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THE COMPLEX POLITICS OF IMMIGRATION

It's perhaps one of the bigger ironies of current New Zealand politics that the tightening up on immigration proposed by both main parties has been greeted with guarded approval by immigrant candidates. Meanwhile, business groups are lobbying the Government to complain about its tightening up and have reservations about Labour's proposals. But the argument that there could be a bitter and divisive debate about the different policies during the election campaign tends to get kicked into touch by the reluctance of the ethnic candidates to engage. TAP TO EXPAND

FOOD SAFETY BOARD

Minister of Food Safety David Bennett has appointed Teresa Ciprian to the Food Safety Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) board.

BUOYANT OUTLOOK FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

The Ministry of Primary Industries annual "Situation and Outlook" report says New Zealand's primary industry exports are forecast to increase 2.4 percent to \$38.1 billion for the year ending June 2017. "Strong global prices for forestry and dairy products, combined with rising horticulture production volumes, are driving short-term growth, even though weather conditions have not been ideal for many sectors," it says.

"For the year ending June 2018, we expect that dairy prices will remain near current end of year levels, significantly boosting dairy export revenues. Also, strong forestry prices are expected to continue to drive record harvest volumes while

horticulture exports are also forecast to continue their strong growth.

“Meat and wool exports are lower in 2017, after two years of exceptional results, but exports are expected to resume growing during the year ending June 2018 despite lower sheep and cattle numbers.

“The fundamentals for continued trade growth remain strong. Our major trading partners are experiencing relatively robust demand for food imports as well as overall economic growth. Emerging opportunities for expanding trade in Southeast Asia and the Middle East also provide reason for optimism.”

BUT PER CAPITA GROWTH DOWN

Gross domestic product (GDP) rose 0.5 percent in the March 2017 quarter, following an increase of 0.4 percent in the December 2016 quarter, Stats NZ said yesterday.

GDP per capita decreased 0.1 percent, following a 0.2 percent fall in the December 2016 quarter.

Annual GDP growth for the year ended March 2017 was 3.0 percent.

GDP per head increase

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1.6%	1.7%	1.5%	1.7%	0.4%	0.9%

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT SOON

There were more hints yesterday that a major announcement on infrastructure funding is imminent. The OECD called for the Government to “pursue further options to broaden funding for infrastructure, including targeted property taxes that capture increases in land value from the provision of new amenities and more cost-reflective developer contributions. Further develop alternative delivery models, such as Public–Private Partnerships>”

In his detailed response to the OECD’s recommendations on the New Zealand economy which amounted to an explanation and defence of current Government policy, there was no response to the infrastructure recommendation. Instead, Joyce said: “Policies in this area are currently under development.”

SMITH SAYS NZ BUILDING REGS TOUGH ON CLADDING

New Zealand is less exposed to the risks of fire as a result of combustible claddings on high-rise buildings due to these products being restricted earlier this year, Building and Construction Minister Dr Nick Smith says. "The Government amended Building Code provisions in January this year to restrict the use of combustible cladding systems in buildings following fires in Melbourne and Dubai. I am advised that these systems are not prevalent in New Zealand. I have asked the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to contact councils and check whether any high-rise buildings have been constructed with these materials prior to the amendments earlier this year.



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