

# Leadership programme making its mark in Coast boardrooms



2013 Leadership and Governance graduates – (L to R) Bede O'Connor, Gareth Allen, Mel Sutherland, Chris Rea, Emily Craddock, Kirsty Robertson, Quecha Horning, Judi Brennan, Stephen Lowe, Troy Scanlon, Hayden Kendrick, Suvi van Smith and Hadleigh Smith.

The success of a programme to boost the West Coast's pool of people with leadership and governance experience will see a third course run in 2014.

DWC launched the West Coast Leadership and Governance programme in partnership with Westland Milk Products after recognising the need to develop the Coast's next generation of leaders.

Last month the second wave of 13 business leaders graduated from the intensive 14-month long course.

"As the second group to pass through this programme we now have a group of around 25 people ready to build up the layers of leadership and governance experience in our communities. These people are already becoming entrenched in our community organisations and businesses," says DWC's Chief Operating Officer Warren Gilbertson.

Of the 13 new graduates six have already taken up positions on boards of various West Coast businesses and community groups. Stephen Lowe was the General Manager of WestReef when he began the programme but has since been promoted to CEO of Buller

Holdings, WestReef's parent company.

"It is a great programme which gives participants confidence that when they get on those boards they are able to contribute because they know what is expected of them. The tutors are experienced business people who came in and talked us through real life examples of issues that they were dealing with which was invaluable," he says.

"It is really positive that DWC and Coast businesses continue to support it and make it happen. One of the best aspects is the networking opportunities it gives you to interact with a whole lot of like minded Coasters. As a group we would like to continue working together to help the community in economic development type roles".

Companies taking part in this intake of the programme were Westland Milk Products, DOC, Hokitika Automotive, Buller Electricity, FT Dooley Ltd, Tai Poutini Polytechnic, Grey District Council, Buller Holdings, Martin & Co Mitre 10 Westport and CMP Kokiri.

Businesses who are interested in taking part in the next programme should contact Nelia Heersink at DWC.

# New Tangata Whenua Trustee Appointed

This month Development West Coast welcomed Francois Tumahai as the new Tangata Whenua Trustee on the board. He replaces Helen Rasmussen who has been a Trustee since 2010.

Francois is of Ngati Waewae and Ngati 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 Ngati Waewae in the mid 1990s and joined the executive in 2007 before being appointed Chair in 2008. He has project managed the Runanga's Marae development over the last five years with the \$5 million facility due to open in November 2014.

Francois is involved on many boards including health provider Poutini Waiora and the Advisory Board of Te Tau Pounamu. He is Managing Director of Poutini Environmental and General Manager of Waewae Pounamu which is Ngati Waewae's commercial Pounamu outlet in Hokitika.

Francois says he is looking forward to working with DWC.

"I want to see Poutini Ngai Tahu, and the West Coast, move forward and am looking



forward to giving DWC some Poutini Ngai Tahu influence," he says.

DWC Chair John Sturgeon says he would like to thank Helen Rasmussen for her contribution to the Trust.

"Helen has been an asset to the Trust over the last three years in both her role as the Tangata Whenua representative and also as a voice for Haast where she is based. We thank her for her time and look forward to working with Mr Tumahai in the future," he says.

# Up close and personal with Hugh Little – DWC's Westland Trustee

HUGH Little can definitely say dairy farming is in his blood. His mother's family was the second to dairy farm in the Waitaha Valley, Hugh's grandfather developing the farm with an axe rather than a tractor.

Keeping with tradition Hugh and wife Glenda owned a dairy farm in Kowhitirangi which has now been taken over by their son who milks 300 cows. Add to that a 47-year career with Westland Milk Products and you would have to say the new DWC trustee knows a bit about the dairy industry.

A third generation Coaster he was born and bred in Hokitika, the only boy in a family of five girls, and did all his schooling at St Mary's. Leaving school he started with the dairy company as a labourer in the production area.

"I started on the factory floor and realised pretty soon I wanted to go further with the company. It was just a small butter company when I started, producing 1,100 tonnes of butter annually. Seeing it move from a single product company to now producing over 100,000 tonnes of a full range of dairy products every year has been enormously satisfying and pleasing," he says.

Hugh studied part time for a Diploma in Dairy Technology at Massey University while still working for the company and over 47 years worked his way up the corporate ladder, retiring three years ago as Deputy CEO and General Manager of Operations.

"I was acting CEO on four different occasions totalling about four years but operations was my forte and I am particularly proud of my involvement in setting up the new protein facility and powder plants. Westland Milk Products is enormously important to Hokitika and the West Coast as an employer and it is not up to full potential yet. I am sure it will continue to grow".

Hugh and Glenda have four adult children and six grandchildren, and built and own Hokitika's luxury accommodation and restaurant complex Station's Inn. For the last 14



years he has also been a director of Westpower and the Westpower group of companies and he was the directors' representative for the successfully commissioned Amethyst Power scheme.

Hugh was voted Westland's DWC Trustee in October's local body elections and is relishing the opportunity to learn more about how the Trust is able to help the Coast.

"We have to grow and maintain the fund, making sound investments with an appropriate rate of return, but also stimulating employment opportunities right across the Coast," he says.

"As a former senior executive I understand financial management and governance and I see the position of DWC Trustee as very much a governance role. Farming and tourism are hugely important to Westland and the West Coast and given my understanding of both industries I will be in a strong position to advocate for these areas of the economy."

As well as farming and tourism Hugh is also passionate about rugby and played in his younger years, coaching up to senior level in Westland.

**The Chairman, Trustees and Staff of DWC wish everybody a safe and Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year.**

**Take care of one another!**

## Chairman's Comment

The opening of the Westland Wilderness Cycle Trail on 23 November was a great success, well attended by visitors from far and near. New Zealand cycling star Sarah Ulmer opened the cycle trail along with Associate Minister of Tourism Chris Tremain.

I congratulate Kerrie and Mark Fitzgibbon on the wonderful job they have done with refurbishing the Theatre Royal Hotel and their ongoing work with the old bank and shop. These developments are going a significant way in revitalising the Kumara township. Well done!

I was privileged to have been invited to the graduation of thirteen of the 2013 Leadership and Governance programme participants. This now provides a group of 25 people who have been through the programme and are already well on their way to utilising their skills within organisations and businesses throughout the Coast. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the sponsors of this programme for their support. I would particularly like to thank and congratulate our Business Services Manager, Nelia Heersink, for her efforts as programme co-ordinator who has ensured the success of the programme.

The 2014 programme is looking to be every bit as successful as the previous two with just one spot still available.

Over the past two months DWC has farewelled two Trustees. I would like to thank outgoing Tangata Whenua Trustee, Helen Rasmussen, and Westland Elected Trustee Evan Jones for their time and contribution to DWC. I also welcome the new Tangata Whenua Trustee, Francois Tumahai, and Westland Elected Trustee, Hugh Little. We look forward to working with Francois and Hugh and trust they will enjoy their time in office.

With Christmas upon us, on behalf of Trustees I must thank the staff of DWC for their valuable contribution and commitment over the last 12 months. I hope you have a Merry Christmas and look forward to another great year ahead in 2014.

**John Sturgeon  
Chairman**

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