

**Southern
Te Wahipounamu
South West New Zealand
World Heritage Area**

-

Tourism Development Strategy

April 2009



Prepared for
Development West Coast

Prepared by



Tourism Resource Consultants Ltd

In association with
Destination Planning Ltd, Boffa Miskell Ltd and Quality Tourism Development Ltd

Executive Summary

This is the Tourism Development Strategy for the Southern Te Wahipounamu South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. It has been prepared to guide future management of tourism in and around the World Heritage Area mainly through greater collaborative effort of local and central government and the tourism industry.

Who is it for?

The Plan has been prepared for tourism operators and investors, Westland District Council, Department of Conservation, Ngai Tahu, Development West Coast and other related government agencies such as the New Zealand Transport Agency.

How was it prepared?

Development West Coast coordinated preparation of this Strategy as part of the West Coast Major Regional Tourism Initiative. The Strategy follows on from consultation undertaken in and around Haast in mid-2007 and an Issues and Options Report released in early 2008. Follow-up consultation at Haast took place over November – December 2008 with written feedback from Haast businesses in January 2009. Similar plans are being prepared for Glacier Country, Punakaiki and Denniston.

A Project Management Team consisting of Development West Coast, Westland District Council, Department of Conservation and Tourism West Coast has overseen the Strategy's preparation. Consultants were engaged to undertake consultation, background research and write the draft document.

What is the status of this plan?

This is a strategic plan that should be used in the preparation of other important statutory documents including the Westland Long Term Council Community Plan, District Plan, Conservation Management Strategy and National Park Management Plans for Westland and Mount Aspiring National Parks.

It is not intended to override the legal functions of local and central government agencies but to provide important guidance to the development of policies and decision-making made by those agencies. It should be referred to by businesses, elected officials, planners, managers and other decision-makers.

What are the key recommendations?

The Strategy is divided into four Priority Areas. These include Product Quality, Tourism Support Services, Infrastructure and Marketing. A set of Recommended Actions have been developed for each Priority Area. These

are based on an assessment of issues and options to address each issue. The Recommended Actions require further discussion and endorsement by the parties affected by this Strategy.

Overall, the order of priorities supported by Haast tourism businesses are:

1. Undertake a structure planning process for the future of Haast Township (including future location of the i-SITE) and establishing a clearly defined service centre for visitors
2. Improved marketing of Haast and the World Heritage Area
3. Improved tracks, trails, stopping places, information and other facilities to enable visitors to stay longer in the area.
4. Improved signs for visitors throughout the Haast – South Westland area
5. Installation of a new back-up electricity generator and investigate security of supply issues in general
6. Broadband, mobile phone and improved trunk line services to Haast
7. Upgrade the DOC information centre to an i-SITE, noting that the long term future location of the i-SITE is yet to be determined
8. Improve visibility of and access to the information centre from the highway
9. Improved waste management and recycling services :

A summary of the Priority Areas and Recommended Actions are outlined below

Product Quality

Action	Lead Agency	Timing	Funding
1. Identify needs and provide professional business support services and business mentoring to help raise standards and develop new products and services.	DWC	2009 ongoing	DWC
2. Engage the Haast Promotions Group tourism interests in reviews of the West Coast CMS, Westland National Park and Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plans that lead to the protection and enhancement of recreational access and development of sustainable tourism businesses.	DOC	2009 - 2011	DOC

Tourism Support Services

Action	Lead Agency	Timing	Funding
<p>1. Undertake a structure planning exercise to determine a preferred option for the future development of Haast as a tourist service centre having regard to accessibility to tourist accommodation and services, commercial activities, parking and the efficient use of infrastructure and the enhancement of its amenity as a place to visit and live.</p> <p>Following adoption of the preferred development option, to implement any plan changes to the district plan and other actions required to give effect to the structure plan.</p> <p>Develop landscape guidelines to assist WDC when considering applications for future land use to respect the wild and natural character of the locality.</p> <p>Ensure that road works to maintain vehicular accessibility to Haast at all times are identified and provided for in the West Coast Regional Land Transport Strategy and prioritised by the New Zealand Transport Agency.</p> <p><i>NOTE:refer to item 4 belowre beach access and similar.</i></p>	WDC	2010 - 2011	WDC with possibly some support from DWC
2. Strengthen the role of the Haast Promotions Group through an independent tourism coordinator/facilitator and ongoing business assistance programmes from Development West Coast.	DWC/TWC	2009 ongoing	TWC/DWC
3. TWC to be requested to visit the destination more frequently and to provide more support to local operators.	Haast Promotions Group	2009 ongoing	Haast Promotions Group

Infrastructure

Action	Lead Agency	Timing	Funding
1. Approach all telecommunication providers to determine a programme for broadband installation and improved trunk line and mobile telephone services. Some businesses are currently using satellite services at greater cost and lower bandwidth.	Development West Coast	2009 - 2012	To be determined
2. In collaboration with the existing power supply company and local businesses, design and install an improved back-up power supply system. A vital issue is the risk management around disaster events and the level of insurance cover.	Project Management Team	2009	To be determined
3. Develop a more effective system for solid waste management for the Haast area, to resolve physical issues, including the negative impacts of freedom camping and to contribute to a 'greener' brand for the World Heritage Area.	WDC	2009 - 2010	Based on practical solution
4. Develop beach access, car parks, viewing areas,	WDC and	2009 - 2010	WDC and DOC

signage, on-site interpretation, mountain bike trails, picnic areas and other amenities that would support three local day or half-day itineraries to Jackson Bay, Bruce Bay and other areas surrounding Haast.

DOC

Marketing

Action	Lead Agency	Timing	Funding
1. In consultation with the Haast Promotions Group develop a Southern South Westland World Heritage Marketing Action Plan to guide marketing activities over the next 3-5 years.	Tourism West Coast	2009 - 2010	TWC
2. In consultation with the Haast Promotions Group review effectiveness of images, positioning and pricing strategies.	Tourism West Coast	2009 - 2010	TWC
3. In consultation with the Haast Promotions Group develop a strategy to incorporate WHA into promotions and to deliver experiences fitting of a WHA.	Tourism West Coast	2009 - 2010	TWC

How will it be implemented?

Successful implementation of the Tourism Development Strategy relies on stakeholder support and coordination of activities. Capacity issues need to be taken into account when seeking agreement on implementation.

Organisational structures that enable stakeholder cooperation have already been established under the West Coast Major Regional Initiative (MRI). For instance, the Project Management Team for this Plan involves representatives from Tourism West Coast, Development West Coast, DOC and Westland District Council. These agencies and possibly other representation that maybe required can continue working together after the three-year MRI is completed.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ii
Table of Contents	vii
1. Introduction	1
Purpose and Status of this Strategy	1
Structure of the Strategy	2
2. Recap on Issues	3
3. Growth Scenarios	5
Accommodation Capacity	6
Infrastructure, Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment	6
Visitor Experience	6
4. Vision	7
Goal	7
Objectives	7
Priority Areas	7
Development Principles	8
5. Product Quality	8
Background	8
Issues and Challenges	9
Management Options	10
Objectives	11
Recommended Actions	11
6. Tourism Support Services	12
Background	12
Issues and Challenges	12
Management Options	15
Objectives	15
Recommended Actions	16
7. Infrastructure	17
Background	17
Issues and Challenges	17
Management Options	20
Objectives	20
Recommended Actions	21
8. Marketing	22
Background	22

Issues and Challenges	22
Management Options	24
Objectives	24
Recommended Actions	24
9. Implementation	25
Current Status	25
Coordination	25
Next Steps	26
Appendix 1: Planning Context for the Tourism Development Strategy, Southern Te Wahipounamu South West New Zealand World Heritage Area	27

1. Introduction

This Tourism Development Strategy (TDS) has been prepared to chart a course of action for future tourism development in Southern Te Wahipounamu South West New Zealand World Heritage Area.

