

Financial Overview

The two months of August and September saw a reversal in the value of DWC's investments as equity markets lost gains made earlier in the financial year. DWC's income for the six months to September has fallen to 50% of budget at \$1.7m

Operational expenses remain close to budget but the accrual of economic stimulus grants totalling \$4m means DWC is significantly behind budget. DWC's half-year result is a loss of \$4.37m.

At 30 September DWC had equity of \$108.2m and total assets of \$127.5m.

Growth study good opportunity for West Coast

A comprehensive West Coast economic growth study will complement and assist the work already underway to boost the regional economy says DWC Chairman John Sturgeon.

The Government announced it would fund a regional economic growth study last week. The study will begin in 2016 and aims to identify and attract new investment and additional jobs to the West Coast. Similar studies have already been completed in Northland, Bay of Plenty, East Coast and Manawatu-Whanganui.

Economic Development Minister Steven Joyce says diversification is going to be the key for the West Coast. "This study will help identify the opportunities for competitive new industries, and help remove the roadblocks that may prevent them from developing," he says.

DWC Chairman John Sturgeon says the study will be positive for the West Coast economy.

"Having someone independent do an in-depth study looking for opportunities across the region and also assessing the economic development



Buller District Mayor Garry Howard, Economic Development Minister Steven Joyce and West Coast Regional Council Chief Executive Andrew Robb at the announcement.

work already underway by DWC and the region's councils can only assist us to make progress. It also sounds like it will help open some doors for more assistance as well," he says.

Still time to have your say on Minerals Strategy

DWC is encouraging the public to have their say about the West Coast Minerals Strategy with submissions open until 5pm on Friday 11 December. So far only a handful of people have taken the opportunity to comment.

The strategy was launched last month for public comment and aims to increase investment into the minerals sector, while setting out the expectations of what doing business in the region entails. The West Coast Minerals Strategy has been initiated by the Mayors of the Buller, Grey and Westland Districts, and the Chairs of the West Coast Regional Council and DWC. It is intended

to provide a message to potential investors, welcoming them, and also being up front about expectations in terms of the environment and a fair return to West Coast communities.

Copies of the West Coast Minerals Strategy and feedback forms are available at public libraries in Westport, Reefton, Greymouth and Hokitika. The Strategy is also available online at <http://mineralsstrategy.wix.com/westcoast>. Feedback can be delivered to DWC, 1st floor, Brunner House, 54 Tainui St, Greymouth, posted to PO Box 451, or sent to info@dwc.org.nz with Minerals Strategy in the subject line.

Chairman's report

2015 has been a year of challenges for the West Coast. It was with much sadness I heard about the recent helicopter crash in Fox Glacier and our hearts go out to all those involved.

Economically it has been a tough year as well and DWC has responded to the economic downturn in a number of ways. It is great to see so much interest in the Business and Industry Stimulus Fund, with over 20 businesses having already approached DWC for funding. The door is still open, and what is different from DWC's 'business as usual' is we are prepared to take a bit more of a risk than normal and look at lower interest rates.

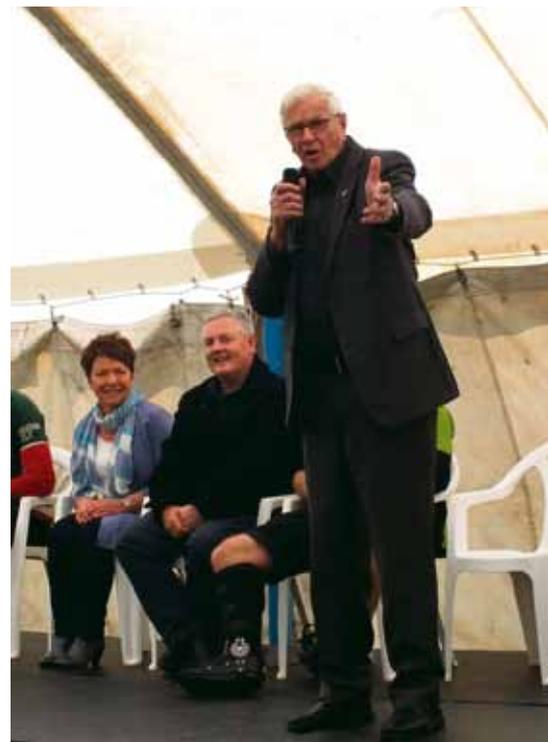
You may be aware CEO Joseph Thomas resigned in October. In the interim, Chief Financial Officer Mark Dawson is taking the helm and Trustees will sit down and look at the skillset needed for the top job in the new year.

I was delighted to attend the official opening of the West Coast Wilderness Trail in October and be able to congratulate all those involved for their hard work. This month Buller's Old Ghost Road tramping and mountainbike trail officially opens and the huge number of volunteers involved should be very proud of their achievement. DWC has invested nearly \$5 million in the two trails and it is great to see these mammoth projects come to fruition and bring visitors and money into the region.

Tourism does seem to be on a roll. I stopped into the Punakaiki camping ground one morning recently and counted 27 campervans and I hear tourism operators are reporting strong forward bookings. It's not just the petrol stations and accommodation providers that benefit from tourists, there's a trickle down effect that keeps many of our West Coast businesses open.

As we head into a new year I feel that the West Coast is starting to rise slowly but we have to be patient about our recovery. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the DWC staff and Trustees for their hard work and enthusiasm and wish everyone on the Coast a happy Christmas with their families, and to those who are travelling, travel safe.

John Sturgeon ONZM, MBE
Chairman



DWC Chairman John Sturgeon speaks at the opening of the West Coast Wilderness Trail

Business and Industry Stimulus Fund popular

DWC is pleased with the strong interest in its Business and Industry Stimulus Fund which was designed to support West Coast businesses and encourage employment opportunities.

Since launching in October the \$5 million fund has attracted over 20 enquiries from across the region and three from outside the region that involve business start-ups on the West Coast. The funding requests range from \$5,000 to \$1 million.

DWC Chairman John Sturgeon says he's pleased to see a good spread of interest from across the West Coast.

"This fund is designed to do two things, boost the number of people businesses can

employ, and keep the doors of business open. Most of the enquiries we are seeing aim to expand existing regional businesses and all would lead to employment growth in the longer term which is exactly what the fund was setup for," he says.

Businesses can still apply to DWC for funding which can take various forms including equity investment, loans with discounted interest rates, interest only periods or concessional repayment terms. DWC maintains its usual level of due diligence and applications are analysed by DWC management and considered by Trustees on a case-by-case basis.



Development
West Coast wishes
everyone a
Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!