



Local Government  
Commission  
Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe

# A study of West Coast communities of interest

Buller  
District  
Council

Grey  
District  
Council

Westland  
District  
Council

West Coast  
Regional  
Council

WEST COAST

October 2017

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## PURPOSE

1. This report is to assist the Local Government Commission (the Commission) to identify the “reasonably practicable options” for reorganisation of local government on the West Coast.
2. This follows the receipt by the Commission of a reorganisation application proposing the establishment of a unitary authority (i.e. a territorial authority also undertaking the responsibilities of a regional council) covering all of the West Coast Region that is Buller, Grey and Westland districts (see map below).
3. After agreeing to assess the reorganisation application, the Commission was then required to invite alternative applications. This process has been completed and a range of alternative proposals received for the Commission’s consideration.
4. The next step is for the Commission to identify the “reasonably practicable options”, as defined in clause 11 of Schedule 3 of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA), for the West Coast. These options are deemed by the legislation to include the no change option i.e. status quo local government arrangements.
5. In addition to status quo arrangements, the Commission has agreed that analysis be undertaken of further options as potential reasonably practicable options particularly:
  - a. a unitary authority for West Coast Region
  - b. union of the three West Coast districts (leaving West Coast Regional Council in place)
  - c. union of Grey and Westland districts
  - d. transfer to West Coast Regional Council of the Buller, Grey and Westland district councils’ statutory obligations for preparing district plans under the Resource Management Act.
6. To be a reasonably practicable option, any new or changed local authority is required, among other things, to contain one or more “distinct communities of interest” (clause 11(5)(c) of Schedule 3, LGA).
7. This report identifies West Coast communities of interest and how these are currently grouped together, to help the Commission determine which of the options set out in paragraph 5 above meet the clause 11(5)(c) requirement for being reasonably practicable. A proposed reorganisation under any of these options will need to ensure, for example, communities of interest are grouped appropriately and not divided by electoral boundaries.
8. The report is in two parts:
  - a. *Part A*: provides a brief outline of the general approach taken to the identification of communities of interest
  - b. *Part B*: applies the approach to the West Coast, firstly on a district by district basis and then region-wide, in order to identify current distinct communities of interest.



## PART A: GENERAL APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

9. A broad approach to defining communities of interest is taken in this report. It is based on the working definition of community of interest developed by Helen Fulcher as having one or more of the following three dimensions:
- Perceptual:** a sense of belonging to an area or locality which can be clearly defined.
  - Functional:** the ability to meet with reasonable economy the community's requirements for comprehensive physical and human services.
  - Political:** the ability of the elected body to represent the interests and reconcile the conflicts of all its members.<sup>1</sup>
10. The three dimensions are applied in this report firstly at the district level also encompassing the local/neighbourhood level, and then at the regional level. There is further explanation and examples of the approach to communities of interest in *Appendix 1*.
11. Factors seen as contributing to or reinforcing **perceptions** of communities of interest, involving a sense of belonging to and identification with an area, include:
- the geography of the area and significant physical features as they relate to land-use and settlement patterns, and then to feelings of difference and separateness
  - socio-economic characteristics of the area including how these are currently recognised by groupings into districts/constituencies/wards/community board areas for local government representation purposes
  - evolution of the local government arrangements i.e. establishment/mergers of former counties and boroughs, reflecting geography and other factors, leading to the present now familiar structure, with an associated sense of identity and belonging.
12. The following factors are seen as important in identifying **functional** communities of interest, in some cases building on or reinforcing perceptual factors:
- current broad land-use patterns (residential, commercial, rural) as they relate to where people currently live, work and play
  - travel to work patterns i.e. the extent people stay within or travel out of the area to work
  - location of shopping i.e. the extent people shop within or outside the area
  - range of community, recreation, cultural facilities and services within particular areas
  - location and usage patterns of wider 'regional' facilities
  - current catchment areas for the delivery of core local authority infrastructure (e.g. water supply) and planning and regulatory services (e.g. resource management functions) including the extent of shared or joint arrangements between councils
  - flows of goods and services within and out of the area including the role of key infrastructure such as ports, airports, state highways
  - current catchment areas for the delivery of particular central government services e.g. health, education, social welfare.