It follows on from consultation undertaken in mid-2007 and an Issues and Options Report released in early 2008. The background analysis and discussion of options in the Issues and Options Report underpins the recommended actions of this strategy. Similar plans have been prepared for Glacier Country, Punakaiki and Denniston.

These planning projects form part of the West Coast Major Regional Initiative (MRI), a three-year programme to facilitate sustainable tourism development managed by Development West Coast.

Purpose and Status of this Strategy

In recognising the current and future importance of tourism on the Coast, Development West Coast wishes to take a lead and actively encourage the key stakeholder groups who are involved in the tourism industry and the management of the natural and physical resources of the region to become more collaborative in planning for tourism and addressing tourism related issues. Development West Coast foresees significant potential benefits for the tourism industry and the communities of the West Coast in taking this approach, particularly for those settlements serving tourism activities such as Fox Glacier, Franz Josef and the communities in the Haast area. These benefits span economic, social and environmental outcomes.

As a first step, Development West Coast has identified a Tourism Development Strategy as an appropriate tool or mechanism to achieve greater collaboration. The Strategy would be based on a vision that is agreed by the key South Westland tourism and community governing agencies. Development West Coast is keen for all the key agencies to not only recognise the importance of tourism in the economy, but also the greater potential that may be realised where the Vision is shared, and energies and focus are combined to achieve agreed goals and actions.

The Strategy is intended to be a strategic document. It defines the vision and then identifies the steps that would guide the future actions and decision-making of the key agencies in relation to activities and infrastructure that affect the tourism industry. It is anticipated that these actions would involve greater coordination and collaboration between the key agencies. It is acknowledged that some of these agencies, such as Westland District Council or the Department of Conservation already have statutory duties and functions defined in legislation.

The Strategy is not intended to over-ride or divert these duties, but to be used by those agencies to assist and inform their business and planning, recognising the

importance and impact they may have on tourism. For instance, the next Long Term Council Community Plan for Westland District is being developed now and is due to be signed off by July 2009. Similarly, preparation of the Department of Conservation's West Coast Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) and Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan are also underway. Therefore, the TDS can play an important role in helping to shape these statutory plans and flagging issues that can be formally consulted upon through the statutory plan processes.

Most importantly the role of the Strategy is to draw together a number of organisations and interests, to develop a holistic approach and understanding of tourism in South Westland. This industry is dependent on the integrity of the natural environment along with the maintenance of viable businesses and communities.

Structure of the Strategy

The Strategy starts off with a recap of the issues that were raised in the 2007 Issues and Options Report. Following this background analysis, the Strategy's vision, goal and Priority Areas are laid out. Each Priority Area is presented via a brief background, list of key issues or challenges, the options for addressing those issues and the recommended actions.

2. Recap on Issues

The 2007 Issues and Options Report raised over 20 issues affecting or affected by the tourism sector. Most of these issues were those raised by local stakeholders during consultation in 2007 and others were raised by the consultants and Project Management Team (PMT). Examples include: the need for wet weather attractions; impacts of the short and intense whitebait season; lack of top-end products and accommodation to attract higher spending visitors; seasonal variations in business; lack of a 'beating heart' or hub to orientate visitors to the area; difficulties with providing adequate recycling and waste management services; lack of a reliable supply of power and telecommunications; labour and skill shortages; and due to the small rating base - limited funding available for investment in town infrastructure and beautification.

The PMT then grouped the issues into four Priority Areas. These include: Product Quality, Tourism Support Services, Infrastructure and Marketing. Most of the issues fit under one of these Priority Areas although they are all interrelated.

Subsequent meetings of the PMT and consultants managed to refine the list of 20+ issues down to 9 key issues spread across the four Priority Areas. This created a more manageable list of issues to address. Condensing the initial long list to a short list of issues was achieved by (i) grouping closely related issues at a more strategic level (ii) scaling back those issues that were considered to be largely out of the control of most operators or agencies or very difficult to influence (such as seasonality) and (iii) removing those issues that were not understood sufficiently, lacked supporting information or there was disagreement over the significance of the issue.

As a result, the Priority Areas and associated key issues are summarised below:

Product Quality – Key Issues:

- ▶ Small number of isolated businesses and products
- ▶ Incomplete policies and provisions for management of tourism development consistent with Southern South Westland World Heritage Area.

Tourism Support Services – Key Issues:

- ▶ Lack of a readily identifiable and accessible visitor service centre drawing travellers from the State Highway and welcoming and orienting them to the Haast area
- ▶ Strengthening cooperation amongst tourism operators. Customer service standards, capacity and capability are key issues.

Infrastructure – Key Issues

- ▶ Gaining greater security of supply for electricity and telecommunications (phone lines, mobile phone, internet and email)
- ▶ Providing small-scale visitor amenities that will help visitors stay longer and explore the wilderness character of Southern South Westland (eg, beach access, car park areas, view points, short walks, mountain bike trails, on-site interpretation, signs).

Marketing – Key Issues

- ▶ Building awareness in visitor markets of Southern South Westland
- ▶ Lack of profile for the World Heritage Area
- ▶ Seasonal highs and lows.

The Priority Areas and key issues form the basis of the recommended actions outlined in this strategy.

Overall, the order of priorities supported by Haast tourism businesses are:

1. Undertake a structure planning process for the future of Haast Township (including future location of the i-SITE) and establishing a clearly defined service centre for visitors
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9. Improved waste management and recycling services

3. Growth Scenarios

Three growth scenarios are raised in this strategy to help understand what might happen if growth in the volume of tourism activity (i) grows less than is officially forecast, (ii) continues as is officially forecast, or (iii) increases above what is forecast¹.

The same scenarios were used in the Destination Management Plan for Glacier Country.

Official projections indicate a low growth scenario and potentially a significant downturn in visitors to South Westland

The growth projections used in this plan are:

Scenario 1 Low Growth	Scenario 2 Medium Growth	Scenario 3 High Growth
Below official forecasts	Official visitor demand forecast for West Coast	Above official forecast demand
1.3% annual average growth rate to 2015	3.4% annual average growth rate to 2015	6.9% annual average growth rate to 2015

Although growth rates above 8% per annum have been achieved in Glacier Country in the past decade, these have declined markedly in recent years. This is true of the rest of New Zealand where total visitor arrivals to the country grew at between 1% – 2% between 2006 and 2007. The general outlook from the industry is that a low growth scenario and possibly decline is the most realistic for the West Coast and other regions over the next few years. For New Zealand, arrivals, spend and accommodation guest nights are trending downwards (to year ended September 2008). An upward spike in arrivals to most regions, especially those on the main North Island and South Island tourist trails, is predicted to occur in 2011 and 2012 due to the Rugby World Cup and new long haul aircraft.

What happens under these growth scenarios?

