

Innovation in Canterbury



Realising our potential

ChristchurchNZ™

How can Canterbury realise more value from innovation?

Inventiveness, innovation and resourcefulness have long been thought of as a part of the Kiwi DNA. As well as incrementally improving productivity, translating new ideas and technologies into commercial outcomes creates new opportunities, industries and builds new businesses.

This has downstream effects: higher incomes, new jobs and export opportunities.

Getting innovation right has never been more important to stay competitive.

The question is: how well does Canterbury stack up compared to other regions and what do we need to do to realise the full economic value from innovation?





What is innovation?

Great ideas are just the beginning. To deliver real economic benefit, innovation must be commercialised and implemented.

Innovation is best understood in three phases:

1. The creation of an idea or invention of a product, service or way of doing things.
2. Implementation – the process of translating a new product, service or way of doing things into value by incorporating it into society or business.
3. Benefits realised – innovation is successfully implemented and society or business benefits.

innovation

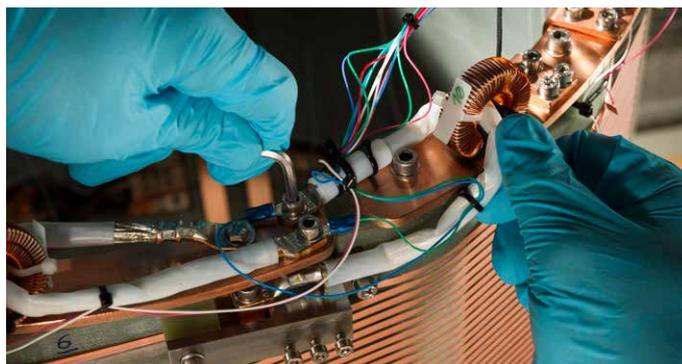
noun

Innovation is a new product, service or way of doing things that delivers a tangible commercial or economic benefit.

Why is a regional context important?

International research shows successful innovation starts at a local level because it's about interactions between ideas and people.

A successful regional innovation system has a critical mass of innovation assets including businesses, research and education institutes, interactions between a diverse range of people and ideas, and an environment which supports and enables innovation and commercialisation. Success is measured by the new ideas and commercial outcomes the regional innovation system generates.





Canterbury: How do we stack up?



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CENTRAL

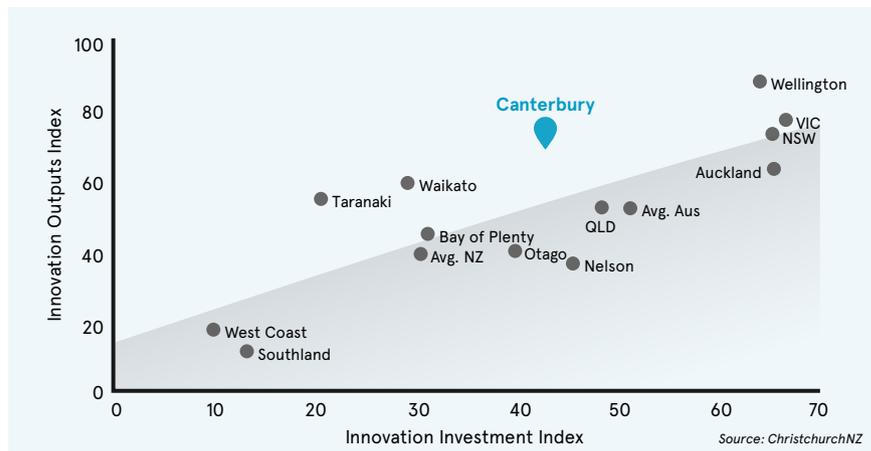
How successful is Canterbury's innovation system?

Our economic research into Canterbury's innovation system shows the region has a rich set of innovation assets – skilled, creative and entrepreneurial people and strong research and tertiary institutions. Canterbury produces high numbers of patents and a high proportion of employment is in knowledge and technology intensive industries, indicating high levels of innovation are occurring. But we're not getting the best value from new ideas and technologies. This is illustrated in the graphs to the right.