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<sup>1</sup> Fulcher, H., (1989), South Australian Department of Local Government, *A Discussion Paper Which Explores The Concept of Community Of Interest As It Applies To Local Government Boundaries*

13. Recognition of both perceptual and functional dimensions is likely to result in identification of different scope and scale communities of interest. The political dimension can then be used to achieve a balance between these dimensions and for determining appropriate representation and decision-making structures for the “enabling of democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities” (one part of the statutory purpose of local government as set out in section 10 of the LGA).
14. The following factors are seen as important in determining **political** communities of interest:
- the governance area being a coherent geographical, social and economic unit
  - current local government representation arrangements within regions and districts i.e. constituencies, wards, local/community board areas, reflecting the diversity of the area and distinct local communities of interest
  - hapū/iwi/Māori areas of interest and associated structures
  - the projected degree of change in particular socio-economic factors, such as demographics, as they impact on representation arrangements
  - the existence and nature of other social, cultural, ethnic communities which may cut across some electoral boundaries
  - parliamentary electorates
  - central government agency structures at the local level
  - non-governmental interest group structures e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Federated Farmers, women’s groups such as Women’s Institute or Rural Women
  - local interest groups including ratepayer and resident groups.
15. As can be seen, local government representation and decision-making structures need to be designed to reflect a range of factors and interests and, as a result, provide the means to achieve effective reconciliation of diversity, conflicts and differing local priorities. At the same time there is a need to consider efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability in the delivery of local government services to best meet current and future community needs (the other part of the statutory purpose of local government set out in section 10 of the LGA).
16. In summary, criteria for assessing ‘good local government’ arrangements, guided by the dual purposes of local government, are seen as follows:
- enabling democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities with arrangements that:
    - reflect distinct communities of interest, grouped as appropriate
    - provide fair and effective representation for individuals and communities
    - do not create barriers to participation e.g. at elections
  - meeting current and future needs of communities for good quality local infrastructure, local public services and regulatory functions in a way that is most cost effective for households and businesses with arrangements that are:
    - efficient (achieve maximum economies, avoid unnecessary duplication, match the area of benefit with the area that pays)
    - effective (meet statutory responsibilities and the identified needs and priorities of the community, households, businesses)
    - appropriate to present and anticipated future circumstances.

17. *Part B* applies the three dimensions of community of interest using the above criteria to the West Coast Region beginning with the three districts making up the region and then the region as a whole.



## **PART B: APPLICATION OF APPROACH ON COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST TO WEST COAST**

18. This Part identifies perceptual, functional and political dimensions of communities of interest on the West Coast including how these are presently grouped together. It does this firstly at the district level, with the districts seen as groupings of more immediate local communities of interest, and then for the region as a whole. (See *Appendix 2* for profiles of the districts and region.)

### **BULLER DISTRICT**

#### **Evolution of district governance**

19. The borough of Westport was constituted in 1873 while part of Nelson Province. Adjacent counties of Buller and Inangahua were subsequently constituted, on the abolition of the provinces, in 1876.
20. Apart from a boundary alteration between Inangahua and Murchison counties in 1924, this local government structure of one borough and two counties in the Buller area remained in place until the major nationwide local government reforms over a century later in 1989. These reforms resulted in the constitution of the present Buller District and the consequential abolition of Westport Borough, Buller County and Inangahua County.
21. In its draft proposal in 1988, the Local Government Commission said it considered there were three distinct communities of interest on the West Coast being “those which identify most strongly with the towns of Westport, Greymouth or Hokitika”.<sup>2</sup> On this basis it proposed a new Buller district comprising the areas of the existing Buller County, Westport Borough and Inangahua County which it considered would provide a strong single authority identifying with and based on Westport. The Commission’s final reorganisation scheme in 1989 confirmed its initial proposal for a new Buller district for this area (see map below).
22. Within the new Buller District, the Commission considered there were three distinct groupings of local communities of interest. Accordingly it established three wards to reflect, respectively, communities of interest that:
  - a. exist in Granity and Ngakawau and north to Karamea (Seddon Ward)
  - b. lie in the immediate vicinity of Westport (Westport Ward)
  - c. identify with the township of Reefton and largely comprise Inangahua County and that part of Buller County lying south of Westport (Inangahua Ward).
23. The Commission also considered that a community board for the Inangahua Ward area was necessary, along with a designated service centre for the ward, to recognise the identity of Reefton and its environs together with its physical separation from the Westport area.
24. The same grouping of local communities of interest into three wards for electoral purposes, as established in 1989, continues today. The Inangahua Community Board also remains in place along with a Reefton service centre.