¹ Official forecasts are determined annually by a panel of industry experts and published through the Ministry of Tourism. Over the years they have been found to be reasonably accurate.

Accommodation Capacity

The Issues and Options report noted there are about 500 commercial beds available in and around Haast in the peak season. This is about a third of what is available at Franz Josef and about half of that available at Fox Glacier.

Under the Low Growth Scenario, the current situation would stay largely the same. In peak season, Haast will run at close to full capacity and overflow will seek beds in Glacier Country or elsewhere. Shoulder season business is now better than it was 10 years ago and that is likely to remain the same.

Under the Medium and High Growth Scenarios, there will likely be demand for more accommodation in peak season. Unless more visitors arrive during the shoulder and off-season, peak season capacity will remain under pressure.

Infrastructure, Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment

The number one infrastructure priority for Haast tourism businesses is having reliable broadband. Businesses struggle to cope now without broadband and mobile phone coverage and any growth in the tourism sector will be constrained due to the lack of broadband-enabled marketing, booking and communication systems.

Over the next 5 years, planned upgrades will occur to both water supplies and sewerage treatment. Further tourism development in the area would be accommodated by 'bolting on' additional modular systems to expand current capacity.

While water and sewerage systems appear adequate, there is a lack of amenities such as picnic areas, defined parking areas, access to the beaches, welcome and direction signs, public shelter and on-site interpretation at local attractions. There is an adequate supply of public toilets to cater for future growth.

Visitor Experience

There is no system in place to track visitor satisfaction with the South Westland experience. Informal feedback indicates that most visitors rate their experience highly.

Emerging issues that need attention include adverse effects from whitebaiting and freedom camping (rubbish, human waste and anti-social behaviour), limited opening hours and services available during shoulder and off-seasons and customer service standards.

These issues will intensify under Medium and High Growth Scenarios. Stronger collaboration between Haast tourism operators and the key agencies (DOC, New Zealand Transport Agency and Westland District Council) will be required to manage the visitor experience under either of the growth scenarios.

4. Vision

A draft vision for South Westland was put forward to discuss and amend and this has now been agreed:

Gateway to the Southern South Westland World Heritage Area and West Coast – Haast provides a stunning, welcoming and well-managed arrival for visitors

Real Frontier Feel – Visitors are overwhelmed by the scenery and 'edge of the world' natural experiences

Wilderness Experience Matched With Quality Service – Southern South Westland tourism operators provide top quality service in a World Heritage Area

Goal

The goal of this strategy is to:

Chart a course of action that will assist the community and other stakeholders to develop and manage the Southern South Westland World Heritage Area as a leading and enduring tourism destination

Objectives

The key objectives of this strategy are for Southern South Westland to:

1. Develop the Haast area as a world class gateway for the Southern South Westland World Heritage Area
2. Develop Haast as an accessible and identifiable visitor service centre and an access point to the wider Haast locality, providing convenient and quality services and facilities to travellers
3. Further develop support services to underpin a viable tourism sector.

Priority Areas

The PMT has identified four priority areas that this plan seeks to address. These include:

Product Quality

This is about the overall visitor experience of Southern South Westland. It covers the type of activities and attractions on offer, how they are managed and how visitors rate their experiences.

Tourism Support Services

Support services include amenities and services (information, bookings, food outlets) and cooperation amongst tourism operators and related organisations.

Infrastructure

This includes telecommunications, power supplies, water supply, roads, wastewater treatment, pathways, car parks and buildings required to support a community and tourism destination. Provision of high speed broadband is the Number 1 priority for the Haast area.

Marketing

For this plan, marketing is about the promotional activities undertaken by the industry and Tourism West Coast to develop and position Southern South Westland as a top class destination.

Development Principles

Four key principles have been put forward to guide future development in the tourism sector:

- ▶ Support local businesses that adopt and adhere to sustainable business practices and which demonstrate conservation gains
- ▶ Foster cooperation amongst businesses
- ▶ Strive for quality products and services that are internationally competitive
- ▶ Minimise or avoid adverse effects on Southern South Westland's natural and cultural features.

5. Product Quality

Background

Due to the status as a World Heritage Area (WHA), international visitor expectations in terms of environmental practices, tourism products and services are high. There are plenty of opportunities in and around Haast to meet these expectations and build a viable industry in keeping with the WHA.

Currently however, businesses in and around the WHA are generally small, often run part time, isolated and geographically dispersed. Activities based on the World Heritage Area include jet boat rides, helicopter tours, kayaking and tramping tracks. The majority of accommodation is generally basic to mid-range, rather than higher quality or luxury.

Planning policies for the WHA do not envisage any substantial developments and tend to support as far as practical the protection of wilderness values for which the area is becoming increasingly well known.

In keeping with these policies and values, tourism development should centre on giving visitors a reason and a means to stop, stay a while and explore the area.

Whether stopping for refreshment, information and a short walk or staying overnight, the Haast area needs to provide an appropriate range of activities and attractions that reflect the outstanding natural and underlying cultural heritage.

Building the capacity of local operators, clarifying WHA policies and regulations, creating an obvious service centre for visitors and developing WHA itineraries with supporting small - scale infrastructure are the key strategies put forward for stakeholders to consider.

Issues and Challenges

1. Limited Capacity Of Local Businesses

Getting the basics right in terms of products and services is a high priority for Haast. The area is isolated, very few visitors stay overnight compared with destinations further north, and seasonal variations in business are significant. While these local factors present enough challenges on their own, the WHA status presents further challenges because there are wider industry and visitor expectations that:

- ▶ There is a high level of wet weather and off-season preparedness (eg, duty cafes/restaurants and accommodation)
- ▶ Businesses are leaders in sustainable tourism and can show their responsibility by attaining Qualmark Green, Green Globe 21 or other environmental certification
- ▶ Tourism operators know the natural and cultural history of the WHA and can interpret this to visitors in commentaries, brochures, websites and other media
- ▶ Businesses are contributing towards conservation of the WHA
- ▶ Businesses have the latest communication technology available and know how to market themselves effectively
- ▶ There are high standards of service, accommodation, food and activities – befitting a World Heritage Area status.

These expectations are hard enough to meet in developed destinations. Because of the relative isolation and emerging nature of the Haast gateway, there is a strong case to establish a business support service that could provide practical and appropriate advice to operators across the full range of operations – product development in a WHA, staff management, joint and individual marketing activities, compliance with conservation and other policies

and regulations and service standards.

2. Clarity of Conservation Policies and Plans

To encourage the development of visitor related businesses in the WHA measures need to be taken to reduce the perceived barriers for businesses to develop.

The development of a broader product base is also important to increase length of stay in the area and provide additional or alternative opportunities to interact with the WHA. Some examples include:

- ▶ Bird watching tours
- ▶ Heli-hikes and other activities using helicopter access
- ▶ Coastal walks
- ▶ Mountain biking trails (eg, the old Cattle Tracks)
- ▶ Greenstone tours using helicopter access
- ▶ Coordinating accommodation holiday homes (promoted via real estate agents, developers etc)
- ▶ Quality mid to higher range accommodation options in sync with the environment.

As the area encapsulated by the WHA covers two different conservancies, West Coast and Otago, with different planning policies and regulations (Aspiring National Park Management Plan and the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy), there is a need to clarify what sort of tourism activity is possible and where.

At the current time, DOC is reviewing both planning documents with further consultation planned. As the plans cover a 10 - year period, it is important to reach consensus on policies that will influence future investment and employment in the area.

