

Opportunities for the Coast

COVID-19 has presented a significant economic shock to the West Coast. Unemployment amongst our working age population has risen to 7.7%, up from 6.1% at the start of the year, and there will likely be more job losses once wage subsidies run out. Without doubt it's a challenging time, but it's not all doom and gloom on the Coast.

Retail spending on the West Coast has bounced back at a faster rate than the rest of the Country, with spending during June 8.8% higher than it was last year - compared to 0.6% nationally.

The last few weeks have also seen positive news for the region with the resumption of Sounds Air, InterCity and now TranzAlpine services. We also saw NZTA reversing their controversial plan to close the Arthur's Pass highway to all traffic when it snows.

Connectivity is vital for our region and the recovery. DWC and the West Coast Mayors, Chairs and Iwi have been working together to advocate for the return of these key services.

Other recent good news for the Coast includes the resumption of guided adventures on the Franz Josef Glacier, thanks to a collaboration between Ngāi Tahu Tourism, the Department of Conservation and The Helicopter Line with support from Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio.

These recent achievements are all very important for the Coast and our economy, but they are largely related to protecting what we had. In the post-COVID environment we also need to be looking ahead at new opportunities.

Significant work is going on in the background to ensure our region comes through this stronger than before. DWC is working closely with other key stakeholders on a number of projects through the West Coast Recovery Group, and together with the West Coast Mayors, Chairs and Iwi we are pushing to attract more investment into the region.

We are already seeing significant funding for new projects that will not only create jobs during this difficult time, but provide opportunities going forward.

Recent Government announcements have included: \$17.9m for the Pounamu Pathways project, \$1.2m for digital hubs (two of which will be administered by DWC), \$2m towards a regional employment scheme (DWC's Upskill programme), \$1.9m for the revitalisation of the Westport Waterfront and \$4.4m towards the \$15.7m Mt Te Kinga predator free project. These are just a few of the projects within the \$147.2m allocated to the West Coast through the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) and other recent funding streams.

On top of this, last week the Government announced it will be investing a further \$90m from its COVID-19 infrastructure fund, and an additional \$7m towards our ports.

It's encouraging seeing these projects get over the line. DWC has contributed to the initial business cases and applications for a number of them. For example, our contribution of \$87k towards a feasibility study on upgrading the Westport and Greymouth ports helped leverage an additional \$225k in PGF funding towards that study and further work on governance structures for the ports. This has led to over \$17m being invested in West Coast ports - a great result for the region.



The TranzAlpine resumes services to the West Coast

These projects will create jobs and strengthen resilience on the Coast.

With close to \$240m of funding allocated, we are seeing significant investment coming into our region and we are advocating for more. DWC along with other regional leaders are looking to create a funding management mechanism that will give Treasury greater confidence to allocate funds to the West Coast.

Notwithstanding the hit we have taken with international tourism, the Coast is in many respects better placed than other regions in New Zealand to see out the COVID challenge.

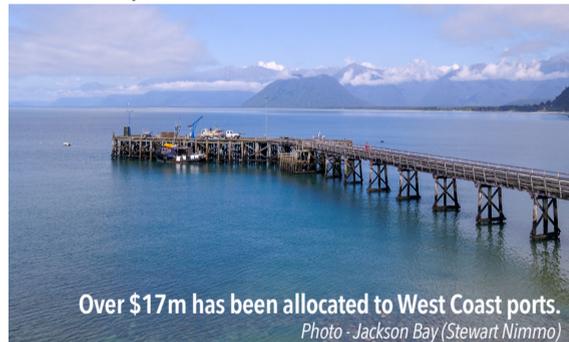
Despite the widespread turmoil in international markets, New Zealand's exports of food products are holding up and for some commodities even growing slightly. Primary industries account for 23.4% of the West Coast's GDP - compared to just 6.4% nationally. The strength of our primary industries - our agricultural sector, gold and other mining and moss industry - will play a significant role in our economic recovery.

The experience of the lockdown has also shown us that you don't need expensive office space in big cities. The rise of remote working could help distribute New Zealand's workforce throughout the regions. With affordable housing and a superior lifestyle offering, the Coast is well positioned to take advantage of any increase in domestic migration. West Coast employers are already noticing a rise in job applications from people across the Country.

With all these different opportunities and all the regional projects underway or due to begin, we are expecting more jobs on the way.