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<sup>2</sup> Local Government Commission, December 1988, *Draft reorganisation schemes for the West Coast Region*, Section D p.8



## Perceived Buller District community of interest

25. Perceptions of a distinct Buller District community of interest reflect firstly the geography of the area with the district clearly defined by its coastline to the west and mountain ranges particularly in the north and east. The southern boundary near the coast is defined broadly by the Punakaiki River although the actual course of the river has changed over the years.
26. The physical features of the area are likely to have contributed to the relative stability in Buller local government structures dating back to the late nineteenth century. This stability has further reinforced perceptions of a separate and distinct Buller District.
27. As noted, the Commission in 1988 considered that an appropriate local government structure for this area was one based on identification with the town of Westport. Today Westport remains the main centre of the district with other townships all being considerably smaller. However, the strength of the identification with Westport, as the basis of a perceived district community of interest, reduces the further one travels from the town and the nearer one comes to boundaries with neighbouring districts.
28. Westport is significantly closer to Nelson than it is to Christchurch, the nearest city for the other two West Coast districts, helping to reinforce a sense of identity in Buller distinct from the rest of the West Coast. In addition, a number of sporting and other interest groups have governing organisations, based in Buller, separate from those for the remainder of the West Coast (see below for details).
29. The distance from Westport to Greymouth (100.7 km with travel time of 1 hour 24 minutes) is significantly greater than Hokitika to Greymouth (38.9 km with travel time of 32 minutes). This supports arguments that there is less affinity and commonality between Buller and Grey districts than between Westland and Grey districts.
30. Finally, the perceived distinction and separateness of Buller District from the remainder of the West Coast which exists today may be related to the fact that, for a period in the nineteenth century, the area was part of Nelson Province, unlike the rest of the West Coast which was part of Canterbury Province and then briefly an autonomous province in its own right. The perceived distinction between Buller and the rest of the West Coast is perpetuated by the continued observance of the different anniversary days of the two historical provinces.
31. This stronger sense of identity in Buller is reflected in the responses to the Local Government Commission's questionnaire carried out in June/July 2016 as part of the Commission's community engagement programme on West Coast local government arrangements. In response to the question 'How important is it that your district council is retained', 70 per cent of Buller respondents attached high importance to this, compared to 51 per cent of Grey respondents and 65 per cent of Westland respondents.
32. While there is a distinct sense of identity and belonging in Buller District, the socio-demographic characteristics of the district are not significantly different from those of the other two West Coast districts (see *Appendix 3*). These characteristics include the projected declining population which is older and very predominantly European compared to national averages, and lower average personal incomes.

33. Buller District also has similar characteristics to the other two districts in terms of the significant area in public ownership, being largely conservation estate including two national parks (Kahurangi and Paparoa) and Victoria Forest Park. This results in only 18 per cent of the district being able to be rated for local government purposes leading in turn to questions about ongoing affordability for ratepayers of local government services and the sustainability of current local government structures.
34. The above factors help reinforce perceptions of a distinct and unique West Coast-wide community of interest. This includes perceptions about unfairness for West Coast residents given significant national interests in the area, imposed restrictions on activities like logging of native timber, and pressures on councils arising from the growth in visitor numbers.

