

Left licks wounds

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The Greens are hoping to draw a line under their torrid year, ejecting disgraced MP Darleen Tana from the party after a scandal involving her connections to alleged migrant exploitation at her husband's business. Tana was the latest in a series of scandals that embroiled the left this year, which have undermined its ability to present a credible alternative government.

Cities to be 'flooded' with land

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The government announced a suite of regulatory changes that will free up additional urban and rural land for housing and make it easier and cheaper to build on that land. While Labour and the Greens quibbled with details, they supported the substance of the changes. Parliament is now a united front in favour of deregulation to resolve New Zealand's housing crisis.

Slightly slower track

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Shane Jones and Chris Bishop have said they are open to changing the government's fast track consenting regime, currently in front of select committee. The Beehive is not surprised the regime is controversial, but it was surprised at the volume of opposition. An obvious and likely change is to limit the level of ministerial involvement in final consenting decisions.

Christopher Luxon shows sharp elbows at Nato

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Despite New Zealand having very little to do with Nato, recent prime ministers, including Christopher Luxon, have used invitations to meetings of Nato leaders to get quality time with leaders who would normally ignore New Zealand. This year's summit was no exception.

Cut on the horizon

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The Reserve Bank held the OCR at 5.5% this week. The bank said restrictive monetary policy had significantly reduced consumer price inflation and it would return to within the 1% to 3% target range.

Dairy drop

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The Global Dairy Trade price index witnessed its largest drop since August last year, plunging 6.9% to an average price of US\$3,782 a metric tonne (NZ\$5,672/MT).

Electrifying

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Car and battery firm Tesla has been contracted by Contact to build and service a 100MW battery at Glenbrook at a cost of up to \$163m. The battery will be sited next to NZ Steel and Transpower's grid connection point.

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Left licks wounds

It has been a bruising few months for the opposition. Despite strong showings in recent polls, the left bloc's support parties have been rocked by scandal after scandal since last year's election.

Last Saturday, Darleen Tana resigned from the Greens, falling on her sword before she was pushed. An independent review connected Tana to allegations of migrant exploitation at her husband's bike business, which were made public in March. Tana disputes the findings.

Ejected from caucus, Tana is for now an independent MP. The Greens are calling on her to resign from Parliament altogether, allowing them to bring in an additional MP.

Tana has incentives to stay, particularly given her husband's business appears to be in some strife. Should she choose to stay, the Greens may decide to hold their collective noses and "waka jump" her. This would be a big step, given the Greens' historic opposition to punishing waka jumpers, and the fact that Tana would be the first MP to be ejected from Parliament since the current waka jumping regime was legislated in 2018. However, it appears Green members, who strongly support co-leader Chlöe Swarbrick and abhor migrant exploitation, may be on the party's side.

Swarbrick said no discussions have been had about using the waka jumping law, but that it is on the table.

Parliament has been in an extended recess since the Budget, sitting for just one week in the seven following Budget Day. Swarbrick will want to come to some resolution by the time Parliament returns in a week, and if not then, before the Green Party's AGM in Christchurch at the end of the month, when members are considering presenting a remit calling on Swarbrick to eject Tana from Parliament.

Despite taking their largest ever cohort of MPs to Parliament (14), the Greens are reeling from scandal and tragedy. In a little over a year, scandal has destroyed the careers of Elizabeth Kerekere, Golriz Ghahraman, and Darleen Tana. High ranking MP Julie Anne Genter's reputation was badly dented by an outburst in Parliament which will very shortly see her hauled before the Privileges Committee and could see her found in contempt of Parliament and censured.

The party is also grappling with the death of Efeso Collins, Marama Davidson taking leave to battle breast cancer, and the retirement of James Shaw.

The only thing going right for the Greens is their high polling, with the party registering 12.2% in the June Taxpayers' Union-Curia poll.

