

WEST COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Action Plan 2017



Working together to grow more business, attract investment, create new jobs and increase the incomes of all West Coasters

Acknowledgement

Images courtesy of Westland Milk Products, West Coast Regional Council, Grey District Council, Stewart Nimmo, Tai Poutini Polytechnic, Tourism West Coast, Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae.



Foreword

Message from the Governance Group

The West Coast is full of potential. Many of the characteristics of the region that have traditionally been seen as barriers will be the keys to our future success. The development of this Action Plan picks up on these opportunities and identifies clear pathways forward which will effect real change in the lives of our people, our communities and for our future growth and prosperity.

The passion and commitment of the Governance Group has led to an Action Plan developed by the region for the region. Using the nous of some of our best business minds and intertwining this with the wisdom of our local Rūnanga, and with assistance from local and central government, the Action Plan is a living document which will continue to evolve as existing opportunities are developed and new ones are identified.

This is the time for us as West Coasters to grasp these opportunities, to celebrate and market our identity, tell the world our positive stories and that the region is open for business.

On behalf of the Governance Group, I would like to acknowledge the support from Regional Economic Development Ministers, our Mayors and elected members throughout the region, government agencies and the various organisations involved in developing the individual project plans which make up this Action Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Robb', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Robb
Chairman
West Coast Governance Group

Message from West Coast Mayors



The West Coast has been provided an opportunity by central government to embrace and co-invest in the region's future. The Action Plan is not a short term fix but a long term commitment to achieving better economic outcomes, which will have a positive impact on communities throughout the West Coast.



We want to thank the government, in particular Hons Steven Joyce, Simon Bridges and Nathan Guy, along with the Governance Group who have dedicated so much of their time and expertise to the Action Plan. We want to thank all the West Coasters who have contributed to the plan and helped ensure that it truly reflects the opportunities and aspirations of their region.

Implementation of the Action Plan is our next task. We will all work together to ensure that it is successful.



Garry Howard
Mayor, Buller District Council

Tony Kokshoorn
Mayor, Grey District Council

Bruce Smith
Mayor, Westland District Council



Message from the Chair of Development West Coast

When the Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Study was released, it was clear Development West Coast shared the same objectives of identifying opportunities for increasing investment, employment and incomes on the Coast.

Development West Coast has worked closely with the Governance Group as the Action Plan was developed and, in partnership with central government, is pleased to have already committed financial support for five of the Plan's 14 main actions.

The Action Plan has the potential to make a significant contribution to economic development in the region and Development West Coast trustees and staff are looking forward to working with councils, iwi, central government and others across the region on its implementation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Renee Rooney', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Renee Rooney
Chair
Development West Coast



Introduction

The West Coast economy is strongly dependent on the two commodity sectors of minerals and dairy. The region has faced challenging times in the last few years due to the combination of low coal and dairy prices. The value of the economy has contracted by an estimated \$200 million and employment has decreased by over 900 filled jobs over the last three years.

The future for dairy looks brighter as prices have recovered, although the future for coal is uncertain with prices remaining volatile. Tourism has been a standout performer for the region with visitor expenditure growing by close to 11 percent per annum over the last two years and employment in the sector growing by around 140 jobs. But the economy will continue to be at the mercy of the rise and fall of international commodity prices unless it can diversify, add value to the traditional sectors and build an environment that attracts and retains investment and talent.

The Tai Poutini West Coast Regional Growth Study was commissioned in response to this situation and released in September 2016. The Study, a partnership between the region and central government, was the result of extensive research and consultation across the region. A Governance Group, comprising leaders from the business community, iwi/Rūnanga, local government and central government, provided oversight and direction of the process.

The Study identified that the region has several assets that will support stronger employment and income growth in the future. These include its resourceful people, spectacular natural assets and abundant resources. The

Study identified the following major opportunities for the region:

- Capturing greater value from visitor growth by developing a stronger set of iconic attractions that encourage visitors to travel across the region and stay longer, and by commercialising more experiences. The Study noted that this will require improving marketing, tourism product development and maintenance, and the quality of infrastructure and amenities at key locations
- Enhancing connectivity and resilience through further investment in roading, Ultra-Fast Broadband (UFB) and mobile coverage
- Encouraging investment in the minerals and other primary sectors by improving the quality of the regulatory and business environment
- Cultivating the development of niche sectors, including the digital economy, indigenous wood processing, horticulture, food and beverage, and whitebaiting
- Improving the capability of economic development support in the region to respond to sector and business opportunities.

The Study was the first phase in the process. The second phase was to develop this Action Plan, which sets out how the opportunities could be executed. This Action Plan provides clarity to delivery partners and the community about what is to be delivered and when, and who is responsible and involved.

Background

The development of the Action Plan has involved three key stages over six months:

1. Prioritising the list of opportunities

The Growth Study identified the following initial list of high priority proposals for implementation:

- Developing a tourism action plan
- Reviewing economic development arrangements in the region and reviewing the investment approach of Development West Coast
- Extending UFB and mobile network coverage across the region
- Identifying areas of low conservation value stewardship land with development potential
- Developing a single window regulatory processing hub that streamlines the processing of permits, land access arrangements and consents.

The Governance Group confirmed these as high priorities and also identified a set of additional proposals for development that were closely related to the initial priorities and/or were ready to implement. For example, the Group identified that accelerated investment in road resilience and safer visitor routes would be critical to support the tourism action plan and that developing the digital sector in the region would help to ensure that value is generated from the continued roll-out of UFB. They also identified three projects where implementation could begin relatively early: research to support the development of a sustainable whitebait fishery; an assessment of the future extension of windblown indigenous timber processing; and a social enterprise pilot based on horticulture and food processing.

2. Action project planning

The next phase involved small teams of relevant agencies and stakeholders developing a project plan for each prioritised action. The composition of the teams varied according to the action, and teams comprised a mix of community, business, local authority staff, Rūnanga and central government representatives.

The project planning process focused on identifying:

- the key deliverables and responsibilities for each action
- the short- and long-term outcomes the action was designed to influence so that progress and the impact could be monitored

- the resources that would be required to implement each action.

Project plans were subject to several iterations based on feedback from the project advisors and the Governance Group.

3. Drafting the Action Plan

The project plans were then used as a basis for developing this Action Plan. Resource requirements and deliverables were tested with central government agencies, Development West Coast and Councils. This phase also set out how the actions were to be implemented and the oversight of and support for implementation.

The actions documented here are those where work has already commenced or can be started over the next two years. The Governance Group is keen to ensure that the region focuses on a small number of executable actions at any one time so that resources are not spread too thinly over too many projects. There are also several more exploratory actions in this Plan that involve feasibility and business case work over its first 12 months.

There were a number of potential actions identified in the process that require further consultation and development before work should commence. The most viable of these are noted in this document. These actions will be reconsidered as part of future updates of the Action Plan.

This Action Plan will evolve. The intention is that the Plan will be reviewed annually as new opportunities will emerge, existing actions may be amended as circumstances change, and actions that have been successfully implemented will make way for new actions.

Ultimately, all of the actions are aimed at supporting growth in employment and incomes throughout the West Coast. Improving the quality of support for economic development is a key priority. There is also a focus on actions that will grow the visitor economy. The other actions in the plan aim to make it easier to do business and invest in the West Coast, encourage economic diversification and improve the region's connectivity.

The rest of this document discusses the importance of each of these strategic priorities and the actions under each of these priorities that will ultimately improve economic outcomes for the West Coast.

Action Plan at a Glance

The challenge: Achieving higher growth in GDP, employment and incomes

FIVE PRIORITIES

1

Enhanced economic development support

2

Growing the West Coast visitor economy

3


Making it easier to invest and do business

4

Supporting economic diversification

5

Improving connectivity and infrastructure

A background image of a waterfall cascading down a rocky cliff, surrounded by lush green vegetation. The waterfall is the central focus, with water splashing and creating a misty atmosphere. The rocks are dark and wet, and the surrounding forest is dense and vibrant.

THE ACTIONS

More effective support for West Coast sectors and businesses as they respond to new opportunities, including those arising from the Action Plan.

- Development of the Oparara Arches near Karamea as an iconic attraction.
- Extension of the Hokitika Gorge walking track and associated amenities, alongside safety improvements to the access road.
- Future-proofing Punakaiki visitor and heritage infrastructure.
- Future-proofing Franz Josef infrastructure against flooding and earthquakes.
- Funding a feasibility study for the upgrade of Croesus Road near Blackball for improved access to the Paparoa Great Walk, including the Pike29 Memorial Track.
- Funding a feasibility study for the Kawatiri (Charleston to Westport) Coastal Walking and Cycling Trail.
- Preparing and implementing the Tai Poutini Māori Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.

- Streamlining mining consent processes.
- Identifying low value conservation stewardship land that could be disposed of.

- Development of a digital economy action plan.
- Enabling ongoing access to windblown timber on public conservation land.
- Developing a sustainable whitebait fishery.
- Establishing social enterprises across the West Coast, with an initial pilot scheme in Karamea focused on horticulture and food processing.

- Investment in road resilience.
- Investment in safer visitor routes.
- Preparation of a strategic case for a road connecting Northern Buller with the Tasman region.





