

DWC service offers West Coast businesses a link to wider support

Businesses looking for a helping hand with new ventures are encouraged to approach Development West Coast as a first point of contact, says the organisation's new Business Services Manager, Fiona Hill.

Fiona has recently taken on the role and is looking forward to working with organisations that have ideas about growing their business but may not know how to progress them.

"In particular I'm keen to talk to businesses that are open to seeking support from either DWC or another external organisation," Fiona says.

"Often taking the first step is the hardest but DWC is here to help as a sounding board. I'm keen to make sure local businesses know there is support and guidance on hand, even if it is just to have an initial conversation about an idea."

As the Business Services Manager, Fiona looks after the Regional Business Partner Programme for the West Coast Region. This is a funding network that opens businesses up to assistance through New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, and Callaghan Innovation, as well as support from the Business Mentors New Zealand Mentoring Programme.

Linking West Coast businesses with this support is one of the many services DWC offers, with an aim of providing local industry with as much opportunity as possible.

Fiona is no stranger to the challenge of owning a small to medium business on the West Coast, and she says her own business



Development West Coast's new business services Manager, Fiona Hill.

experience has been an excellent training ground for understanding business needs in our communities.

"I am excited by the opportunity my new role gives me to support and help facilitate local businesses to build capability, grow and achieve their strategic goals."

To contact Fiona Hill call 03 769 7023 or email her at Fiona@dwc.org.nz

First grants approved under new economic stimulus fund

Development West Coast has approved the first funding via its District Economic Stimulus Fund (DESF), which has been set up in direct response to the current economic challenges faced by the region.

Up to \$1 million will be distributed to applicants through each of the three West Coast districts councils.

To date over 10 projects have had funding approved which include the Buller Employment Initiative, and internet clothing business, WearBox Ltd.

The Buller Employment Initiative, promoted by Buller District Council, will use its grant to help businesses develop up to 20 new positions. This funding will be bolstered by Government funding through Work and Income New Zealand, and

together the organisations will implement the employment boosting scheme over the next two years.

WearBox Ltd aims to use its grant to expand its start-up web-based clothing business to a point where more staff are required.

With funding for the first wave of applications agreed, DWC is currently considering a further group of applications from Westland District Council and will be letting those organisations know the outcome in the next month.

Applicants must demonstrate how their particular project will promote employment or generate sustainable economic benefits to the district, and preference will be given to projects that will use the DESF funds to leverage other funding sources.

Financial Overview

DWC's investments had a strong start to the financial year with April and May's equity returns equalling the full year's budget. The net surplus to the end of May was \$2.5m above the budget for the period. However, preliminary results for June show that the strong NZ dollar has reversed many of these gains.

The audit of the DWC's 2016 annual accounts is almost complete and the Annual Report will be released at the Annual Public Meeting, which will take place in Hokitika at 7pm on 30 August 2016.

Upcoming Events

Kiwihost Workshops | Tai Poutini Polytechnic
Register at www.tpp.ac.nz or phone 0800 800 411

Kiwihost: Professional Telephone Techniques	Greymouth	Thursday 18 August 2016
Kiwihost: Advanced Customer Service	Franz Josef	Thursday 8 September 2016
Development West Coast Annual Public Meeting	St John, Hokitika	Tuesday 30 August 2016 at 7pm

DWC frequently emails out event updates. If you would like to receive these, email info@dwc.org.nz

DWC inspired to work with West Coast youth



Photo courtesy of Roxanne Rose Photography.

Westport youth organisation, West Coast Founders Trust, won the admiration of DWC chief executive, Chris Mackenzie, during a recent fundraising dinner, and he says he hopes the two groups can work closely together in the future.

West Coast Founders Trust is a not-for-profit group which focuses on youth-led community initiatives, and it was the beneficiary of the fundraising efforts from the recent Community Fusion dinner in Westport.

Speaking at the dinner, Mr Mackenzie said he was heartened to see a group like West

Coast Founders Trust working hard to create opportunities for the region's young people, and was also impressed by the work of the Westport REAP youth team in getting the ten groups of youth together for the showcase.

He says the missions of both the Trust and DWC are similar – to create opportunities for the community – and therefore working together in the future could be hugely beneficial for everyone.

You can read more about the West Coast Founders Trust here <http://founderstrust.wix.com/westport>

Chairman's report

We are fast approaching our annual event to celebrate the successes of our local business sector, the West Coast Leading Light Business Excellence Awards.

While West Coasters don't typically like to put their head above the parapet to be recognised, I do encourage businesses to enter. You may become a finalist or even a winner but even more importantly, the process provides a valuable opportunity for you to take a step back and critically assess your operation. You might also be surprised at how motivating it can be for your staff who take much pride in their work.

The Awards evening is always a great celebration and I look forward to seeing more businesses having a go.

John Sturgeon
Chairman, Development West Coast