There is no better place to see out this crisis than here on the West Coast. But we must acknowledge how difficult the current situation is for some businesses. Many will need support to see this through, and as the region's economic development agency we are here to help.

Heath Milne | DWC Chief Executive



Over \$17m has been allocated to West Coast ports. Photo - Jackson Bay (Stewart Nimmo)

DWC 'UPSKILL' Employment Programme ready to launch

DWC has announced the launch of West Coast Employment Scheme, "Upskill".

Upskill, a Provincial Growth Fund: Skills and Employment (Te Ara Mahi) funded programme, is a DWC-led initiative focused on supporting people to attain recognised qualifications and creating sustainable employment opportunities to keep both people and businesses on the West Coast.

The programme will implement an employment pathway scheme to match available people to employment opportunities. Supporting sustainable positions which are either new or vacant and are for at least 30 hours per week, it can assist people to gain a recognised qualification to gain employment, or support existing employees to undertake new training or education to move up or transition into a new role.

DWC's Economic Development Manager, Jo Birnie, says "this is an exciting opportunity to support businesses and the people of the West Coast at such a critical time."

Delivering the project in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) alongside their complementary Mana in Mahi initiative will enable the greatest benefits for both employees and employers.

Upskill Project Co-Ordinator, Tania Washer, has been engaged to deliver the programme, and will be coordinating the needs of businesses and individuals with the necessary training providers, while also working closely with MSD and other agencies to ensure the greatest outcomes for all involved.

If you are a business or individual and believe this programme can assist you, or you would like more information, email Tania on upskill@dwc.org.nz or visit www.dwc.org.nz

Upcoming Events

JULY

8

Tourism & Hospitality Workshop: Telling Compelling Stories

6:00pm-7:30pm | DWC Boardroom, Greymouth | FREE
Register online at www.dwc.org.nz

29

Techweek 2020: Social Media Webinar Building your Brand | Digital Journey

3:00pm-5:00pm | Online | FREE
Register online at www.dwc.org.nz

29

Techweek 2020: ECommerce Webinar | Digital Journey

5:30pm-7:00pm | Online | FREE
Register online at www.dwc.org.nz

SEPTEMBER

10

Business Preparedness Workshops | Resilient Organisations

12:30pm-5:00pm | Greymouth | FREE
Register online at www.dwc.org.nz

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Business Preparedness Workshops | Resilient Organisations

8:30am-12:30pm | Westport | FREE
Register online at www.dwc.org.nz

West Coast Governance Programme

DWC, in partnership with Westlake Governance, are bringing governance training to the West Coast business community.

The West Coast Governance Programme will commence in August 2020, facilitated by Richard Westlake and Vaughan Renner, and will be delivered across the West Coast to make it accessible for all participants. It consists of four workshops covering governance matters.

Attending this programme will help you understand the key roles and responsibilities of the board and individual directors. You will learn about board relationships, good processes and decision making along with the important elements of operations of a board.

Introduction to Governance, the Board and its Role.

DATE: Wednesday, 12 August
TIME: 9.00am - 4.00pm
LOCATION: Westport

Working with the Chief Executive, and the Board's role in Finance.

DATE: Thursday, 3 September
TIME: 9.00am - 4.00pm
LOCATION: Hokitika

Governing Strategy and Risk.

DATE: Thursday, 1 October
TIME: 9.00am - 4.00pm
LOCATION: Westport

Boardroom Dynamics.

DATE: Thursday, 5 November
TIME: 9.00am - 4.00pm
LOCATION: Greymouth

NOTE: Maximum of 16 participants.

COST: \$2000 (+GST) per participant.

Contact DWC to see if you are eligible for NZTE business capability funding.

More info: events@dwc.org.nz

Project Management Training

DWC have Partnered with The Knowledge Academy to bring PRINCE2 Project Management training to the Coast

PRINCE2 is a structured project management method and practitioner certification programme. PRINCE2 emphasises dividing projects into manageable and controllable stages.

The PRINCE2 course combines training and exams for the PRINCE2 Foundation and Practitioner certifications into one 5-day course. Passing the course will provide you with the skills and knowledge required to start applying PRINCE2 to real life work projects.

These courses will be run over August and spaces are limited to 14 per course.

COST: PRINCE2 Foundation (3 day course) - \$1091 (+GST) per participant.
PRINCE2 Foundation & Practitioner (5 day course) - \$1466 (+GST) per participant.

Both course costs are significantly discounted.

More info: events@dwc.org.nz