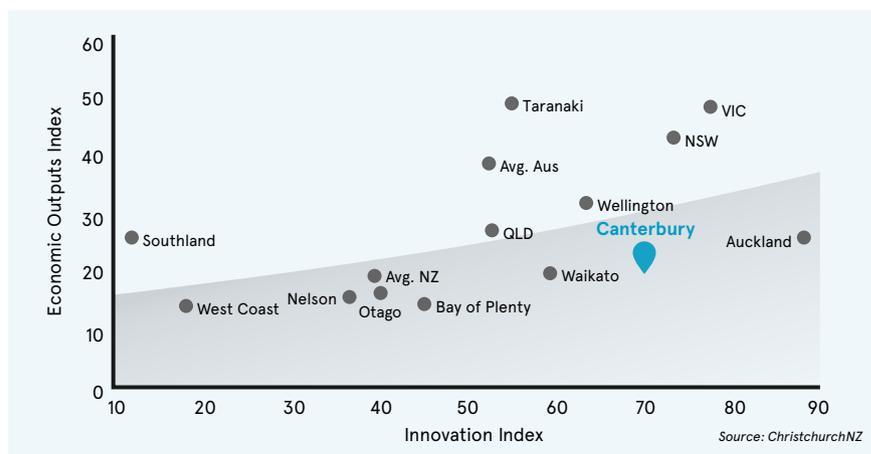
The graph on the top right shows that Canterbury is relatively effective at generating innovation and doing new things from its investment in innovation compared with other Australasian cities and regions.

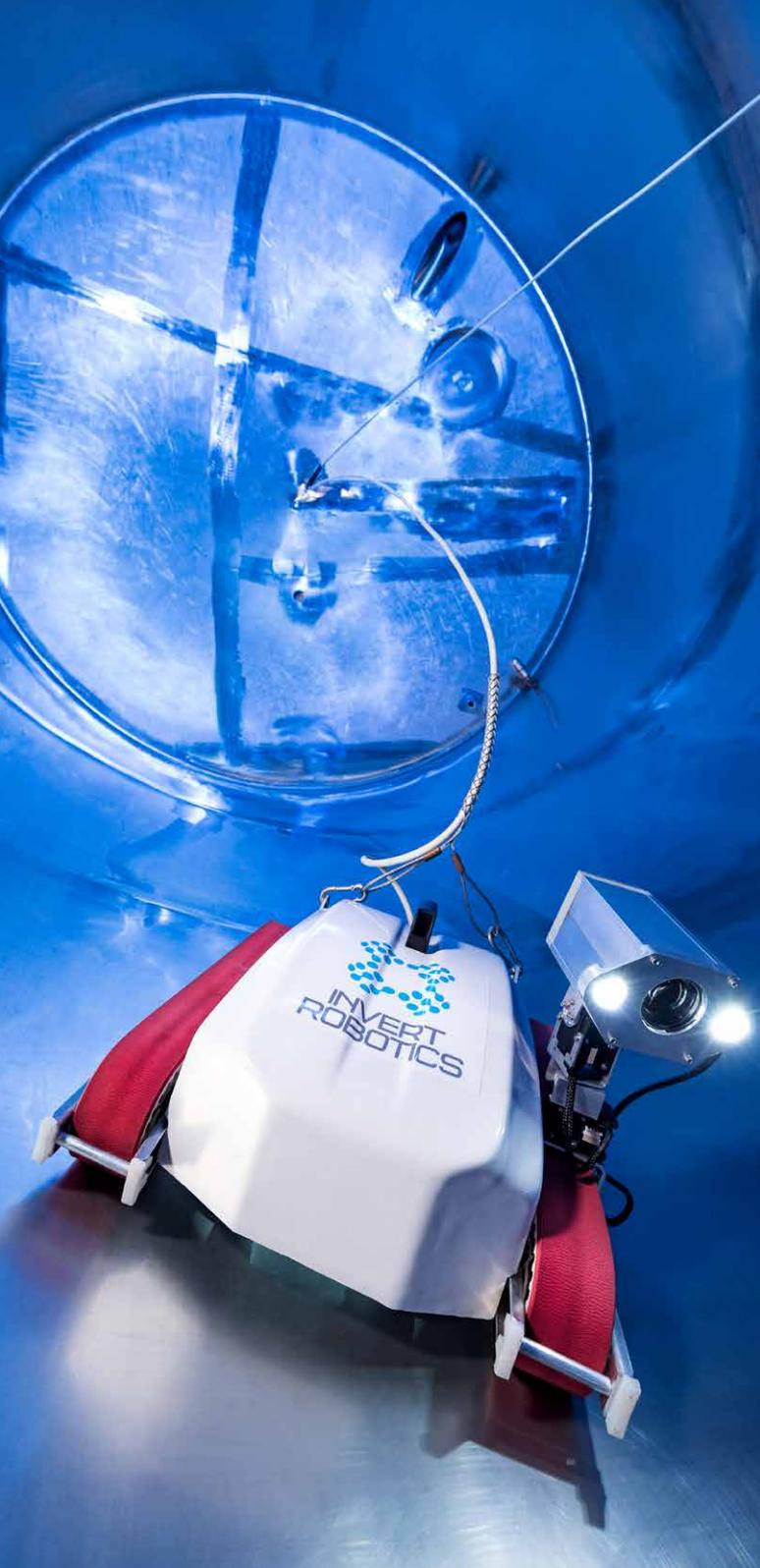
The graph on the bottom right shows that Canterbury is relatively less effective than other regions at converting innovative activities into economic value (labour productivity, average wages, per capita wealth creation).