Management Options

The main options are:

Capacity of Local Businesses

- ▶ Leave market forces to develop products and services over time
- ▶ Provide a tourism business support service for three years to help businesses expand and encourage new investment
- ▶ Provide training and workshops in relation to environmental practices and development of

interpretation.

Management Plans and Policies Affecting the World Heritage Area

- ▶ Hold a special forum for DOC (Otago and West Coast Conservancies) and tourism operators to clarify issues and find consensus over policies for air access, tourism concession activity, accommodation developments and operator standards for the WHA
- ▶ Operators submit comments on DOC management plans as individual businesses.

Objectives

The objectives for this Priority Area are:

- 1. Enhance and expand tourism products and services**
- 2. Clarify conservation policies and plans for compatible tourism development**

Recommended Actions

Action	Lead Agency	Timing	Funding	Estimated Budget
1. Identify needs and provide professional business support services to help raise standards and develop new products and services	DWC	2009 ongoing	DWC	\$20,000 p.a
2. Engage the Haast Promotions Group tourism interests in reviews of the West Coast CMS, Westland National Park and Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plans that lead to the protection and enhancement of recreational access and development of sustainable tourism businesses	DOC	2009 - 2011	DOC	NA

6. Tourism Support Services

Background

Haast plays an important role for the West Coast primarily as a gateway and also as a destination. The sheer expanse of the area dotted with small settlements means that passing tourist vehicles need to be slowed down and diverted to a central point. From there they can explore the area further or carry on their journey.

Two interventions would greatly assist growth of Haast as a gateway and emergent destination. The first involves attracting visitors from the highway while the second centres on building cooperation amongst the industry to help manage and grow the destination.

Issues and Challenges

1. Haast Needs an Identifiable and Accessible Service Centre for Visitors

One of the key constraints for tourism development in and around Haast is the absence of a tourist information facility that is readily identifiable and convenient for motorists. Proximity to or co-location with other motoring and visitor related services such as telephone, internet, visitor information, accommodation and refreshment needs would be commercially advantageous as well providing an enhanced service for visitors.

Currently over 600,000 visitors drive past Haast with less than 120,000 of those actually making a short stop at the visitor centre and potentially less than 30,000 staying overnight. This represents lost opportunities for Haast and surrounding areas.

The West Coast Visitor Centre Review, completed by Development West Coast in 2007, recommended upgrading the visitor centre to a fully serviced i-SITE and providing a more fulfilling experience through complimentary services and upgrading the now dated interpretation of the World Heritage Area. Such an i-SITE will encourage more visitors to stop at Haast and explore the area, leading onto other commercial benefits. As part of the national i-SITE network the centre would play a more proactive role in promoting and booking local tourism operators, both within the centre and remotely via phone, email and web bookings. While it is common for local businesses to receive only a small proportion of their bookings from their local i-SITE, by being part of a regional West Coast and national network, this will enhance promotional opportunities for Haast operators through other strategic i-SITES such as Punakaiki and Wanaka.

An immediate priority is to upgrade the existing information centre to an i-SITE. This would involve staff training, interior fit out, extended hours and new booking technology. Improved visibility and access from the highway is also required. Any relocation of the i-SITE to Haast Township should be considered as part of a broader structure planning process, outlined below.

Although a town centre has developed over time, this was not designed with the needs of visitors in mind. To reduce the potential for tourists to by-pass Haast enhanced directional signage to, or visibility of up-graded tourist information, accommodation and booking services within the township would be beneficial. The existing Haast Township is an existing node of development and a critical mass of infrastructure that provides a basis for new development. The efficient use of infrastructure combined with further consideration of accessibility for tourists, connections between services, commercial businesses and accommodation combined with amenity enhancements within the township would assist in making Haast a more attractive stopping point.

Amenities that should be considered include public seating, a children's play area, and shelter from the sun or the rain for visitors to Haast Township. If improvements to signage and the state highway entrance to Haast are effective this will have considerable potential to increase both the visitor flow and length of stay. Resolving and overcoming the shortfalls in parking and amenities will become critical to enabling the increased traffic to be converted into economic gains. A tourist information board could be integral to such improvements.

This type of development could be achieved through a structure planning exercise that identifies a preferred development option for Haast based on a number of key objectives to enhance its function for providing convenient and accessible tourist services. These could include upgrading the Visitor Information Centre to an i-SITE, enhancing parking for tourist vehicles, improving pedestrian connectivity between facilities and services and considering amenity enhancements within public spaces. It is also appropriate in a World Heritage environment that new development is respectful of the wild and natural character of the locality.

A regional tourist sign project, currently underway with Development West Coast, will help improve the effectiveness of tourist signs used on or in association with the State Highway. Currently, the provision of signs is inconsistent (too many in some places and not enough in others) and ineffective at attracting people off the highway. Local options for consideration in the regional signage plan include a West Coast arrival sign entering Haast Pass, more prominent signage for Haast itself and a formal

signposted tourist drive along the Jackson Bay road. The effectiveness of critical signs used to give direction to Haast located outside the region (eg, Wanaka) should also be included in the sign project.

2. Local collaboration to grow business

Informal meetings of Haast tourism operators have occurred over the years to discuss issues of mutual concern. A Haast Promotions Group has since been formed with about 32 members. A smaller core group of Promotions Group members currently play an active role in joint marketing activities and maintain a good working relationship with Tourism West Coast.

During consultation on this strategy, strong support from Haast tourism businesses was given to the idea of having a full-time tourism coordinator based in Glacier Country. Indeed, it was seen as being essential. This idea is raised in more detail in the Destination Management Plan for Franz Josef and Fox Glacier. Although based in Glacier Country, the coordinator would also service Haast in the areas of joint marketing activity, business advice, destination management issues and ideas (eg, waste management, freedom camping), training activities and coordinating input from the industry on council and DOC plans and policies. Further businesses assistance can be coordinated through Development West Coast's economic development services.

Implementation of this strategy will be more successful if the Haast Promotions Group works closely with the proposed tourism coordinator, who in-turn would report to and be part-funded by Development West Coast and Tourism West Coast.

The Haast Promotions Group has potential to play an important role in:

- ▶ Development and implementation of a structure plan to enhance the role of Haast as a tourist service centre
- ▶ Product development for Haast and the WHA
- ▶ Joint marketing with Tourism West Coast
- ▶ Liaison with Queenstown and Wanaka i-SITES
- ▶ Staff and business management training
- ▶ Recycling and waste management
- ▶ DOC and Council policy and plans.

Management Options

The main options for stakeholders to consider include:

The key objectives to be achieved in a Structure Plan

- ▶ Leave Haast Township as it is now
- ▶ Look to enhance connections between accommodation and tourist information facilities and businesses providing complementary services such as cafes and internet providers
- ▶ Seek to provide further guidance on how future land use development can respect and complement the landscape and natural character values of the locality.

Growing local businesses

- ▶ Do nothing
- ▶ Strengthen the Haast Promotions Group in order to grow local businesses
- ▶ Support establishment of a full-time tourism coordinator to work with Glacier Country and Haast tourism businesses.

