

Economic recovery a mixed bag for Coast

The West Coast economy is showing signs of bouncing back after taking a substantial hit during the COVID lockdown, but the path ahead remains uncertain.

According to the latest data from Infometrics, economic activity on the Coast for the September 2020 quarter was down just 0.4% compared to September 2019. The nation as a whole saw a decline of 3.2%.

The economic impact of COVID has been felt in vastly different ways across the region. Comparing the September 2020 quarter versus the September 2019 quarter, Buller District had the highest growth rate in New Zealand at 7.9%, while Grey District saw a decline of 3.6%. Westland District, which has been particularly hard hit by the loss of international visitors, experienced a 5.6% decrease in GDP.

A resurgence in domestic tourism has benefited the West Coast to a degree, particularly in Buller. MBIE's regional tourism spending estimates show that domestic visitor spending on the West Coast was up by 54% (\$26m) in the September quarter compared to last year. This nearly offset the loss of international visitors, who spent \$27m in the region during the September 2019 quarter.

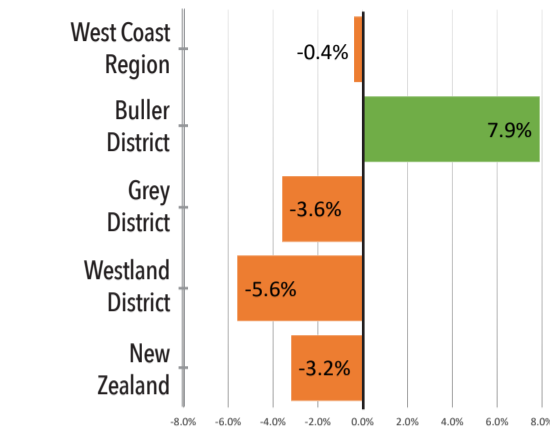
While it has been promising to see the West Coast lead New Zealand in growth for domestic visitor spend, we remain very cautious about the upcoming summer season.

International visitors spent \$72m in the December 2019 quarter and \$119m in the March 2019 quarter, so even if the extra domestic spend is sustained throughout summer, it will unlikely replace international visitor spending.

Our tourism team remains committed to driving visitor demand and will be running an extensive domestic campaign starting next week through to February.

For the year to September 2020, the number of Jobseeker support recipients has continued to rise, with an additional 408 recipients on the West Coast over the past year. This is a 17.7% increase, below the national rate of 27.3%.

While the number of Jobseeker support recipients is starting



Sept quarter 2020 compared to Sept quarter 2019 (Source: Infometrics)

to fall, we cannot become complacent as the full extent of the economic shock of COVID is still to play out. It is vital we continue to support one another and leverage available opportunities.

We encourage any businesses impacted by COVID to contact the team at DWC, and for businesses to tap into the different employment and training initiatives that are currently available such as DWC's Upskill programme, the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, MSD's Mana in Mahi and MBIE's Regional Apprenticeships Initiative.

At DWC we are continuing to look at wider opportunities for the region. Alongside the West Coast Regional Council, Department of Conservation and Iwi, we have formed the Kotahitanga kit e Uru Regional Alliance.

The Alliance has been established to initiate, support and drive West Coast initiatives and secure central government funding to support the economic recovery and mitigate the social and economic impacts of COVID.

Heath Milne | DWC Chief Executive

Building governance capabilities on the Coast



West Coast Governance Programme graduation: Renee Rooney (past graduate), Richard Westlake (facilitator), Anna-Marie Thompson (Agfest West Coast), Heath Milne (DWC), Anita Halsall-Quinlan (West Coast DHB, sponsored by Buller Electricity), Matt Kunzmann (DOC), Melanie Anderson (Destination Westland), Casey Scanlon (Mitre10 Westport and Westport Kindergarten), Nicole Kunzmann (DOC), Stuart Brown (DWC), Jenny Keogan (Westland District Council), Vaughan Renner (facilitator) and Mayor Jamie Cleine (past graduate)

The pool of leaders on the West Coast has had another boost with the graduation of DWC's Governance Programme.

