

Alternative applications and other proposals for change to West Coast Local Government arrangements

- i. Proposals for structural reorganisation
- ii. Proposals for some form of shared service

Proposals for structural reorganisation

From: Mike Sexton [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 4 February 2017 5:08 p.m.
To: LGC
Subject: West Coast Local Government Consultation Submission

Dear CEO.

I have read the Summary of Community Feedback and the Original West Coast Reorganisation application relating to the District and Regional Councils on the West Coast.

I support the restructuring of the three district councils into a single council with the aim of reducing the duplication of personel (and staff costs) who are employed to perform the same functions across the three local bodies. There should be elected councillors from Buller, Grey and Westland who would represent their constituents and a single elected Mayor. The administration would be a single CEO with supporting staff who would be responsible to the West Coast and its council as a whole. The council functions will be those for which the district councils take responsibility now.

In spite of the feedback I favour retaining the Regional Council because its functions are wider than the largely infrastructure focus of the district councils and it is beneficial to have the two groups with one being a monitoring influence on the other. While this can produce tensions, as recently seen in the Hawkes Bay and its water contamination, overall such oversight is likely to benefit the community and the environment.

It is unconscionable that central government through DOC administers such a large proportion of territory on the West Coast but does not contribute to the local government costs for providing the infrastructure which supports access to, and the maintenance of, these areas. As the feedback has indicated, the rating base for 10% of New Zealand's land area is less than 1% of its population. This is not sustainable.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Sincerely,

Michael A Sexton
[REDACTED]

Keith Morfett and Clare Backes



2 March 2017.

A submission in favour of local government reorganisation of the West Coast.

Originally from England we have lived in New Zealand since 1988 and on the same block of land in Hokitika, Westland since 1993.

During our time here in Westland we have had direct experience with both district and regional councils on many fronts including the subdivision of a 37 hectare block of bare land into 12 separate titles, the building of 5 new dwellings on those new titles and we are currently involved in another subdivision creating 5 further new titles.

Along with my partner we have built 3 businesses based in Hokitika

- Blue Spur Lodge – offered a variety of self-catering accommodation
- Wilderness Lakes – a guided fly fishing operation
- Clarke Creek Consultants Ltd. – designs, delivers and reviews emergency management training.

We both have PhDs in freshwater chemistry.

I have been a Search and Rescue volunteer for over 25 years and have played a major role in SAR operations from Haast to Motueka and Clare has been active in West Coast Conservation including an eight year term on the Tai Poutini Conservation board including two years as Chair.

Reasons for change.

Current local government structures were developed to suit a world that was far less connected than the world we live in. Modern communications and transport infrastructure has resulted in a world that is in effect smaller and far better integrated than ever before. The tyranny of distance and isolation no longer applies.

Four Councils presiding over approximately 30,000 people results in a massive duplication of personnel and services. Economies of scale would surely result in a more efficient use of the rate take.

We believe that the current local government structure does not facilitate the election or appointment of top quality councillors or, in some cases, council staff. Current structures seem to encourage parochialism and often result in council in-fighting, rampant conflicts of interest and council capture by a narrow minority of vocal influential local interests.

In summary we believe that local government reorganisation would result in a more integrated and effective promotion of the West Coast in general, more efficient and effective representation and administration and would better facilitate our economic and social development.

Suggested new structures and pathways to achieve them.

Ultimately we believe that the West Coast would be best served through a Unitary Council supported by strong and democratic community boards throughout the region.

We believe the best and most effective pathway to break down parochialism and build a unitary Council would be through a staged approach to the amalgamation of the current four West Coast Councils.

Phase 1. Integrated services including: planning, mining and agriculture, waste management, building and compliance etc.... providing efficient and consistent services for the entire West Coast.

Phase 2. The amalgamation of Westland and Grey district Councils.

Phase 3. The creation of a Unitary Council for the entire West Coast supported by strong democratic community boards.

To achieve these aims some strong external pressure and leadership will need to be applied. The current Westland Council is steeped in parochialism and is vocal in its opposition to any real local government reorganisation. This major hurdle to a more efficient local government structure may require considerable time and energy to overcome. The alternative scenario of a major breakdown of local government in Westland, fuelled by a misunderstanding of the practices and processes of governance, is also a possibility and may provide an opportunity for change.

From: Terry [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 6 March 2017 3:18 p.m.
To: LGC
Subject: West Coast Reorganisation Proposals

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to submit my views on the current proposals for the reorganisation of West Coast Local Government. I have been employed /elected in West Coast Local Government in excess of 30 years and am currently serving in my fourth term as an elected councillor for the West Coast Regional Council having formerly been employed as a manager with the Buller District Council.

I have been supportive of a range of 'shared services' recently implemented by the four West Coast Councils and firmly believe that there is scope for further sharing of services not least of which could include planning(resource management), building control, general operations/engineering, financial management and environmental health services as a minimum where there was a positive mind-set to amalgamate these services. Effectively speaking I can see no specific logical reasons why all local government statutory functions as enshrined within the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 could not be amalgamated as a single unitary authority on the West Coast subject to a number of provisos.

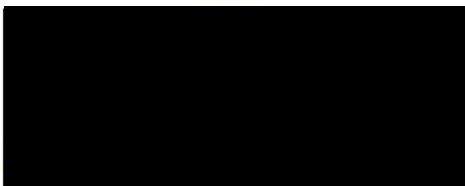
It is well understood that the total residential population of the West Coast region is a declining 32,000 and with such a minimal population it is difficult to understand how such a population can support four separate councils consisting of three district and one regional councils without paying prohibitively increasing rates. From my observations the major concern of forming a unitary authority is that Westland and Buller District would be likely to lose their identities and fear the seat of local government would be based in Greymouth. It seems to me that this fear is based more on parochialism than any other logical reasoning. In my view such a fear could be easily overcome by an appropriately elected political representation reorganisation in a similar way to that which currently exists with the West Coast Regional Council and based on a population basis. Effectively this would provide more elected politicians to Westland and Buller as jointly they have a higher population than Grey District

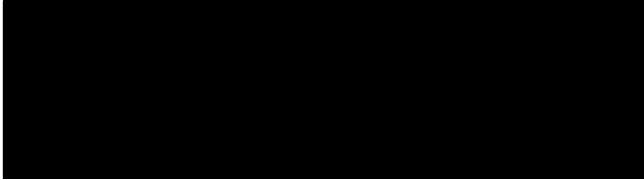

It is my belief however that proposed historical amalgamations have been poorly investigated, with promises of financial savings never being realised, and have inevitably resulted in increased rates and run away spending.