Objectives

Two objectives have been developed for this Priority Area:

1. Enhance the role of Haast as an accessible visitor service centre and a gateway for the World Heritage Area and as a southern entry to the West Coast

2. Strengthen the Haast Promotions Group in order to grow local businesses

Recommended Actions

Action	Lead Agency	Timing	Funding	Estimated Budget
<p>1. Undertake a structure planning exercise to determine a preferred option for the future development of Haast as a tourist service centre having regard to accessibility to tourist accommodation and services, signs, commercial activities, upgrade of the information centre to i-SITE, parking and the efficient use of infrastructure and the enhancement of its amenity as a place to visit and live.</p> <p>Following adoption of the preferred development option, to implement any plan changes to the district plan and other actions required to give effect to the structure plan.</p> <p>Develop landscape guidelines to assist WDC when considering applications for future land use to respect the wild and natural character of the locality.</p> <p>Ensure that road works to maintain vehicular accessibility to Haast at all times are identified and provided for in the West Coast Regional Land Transport Strategy and prioritised by the New Zealand Transport Agency.</p> <p><i>NOTE: refer to item 4 below re beach access and similar.</i></p>	WDC	2010 - 2011	WDC with possibly some support from DWC	To be determined
2. Strengthen the role of the Haast Promotions Group through an independent tourism coordinator/facilitator and ongoing business assistance programmes from Development West Coast.	DWC/TWC	2009 ongoing	DWC	To be determined
3. TWC to be requested to visit the destination more frequently and to provide more support to local operators	Haast Promotions Group	2009 ongoing	Haast Promotions Group	

7. Infrastructure

Background

Planned improvements to Haast's core infrastructure (roads, water and waste water treatment) are outlined in Westland District Council's Long Term Council Community Plan. In general, this infrastructure is designed to cope with further development by using bolt-on engineering components.

In the short-term, attention should be turned to (i) improving the supply of telecommunication services (broadband and mobile phone) and electricity and (ii) improving the provision of small-scale visitor amenities that would help visitors to stay longer and explore the area.

Issues and Challenges

1. Security of Telecommunications, Power Supply and Solid Waste Management Services

Apart from water and sewerage systems, the other core infrastructure underpinning the tourism industry is secure telecommunications, a reliable power supply and effective solid waste management services.

The highest priority for Haast tourism businesses is getting high speed broadband installed in association with mobile phone services and an improved trunk line. Currently, the trunk line would not support ATM services that are also needed. The matter is urgent. The lack of broadband means business struggle with booking systems (such as Wotif and others), managing email attachments, and managing shared room inventories. The second priority is putting in place a more reliable back-up system for the local power supply.

The Haast area is vulnerable in this regard having no reliable cellphone services south of Fox Glacier and only one private power supplier.

Telecom have indicated that no further cellphone or trunk services will be developed for South Westland in the near future. Provision of a broadband service was approved but is now not on offer due to the recent change in government.

Haast and the surrounding area is supplied by a privately owned hydro scheme in the Turnbull River (New Zealand Energy Ltd). Haast is not connected to the national grid and therefore cannot be supplied by a mix of generators via the national transmission network in the event of a failure.

In terms of the power supplied by New Zealand Energy,

there is ample generating capacity. Peak load accounts for about 60% of total capacity and additional generating capacity can be installed if required within the capacity of the natural water resource available. Further investment in demand-side management (smart metering and more sophisticated switch gear), coupled with improved back-up power generation is planned. This will greatly reduce disruptions caused by flooding, falling trees and blocked intake screens at the mini-power station.

The present back-up generator needs to be bigger to meet the load in times when the hydro station is affected by weather events. Although some of the local businesses have their own generators, this is an expensive exercise, and there are issues with noise, fuel costs, general environmental negatives, and duplication of capital expenditure.

A further risk to the community and businesses is that should there be a catastrophic failure of the hydro plant then that would lead to the temporary installation of a larger diesel generator that would immediately increase the costs of electricity to greater than three times the cost of hydro (for instance, Chatham Islands or Stewart Island rates). This would have a significant impact on the profitability of businesses and the well being of residents.

The recommendation is that the Project Management Team pursues a strategic solution with New Zealand Energy.

Solid waste disposal has improved over the past year with the introduction of District wide recycling and the roll out of "Love NZ" recycling and waste disposal bins for members of the public. Waste transfer stations including recycling are available at Neils Beach and Bruce Bay. The Haast dump provides for solid waste disposal and the collection of recyclables. The dump hours have been set through community consultation and the dump is currently open on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The contractor has also arranged private recycling pick-ups from a number of businesses. These opening hours are perceived by some to be unduly restrictive during peak season..

2. Development of amenities to encourage visitors to stay longer in the area

Although South Westland has an abundance of natural attractions and in general a good range of walking tracks and trails, further development needs to occur to enable visitors to have access to and be able to experience these attractions. For example: beach access, mountain bike trails, viewing areas with on-site interpretation panels and displays, car parks, picnic areas, better signage of attractions and destinations within the area (eg Jackson

Bay) and, building a strong sense of arrival into the WHA.

Assuming that the visitor – service centre concept is accepted and successful, there will be a need to upgrade and better promote nearby tracks, trails, car parks and other small facilities at the places that visitors are directed to from the centre and their accommodation.

As a starting point, three itineraries could be developed: (i) Haast to Jackson Bay (ii) Haast to Bruce Bay and (iii) areas surrounding Haast.

Haast to Jackson Bay

Existing short walks are situated at Hapuka Estuary and Whare Te Kou at Jackson Bay. The track to Lake Ellery from the Jackson Bay road is currently being upgraded. Beach access tracks at Haast Beach and at other points along the Jackson Bay road need to be better formed with defined car parking and suitable directional and information signs. Cars often get stuck in the sand when trying to find access to the beaches. Parking at and signs for Jackson Bay itself also need improvement. The drive to Jackson Bay is becoming increasingly popular.

Haast to Bruce Bay (Mahitahi)

Popular stopping places include Ship Creek, Munro Beach and Lake Paringa. Bruce Bay is significant as it is the only place south of Kumara where the sudden appearance of the sea is so dramatic that people stop in awe. In terms of Maori mythology, it is also very important and is the site of the Te Runanga o Makaawhio marae.

Apart from walking on the beach, there is a complete lack of opportunities, facilities and interpretation for visitors to experience. Maori mythology, the presence of Aotea or malachite on the beach (a semi-precious stone), the 'Beech Gap' story coupled with a potential walk to Heretaniwha Point with its stunning views, could all be combined into one of the most rewarding stopping places on the West Coast. Suitable car parking, interpretation, picnic area, toilets and trail development are required. In turn, business opportunities are likely to arise based on visitors staying longer in the area.

Around Haast and to Haast Pass

Between Haast and Haast Pass, established walks are found at Roaring Billy Falls, Pleasant Flat, Thunder Creek Falls and Fantail Falls. There is a potential with Landsborough Station to become a camping walking destination, although access is only suitable for 4WD vehicles at this point.

Around Haast Township, there is a strong case to develop a dual walking and biking trail linking the Township with Haast Junction / visitor centre and World Heritage Hotel through to Haast Beach. This is for safety reasons to keep people off the road and to provide a local recreation opportunity that would keep people in the area and link up the existing nodes of activity. This has strong support from Haast tourism businesses and residents. Local businesses also support better parking, a safe play area for kids combined with a public shelter / picnic area with adequate seating, tables etc in the Township. This is seen as an essential part of being a welcoming destination and is good for local business.