The Greens are cautious and occasionally complacent. Their polling buoyed by a relatively conservative Labour Party is likely to stay relatively elevated. But Swarbrick has publicly acknowledged the party has had a torrid year and that it needs to look inward, including at its candidate selection process, which is partly responsible for bringing these MPs to Parliament.

The party has, for a long time, avoided a showdown with members to change who wields the power over the party's list. Power currently sits with members. This often means candidates with impeccable leftwing credentials but questionable personalities get bumped up the list at the expense of safer pairs of hands.

The Greens are not the only party on the left in a funk. Te Pāti Māori is the subject of multiple investigations over allegations involving misuse of census data and other private information to further its electoral aims. The party has attacked the investigation with heavy American-style rhetoric, arguing that vested interests are setting the power of the state against their movement.

All this chaos is a challenge for Labour, which continues to poll low (25.9%) in the latest Curia poll and will require the support of both the Greens and Te Pāti Māori to govern. Te Pāti Māori is a serious concern, with Labour knowing the party's radicalism is offputting to voters they need to win back. Hipkins gets on well with co-leader Debbie Ngarewa-Packer, but relations with Party President John Tamihere and co-leader Rawiri Waititi (married to Tamihere's daughter) are strained, with Tamihere's close friend, Labour MP Willie Jackson, forced to play intermediary.

Hipkins took the unusual step this week of urging the Greens to waka jump Tana this week, arguing it was time to bring the circus on the left to a close. He looked every bit the leader of the left bloc, which he needs to if he's to stand a hope of putting up a credible alternative in 2026.

Cities to be 'flooded' with land

The government is forging ahead with a quietly radical agenda to end the country's housing crisis by reducing the cost of new housing. Housing Minister Chris Bishop announced plans to "flood" cities and towns with land for development by ushering in a more permissive, less NIMBY, planning regime.

Bishop's announcement follows a suite of regulatory changes by Building and Construction Minister Chris Penk and Minister for Regulation David Seymour to cut red tape and make it cheaper and easier to build.

The measures are controversial on all sides; on the right, National's Auckland electorates rebelled

against the party when it backed Labour's MDRS densification rules in 2021, while some on the left oppose the return of "shoebox" apartments through abolishing councils' ability to set minimum size requirements.

The opposition has been relatively quiet about the substance of the changes. The reason for this is twofold. The first, is that Bishop's main mechanism for delivering the reforms will be to strengthen, extend, and clarify the NPS-UD, a 2020 vintage Labour government document dating back to Phil Twyford's time as Urban Development minister; the second is that the opposition agrees with the substance of the changes, which mainly strengthen Twyford's document by removing room for councils to interpret what sort of transit corridors qualify for densification, and extends places Twyford wanted it to go in 2020 had he been able to get the political buy-in.

The changes come on the heels of four years of reforms that have radically altered the balance of planning in New Zealand from being fairly restrictive, to being far more permissive, mainly by forcing councils' hands. Bishop said he is effectively creating a "right to build" in some places. The unusual amount of bipartisan support suggests the reforms are here to stay, with both National and Labour deciding whatever political opportunity might exist in appealing to people who dislike the rules is outweighed by the costs of the continued housing crisis, which both are determined to solve. Act and the Greens are on board. For now, there is no way back.

The substance of Bishop's changes is:

- Councils will be required to quickly "live zone" 30 years of "feasible development capacity", based on "high" population projections. This means zoning land that can realistically and commercially be developed. Currently, just three years of land is required to be live-zoned.
- Councils will be prohibited from setting arbitrary rural-urban boundaries, allowing cities to expand outwards – however, developers will be required to prove they can pay for infrastructure connections.
- Councils will be forced to enable more mixed-use developments, including buildings with cafes and restaurants on the ground floor and housing on upper floors.
- Councils will no longer be able to set minimum size requirements or balcony requirements. Bishop cited 2015 evidence from Auckland that said balcony size requirements increased the cost of an apartment by \$40,000 to \$70,000 per unit.
- The MDRS will become optional for councils, but they must complete Bishop's 30-year active zoning

in the very same plan in which they alter or opt out of the MDRS.

