

To Chief Executive Officer

Dear Madam

We the undersigned Colin Pattinson and Les Mathieson met with the commission in their recent visit to Greymouth.

The follow points we would like to be addressed.

We need change for relief of rates and needless expenditure,

This we consider can come about in various ways,

- 1) There is a huge amount of staff in the four councils to administer 30,000 people
- 2) The work of the Regional Council could be split amongst the remaining three councils
- 3) A unitary Council could be formed in place of the three remaining Councils
- 4) The Infrastructure (i.e.) Roads and footpaths has declined over a number of years

Signed By

Les Mathieson



Colin Pattinson



## Councils review

In reference to the article about the Local Government Commission, the call for a review of council services on the West Coast is not a "complete waste of money", as stated by Westland Mayor Bruce Smith (Greymouth Star, February 2).

The Local Government Commission was called in by 400-plus resident-ratepayers who had had a gutsful of bad management, bad decision making and spiralling rate increases, by bloated councils with no respect for whose money they were spending.

Already the commission's presence has had Coast councils discussing shared services and people are now looking at ways of cutting costs to ratepayers.

Councils have been sucking like leeches on the West Coast ratepayers and we have run out of blood. Many old people with property are struggling to meet rate demands.

The arrival of the commission has brought about discussion on something that was broken. Now we have a chance to say how to fix it, and living in the past is not the answer. Whether you like it or not Mayor Bruce, the status quo cannot afford to remain without major changes taking place. Even his own members of council are questioning the benefits of some members of staff.

If amalgamation is required then so be it.

We are not calling on centralisation. Alternatives could be sought, such as disbanding the West Coast Regional Council and absorbing it into the three district councils. Resource consents could be administered from Greymouth, roading from Westland, civil defence from Buller etc.

We all live in a special but isolated part of the country with a declining population. There is a dire need for us to work together if we want to continue to live here, otherwise the Coast will be overrun by tourists and become a holiday home playground for wealthy people from outside the district. It has already happened in Haast.

Write and have your say with the commission. At least some positive ideas can be put forward that could take the pressure off the rates burden of the locals.

Peter Salter  
Pukekura

*Lucas 27 2017*

## Mayors protecting their positions'

May I tell the Local Government Commission that it is time to stop wasting money and listening to the mayors pleading to hold on to their positions. It is strange we never heard a word about sharing until the Local Government Commission appeared on the scene.

Get on with it and hold a poll — a unitary council against the old tired councils for more of the same, 5% rate rises, 5% increase in water, sewerage, rubbish charges etc — and increases in their salaries.

As the rate demand on my property is \$3000-plus, it takes a large bite out of my National Superannuation. As many of these councils have large redundancy agreements, I ask how many councils have been using rates reserves to make these payments?

If the then MP had done the job required in 1989 (Kerry Burke) and tabled the petitions we had gathered, I am convinced we would have been successful then and won the battle for a unitary council, but he chose to sit on the petitions.

Fifteen per cent of ratepayers was required. Hokitika and Westport had over 23% of ratepayers who signed the petitions.

Harry Cox  
Blaketown

## Blaketown lease court report

Re the article 'Council forces bankruptcy' (Greymouth Star, February 4), the public interest in council spending over \$1 million in hiring one of New Zealand's most prestigious legal firms, while we were legally unrepresented, is understandable, but it is not understandable why the Greymouth Star needed to misrepresent the truth, in my view.

On February 2, this paper stated we owed \$81,000 in legal costs so how then was it honestly possible, just two days later, in the dominant front page article of 4 February, to state we had "left it very late in the piece to own up to their responsibility to pay \$44,000 they owed in unpaid lease payments to the council"?

The judge never made this statement because we have never owed \$44,000 in lease rental.