Before any such reorganisation could be realistically considered, an in depth financial analysis should be undertaken with particular emphasis on reviewing other areas poor investigations and unrealistic expectations as to how and why these analysis have not proved to be realistic. If and only if, after an in depth evaluation of the costs/benefits clearly show there are benefits to be achieved without increasing rates, and the total statutory functions are able to be achieved, then I would support the establishment of a single unitary authority for the West Coast region.

Over recent weeks, I understand there has been some discussion over a reorganisation and an amalgamation by establishment of three (3) unitary authorities based on the district boundaries of the three District Councils. In my view such a proposal has little if any merit, and appears to be based on the retention of parochialism at any cost. In my view, paying for such an investigation would result in an absolute waste of money and indicates to me the lack of understanding of the proponents actual functions or resource requirements necessary, to form a unitary authority.

Yours faithfully
Terry Archer MBE





Chief Executive Officer
Local Government Commission
PO Box 5362
Wellington 5140

Submission re West Coast local government arrangements.

- i. It is objectively absurd that there are 4 local government organisations for 30,000 people.
- ii. It is kept in place by geographic distance, parochialism and valid fears that a unitary arrangement would involve centralization, probably in Greymouth, as the geographically central point and largest service centre.
- iii. The question then becomes whether there is a solution to this absurdity, an absurdity which involves fragmentation of payroll, supply, procurement, service, quadrupling of staff at senior management level and so on?
- iv. I believe there is a solution if one turns to a federalist model.
- v. Under this model, there is a CEO, an elected Mayor and a Deputy Mayor and elected community boards with chairs.
- vi. There is a policy unit which sets policy on environment, water, roading, planning, procurement and cultural services, and which interprets national prescriptions for policy; but is open to community board input.
- vii. A rating unit can set rates on a variety of scales according to equity, service provision and so on.
- viii. A building and resource consent unit processes permits and consents with outreach officers.
- ix. An assets and engineering unit looks after and develops assets, once again with outreach officers.
- x. A procurement unit looks after procurement.
- xi. A service unit negotiates with community boards regarding annual plans for spend in each community, this including cultural services.
- xii. The defining of these communities could be an issue, but at the obvious level there is Greymouth, Hokitika and Westport; then the villages (Blackball, Runanga, Ikamatua, Ross, Reefton, Haast etc). The smaller communities may wish to organically enlarge themselves (Grey Valley, Coast Road, South Westland). The runanga could well wish to define themselves as communities. This defining of community board areas would be an essential part of the developing of this plan.

- xiii. The election of community boards and their chairs and their meeting processes become very important, for they determine these annual plans and oversee their implementation. Administrative budget for these boards would be proportional to rate take.
- xiv. In this model, democratic processes are locally based; administration is centralised and rationalized.
- xv. At quarterly intervals there would be assemblies of community boards, Mayor, Deputy Mayor, CEO and heads of units, to discuss policy, issues, problems, successes etc. These would be open to submissions from the public.
- xvi. Elections would take place for Mayor, Deputy Mayor and community boards. Whether the chair of community boards should be elected or be the highest polling candidate or appointed by board members is a moot point.
- xvii. I believe the above model, while radical, would go a long way to solving the local government issues on the Coast.

Dr Paul Maunder

Submission on alternative applications and change to West Coast local Government

This application is made on behalf of myself and my Mining Company

My name is Michael Peter Rogers



My business is Rockies Mining Ltd (RML)
Based on the Stockton Plateau above Granity
M P Rogers Company Director

My submission proposes the following under Section 24:

1. A union of Grey District Council with Westland District Council.
2. Buller District Council to remain.
3. The dissolution of the present West Coast Regional Council (WCRC).
4. The statutory obligations of the WCRC being taken over by the two remaining Councils.

I have not provided a map, as the area covered by the present WCRC would be the same. The only difference would be a change of boundaries for Grey and Westland District Councils.

Reasons for change:

The West Coast covers an area long in distance, but sparse in population. The present situation with Councils is not efficient, in particular the WCRC e.g if staff are to travel to Karamea or to Haast for a resource consent issue, they are charged mileage and time. This is hugely expensive for consent holders and gives an unfair advantage to those within a short distance of the Greymouth office.

I agree with the original reorganisation application on efficiency, less staff and management costs etc, but feel we also need to keep local knowledge, as the regions can vary considerably. I believe my application is a reasonably practicable option.

Based on experience of my business dealings with the WCRC, I believe this Council is almost dysfunctional. I have not been able to operate my mining operation for three years now because of this Council's inability to understand our Resource Consent

conditions and changes that have occurred since the original Assessment of Environmental Effects. There has been an Environmental Court ruling that has been ignored by the Council. I also have been charged for costs that do not relate to my Companies Resource Consent. I have spoken to a staff member by phone at this Commissions Office about the above, but have been given the run around that I find typical of Government Departments. Please, we all have jobs and responsibilities. West Coast Regional Council needs to go.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you
Mike Rogers

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 13 March 2017 9:42 p.m.
To: LGC
Subject: West Coast Alternative Submission for possible amalgamation etc. Due 15 March 2017

Name: Charlotte May
[REDACTED]

Alternative Submission – West Coast of South Island.

Reasons why:

Due to the unusual behaviour of the West Coast District and Regional Council Mayors and CEO's in

- 'The News' (Westport) Editorials etc,
- the contempt shown toward small Inc Societies representing groups of ratepayers,
- and the 'moving' of a Point of Take for Water on a joint West Maps site by the Buller District Council – disregarding the permanent dispute on this Consent by a Society Inc,
- The BDC knowingly allowing incorrect information to be stated within the Westmaps site and also ignoring the WCRC's Consents wording.

('The News' states the BDC wants the West Coast Regional Council disbanded)

(NOTE: the WCRC put the Point of Take back to its legal position not the BDC who moved it)

(This leads me to believe that the next step is to physically move PoT's, alter information, without the appropriate procedures and lawfulness taking place)

- OIA's being ignored or 'delayed',
- massive misinformation, or incorrect statements; given in applications for funding, and to the Ministry of Health in particular, in order to manipulate the truth for reasons that place the ratepayers of the area without any clear or honest representation. Whether this is particular to our area or indicative of all NZ Council behaviour is concerning.

Either way this leads me to believe that the Governance of this area does indeed need to be looked into and re-established in a far more transparent manner.