Translation of investment into innovation



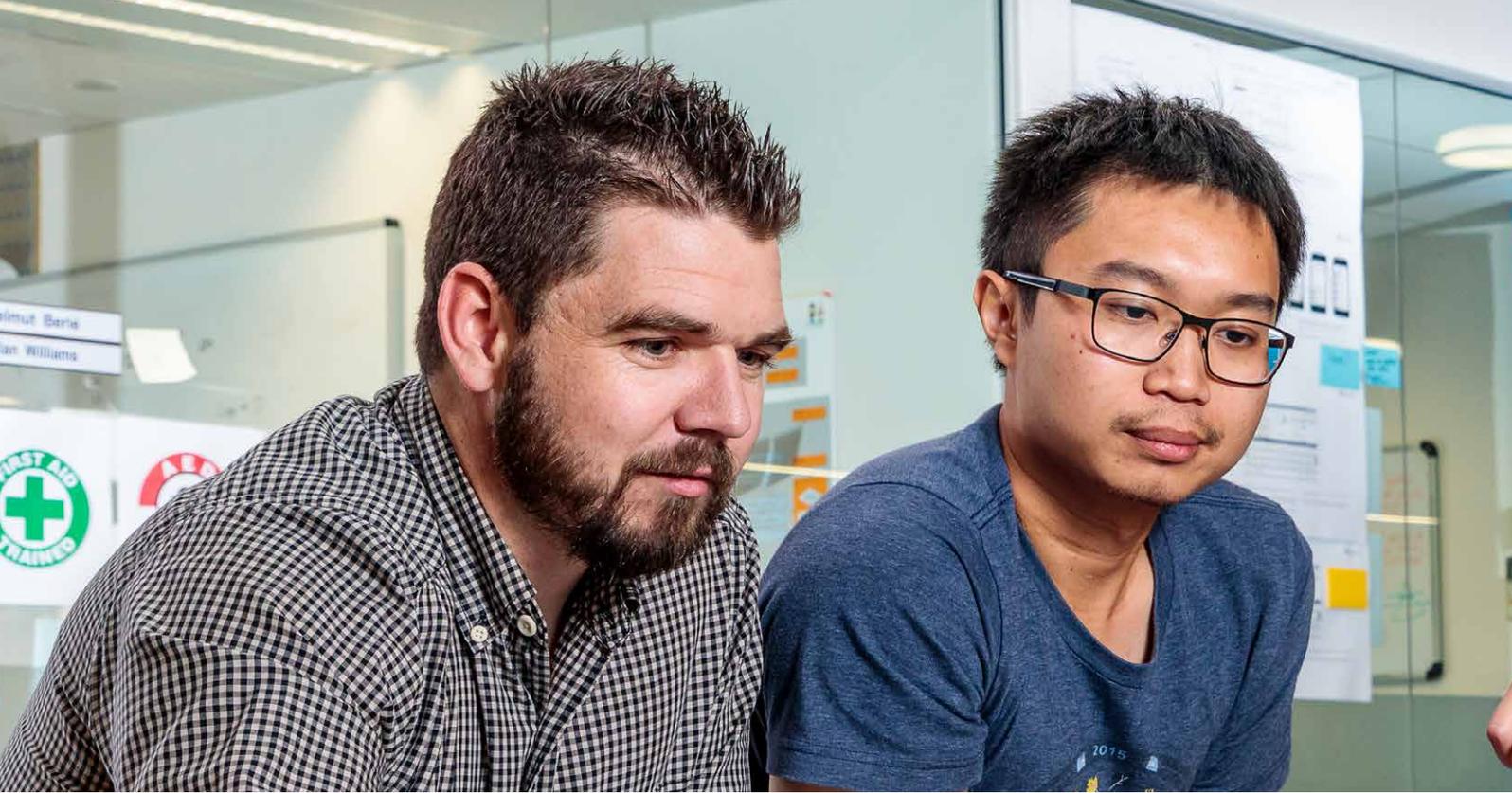
Translation of innovation into economic outcomes