Enhanced Economic Development Support

The Growth Study concluded that economic development functions on the West Coast were fragmented and that this was a major impediment to economic development. It recommended a review of existing arrangements and the implementation of a new approach to providing regional economic development governance and delivery.

The review has been completed. The two main recommendations are that future economic development arrangements involve a two-step process:

- Development of a Regional Economic Strategy overseen by a business-led regional strategy group which consults on and determines regional priorities and investment
- A single unit within Development West Coast (DWC) which will deliver on the action plan arising from the Regional Economic Strategy.

Members of the Regional Economic Strategy Group will be appointed in a manner that ensures it has an appropriate mix of skills and, as a group, can bring to bear a complete regional perspective across sectors and interest groups. While being business-led it will also have iwi/Rūnanga, local government and central government representatives. The West Coast Regional Council will provide the secretariat, support and funding for the Regional Strategy Group and any further external assistance that it may require in preparing the regional strategy.

The review of economic development arrangements recommended increased clarity around DWC's role in economic development. It also concluded that DWC should take a more active approach to identifying economic development opportunities, along with increased clarity around its distributions and lending. These recommendations are now being acted upon.

A new Regional Economic Development Unit will be set up within DWC. As soon as possible, the activities of the existing Business Development Unit of Development West Coast, all activities of Tourism West Coast and the Regional Economic Development Manager will be transferred to the new unit.

The transition to these new arrangements will be completed by July 2020.

The new arrangements will underpin the development and implementation of more effective economic development strategies for the West Coast. They will provide more effective support for West Coast sectors and businesses as they respond to new opportunities, including those arising from this Action Plan.



Action Plan Implementation

The current West Coast Governance Group will oversee the initial implementation of the initiatives in this Action Plan. As the region transitions to the new economic development governance and delivery arrangements, this oversight role will shift to the Regional Economic Strategy Group, the proposed new business-led strategy body.

Development West Coast will have overall responsibility for implementation/delivery, although responsibility for the implementation of individual initiatives will rest with the lead regional/central government entity for each initiative.

As lead agencies for central government's Regional Growth Programme, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and Ministry of Primary Industries, with support from other relevant organisations, will work with the region on the overall implementation of the Action Plan.

Once the transition to the new arrangements is completed the Regional Economic Strategy Group will agree the implementation and delivery of action plans with Development West Coast, which will be accountable to the strategy group for their implementation.

The Regional Economic Strategy Group will:

- Monitor the progress of actions against the Plan and outcomes, determine whether changes in course are necessary, and report progress to Mayors, Chairs and Ministers
- Provide guidance on actions and act as a sounding board for those involved in implementing actions

- Communicate and champion actions to stakeholder groups and the community
- Identify where potential resources may be available for implementing actions and draw on networks to support implementation
- Engage with industry, iwi/Rūnanga and the community to review and update the Action Plan annually and recommend Plan updates to the Mayors, Chairs and Ministers
- Release annual reports on overall progress against the Plan.

The diagram, right, shows the governance and support arrangements for implementing the Action Plan into the future. The sponsors or 'owners' of the Action Plan are the region's Mayors and Chairs Forum.

The new strategy group will be assisted by a support group of local and central government officials who will engage with the project teams implementing actions. They will provide advice to the strategy group on progress and any issues that arise and require resolution. They will ensure that resources for implementation are coordinated across their respective agencies.

A programme manager will be appointed to work with action teams and project leaders to track progress, coordinate the implementation of actions across teams, identify risks and corrective measures, report on progress to the support group and the strategy group, assist in the annual review of actions and the development of the annual report, and manage stakeholder communications.

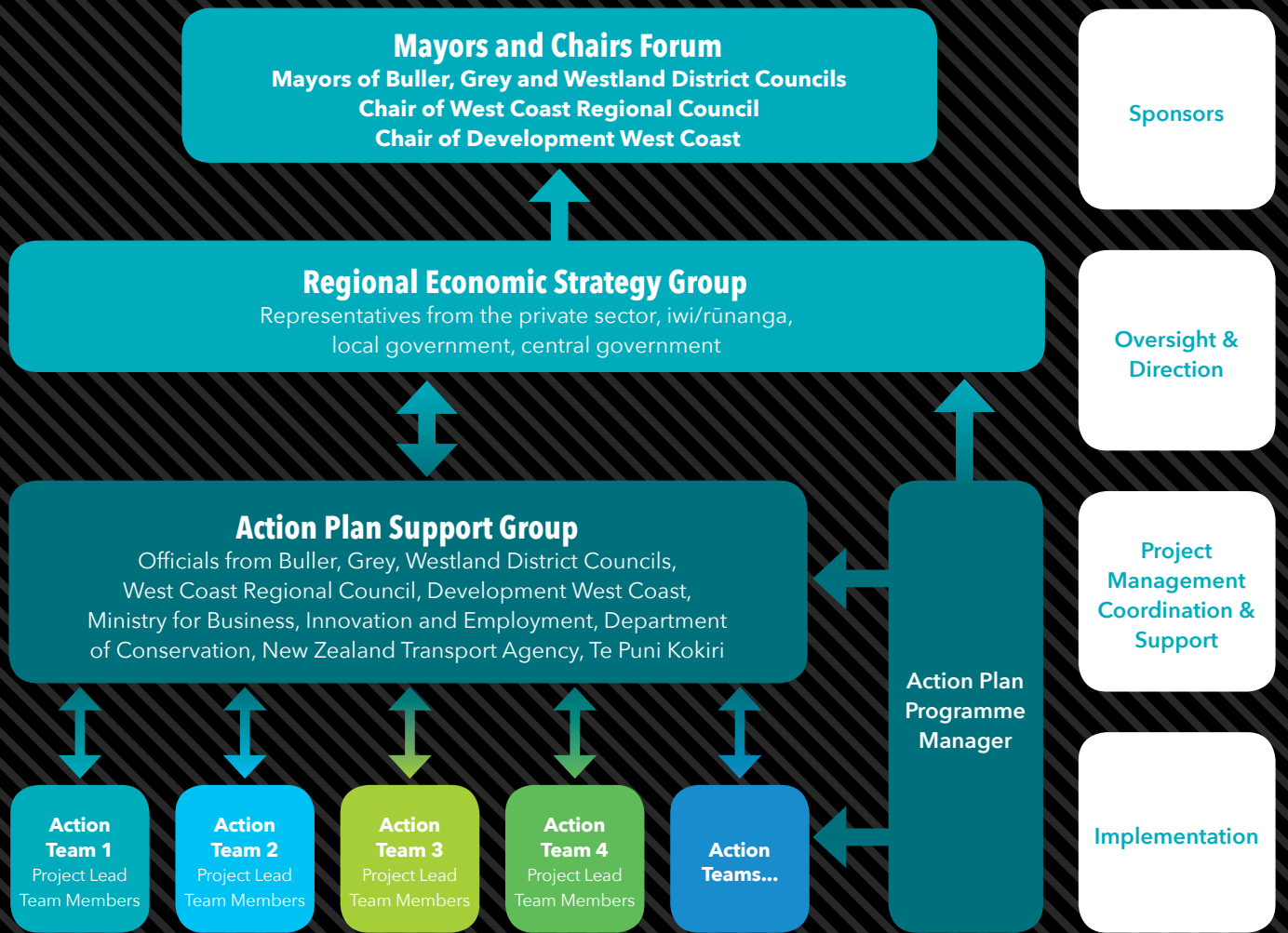


Figure 2: Action Plan Implementation Arrangements





Growing the West Coast visitor economy

The West Coast has significant potential to sustainably grow its visitor economy by increasing the appeal of its large range of attractions. These include major natural and heritage assets, adventure-based attractions, and cycling and walking trails that span the entire length of the region.

Although the West Coast has had strong international visitor growth over several years, it has, until recently, had relatively poor domestic visitor growth and variable visitor growth across the three districts. Visitors are staying in the region for short periods with many visiting only the current iconic attractions of Punakaiki and the Glaciers.

As was discussed in the Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Study, our region faces some significant challenges in growing the visitor economy, including:

- Being distant from visitor markets
- limited visitor awareness of the range of attractions
- a high level of seasonality
- infrastructure pressures resulting from a combination of visitor growth and natural hazards
- difficulty extracting value from many attractions, which are currently free to access and use
- a fragmented approach to promoting and developing tourism in the region.

The Growth Study has identified several workstreams and actions for dealing with these challenges in a cohesive manner to extend the visitor season, increase visitor expenditure, spread the visitor load across the region, and manage the significant existing infrastructure pressures.

Several existing and potential iconic attractions need to be developed or enhanced to spread the visitor load. Four of the seven actions under this priority focus on this. The immediate opportunities include the Hokitika Gorge and Oparara Arches. There has been tremendous pressure on the facilities at Punakaiki and Franz Josef, with high demand for water resources, toilets and waste management, car parks, accommodation and food services. This needs addressing as does their susceptibility to natural hazards, such as coastal erosion at Punakaiki and flooding at Franz Josef.

Two of the actions relate to feasibility studies for a Kawatiri (Charleston to Westport) Coastal Walking and Cycling Trail and the upgrade of the Croesus Road at Blackball to improve access to the Paparoa Great Walk, including the Pike29 Memorial Track.

