

Chief Executive's Report

We hope you enjoyed your Easter break at home and were able to take some time out to relax and recharge after the stress of the past few weeks.

As we prepare to enter our fourth week in lockdown, we are thinking ahead to what a recovery from the COVID-19 crisis might look like for the West Coast.

With border restrictions and controls likely to be in place for some time to come, the impact of COVID-19 could, in some respects, reshape our regional economy.

We are working closely with key stakeholders on a number of initiatives (some outlined on this page) to help the West Coast economy prepare for its eventual rebound.

The Prime Minister has stated that we won't be moving out of Alert Level 4 early. Cabinet will make its decision on 20 April on what the next steps will be.

A shift down to Alert Level 3 will still present significant restrictions though. On Thursday, the PM will provide more details on what this will look like for businesses.

Businesses should be using this time to prepare for a possible reopening under different scenarios. This could include looking at whether you can work with social distancing, can the Ministry of Health contact trace all your employees and customers and will you need any PPE.

The impact of the lockdown has caused significant issues for many in our business community. So now is also the time for businesses to make sure they are utilising all available support.



There are various forms of assistance available to help Coast businesses - whether through DWC itself, our partner organisations, the banks and the Government.

At DWC, we are busy working to support as many enterprises as possible through this crisis.

Since the lockdown started, we have been working directly with over 230 local businesses to make sure they are accessing the support available. Our staff are still busy reaching out to help more businesses.

Thank-you to all who have contacted us, and we encourage you to continue reaching out for support and to keep us updated on your situation, so we can continue advocating for you.

Heath Milne | Chief Executive

Regional Employment scheme to deliver 90 jobs

The West Coast will receive a \$2.08 million Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) investment from the Te Ara Mahi allocation to get local people into local jobs.

The West Coast Regional Employment Scheme will be run by DWC with support from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

The employment and training programme will be targeted at skill shortage areas across the Coast. It will fit West Coast businesses seeking to create new positions with specific training tailored to jobs, as well as the upskilling of existing employees to new positions.

The employment scheme will work with at least 90 people to train, upskill and support them into sustainable local employment for at least 18 months.

According to Provincial Development Unit Head Robert Pigou, "employment schemes like this will ensure a robust and resilient economy that can respond to and recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19."

DWC chief executive Heath Milne said the Government recognises the need for continued support for the region and the Provincial Development Unit has been instrumental in getting this project across the line.

The programme is based on a successful pilot project that was run in the Buller Region in 2016, which was jointly funded by DWC and MSD and delivered with the assistance of the Buller District Council.

More details about the West Coast Regional Employment Scheme will be released at a later date.



Alisha McIntosh from GATHERER

Voucher website helping businesses through lockdown

The website SOS Cafe provides an online voucher system to help businesses through the COVID-19 crisis.

"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and a key part of what makes our West Coast towns so vibrant and great to live in," says DWC chief executive Heath Milne.

"Many are enduring a rough ride of uncertainty at the moment, particularly those who have had to close their doors during the lockdown."

SOS Cafe offers an avenue to help such businesses through this uncertainty. It provides a portal for regular customers and supporters to buy vouchers, for a later visit, from their favourite local businesses who are unable to earn an income during the lockdown.

Alisha McIntosh from GATHERER Wholefoods & Bar in Hokitika is one of the West Coast businesses already listed

on the website.

"I am so grateful for David Downs and his team of generous volunteers for this online platform to help small business get through these unprecedented times," Alisha says.

"We have already seen support from some beautifully generous regulars, locals, and even people on the other side of the world - wanting to help us remain open for their family who live in Hokitika."

"Any small business can register to be a part of this fantastic initiative; you don't have to be a café. By doing so, you are wisely giving your business a greater chance of being there on the other side."

www.soscafe.nz

COVID-19 Business Support

If your business is being impacted by COVID-19, contact DWC to discuss your individual circumstances. We're here to help you get through.

info@dwc.org.nz | 0800 768 0140

Tourism update

Last week Tourism Minister Kelvin Davis announced that the Government and industry will be working together on a plan to restart tourism in a post-COVID-19 world.

DWC's tourism team are also looking at the future of tourism on the West Coast and how we can adjust to a very different visitor profile in the future.

We are evaluating and revising short, medium and long term tourism initiatives for the West Coast.

We are currently consulting with tourism operators on a proposed domestic campaign to launch once travel restrictions have lifted in New Zealand. We are also in discussions with Christchurch NZ on a wider domestic campaign.

Work is currently underway to establish a Tourism Recovery Group that will focus on a Destination Management Plan for the region.

COVID-19 wage subsidy

The Government's wage subsidy is available to employers, contractors, sole traders, NGOs and incorporated societies that are significantly impacted by COVID-19.

If eligible, employers would be paid \$585.80 per week for full-time staff and \$350 for part-time. They will be paid in a lump sum. The support will be available for 12 weeks.

Businesses must have taken active steps to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, and must make their best efforts to retain employees and pay them a minimum of 80% of their normal income for the subsidised period.

If you experience any difficulties applying for the wage subsidy, please let the team at DWC know.

Register online: www.workandincome.govt.nz

Calling businesses who need staff or have staff to redeploy

An employment portal is being set up by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to help West Coast businesses and workers affected by COVID-19.

The establishment of the portal is one of several initiatives underway aimed at mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on local employment.

Through the portal, DWC will be working with MSD and other regional development agencies to

facilitate getting available workers into much-needed employment once the COVID-19 lockdown is removed.

The employment portal will be up and running soon. In the meantime, any businesses that either need staff or have staff to redeploy please contact DWC or Anne Ginty directly at MSD.

Ph: 029 200 6245, Email: anne.ginty001@msd.govt.nz

Snapshot of the West Coast workforce during the COVID-19 lockdown

West Coast's total workforce 16,263

49.9%
Currently
unable to work



50.1%
Currently
working

(Either remotely or as 'essential workers')

Sectors with most people unable to work

Accommodation & Food Services	1,767
Construction	1,452
Manufacturing	925
Retail Trade	769

Sectors with most workers currently active (either working remotely or as 'essential workers')

Health Care & Social Assistance	1,522
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	1,412
Manufacturing	854
Retail Trade	803

Estimates based on insights from Infometrics and Stats NZ