

Media Release

CBD gaps filling fast as Crown returns

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Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee says the notion of a donut effect in the Christchurch CBD – with new developments on the fringes but few buildings in the centre – is being rapidly dispelled.

"Development of the anchor projects combined with an increasing stream of private sector buildings is rapidly filling in the gaps, providing confidence to other investors that the CBD will be an economically viable and thriving space," Mr Brownlee says.

He was speaking at an event confirming the return of 1100 Government staff from 13 agencies to Christchurch's CBD by 2016, all of them housed in three new privately owned commercial buildings.

"This is in addition to 200 Inland Revenue staff already working in the Mid City Building above Ballantynes, and will soon be followed by another 400 Government staff moving into another new building in the city," Mr Brownlee says.

"Leases for the 1100 staff across the three buildings we're announcing today represent a \$170 million investment in Christchurch over the next 20 years; so this is a significant commitment to the city's prosperity.

"These buildings are in or on the edge of the Retail Precinct, meaning an influx of 1100 people into shops and food outlets in the city each day," Mr Brownlee says.

State Services Minister Dr Jonathan Coleman says the extensive project to bring Government departments and agencies together has saved time and money through its cohesive approach.

"This accommodation approach in Christchurch supports the Government's National Property Strategy, promoting greater collaboration and efficiencies, both within and across government agencies," Dr Coleman says.

"When this project is complete we'll have reduced Crown accommodation in the city from the current 17 buildings to four, which is a great example of the new public sector office environment.

"This enables flexible working, with shared facilities and greater collaboration."

The three buildings and their tenants are:

Grand Central (owned by Grand Central (NZ) Ltd) 8,200sqm occupied by:

- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
- Ministry of Social Development
- Department of Conservation

Cashel Square Stage I (owned by Lichfield Holdings Ltd) 5,949sqm occupied by:

- Statistics New Zealand
- NZ Transport Agency
- Department of Internal Affairs
- Te Puni Kokiri
- Commerce Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority
- Creative New Zealand

Cashel Square Stage II (owned by Lichfield Holdings Ltd) 3,180sqm occupied by:

- Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)

All four buildings will have space for additional private tenants, retail spaces and car parking. Also going into Cashel Square Stage II is the BNZ, with around 200 staff. The accommodation programme is led by the Government Property Management Centre of Expertise, through the Ministry of Social Development.

The fourth building in the accommodation programme will provide space for the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Housing NZ Corporation, and Fairway Resolution.

Today's announcement comes on the back of a prediction by property firm Colliers that within three years around 10,000 people will be working within 300 metres of Christchurch's Retail Precinct, rising to 15,000 within four years.

"With the recent private sector announcements of the Vodafone Building, Triangle Centre and UniMed Building, among numerous others, I have every confidence the vision of a compact, cohesive and busy Christchurch CBD will soon come to fruition," Mr Brownlee says.