### **Functional dimensions of a Buller District community of interest**

#### ***Local economy***

35. There are some distinctions between the respective district economies on the West Coast with, for example, Buller having a stronger reliance on mining with this accounting for 10 per cent of the district's employment.<sup>3</sup> Distinct economic functional interests are also reflected in organisations like Buller Coal Ltd and Buller Electricity Ltd<sup>4</sup>. Buller District also has its own distinctive tourist attractions including the 'pancake rocks' at Punakaiki, one of the most visited attractions in New Zealand, and the limestone arches and caves near Karamea.
36. Within the district, Westport is the largest town with approximately 4,000 people (38.5 per cent of the district's population) and today remains the main commercial and administrative centre for the district. Reefton is next largest with approximately 1,100 people, and is a service town for extensive dairy farming in the area with other sources of employment including coal mining, gold mining and tourism. Karamea has approximately 650 people and supports a range of horticultural, dairying and tourism activities. Other townships each with less than one hundred people include Punakaiki, Granity, Inangahua Junction and Maruia.
37. In relation to place of work, *Appendix 4* shows that Buller District is the most self-contained of the three West Coast districts with 85 per cent of workers in the 2013 census identifying their place of work as Buller District with less than 2 per cent identifying their place of work as being in Grey District, the next highest work location. Very few people (less than 1 per cent) work in either Tasman District or Nelson City to the north.
38. In relation to location of shopping, *Appendix 5* shows that in the year ending July 2016, nearly 60 per cent of Buller residents' shopping by amount spent, and 65 per cent by transactions, took place in Buller District. The next highest location of shopping, by both amount spent and transactions, was in Christchurch City. This was followed by a slightly smaller amount of shopping, by both amount spent and transactions, taking place in the Nelson/Tasman area.
39. While Buller District is relatively self-contained in terms of shopping, further analysis shows that residents of some areas in the district, however, are more likely to shop in Grey District (more specifically Greymouth). In particular, Reefton residents in the year ending July 2016, undertook over twice as much of their shopping by both amount spent and transactions in Grey District compared to Buller District residents as a whole.

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 'Regional Economic Activity Report 2015', pp 66 to 69.

<sup>4</sup> This company does not cover all Buller District, with an area from Lyell south coming under Westpower.

40. The absence of strong functional connections with the Nelson/Tasman area is seen to reflect local geography and the resulting nature of road linkages to the north. State Highway 6 runs south from Nelson City crossing the Buller District boundary north of Inangahua and then it runs westwards to Westport located in the southern half of the district. As a result the northern area of Buller District has no direct road connection to the Nelson/Tasman area.

### **Local services**

41. Limited governmental and other public and community services are provided at the district level on the West Coast. Services provided in Buller, and primarily Westport, include: service centres for Work and Income and Heartland Services; a Tai Poutini Polytechnic campus; Buller REAP (rural education activities programme); police stations in Westport, Reefton, Granity and Karamea; and volunteer fire brigades in Westport, Waimangaroa, Granity, Little Wanganui (auxiliary), Karamea and Reefton. There is also a Buller Citizens Advice Bureau and Buller Community Development Co. Ltd, a community training company for youth and long term unemployed.
42. As noted in *Appendix 1*, schools play a significant role in parents' sense of belonging to a community. Buller District has a total of ten schools reflecting the existence of distinct local communities of interest. Westport has four of these schools, being three full primary schools (years 1 to 8) and one high school (years 9 to 15). Reefton and Karamea are two other communities with local schools with Reefton having one full primary school and one area school (years 1 to 15), and Karamea one area school. In addition, there are full primary schools in Granity and Maruia, and a contributing school (years 1 to 6) in Inangahua Junction.
43. In relation to health services, West Coast DHB divides Buller District into two 'regions': Buller and Reefton. Buller Health, an integrated health unit located in Westport, provides health services for the area from Punakaiki to Karamea, with local services including Karamea Medical Centre and Ngakawau Health Centre. Reefton Health Services provides services in conjunction with the Reefton Medical Centre for the wider Reefton area.
44. Westport has its own commercial port and airport with daily flights to and from Wellington.
45. Buller has a number of sports governing bodies further reflecting the degree of separation of the area from the remainder of the West Coast. These include separate Buller organisations for rugby, cricket, netball, hockey and basketball. Buller District is part of Sport Tasman whereas the other two West Coast districts come within the area of Sport Canterbury.