Meanwhile, Penk announced the latest in a suite of deregulation measures designed to lower construction costs. He progressed a requirement for building consent authorities to use remote (mobile app based) inspections as a default approach, removing the need for many manual inspections.

Cautious council minds immediately turned to the leaky homes saga. Auckland Council's building consents manager Ian McCormick, regarded as one of the authorities on consenting, cautioned that for some inspections, including pre-line (inspecting frames) and final inspections the failure rate can be just under 40%. He argued these high rates of failure suggest the government should favour hands-on, in-person approach for some inspections.

Labour has been mostly supportive of the changes, but has criticized abolishing minimum size requirements and prohibiting the abolition of the rural-urban boundary. There is a split in the party between the likes of Environment Minister David Parker, whose NPS on highly productive land under the last government further protected rural land from urban encroachment, and people like Twyford who support a far more permissive development regime.

Hipkins was cautiously supportive, but cited the leaky homes debacle as a reason to be cautious about further deregulation.

But that is getting ahead of things.

In the short term, the big political story will shift from the Beehive to councils, who in the next year will be required to carry out a "ratification vote" on whether they intend to retain, alter, or remove the MDRS from their urban areas. If they choose to alter or remove the MDRS they must then swiftly move to implement Bishop's other zoning requirements.

This means, with a little over a year before the next local body elections, the councils in our cities and largest towns must swiftly relitigate one of the most divisive planning debates of the last few years. Expect fireworks, particularly for councils who hold votes close to local body elections next year.

Slightly slower track

Parliament's Environment committee continues to hear submissions on the Fast Track approvals bill. Applications to be among the first projects to be

Golden opportunity

Resources Minister Shane Jones visited Australia this week as part of his ongoing and controversial campaign to entice international mining firms to invest in New Zealand.

Jones wants to double mining exports by 2035.

referred for fast tracking in schedule 2A of the bill have closed. The applications are now being assessed.

The bill is due back from select committee in September, and the list of projects will then be included in the bill in an amendment at committee of the whole house stage.

Ministers are weighing up whether to significantly weaken the ministerial powers of the current bill, which makes ministers the final decision makers on projects, although they must be sent to an expert panel first.

The government is acting to soften perceptions of the bill. Its most recent quarterly plan dropped the name “fast track” and reverted to calling the bill a “one-stop shop consenting and permitting scheme”, mirroring language from the coalition agreement. NZ First’s Shane Jones, one of the troika of ministers driving the project has begun saying that it is the “one-stop shop” part of the legislation, which allows applicants to apply for necessary approvals under things like the Conservation Act, the Wildlife Act, the Crown Minerals Act, and several other laws, which was the most important part of the bill.

NZ First is still keen that ministers retain the powers included in the bill, and not revert to a panel-led regime that currently exists as part of the fast track process established by Labour. Act is keen that ministers not be given final say, and National is somewhere in the middle, although it errs towards Act. Jones has publicly said he would prefer to keep ministerial powers, but acknowledged that he may be overruled by the other two parties. Any decision on that will wait until the bill returns from select committee.

Luxon’s sharp elbows

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon spent the week in Washington DC at the Nato summit. Since Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern became the first prime minister in more than a decade to attend a summit in 2022, it has become something of a fixture on

prime ministers’ calendars, with each subsequent prime minister attending in New Zealand’s capacity as a member of the Indo-Pacific Four, along with Australia, Japan and South Korea.

The intimate nature of the summit, which includes 32 of the Western world’s most powerful leaders, means it is a good opportunity for New Zealand to rub shoulders with leaders who would be out of our league at larger summits, like United Nations leaders week.

The summit had a Ukraine focus, and Luxon announced an additional \$16m support for Ukraine’s war effort.

