

Media Release
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Ashburton District triples export expectation

New research has uncovered Ashburton District's significant contribution to the national economy.

Commissioned by Enterprise Ashburton, a profile of the Ashburton District and its key sectors by Business and Economic Research Ltd (Berl), based on initial estimates of GDP for the 2007 year, shows growth in the past year across the four main sectors: manufacturing and building, sheep and beef, dairy and arable.

Enterprise Ashburton chief executive Rob Brawley said Ashburton's annual GDP growth had outstripped Canterbury as a whole (1.3% cf 0.9% respectively) and the real surprise was in the district's overall contribution to the nation's exports.

"The report showed our district's portion of regional exports across the four key sectors is 3.5 times higher than the size of its economy would suggest."

"We knew export-related business here was strong but now we see how strong. About 30% of our exports are in the sheep and beef sector."

While Ashburton had just 5.3% of total Canterbury GDP due to its industry make-up and workforce size, it accounted for 19% of exports across these four sectors.

Ashburton's rural economy also held its own in employment. Although the district had just 5.4% of total employment in Canterbury, it accounted for between 7.3% - 24% of all regional employment in the sheep and beef, dairy, arable and engineering sectors.

The manufacturing and building sector accounted for the largest chunk of Ashburton's GDP in 2007 at \$349million (30% of the district's total). Second were business services and primary industries at \$271million and \$235million respectively.

The food, beverage and tobacco industry (mostly meat and vegetable processing) accounted for \$207million in GDP. The fastest growing sector was business services, which provided \$20million more in GDP than the previous year, with property services making biggest gains.

Dairy employed 1,350 full time employees in 339 businesses across the district. These businesses contributed a total \$150million to the district's annual GDP.

Mr Brawley said the data was very beneficial for long term planning both at a local, regional and national level.

"It is also very useful to quantify the significant contribution our meat and fibre, dairy, arable and engineering sectors make to the local and NZ economy. The capabilities and competencies of our farmers should be well known but the skills and capabilities of this district's engineering sector are quite outstanding and deserve recognition."

For more information or a copy of the report please contact

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