Research question

How can local property entrepreneurs be enabled to contribute to the regeneration of second-tier settlements?
Why this topic?

- This topic emerged from preliminary talks with property entrepreneurs in Ashburton and Timaru interested in the provision of commercial, retail and hotel premises.

- Those interviewed were people engaging passionately with town centre development projects.

- They were also reporting ongoing struggles with the institutions who fund and regulate property development, e.g., Hydro Hotel.
Approach

• Literature review (year 1) focusing on small-medium sized towns in UK, Europe, Australia and NZ

• 31 interviews in Timaru and Ashburton:
  o Developers and real estate experts
  o Planners, council members
  o Business owners/advisors
  o Urban designers
  o Property owners

• Analysis consistent with the tenets of realist evaluation: “what works for whom in what circumstances and why” (Pawson & Manzano-Santaella, 2012).
Emerging ideas

• New institutionalism as an interpretative approach focusing on: provenance, rules of the game, informal relations, and outcomes in research settings

• Given current institutional arrangements, private entrepreneurs are the only likely developers of commercial property in small towns in NZ

• There is a need to find ways of increasing the capacity of local government to work effectively with these developers.

• Thought needs to be applied to activities which lower the barriers to development activity:
  o Master planning
  o Clearer planning processes
  o Opportunity for PPP’s
  o Central government intervention/policy