The seventh action is the preparation and implementation of the Tai Poutini Māori Tourism Strategy.

The West Coast Wilderness Trail and the Old Ghost Trail are important regional tourism assets. The region is seeking funding to complete the West Coast Wilderness Trail in accordance with the original concept and to establish effective governance, management and maintenance arrangements. It wants bridging finance to support the management and maintenance of the Old Ghost Trail until sustainable arrangements are put in place.

The Governance Group recognises the importance of the two trails. However, as it was unlikely that discussions on funding arrangements for the two trails would be finalised before the launch of the Action Plan, the Governance Group has removed them from the list of priority actions.

There are a number of visitor-related actions that can potentially be included in future action plans. These are outlined later in this document.



Extending the Hokitika Gorge experience

From the current carpark at the Hokitika Gorge, 650 metres of walking track leads to a suspension bridge over the Hokitika River. The walking track and bridge offer spectacular views of the deep turquoise waters of the river as it passes through a granite gorge. Visitor numbers to the site have doubled to approximately 40,000 per annum since the completion of the project in 2010.

The drive from Hokitika to the Hokitika Gorge is 33 kilometres or 30 minutes each way. The current facilities provide the visitor with a 10 to 15 minute walk to the views of the Gorge. However, having such a short walk at the end of a relatively long drive does not fully recognise the value and potential of the site.

The purpose of this action is to add value for visitors who make the drive to the Gorge and encourage them to stay longer in the area. The proposal is to extend the length of the walk with an additional 1.2 kilometres or 30 to 40 minute loop track. Three new platforms would allow visitors to get different views of the Gorge. A new 70 metre suspension bridge will span the upper end of the Hokitika Gorge and a second, shorter (20 metre) suspension bridge will allow visitors to walk back to the car park. The proposed sealing of the road and the extension of the car park by the Westland District Council will address high season congestion issues.

DOC's intention is that the Hokitika Gorge will be one of its Great Short Walks.

Action	Enhancements to the Hokitika Gorge track and facilities
Lead agency	DOC
Partner agencies	WDC, TWC, NZTA
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design for track, gantry and suspension bridges • Extension of new building to existing toilets • Track construction • Construction of bridges • Signage and interpretation
Timeframe	November 2017 to December 2018
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased visitor stay and visitor spend in the region • More people participate in recreation in the region • More people engage with conservation and value its benefits • More business opportunities delivering both economic and conservation gains (e.g., increased concessionaire use)
Current status	Business case has been completed.



Assessing the potential of the Oparara Basin experience

The Buller District gets a limited share of visitor expenditure in the West Coast. The district lacks the range of tourism attractions and options that are present in Grey and Westland. However, at the top end of the district is the Oparara Basin, which has the potential to become an iconic tourism experience. The Basin has a uniquely formed cave system, including the largest limestone arch in Australasia and an array of compelling walking options.

The focus of this action is the preparation of a feasibility study and business case to determine how best to improve the Oparara Arches experience and market the Arches as an iconic attraction. A proposed concept includes completing a new walkway from the rest area through the main arch and improving visitors' understanding by telling a better story about the natural history of the area.

In the long-term, the rest area could be expanded to accommodate growth in visitor numbers, a café or visitor hub could be established, and new tours could be developed to bring more visitors to the Arches. Care of the spectacular natural assets at Oparara would be paramount in any development.

Action	Business case for the development of the Oparara Arches as an iconic attraction
Lead agency	TWC
Partner agencies	DOC, Karamea Community, BDC, Advance Northern West Coast, NZTA
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility study • Business case
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2017 to June 2018 for the business case • From June 2018 for development
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of visitors to the Arches • Increased visitor stay and visitor spend in the region, particularly in the north • Increase in business opportunities in Karamea
Current status	Research report on the concept and initial community and stakeholder consultation completed



Future proofing Franz Josef

Franz Josef has long had issues with flooding from the Waiho River to the south of the township and faces potentially serious consequences in the event of a major earthquake on the Alpine Fault, which runs through the centre of the township. Although infrastructure improvements continue to be made (e.g., stop bank repairs, raising of the bridge over the Waiho River), these are only temporary measures.

This action is focused on initially assessing the likelihood and impact of hazards (alpine fault and flooding) and identifying the costs and benefits of potential infrastructure improvements, including for the roading network. This will enable the development of options for managing the hazard risks and catering for Franz Josef's future growth. This will then result in recommendations for infrastructure improvements and potential funding mechanisms.

Action	Infrastructure improvements for Franz Josef
Lead agencies	MBIE, MfE and WCRC
Partner agencies	Franz Josef Working Group, WDC, NZTA
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options analysis and cost-benefit assessment • Central government and community agreement on a preferred option • Masterplan for the township developed and agreed
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2017 to December 2017 for options assessment and Master Plan • From January 2018 for implementing the Master Plan
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the infrastructure option that achieves the greatest benefits relative to the costs • Greater certainty for residents and businesses making investment decisions • Lower levels of disruption due to improved infrastructure, amenities and resilience in Franz Josef • Higher quality visitor experience
Current status	Options analysis underway



Future proofing Punakaiki

Punakaiki faces several major challenges due to the growth in tourism. There is the obvious challenge of the pressure on current infrastructure. Despite infrastructure improvements over the years, some elements, such as parking and toilets, are currently struggling to cope with visitor numbers and will certainly not cope with predicted future increases.

The existing visitor centre is dated and provides limited conservation, education or commercial offerings. In addition, the Punakaiki community faces difficulties associated with short visitor stays and seasonality. There are relatively few experiences and accommodation options that would encourage visitors to stay in and around the area for longer. The more limited visitor numbers in the winter months also impact on the sustainability of the local community and businesses.

The focus of this action is two-fold:

- To make initial essential infrastructure improvements (i.e. car parking and toilet improvements and the safety of visitors crossing SH6)
- To advance a detailed scoping, design and business case for developing Punakaiki as a world class destination. This will include consideration of raising revenue streams from visitors to support the capital costs of infrastructure.

The scoping and design work will include a collaborative planning exercise with stakeholders and community representatives.

Action	Ensuring Punakaiki is a world-class destination
Lead agency	DOC
Partner agencies	Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, NZTA, BDC, TWC, DWC
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial access way, carparking and toilet improvements, pedestrian safety • Scoping and design work • Business case for medium-term and long-term improvements
Timeframe	November 2017 to November 2018 for essential infrastructure improvements and detailed design work
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A world-class integrated visitor experience right from arrival to departure as indicated through increased visitor interaction and satisfaction, and increased length of stay and expenditure • An enriched natural and cultural experience
Current status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial stakeholder engagement completed • Development opportunity study completed, including initial concept options for Pancake Rocks visitor area



Developing the case for the Kawatiri Coastal Trail

The Kawatiri Coastal Trail (Charleston to Westport Coastal Trail) is a planned 45 kilometre Grade 2 Trail around the coastal area of Buller, crossing Charleston, the Nile River, the Totara River, Okari Lagoon, Tauranga Bay and Cape Foulwind. Significant work on the proposal has already been completed, including the establishment of a trust to develop the concept, consultation with landowners, stakeholders and the community, research on the topography, geology and environment, and walk-over surveys of the route.

The proposed trail will have spectacular coastal views. The intention is to erect interpretation panels along the route, giving users key information related to flora and fauna, and the Māori and European history of the area. The proposed trail covers seven kilometres of conservation and private land, and access to land needs to be finalised. Construction of the trail will take an estimated two years.

The focus of this action is the completion of a survey and engineering assessment of the route and development of a business case for the trail to ensure the benefits will exceed the costs.

Action	Assessment of, and business case for, the Kawatiri Coastal Trail
Lead agency	Charleston-Westport Coastal Trail Trust
Partner agencies	BDC, DOC, Landcorp, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, Heritage West Coast, DWC, New Zealand Cycle Trail Inc, TWC
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site investigations, survey and detailed design • Access agreements and resource consents • Business case • Project manager and contractor appointed • Interpretative product and signage developed • Construction completed
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2017 to November 2018 for the design and business case • December 2018 to December 2019 for construction of the Trail
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail completed • Trail usage grows to 20,000 per annum by 2025 • New business opportunities developed in hospitality, transport, accommodation, eco-tourism, guided tours related to the Trail • Growth in employment and visitor spend directly related to the Trail
Current status	Research and initial consultation with stakeholders undertaken. Land access agreements being negotiated



Investing in Blackball infrastructure to support the Paparoa Track, including the Pike29 Memorial Track

The Department of Conservation is establishing the Paparoa Great Walk Track, which includes the Pike29 Memorial Track, as multiday tramping and cycling tracks in memory of the Pike River miners.

The 65 kilometre Great Walk will link Blackball to Punakaiki and provide access to the diverse landscapes of the southern Paparoa National Park. The Great Walk Track will be open to both trampers (a 2-3 day walk) and mountain bikers (advanced level 1-2 day ride) and is due to open in autumn 2019. The Pike29 Memorial Track is the 9km section of the Great Walk leading to the Pike River Mine site.

The new Great Walk begins at the Blackball end on the existing Croesus Track, an old miners' track. Blackball, with a population of 330, does not have the infrastructure in place to support a large increase in visitors.

This action is focused on ensuring that priority infrastructure improvements are made at Blackball to cope with increased visitor numbers.