Luxon secured a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron, cementing the strong relationship with Europe’s preeminent (though now humbled) leader, forged by Ardern. He failed to land a White House visit, although this was never really likely. Luxon did manage to bump into President Biden on sidelines of the summit.

Nato and the IP4 nations including New Zealand announced work would begin on four “joint projects” which include support for Ukraine, artificial intelligence, disinformation and cybersecurity.

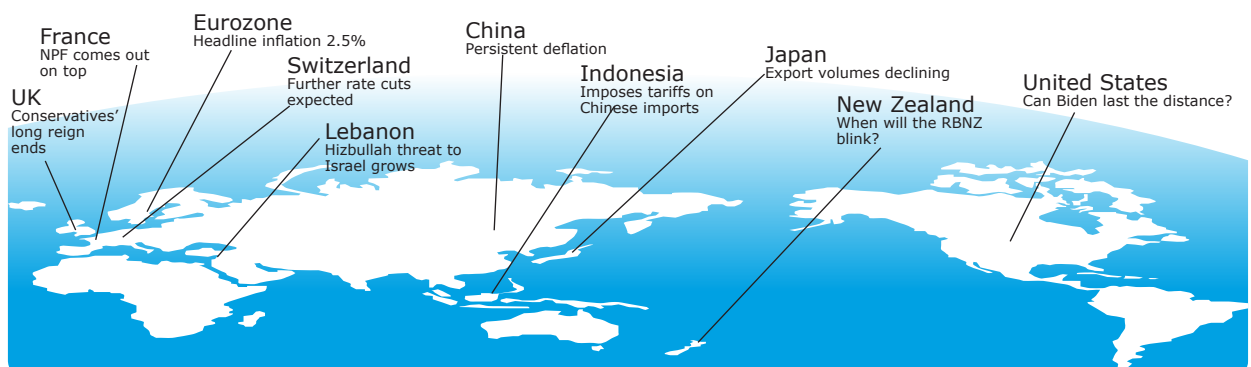
White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said, “each initiative is different, but the main goal is the same: harness the unique strengths of highly capable democracies to address shared challenges”.

The latter three are somewhat similar to the projects in Aukus pillar 2. It is not clear whether they require additional resource from New Zealand in terms of contributions to Nato work, or whether the projects could be used as a substitute for signing up to Aukus pillar 2, which also involves work on cybersecurity and artificial intelligence.

New Zealand has moved closer to Nato but has avoided going as far as others. We remain the only IP4 country not to sign an Individually Tailored Partnership Agreement.

Luxon was not the only one travelling. Foreign

The world at a glance



Minister Winston Peters led a political delegation to Solomon Islands, Nauru and Niue. He will be off to Japan and South Korea next week, keeping up his impressive travel schedule.

New quarterly plan

The government released its new quarterly plan for the next 91 days, containing 40 actions divided into three areas – “rebuild the economy and ease the cost of living”, “restore law and order”, and “deliver better public services”, with Luxon saying “law and order” is the main focus.

Several action-points were signalled earlier, including opening a \$1.2b Regional Infrastructure Fund for applications, consultation on Holidays Act changes and passing the second Local Water Done Well Bill – introduced to Parliament in May.

One of the big items due in the next couple of weeks is the government’s Emissions Reduction Plan for 2026-2030. The government is yet to seriously grapple with climate change.

Of the last quarterly plan, only beginning the demerger of the Te Pūkenga national polytech was unfulfilled, a black mark against Minister Penny Simmonds, who has already been demoted once.

Public service reshuffle

The top ranks of the public service have been refreshed. While the Beehive isn’t directly responsible for most of the clearout, it is not unhappy with it.

Treasury Secretary Caralee McLiesh is not seeking a

second term, the first Treasury secretary since 2002 not to serve a second term. Deputy Struan Little was appointed acting secretary and is a potential internal candidate for the top job.