My Submission/suggestions are:

- Put the Buller District under the Tasman Council. Disband the Buller District Council.
Whether the boundary is directly Northern Buller only; Or includes all or other parts of Buller - through Westport, Reefton and Inangahua (if they wish); or to Springs Junction; could be put out to community consultation/communication/voting by direct and individual mailing ... Not through the Councils.
- Disband the Westland District Council. (I have my reasons but it is too complex to go into here. The BDC and Westland DC together – possible interests in Okuru Enterprises could be at play here)
- Leave the West Coast Regional Council and Grey District Council to Govern from South of Westport (or where ever boundary is placed) to the bottom of the West Coast.

Give the Department of Conservation, Forest and Bird and Heritage NZ a major say and involvement in all decisions made within the West Coast area. (the five work together)

In its entirety it is a Major NZ attraction and is at clear risk of damage by Private Business and individual desires.

Central Government responsibility:

Divide up the \$120 million given to the West Coast (Development West Coast): between - a Tolled Road Entity (Northern Buller to Tasman), and; the West Coast Regional Council/DoC group.

(Not to the Tasman council as not allocated within the original payment) Also NO Council members or staff should be elected to the Tolled Road Entity.

A Special, unique Tolled Road is needed. Whether though from Seddonville, Little Wanganui or Karamea would need to be decided.

This would be a World Wide NZ Attraction. Make it a breath taking road. No camping .. no overnighting .. no tramping etc

The proviso being is that the portion to the Tasman/Northern Buller District (or group assigned the responsibility of Governance for the Tolled Road) is retained within its own group but audited separately by Audit NZ. It also should not be part of any Councils business at all.

The 'Tourist Toll' income and funding would be used ONLY for this Special Roads building, future development and its outgoings. All work would be done through a robust tender process and be very very transparent.

To that end the Buller (or Northern Buller) ratepayers/permanent residents should be provided with free passes for use of this road as the DWC income was intended to help this area with the ceasing of the Native Forest logging. At least for the initial years of use. (until the toll costs begin to drop away)

Tasman / Buller ratepayers would both benefit from the income generated by the additional Tourism. Tourists would be better able to access the 'Lost World' of Karamea and Ghost Road as well.

Although it won't happen overnight and a lot of funding will need to be raised; it would give it a start. Support from DoC and other Central Govt departments would be helpful.

This DWC money has been fought over for years and now looks to be possibly manipulated by the current Mayors of the District.

It needs to be completely removed from the Mayors/CEO's hands as they see it as a way out of the massive debt the Councils have incurred. They have developed strange (but obvious) ways of getting Govt funding/money back into the Councils pockets. (Not out to the communities)

To lose the DWC funding in this way (and the above extra funding given by Central Govt) will not 'give' a cure to bad management and Governance (nor improve work opportunities within the Districts). The bad management and Governance will carry on regardless - as it is now.

Future Management and Governance options – Also possible misuse of individual and collective Positions of Authority.

DoC could hold the West Coast Portion and Govern it themselves? They are the major land stewards of course... But held separately from other business within DoC.

Central Government needs to look into the high staffing levels of the West Coast Councils and require them to be far more responsible in managing that.

Also the personal interests of large groups seeking to export the best of our water. Central Govt is not addressing this and it causes concern amongst the ratepayers/residents who appear to be paying heavily for water because of the disastrous management of Councils (ie non involvement and then the over riding of the ratepayers aspirations for their own management of their water supplies which compound the problems).. and yet private business (for their shareholders alone) are gaining greatly from something that is supposed to be free.

Tonight's paper for example. The ratepayers will pay for the Mayor to go to China because China wants to invest in the West Coast? Why don't the Chinese visit us at their own cost? Please consider that the BDC Mayor is also a shareholder of Okuru Enterprises. One of those 'investments' may possibly turn out to be his own business interest.

The Okuru Enterprise needs \$100 million to get off the ground and possibly 5 billion to complete (depending if tankers are new or leased). Okuru is also seeking contentious Resource Consents. The ousting of the Development West Coast Chair by the majors has been stated by a prominent resident as "*He believed the mayors' motive was to manipulate the trust through a new appointee*" in our local paper page 3 – The News 23 Feb 2017. We also revisit the 'Reasons why' above re the manipulation of a Resource Consent (even just though the public mapping it shows a clear intent to mislead and leaves uncertainly as to its over all correctness via procedures; and, the possible future outcomes from being used this way)

There are serious issues to address here in the West Coast Districts and it is of great concern to many. The Councils as I've stated in 'Reasons why' may not be working in the way they should.

Thank you for your time with my submission.

I do not intend or wish to defame anyone or any organisation. I wish to try and show the reasons that serious consideration to the overall Governance of the West Coast is needed.

I have personal experience of this manipulation. It appears to be so very easy for the Council (and DHB's) to mislead Central Govt especially after they first disassociate the ratepayers from the issues they (BDC) wish to further for themselves .. thus disadvantaging those same ratepayers by denying them due process. I can now only believe that this behaviour is likely to be coast wide.

I hope I have made myself easy enough to follow. If not - I will clarify if wished. There is certainly a great deal more I could add.

Regards
Charlotte May

West Coast Local Government Alternative Application

Last year the Local Government Commission received an application asking them to look at local government arrangements on the West Coast, with a view to making changes. In February 2017 LGC released a public notice inviting alternative applications or other more general proposals for change to local government arrangements on the West Coast. The questions asked of the commission are.

1. What are the big challenges and opportunities for the West Coast?
2. What do you like about the current way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered?
3. Is there anything about the current way your councils are set up and the way services are delivered, that you would like to change?
4. Are there any council services you think would be better delivered over a wider area as shared services by existing councils?
5. Should some council's be combined?

In my alternative application I propose to seek a more collaborative and efficient administration body for a combined West Coast Council. With the above 5 questions in mind my present thoughts are as follows.

The challengers we face are;

1. The West Coast has only one vote in Parliament, therefore it is on the back foot all the way.
2. Geography- the Buller, West Coast and Westland local body electorates stretches from Jacksons Bay in the South to Karamea in the North. (The same distance as from Wellington to Auckland.) It is insurmountable to expect a small population of 32,000 people working on 15% of the total land base to make ends meet, let alone to be expected to meet their rate commitments. Also the weather and the topography of the South Islands West Coast, are always challenging.