These include:

- Upgrading Croesus Road to ensure that it is safe for all classes of vehicles likely to access the start of the Track
- Establishing public toilets and a carpark
- Upgrading the main road in Blackball.

Action	Investing in Blackball infrastructure
Lead agency	GDC
Partner agencies	DOC, NZTA, Blackball Community
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk and cost assessment of upgrading Croesus Road • Croesus Road upgraded • Public toilets established • Carpark established • Culverts in place and widening of main road in Blackball
Timeframe	November 2017 to June 2019
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality infrastructure that supports increased visitor numbers to the Paparoa Great Walk Track and Pike 29 Memorial Track • Increased visitor satisfaction
Current status	Paparoa Great Walk Track and Pike29 Memorial Trail are being developed.



Tai Poutini Māori Tourism Strategy

Naia te mihi, naia te oha, naia te reo rāhiri! Ko te Tai poutini tēnei, ngā uri o rātou mā, e takahi nei i te ara, kia hāpaitia te mana o ō mātau tīpuna , mō tātou, ā mō kā uri ā muri ake nei, te painga atu, te orang ake! Tihei Mauriora!

Iwi/Māori have several investments in the visitor industry in the West Coast region. For example, Ngāi Tahu Tourism is involved in glacier tours, accommodation and a thermal spa experience. Papatipu Rūnanga are engaged with the sector through pounamu, from river and bush tours to retail sales. Iwi/Māori in the West Coast have the potential to increase investment into the sector. They can also contribute to the broader visitor offering in the region by providing stories of their unique insight into Te Ao Māori that has shaped the lands, their traditions, culture and people. This will be complementary to the natural attractions (for example, cycle trails and walking trails).

This action is focused on developing a strategy to provide a Iwi/Māori tourism trail or pathway that both tells a story (e.g., via interpretation panels and art installations at key sites) and a path for visitors to follow through the region, taking in the major attractions, destinations and Iwi/Māori tourism operators. The strategy will also provide the marketing story to promote Ngāi Tahu history and Iwi/Māori tourism business in the region. The aim will be to support whānau, hapū and Iwi/Māori to take up tourism employment and business opportunities.

This action has alignment with the Tourism West Coast Marketing Plan 2017-2021 and will build the histories of Poutini Ngāi Tahu into the brand of “Untamed Natural Wilderness” and the tourism icons.

Action	Developing the Tai Poutini Māori Tourism Strategy
Lead agencies	Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio, Te Rūnanga o Ngati Waewae, Mawhera Incorporation, Ngāi Tahu Tourism, TWC
Partner agencies	DOC, MBIE, New Zealand Māori Tourism, TPK, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, DWC, NZTA, BDC, GDC, WDC
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy scoped • Commission professional services to facilitate the development of the Strategy • Research and consultation undertaken to inform the Strategy • Strategy completed • Implementation of the Strategy
Timeframe	July 2017 to June 2018
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Tai Poutini tourism experiences have a strong Māori component • Increase visitor awareness and understanding of Māori history, culture and sites of significance • Increase visitor numbers to Māori tourism initiatives • Increase visitor spend on Māori tourism initiatives • Increase employment for whānau, hapu and Māori within the tourism sector
Current status	Agreement being sought on the approach and parameters of the project

TŪHURU





Related action underway

Culture and heritage tourism development

The West Coast has a wealth of cultural and heritage tourism assets. The Coaltown Museum at Westport, Te Tauraka Waka A Maui Marae, Arahura Marae, Shantytown, Hokitika Museum, Westland Industrial Heritage Park, the historic areas of Reefton and Ross, the Brunner Mine Industrial site, and the Blackball Museum of Working Class History are some examples of these. There has been significant investment in their preservation and interpretation but relatively limited marketing to visitors, with the exception of Shantytown. In addition, there are opportunities to create new heritage attractions on the West Coast.

Heritage West Coast is leading a project to create a range of market-ready cultural and heritage

products to meet visitors' needs and interests (either through enhancing existing products or developing new products); establish new commercial businesses (such as guiding and activities); provide the necessary business training for operators; and create itineraries and marketing material for promotional efforts. The focus is initially on Westland but the intention is to expand this to other areas of the region.

A major focus is to move beyond sightseeing and static attractions to offering high value participatory experiences that generate revenue for the attractions, and the businesses and communities in which they are located.

Heritage West Coast is working with communities, iwi and Rūnanga, and culture and heritage organisations in Westland to achieve this. It is also seeking advice and support from the Ministry of Culture and Heritage and Te Papa Tongarewa. The initial phase of work is market research into visitor demand and the current offerings, and then to identify the required product enhancements.

Related action underway

Implementing the West Coast Tourism marketing plan

The Growth Study emphasised that the region needs to implement a regional marketing plan, with clear targeting of domestic and international markets, and which identifies a clear visitor proposition aligned with the new brand for the region.

Tourism West Coast has developed the new brand to communicate the strengths of the West Coast region to local communities, visitors and businesses. The brand is designed to showcase what the West Coast has to offer and create a place that is desirable to visit. To build the brand, Tourism West Coast has also developed a marketing plan for 2017-2021, which focuses on marketing six iconic areas across the region, as well as events, cycle trails and walking tracks. The six iconic areas are the Oparara Arches, Lake Brunner, Punakaiki and the Pancake Rocks, Hokitika Gorge, the Glaciers (Franz Josef and Fox) and Haast.

Each icon is being developed as a sub-brand of the new West Coast brand to create a recognisable link with the region. Each iconic area will include the key icon and five or six satellite activities and attractions.

A major element of the marketing plan is to target visitor growth from key international markets (e.g. Germany, the rest of Europe, China and Australia) and major domestic markets (e.g. Canterbury, Auckland and Wellington).

This action is focused on implementing the marketing plan. Implementation require Tourism West Coast, the councils, and relevant central government agencies to identify the long-term funding requirements for marketing the region and the best mix of funding mechanisms.

Action	Implementing the West Coast Marketing Plan
Lead agency	TWC
Partner agencies	District and area promotion organisations, DWC, DOC, NZTA, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio, Mawhera Incorporation, Ngāi Tahu Tourism, GDC, BDC, WDC
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and confirm investment required and funding mechanisms • Deliver brand communications campaign • Develop and implement marketing collateral for each icon • All icons launched and marketed • Annual review of marketing plan
Timeframe	January 2017 to June 2021
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase brand utilisation with all West Coast tourism operators • Gain strong brand awareness and recall across target markets and stakeholders • Increase visitor dispersal across the region • By 2021, increase: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o visitor arrivals from 870,000 to 1.1 million o average length of stay from 2 to 2.7 nights o visitor expenditure from \$470 million to \$810 billion o tourism employment from around 2,000 to 2,500
Current status	Marketing plan and brand developed. Workshops and consultation undertaken with key stakeholders





Making it easier to invest and do business

The minerals sector makes a major contribution to the value added and employment on the West Coast (over \$230 million in GDP and 900 jobs in 2016) and provides high incomes. The West Coast has significant advantages in the sector based on the range and volume of minerals, the local infrastructure and capability. The labour force is experienced and local mining businesses are strong, as well as supporting businesses in machinery and equipment manufacturing, engineering, surveying, and construction.

Although the minerals sector has faced challenging market conditions, companies in the sector are continuing to look for investment, exploration and development opportunities on the West Coast. The Growth Study identified that there are several impediments to these opportunities being realised:

- Long time frames for the processing of exploration permits
- The costs and time involved in obtaining access agreements to prospect and explore land that is in the conservation estate
- Duplication of information requests and regulatory approval processes across agencies, which adds to the times and costs involved in commencing exploration or mining
- Difficulties and costs involved in obtaining consents for new mines due to environmental objections and process hurdles.

The potential environmental impacts of applications for prospecting, exploring and mining in the region need to be considered, particularly given the importance of the region's landscape and habitat to the value proposition of the West Coast, the visitor economy and New Zealand more widely. The opportunity is to ensure that the processes involved in making these assessments do not impose unnecessary costs on investors, businesses or the community.

Two key actions have been identified to mitigate the regulatory hurdles and improve certainty for decision-making.



Single window regulatory processing initiative

To mine an area, developers currently need some or all of the following:

- Crown Minerals permit from the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
- Resource consents from the District and/or Regional Councils
- Concession agreements and land access agreements from the Department of Conservation and/or Land Information New Zealand when mining on Crown land
- Access arrangements with the landowner, which in some cases is Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu
- Approval from WorkSafe depending on the status of the proposed operation
- On occasion an approval from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

This typically involves a long and sequential process through several of these regulatory approval processes, which often have over-lapping requirements. A delay or an appeal at any one of the stages can result in significant delays to the remaining stages and the full process. It is possible for applicants to apply for several consents or permissions at the same time but this can still be time consuming if organisations interpret requirements and evidence differently.

This action is focused on identifying and developing, within existing legislative settings, a 'single window' or coordinated process across agencies for:

- Information requests and assessments of documentation related to permits, access agreements, resource consents and concessions
- Public notifications, community and iwi consultation
- Support for resource consent hearings.

