

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

18 August 2021

COVID forces postponement of New Zealand’s largest gala dinner

“Disappointing but necessary” is how Property Council New Zealand chief executive Leonie Freeman describes the forced postponement of the country’s largest gala dinner event, the Property Council New Zealand Rider Levett Bucknall Property Industry Awards.

The 2021 gala dinner had sold over 1,500 tickets and was scheduled to take place at Spark Arena, Auckland this Friday 20 August. The event will now take place on Friday 29 October 2021.

“Thanks to the tremendous efforts of our suppliers we have been able to donate all pre-purchased food items to the Auckland City Mission, which is a wonderful silver-lining to the unfortunate circumstances”, says Freeman.

The annual event has been postponed for the second time in its 24-year history, with two postponements in 2020 moving the event from June to September before it was eventually able to be run in November.

“In 2020 we were fortunate to be able to hold the event, as the Government announced a community case in Auckland mere hours prior to us opening the doors but didn’t officially lockdown the city. We made the difficult decision to go ahead as unfortunately the lack of clarity meant none of the cancellation clauses in our supplier contracts were triggered. Had we cancelled, the organisation would have faced a very difficult financial hurdle”, says Freeman.

“While this year’s postponement is disappointing, the clarity provided by the Ministry of Health coupled with strong contingency planning by our team has meant we are much better placed to pivot the event at short notice.

“We surveyed our members late last year to canvas opinion on whether in a case such as this the event should be postponed or held virtually, and the response was resoundingly in favour of postponement. We do have a full recording of the awards ceremony as a contingency but will continue to do all we can to bring this event to our members as an in-person offering.

“It’s certainly no small task to reschedule an event of this magnitude and we thank our suppliers, sponsors and members for their support over this time.

“We applaud the Ministry of Health and government for their swift and decisive action and look forward to being able to bring the industry together once again in October, COVID-willing,” says Freeman.

ENDS

For further comment please contact:

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Please note that Leonie will be unavailable for comment between 1pm – 3pm this afternoon.

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

About the Awards

The prestigious Property Council New Zealand Rider Levett Bucknall Property Industry Awards are presented to outstanding property projects, developments or substantive refurbishments across New Zealand.

The 2021 Gala Dinner, scheduled to be held at Spark Arena in Auckland, is amongst New Zealand's largest and most established, attracting up to 1,600 guests on an annual basis throughout its 25-year history.

The Awards are Property Council New Zealand's flagship event, generating a considerable amount of revenue and publicity. The Property Council hosts approximately 80 events per annum across New Zealand, with event income a key revenue stream for the organisation.

About Property Council New Zealand

Property Council New Zealand is the leading advocate for New Zealand's largest industry - property.

A not-for-profit organisation, the Property Council connects more than 15,000 property professionals, championing the interests of over 560 member companies who have a collective \$50 billion investment in New Zealand property.

Our membership is broad and includes some of the largest commercial and residential property owners and developers in New Zealand. The property industry comes together at our 80+ Property Council events, which offer professional development, exceptional networking and access to industry-leading research.

Property Council acts as a collective voice, giving our members a seat at the table with policy makers, ensuring they make informed decisions that benefit our industry whilst enabling a strong economy and thriving communities.

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