

Media release – 8 June 2011

## **Councils and community trusts to distribute DWC funds**

Mayors from Buller, Grey and Westland District Councils yesterday signed a funding agreement with Development West Coast which will see each district provided with a special one-off fund of \$2 million.

The \$2 million is expected to provide an economic boost to the three districts through to March 2016 and enable each district to fund various community assets and projects at their discretion.

“It’s about building significant assets in our community, such things are better directed through the councils who know their respective communities needs,” says DWC Chair John Sturgeon.

While Development West Coast will not dictate how and where the fund is spent councils have agreed to ensure the money is applied to projects that meet the Trust’s objects of promoting sustainable employment opportunities and economic benefits to the West Coast region.

Trustees have also resolved that the West Coast Community Trust and Solid Energy Amateur Sports Trust will each be a recipient of bulk funds from DWC for them to distribute to the community.

“The intent is to move away from Development West Coast directly making community grants,” says Mr Sturgeon.

“There are organisations in the region who are better connected to the community so the Trust is moving towards an annual bulk funding model.”

Councils have agreed not to make any applications to the Trust in respect of community assets and projects for a period of five years. However the Trust will continue to consider any commercial applications from community and charitable organisations.

As a requirement of the agreement Development West Coast wishes each of the Councils to consult thoroughly with its communities before deciding how to distribute the funds.

Grey District Mayor Tony Kokshoorn says Grey District has a number of projects which will fit the funding criteria.

“We can spend this money easily and if we spend it wisely it is a win win for everyone. Development West Coast is investing in the community and growth for the future.

Westland District Council has decided to use the money towards the four day Westland Cycle Trail.

“\$2 million is going to go some way to developing our cycle trail which will bring real economic benefit to the Coast,” says Westland Mayor Maureen Pugh.

Buller District Council Mayor Pat McManus says the council has set up a small working group to develop a set of criteria for applications.

“We haven’t decided where the money will go yet but I think the council should look at doing joint ventures or leverage to turn the \$2 million into a \$4 million project.

Over the past 10 years DWC has injected over \$27 million into the community for various projects and purposes. An additional \$13.2 million has been allocated through the Major District Initiative programme which has seen major community assets built including Buller’s Solid Energy Centre, Greymouth’s Aquatic Centre and the refurbishment of Hokitika’s Regent Theatre. This translates to over \$40 million cash into the West Coast community.

The extraordinary distribution fund has been approved by the Minister of Finance in his capacity as Settlor under the Deed of Trust.

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For more information contact :

Development West Coast Chair John Sturgeon  
Phone : 021 421 790

Westland District Mayor Maureen Pugh  
Phone : 027 555 8767

Grey District Mayor Tony Kokshoorn  
Phone : 027 434 3717

Buller District Mayor Pat McManus  
Phone : 027 208 7583