Education Secretary Iona Holsted will finish up later this year after two terms.

This follows changes at KiwiRail, where chair David McLean has stepped down and the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Force, where experienced public servant (ex-DPMC, ex-MFAT) Brooke Barrington and Air Marshal Tony Davies are taking over the top jobs.

While a vacancy at the Defence Force was expected, the previous Secretary of Defence Andrew Bridgeman, was widely expected to get a second term.

Long-serving chief executive of Kainga Ora, Andrew McKenzie, announced he would leave the organisation later this year, following the Bill English Review. KiwiRail chief executive Peter Reidy could come under pressure to quit too.

There is of course a vacancy in the top job: Public Service Commissioner, following the retirement of Peter Hughes. Heather Baggott is currently serving in that role in an acting capacity.

With the exception of the likes of Kainga Ora and KiwiRail, whose boards are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of ministers, the Beehive has only limited say over who the Public Service Commissioner appoints to head departments. The Beehive is not unhappy with the current clearout, feeling that in many cases a fresh approach is needed. ■

Trading partner growth

(2022-23 actual; 2024-2026 Hugo and Consensus Forecasts)

Trading partners	Weights %	GDP Growth (ann avg %)					CPI Inflation (ann avg %)				
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
China	27.0	3.0	5.2	5.0	4.4	4.1	2.0	0.2	0.5	1.5	1.8
Australia	12.8	3.8	2.0	1.3	2.3	2.5	6.6	5.6	3.4	2.8	2.5
United States	12.5	1.9	2.5	2.3	1.7	2.1	8.0	4.1	3.2	2.4	2.3
Japan	5.3	1.0	1.9	0.3	1.2	0.9	2.5	3.3	2.6	2.0	1.6
Eurozone	6.2	3.4	0.5	0.7	1.4	1.5	8.4	5.4	2.4	2.0	2.0
South Korea	3.3	2.6	1.4	2.5	2.2	2.2	5.1	3.6	2.6	2.1	2.0
United Kingdom	2.2	4.3	0.1	0.6	1.1	1.6	9.1	7.3	2.6	2.3	2.2
Singapore	2.5	3.8	1.1	2.4	2.5	2.6	6.1	4.8	2.6	2.0	1.7
Hong Kong	1.6	-3.7	3.3	2.8	2.8	2.6	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.2	2.2
Taiwan	2.2	2.6	1.3	3.6	2.7	2.5	3.0	2.5	2.1	1.6	1.5
Malaysia	1.9	8.7	3.7	4.2	4.6	4.5	3.4	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.4
Indonesia	2.3	5.3	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.0	4.2	3.7	2.9	2.8	2.9
Thailand	1.8	2.5	1.9	2.7	3.2	3.1	6.1	1.2	0.8	1.7	1.8
Philippines	1.1	7.6	5.5	5.7	5.9	5.9	5.9	6.0	3.7	3.4	3.3
Vietnam	1.3	8.0	5.1	5.8	6.4	6.3	3.2	3.3	3.7	3.5	3.4
India	0.9	6.5	8.2	6.8	6.6	6.8	6.7	5.4	4.6	4.6	4.7
Canada	1.4	3.8	1.2	1.0	1.8	2.2	6.8	3.9	2.5	2.1	2.0
NZ Trading Partners	86.4	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	4.2	2.6	1.8	1.8	1.8
Forecasts for New Zealand											
Consensus		2.4	0.6	0.7	2.3	2.9	7.2	5.7	3.2	2.2	2.0
BNZ Forecasts		2.4	0.6	0.2	2.4	3.0	7.2	5.7	3.3	2.3	2.6
The World		2.9	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.5	7.4	5.6	4.3	3.0	3.0

DOMESTIC ECONOMY**Cut on the horizon**

The Reserve Bank kept the official cash rate on hold at 5.5%, but said restrictive monetary policy had significantly reduced consumer price inflation and it would return to within the 1% to 3% target range over the second half of this year.

