Venture Timaru
Creativity, Innovation & Resilient Business

Kia ora koutou,

With most of the votes counted, we're still waiting on the final special vote results at the time of writing for the new Government. Throughout the election campaign, cost-of-living pressures and business growth were front of mind for many New Zealanders, with the grocery sector featuring in policies and discussions across the political parties.

In this update we start with some food for thought, taking a brief look at the grocery sector and some of the issues shaping the way our food market is working. We also share an update on the visit from six UK agritech innovators, including the new business opportunities and local connections that came from bringing international ideas together with our food and fibre sector.

There are some good successes to celebrate across the district this month too. From the Winter Different tourism campaign picking up a national award, to the range of events bringing visitors and activity into the region, it's a good reminder of the contribution that collaboration, innovation and events make to a thriving local economy. As highlighted by the connections made through the UK agritech visit, they also help build Timaru District's profile as a great place to do business, invest, live and visit.

Under business resources and support, we've got some useful insights into opportunities in the seafood sector, along with information to help local manufacturers connect with students looking for summer jobs, internships and work experience.

And a quick thank you to everyone who has been reading and sharing our local success stories. We've been popular, and there are some great examples of what businesses across the district are achieving. If you haven't had a chance to check them out yet, take a look – they're a good way to see the capability, ideas and ambition we have right here in Timaru District.

We hope you find something useful in this month's update – and, as always, if there's something you'd like to talk to us about, please get in touch.

Nāku noa,
Nigel Davenport
Venture Timaru, CEO

Economic & Business Updates



Grocery sector in the spotlight

With the cost-of-living front and centre for New Zealanders in the recent election, there's plenty of interest in how our grocery market is working – and what could be done differently.

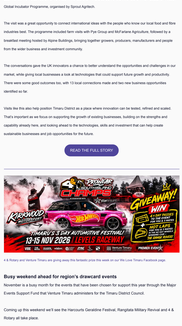
Horticulture New Zealand has released its latest position statement, **A Fairer Grocery Market for Growers and Consumers**, looking at what growers need from the grocery sector to support a fairer and more transparent market.

The report calls for greater transparency around grocery margins, stronger independent oversight and meaningful consequences where the Grocery Supply Code is breached. Importantly, it looks at the whole supply chain – from growers through to retailers and, ultimately, consumers.

It's an interesting read, particularly when cost pressures are being felt right across the supply chain, and by households at the checkout. The way the grocery market works has an impact on growers, businesses and consumers alike.

We've included the report here if you'd like to take a look.

HORTNZ POSITION STATEMENT



2026 UK Innovate Future! delegation pictured with Alpine Buildings and Venture Timaru team members

Connecting international innovation with local expertise

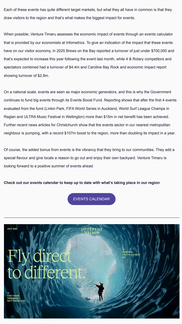
Last month, we welcomed six UK agritech innovators to Timaru as part of the Innovate UK New Zealand Agritech Global Incubator Programme, organised by Sprout.Agritech.

The visit was a great opportunity to connect international ideas with the people in Canterbury who could test and fine-tune industries best. The programme included farm visits with Pye Group and McFarlane Agriculture, followed by a breakfast meeting hosted at Alpine Buildings, bringing together growers, producers, manufacturers and people from the wider business and investment community.

The conversations gave the UK innovators a chance to better understand the opportunities and challenges in our market, while giving local businesses a look at technologies that could support future growth and productivity. There were some great outcomes too, with 13 local connections made and two new business opportunities identified so far.

Visits like this also help position Timaru District as a place where innovation can be tested, refined and scaled. That's important as we focus on supporting the growth of existing businesses, building on the strengths and capacity already here, and looking ahead to the technologies, skills and investment that can help create sustainable businesses and job opportunities for the future.

READ THE FULL STORY



4 & Rotary and Venture Timaru are giving away this fantastic prize this week on our We Love Timaru Facebook page.

Busy weekend ahead for region's drawcard events

November is a busy month for the events that have been chosen for support this year through the Major Events Support Fund that Venture Timaru administers for the Timaru District Council.

Coming up this weekend we'll see the Harcourts Geraldine Festival, Rangitata Military Revival and 4 & Rotary all take place.

Each of these events has quite different target markets, but what they all have in common is that they draw visitors to the region and that's what makes the biggest impact for events.

