

Leading Light Business Excellence Awards

The stage is almost set for the fifth annual Leading Light Business Excellence Awards, which will be held at Shantytown this Friday night. This year 21 businesses from across the West Coast region have reached the finals and will be vying for the titles across seven different categories. The gala event will be emceed by television personality Ric Salizzo. DWC chief executive

Chris Mackenzie says the event is one of the highlights of the year for his organisation. "This is the culmination of our team's work in supporting West Coast businesses over the course of the year. We are pleased to see their successes and achievements, but more than that we are pleased to see other organisations also showing their appreciation of their peers."

The 2016 Awards finalists are:

Duncan Cotterill Large Enterprise
WestReef Services Ltd
Landcorp Buller

Crombie Lockwood Medium Enterprise
Design Windows West Coast
Cuffs Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors
Robert Caldana Builder Ltd

NZME Newstalk ZB Small Enterprise
Em's Power Cookies
John Wood and Associates
Mark Jones Collision Repairs

Westland Milk Products Not for Profit
The West Coast Trades Academy
Mokihinui – Lyell Backcountry Trust
West Coast District Health Board

Christchurch Airport Tourism & Hospitality
Robert Harris Greymouth
Northwest Adventures
Coleraine Apartments and Suites

ACC Workplace Safety Award
Robert Caldana Builder Ltd
Design Windows West Coast
Cuffs Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors
WestReef Services Ltd

Department of Conservation Environment Award
Landcorp Buller
Em's Power Cookies
WestReef Services

Winners of each category will be eligible for the top prize, the Greymouth Star Super Nova Award.

Ministers visit West Coast to celebrate official opening of EPIC

Science and Innovation Minister Steven Joyce and Communications Minister Amy Adams were in Westport recently for the official opening of the town's new technology hub.

Enterprise Precinct Innovation Campus (EPIC) Westport is a branch of EPIC Christchurch, and is set up to provide a co-working space for innovative local companies.

DWC assisted EPIC through funding provided via its Business and Industry Stimulus Fund on the basis that it aims to accommodate around 25 full-time workers and around a dozen hot-desk users.

DWC chief executive Chris Mackenzie says supporting innovative new developments like EPIC ensures the West Coast region is at the forefront of new working systems.

"We saw from the initial EPIC development in Christchurch that this is a very successful model for small businesses. Having co-working spaces ensures collaboration and knowledge-sharing is not just generated as a one-off – these are hubs where innovation breeds more innovation," he says.

"For a region with the geographic challenges the West Coast has, finding new ways for small

businesses to share ideas and support each other's product development is key to our regional success."

At the official opening Science and Innovation Minister Steven Joyce told the crowd that the EPIC facility would play an important part in connecting entrepreneurs with national and international businesses.

"This facility is proof that in the new interconnected world we live in, towns as small as Westport can host hi-tech businesses and marry opportunity with great lifestyle," he said.



Steven Joyce addresses the audience at the opening of EPIC.

Upcoming Events

Business Mentors New Zealand

– **Business Start-Up Workshop, Greymouth, Thursday 18 October, 5.30-7.30pm**
Registrations to info@dwc.org.nz or 03 769 7000

Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce (CECC)

– **Advanced Training for Health and Safety Representatives (Stage 2) Hokitika, Tuesday 18 & Wednesday 19 October, 9am-3.30pm**
Visit www.cecc.org.nz/whats-on and search "West Coast" for more information and to register

Worksafe New Zealand

Construction: The Health and Safety At Work Act in Practise

– **Greymouth, Wednesday 30 November, 5.30-7.30pm**
– **Westport, Thursday 1 December, 5.30-7.30pm**
Visit www.bsm.org.nz/meetings for more information and to register

Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP)

– **KiwiHost: Dealing with Difficult Customers, Greymouth, Friday 28 October**
– **KiwiHost: Advanced Customer Service, Greymouth, Friday 18 November**
Visit www.tpp.ac.nz or phone 0800 800 411 for more information and to register

ALSO COMING UP – join Graeme Wheeler, Governor, Reserve Bank of New Zealand, at Shantytown on Wednesday 23 November. Further information to follow. Phone DWC on 03 769 7000 to register your interest.

Business mentors needed

DWC is seeking more volunteers to act as mentors for small business owners in the region as part of its wider partnership with the New Zealand Business Mentors programme.

DWC Business Services Manager, Fiona Hill, says the work is rewarding and even a small amount of support can make a huge difference to someone who is new to the business world.

"You just have to look at the success of the organisations highlighted in the Leading Light Awards to see what we can achieve on the West Coast by supporting each other.

As a former business owner Fiona has a keen understanding of the challenges involved. "We aren't necessarily looking for someone with 40

years of experience behind them, just people who have the understanding of how small business works, have empathy for small business owners and are able to communicate and win the confidence of others".

"Our mentors are experienced, successful business people who know what it feels like to be in business. They act as a sounding board and share their knowledge and expertise one-on-one — it really can make all the difference for someone".

To find out more about how you can help to inspire others, phone Fiona on 03 769 7023 or email her at Fiona@dwc.org.nz. You can also find out more at www.businessmentors.org.nz

Regional Growth Study

The West Coast has been a popular place in recent weeks for Ministers of the Crown, with several visiting to open EPIC Westport, the Inchbonnie Hydro scheme and the release of a new detailed report into the region's economy.

The Tai Poutini West Coast Regional Growth Study particularly looks at identifying opportunities for investment, incomes and employment across our region.

This naturally piques DWC's interest as it strives to support those exact activities. It is healthy for things to be looked at periodically and review if there are different ways that DWC can participate in initiatives as part of achieving its objects. Any additional research that can support how DWC goes about that is a great tool.

We are all keenly aware of the challenges we as a region have been facing both directly and indirectly due to the drop in dairy prices. There has been some promising news on that front over the past two weeks, but we know we need to have more tricks up our sleeves other than relying on the success of just one industry.

As was pointed out at the launch of the Growth Study by Hon Steven Joyce in his capacity as Economic Development Minister, this study is a unique opportunity for local community



and business leaders to work alongside central government on an action plan for our region.

Collectively we will grow through new investment and new industries, and DWC is excited to see that central government commitment being made.

DWC will now take the time to assess how it can best feed into the Regional Growth Programme so that we can ensure our funding is applied in the right areas to best support our West Coast community.

As part of the programme, an economic action plan for the West Coast, informed by the Tai Poutini West Coast Regional Growth Study, will be released in early 2017 and we look forward to playing a role in that.