Development of a track to the top of Mosquito Hill at Haast has been raised but would be a major undertaking given the swampy terrain and the need to cross the Haast River. Mountain bike trails also have potential. Relatively short (1-3 hrs), easily accessible rides that combine mixed terrain, forest, river and coastal scenery would be more in demand than long, difficult rides.

As a rule of thumb, visitors need to be provided with a sense of arrival at attractions. Even in a wilderness landscape, visitors need to know where the preferred beach access is, where to park cars and what stories or history make the place so special.

This does not mean a proliferation of signs and other structures. As with nearby developments such as at Ship Creek, there is a lot of potential in and around Haast for sensitively designed facilities that enhance the visitor experience and give them a reason to stay longer – even if for a couple of hours.

Management Options

Telecommunications, power and solid waste management

- ▶ Let market forces deliver better services
- ▶ Development West Coast to intervene and help broker improved services.

Visitor amenities

- ▶ Leave amenities as they are now
- ▶ Invest in visitor amenities that will provide visitors with reasons to stay longer and explore the area.

Objectives

In light of this discussion, the following objectives have been put forward:

1. Install broadband, improve trunk line and mobile phone services, improve the back-up system for local power supply and improve solid waste management

2. Provide opportunities for visitors to stay longer and explore the area

Recommended Actions

Action	Lead Agency	Timing	Funding	Estimated Budget
1. Approach all telecommunication providers to determine a programme for broadband installation and improved trunk line and mobile telephone services. Some businesses are currently using satellite services at greater cost and lower bandwidth.	Development West Coast	2009	To be determined	Based on telecommunication solutions
2. In collaboration with the existing power supply company and local businesses, design and install an improved back-up power supply system. A vital issue is the risk management around disaster events and the level of insurance cover.	Project Management Team	2009 - 2010	To be determined	Based on power supply solutions
3. Develop a more effective system for solid waste management for the Haast area to resolve physical issues, including the negative impacts of freedom camping and to contribute to a 'greener' brand for the World Heritage Area.	WDC	2009 - 2010	Based on practical solution	
4. Develop beach access, car parks, viewing areas, signage, on-site interpretation, mountain bike trails, picnic areas and other amenities that would support three local day or half-day itineraries to Jackson Bay, Bruce Bay and other areas surrounding Haast.	WDC and DOC	2010 - 2013	WDC and DOC	To be determined

8. Marketing

Background

Tourism on the West Coast has been a story of success over the last decade. Strong growth in arrivals to New Zealand, an effective global campaign (100% Pure), individual operator contributions and the marketing activities of Tourism West Coast have all had varying degrees of influence.

Over the last 3 years the growth in visitor arrivals to New Zealand and the West Coast has slowed. The outlook is for a Low Growth Scenario over coming years and potentially a marked downturn in the next 1 – 2 years.

Issues and Challenges

The three biggest marketing opportunities for Southern South Westland appear to be (i) creating awareness of Southern South Westland as a destination (ii) capitalising on being a World Heritage Area, and iii) driving more business in shoulder and off-seasons.

1. Creating awareness of Southern South Westland as a destination

A coordinated marketing plan of action for the next 3 – 5 years, led by the Haast Promotions Group working with Tourism West Coast, should be a high priority. There are already significant promotional investments being made by individual operators (especially Ngai Tahu) in Queenstown and Wanaka and that one of the best opportunities is to coordinate and leverage this in joint campaign activity.

Potential areas of focus for the marketing plan could include:

- ▶ Leveraging off the World Heritage Area status
- ▶ Clarifying the brand name and values of the World Heritage Area - the official title 'Southern Te Wahipounamu South West New Zealand World Heritage Area' - is difficult to use for marketing activities
- ▶ Promoting a number of day or half-day itineraries including down to Jackson Bay, up to Bruce Bay and other sites near to Haast Township for self-drive visitors
- ▶ Developing itineraries for winter ski markets through Australian travel trade as 'add-ons' to Queenstown/Wanaka
- ▶ Targeting niche or special interest markets such as birding, hunting, or fishing

- ▶ Promoting cultural and historical elements in addition to natural attractions
- ▶ Promoting softer adventure experiences and more luxurious accommodation options (to visitors, trade and media)
- ▶ Using technology (eg pod tours) to encourage longer length of stay by providing interpreted, themed self guided tours
- ▶ Cross promotion by West Coast operators
- ▶ Public Relations (through media) and online tools (travel portal).

2. Capitalising on World Heritage status

Being one of only two World Heritage Areas on New Zealand's mainland, there is plenty of scope to leverage further profile for Southern South West New Zealand.

Images, tourist signage, website content (Haast, West Coast, and third party travel portals), products, interpretation (stories) tour packages, retail products, art and craft and travel trade collateral all play a part in positioning and strengthening the brand of being a World Heritage Area.

There are complications in that the World Heritage Area also encompasses Fiordland National Park and Glacier Country (Westland National Park). Therefore, a careful process is required to determine the most effective branding and execution for Southern South Westland as a destination within and perhaps a hub of the World Heritage Area.

3. Seasonal campaigns

Seasonal campaigns would be best undertaken in coordination with Glacier Country and Tourism West Coast who in turn will coordinate with national initiatives such as Tourism New Zealand's seasonal campaign in Australia.

The skier markets have potential for Westland but visitation tends to be linked to poor skiing weather and decisions are taken at short notice. Companies such as Real Journeys work directly with the ski area companies to provide trips that are transferrable with ski passes to generate significant low season business. This and other targeted initiatives need to be included in a comprehensive marketing plan.

Seasonal pricing strategies should be set in place and used consistently. Currently there is a lack of seasonal and other pricing initiatives. Web technology now makes it much

easier for small operators to manage and promote seasonally priced packages.

The possible establishment of a Destination Management position in Glacier Country referred to earlier would also cover Southern South Westland and would be able to assist this activity.

Management Options

The main options for stakeholders to consider are:

Increase awareness of Southern South Westland as a destination

- ▶ Maintain status quo
- ▶ Create obvious entrances to Southern South Westland and the World Heritage Area from the South
- ▶ Develop a marketing action plan for Southern South Westland and the World Heritage Area to feed into annual West Coast marketing activities.

Develop seasonal campaigns

- ▶ For the domestic market and Australia
- ▶ In coordination with Queenstown and Wanaka.

Objectives

The objectives for this Priority Area is to:

1. Develop a marketing action plan for the Southern Te Whipounamu South West New Zealand World Heritage Area

Recommended Actions

Action	Lead Agency	Timing	Funding	Estimated Budget
1. Develop a Southern South Westland World Heritage Marketing Action Plan to guide marketing activities over the next 3 – 5 years.	Haast Promotions Group	2009 - 2010	TWC	To be determined
2. Review effectiveness of images, positioning and pricing strategies.	Tourism West Coast	2009 - 2010	TWC	To be determined
3. Develop a strategy to incorporate WHA into promotions and to deliver experiences fitting of a WHA.	Haast Promotions Group	2009 - 2010	TWC	To be determined

9. Implementation

Current Status

The draft strategy has put forward four Priority Areas each with recommended actions, objectives and a lead agency. The draft strategy is now up for discussion with the lead agencies, following initial discussions with Haast tourism businesses and DOC on an earlier draft in December 2008.

A summary of the strategy's recommended actions is presented on the following page. This shows how the actions link to the objectives for each Priority Area and then how these contribute towards the vision for Southern South Westland.