### **Local government services**

46. Buller District Council provides services to the community as a mix of both district-wide and local services reflecting efficiency and effectiveness considerations. The mix reflects the nature of the district being a relatively large area with a small population spread across a number of settlements in the district. In common with the other two West Coast districts, the small scattered population and limited rating base (7,533 rateable properties) given the amount of land in public ownership, raise ongoing sustainability issues for the council.
47. The services provided on a district-wide basis are:
- a. roading and urban development
  - b. regulatory services (animal and stock control, planning and consent functions, building control, compliance and enforcement, alcohol licensing, emergency management/civil defence, rural fire, environmental health)

- c. solid waste (collection, transfer and disposal including two active landfills at Karamea and Maruia, and management of closed landfills)
  - d. community services (grants and funding, bi-monthly newsletter to households and e-newsletter, district promotion and tourism, event tourism, business support).
48. The following services are provided on a scale appropriate to particular local communities:
- a. water supply (separate schemes at Westport/Carters Beach, Reefton, Little Wanganui, Mokihinui, Ngakawau-Hector, Waimangaroa, Punakaiki, Inangahua Junction, South Granity)
  - b. wastewater/sewerage (separate schemes at Westport, Little Wanganui, Reefton)
  - c. stormwater (piped system in Westport and open drain systems in Hector, Ngakawau, Seddonville, Granity, Waimangaroa, Westport, Carters Beach, Reefton)
  - d. libraries in Westport and Reefton with an internet service also available
  - e. amenities (local parks, reserves and sports facilities); public toilets in Westport, Reefton and Waimangaroa and assistance for facilities elsewhere; four cemeteries; housing for the elderly in Westport, Reefton and Karamea; NBS theatre in Westport and Reefton community centre and cinema; other properties and buildings at particular locations).

#### **Political dimensions of a Buller District community of interest**

49. As noted in *Part A*, the political dimension of communities of interest can be seen to represent a balance between the other two dimensions i.e. perceptual and functional. The district level also reflects a particular grouping of more local communities of interest with clear commonalities.
50. The balance of the perceptual and functional dimensions achieved in Buller District is assessed below by considering representation arrangements for communities of interest, council decision-making structures including any subsidiary bodies like community boards, hapū/iwi/Māori interests and the range of special interest groups in the district.
51. To the extent local government arrangements and structures are aligned with those of other organisations and interests in a district, including at the more local community level, cooperation and collaboration across agencies and interests is easier. This in turn helps strengthen communities and builds social cohesion with further benefits such as assisting the promotion of community resilience.<sup>5</sup> Resilience is important in all three West Coast districts given the impact of climate change and such risks as flooding and coastal erosion. There are also risks from earthquakes given the alpine fault runs through the region with Buller District also having some other active faults (as identified in GNS Science active fault database).

#### **Representation arrangements for communities of interest**

52. Buller District has had three groupings of communities of interest for electoral purposes (Seddon, Westport and Inangahua wards) since its constitution in 1989. These ward arrangements remain in place today.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Resilience' is defined by Dr Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, as "the capacity of any entity – an individual, a community, an organisation, or a natural system – to prepare for disruptions, to recover from shocks and stresses, and to adapt and grow from a disruptive experience". See Rodin, Judith (2015) *The Resilience Dividend: Being Strong in a World Where things Go Wrong*, amazon.com, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, <http://resiliencedividend.org/>

53. With the exception of two elections, where one ward was uncontested each time, there have been electoral contests in all three Buller wards since 1989. *Appendix 2* shows that voter turnout for Buller District elections has been consistently higher than the average for New Zealand districts since 1989.
54. While there was a significant drop in voter turnout in 2016, Buller’s ward arrangements may be seen, at least until recently, to have facilitated participation in electoral processes or at least to have not created particular barriers to participation. An important element in this are arrangements that electors are able to identify with as reflecting their own perceived communities of interest thereby assisting effective representation for these communities, a requirement of the Local Electoral Act 2001.
55. Current ward arrangements using Statistics NZ 2016 population estimates are as follows.

