



Media Release

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## **Annual Report highlights busy year for Selwyn**

Selwyn District Council's Annual Report for 2015/16 confirms that the district enjoyed another busy and prosperous year, with new subdivisions, business land and shops being developed and the Council focusing on future planning, improving infrastructure and adding to residents' quality of life. The report was adopted by the Council at a meeting last week.

"The numbers in our annual report confirm that Selwyn is the best place in the country to live," says Selwyn Mayor Sam Broughton. "We knew that and more and more people are moving here and finding out too," he adds.

"We have strong local communities each with their own flavour. Our natural landscape offers plenty of space to escape and take a breath. Our business community continues to grow and offer new employment and opportunities to add value to the top quality primary produce we are proud to grow."

The Council's most recent independent Resident's Survey found that 94% of Selwyn residents thought that the district was a great place to live, with respondents highlighting the positive atmosphere and environment, community spirit, friendly people, accessibility to urban services, and good facilities and amenities.

Building and construction activity continues to be strong in Selwyn. The value of non-residential building consents in Selwyn grew by 40 percent to reach \$152 million for the year ending June 2016. The figures reflect the building of new schools in Rolleston, consents for new shops to be developed in Rolleston, West Melton and Darfield and the continuing development of new businesses at Izone.

A total of 2,687 building consents were issued in Selwyn in the year to June 2016, with consents taking an average of 11 days to be processed. The Council's building team was also the first in New Zealand to be reaccredited as a Building Consent Authority three times, with no requirement for changes to existing practices or systems. During the year, 113 hectares of land on the outskirts of Rolleston was approved by the government for residential development under the Special Housing Accord scheme, which aims to improve land availability and affordability.

Council infrastructure and facilities are being upgraded for Selwyn's growing population. A number of water supply upgrades were undertaken to add capacity in high growth areas and the first stage of a major stormwater upgrade in Leeston was started. Work started to develop a new cycleway between Coalgate and Glentunnel. Drainage improvements were completed on 140 kilometres of rural roads. Other local projects completed included an extension to the Leeston skate park and the opening of the Greenpark Community Centre. Earthquake repairs to around 1,100 headstones in the district's public cemeteries were also completed. New paths are now open to the public at Foster Park, and the park hosted its first winter sport season with more than 600 footballers taking part in matches.

Future planning work was also a focus for the Council, which adopted area plans for Malvern and Ellesmere. Consultation on the Land Use Recovery Plan, which identifies commercial,

community and service activity areas in Lincoln and Rolleston was also undertaken and the Lincoln Town Centre Plan adopted.

In December 2015, the Newcomers and Migrants Strategy was adopted. The strategy is a joint initiative involving central government, the Council and community organisations and sets out a range of actions to help support newcomers and migrants. The Council and Selwyn Youth Council hosted 74 events for local residents and young people enabling communities to connect, have fun and celebrate living in Selwyn. New events included Meet Your Street neighbourhood sessions, Matariki and Diwali celebrations, Have a Go Day and Music on the Green.

Selwyn District Council's financial performance for the year was strong. Expenditure for the year was \$86.9 million, compared with the budget of \$88.3 million. Revenue was \$148.9 million, compared with the budget of \$116.3 million. The main revenue variations were due to development contribution income being \$8.3 million above budget and vested assets being valued at \$11.7 million higher than the budget. Development contributions are contributions taken at the time of subdivision which are used to fund new parks and growth related costs. This funding cannot be used to subsidise rates. Vested assets are new infrastructure such as roads and footpaths which is transferred to the Council from new development areas. Vested assets do not generate income. The Council also received dividend income which was \$4.7 million higher than budgeted.

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