The committee agreed monetary policy needs to “remain restrictive”, but the extent of this will be tempered with the expected decline in inflation pressures. The next key indicator will be CPI stats next week.

The NZ dollar fell immediately after the announcement from US\$61.3c to US\$60.9c signalling that markets saw the comments from the RBNZ as more dovish than had been expected. The market priced in a 60% chance of a rate cut in Nov following the announcement.

The next OCR review will be on Aug 14, when the RBNZ will revise its forecasts and publish an MPS.

The non-financial business sector showed negative saving of \$2.5b in the March 2024 quarter, according to Stats NZ. This is the fifth consecutive decrease since the final quarter of 2022 when gross operating surplus was \$18.9b. Interest paid increased by a further 2.2% to \$7.2b in the March 2024 quarter. Interest expenses made up 28% of income payable in the latest quarter. Net inventories declined \$5.2b.

In the March 2024 quarter, the total value of insurance and pension assets of households rose \$8.3b (5.5%) from the Dec 2023 quarter, following a \$6.2b (4.3%) rise in the previous quarter. Total household assets increased \$10.3b or 0.4% in the March 2024 quarter. Net worth rose \$7.8b (0.3%) in the quarter.

Data from the Ministry of Social Development said there were 13,668 more people on the Jobseeker Work Ready benefit in May than a year earlier, an increase of 14%. Another 2,052 went on to the benefit in the month of May. Since then, weekly reporting data shows another 2,450 signed up to the benefit through June.

The number of NZ citizens leaving the country hit another new record in the year to May with more than 60,000 long-term departures. Migration continues to run at high levels in both directions. Stats NZ said showing 138,600 total migrant departures in the May 2024 year, provisionally the highest on record for an annual period. This was offset by migrant arrivals of 221,400 for an annual net migration gain of 82,800.

Seek NZ's June dashboard showed job ad volumes fell 8% in June and were down by more than a third from a year ago. Volumes have been consistently

falling since Feb. Applications per job ad, recorded with a one-month lag, showed a 1% increase in May and were at record highs.

BNZ economists said that while a trend in declining job ads began in late 2022, it had accelerated since March this year. Most regions had a fall in job ad volumes, including a 9% fall in Wellington, 8% in Auckland and 7% in Canterbury. Manawatū recorded the biggest fall in monthly job ads at 16%, while Marlborough had the highest annual fall of 50%.

Annual figures show the impact retrenchment in public sector spending, with Wellington seeing the second largest decline in job ads over the past 12 months (-46%).

Worldline data for June said retail spending across its systems was down 2.3% compared to the same month last year.

CoreLogic's House Price Index fell 0.5% in June – the largest month-on-month decline since June 2023. Over the past 12 months to June, house prices were up 1.8%. The annual rise reflects the earlier but temporary 3.2% rise in prices between Sept 2023 and March 2024.

The government's financial statements for the 11 months ended May 31 said core Crown tax revenue was \$111.1b, 1.4% more than the \$109.55b forecast in the Budget Economic Fiscal Update published on May 30. Treasury said the variance was due to higher-than-expected tax revenue from Portfolio Investment Entities on the back of strong investment performance and resident withholding tax on dividends due to an uplift in dividend payments.

The Sharesies Index for April-June said confidence among its investors returned to “balanced” for the first time since June 2023. Sentiment has hovered mainly in the “cautious” range throughout 2024.

NZIER's Quarterly Survey of Business Opinion said a net 35% of firms expected a deterioration in the general economic outlook over the coming months on a seasonally adjusted basis. A net 28% of firms reported a decline in activity in their own business in the June quarter, which was up from 24% in the previous quarter.