3. With a small population base, widely distributed, we face a very uncertain future. With TPP affecting all small towns throughout New Zealand; we on the West Coast are no exception. Under present government policy we are not likely to see any medium to large business development on the West Coast, while it is cheaper to import and build these products overseas.

With this in mind, our future is in developing tourism and making this a 12 month industry.

Unfortunately the majority of jobs in the tourist industry are low paid and seasonal, we now need to look at long term rate relief for our families living on the West Coast.

What government could do to help local body councils throughout NZ, is to apply a disposal tax on all imported goods to our country, this collection of monies is then given back to councils throughout the country, to be used for supporting council infrastructure related to rubbish collection, toilets and other tourist related amenities under the umbrella of DOC.

The new tax could be seen as a Keep New Zealand Tidy incentive, where user pays and the benefits of better kept towns and facilities for tourist are enjoyed.

And at the same time small towns like ours benefit from government support, supplying job opportunities, and the prospects of rate decreases on council amenities.

4. At the moment we have a large visitor/tourist load on our infrastructure, provided for by a small ratepayer base (Punakaiki has 500,000 visitors per year and about 30 ratepayers who live in the area.)
5. The West Coast has seen a large increase in tourism but unfortunately it is very seasonal, from September to the end of April. It is also a low wage industry, in most cases offering temporary employment only. There is also a problem with freedom campers traveling throughout NZ in their vans without toilet facilities, desecrating the remote parking areas beach fronts and side roads. This problem is placing an extremely high infrastructural load on our toilets and water supplied to these remote areas.

6. As mentioned we have large tracts of unrated land, these being DOC conservation estates, which return no income to our councils.
7. Parochialism is strong between Buller, Grey and Westland Councils as each district competes against the other two to maximise its own outcomes, rather than a combined West Coast one.
8. At the moment we have 3 elected Mayors vying for the same pot of monies in hope that they get the major share to take back to their council. Where on the other hand if the West Coast could act as one under the auspice of a Regional Council run by a "Governor", not Mayors. Maybe the West Coast could act more like a "state" or back to a "province" than having 3 District Councils each vying for its own.
9. Lastly, the Local Government Act is a one size fits all and limits thinking or acting outside the box. Its prescriptions have to be followed by law, even though these may not produce desirable/optimised localised outcomes.

Thinking the same as in the past will not produce new solutions.

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. (Albert Einstein)

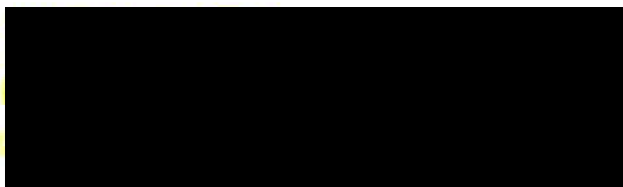
The fundamental issue I see is providing infrastructure to a very challenging geographic area with a small (rateable) population. I feel some sort of regional summit with the aim of thinking differently could help.

However I also know each district will turn up trying to get what's best for them, rather than putting that aside to get what's best for the Coast.

Can you please tell us where in the region you live? (Buller District)

Which age gap do you fall into? (65+)

Charles Richard Bruning



Local Government
Commission.
Wellington.

[REDACTED]
7-3-2017.

Dear Sir / Madam,

Proposal for amalgamation West Coast Councils.

If we can have 1 Council for the whole district, we should have the Westland - Grey Districts together.

They have most in common, and then the West Coast Regional Council's work could be included.

Buller has more in common with the Tasman District.

There is too much duplication in both, like Grey Council is not as big in area as the Westland, so to me that would be the best for both.

F.J. Glacier sewage has not been sorted, of course rate could be spread out more.

Thank you.

A. KREMER
[REDACTED]

West Coast Alternative Reorganisation Application – 14.3.17

Applicant: Deborah Hogan, [REDACTED]

Map:



Description of type of local government change proposed

I would like to see the amalgamation of the Westland, Grey and Buller district councils into one council, with a reduced number of councillors and one mayor for the West Coast.

The West Coast Regional Council would remain a separate entity, but would combine administration functions including rates collection.

[I'm against the idea of getting rid of the WCRC and dividing the WCRC functions across the 3 DCs because the WCRC functions very well and this would cause unnecessary churn and not tackle parochialism.]

What the changes are seeking to achieve and what improvements would result from them including how they promote good local government

1. Above all this amalgamation would provide consistency across the region. It would tackle the parochialism which currently sees our district councils only interested in dealing with issues that occur within their own boundaries.
2. More efficient operation, with the amalgamation of these types of services:
 - Planning – let's have one district plan for the region
 - Building permits – again we need consistency
 - Rates collection and finance/accounts
 - Administration (includes payroll, HR and IT)
 - Civil defence – it's really important we have a joined-up approach to this. We are vulnerable to a number of emergencies caused by the Alpine fault, plus rising sea levels and global warming causing more flood events.
 - Roothing
3. One mayor for the region would have a much stronger voice at a national level than the current 3.
4. Better quality outcomes due to staff doing the same work being collegial since they are in the same team/organisation, even if they are not based in the same office.
5. Fewer and better quality councillors. Currently a number of the candidates standing for election as councillors or even mayors do not understand how local government functions. We would get better quality candidates if there were fewer positions available. For the approx. 32,000 people in our region we are grossly overrepresented with our 3 mayors, 1 chairman and 36 councillors – that's more than one councillor per 1,000 people!

Buller and Westcoast local council governance

Proposed unitary authority for Buller and Westcoast

The land area administered by the Buller/Westcoast Councils covers an area from beyond the start of the Heaphy Track to the Haast Pass. Total travelling time by road of approximately 9 hours.

Those who think that a one council for the Buller/Westcoast will save money and enable an efficient team of staff and councillors to look after the important needs of the Buller and Westcoast people are sadly mistaken and have not done their homework.

A single council is a situation that will not work. There will still be the same amount of work for that of a single council to do as is currently done by the 4 councils.

A one council is more than likely to be centred at Greymouth creating job losses in Westport and Hokitika. These towns along with the other smaller communities in Buller and the Westcoast are seriously struggling with lack of jobs, let alone suitable jobs. One council will only intensify that.

A centre based on Greymouth equals loss of jobs to Hokitika and Westport, less councillors means a bigger area for each councillor to service meaning more councillor time which equals increased cost.

Current councillors are part time councillors; most have full time employment, so spend their personnel time on council business. Fewer councillors would mean more personal time on council business. Therefore it will be extremely difficult for these councillors to maintain this.

