



## PRESS RELEASE



# THREE YEARS ON – CHRISTCHURCH SHINES AS CREATIVE NEW ZEALAND HUB

New festivals, thriving arts scene and new gap filler projects see 'city reimagined'



For media enquiries, please contact

Just over three years since the 22 February 2011 earthquake, which hit central Christchurch on New Zealand's South Island, the gateway to the beautiful Canterbury region is being tagged as a 'city reimagined'. It is becoming one of the country's most vibrant and creative hubs as a passionate population work to rebuild and recreate their city.

### THRIVING ARTS SCENE

One of the most exciting aspects of the regenerating city is its vibrant arts scene. With galleries and art spaces temporarily closed after the earthquake, exhibitions were being shown in makeshift galleries in people's homes, garages and purpose built modular Art Boxes around the city. As a result, Christchurch is now home to some of the most exciting public art events in New Zealand.

**OI YOU! RISE (December 2013-23 March 2014)** - One of the largest collections of street art by UK artist Banksy adorns the walls of the Canterbury Museum as part of the Oi YOU! RISE festival, a celebration of street art. RISE will run until March with work from Banksy and other leading progressive artists such as ROA, Thom Buchanan, Milton Springsteen and Vans the Omega. While RISE is held at Canterbury Museum, the featuring artists may also create artworks around Christchurch [www.streetart.co.nz/rise](http://www.streetart.co.nz/rise)

**FESTA 2014 - (25-27 October 2014)** The free annual Festival of Transitional Architecture will be held again this October over Labour Day Weekend transforming Christchurch's

Paul Charles / Julia Perowne / Louise  
Ferrall / Sarah Rigler at Perowne Charles  
Communications

+44 207 792 8884  
[newzealand@verypcc.com](mailto:newzealand@verypcc.com)

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cityscape through a myriad of interventions, events, talks,  
tours, projects and public participation to bring the transitional  
city to life [www.festa.org.nz](http://www.festa.org.nz)

**ART CENTRAL** - Completed in Autumn 2013 as a temporary arts hub, the buzzing Art Central will be the centerpiece of a new trail of 11 temporary public artworks and two permanent pieces stretching from the Botanic gardens to St Asaph Street, with features including a sheltered courtyard, café and stage for events. Art can also be seen in temporary spaces around the city, from the rooftop of C1 Espresso to the 10m suspended sculpture bridging the gap between Cathedral Square and the new Transitional Cathedral

## GAP FILLER PROJECTS

The Gap Filler creative regeneration project started after the earthquake to temporarily activate vacant sites within Christchurch, with everything from pedal powered cinemas to Gap Golf. The innovations continue in 2014 with a number of new and returning projects:

**DANCE O'MAT** - Returned to the city from December 2013 for the New Zealand summer, the popular Dance O-Mat allows visitors to plug into the converted ex-laundromat washing machine with their own iPod, phone or MP3 player headphones, activate the power and get dancing in the street for just \$2

**TRANSITIONAL AUDIO CITY TOUR REVAMPED** - Free 1 hour 40 minute audio tours around the transitional city have been revamped to offer visitors an insight into the ever changing CBD. Starting from the Pallet Pavilion, the self-guided tour provides a commentary of personal stories and historical and contemporary geographical and architectural information to a soundscape from local musicians [www.gapfiller.org.nz](http://www.gapfiller.org.nz)

## SIGHTSEEING

**TRAMS BACK ON TRACK** - From November 2013, the first of Christchurch's iconic trams went 'back on the tracks'. Newly fitted with screens and AV content showcasing the history and future plans for Christchurch, the heritage trams are travelling on new city routes starting from New Regent Street, through Cathedral Junction, across Cathedral Square and down to Canterbury museum and back. From mid 2014, the route will be extended into a loop and by late 2014 this will be extended to pass through the Re:START shipping container shopping mall [www.tram.co.nz](http://www.tram.co.nz)

**CARDBOARD CATHEDRAL** - The transitional 'cardboard' cathedral designed by renowned Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, opened its doors to the public in August 2013, forming a new attraction in the 'city of churches'. Designed to last just 50 years, the cathedral is also being used for regular concerts and events throughout 2014 [www.cardboardcathedral.org.nz](http://www.cardboardcathedral.org.nz)

**NEW AVON RIVER PARK** - Work has begun on the creation of a new river park that will form a green ribbon through Christchurch's new CBD. Set to feature cycle ways, riverside pedestrian walks and boardwalk areas alongside open theatre, recreation and restaurant areas, the project is also working to create a healthy river ecosystem. The first Watermark stage opened in late 2013 with work ongoing to complete the development [www.ccd.govt.nz](http://www.ccd.govt.nz)

**EXPLORE CHRISTCHURCH ON A LONDON BUS** - Those who can't get enough of British transport can now join Hassle Free Tours red London bus 'Discover Christchurch' tours on an hourly, daily basis. A great way to explore the city and beyond, new hop off options include The Tannery shopping area. [www.hasslefreetours.co.nz](http://www.hasslefreetours.co.nz)

## DINING AND NIGHTLIFE

From refurbished shipping containers to converted buses, Christchurch's CBD is growing its exciting range of innovative bars, restaurants and nightlife as business moves back into the city centre with over 830 outlets now open. The bar scene around Victoria street is thriving, the café and shopping precinct in New Regent Street has swung back into life and new areas such as The Tannery, a development of boutique shopping, restaurants and bars, is a showcase just outside the city for independent businesses. Hot new openings include:

**REVIVAL BAR** - Revival is a funky new bar on Victoria Street using recycled materials - think shipping containers as the structures and suitcases into chairs. [www.revivalbar.co.nz](http://www.revivalbar.co.nz)

**VELVET BURGER** - The Gourmet burger craze took another stride in Christchurch this month with the opening of an outpost of a Kiwi favourite, serving up 'Big Bro' Kiwi Burgers and -they claim - the best vegetarian 'Kumara and Coriander' burger in New Zealand. [www.velvetburger.co.nz](http://www.velvetburger.co.nz)

**VESPA BAR** - A Christchurch favourite - this cosy and eclectic cocktail and tapas bar has now reopened after the quake. Located next to the new creative precinct 'Strangers Laneway' due to launch this Spring in the style of Auckland's Britomart area, it's an area to watch

## WHERE TO SLEEP

20 hotels are now operating in the city centre with over 1800 brand new hotel rooms expanding the accommodation offering as Christchurch builds up to host major events including the opening match of the Cricket World Cup in February 2015. Hot new openings include:

**HOTEL 115** - The 30-room boutique hotel completed at the end of 2013. Each room is individually designed in an eclectic and modern style [www.hotel115.co.nz](http://www.hotel115.co.nz)

### **OPENING JULY 2014 - NEW 5-STAR BOUTIQUE HOTEL**

**MONTREAL** - Christchurch will open its second five-star hotel this July. The 27 room boutique property on Cranmer Street will feature a tapas bar and an external mural from renowned Australian street artist Rone

**OPENING 2015 - HOTEL GRAND CHANCELLOR** - Grand Hotels International has announced plans for a new hotel on Chancel Street to complete in late 2015 [www.ghihotels.com](http://www.ghihotels.com)

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