Ward	Population	No. of councillors per ward	Population per councillor	Deviation from district average population per councillor	% deviation from district average population per councillor
Seddon	1,660	2	830	-192	-18.79
Inangahua	2,010	2	1,005	-17	-1.66
Westport	6,550	6	1,092	+70	+6.85
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10,220</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1,022</b>		

56. As can be seen, the Seddon Ward now has significantly less population per councillor than the average for Buller District as a whole i.e. is over represented beyond the statutory +/-10 per cent fair representation requirement.<sup>6</sup> The Buller District Council will have to consider this as part of its next review of the district’s representation arrangements, prior to the 2019 local authority elections, so as to achieve fair representation of electors as well as effective representation for communities of interest as required by the Local Electoral Act.
57. In relation to the current wards as groupings of local communities of interest, the Inangahua Ward, as noted by the Local Government Commission in 2007, is different from the other two ward areas, being inland and surrounded by mountain ranges with access to the rest of the district only via State Highway 6 through the lower Buller Gorge.<sup>7</sup> Reefton, an hour’s drive from Westport, is the largest town in the ward with a number of services and facilities including two schools and a medical centre. Other smaller communities of interest are scattered throughout the ward including those based around local schools in Inangahua Junction and Maruia.
58. The Commission noted further in 2007 that while the outlying areas in the ward were likely to use the services and facilities available in Reefton, some residents were also seen as more likely to use particular services in Greymouth than in Westport. This continues to be the case for some shopping as shown in *Appendix 5*.

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<sup>6</sup> Section 19V(2) of the Local Electoral Act 2001 requires the population of each ward divided by the number of councillors for that ward to be no more than 10 per cent greater or smaller than the population of the district as a whole divided by the total number of councillors. However an amendment in 2013 now provides more flexibility in the application of this requirement on the basis that communities of interest should not be split between wards and communities of interest with few commonalities of interest should not be united within a ward.

<sup>7</sup> See Local Government Commission ‘Determination of representation arrangements to apply for the election of the Buller District Council to be held on 13 October 2007’, dated 1 September 2006

59. In relation to the Seddon and Westport wards, the Commission considered the position was not as clear cut and that the boundary between these two wards was “somewhat arbitrary”. However, given the then more strict interpretation of the +/-10 per cent fair representation requirement, the Commission endorsed the council’s proposal to retain these two wards as defined. This was based on the communities in Seddon Ward all being linked by State Highway 67 and the commonalities between the communities as coastal settlements.
60. A key issue in considering appropriate groupings of communities of interest is the degree of connection between different communities and particularly with what is identified as the centre or hub of that area. In this case the hub for the coastal part of the district is clearly the town of Westport.
61. As noted by the Commission in 2007, a number of the communities in the southern end of Seddon Ward have strong links with Westport given they are within a 35 minute drive of the town. The Commission considered most of the residents of these communities were likely to travel regularly to Westport for services and to meet their general day-to-day needs. This was in contrast to those living north of Karamea Bluff who were seen as likely to use services and facilities in Karamea and were less likely to travel to Westport (a one and a half hour drive from Karamea).
62. In the southern part of Seddon Ward, Granity has a full primary school with students then likely to attend Westport High School. Ngakawau has its own health centre with further services available in Westport. In line with the Commission’s view in 2007, these services and facilities suggest communities of interest in this part of the ward are more closely linked to Westport and as a result somewhat distinct from those in the northern part of the ward.
63. At the same time a reasonably distinct community of interest in the northern part of Seddon Ward is reflected in facilities and services such as an area school (years 1 to 15) and a medical centre based in Karamea, and separate Little Wanganui water and wastewater schemes. The area also has somewhat different connectivity characteristics with a degree of isolation from the rest of the ward reflected in lower levels of access to cellphones, but at the same time higher percentages of internet access.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the Karamea and Little Wanganui census area units (as defined by Statistics New Zealand) have slightly different ethnic profiles, particularly less Māori, and also lower deprivation levels compared to most of the remainder of Seddon Ward.<sup>9</sup>
64. The strength of connections between communities in the area south of Westport with Westport also requires some consideration. This is in light of suggestions that the area understood by some to comprise Punakaiki is now split between Buller and Grey districts. This may suggest a need to review the location of the boundary between Buller and Grey districts. However, no formal proposals for change have been received by the Commission.

