



MEDIA RELEASE – 24 February 2022

Appointments confirmed for Westport Joint Committee

At meetings held yesterday, the West Coast Regional Council and Buller District Council have confirmed the appointments of the independent chair and community representatives for the Westport Joint Committee.

Heather Mabin, West Coast Regional Council Chief Executive, said that the Councils were very pleased with the applications received for the independent chair, which were also endorsed by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae.

“We had several applicants with robust knowledge of chairing committees and leading groups in a collaborative and consensus-seeking manner, skills critical to this role, but one candidate really stood out for us during this process,” said Ms Mabin. “I am pleased to announce that Hugh McMillan has been the successful candidate for the role and we look forward to working with Hugh particularly as the flood protection project continues to pick up pace.”

A long time Westport resident, Hugh McMillan is currently chair of the Buller Rugby Union and the SGS New Zealand Community Funding Committee.

Two previous members of the Westport 2100 Working Group, Jodi Murray and Dan Moloney, have been confirmed as the community representatives on the Joint Committee.

“To have the experience of Jodi and Dan continue through to the Joint Committee will be a real asset for both Councils,” Ms Mabin said. “The knowledge of these members through their time on the 2100 Group underpins the work the Joint Committee, and Councils, will be undertaking.”

The purpose of the Joint Committee is to review the annual work plan for Westport flood protection provided to it by Regional Council staff, consider any independent expert advice and make informed recommendations to the Regional Council for final decision.

The first meeting of the Westport Joint Committee is to be held on 3 March 2022 at 1.00pm. Due to Covid-19 restrictions it will be held via Zoom and live streamed via the West Coast Regional Council’s Facebook page.

Ms Mabin said the Joint Committee had a lot to get through at their first meeting.

“Our Engineers have been working with experts in the field to model the various effects of the options in front of us. All of this information will be presented to the Joint Committee on the third.”

Parallel, and separate to the Westport Joint Committee, is the Buller Recovery Steering Group. The Steering Group is considering an integrated package of long-term resilience measures that will be put forward, for possible funding through a co-investment approach with Government, in June 2022.

ENDS

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