

COASTERS SHARE VIEWS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

According to a recent public survey, adding value to the agricultural/food sector is viewed as the most significant opportunity for improving prosperity on the West Coast, while retaining talented people is seen as the most pressing challenge for the region.

DWC is currently facilitating a review of the West Coast's economic strategy. To ensure there is a well-represented view of the region, the public has been asked to share their views on economic development.

339 residents, of all ages and backgrounds, contributed through an online survey.

The insights from the survey along with stakeholder workshops will play a key role in creating a vision for



HEATH MILNE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DWC

the economy and the long-term future we want to create and the issues that need to be resolved to get there.

The views shared will also help establish key actionable priorities for the West Coast to develop as a prosperous resilient region.

It is important that we ensure, as West Coasters, we have the resources and support required to meet future challenges and opportunities, enjoy prosperity, and make a sustainable contribution to New Zealand, while maintaining our unique lifestyle.



CO.STARTERS BUSINESS PROGRAMME

Expressions of interest are open for DWC's Co.Starters business start-up and development programme set to begin on 7 September in Greymouth.

The 9-week course is designed to help you find the best approach to starting and growing a business, and collaborate with others who share your entrepreneurial spirit as you work through your business model.

[More info: westcoast.co.nz/co.starters](https://westcoast.co.nz/co.starters)

SURVEY RESULTS

Most important areas of economic development:

1 = least important, 5 = most important



Most significant opportunities for improving prosperity in next 30 years:

- Adding value to agricultural/food sector: 47%
- Education and training on the West Coast: 42%
- Accessing traditional mineral resources: 41%

Most pressing challenges in next 5 years:

- Retaining talented people: 70%
- Accessing investment capital: 42%
- Ageing/reducing population: 40%

Most pressing challenges in next 30 years:

- Retaining talented people: 60%
- Ageing/reducing population: 52%
- Climate change and sea level rise: 51%

Biggest advantages of living on the West Coast:

- Lifestyle: 89%
- Natural environment: 79%
- People and culture: 42%



BUSINESS AWARDS IN NOVEMBER

The Development West Coast Leading Light Business Excellence Awards will be held this year on Thursday 18 November, after the 2020 awards were postponed due to COVID-19.

"The past year has been an incredibly challenging time for businesses on the Coast," said DWC Chief Executive Heath Milne.

"But many have shown extraordinary innovation, adaptation and leadership through this period.

"We need to acknowledge and celebrate their achievements, and these awards will do exactly that.

"We have reshaped the awards to reflect the current environment, recognising and celebrating the West Coast's resilience during this time."

Further details about the event will be announced soon - watch this space!

YOUNG ENTERPRISE SCHEME

Support from DWC helps West Coast High School students put their business skills to the test through the Young Enterprise Scheme (YES).

The YES programme gives pupils the chance to create and run their own businesses.

This year Tai Poutini Polytechnic's (TPP) secondary/tertiary education liaison Jade Mahuika took on the new role of Regional Coordinator for YES.

"With DWC supporting the initiative, we were able to have our very first West Coast YES cohort, which is pretty exciting stuff!" Jade said.

"We've got teams from Greymouth High School, Buller High School and the West Coast Trades Academy involved in this year's challenge - a series of business planning, mentoring and pitch events that gives them a chance to be creative and put their entrepreneurial skills to the test."

The students recently pitched their business ideas to a panel of judges including DWC Capability and Growth Advisors Ian Johnson and Rob Kennedy, TPP Board Member Rob Caldwell, and Westland District Councillor Latham Martin.

Ian Johnson said: "By asking students to plant a seed of their own creation and nurture it all the way through to the end-user, YES develops an entrepreneurial mindset and pushes the students to understand and actively engage in the whole of the supply chain."

"They often come in knowing 'what to think', the programme teaches them 'how to think'. I can't recommend it highly enough."

DWC has also provided seed funding to YES businesses: Golden Westport NZ received \$350 for their business start-up providing surfboard repair kits; West Coast Collie Co. received \$300 for their venture making customisable, durable, adventure ready biothane dog gear; and Papatūānuku Sports Kits from Greymouth High received \$250 for their business creating sports kits (Baseball5 and Ki o Rahi) out of recycled materials.

[More info: youngenterprise.org.nz](https://youngenterprise.org.nz)