Many high calibre people may not be able to take on these larger time consuming roles or may take on these roles and not be able to put the extra work and time into them. The end result with one council is likely to result in a poorer quality leadership, work ethic and end results for the communities of Buller and the Westcoast.

My employment takes me to Queensland Australia where I work in the health service as a Radiographer. The health service area covers 22% of Queensland's land area. I supervise the x-ray staff at 8 x-ray sites scattered throughout this district.

Travelling is a considerable amount of the time spent by myself and other Allied Health staff in providing services throughout the health district. If the scattered sites were closed and all the work done at the base there would be no reduction in the full time equivalent staffing. The services would still need the current number of staff to maintain the provision of services.

There would be no benefit from one council for the Buller and Westcoast districts to be administered for their essential services from one point in a district, which has essential services over a distance of travel equivalent to that from Wellington to Auckland.

To provide an efficient and adequate local body service to the people of Buller and Westcoast we would still need the same number of staff and councillors.

One council centred on Greymouth would mean more travelling time for staff, overnight stays and extra vehicles, all added cost. Along with poor communication coverage throughout most of the Buller and Westcoast, the staff travelling would not be able to be readily contacted, leaving essential and important services without adequate cover.

The current 4 councils have agreed to some shared services and are working towards many more. Retaining the 3 districts councils and integrating the work of the regional council would be a far better and more efficient outcome for the Buller and Westcoast districts.

We would still need the same number of council staff as there would still be the same amount of work to do. Job losses would be to the detriment of providing efficiently the essential services.

The regional councillor's positions would need to be seriously looked at as without these the district councillors would be faced with a bigger workload, to the detriment that I have already outlined (paragraph 5).

Each district council would most likely need 2 extra councillors to uptake this increased work load.

There is no way that reducing the Buller and Westcoast councils to one council will bring any savings. The same amount of work will still be required to be done therefore the same amount of staff and councillors are needed.

The efficiencies are in shared services and common rules and regulations within the 3 district councils. Also these councils need to be resourced so that they can take on the added and different responsibilities of the Regional Council to create a single service point.

John Currie



14 March 2017

Local Government Commission Submission on West Coast Governance Arrangements

Submission from:

Allan John Birchfield



Please find my submission:

For a population of 32,600 people, we have too many representatives. At my last count, it was around 47 – approximately one Councillor for every 700 people.

This creates a problem at election time to find enough people to fill the positions. Often, some Wards have no election as they are not contested. And in others, it's a choice of dumb or dumber.

We are a thin coastal strip with our roading system largely financed and administered by Central Government, with the Councils left to administer secondary roads and only able to rate for 8% of the area.

My submission is that one Council can handle this total area. The alternative is to have two Councils with the Regional Council handling all regulatory functions and a single District Council divided into three Wards – North, Central and South – with service centres in the populated areas to carry out the basic services.

I wish to be heard to support my submission.

12th March 2017

Suzanne Doig
C.E.O. Local Government Commission,
P.O. Box 5362,
Wellington 6140.

Tenakeo,

Support the application for a unitary authority
for the West Coast.

Propose a Council of 7 Ward representatives
elected with 2 Manawhenua Iwi Representatives.

1 Karamea

1 Westport

1 Reefton

1 Greymouth

1 Hokitika

1 Franz Joseph

1 Haast

2 Manawhenua Iwi Representatives

Area to be that covered by the present Councils.
Change would achieve a lower administration cost

Working depots be established at: -

Karamea,

Westport,

Clymouth,

Haast.

Would uniform rates across the whole of the West Coast.

Further, the Commission to look at the alignment of Hapu tribal areas of the Tai Poutini (West Coast) with that of Council boundaries.

Kia ora, ua

James Mason Russell

Chairman Kati Waewae Kaumatua Kahui.

P.S. Attachment.

Coast 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 (Guardian, February 3).

The Local Government Commission was called in by 400-plus resident-ratepayers who had had a gutfest 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

Hokitika Guardian

Tuesday, February 7, 2017

SUBMISSION FROM

cr Allan gibson

grey district councilor

the west coast is unique,being 100s of kilometers long but only 25 km wide with a population of about 32,000 people.

We seem to over representative with councils ,if it was cristchurch we would have at least 30 councils running it.i think that 2 bodies would be enough,one for roading and infrastucture with depots in each district and one council for the regulatory side of things. It would help with them pooling resources in times of natural disaster,flooding and other events,it would also keep say tourism and other things on the same level with all the area instead of being disjointed as it is now. I dont wish to be heard on my submission

thanks allan gibson

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.

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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.

Proposals for some form of shared service

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 14 March 2017 8:10 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: please forward to local government commission

Hi Garry could you send this through as it won't go through to info @lgc.govt.nz – keeps telling me my email is considered spam!!

Thanks Jo

Please accept my submission on West Coast Local Government arrangements as per attached.

Regards Joanne Howard

[REDACTED]

Dated 14th march 2017

Joanne Howard

[REDACTED]

West Coast Region

Types of alternative reorganization applications/other proposals for change

I do not want to submit an alternative application as I don't think it would be in the best interests of residents and ratepayers.

I do support the existing councils sharing the delivery of particular services.

These could be defined by the mayors and chairs in their triannual agreement and determined by current needs and resources available to the councils at the time. (Resources including staffing capacity and skills.)

The greater Canterbury region is an example where individual councils collaborate and different districts are tasked to lead initiatives.

Reasons behind my decision:

