



Message from the Chair

It's been another busy few months for councilors and staff.

As a Council we're very happy that the rates invoices going out with this newsletter reflect a rating increase considerably lower than previously proposed. We have reduced the overall increase in Council's rate requirement from 20.8%, as consulted, to 12.6%.

We know the communities we serve are facing financial challenges – you've told us this and your councillors have listened.

Rates paid by each ratepayer will vary, of course, according to the value of their property and whether they are part of a special rating district, but what we've come up with is less than the forecast national average for rates increase.

We're making a careful balance between delivering core services for our community against the increased external costs we face in delivering that work.

We're achieving the reduced council rate requirement through a change in borrowing, in line with that consulted. This will not change the expectation that Council returns to surplus in Year 4 of the Long-Term Plan.

In other good news, the Government has put Franz Josef on its list of projects to be funded through the Regional Infrastructure Fund Before the Deluge 2.

The total for the works on the Waiho River will be \$10 million, with \$6 million from central government and \$4 million from local government. Council is consulting with the Franz Josef Rating District in a formal consultation over the next month.



Peter Haddock
CHAIR, WESTLAND CONSTITUENCY

The announcement is a great outcome after a lot of hard work by Council and the community together. This support means we can get on with the essential work of protecting our communities and vital infrastructure.

In addition, West Coast Emergency Management has secured \$155,000 for two projects through Civil Defence Emergency Management Agency funding.

One project will build on the lessons learned through 'Resilient Westport Evacuation Planning' to help Greymouth, Hokitika and Franz Josef. The other will establish three emergency caches of supplies to support emergency response coordination and operations on the Coast.

In this newsletter you'll see the first spades have hit the ground for vital floodworks in Westport, work is well underway on the Hokitika and Greymouth floodwalls, Council's compliance team has been out and about and Te Kinga staff are getting clever with artificial intelligence to help combat pests.

For those of you who are out on the riverbanks, I hope it's a good whitebait season for you.



Whitebait season

Council staff were busy before the start of the whitebait season checking stand locations ahead of opening day. The compliance team used GPS equipment to ensure uniformity for stand holders as boundary stands can shift over the course of the year.

Pictured right: Compliance officer Paddy Comber helps mark out whitebait stand sites on the Haast River.



Hokitika floodwall.

Sustainable Wild Whitebait Fishery Project

In other whitebait news, the Sustainable Wild Whitebait Fishery Project ended in June. This was led by Council and funded by the Department of Conservation through the Jobs for Nature fund.

The work provided 16 full-time equivalent jobs over the lifetime of the project.

During the three years it was running, 10,000 trees were planted and 650 metres of whitebait habitat channel created at Wadeson Island. Its scope also included fencing stock out of 13km of whitebait breeding habitat across the West Coast, assessing 2500 structures for fish passage, and weed control at over 34 waterways between Kohaihai and Jacksons Bay.

The project enhanced whitebait spawning sites, improved and created adult habitats and identified barriers to the movement of fish.

Conservation Volunteers New Zealand, MBC Environmental, Westland District Council, Westland Milk Products, the West Coast Whitebait Association, DOC and Henry Adams were all involved in different ways.



Hokitika and Greymouth floodwall progress

Stage 1B of the Hokitika floodwall project got underway in July. The works will help protect from a 1:100 year flood by increasing the height of the stopbank between the SH6 bridge and Livingstone Street and providing an additional 600mm of freeboard.

When finished, the works will align with the Northern Hokitika Riverbank, from the corner of Gibson Quay-Livingstone Street upstream past McMullan ITM, completed in August last year.

Stage 2 of the Mawhera Quay Flood Protection Wall (Grey Floodwall) is also making good progress.

The upgrade is raising the stopbanks between Richmond Quay and Anzac Park to meet a 1:150-year flood level, plus providing additional 600mm of freeboard to align with the previously raised sections along Mawhera Quay and Short Street.

Completing stage 2 will provide a greater level of flood protection for Greymouth including key assets such as Te Nīkau Grey Hospital and Health Centre.


The floodwall projects were co-funded through the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund announced by the Government in May 2020.



WCRC and Buller District Council are working together through the Resilient Westport programme to improve Westport's flood resilience.

The two councils are working collaboratively with Iwi, other organisations and government departments to protect Westport where possible and to plan low risk growth areas. Key projects are building flood mitigation structures for Westport (floodwalls and stopbanks) and master planning for Westport's future growth and development.