Action
Lead agency

Single window regulatory processing initiative

WCRC

Partner agencies

DOC, MBIE, Minerals West Coast, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, BDC, GDC, WDC, Land Information New Zealand, WorkSafe, DWC

Key deliverables

- Workshop with all agencies to identify and discuss potential for process efficiencies
- Agreement on where efficiencies can be gained
- Development of process improvement model
- Ministerial and local government approval of process improvements
- New processes implemented
- Review of processes

Timeframe

May 2017 to December 2019

Key outcomes

- Reduction in cost of regulatory approvals for new mining developments
- Overall reduction in the time it takes for new mining developments to start
- An increase in the number of developers applying for permits and access agreements
- Increased investor confidence in the minerals sector in the region

Current status

Project team has been established



Disposal of low conservation value land

Around 85 per cent of the West Coast is land administered by the Department of Conservation. While a large proportion of that land is classified as National Park or other categories of protection, the Department has a range of scattered land holdings that have no substantive conservation value. In many instances this land is leased, often for grazing purposes. Where there is no conservation driver to hold the land, allowing it to be used for higher value purposes could assist the local economy.

This action involves DOC considering options for land disposal where it holds land with low or limited conservation value. It is not intended that this action will encompass land with native forest cover. This action would complement the Department's ongoing programme of classifying high value Stewardship Land on the Coast to ensure that over time all DOC land has the appropriate level of conservation protection.

Action	Disposal of low conservation value land
Lead agency	DOC
Partner agencies	West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board, Minerals West Coast, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, BDC, GDC, WDC, WCRC, Federated Farmers, DWC
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority list of Stewardship Land compiled • Ecological assessments undertaken • Decisions made on suitability for disposal/exchange
Timeframe	December 2017 to June 2019
Key outcomes	Identification of low conservation value land and development of options for future management
Current status	Has not commenced



Supporting economic diversification

The West Coast's small economy and reliance on a few sectors has meant that the region has been vulnerable to economic shocks, such as the significant impact of lower international coal, gold and dairy prices over the last few years. This has resulted in lower rates of GDP and employment growth, with flow-on effects on the population.

A key objective of the Growth Study was to identify opportunities to help diversify the regional economy. Beyond the potential of tourism, the Study highlighted a range of niche sectors that, although currently small scale, could provide many employment opportunities in future. These include:

- Wild whitebait fishing and aquaculture – the West Coast has a strong reputation and capability in recreational fishing and whitebaiting. Commercial freshwater fishing and aquaculture are currently very small in scale, with only a few commercial whitebait operators and a boutique salmon farm in South Westland. There is, however, interest in realising the potential of whitebaiting and aquaculture
- Creative and ICT – the West Coast is well known for its creative capability in arts, craft and design and is developing a base of ICT capability through the work of EPIC Westport, Tech Space in Greymouth and Tai Poutini Polytechnic
- Indigenous wood processing – most of the West Coast's forests are indigenous and within the conservation estate. Special legislation that came into effect in 2014 has allowed operators to remove and process indigenous timber from the conservation estate damaged by Cyclone Ita. This has sparked the revival of a small indigenous timber processing industry in the region
- Horticulture – most horticulture industries in the region comprise cottage businesses, but several are exporting nationally and/or internationally, with tomatoes, lettuce, sphagnum moss, cranberries and honey among their products

This set of actions is focused on supporting further development of these niche sectors.





Developing a sustainable wild whitebait fishery

Whitebaiting on the West Coast is not only commercially important but also has cultural, recreational and social significance. However, the significance and potential of whitebaiting may be under threat because of changes to waterways and spawning sites. Although there is no hard evidence to show there has been a decline in whitebait stocks, there is a widely-held belief that there are fewer whitebait running in the rivers than there used to be due to a combination of erosion, expanded coastal towns, and dairy farming's impact on waterways.

The purpose of this action is to identify and implement a programme of work to:

- Enhance spawning sites
- Remove barriers to fish passage
- Protect at-risk habitat sites and restore degraded sites.

Action	Developing a sustainable wild whitebait fishery
Lead agency	DOC
Partner agencies	WCRC, Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae, Te Rūnanga o Ngai Tahu, Federated Farmers, Landcare, Science agencies and Universities (e.g., University of Canterbury, NIWA, Cawthron), Westland Milk Products, MPI, DairyNZ, MBIE, West Coast Whitebaiters Association
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance group established, project coordinator employed and project plan developed • Whitebait spawning site assessment report and mapping of known barriers to fish passage • Report outlining the survey and assessment results of the restoration needs of adult whitebait habitat • Restoration at key sites undertaken (number to be determined when funding is confirmed)
Timeframe	September 2017 to December 2021
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a shared understanding of the requirements for enhancing adult whitebait habitat • Habitat for adult and spawning whitebait will be enhanced • Data about breeding and stocks of whitebait improved • Sustainable whitebait fishery realised • Tangata whenua, community and commercial operators are enjoying sustainable benefits from a resilient and sustainable fishery
Current status	To be commenced



Wind-blown timber from West Coast Public Conservation Land

In 2014 the West Coast Windblown Timber (Conservation Lands) Act (WCWT Act) was enacted, which allowed for the recovery of a proportion of the trees blown down on conservation land during Cyclone Ita in April 2014. Around 30 to 50 people have had work directly generated by this opportunity at various stages across the sawmilling, forestry and transport sectors.

This is a short-term opportunity as the WCWT Act applies only to timber blown down during Cyclone Ita and is available only until 2 July 2019. The quality and quantity of available timber has now declined, as has the amount of timber being extracted and the number of active operators. It is unlikely that significant operations will extend beyond 2017.

The experience has shown that wind-blown timber can be safely recovered without significant harm to the conservation value of harvest areas. It has also provided significant revenue for the Department of Conservation to protect conservation land from plant and animal pests.

This action will assess the lessons, costs and benefits from the WCWT Act and identify, if appropriate, legislative change options that would enable ongoing access to timber on Public Conservation Land that is felled as a result of natural events.

Action	Wind-blown Timber from West Coast Public Conservation Land
Lead agency	DOC
Partner agencies	MPI, Industry expertise – New Zealand Sustainable Forest Products and others as required
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the issues, management approach and lessons on the implementation of the WCWT Act • Monitoring of harvest sites and non-harvest sites to confirm the broad effects • An analysis of the market potential and economic impact of indigenous timber • An assessment of legal options available to make a proportion of naturally fallen timber on conservation land available for harvest • Recommendations for implementation
Timeframe	November 2017 to December 2019
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of options for legislative processes to enable the ongoing use of a proportion of naturally fallen timber from Public Conservation Land • Greater certainty for the indigenous timber industry on the sources of timber that will be available, their likely distribution over time and the conditions under which access will be possible • Increase in revenue for the management of conservation areas • Improved consistency of supply for the indigenous timber industry in the West Coast region • Retention of the expertise, markets and investment made by operators that have built businesses based on indigenous timber
Current status	To be commenced



Social enterprise pilot and regional expansion

The West Coast has some climate and resource advantages for growing horticulture crops.

In the north, Karamea's coastal land is regarded as ideal for horticulture, with its relatively lower rainfall, mild winters and because the marine climate prevents low night temperatures. The region also has some production cost advantages for covered horticulture. Previous research on the horticulture industry on the West Coast also suggested that the region had unrealised potential for berry crops such as blueberries, blackcurrants and elderberries, fruit such as kiwifruit and feijoas, and niche products, such as tea tree and wasabi.

The Growth Study identified a specific opportunity to use a social enterprise approach to explore new prospects for horticulture, food and beverage in Buller. A collection of West Coast agencies has also expressed an interest in growing social enterprise activity in the region to promote economic development and community resilience. Social enterprises earn income from trading but they commit to benefiting the community. For example, they might focus on providing employment opportunities for youth, improving the health of local people, or creating local infrastructure. The Ākina Foundation has been working with local agencies, including the Buller Rural Education Activities Programmes (REAP) and the Grey District Council, to run initial capability building activities for social enterprise.

This action is focused on initially developing a food cluster, or collective, in Karamea to produce, add value, market and distribute locally grown food, while supporting local employment, tourism and environmental initiatives. The Karamea pilot is a flagship project that, if successful, will lead to social enterprise initiatives in the wider region.

Action

Social enterprise pilot and regional expansion

Lead agency

Ākina Foundation

Partner agencies

Karamea Community, Buller REAP, BDC, EPIC Westport, GDC, Tai Poutini Polytechnic

Key deliverables

- Implement workshop series and engagement activities with communities
- Initiate Karamea horticulture & food cluster project and social enterprise support activities
- Complete investment case for social enterprise support in the West Coast
- Complete business case for the Karamea horticulture & food cluster
- Expand social enterprise to Grey District

Timeframe

May 2017 to December 2018

Key outcomes

- Increase capability and employment in local food growing, processing and support industries (including tourism and hospitality)
- Increase the capacity of local agencies to support social enterprise
- Increase the number of viable social enterprises established on the West Coast and employment/volunteering opportunities associated with these social enterprises
- Establish the West Coast as a recognised brand for food and beverage, and increase the exporting of food and beverage products outside the region

Current status

Project scope completed and initial social enterprise workshops held

Growing the digital economy

Digital technology provides an opportunity for businesses and the community on the West Coast to overcome the region's remoteness.