The Lead Agency for each action has been assigned based on statutory responsibility or their ability to influence the desired outcome. For some actions, such as marketing, the Lead Agency (Tourism West Coast) may not be the only organisation that funds the recommended activities. Lead agencies will also seek funding from other sources and facilitate involvement of other agencies, where this is needed (for example, from the industry in the case of marketing; in the case of roads, from the New Zealand Transport Agency and in terms of regional transport planning and natural hazards, the West Coast Regional Council).

Coordination

Successful implementation of the Tourism Development Strategy relies on stakeholder support and coordination of activities. Capacity issues need to be taken into account when seeking agreement on implementation. For instance, the Haast area has very few established full-time tourism operators and so there is a need to be realistic about what can be achieved in coming years.

Organisational structures that enable stakeholder cooperation have already been established under the West Coast Major Regional Initiative (MRI). For instance, the PMT for this plan involves representatives from Tourism West Coast, Development West Coast, DOC and Westland District Council. These agencies and possibly other representation that maybe required can continue working together after the three-year MRI is completed.

Recognising that there is limited capacity in Haast's tourism industry and in Glacier Country to coordinate industry and agency activities, a Destination Management position has been put forward for stakeholders to consider. The principle idea is to have someone on the ground as the link between Haast, Glacier Country, DOC, Development West Coast, Tourism West Coast and other agencies such as the New Zealand Transport Agency (was New Zealand Transport Agency). Although possibly based in Glacier Country, an important function of this position is to cover Haast and Southern South Westland communities who have or are

starting to be involved with tourism (Paringa, Jackson Bay, Okuru, Bruce Bay). The share size and driving distances involved with the West Coast suggests that communication, stakeholder relationships and on the ground coordination of activities can be greatly improved by having a resource within the destination. This position is fully supported and seen as essential by the Haast Promotions Group.

Next Steps

The next steps in finalising this strategy will involve:

- ▶ Discussion and endorsement by the lead agencies and Haast Promotions Group
- ▶ Further input and sign-off by Development West Coast and the PMT
- ▶ Sign-off by the MRI Steering Committee.

These events are scheduled to take place between January – February 2009.

Appendix 1: Planning Context for the Tourism Development Strategy, Southern Te Wahipounamu South West New Zealand World Heritage Area

Introduction

Legislation such as the Local Government Act, the Resource Management Act, the National Parks Act and the Conservation Act provide the legal basis on which the implementation of the Destination Management Plan is dependent.

The statutory plans of the Westland District Council e.g., the District Plan and Long Term Council Community Plan and the plans prepared by the Department of Conservation such as the Westland *Tai Poutini National Park Management Plan* and the West Coast Conservation Management Strategy will guide the management and decision-making processes of those organisations. It is therefore important to assess if those plans present any potential conflicts.

In summary, the Westland Tai Poutini National Park Management Plan, although having some specific references to the Te Wahipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area, generally has broad criteria for consideration of activities across the Park.

The District Plan guides the use and management of land outside the National Park. The standards within the District Plan represent thresholds beyond which resource consents would be required. The nature of all district plan standards is that they represent a bottom line for development, but do not necessarily result in an optimum outcome in terms of responsiveness to the special character or context of a locality or its functionality as a place to live and visit.

Westland *Tai Poutini* National Park Management Plan 2001-2011

This Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with the National Parks Act 1980. It provides policy guidance on the management of the Westland *Tai Poutini* National Park. The Management Plan identifies that since the opening of the Haast Highway in 1965, tourism has increased in South Westland and is now an important contributor to the local economy.

The primary objectives in the Plan are concerned with the preservation of the natural values and character of the environment and to give effect to the Treaty of Waitangi.

Of relevance to this Destination Management Plan are the following policy considerations:

Visitor Management Strategies

The Plan provides for recreational activities using “Visitor Management Settings”. Te Wahipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area covers a significant land area which includes a mix of “Backcountry – Remote Zone, Remote Zones and Wilderness Areas. The Plan anticipates that recreation/tourism concessionaires and that recreational/commercial activities within the park must be consistent with preservation and protection objectives. Within the Backcountry Setting party sizes are to be restricted to a size that will not dominate the setting i.e., approximately 1-15 people per group along with the need to pay particular attention to minimising effects.

Roads and Activities

Policy² seeks to foster public access in a manner which is consistent with environmental protection objectives, the visitor management setting identified for the location and the minimisation of conflict between visitor user groups.

Similarly, policy³ allows for recreational activities and facilities to the extent that these activities are consistent with preservation of the Park, having regard to the visitor management setting, the extent to which the activity can be undertaken outside the Park and other relevant legislation. Generally however, service activities such as accommodation, ticketing, cafes etc are not to be permitted within the park and are anticipated to be located in the townships.

Policy⁴ provides for the Minister to approve road-works and realignments within the park where environmental effects are addressed. A method for achieving the various roading policies states that the Department of Conservation will work with other agencies to identify key roadside facilities required by visitors. This policy therefore lends support to a visitor hub or gateway at Haast as promoted in the TDS.

Aircraft

The Plan acknowledges that air access does conflict with achievement of “natural quiet” in the Park. Conflict between on-ground users and people taking scenic flights occurs primarily in relation to the Glaciers. The aircraft policies⁵ do however apply across all of the Park and require concessions for aircraft to land in the Park, to comply with the Aircraft User Group Environmental Policy and to be consistent with the visitor management setting where they are flying. At this point in time it is unknown what the likely policy for aircraft in the adjoining Mt Aspiring National Park will be (see below to section on Aspiring National Park Management Plan).

Utilities

Policy⁶ provides for the consideration of applications for small-scale hydroelectric power generation where the generating structures are located outside the Park and water take is less than 5%. This may be of relevance to the Haast communities where the power supply is not secure, and the potential for growth is unclear. A further policy⁷ recommends that the Minister allow utilities and easements where the purpose is for the public good, the activity cannot be reasonably achieved outside the Park and environmental impacts are addressed.

West Coast Draft Conservation Management Strategy

The draft Conservation Management Strategy sets out a general strategy for the use of public conservation lands.

The Strategy contains a comprehensive set of objectives and policies for managing recreational activities⁸. The objectives anticipate a wide range of recreation activities, whilst avoiding or minimising conflicts between activities and users.

The Conservation Management Strategy mirrors the National Park Management Plan in terms of the Visitor Management Setting. Some issues of particular relevance to Te Wahipounamu South

² Policy 4.3.1, page 77, Westland Tai Poutini National Park Management Plan 2001

³ Policy and Method 4.3.2, page 79, and Policy 4.3.3(a) and (b), page 81 Westland Tai Poutini National Park Management Plan 2001

⁴ Policy 4.4.17(d), Roading, page 146, Westland Tai Poutini National Park Management Plan 2001

⁵ 4.4.3 Aircraft Access, page 108, Westland Tai Poutini National Park Management Plan 2001

⁶ Policy 4.4.13 Hydroelectric Power, page 140, Westland Tai Poutini National Park Management Plan 2001

⁷ Policy 4.4.14 Utilities and Easements, page 141, Westland Tai Poutini National Park Management Plan 2001

⁸ 3.6.2 Range of Recreational Opportunities, pages 219-238 West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini Conservation Management Strategy – Draft 2007*

Westland relate to the use of powered water craft and the need to address conflicts between various users of surface water bodies⁹, In addition, recreational fishing, including eeling and whitebaiting¹⁰ are identified as issues, noting that whitebaiting is controlled under the Whitebait Fishing Regulations 1994 and the Whitebait Fishing (West Coast) Regulations 1994. There is also is policy for the granting of concessions for utilities¹¹ where the utility cannot be reasonably located outside public conservation land.

