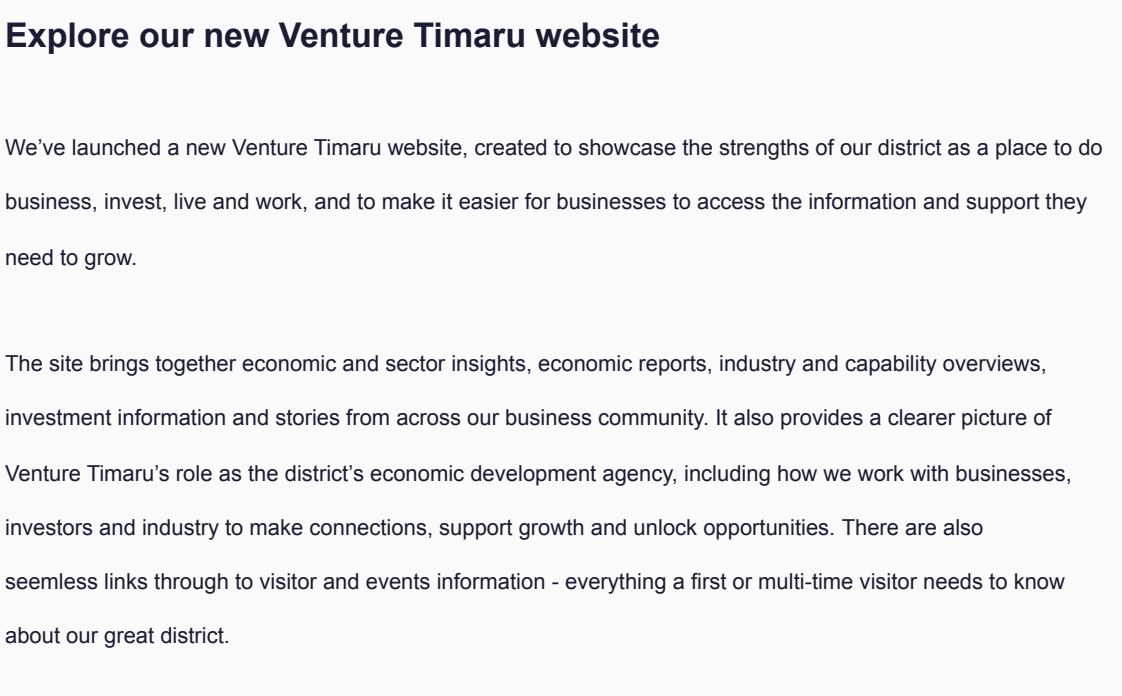
In September, Venture Timaru was proud to promote Timaru District to the 2026 New Zealand Global Incubator Programme cohort and successfully secure a two-day visit as part of their Christchurch–Dunedin programme. The six innovative UK agritech businesses are visiting New Zealand through [Innovate UK](#), the UK's innovation agency, in partnership with [Sprout Agritech](#), to explore the New Zealand market, build partnerships and identify opportunities for investment, pilots and collaboration.

The cohort was impressed by the diversity of strengths across our district — from innovation happening on farm through to our highly connected processing and manufacturing sectors, supported by strong collaboration and continued local and international investment. They will experience this capability first-hand through on-farm visits, followed by a breakfast session at the Washdyke Industrial Hub, where the UK innovators will each give a one-minute pitch on their technology and innovation to local growers and processors before connecting one-on-one with businesses and industry experts.

For us, creating these international connections is an important part of supporting future agritech growth. The visit provides local businesses with an opportunity to connect with new technologies, knowledge, partnerships and markets, while opening the door to future investment, collaboration and innovation across our agricultural and technology sectors.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Business Resources & Support



Explore our new Venture Timaru website

We've launched a new Venture Timaru website, created to showcase the strengths of our district as a place to do business, invest, live and work, and to make it easier for businesses to access the information and support they need to grow.

The site brings together economic and sector insights, economic reports, industry and capability overviews, investment information and stories from across our business community. It also provides a clearer picture of Venture Timaru's role as the district's economic development agency, including how we work with businesses, investors and industry to make connections, support growth and unlock opportunities. There are also seamless links through to visitor and events information - everything a first or multi-time visitor needs to know about our great district.

We encourage you to explore the new site, use the insights and resources to support your own business planning, and get in touch with our team if there's a way we can help.

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)

Cruise Ready Workshop

Calling would-be cruise tour operators! Here's your chance to learn about the cruise sector and how you can get involved. The Cruise Ready Workshop is designed for those new to the cruise sector. It'll cover:

- Insights into NZ's cruise industry, from market breakdown to visitation, spending and economic impact
- Attracting passengers – bookings, ship excursions, key attractions
- Working with the cruise lines
- Plus plenty of time for Q&A.

Guest speakers include Jacqui Lloyd, Chief Executive of NZ Cruise Association and Belinda Sawyer NZ Port Operations representative for IDNZ.

- Thursday 24 September 2026
- The Grosvenor, Cairns Terrace
- 9.45am – 10am meet and greet with morning tea
- 10am-12pm Workshop

Free to attend. To register email enquiries@venturetimaru.nz



R&D Career Grant

Looking to bring fresh ideas and emerging talent into your R&D programme? The R&D Career Grant can help businesses employ a recent master's or PhD graduate in **science, technology, engineering, design or business** for six months, with funding of up to \$30,000 for a master's graduate or \$35,000 for a PhD graduate. This is an opportunity to bring new capability into your business, support the next generation of talent and accelerate an R&D project at the same time, it's an opportunity to develop local talent or attract new skills and ideas to the district.

Applications are open now and close when funding is allocated.

[APPLY OR FIND OUT MORE](#)

Local Success Stories

Discover the people, businesses and ideas shaping life in the Timaru District. Explore local business success stories, innovation, community, events and lifestyle, alongside updates on our district's economic performance.

[BUSINESS SUCCESS](#)

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[LOCAL INNOVATION](#)

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