

MEDIA RELEASE

12 August 2016

For immediate release

Economic Action Plan for growing prosperity in the Manawatū-Whanganui Region launched

Economic Development Minister Steven Joyce, Primary Industries Minister Nathan Guy, and Māori Development Minister Te Ururoa Flavell joined Region leaders at the Manawatū-Whanganui Economic Action Plan launch this morning at the Whanganui War Memorial Centre.

In 2015, the Government's Regional Growth Study highlighted emerging opportunities in fields such as tourism, aged care and business outsourcing, as well as scope to build on the Manawatū-Whanganui Region's existing strengths in the primary sector.

As a result, the Manawatū-Whanganui Economic Action Plan has been developed by business leaders, iwi, hapu, and councils in partnership with central government. The Action Plan identifies tangible opportunities and strategies across all sectors that will enable the acceleration of social and economic growth in the Region by 2025.

The Action Plan Launch was hosted by Whanganui Mayor Annette Main, who says a commitment to regional prosperity has brought councils, business, iwi and key players together to develop opportunities for all communities.

"Launching the Action Plan provides a foundation for our region to work more closely with central government," Mayor Main said.

"The region's leaders are committed to being 'one team, one region' to build our economy, increase job opportunities and improve our quality of life by connecting people, business and our environment."

Accelerate25 Lead Team Facilitator and Horizons Regional Council CE Michael McCartney says the Action Plan is a balanced portfolio that will contribute to social, cultural, economic and environmental prosperity.

"These opportunities are spread around the Region, from major land users such as agriculture and realising Māori potential, through to major tourism areas of Ruapehu and a quality aged care pilot in Levin," says Mr McCartney. "The Plan also includes a focus on skills training, transport infrastructure, digital connectivity, and ways to help businesses grow."

"Implementing the Action Plan will bring hundreds of new jobs to the Region. Initial estimates by NZIER are around one thousand jobs across the identified opportunities, and hundreds of millions in regional GDP."

Accelerate25 is the business brand, and is led by a governance group made up from a mixture of business and iwi leaders, two local government reps, and the facilitator. This Lead Team will continue to work as implementation of the Action Plan gets underway.

"Manawatu-Whanganui is a resourceful and resource-rich region full of promise and hardworking, determined people. We want to take this region to its next stage of performance and deliver the potential of what we have to offer to the nation and the world," says Mr McCartney.

"The Action Plan offers a solid platform for growing our regional economy, now is the time for a collective and concerted effort from us all to make it happen."

Following the Economic Action Plan launch in Whanganui, Ministers Joyce and Guy will be attending various site visits throughout the Region. Announcements on some of the Plan's opportunities are expected in Ohakune, Cheltenham, Palmerston North and Levin. More information is available on the Accelerate25 website:

www.accelerate25.co.nz

ENDS.

Chrissie Morrison, Media and Communications Manager, chrissie.morrison@horizons.govt.nz, 027 695 9747