1. Unitary councils have not reduced costs. No amalgamation to date has resulted in overall savings to ratepayers. The original request for change was in the belief that significant costs could be made. Those I have spoken to supporting change also falsely believe that savings will occur – Under a unitary council you would be trying to govern an area the length of Auckland to Wellington! The time and travel cost of covering the area from a central location would be horrendous. Current centralized services from other agencies have resulted in poor service to remote areas and staff inefficiencies due to travel. I think the average person doesn't understand the main drivers of rates e.g. 25% roading, Administration and representation are small factors.
2. Lack of local democracy. I attend most council meetings in Westport. A unitary council would reduce/stop my ability to engage with the council and advocate for the community. Unitary councils result in more community boards – this adds another hierarchical level to democracy. My experience with the Inangahua Community Board is that the timeliness of decisions is reduced and that adding that additional level results in inevitable communication loss. The size of the Buller district currently makes it challenging to represent all.e.g. Maruia, Karamea, Punakaiki.
3. Catchments. All the study/research I have done over the years suggest that governance is best based on water catchment and/or other geographical catchments. Obviously these are numerous on the coast and disperse populations means amalgamating some. Main rivers are obviously the Karamea, Buller, Grey, Taramakau, Hokitika and Haast with major road links being Buller Gorge to Nelson, Lewis, Arthurs and Haast passes. This makes sense too with emergency management with bridges and bluffs isolating communities. I like the shared model as you can have shared management but it is important to keep resources (including people) in catchments.
4. We have to work to our advantages on the Coast as we are a sparse and isolated population. People live here for the environment and because they choose to live in "communities". Successful communities are driven from the bottom up. I believe that we will be more successful by devolving more responsibility to community level, greater engagement and a unitary council do not fit. At the Inangahua Community Board meetings the public actively engage with the board and public forums are well attended with positive conversations. As the communities get larger there is less engagement as people feel more disconnected with decision making bodies. This is not what I want to see for the coast.
5. Loss of representation, democracy. Distance to attend meetings. A good council should be representative of the community. The pool able to stand as councillors would be reduced due to work and family commitments, ability to travel. It would particularly affect the younger demographics. It would be detrimental to the establishment of youth councils. Welfare of people when they have to travel the distances involved on the Coast.

What is working well and what we should be focusing on:

Collaboration/shared services. Agreement in place between 4 councils. Mayors and Chairs meetings. Regional strategy.

Civil Defence

Economic Development

Tourism

Professional services and staff

Common policies/procedures:

Building consents

Freedom camping

Liquor licensing etc.

Library – shared services and memberships so Punakaiki and Reefton have options of using Buller or Grey services.

Collaboration goes further than just West Coast – working with neighbours – Tasman, Hurunui. Working with other councils e.g. Selwyn doing building consents.

Supporting information:

Inconclusive evidence of economies of scale. "29 per cent of research finds U-shaped cost curves, 39 per cent find no statistical relationship between per capita expenditure and size, 8 per cent find evidence of economies of scale, and 24 per cent find diseconomies of scale" (p.

393). <http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/havsay/pdf/royalcommission/7-literaturereview.pdf>

In her preliminary assessment of the Toronto amalgamation, Slack (2000) concludes that while there may have been good reasons to undertake the amalgamation, "it is highly unlikely, however, that the amalgamation will lead to cost savings. On the contrary, it is more likely that costs will increase (p. 17).

"whereas the Victorian State Government claimed that its amalgamation programme would yield direct cost savings of 20 per cent, the net results has been only 8.5 pr cent, most of which was derived from competitive tendering and not restructuring"(p.75). Similarly, in South Australia the authorities promised savings of 17.4 per cents, but only achieved a mere 2.3 per cent" (p. 75). District is doing joint tendering eg insurance

Pole (2000) uses a 1999 Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Citizen Survey to study citizen responses to a municipal amalgamation that created the Halifax Regional Municipality. This survey explore citizens assessments of amalgamation three years after the experience and what factors best explain citizens' views towards amalgamation. The survey found that opposition to the amalgamation legislation and its outcome increased since amalgamation took place. 66% of citizens opposed amalgamation in the 1999 survey compared with from 42% in 1995 (when the amalgamation occurred). The table below outlines the survey results.

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http://www.mdl.co.nz/Blog/x_blog_uid/51/topic/Local+Government+amalgamations.html

What can we learn from New South Wales?

The New South Wales review provides a very good case study. Both the Independent Panel on Local Government Reform, and the Destination 2036 process out of which it came, have placed a strong emphasis on encouraging councils to develop their own solutions. However, the Panel has also gone to considerable lengths to make it clear that change is inevitable, simply because of the changed environment in which local government functions, and the challenges it now needs to deal with. The New South Wales approach is probably as good an example as one could hope for of an initiative that really recognises the value of local government, and the importance of enabling councils to make their own decisions about their future if it all possible.

Findings indicate that a number of issues arising from the structure, range of functions, and territorial scale of unitary councils, limit their potential to facilitate more integrated management through increased levels of comprehensiveness and coordination. It is recommended that no further unitary councils are created. In addition, although unitary authorities are not the ideal institutional form within which resource management occurs, practical steps to enhance the integrative potential of existing unitary authorities are suggested.

<https://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/handle/10182/4356>

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 15 March 2017 1:32 p.m.
To: LGC
Subject: Other proposal - Local Government Commission: West Coast local government arrangements
Attachments: PastedGraphic-6.tiff

Other proposal - Local Government Commission: West Coast local government arrangements

Please find below a submission from Anthony Black in relation to the above invitation.

Anthony Black
[REDACTED]

While I believe it is unlikely that the West Coast will get a unitary authority, I support change to the existing local government structure on the Coast, with a view to streamlining and improving key processes, in particular West Coast planning processes. I support changing the current structure and would like to see unified district planning and centralisation of resources for the processing of planning/consent applications, particularly those that are larger scale, or more technical to process. The individual Council's do not have the mass to attract and retain specialised staff, and have struggled in this area. The level of service provision, and the calibre of that service, varies significantly between Councils and districts. Unifying these services I believe, would provide an opportunity to attract and retain a depth of planners and experience that is currently lacking within the individual Councils. Improvements to the quality and consistency of service levels should also be achievable.



15 March 2017

Chief Executive Officer
Local Government Commission
PO Box 5362
Wellington 6140

By email: info@lgc.govt.nz

Dear Suzanne

Submission on Alternative Arrangements for the West Coast

We write in our capacity as the Mayors of the Buller, Grey and Westland District Councils and the Chair of the West Coast Regional Council, noting that this submission is also supported by the Chair of Development West Coast. As the West Coast Mayors and Chairs Forum we have a strong commitment to working together and cooperating on matters that benefit the West Coast and our economy as a whole.

We would like to thank the Local Government Commission for the opportunity to make this submission and for having extensive dialogue on the reorganisation review process to date. We submit the following for your consideration.

Our region

The West Coast has a number of unique characteristics which sets it apart from the rest of New Zealand.

The West Coast has a small population of 32,600, sparsely scattered over a long and narrow coastline. The length of the region, the same as the distance between Auckland to Wellington, requires careful consideration as to how to provide efficient and effective services and functions to the communities along this narrow strip. Some of our communities already have significant distance to travel to engage with our officers, and we work closely with them to ensure that they feel empowered and included within our local government services.

