

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 5AM ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **OCC and OSEA boards propose merger**

The boards of the Otago Southland Employers' Association and the Otago Chamber of Commerce today announced a proposal to merge the two organisations into a unified entity called "Business South".

The proposal is subject to OSEA and OCC member approval but, if supported in its current form, would see the two business membership organisations merge by 1 November 2020.

Information about the proposal was shared with OSEA and OCC members and staff yesterday.

"In 2020 the operating environment for Otago and Southland businesses has been more challenging than ever before," said OSEA Board President Andrew Leys, "and this dynamic business landscape is likely to continue to evolve rapidly.

"We recognise an opportunity to provide business in the south with a strong, unified voice, at the same time as ensuring that the membership organisations that have proudly supported business in the south for a combined almost 300 years are best placed to continue to do so."

"This proposal is about creating a single membership entity that can not only meet the needs of current and future members but also deliver improved value," added OCC President Grant McKenzie.

"OSEA and OCC offer complementary services which, when combined, will create an enhanced offering for both memberships and provide opportunities to increase member benefits."

Under the proposal, once member approval for the merger has been confirmed, the OCC and OSEA boards will establish an interim, single board which will act as a transition board. This board will appoint a CEO who will take operational responsibility for the merger.

The proposal also includes ongoing consultation with OCC and OSEA members so that their feedback regarding the operations and services of the proposed new, unified membership organisation can be taken into consideration.

In the meantime both organisations will continue to provide services as they have always done across Otago (and Southland in the case of OSEA).

ENDS

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