

MEDIA RELEASE

31 March 2022



It's time to turn the immigration tap on

A new report released this morning by the BusinessNZ network has outlined the severity of the situation we face in the labour market – and reinforced why we need the tap turned on for immigration right now.

“The [Labour Market Conditions for Business report](#) has reinforced that there is no spare capacity with critical worker shortages across New Zealand, high employment levels, and high demand for goods and services creating a compounding effect across our economy,” says Leeann Watson, Chief Executive, Canterbury Employers’ Chamber of Commerce.

“Our members have been telling us that for many businesses in the Canterbury region the ability to access critical workers has been one of the most significant challenges arising from the extended closure of the New Zealand border.

“The state of the labour market remains the biggest constraint to economic growth and is damaging economic activity. Businesses are concerned it is only going to get worse with a brain drain this is well and truly underway.

“Immigration has been a staple of the modern New Zealand labour market. Research conducted by Lincoln University earlier this year estimated that at least 10,000 additional workers are needed each year to replenish the shortages in the Canterbury region alone. We cannot rely solely on population growth to achieve this.

“New Zealand needs immigration at all skill levels, and we need to welcome migrants back to New Zealand right now, before they are plucked from the queue by other countries, and not underestimate the significant contribution they make to the economy and our communities.

“The time is right now for a simple, easy to understand and permissive immigration policy that provides our business community with the desperately needed workers they require.”

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Note to editors:

The full report commissioned by the BusinessNZ network can be [accessed here](#).

For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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The Canterbury Employers’ Chamber of Commerce (The Chamber) is a not-for-profit membership-based service organisation that has been the home and voice of business in the Canterbury region since 1859. Comprised of over 2,900 member organisations that represent over 70,000 employees, The Chamber’s purpose is to empower people in business by providing advisory and consultancy support in employment relations, human resources, health and safety, international trade, manufacturing, migrant support, research and development grants, and training and development in many areas. www.thechamber.co.nz