How can we realise greater economic value from innovation?

To answer this question, we talked with 50 people who work in the innovation system here in Canterbury, in New Zealand and around the world. We spoke with people within the business, tertiaries, research institutions, social enterprise, urban regeneration and creative communities, as well as local and central government. The following pages summarises their thinking and ideas.



We have a good portfolio of innovation assets

People we spoke with recognised the region has a good portfolio of innovation assets.

In terms of research, the region is home to four tertiary institutions including the University of Canterbury, Lincoln University, Ara Institute of Canterbury and University of Otago Medical School in Christchurch. Six of New Zealand's seven Crown Research Institutes have a presence in the region (AgResearch, LandCare, Plant and Food, New Zealand Forest Research Institute Ltd,

the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research and the Institute of Environmental Science and Research). These institutions, along with the Canterbury District Health Board, conduct internationally-recognised research.

On the commercial side, our business community has representation across knowledge-intensive industries such as high-value manufacturing, ICT, professional services, agribusiness and health. It's supported by an active start-up ecosystem and networks.



We need to reduce silos

While recognising the region is fortunate to have strong innovation assets, people felt there are silos which limit the ability of these assets to work together. There was a desire to develop ways for stakeholders to better share and communicate their individual strategies and identify and act upon potential collaboration opportunities. This requires strong leadership and co-ordination.



Working collectively



Many Canterbury businesses are small and often lack the resources to realise the full commercial potential of their innovations. With few businesses of international scale in the region, there are limited opportunities to build international partnerships and develop international expertise, constraining expansion into global markets.

People we spoke with suggested there may be opportunities to identify Canterbury's areas of expertise and work together to build critical mass in these areas. This would provide an attractive proposition as the basis for international partnerships and deliver commercialisation pathways out of the region.

Sharing networks



Linkages and networks were described as critical in enabling people to share ideas, skills and expertise. People increasingly recognised partnerships were becoming a model for converting ideas into business opportunities.

The idea of resourcing "super-connectors", activists and opportunity spotters was mooted to help identify and exploit opportunities better. To make this a success, it would be important to map Canterbury's local and global networks and investigate ways to improve connectivity between these and to better leverage experiences and relationships.

A man in a grey blazer is talking on a smartphone in a busy office setting. In the background, other people are working at desks, and there are large white spherical structures. A teal diagonal graphic element is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

We need a strong city profile

People we spoke with recognised we have lots of talented people in Canterbury and that a diverse range of creative, talented, curious and entrepreneurial people is critical for the success of a region's innovation system. As such, continuing to attract and retain these people is necessary to realise the full value of

innovation in the region. People we spoke with believed Canterbury has many characteristics which make it attractive to innovative and entrepreneurial people, but felt the region's profile is not well-communicated nationally or internationally.