There were 34,851 homes consented in the 12 months to May 31 this year, a 32% fall from the record of 51,015 for the May 2022 year. There were 15,309 consents for stand-alone houses, down 18% from the previous 12-month period. Consents for multi-unit homes were down 26% over the same period. Of the 19,542 multi-unit consents, 15,825 were townhouses, flats or units, 2,013 were apartments, and 1,704 were retirement units. Apartment consents were down 52% from the same period last year. ■

Primary Sector

Wedderspoon Organic, the largest seller of NZ sourced and manufactured mānuka honey products in North America, has been bought by **Florenz**, a subsidiary of the Christchurch-based investment company Masthead – owned by the Stewart family.

The **Global Dairy Trade price index** fell 6.9% to an average price of US\$3,782 a metric tonne (NZ\$5,672/MT) at the latest auction. The largest drop since Aug last year after 0.5% decline two weeks earlier. Across the auction, all products except lactose, decreased.

Sealord is selling its almost 35-year-old trawler Otakou, reducing its NZ operating fleet to six.

Energy and resources

Contact said normalised and expected earnings (ebitdaf) for FY2025 was expected to be \$770m, above the \$620m it expects to report in the year to June 30. It expects to deliver a 4 cents per share uplift from its current 35cps annual dividend.

Chair of the soon-to-be-canned **Consumer Advocacy Council**, Deborah Hart, said the increasing frequency of narrow supply margins and growing unaffordability for households were signs the electricity market is not working as well as it should.

Contact has contracted with **Tesla** to build and service a 100MW battery at Glenbrook at a cost of up to \$163m. The battery will be sited next to NZ Steel and Transpower's grid connection point.

The **Electricity Authority** is tendering out the provision for an online electricity price comparison and switching service to replace the Powerswitch website run by Consumer NZ.

Banking, finance and insurance

Dosh, the trading name of **MCA Investments**, is seeking a bank licence to become the only solely digital bank in NZ.

Offers to purchase collapsed buy-now-pay-later service **Laybuy** are being considered, receivers said.

Global private equity **Advent International** confirmed it was opening a new Australia and NZ office based in Sydney with former Anchorage Capital Partners managing director Beau Dixon appointed to lead Advent's new outpost.

The Commerce Commission proposed approving **Payments NZ's** application to play a key role in developing open banking standards with some conditions applied. The regulator proposed prohibiting non-independent directors of the industry body's board from making any decisions on the standards.

Telecommunications, media & entertainment

Stuff said the Sunday News newspaper will close at the end of July after 61 years of publishing. It also announced the closure of its last remaining Northland community newspapers as **NZME** said it was cutting staff at most of its regional newspapers to divert resources.

Wholesale and retail

Briscoe Group said changes in tax legislation will decrease deferred tax asset and net profit by \$7.4m in the year to Jan 26 2025. The change in tax legislation enacted on March 28 means the tax depreciation rate on commercial buildings with an estimated useful life of 50 years or more will be reduced to 0%.

Woolworths said physical assaults at its stores rose 50% to 329 incidents in the 12 months to June 30. The number of overall acts of violence and aggression rose 9% to 925.

Five years after opening its flagship store on Auckland's Queen St, French beauty retailer **Sephora** is closing in August.

Transport

Port of Tauranga said changes to tax depreciation rules will result in a \$12.9m impact on the group's net profit after tax for the year ending June 30 2024. The company still expects to deliver a normalised operating profit in line with previous guidance.

Consent for a port extension at **Northport** was declined, largely due to adverse cultural effects. The port had been seeking 11.7ha of reclamation and associated coastal structures for a 250 metre wharf extension, and 1.72m cubic metres of capital dredging and ongoing maintenance dredging.

Manufacturing and construction

Fletcher Building handed over the completed 303-room Horizon Hotel, which is connected to the NZ International Convention Centre, to **Sky City**. The Hobson Street hotel was originally due to open in 2019 but was pushed back following the convention centre fire, and further construction delays.