Technology entrepreneurs can be attracted to the region because of its lifestyle, affordability and natural amenities. To compete effectively and grow its digital economy, the West Coast also needs to provide access to skills, business development support, investment networks and digital infrastructure that match opportunities found in major centres and other regions.

Central government has recently announced that Hokitika is one of the first towns to begin an Ultra-Fast Broadband (UFB) build under the extension of the UFB programme. Under the programme, fibre will also be deployed in Reefton, Westport and Rūnanga. Greymouth already has access to UFB and, by the end of 2019, more than 50 percent of the region's population will have access.

People and businesses need the capability to take up opportunities that the UFB deployment will provide (e.g. for online sales, improved marketing and logistics, new employment opportunities). To enable the West Coast to grow, attract and retain digital businesses, entrepreneurs and skills, this action is initially focused on expanding the delivery of EPIC's and Tech Space's services in the region. EPIC Westport provides early-stage technology businesses with co-working space and mentoring, networking and investment services. Tech Space supports the development of ICT capability in youth and the broader community through a range of programmes and events. In the medium-term, a digital action plan will be developed which will include a broader range of digital research, training and investment attraction initiatives.

Related actions underway

New Zealand Institute for Minerals to Materials Research

Consultation undertaken for the Growth Study found that several organisations believed that there was limited availability of research and development and technical expertise to support business innovation in the region. To help address this gap, specifically for the minerals sector, the industry is developing a proposal for a Regional Research Institute – the New Zealand Institute for Minerals to Materials Research and seeking funding from the Government's Regional Research Institutes initiative.

The proposed institute would focus on moving the

Action	Growing the digital economy
Lead agencies	EPIC Westport and Tech Space, TPP
Partner agencies	Buller District Council, Grey District Council, Westland District Council, DWC
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop mentor cohorts in Grey and Westland• Deliver start-up business programme for digital and tech-based firm in Buller, Grey and Westland• Confirm business participation in accelerator programme• Deliver accelerator programme• Expand Tech Space programme across region• Review of programme expansions• Develop digital action plan
Timeframe	September 2017 to June 2018
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals and firms have improved access to digital skills/expertise• Increased digital capability in youth and businesses• Increased investment in ICT/digital businesses in the region• Increased use of broadband for digital commerce• Increased awareness of the West Coast as a viable location for digital business• An increased number of ICT/digital jobs in the region
Current status	EPIC and Tech Space are currently delivering programmes. The initial scope of actions has been agreed and a 10 year education, business development and investment pipeline is under development by lead agencies.

minerals industry from commodities to the creation of high value materials and products. This includes developing extraction, separation and purification technology to be able to use other enriched minerals and metals from mining that are typically discarded with waste, which is a considerable lost opportunity.

Although it is to be based on the West Coast, the Institute would also drive collaboration in minerals and manufacturing research from throughout New Zealand. Partners involved in the proposal include Development West Coast, Grey District Council, Buller District Council, Minerals West Coast, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Tai Poutini Polytechnic and CRL Energy.

The proposal is being evaluated as part of the second funding round of the Regional Research Institutes initiative and a decision is due in mid-2017.





Improving connectivity and infrastructure

The West Coast's remoteness and distance from the main employment and business centres in the South Island, and elsewhere in New Zealand, means it is very dependent on safe and reliable transport links. The road network is particularly important for business connections and freight flows, given the limited rail and air services to and from the region.

The West Coast faces a range of transport challenges related to the length of the road network and the region's topography. These include:

- Many hazards that can disrupt the road network, including ice and snow, falling trees, rockfalls, flooding and landslides
- The many one-lane bridges throughout the region, some of which are approaching the end of their useful lives
- The roads on the West Coast can be narrow, winding and steep in places, and a reasonable proportion of local roads are not sealed. These factors result in difficult driving conditions for visitors who are not used to such roads.

Given these challenges, the Growth Study emphasised that further investment is required to proactively manage resilience and road safety across the region's roading network. The Study also identified additional road proposals that could have a significant impact on employment and economic development in the region but which require detailed assessments of their benefits and costs.

This set of actions is focused on advancing road resilience and safety projects in the region, while assessing the potential of new road links in the north and south.



Investment in road resilience

The West Coast’s population is less than one per cent of New Zealand’s, but the state highway network within the region accounts for eight percent of the total length of the national state highway network. Furthermore, state highways comprise over 30 per cent of the length of the total road network in the region, almost three times as high as the national average. The performance of the state highways is therefore particularly important to the region.

Over the years, closures caused by slips, washouts and flooding have been relatively large and costly in some parts of the state highway network. Disruptions or closure can result in considerable increases in the travel distances between key locations because of the limited alternative routes within the region. For example, diversion distances for much of SH6 are in excess of 500 kilometres.

Based on national criteria, however, the state highways serving the West Coast have been given a low resilience prioritisation. This reflects the relatively low population and traffic flows in the region. The main approach to address resilience issues is to be prepared to respond to problems as they occur rather than attempt prevention.

The Growth Study identified the potential to bring forward priority resilience projects, such as bridge strengthening and replacement projects. This action is focused on completing major improvement projects and determining investments in network resilience that can be made as part of the mid-term review of the Regional Land Transport Plan, which is to be completed by mid-2018.

Action	Investment in road resilience
Lead agency	WCRC
Partner agencies	NZTA, BDC, GDC, WDC
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mingha Bluff to Rough Creek realignment • Enhanced network resilience at spot locations • Arnold bridge strengthening • Ahaura Bridge replacement • Stony Creek Bridge replacement investigation • Other new projects implemented under the Regional Land Transport Plan, such as the SH6, SH7 and SH73 resilience projects, Deep Creek No 1 Bridge replacement, Moonlight Creek Bridge replacement, Rough River Bridge replacement • 2018-2021 Regional Land Transport Plan Mid-term Review
Timeframe	January 2017 to June 2021
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more secure and resilient road network • Improved efficiency of freight supply chains • Increased journey time reliability • Reduced social and economic costs due to disruptions
Current status	Regional Transport Committee has reviewed priority transport issues for the West Coast. Drafting of Regional Land Transport Plan underway



Investment in visitor routes

Growth in visitor numbers on the West Coast has included an increase in free independent travellers (FITs) driving themselves around the region. This includes a marked increase in the number of international FITs who hire rental cars and campervans. As noted, the roads on the West Coast can provide challenging driving conditions for FITs who are not used to local conditions.

The West Coast has the highest number of road fatalities per 10,000 population and the highest number of serious injuries from road crashes per 10,000 population in New Zealand. Between 2011 and 2015, over 20 per cent of road crashes on the West Coast involved (although were not necessarily caused by) an overseas license holder. The proportion of crashes involving overseas license holders over the period was particularly high in Westland at 37 percent, which was the highest of all local authority areas in New Zealand.

Investment in the safety of key visitor routes is required to enable and support the region's tourism growth aspirations. This action is focused on improving the safety of West Coast roads through the Visiting Drivers Project and the provision of slow vehicle bays in the mid-term review of the 2018-2021 Regional Land Transport Plan, which is to be completed by mid-2018. The Visiting Drivers Project includes initiatives to ensure drivers are well informed about driving conditions in New Zealand before and during their travel and to ensure roads and roadsides support a safe driving experience through appropriate rest spots, signage and markings.

Action	Investment in visitor routes
Lead agency	NZTA
Partner agencies	Immigration New Zealand, MBIE, Air New Zealand, Christchurch International Airport, Queenstown Airport, Wellington Airport, CamperMate, The High Commission of India, The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in New Zealand, WCRC, BDC, GDC, WDC, TWC, NZ Police
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a safety engineering programme on the State Highway network • Implementation of a safety engineering programme on the local road network • Implementation of an education campaign providing key safety messages to visitors • Slow vehicle bays on SH6 Franz Josef to Fox Glacier, SH6 Inangahua Junction to SH67, SH7 Springs Junction to Reefton • 2018-2021 Regional Land Transport Plan Mid-term Review • New projects implemented under the Regional Land Transport Plan
Timeframe	January 2017 to June 2021
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced deaths and serious injuries • Increased awareness of road safety messaging • Higher road user satisfaction • Safer journeys for all users • Improve the West Coast's reputation as a safe driving destination for visitors
Current status	Underway



Strategic case for the Wangapeka Road

For some time there has been interest in building a road between Buller at Little Wanganui and Tasman at Wangapeka. The 56 kilometre road would provide a more direct connection to Nelson from Karamea, almost halving the driving distance, and another road link north.

The road link is likely to traverse the Kahurangi National Park and will need to pass through and over mountainous terrain. The construction costs and environmental impacts may be high. There may also be significant benefits from increased visitor numbers and expenditure, improved route security and flow-on benefits to the Buller District and businesses.

A strategic case is required to assess the feasibility of constructing the road and to determine whether the benefits are likely to exceed the costs. Work is well underway on a strategic case that will consider the extent and scale of potential opportunities along the route and how these might be realised, as well as potential negative impacts on other areas that might result from a displacement of visitor and freight flows.

Action	Strategic case for the Wangapeka road
Lead agency	BDC
Partner agencies	NZTA, Tasman District Council, WCRC, MBIE
Key deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment Logic Map Benefits map and assessment Strategic business case
Timeframe	March 2017 to August 2017
Key outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear identification of the problems, opportunities, benefits and costs involved in the road link Clear determination of whether there is a case to further investigate and invest in the road link
Current status	Project has started and investment logic workshops held



Potential future actions

This section outlines a number of visitor-related actions that can potentially be included in future action plans.