Innovative city

Previously the story of Christchurch is one of the earthquake disaster and rebuild. People we spoke with had a strong desire for the city's story to move on. Christchurch and the region have a strong innovation system, which is not well recognised or profiled. Innovation could form the basis of our city profile because we have key innovation assets and many examples of successful innovation and commercialisation.

Connecting people into the innovation system

People we spoke with suggested it can be difficult for new arrivals to engage with the innovation system and felt more could be done to make it easy for visitors, migrants and international delegations to get involved and be better positioned to leverage new opportunities.

Discussions focused on the opportunities presented by major innovation and entrepreneurship events to help redefine the city profile. We need to work harder to make it easier for entrepreneurs to visit and move here and be connected to opportunities. This may involve developing a framework for co-ordinated hosting of visitors and delegations.





Retaining and building Christchurch's 'make it happen' spirit

People recognised that relaxing regulations, rules and policy immediately post-quake to allow things to happen more quickly, enabled innovation. They acknowledged strong public and private sector investment into the region through the earthquake rebuild has provided, and still provides, a chance to learn, share learnings and develop new innovative ideas.

There was a strong desire to see Christchurch retain elements of the post-quake 'make it happen' spirit, while balancing the need for rules and regulations to keep us safe and balance community interests. People felt an innovation-friendly environment was important and could be a unique attractor for innovators, business and investment.



Where to from here?

Our goal is to generate greater commercialisation value from ideas and new technologies

It is clear from our research Canterbury already has many aspects of a successful regional innovation system. However, there is an opportunity for the region to work together in a more coordinated way to generate greater commercial value from our collective assets, capability and networks. We won't realise this additional value by continuing to simply do what we are doing.

We have taken the insights from this piece of work and incorporated these into the Christchurch Economic Development Strategy, which sets out the action plan and commitments to projects that will strengthen the regional innovation system.



What we are doing

Work collaboratively and share networks

We are developing and connecting Christchurch's Innovation and Health Precincts, GreenHouse, Lincoln Hub and other key innovation assets to facilitate greater innovation and collaboration in the city.

Create a strong city profile

We will promote Christchurch as a "city of opportunity" to residents, talented migrants, businesses and investors.

We will be developing a "landing pad" to welcome and introduce potential entrepreneurs, commercial partners and investors.

Build on Christchurch's "make it happen" spirit

We are investigating potential for Christchurch to be an Innovation Friendly City.

Christchurch will implement the LINZ Smart Cities - Smart Nation initiative to trial new technology to make data available for innovation and decision making.

Realise more commercial value from our innovation

We will investigate international commercialisation models and investment vehicles to realise returns from private and public sector research.

Investigating the potential to develop clusters, value chains and market opportunities where Christchurch has commercial, research or education capability to drive greater investment, talent attraction and economic growth.

For more info you can read the full Christchurch Economic Development Strategy Action Plan available at christchurchnz.org.nz or send us your thoughts, comments or feedback at enquiries@christchurchnz.org.nz

» How to connect to Canterbury's Innovation System

» Innovation Ecosystem Map

Find out who can help with developing an idea or a business, or growing your existing business.

innovationmap.co.nz

» Innovation Precinct

News, events and contacts – what's happening, in the Innovation Precinct.

innovationprecinct.nz

» Ministry of Awesome

Ministry of Awesome is the starting point for making things happen in Christchurch – weekly Coffee & Jam sessions; Start-Up Activator; co-working spaces and lots of other events.

ministryofawesome.com

» Meet-ups

Over 120 meetups – including business and social around Christchurch. Specifically search for: Women in tech, user groups, new to Christchurch.

meetup.com/cities/nz/christchurch

» Canterbury Tech Cluster

A broad-based member community for people working in the tech sector. Activities include monthly networking events and the annual Tech Summit in September.

canterburytech.nz christchurch.events.geek.nz

» Canterbury Angels

Network of angel investors. Connect Canterbury investors with fast growing, innovative New Zealand companies.

canterburyangels.nz

» Co-working space

Just google, or use "Shared Space" to find co-working spaces.

green-house.co.nz innovationmap.co.nz



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