

MEDIA RELEASE
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McDonald's Canterbury celebrating 30 years of being Locally Owned and Operated

Queues of excited fans and curious locals were already forming well before the doors opened on opening day at McDonald's Linwood and Merivale who both opened at the same time on 3 November, 1987.

The rush for the world famous Big Mac and french fries created a traffic gridlock that almost brought Christchurch to a standstill as both restaurants, which were the first McDonald's restaurants to open in the South Island, almost broke world records with their opening days. Mystery surrounds whether Linwood or Merivale was the busiest on the day and only franchisees Bruce Davis and Alan Traill, who are sworn to secrecy on the matter, know the answer.

"There were hundreds of people lining up to get in on opening morning – and the lines never went away," says Bruce of Linwood's 1987 opening. "There was a sea of faces from opening to closing, and for many days after that."

"News quickly spread, and we had people travelling huge distances from the Westcoast, Nelson and South of Dunedin to try McDonald's, often for the very first time. The stories of the adventures and efforts that people made were extraordinary and inspiring" says Bruce, who currently owns 5 McDonald's restaurants in Christchurch.

Alan Traill, the franchisee of Merivale, recounts his experience at the time. "We moved our family to Christchurch from Whangarei, where we opened owned and operated our first McDonald's restaurant 6 years earlier, to open Merivale in 1987. It was an economically uncertain time after the 87 crash with interest rates above 20 per cent, but our belief in McDonald's and in Christchurch made us confident that it was worth taking the huge risk. We are happy we chose Christchurch to be our family's new home and are very proud to now call ourselves Cantabrians".

"The people of Christchurch have supported our business which has been proudly locally owned and operated for the last 30 years. Very few people would realise how local and Cantabrian our brand is in Christchurch. It always amuses me when our brand is portrayed as a 'global corporate'; the fact is, it couldn't be further from the truth" Alan explains.

"The franchisees all have a deep, personal connection to the area and the region is as strong today as it was 30 years ago. We are proud to have former employees who have gone on to become McDonald's franchisees themselves," says Alan.

In addition to being a major local employer of over 1000 crew and managers, McDonald's local franchisees have made supporting the community part of everything they do. Supporting countless teams, individuals, clubs, tournaments, fairs, groups and events and literally hundreds of thousands of Player of The Day Certificates and Achievement Awards only scratch the surface of what they have done for the community.

Canterbury residents are invited to celebrate the 30th anniversary of McDonald's in the community. McDonald's is sending special deals to mailboxes Canterbury-wide for residents to enjoy their favourite McDonald's items at one-off birthday prices.

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About McDonald's Christchurch

There are 17 McDonald's restaurants in the Christchurch and Canterbury area today, all of which have a strong connection to the opening day November 3, 1987. Original franchisees Bruce and Madeline Davis and Alan and Neti Traill still proudly own and operate multiple stores in Christchurch. Both operators have children that are now very proud second-generation McDonald's franchisees: Michaela Davis, Bruce and Madeline's daughter, and her fiance Cam own the Rangiora restaurant and Murray Traill, Alan and Neti's son, and his wife Jess own 4 restaurants around Christchurch. Pat Cornish and Dave Whalley were both Restaurant Managers at Merivale on day one Nov 3, 1987: Pat and his wife Anne now own the Kaiapoi restaurant and Dave and Andrea own the Rolleston and Ashburton restaurants.

About McDonald's New Zealand

New Zealand's first McDonald's restaurant opened in Porirua in 1976. Today there are over 165 McDonald's restaurants across New Zealand, 85 per cent of which are owned and operated by local business men and women. The organisation employs over 9,000 people in restaurants nationwide, and is one of New Zealand's largest employers of youth. In 2016 McDonald's spent more than \$150 million with local suppliers, while New Zealand producers exported over \$247 million of food to other McDonald's markets around the world. McDonald's is the primary supporter of Ronald McDonald House Charities New Zealand, who keep families close while their children are in hospital.

For more information visit www.mcdonalds.co.nz

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