The four session programme was run by Richard Westlake and Vaughan Renner from Westlake Governance, with sessions held in Hokitika, Westport and Greymouth.

The graduation ceremony at Speights Ale House in Greymouth was attended by Buller District Mayor Jamie Cleine and DWC chair Renee Rooney who are both alumni of the West Coast Leadership and Governance programme.

Ms Rooney said: "Not only have these participants made an investment in themselves through their own professional development, they have also made an investment in the future success of our West Coast Region through the learnings and the contribution they will bring to any boardroom, organisation or leadership position they are involved in."

DWC also hosted a community governance workshop

this month in Westport. This full-day workshop facilitated by Westlake Governance was targeted towards community organisations looking to improve their governance capabilities.



Community Governance Programme graduation: Vaughan Renner (facilitator), Martin Abel (West Coast Penguin Trust), Rachel Hill (Buller Cricket), Joey Keen (Homebuilders West Coast Trust), Laura Weir (Westport Early Learning Centre), Rochelle Crossman (Westport Early Learning Centre), Tina Emsden (West Coast Women's Refuge), Debbie Lawn (West Coast Women's Refuge), Zoe Watson (West Coast Penguin Trust) and Richard Westlake (facilitator)

Upcoming Events

NOVEMBER

26

DWC annual public meeting
12:00 noon - 1pm | Ashley Hotel, Greymouth | FREE
Register with events@dwc.org.nz

DECEMBER

07

Business breakfast with Jenn Bestwick | Greymouth
'Doing business with Wellington - understanding the opportunities and how and where to connect.'
7:00am-8:00am | Paroa Hotel, Greymouth | FREE
Register online at www.dwc.org.nz

09

Business lunch | Westport
12:00 noon - 1pm | TBC | FREE

15

Business breakfast with Keith Reilly | Hokitika
7:30am-8:30am | Beachfront Hotel, Hokitika | FREE
Register online at www.dwc.org.nz

Signup to DWC's newsletter for the latest news and events: www.dwc.org.nz

DWC Annual Public Meeting

We cordially invite you to DWC's Annual Public Meeting and the presentation of DWC's 2020 unaudited financial statements.

As a result of COVID-19 and the impact of that on the workload of Audit New Zealand, the audit of DWC's financial statements has not been concluded. In light of this delay, DWC will provide a high-level presentation on its performance and activities for the 2020 financial year. DWC's annual report will be published and available on conclusion of the audit process.

Thursday, 26 November 2020, 12 noon,
Ashley Hotel, Greymouth

Register:
events@dwc.org.nz

West Coast entrepreneurial spirit on display



Co.Starters graduation: Phil Johnston-Coates (facilitator), Jeremiah Maniogo (Toys for Ages), Laksmi Duyvesteyn (Moonlight Healing), Paula Kerr (New River Kennels Ltd), Astiana Trouland (Hauora Coaching), Ana Krakosky (Jade and Form) and Hannah Fitzgibbon (facilitator)

Inspiring business pitches marked the celebration night for the latest graduates of DWC's Co.Starters business start-up and development programme.

Co.Starters is a nine-week programme designed to help you find the best approach to starting and growing a business and collaborate with others who share your entrepreneurial spirit as you work through your business model.

The latest programme held in Greymouth was facilitated by Phil Johnston-Coates and Hannah Fitzgibbon. During the graduation night, the participants pitched a range of startup and developing businesses, including a jade carver, toy maker, dog kennels and holistic therapy.

Astiana Trouland took home the 'best pitch' award for her presentation on her wellness business Hauora Coaching.

If you would like to start your own business, develop your existing business, or explore and develop an idea or project then register your interest for an upcoming Co.Starters cohort.

Westport and Hokitika programmes
commencing February 2021

More info:
events@dwc.org.nz