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**When one size doesn't fit all**  
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**NEWS**



## Burglaries skyrocket

Student flats near the University of Canterbury have become easy targets for opportunistic burglars as thefts in the area soar. Police have increased patrols and urged Riccarton and Upper Riccarton residents to be vigilant.

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Pictured: From left, nervous students Ella Chambers, Emily Pepper and Portia Loveday at their Upper Riccarton flat yesterday.  
IAIN MCGREGOR/THE PRESS



# No wait for Wellington

Canterbury staking out own path with new 'Ambition' vision document launched today

**REGION'S DEVELOPMENT**  
**Blayne Slabbert**

Business leaders and mayors have taken the unusual step of writing their own vision, arguing the region needs a plan of its own rather than waiting for decisions from Wellington.

The new Canterbury Ambition document is a two-page vision with three priorities – early investment in energy, transport and infrastructure, protecting Canterbury's edge in housing and lifestyle, and simpler rules so it is easier to build and do business across council boundaries.

Those behind the project say it is a vision for the whole Canterbury region – from Kaikōura to Waimate – not just Christchurch.

Business Canterbury chief executive Leann Watson said the chamber pushed the

project because the region had strong numbers – fast job growth and relatively affordable housing compared with other main centres – but no single story about where it was heading or how it would protect those advantages as population and investment rise. "We see businesses every day with really strong ambitions, doing amazing things, but there hasn't been a collective, unified vision."

"We didn't want to sit around waiting for someone in Wellington or a council office to tell us what Canterbury's future should be. The private sector drives the economy, so it needs to help define the vision and the conditions for businesses to thrive."

She described the past 18 months as "robust and sometimes contentious", as mayors, council chief executives, iwi representatives and large employers

argued over what should make the final cut.

The document, to be launched in Christchurch tonight, is not a detailed funding plan. Instead, it is intended to sit alongside any future "regional deal" – a long-term funding and powers package between central and local government – and act as a test for which projects should go into that bid.

"When councils are deciding what goes into a regional deal, we want them asking: Will this invest ahead of demand, will it protect our housing and lifestyle edge, and will it make it easier to operate across the whole region?" Watson said. "If the answer is no, it probably doesn't belong there."

Urban Intelligence chief executive Mitchell Anderson, whose Christchurch-based resilience firm has backed the work, said his main concern was that Canterbury did not

slip back into reacting to crises after the fact.

"We can't be prosperous or a great place to live if we're constantly being disrupted and reacting to major events," he said. "After what we've already been through with the earthquakes, it would be ridiculous not to use those lessons and plan proactively ..."

He pointed to fast-growing districts such as Selwyn as examples of where the region needed to "invest ahead of demand" rather than scramble to catch up once roads, pipes and services were already under strain.

"Selwyn is one of the fastest-growing districts in the country, but there's a real risk if we don't build ahead of that demand. If we miss the boat, people will simply choose to invest somewhere else."

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# OPEN DAY



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Thursday 19 March

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