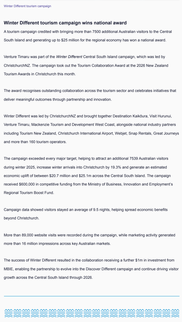
When possible, Venture Timaru assesses the economic impact of events through an events calculator that is provided by our economists at Infometrics. To give an indication of the impact that these events have on our visitor economy, in 2025 Brews on the Bay reported a turnover of just under $730,000 and that's expected to increase this year following the record event, while 4 & Rotary competitors and spectators combined had a turnover of $4.4m and Caroline Bay Rock and economic impact report showing turnover of $2.6m.

On a national scale, events are seen as major economic generators, and this is why the Government continues to fund big events through its Events Boost Fund. Reporting shows that after the first 4 events evaluated from the fund (Lion's Park, FIFA World Series in Auckland, World Surf League Champs in Raglan and ULTRA Music Festival in Wellington) more than $10m in net benefit has been achieved. Further recent news articles for Christchurch show that the events sector in our nearest metropolitan neighbour is pumping, with a record $107m boost to the region, more than doubling its impact in a year.

Of course, the added bonus from events is the vibrancy that they bring to our communities. They add a special flavour and give locals a reason to go out and enjoy their own backyard. Venture Timaru is looking forward to a positive summer of events ahead.

Check out our events calendar to keep up to date with what's taking place in our region

EVENTS CALENDAR



Winter Different tourism campaign

Winter Different tourism campaign wins national award

A tourism campaign credited with bringing more than 7500 additional Australian visitors to the Central South Island and generating up to $25 million for the regional economy has won a national award.

Venture Timaru was part of the Winter Different Central South Island campaign, which was led by ChristchurchNZ. The campaign took out the Tourism Collaboration Award at the 2026 New Zealand Tourism Awards in Christchurch this month.

The award recognises outstanding collaboration across the tourism sector and celebrates initiatives that deliver meaningful outcomes through partnership and innovation.

Winter Different was led by ChristchurchNZ and brought together Destination Kaikōura, Visit Hurunui, Venture Timaru, Waitaruna Tourism and Development West Coast, alongside national industry partners including Tourism New Zealand, Christchurch International Airport, Westjet, Soap Rentals, Great Journeys and more than 160 tourism operators.

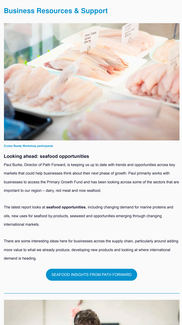
The campaign exceeded every major target, helping to attract an additional 7539 Australian visitors during winter 2025, increase winter arrivals into Christchurch by 19.3% and generate an estimated economic uplift of between $20.7 million and $25.1m across the Central South Island. The campaign received $695,000 in competitive funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Regional Tourism Boost Fund.

Campaign data showed visitors stayed an average of 9.5 nights, helping spread economic benefits beyond Christchurch.

More than 89,000 website visits were recorded during the campaign, while marketing activity generated more than 18 million impressions across key Australian markets.

The success of Winter Different resulted in the collaboration receiving a further $1m in investment from MBIE, enabling the partnership to evolve into the Discover Different campaign and continue driving visitor growth across the Central South Island through 2026.

Business Resources & Support



Emma Rayne, Workforce Connections

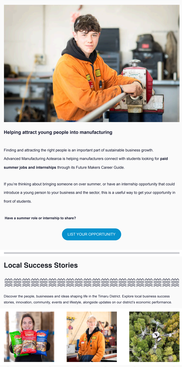
Looking ahead: seafood opportunities

Paul Burke, Director of Path Forward, is keeping us up to date with trends and opportunities across key markets that could help businesses think about their next phase of growth. Paul primarily works with businesses to access the Primary Growth Fund and has been looking across some of the sectors that are important to our region – dairy, red meat and now seafood.

The latest report looked at **seafood opportunities**, including changing demand for marine proteins and oils, new uses for seafood by-products, seaweed and opportunities emerging through changing international markets.

There are some interesting ideas here for businesses across the supply chain, particularly around adding more value to what we already produce, developing new products and looking at where international demand is heading.

SEAFOOD INSIGHTS FROM PATH FORWARD



Helping attract young people into manufacturing

Finding and attracting the right people is an important part of sustainable business growth. Advanced Manufacturing Aotearoa is helping manufacturers connect with students looking for **paid summer jobs and internships** through its Future Makers Career Guide.

If you're thinking about bringing someone on over summer, or have an internship opportunity that could introduce a young person to your business and the sector, this is a useful way to get your opportunity in front of students.

Have a summer role or internship to share?

LIST YOUR OPPORTUNITY

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 | LIFE & WORK | LOCAL INNOVATION

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