# **GETBA Breakfast with Christopher Luxon and Paula Bennett**

### **18 June 2021 | Waipuna Conference Suites Highbrook**

## **Sponsored by Bayleys**

***"When a child is fighting for their life, they need their family to fight with them."***

Last year, Ronald McDonald House provided more than 250 nights' accommodation for 47 East Tamaki families with hospitalised children. Welcoming more than XX guests to this breakfast event, GETBA general manager Ruth White encouraged everyone to support Ronald McDonald House's Join the Fight to Fund a Night fundraising campaign.

Scott Campbell of Bayleys began by affirming the company's strong links with GETBA, expressing pride as long-term sponsors, and looking forward "to the next 20 years!" He then offered an insightful overview of the current residential and commercial property markets, highlighting how these have become more appealing to private investors, especially with term deposits paying "extraordinarily low returns".

Commercial property vacancies in Auckland are at a historic low but, despite yields having "aggressively declined", there has been an uptick in speculative development, such as the Riverside development. Conversely, office and retail vacancies have increased, and there have been many examples of change of use (for example, from admin to distribution).

Summing up, Scott said that industrial is the "golden sector", e-commerce will continue to grow, rents will continue to rise, and land values may continue to accelerate. In these uncertain times, we need to "watch this space".

Former deputy prime minister Paula Bennett is now Bayleys' director of strategic advisory. She led an energetic and refreshingly candid Q&A with Scott Campbell and Christopher Luxon, National's MP for Botany.

Chris spoke first of his "emotional connection" to Botany, describing this hugely diverse electorate as a "pretty special place" – "the new New Zealand is here".

Chris is a member of the transport and infrastructure select committee and, not surprisingly, there was a lengthy and lively discussion about infrastructure, with roading and traffic particularly under the spotlight. There was consensus from everyone – speakers and guests alike – that congestion is daily responsible for lack of productivity. The shelved Mill Road upgrades were referenced with frustration. Again, there was general agreement that a lack of joined-up thinking (e.g., considering all the basic infrastructure requirements – schools, hospitals, housing – when looking at new developments) impedes progress and is more costly in the long run. Ideally, Chris would like to be able to act more strategically, beginning with the premise: "What kind of country do we want to be in 2040?" and working to this "top to bottom plan".

The idea of toll roads was relatively warmly received, but there was a more mixed reaction to congestion charging.

Concerns were raised about supply chain issues and labour shortages, especially migrant workers, acknowledging the multiple challenges business owners face, including stock, cash flow, cash management, and spiralling freight charges.

It also became clear that family and supporting future generations are personal and political priorities for Chris. He questioned why more is being spent on mental health and yet worse outcomes are being achieved, and shared his deep concern that only 58 per cent of Kiwi children are in school 90 per cent of the time.

It was an engrossing and thought-provoking 40 minutes, and the time passed swiftly. Guests clearly enjoyed the robust discussions and the opportunity to better get to know their local MP. Conversations between attendees continued from the conference room to the walk back to the car park!