Courts, legal and regulation

The **Indian government** failed in a bid to trademark the "basmati" rice variety in NZ.

Inland Revenue said it will be "honing in" on cryptocurrency holders who fail to declare their income in their tax returns. IRD has identified 227,000 crypto-asset users in NZ, with around 7m transactions with a value of \$7.8b.

El Cheapo Cars pleaded guilty to seven charges laid against its financing wing **Ezybid Finance** by the

CORPORATE ROUND-UP

Commerce Commission. It said the Wellington-based car dealership and finance lender did not adequately disclose the terms of loans.

The Financial Markets Authority censured **deVere NZ** for failing to comply with obligations under its Financial Advice Provider licence. The censure concerns deVere's conduct while advising clients on UK pension transfers.

The High Court at Auckland ruled **Country Road's** NZ operation must retroactively pay \$2.5m in duties and GST to Customs. In Aug 2023, Customs appealed a decision by the Customs Appeal Authority which held that Country Road NZ did not owe duties on the licensing and royalty payments it makes to its parent company for intellectual property.

Cleaning company **Canterbury Industrial Scrubbing** was fined \$51,000 for uninterrupted cartel behaviour over nearly two decades. The High Court at Christchurch ruled that a fine of up to \$1.25m in the civil case would have been appropriate if it weren't for the financial circumstances.

Technology and IT

Infratil said its CDC Australasian datacentre stake was now worth up to A\$4.9b (NZ\$5.3b) with a midpoint valuation of A\$4.5b. At the end of March, Infratil's investment in CDC was valued at a midpoint of A\$4b, or as much as A\$4.3b.

Chorus said the average amount of data used per person for June 2024 was 623 GB, 2GB more than the previous highest average monthly use in 2021 during covid lockdowns and 25GB more than the March 2024 average of 598GB.

Scott Technology agreed two new deals with European companies for materials handling products worth a combined €11m (NZ\$19m).

Service industries and healthcare

Despite growth in sales, **Summerset** said it expects to deliver underlying profit of between \$87m and \$90m for the six months to June 30. The lower end of the estimate would come in just under the underlying profit of \$87.2m Summerset reported for the same period last year.

TruScreen began a commercial rollout of its cervical cancer screening devices in Vietnam, with an order placed by Gorton Health Services with a total value of approximately \$100,000.

Property

After evicting its former owner, the **Anglican Diocese of Auckland** was granted permission to demolish the Parnell City Lodge building, which sits on land with a rateable value of \$5.5m.

Corporate actions

Freightways chair **Mark Cairns** pulled out of the running to be Fletcher Building's new chair, criticising the process and the board.

New Talisman Gold Mines has told its shareholders to raise at least \$2m to bring its Karangahake Gorge mine into production, as there were very few options left for the company. This followed a temporary trading halt over the company's annual report, which included a 'disclaimer of opinion' because of insufficient evidence in forecasting the group's future cashflows and the likely outcome of the debt or equity capital raise to fund its operations through to production.

Capital markets

ASX-listed mining company **Santana Minerals** applied for a secondary listing on the NZX. The application follows a gold discovery by Santana subsidiary **Matakanui Gold** in NZ.

Geneva Finance will delist from the NZX main board after shareholder approval.

People

The Auckland International Airport board nominated **Grant Devonport** as a director. He is the retiring chief financial officer of the company running Melbourne's main international airport.

NZ Infrastructure Commission chief executive **Ross Copland** resigned and will leave the organisation later this year.

Scott Pickering was appointed chair of **Evolution Healthcare** and director of **Fidelity Life**.

Carl Storm resigned from his executive roles at **WasteCo** but will remain a key shareholder and director. He is standing aside for new chief executive, **David Peterson**.

Bremworth appointed **Rochelle Flint** as chief brand and product officer.

Millennium & Copthorne Hotels NZ announced the appointment of **Anand Rambhai** as its new vice president of finance. 🏢