In accordance with the Conservation General Policy, public access to conservation land is to be free of charge¹². Access may however be restricted where it is necessary to protect the values of the site or for public health and safety¹³.

Of particular interest, the Conservation Management Strategy identifies what Te Wahi Pounamu will be like in 2017 if the Strategy is followed. The Plan envisages that the values of the World Heritage Area are maintained and it is managed in accordance with its international status. Non-motorised water based activities are popular and there are few facilities or services. A single tourist hub at the Haast gateway therefore fits with this intended outcome of leaving the balance of the Haast locality as untouched as possible.

Aspiring National Park Management Plan

The Aspiring National Park adjoins the Westland National Park. Its Management Plan is however currently under review and due for release in early 2009. From discussion with the Department of Conservation it is not anticipated that the new Plan will contain specific policies or create potential conflicts with the activities on the Westland side. The proposed policies are understood to be of a generic nature to guide decision-making and ensure environment and conservation matters are the principle considerations.

Westland District Plan

The Westland District Plan provides a framework for the management of land and resources within the Westland District which fall outside the National Park boundaries. The wider Haast locality is characterised by a spread of historic development of small rural settlements e.g., Haast, Hannah's Clearing, Okuru. Although some new subdivision and land use has occurred close to the Coast in recent time, settlements remain dispersed and geographically isolated. Haast is recognised as part of the Tourist Settlement Policy Unit while Hannah's Clearing is a Small Settlement and Okuru, Neils Beach and Jackson Bay are identified as Coastal Settlements. Haast Junction is not recognised with any planning zone as it is unserviced and the Plan prefers development at Haast The Tourist Settlement policy unit provides for commercial and residential activities.

The TDS does not make any recommendations with respect to these settlements. The TDS does however recommend that some form of tourist service centre or hub is created close to the State Highway to provide a highly visual and easily accessible Gateway to Te Wahipounamu World Heritage Area. This would require the approval of the particular landowner and co-operation between agencies such as the Land Transport Agency and the District Council. Some form of approval under the Resource Management Act would also be required in the form of a resource consent or plan change. The District Plan policy seeks to avoid any unnecessary intrusion of urban activities in the rural environment¹⁴. It will be important for any assessment of a tourist hub/Gateway to demonstrate its benefits and unique features to ensure that the proposal passes the statutory thresholds by avoiding any conflicts with the District Plan policies.

⁹ 3.6.5.11 Powered water craft, page 264, West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini Conservation Management Strategy – Draft 2007*

¹⁰ 3.6.5.12 Recreational fishing, page 265, West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini Conservation Management Strategy – Draft 2007*

¹¹ 3.7.13 Utilities, pages 310 to 312, *Te Tai o Poutini Conservation Management Strategy – Draft 2007*

¹² Page 327, West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini Conservation Management Strategy – Draft 2007*.

¹³ Policy 3 Page 328, West Coast *Te Tai o Poutini Conservation Management Strategy – Draft 2007*

¹⁴ Policy 4.3 Location of Settlements, Westland District Plan.

Westland District Long Term Council Community Plan 2006-2016

The Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) describes the activities of the Council, desired community outcomes and provides a focus for decision-making. Its content covers Council policy in relation to revenue and financing, assets and infrastructure expenditure and planning, development and financial contributions and partnerships with the private sector.

Accordingly it is an important document that will guide infrastructure development and expenditure in relation to Haast and other settlements in southern South Westland. The LTCCP has a 10 year horizon with opportunity for review after 3 years, occurring in 2009. Initiatives arising from the Destination Management Plan which require infrastructure could take advantage of the opportunity presented by this review process. The LTCCP is also complemented by the Annual Plan process which sets out the activities and projects for a particular year (with direct reference to the LTCCP).

It is important for those implementing the Destination Management Plan to understand and work with the LTCCP 10 year statutory timeframe by identifying actions which fit within the timeframe and structure of the Plan. The Destination Management Plan may also be used by the Council to inform the LTCCP as to works and actions that would assist tourism as a significant industry within the District.

West Coast Region Long Term Council Community Plan 2006-2016

Similar to the District Council, the Regional Council has a 10 year plan on how it intends to deliver its statutory duties and community outcomes in relation to environmental planning, consents compliance, emergency management and river drainage and coastal protection.

West Coast Regional Policy Statement

The West Coast Regional Policy Statement is prepared by the West Coast Regional Council. This document provides an overview of the resource management issues of the West Coast region and includes policies and methods for achieving the integrated management of natural and physical resources. District Plans are required to be consistent with Regional Plans.

The Plan acknowledges that 87% of the region's land is administered by the Crown, of which 78% is in the conservation estate. The Plan states¹⁵ *“with only 21% of the land being fully or partly rateable, West Coast residents on the basis of regional rates paid per head of population, are the highest rated in the country. This places inordinate financial pressures on the region's local authorities and ratepayers alike. There continues to be a reduction in the area of rateable land due to land transfers for protection purposes.”*

The Plan includes policies relevant to this TDS including the effects of hazards and land use activities on communities, land transport issues and landscape and amenity concerns. Council also acknowledges the demands of cross-boundary issues, including *“inter agency administrative functions”* with the Department of Conservation¹⁶.

Chapter 7 of the Regional Policy Statement is concerned with soils and rivers. Of particular relevance to Haast are those policies concerned with flooding due to the close proximity of the Haast River. Chapter 9 is concerned with conflicts in land use and Policy 9.1, similar to policies in other statutory plans, seeks to protect natural character and outstanding landscapes. Chapter 11 is concerned with natural hazards and more specifically Policy 11(e) which seeks to locate activities away from areas at risk. The Plan also includes a policy for Council to adopt a user pays approach to hazard avoidance or mitigation. Chapter 17 is concerned with the provision of network utilities. These policies require Council to consider the social and economic benefits of utilities in

¹⁵ Chapter 2, pages 6 and 7, West Coast Regional Policy Statement

¹⁶ Chapter 4, Cross Boundary Issues and Integrated Management, West Coast Regional Policy Statement

addition to effects on nature and the surrounding environment. Generally the low level of development anticipated by the TDS is unlikely to raise conflicts with the Regional Policy Statement, though the enhancement of utilities e.g., electricity generation would raise regional council related issues.

West Coast Regional Land Transport Strategy

This strategy is of importance in facilitating the achievement of the TDS.

The Transport Strategy acknowledges tourism as an important component of the West Coast economy and the need to ensure that visitor growth is considered in respect of transport improvements across the region. The Strategy identifies the funding limitations of a small community *“The local West Coast community cannot reasonably be expected to fund on-going development and maintenance of world-class tourist routes.”*¹⁷

The Strategy discusses funding options and each year the Council is required to provide an Annual Report on the progress of implementation. The Strategy identifies that some works are required at the Gates of Haast to maintain the integrity of the road. The proposal for a tourist service centre is not therefore inconsistent with this Strategy to enhance roading and visitor experiences.

¹⁷ Page2, West Coast Regional Land Transport Strategy