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EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 NZDT 8 DECEMBER 2015

New Zealand employers expect a marginal increase in hiring activity heading into 2016; with the lower dollar comes new opportunities for growth

Manpower Employment Outlook Survey Q1 2016

AUSTRALIA (8 December 2015): According to the most recent Manpower Employment Outlook Survey released today New Zealand employers' hiring intentions remain upbeat heading into the new year.

The survey of more than 650 local employers found that while fifteen percent are looking to increase their headcount, fewer (4%) intend to decrease their workforce in the coming quarter. Meanwhile, the majority (79%) won't be making any changes, suggesting that the next three months will provide a steady level of opportunities and a measure of labour market stability for job seekers and job holders alike. The resulting national Net Employment Outlook (NEO)¹ of +13% is up one percentage point quarter-on-quarter, and down fourteen percentage points from this time last year.

Lincoln Crawley, Managing Director, ManpowerGroup Australia and New Zealand said the 'rock star economy' may have passed, but the local economy is still strong, buoyed by construction and exports.

"Business confidence is back up from the year low in August, and although the dairy industry is still turbulent the lower New Zealand dollar is boosting other export services. Beef exports have risen year-on-year, and technology continues to be a key export. The weaker dollar is also likely to impact on tourism trade, further adding to the economy's strength and employment demand," Mr Crawley said.

Across the regions, employers in Christchurch recorded the strongest hiring intention with a NEO of +18%, up ten percentage points quarter-on-quarter. Employers in Auckland and Wellington have both reported slight decreases in hiring intention heading into the new year, down three and two percentage points from last quarter to record NEOs of +11% and +10%, respectively.

"We know that tourism projections are spurring infrastructure activity in Christchurch, coupled with the ongoing rebuild activity in the area, it's no surprise there is increased demand. In addition, Christchurch's growth has been above national growth, with its share of GDP at a peak, employers will be looking to hire to meet the demand this growth creates," Mr Crawley said.

¹ The Net Employment Outlook is calculated by subtracting the percentage of employers anticipating a decrease in hiring activity from the percentage of employers anticipating an increase in employment. Seasonal adjustment is then applied to the data.

Mining & Construction and Finance, Insurance & Real Estate currently offer the strongest prospects for job seekers, with employers in both sectors recording NEOs of +21%, up four and two percentage points quarter-on-quarter, respectively. Employers in Manufacturing and Public Administration reported a slight increase in hiring intention of two percentage points to record NEOs of +9% and 12%, respectively. While Services remained stable at +14%. Employers in Transport & Utilities and Wholesale Trade & Retail Trade were the only to record a decrease in hiring intention, down eight and six percentage points to +15% and +5%, respectively.

Small and Medium employers are the most positive heading into 2016, both recording a NEO of +20%, up one and ten percentage points on last quarter, respectively. Larger and Micro employers, while still positive, have reported drops in hiring intention over the same period, decreasing eleven and five percentage points to NEOs of +11% and +5%, respectively.

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Table 1. Net Employment Outlook Comparison by Region

	Q1 2016	Quarter-on-Quarter Change	Year-on-Year Change
National	+13%	+1%	-14%
Auckland	+11%	-3%	-15%
Christchurch	+18%	+10%	-6%
Wellington	+10%	-2%	-18%

Table 2. Net Employment Outlook Comparison by Sector

	Q1 2016	Quarter-on-Quarter Change	Year-on-Year Change
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	+21%	+2%	-7%
Manufacturing	+9%	+2%	-9%
Mining & Construction	+21%	+4%	-21%
Public Administration	+12%	+2%	-8%
Services	+14%	+0%	-12%
Transportation & Utilities	+15%	-8%	-16%
Wholesale Trade & Retail Trade	+5%	-6%	-22%

Table 3. Net Employment Outlook Comparison by Organisation size

	Q1 2016	Quarter-on-Quarter Change	Year-on-Year Change
Micro (<10)	+5%	-5%	-8%

Small (10-49)	+20%	+1%	-9%
Medium (50-249)	+20%	+10%	-10%
Large (>250)	+11%	-11%	-15%

Table 4. APAC Q1 2016 results

Country	Q1 2016	Quarter-on Quarter change	Year-on-Year change
AUSTRALIA	+8%	+1%	+1%
CHINA	+7%	+2%	-4%
HONG KONG	+15%	+/-0%	+/-0%
INDIA	+42%	+1%	-1%
JAPAN	+23%	+/-0%	+3%
NEW ZEALAND	+13%	+1%	-14%
SINGAPORE	+11%	-1%	-7%
TAIWAN	+29%	-6%	-15%

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