



Photo Stewart Nimmo

## Reflections on the 'Reefton Shop Front' Project

Amongst economic development professionals it is accepted that the most successful projects take time to realise measurable benefits. Sixteen years ago, DWC in its very early years became a financial supporter of one such project.

The 'Reefton Shop Front' project had its beginnings in 2003 when a delegation from Inangahua Tourism Promotions (ITP) in Reefton came to the then West Coast Development Trust with a proposal to 'do-up' some of the shop fronts in Reefton's main street, Broadway, to make the town more attractive to, and I quote, "shoppers and stoppers".

The vision that the then ITP group had when they brought their proposal to the Trustees of the time was gutsy and for the long-term. DWC provided a commercial loan to ITP, who were then able to onlend to shop owners at very reasonable rates, enabling the business owners to renovate their shopfronts in a heritage style. Broadway and Reefton at large as we know it today began its revival.

While only a few took part in the first phase, it very much set the



From the desk of **Helen Wilson**  
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION MANAGER

scene for more developments to follow. Other phases enabled more to come on board and some owners wanting to contribute to the town's revitalisation took their own initiatives to upgrade their buildings. In essence the project was transformational in taking the town forward for long-term sustainability.

Sixteen years down the track and the benefits are evident for both the community and visitors to the town. It was an early economic development project that DWC is proud to have supported.

On re-reading the original application it was interesting to note a quote in support from the well-known international community development leader, Peter Kenyon.

*"Nowadays towns are really not so different from businesses, they need to keep recreating themselves. The successful towns are likely to be driven by people who are passionate and creative, who see an opportunity and go for it. Some have it, some don't. Reefton has it!"*

## Revitalisation is a Marathon, Not a Sprint

Paul Thomas, joint-owner of the Broadway Tearooms and Bakery, shares his insights on Reefton.

The idea of the 'Reefton Shop Front' project was to emphasise Reefton's distinctiveness; make it stand out from other towns, to engender pride from local people in their town, to create a destination town for visitors and to develop the town economically.

The revitalisation of any place is not a sprint, but a marathon. This community-led initiative has met the challenge, it has endured the marathon and produced an inspirational result. Reefton is now renowned as a thriving and vibrant town, which stands out from the crowd in New Zealand.

As a consequence of the revitalisation local people now have great pride in their place. Visitors stream in, people desire to come and live, and people are upbeat about the town's economy. Further investment into the town is being achieved such as the recent start-up Reefton Distilling Co that opened in 2018. This business initiative puts a stamp of confidence on the town and its future.

As part of the shop front project team, I would say, nothing beats community-led initiatives. The investment by DWC into Reefton through the shop front project was an innovative model for



community economic development, a leap of faith at the time for the investment made, but it has created immeasurable results that have ensured the strong possibility of the town having long-term sustainability. That is a fantastic outcome.

## Business Breakfast on Business Continuity

The recent loss of the Waiho Bridge provided a stark reminder of the impact disruptions can have on businesses on the Coast, reinforcing the importance of continuity and contingency planning.

DWC business development manager Dave Lynch says business continuity is all about ensuring your business, whether big or small, is able to recover and continue functioning in the event of an extended period of disruption.

"Disruption doesn't necessarily have to be from natural disasters like the flooding in Franz Josef. It could be anything from disruptions in your supply chain, loss of key personnel or a computer system failure."

To help build a better understanding of business continuity, DWC will be hosting a business breakfast on 11 June at the Paroa Hotel with Runacres Insurance.

Hamish Curry from Runacres says business continuity is not just planning for a major disaster, it is about planning for any adverse event that may affect your business. "Good planning ahead of time may save your business in the face of such events."

**To register for the business breakfast visit [www.dwc.org.nz](http://www.dwc.org.nz)**

## Upcoming Events

### JUNE

11

#### Business Continuity Business Breakfast

7:30am-9:00am | Paroa Hotel, Greymouth | \$30 (incl breakfast)  
Register online at [www.dwc.org.nz](http://www.dwc.org.nz)

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#### West Coast Ambassador Programme | Hokitika

9:00am-12:00pm | \$30  
Register online at [www.dwc.org.nz](http://www.dwc.org.nz)

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#### West Coast Ambassador Programme | Franz Josef

5:30pm-8:30pm | \$30  
Register online at [www.dwc.org.nz](http://www.dwc.org.nz)

### JULY

04

#### West Coast Leadership Programme | NZIML Building Effective Teams Workshop

10am-3:30pm | Location TBC | \$380 + GST  
Contact [info@dwc.org.nz](mailto:info@dwc.org.nz) for more information and to see if you are eligible for NZTE business capability funding.

### SEPTEMBER

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#### Accounting for Non-Accountants | NZIML

Over 2 days 19-20 September | 9:00am-4:00pm  
Location TBC | \$750 + GST  
Contact [info@dwc.org.nz](mailto:info@dwc.org.nz) for more information and to see if you are eligible for NZTE business capability funding.

## Free Business Development Clinics

These one-to-one clinics are open to businesses from all sectors, all sizes and at all stages of development. They are aimed at helping you gain knowledge, connect with the right people and grow your business. Visit [dwc.org.nz](http://dwc.org.nz) to find out more.

**Contact DWC to book a time between 12:30pm-3:30pm**

### JUNE SCHEDULE

**Hokitika**  
5, 12, 19 and 26 June

**Westport**  
6, 13, 20 and 27 June

**Greymouth**  
10, 17 and 24 June

**Karamea** 6 June  
**Moana** 13 June

**Reefton** 19 June  
**Blackball** 26 June

## Tourism function settled into DWC

Development West Coast Trustees have recently approved the marketing and operational budget for DWC's new tourism function for the coming year.

For a more co-ordinated delivery of regional economic development, the tourism promotion and marketing functions of Tourism West Coast (TWC) migrated into DWC on 1 April.

DWC chief executive Chris Mackenzie says the recently approved budget will ensure the three tourism staff can continue their fantastic work promoting the West Coast as part of the DWC team.

"In their new roles at DWC, regional tourism manager Jim Little, tourism marketing manager Samantha Beneke and tourism marketing assistant Alicia Ulrich are continuing to do what they do best - promoting the region. They have just been at the annual TRENZ event proudly waving the West Coast flag, and then hit the road showing travel agents and journalists around the Coast."

Two months in, and the advantages of this more co-ordinated approach to regional development are already evident.

"Having tourism promotion undertaken from within DWC is presenting greater opportunities to work and share information across other sectors to maximise the full potential of the West Coast as a great place to live, work, invest and visit," says Mr Mackenzie.