The goal is to create a safer, stronger Westport for all residents through a range of solutions and community collaboration.



WEST COAST EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GROUP

Emergency Management

Working with **West Coast Emergency Management**, one of Resilient Westport's other projects is to develop a comprehensive emergency management plan.

A Resilient Westport Emergency Management project lead has been recruited to work with WCRC's Emergency Management team.

The focus is on ways the existing system can be enhanced including better evacuation procedures, upgraded digital systems for data sharing using GIS platforms, coordinated planning among critical infrastructure agencies and emergency services and community engagement.

The work is underway and expected to take 18 to 24 months to complete.



WCRC hydrology manager Samwell Warren and Westport Harbour staff preparing to deploy a Sofar Spotter Ocean wave buoy off Westport earlier this year.

The buoy measures wave height, and the time it takes for two successive wave crests to pass a fixed point (wave period). Wave period is important for forecasting the size and power of waves. The buoy plays an important role in maritime data and flood management, with a live data feed to the WCRC and Westport Harbour websites.



Flood protection

WCRC is delivering flood protection work, building floodwalls and stopbanks to protect Westport in the event of significant future flooding. When it's finished there will be about 16km of flood mitigation structures around Westport including earth stopbanks, 'planter-box' stopbanks, concrete floodwalls, wooden floodwalls, and portable flood barriers. The estimated cost is \$24 million, comprising a \$15.6 million contribution from Government and \$8.37 million from WCRC.

Work has recently started in two areas – Cats Creek and the Floating Lagoon. At Cats Creek a 50-metre-long earthen stopbank will redirect floodwaters to the Abattoir Drain away from nearby homes. The stopbank near the Floating Lagoon needs to be topped for more protection. Work has started on clearing vegetation as part of that work.

More about Resilient Westport

We are providing regular programme updates through newsletters and on our website (www.resilientwestport.co.nz). You can find us on Facebook (search under Resilient Westport) and you can also touch base with us by emailing: info@resilientwestport.co.nz

The Resilient Westport office at 147 Palmerston Street,

Westport, is a joint office for WCRC and Resilient Westport staff working on the project. We will advise people when it is open to the public for drop-in sessions on Resilient Westport projects such as master planning or the floodwalls.

Anyone with queries specific to their rates, or WCRC activities, should free phone: 0508 800 118.



Woolly nightshade

While you're out and about this spring, keep an eye out for woolly nightshade.

Woolly nightshade (*Solanum mauritianum*) is a spreading capsicum-smelling shrub, or small tree covered in dusty hairs that can irritate skin, eyes, nose and have whitish, soft woody stems.

Its leaves are velvety, grey-green, whitish underneath with dense clusters of mauve-purple flowers, followed by round berries that ripen to a soft yellow and are toxic to humans. It grows quickly and forms tall stands that produce many well-dispersed seeds most of the year.

This plant is a great natural spreader, birds eat the berries and can spread the seeds long distances. Woolly nightshade seedlings have also

been known to pop up in compost sourced from off the Coast.

Woolly nightshade is classified as an eradication pest within the West Coast region. On top of producing poisonous berries and leaves that can cause irritation, woolly nightshade plants release toxins that can poison the soil and prevent many other plants from growing in proximity.

If you suspect you have seen woolly nightshade or have it on your property, it is crucial to act promptly. Contact the WCRC Biosecurity team (0508 800 118) to report sightings and seek advice on safe removal.

Rates invoices by email



If you would like your rates invoice emailed to you instead of delivered via NZ Post go to the rates section on our website: wcr.govt.nz/services/rates and select the Rates invoices by email tab. Fill out the form and we'll make sure future rates invoices are sent to you that way.

There is also information on the website about paying your rates by direct debit.

Smart trapping



The Predator Free Te Kinga team is training its AI predator trapping and detection system to target pest species more effectively in the control area.

The team has been manually classifying images to help train the AI system correctly identify weka as a non-target species, an option possible where weka are abundant.

AI is becoming an increasingly important component in predator detection and trapping technology, both to improve overall system efficiency, and particularly in remote and difficult to access areas.



WEST COAST
REGIONAL COUNCIL

388 Main South Road, Paroa, PO Box 66, Greymouth 7840
freephone 0508 800 118 phone 03 768 0466 email info@wcr.govt.nz

wcr.govt.nz  