Developing Haast into an iconic destination

About 600,000 tourists drive through Haast each year, with around 120,000 making a short stop in Haast. The number overnighing in the Haast-Jackson Bay area is low at about 30,000. Most tourists have a limited knowledge of the area's attractions.

Haast sits alongside Mount Aspiring National Park in the heart of Te Wāhipounamu - South West New Zealand World Heritage Area, and offers magnificent mountain, river, coastal and forest attractions. These include Lake Paringa, Lake Moeraki, the Haast Pass and its several waterfalls, the Blue Pools, Jackson Bay, Bruce Bay, and activities such as whitebaiting, fishing, jet boat tours and walking trails.

There is the potential to develop and promote the Haast area as the Southern Gateway to the West Coast and as a 'must-stop' experience for international and domestic visitors. Detailed scoping and planning work is required to make a case for developing the Haast area into an iconic attraction. Subject to the case being made, this would include an integrated package of projects that build on what already exists, encouraging visitors to stop and stay longer.

Developing Ross into an iconic destination

Ross also has the potential to be a must-see destination on the West Coast. It is a major goldmining area and has several gold heritage attractions and sites, including walkways and interpretative displays. Ross is also on the most travelled tourism route between the Glaciers and Punakaiki, and is now the southern starting point for the West Coast Wilderness Trail.

Over the last five years, visitor numbers recorded at the Ross Goldfields Information and Heritage Centre have increased and gold panning participants have more than doubled. Accommodation and food businesses have grown, new accommodation is being provided and a new retail business featuring West Coast products has opened. However, the number of visitors staying overnight in Ross is low and the number of tourists making a stop is still less than 100,000 per annum.

Ross community groups are working to develop Ross as a major cultural and heritage tourism destination. Several projects are underway or proposed, including Chinese miners memorial gardens, new walkways and better visitor signage. There is the potential to build on this work through a comprehensive destination management and marketing plan for Ross and improving the connections between the Ross Township, the Heritage Centre, the West Coast Wilderness Trail and Ross Beach.



Developing the case for the Southern Paparua Coal Heritage Trails

Since the 1860s coal has been mined in several areas around Greymouth, including at Brunner, Wallsend, Dobson, Point Elizabeth, Rewanui, Strongman, Spring Creek and Mount Davy. The vista and environment around this mining heritage include limestone cliff formations, valleys, tunnels, gorges, waterfalls, mountain passes, podocarp forest, ocean and old settlements abandoned over the last 150 years.

All these areas are accessible by walking and cycling trails. The focus of this action is on assessing the case for linking the trails via two walking trails along the Paparua range. These will connect over 25 mining heritage sites and showcase the environment. The Trails would begin at the northern end of the West Coast Wilderness Trail and link with the Paparua Range. Construction would take three to five years.

A feasibility assessment and business case is initially required to test the options for and costs and benefits of the Trail.

Upgrading the Point Elizabeth walkway track

The 5.5 kilometre Point Elizabeth Walk is a popular track just north of Greymouth. It incorporates part of the Rapahoe Scenic Reserve, which contains one of the finest remaining tracts of mixed coastal forest in New Zealand atop the limestone cliffs. Visitors may view Hector's dolphins, New Zealand fur seals and a range of native birds.

This action is focused on upgrading the track to enable dual access for walking and mountain biking in line with the New Zealand Cycle Trail Design Guide for Grade 2 (easy) track. This requires extending the trail from the current 0.5 metre

width to at least one metre and the areas where visibility is poor to 1.5 metres. It is intended that gravel will be spread along the entire length to ensure a good surface is maintained.

The track will provide what is expected to be the main link between Greymouth, the West Coast Wilderness Trail, the Paparua Track and the proposed Southern Paparua Coal Heritage walking and cycling trails.

An initial survey and assessment of the work required has been done. The focus of this action is on developing a full business case, including an assessment of track options, market demand and the economic impact of the track.

Investigating the potential of the Lake Brunner Trail

Lake Brunner and the village of Moana have been a visitor destination since the scheduled daily stop of what is now the TranzAlpine Train passenger service in the 1930s. The natural beauty of the area and the lake's world class fishing have made it a unique destination on the West Coast. There are, however, relatively limited attractions in the area. There are two short walks from the village, a nine-hole golf course, a pottery studio and fishing and lake tours.

A dual cycle/walk way concept has been proposed around the western foreshore of the Lake, joining up to Mitchells and the Taramakau/Inchbonnie road. This would link it to the West Coast Wilderness Trail. Some supportive infrastructure is already in place, including a large suspension bridge and a Department of Conservation camping ground that can be linked up with Moana.

The objective is to capture the "active lifestylers" segment of the visitor market. They want to spend their leisure and holiday time in areas that provide healthy activity options in



a pristine natural environment. The Trail would allow Moana to use the TranzAlpine's daily stop to allow visitors to start or finish the trail, and to support users of the West Coast Wilderness Trail. It is also proposed that events would be held on the trail.

The focus of the action is an initial feasibility study to determine options for developing the trail and to better understand the potential economic benefits relative to the costs.

Charleston Blue Penguin viewing

The West Coast Penguin Trust has been working to conserve penguins and other seabirds on the West Coast for a decade. The Trust conducts research into the ecology of blue penguins to better understand their needs and threats to them. This research is used to initiate conservation projects. The Trust has identified an opportunity to provide penguin viewing facilities in Charleston for visitors and the local community. There is demand for penguin viewing but the experience is not offered on the West Coast. The penguin viewing season is from July to early December with the penguins coming ashore after dark.

The proposal is to create a viewing experience involving a guided tour with a track and viewing platform in Joyce Bay at Charleston. This could be a basic track and small viewing platform suitable for reasonably agile people or a better formed boardwalk with lighting and a larger viewing platform to cater for a greater range of people. The experience would aim to raise awareness of the needs of the threatened species and encourage pro-conservation behaviours. Predator control (including restrictions on dog access) and management actions (e.g. nest boxes) to enhance penguin numbers would be part of the operation. Visitors would be charged admission fees for the tour and access to the site.

The new viewing experience would benefit the local economy by providing extra bed-nights and more visitors over the winter and shoulder tourist seasons. In the longer term, an education and interpretation centre could be established at the site.

Initial work is required to determine that penguin numbers can support the proposed viewing and to assess the costs and benefits of the proposal.

Reefton Powerhouse initiative

The Reefton Powerhouse Charitable Trust has been developing a proposal to create a Powerhouse/Water race experience. The aim is to position Reefton as the place to come for visitors to experience hydro-power, electricity and light, and learn about how it affects their lives and how they might consider making their homes and communities more sustainable. The main element of the proposal is to restore and rebuild Reefton's historic power scheme. The intake, water race and tailrace of the scheme are largely intact but significant repairs are required to enable the scheme to generate electricity.

The proposal also includes extending the existing Powerhouse walk alongside the water race to link the communities of Reefton and Black's Point, and having the Powerhouse site as a key focus for a range of interpretative displays. In the longer term the Powerhouse could be developed into a science and discovery centre focused on educating people about the science and technology associated with advances in electricity generation, transmission, distribution and use.

The Trust has undertaken detailed background work and prepared a feasibility assessment and a plan of action. The project is, however, subject to finalising land access arrangements.



Shantytown Heritage Park Cycle Loop

The aim of this proposed project is to create a 3.2 kilometre loop track off the West Coast Wilderness Cycle Trail into Shantytown Heritage Park from State Highway 6. The Grey District Council designed the loop as part of the original West Coast Wilderness Trail to avoid a main sealed road and as well as means of attracting cyclists to the tourist attraction. Due to funding restrictions, the loop was withdrawn from the original concept plan.

The proposed loop track begins at Paroa and follows historic bush tram routes, takes in early Chinese diggings and travels through regenerating native bush. Cyclists could return to the State Highway via the same track or use the Rutherglen Road. The loop would extend the existing cycle trail and increase Heritage Park visitor numbers.

This trail requires the construction of a route from the State Highway through private and Council land to the Heritage Park boundary. Some culverts or other structures may be required to cross some small water ways. Access to Council and private land will need to be negotiated.

Strategic case for the Haast to Hollyford Road

A road between Haast and Milford Sound has also been proposed for many years. The concept is for an inland toll road between Cascade and close to Te Anau, traversing Westland and Southland District Council areas, three conservation areas, the Fiordland National Park and Mt Aspiring National Park and the Te Wāhipounamu World Heritage Area. The proposed 136 kilometre road will reduce the travelling distance between Haast and Milford Sound by over 350 kilometres. It will also provide an alternative route to the area.

There will be significant construction and development costs, and impacts on the environment. It is proposed that construction and maintenance costs will be covered by private investors and toll charges. There could also potentially be significant benefits from increased employment, the regeneration of Haast and surrounds, and opportunity benefits from reduced travel times.

A full business case is required to clarify the case for this road. An initial step will be to develop a strategic case, as is occurring with the Wangapeka road link proposal. The process and timing for the case has yet to be determined.