Of the 23,000 square kilometres or 2,300,000 hectares land area on the West Coast, the Department of Conservation manages 1,964,141 hectares, or approximately 84% of this. This land management has a significant impact on the ratepayer base for the region and the districts. As a result, we have long had to consider how to deliver a multitude of functions in a cost effective and value for money way. This in part, has contributed to a desire to approach shared services between the four Councils, which over the past years had led to a number of efficiencies and cost savings.

Our history

The West Coast has been stereotyped by a history of 'patch protection', considered as parochial and very much focused on individual district matters. While some of this may have occurred in the past, it is no longer the case. Together we are focused on creating a region that is successful, that has communities that are resilient with a diversified economy, supported through efficient local government service delivery.

In 2015 the four West Coast Councils signed a memorandum of understanding to *A Commitment to Regional Efficiency*. The MOU documented the range of collaborative approaches already in place amongst the four Councils and then the future intentions for further collaboration (a copy of the MOU is appended to this submission).

Our future – what do we want to achieve?

We are of the firm belief that a status quo model with enhanced shared services will provide the best format for the delivery of local government functions across the region. Better alignment between the Councils will

make working across the region more streamlined for business, and having more shared service options will provide for more regionally consistent service delivery.

The New Zealand Initiative has undertaken significant investigation into local government structures around the world. Amalgamating councils is not always the answer. The devolution of responsibility to local government has led to remarkable success in the Netherlands, Switzerland as well as the UK. As such, we believe that greater focus on shared services is a much more productive alternative to a Unitary Council.

There are several key projects that are seen to be crucial to a better delivery of services, and which we wish to progress development and implementation. These include:

- **A single district plan across the region**
Unifying the district plans across the West Coast brings many advantages to the region. Not only will it standardize the regulatory framework, creating a more seamless environment to undertake the consenting process within, but it provides further certainty to investors. More importantly the cost of undertaking this, and any potential appeal and court processes, will be minimized. It has also been recognised that there is a lack of resource in the policy space across the District Councils to undertake individual reviews. This process better utilizes staff capacity across the region and ensures we are able to have in place a fit for purpose district plan to cater to the needs of not only the individual districts, but the region as a whole.
- **Unified regulatory services**
There are opportunities to review the delivery of a number of regulatory functions between Councils. This includes consent processing, compliance monitoring and building consent work. Similar to the outcomes of the single district plan, this again provides opportunity to streamline processes, making it easier to work through the consenting process delivering savings in both time and money to investors, businesses and the community generally. Some of this is already occurring in the building area and with some RMA functions delegated to a neighbouring district or the regional council.
- **A shared pool of 'expertise'**
As small Councils it is inherently difficult to fund a number of services adequately on an individual basis. This expertise would add significantly to the capability and capacity of our Councils individually and collectively as these are functions that are generally only found in larger Councils and it is unlikely that as individual entities we would ever have the resources to perform these functions well. The current situation sees many of these functions 'tacked on' to existing roles, performed by those who have little time to undertake them to the level they need to be.

We believe that there is merit in the development of a shared pool of expertise, including but not limited to:

- Human resources (high level strategic advice)
- Risk management
- Health and safety
- Procurement and contracts
- Policy and strategy
- Quality assurance
- Business improvement
- Business development / funding (seeking external funding opportunities)
- Strategic communications
- Information management
- Iwi engagement
- Rates and accounting services

- **WC4 Collaborative Information Systems**
The four West Coast Councils have a strategy and roadmap for proposed information systems projects that will be worked on collaboratively. The aim is to provide a high level of service that meets business needs, while containing costs through a combination of collaborative purchasing and sharing of services and effort where practical. There have been a number of projects that have recently been completed, or are being rolled out in the coming weeks which further highlights how the Councils are already working a collaborative space. These projects include:

- The installation of high speed network connections between the Councils. This enables better communication / collaboration between the Councils and enhanced delivery of online services to the community.
- Based on this new network we are installing a shared phone system that will make it much easier for communication directly between staff from the different Councils. This will be delivered over the next few weeks.
- The next step is to enable a user to have a single logon that will enable access to the computer network at more than one Council. This has become important now we have positions that are shared between Councils and there is increasing interest in pooling of staff resources.
- A single Emergency Management web site has been created for the whole region and will be made public over the next few weeks.
- A regional web map portal has been created using the latest technologies as a joint project for the Buller District Council and West Coast Regional Council. The next step for this is to also display Grey and Westland District map information so it becomes a one-stop-shop.
- The three District Councils have worked together to roll out the Alpha-One system for Building Consents
- Aerial photography for the Buller and Grey Districts has been delivered and work has started on capturing images for Westland District.
- All four Councils have worked together on a 'Request for Information' for the supply of a document management system. A number of proposals have been received and we will now choose a preferred vendor and proceed to implementation.
- The new technologies are already being used for video conferencing considerably reducing the need to travel.

A roadmap of future projects in the IT space has already been developed which includes some key projects such as:

- The implementation of an electronic document management system so that document storage and handling can be much more consistent across Councils.
- The Councils are also working together to use the new network to improve the resiliency of our information systems and disaster recovery ability in the case of an event that affects our systems.

Our future – the pathway forward

We believe that to be successful as a region we need to be present in our communities. The issues that each part of the region faces are diverse and require close consultation and engagement with the community.

As outlined above, and in the appended MOU, the region is already committed to identifying how we can do things together to provide for more efficient and effective local government service delivery. Key to the success of such initiatives relies significantly on the governance that surrounds it. We propose that the Mayors and Chairs forum is the vehicle that can champion and drive forward the collaboration progress between the Councils. We are committed to building on the strong foundation that has been established to date.

We propose the following pathway forward:

- Review and update the memorandum of understanding: A Commitment to Regional Efficiency. Note that this is currently underway following local government elections. This would include ensuring there is a clear purpose and agreed outcomes put in place.
- Have the memorandum endorsed and supported by each of our individual Councils.
- Every year review and undertake a stock take of initiatives that can be put forward for investigation, development and implementation based on its potential to provide increased service delivery, efficiency and effectiveness to the West Coast communities. This may be undertaken in conjunction with Local Government assistance.
- Agree on checks and balances – how we would ensure that initiatives are progressed and that they do not remain as good ideas on a shelf.
- Implement a reporting back mechanism which outlines progress, as well as the successes and failures. This would be shared with our Councils and our communities. Shared services and other collaborations must deliver tangible benefits by way of either improved levels of service, or reduced costs. The

overriding priority is that the benefits should outweigh the costs and the end result must be an improved service/facility for the region's residents.