Developing a regional network of world-class cycle trails

The West Coast is becoming a significant destination for cyclists. The recent development of the West Coast Wilderness Trail between Greymouth and Ross and the Old Ghost Road between Lyell and Mokitini has encouraged the development of other trail concepts in the region.

The organisations responsible for the development and maintenance of the two main trails have, however, struggled to fund construction, as well as ongoing maintenance and upgrades. This reflects the small domestic funding base in the region and the limited ability to charge users when trails are on conservation land. As major cycle trails are relatively new ventures, the region is also still developing its capability to manage such significant projects.

As noted earlier, the Governance Group recognises the importance of the two trails. However, as it was unlikely that discussions on funding arrangements for the two trails would be finalised before the launch of the Action Plan, the Governance Group has removed them from the list of priority actions.

West Coast Wilderness Trail completion and management

The West Coast Wilderness Trail between Greymouth and Ross is a Grade 2 (easy) trail and is also one of the New Zealand's Great Rides. It spans 135 kilometres and passes through Kumara, Cowboy Paradise and Hokitika. It was opened (in part) in November 2013 and an estimated 10,000 people are now using the Trail annually. The growth target for 2025 is 20,000. As a result of the trail, tourism operations have become established or expanded, including shuttle businesses, bike hire businesses and accommodation providers.

The establishment of the trail has had its challenges. It has not been fully established as envisaged in the original plans and some sections require completion. Some sections do not meet New Zealand Cycle Trail design standards and some land access arrangements have been problematic. A review of the trail's establishment found several limitations, including a lack of a dedicated project manager and unrealistic project expectations. A temporary project manager is advancing the enhancement and completion of several trail sections. However,



there is a short-fall between the original funding provided and the cost of completion.

The West Coast Wilderness Trail Trust was established to drive the development and promotion of the trail. It is working with the Grey and Westland District Councils and other parties to improve the management of the trail, facilitate the completion and enhancements of the trail and to come up with sustainable options for ongoing maintenance. This action aims to provide the resources and capability to enable the Trust to develop, manage and market the trail effectively.

Old Ghost Road maintenance and management

The Old Ghost Road between Lyell and the Mokihinui River in Buller is a Grade 4 (advanced) trail. It is New Zealand's longest continuous single track (85 kilometres) on public conservation land. It is designed for mountain biking and tramping. It has Great Ride status among a network of 22 trails belonging to the New Zealand Cycle Trail, which means that users are promised and expect outstanding cycling experiences.

Although in its infancy, The Old Ghost Road has already established an excellent reputation, with 95 percent of respondents in one survey indicating the trail was their main reason for visiting the West Coast. User numbers have significantly exceeded expectations (greater than

9,000 in its first year) and satisfaction levels have been very high. There have been broader benefits to the district due to the increase in visitors, including more demand for accommodation and food services, and trail-related (e.g. drop-off and pick-up) services.

The track can continue to be a significant tourism asset for the district and region but faces significant challenges that could undermine the opportunity and degrade the experience. These challenges are an operational maintenance funding shortfall and a lack of the management capacity required to drive and leverage the business opportunities the track offers. This action is focused on addressing these challenges.

Maintenance of the trail involves regular quality inspections, upkeep of the trail and facilities, and repairing storm damage. The major current source of revenue is hut fees, with some revenue from fundraising and donations. Hut revenue has, however, fallen short of maintenance costs and contributions from the Department of Conservation. This shortfall needs to be resolved to arrest any deterioration in the quality of the trail.

The Mokihinui-Lyell Backcountry Trust, which developed and manages the Trail, has a Trail Manager who inspects and manages the upkeep of the Trail's physical assets. Volunteers do all the other business planning, strategy and management. This presents significant capacity constraints and is not sustainable. A General Manager is required for The Old Ghost Road to thrive and to leverage greater business opportunities presented by the Trail.

West Coast Governance Group



Andrew Robb

Having grown up on the West Coast, and as the owner operator of a dairy farm in the Grey Valley, Andrew has a clear understanding of the range of issues facing the region, as well as its potential. Andrew was elected to the West Coast Regional Council in 2007 and after two terms as Councillor, he was appointed as Chairman in 2013, a position he continues to hold today. Andrew has held a number of advisory and board positions and in 2016, was appointed to Chair the Tai Poutini Polytechnic Board. Recognised by central government as a key leader for the region, Andrew is well placed to facilitate new opportunities for the benefit of the West Coast.



Tony Williams

As Managing Director of the Williams Group of companies Tony has a proven ability to successfully contribute knowledge on a wide range of business ideas and initiatives. As well as commitments to businesses owned by the Williams Group, Tony is currently a Director of the Westpower and ElectroNet Group of companies, and has past experience on the Boards of Solid Energy New Zealand Limited, Tourism West Coast and Development West Coast. He has held numerous other directorships and had involvement with a significant number of industry bodies bringing experience gained within these roles to the Governance Group.



Rob Caldwell

The Chief Executive of the Westpower and ElectroNet Group of companies, Rob's previous experience in finance roles in Local Government along with his current role in the electricity distribution and generation sector has provided the Governance Group with an industry perspective across the region. Rob brings a diverse range of skills to the table, including the ability to analyse complex problems, challenge the status quo and identify how to maximize potential opportunities.



Natasha Barnes Dellaca

Natasha Barnes Dellaca is a founder of the EPIC Westport innovation hub. Natasha previously held research and design roles at CerebralFix and the Disarmament and Security Centre. Before working in the startup/ ICT space, Natasha worked for governmental and non-government organisation in funding and policy advisory roles. Natasha is currently a member of the Public Advisory Committee for Disarmament and Arms Control, providing ministerial advice and funding community projects.



Francois Tumahai

Francois is of Ngāti Waewae and Ngāti Whatua descent and while born in Wellington he spent much of his childhood living at Arahura Pa near Hokitika. Based in Christchurch as an engineer he became actively involved in Ngāti Waewae in the late 1990s and joined the executive in 2007 before being appointed Chair in 2008. Francois is involved in many boards including ministerial appointments to the West Coast District Health Board and West Coast Conservation Board, he represents Ngāi Tahu on Development West Coast along with directorships on West Coast Development Holdings and Putake West Coast. He is Chairman of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and Chief Executive of Arahura Holding Limited.



Glenys Perkins

Glenys has a long association of working within the West Coast minerals industry and is currently Chair of Minerals West Coast. She has a vast general knowledge in both coal and gold extraction. Glenys has worked tirelessly for the advancement of the West Coast – lobbying Government in regard to mining issues and the Emission Trading Scheme/Carbon tax. She has also spoken internationally on these issues. Glenys is involved in advancing technology to allow cleaner” burning of solid heating fuels.



Paul Wilson

As a 14th generation Poutini Ngāi Tahu, Paul has been involved in all aspects of traditional and cultural Maoridom, including as Mahitahi Māori Komiti, the local Rūnanga representative for Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and more recently as the resource manager for Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio. Living in South Westland, Paul managed the Southern West Coast state highway from Harihari to the top of the Haast Pass until 2015, with a particular focus on river protection, flood damage and emergency works. Constantly looking for new challenges and goals, Paul has enjoyed being able to share his knowledge with the Governance Group.



Bruce Parkes

Bruce Parkes is Deputy Director-General, Science and Policy, for the Department of Conservation and Senior Regional Official for the West Coast under the Government’s Regional Growth Programme. Bruce came to DOC from MBIE where he was responsible for the team overseeing energy and resources and telecommunications policy. This included the roll out of Ultrafast Broadband, the government’s home insulation scheme and the 2010 electricity sector reforms. Prior to joining government in 2009 Bruce had a 20 year career in the private sector in electricity and telecommunications.

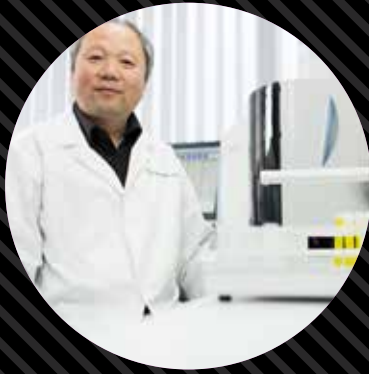


John Wheelans

With over 30 years’ experience as a Chartered Accountant, Director, and business owner, John brings a depth of strategic thinking and commercial disciplines to both commercial and governance roles. John specialises in business consultancy and advisory services that bring fresh, qualified perspectives to situations and clients. His accountancy and finance skills are complemented by John’s operational management and governance experience in the private and public sectors. This commercial astuteness combined with his relationship-building skills enables John to efficiently capture, understand and process information and bring a meaningful point-of-view to discussions and decisions across a range of industries and sectors.

Glossary

BDC	Buller District Council
DOC	Department of Conservation
DWC	Development West Coast
GDC	Grey District Council
MBIE	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
MfE	Ministry for the Environment
MPI	Ministry for Primary Industries
NIWA	National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research
NZTA	New Zealand Transport Agency
REAP	Rural Educational Activities Programmes
TPK	Te Puni Kokiri
TPP	Tai Poutini Polytechnic
TWC	Tourism West Coast
UFB	Ultra-fast Broadband
WCRC	West Coast Regional Council
WDC	Westland District Council



West Coast Regional Council

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