We would also note the amendments to the Local Government Act, and the inclusion of Section 17A requiring Councils to consider their services and determine the best way to deliver these. This is an activity that Councils throughout New Zealand are undertaking, not just those on the West Coast. We would also note that we support the intent of Section 17A reviews as while it may be a legislative requirement, it is simply good practice

The Section 17A review is another mechanism by which we can identify potential areas for collaboration and other shared services. We consider that many of these have already been identified in what we want to achieve in the future above.

What will success look like?

As we look to our future it is important we consider what success will look like, particularly for our communities. We desire a region where our communities are economically and socially better off, well represented and served. The West Coast will be a region where investors and industry find it straightforward to engage and interact with Councils, with services that are delivered to a high and consistent standard across the region. We are confident that this can be achieved through the approach we have identified.

In summary

In summary we submit that:

- A status quo model with enhanced shared services, an approach that we are already progressing, will provide the best format for the delivery of local government functions across the region.
- To be successful as a region we need to be present in our communities.
- Initiatives to progress collaboration and shared services for the future will rely significantly on the governance of the Mayors and Chairs forum to champion this.

We thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and look forward to hearing both the views of our communities and further discussions with yourself.

Yours sincerely



Garry Howard
Mayor, Buller District Council



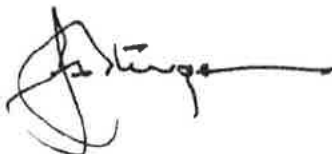
Tony Kokshoorn
Mayor, Grey District Council



Andrew Robb
Chair, West Coast Regional Council



Bruce Smith
Mayor, Westland District Council



John Sturgeon
Chair, Development West Coast

Barbara Holland

15 March 2017

CEO
Local Government Commission
PO Box 5362
Wellington 8140

Dear Sir

Submission: Invitation for alternative reorganisation applications and other proposals for change to West Coast local government arrangements

I do not support any structural changes to the current local government arrangement of three district councils and one regional council for the West Coast.

I strongly advocate for ongoing investigation of, and application of, shared services arrangements between district councils wherever possible.

Within this wide-ranging LGC review I shall confine my comments to one particular area of concern only. I particularly want to advocate for greater attention to be paid to current liquor licensing arrangements across the whole of the West Coast as I believe there is considerable opportunity for improvements in this regard. The following remarks are drawn from my community involvement in alcohol-related harm reduction activities over a number of years including experience in dealing with all three district licensing committees on the West Coast.

I would like to see the following:

- The three existing district councils on the West Coast sharing the delivery of a single liquor licensing service
- Development of a joint local alcohol policy across the whole West Coast
- Creation of a joint West Coast District Licensing Committee (DLC)
- More effective monitoring and inspections

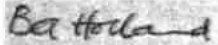
The benefits I see arising are:

- Shared resources and collaborative consistent approaches across the three district councils
- Skilled and efficient management of this statutory service
- Standardised policy for the whole West Coast
- One agency for the Medical Officer of Health / Community Public Health and the Police to deal with instead of three as at present
- Would enable a joint DLC to build up expertise
- A shared licensing inspectorate would likely be more focused, effective and efficient
- Possibility of cost savings from fewer hearings

It is my understanding that the above proposals are already legally possible under empowering provisions of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 without requiring any transfer of statutory obligations to one council. However, I am unclear whether the Local Government Commission can mandate any/all of the above proposed steps. Nevertheless I wish to have these matters drawn to your attention for consideration.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on this particular aspect of local government responsibility and associated service activities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ba Holland". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light grey rectangular background.

To.

10th March 2017.

Chief Executive Officer,
Local Government Commission,
P.O. Box 5362,
Wellington 6140.

West Coast Local Government Arrangements.

Another Proposal.

Retain the West Coast Regional Council essentially in its present form. The West Coast has a more diverse and dynamic range of geographic features than any other region of New Zealand. It is important to have a Council with an entirely rural focus and specialised staff dealing with the vagaries of this rugged landscape and climate.

Centralize as many of the office-bound Council functions of the three District Councils as is possible without impacting on the delivery of ratepayer services by optimising the use of advances in data processing technology, on line service capabilities and video conferencing, all this under the auspices of one CEO.

Presently the three District Councils replicate a multitude of office functions in fulfilling their management, administrative, regulatory, compliance and governance requirements. A move to bring many of these functions into alignment would enable the centralising of most of these activities. In themselves they contribute virtually nothing to the direct delivery of core services which is the prime, in fact the only concern of 90% of ratepayers.

Westreef Services Ltd. (a Buller District Council Controlled Organisation) is responsible for all roading, water, waste-water and stormwater service delivery in this district and I believe would not be

inhibited in any way by such a centralization. They of course have their own set of management and administrative staff adding yet another layer of ratepayer expense.

Faced with diminishing population and a much lower waged economy a more cost effective delivery of Local Government on the Coast has to be the prime objective of the Commissions review process and council job losses have to be seen as inevitable.

It is not acceptable or affordable to have 4 separate Councils, 4 highly paid CEOs, 3 Mayors and a Council Chairman, 32 Councillors and approximately 120 office-bound Council staff costing in excess of \$15 million annually ($\frac{1}{3}$ of total rates collected) to service the Local Government needs of just 32,000 people.

The geographic length of the region should not be seen as an impediment to centralizing the majority of Councils office functions. Key personnel would remain strategically placed and as available as required.

I have been impressed with the thoroughness of the Commissions work thus far and your summary of community feedback.

I have a concern that the lengthy processes that you are obliged to follow (a feature of all local Government work) has disengaged the interest of many ratepayers at this point.

I am disappointed at the parochial self-interest of our elected representatives and the perception that they are placing the interests of staff ahead of that of their electors.

I do not believe that the Coast Councils declared intent to persue more shared services will provide anywhere near the cost savings necessary to give sustainable affordability to rates. Nor do I think that they will continue the pursuit of these with the same enthusiasm as they have shown since the threat of reform surfaced if the Commission were to conclude this project without presenting ratepayers with a more attractive alternative.

Another factor that I think has stifled interest is that district newspapers, who rely on local council activity for a lot of their copy appear intent on preserving the status quo.

Until such time as you present a firm proposal of reform and an indication of potential cost savings will coasters then take an active interest in this matter.

I trust that existing provisions or upcoming ammendments to the Local Government Act will enable you to do this.

From
a pensioner ratepayer.

Allen Morris,

Allen Morris