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<sup>8</sup> The most recent relevant data available is provided in the Statistics New Zealand 2013 census data at: [http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-place.aspx?request\\_value=14643&parent\\_id=14642&tabname=&p=y&printall=true](http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-place.aspx?request_value=14643&parent_id=14642&tabname=&p=y&printall=true)

<sup>9</sup> See Atkinson, Salmond and Crampton (2014), NZDep 2013 Index of Deprivation which gives weighted scores, based on nine deprivation indicators, of ‘7’ for both the Karamea and Little Wanganui census area units (CAUs) compared, for example, to ‘8’ for the Mokihinui CAU and ‘9’ for both the Hector-Ngakawau and Granity CAUs.



### ***Council decision-making structures***

65. Buller District Council currently employs a committee structure, adopted at the last triennial election, to assist it to carry out its responsibilities. The Inangahua Community Board has been retained since 1989, as a subsidiary body, to represent the interests of the Inangahua Ward area and to advocate on the ward's behalf. No community boards have been established in other parts of the district. No specific delegations of decision-making power have been made to the Inangahua Community Board by the council.
66. The council has a number of council-controlled organisations and interests in other district organisations reinforcing the political dimension of communities of interest in Buller District. The council-controlled organisations are: Buller Holdings Ltd; Westreef Services Ltd; Buller Recreation Ltd; Westport Harbour Ltd and Tourism West Coast (jointly owned with other West Coast councils). Westport Airport is a joint venture between the council and the Crown. Organisations the council has an interest in include: Buller Health Trust which aims to assist in preserving public health and wellbeing in the district; Buller Arts and Recreation Trust developed to take a leadership role in developing funding opportunities and support for Buller community projects; and a number of domain boards which are considered to be council subcommittees elected to manage on a voluntary basis, with specific delegations, the reserves in their area.

### ***Hapū/iwi/Māori interests***

67. As described later under 'West Coast Region', there are two Ngāi Tahu rūnanga on the West Coast. The interests of one of these, Te Rūnanga O Ngāti Waewae, cover all of Buller District. Accordingly Buller District Council has established a relationship with this rūnanga which it states in its 2015/16 annual report (p. 3) "is continuing to strengthen as time progresses".

### ***Special interest groups***

68. There are a number of special interest groups in Buller District further reinforcing the political dimension of a distinct district community of interest. These groups include: the Buller Federation of the Women's Institute with three individual institutes in the district (Hector/Ngakawau, Waimangaroa, Westport); Westport Grey Power; Buller Lions Club; Westport Rotary; Buller Workingmen's Club; Westport RSA; Buller Conservation Group; Buller Safer Community Council.

### ***Conclusion***

69. Dating back to the provinces in the late nineteenth century, the Buller area has had an identity somewhat distinct from the remainder of the West Coast. This is the result of factors including geography, historical connections to the Nelson/Tasman area and the existence of a number of solely Buller-focussed organisational structures. Perceptions of a distinct district community of interest have been reinforced by a stable local government structure, initially comprising one borough and two county councils from the abolition of the provinces through until nationwide local government reforms over a century later in 1989. Since 1989, one district council has governed the area (Buller District Council).
70. Functional dimensions of a distinct Buller District community of interest today are reflected in an economy with a stronger reliance on mining than the other West Coast districts, and in the district being the most self-contained of the three districts in terms of place of work. The majority of shopping by Buller residents takes place within the district with the remainder spread across other areas both within and outside West Coast Region. In addition, a number of sporting organisations have Buller-based structures distinguishing them from their counterparts covering the remainder of the West Coast.

71. Westport has traditionally been and remains today the main commercial and administrative centre on which the district community of interest is based. Westport has its own commercial port and airport which serve the district.
72. While there are historical connections with the Nelson/Tasman area, there are no strong functional connections today in terms of the location of work or shopping. This is likely to be due to restricted roading links between the areas again reflecting the geography of the area.
73. Buller District also reflects a particular grouping of more local communities of interest *within* the district. Some of these communities, currently grouped into three wards, can be seen to be more distinct than others particularly in terms of geography and their proximity to and degree of connection with Westport.
74. The communities making up Inangahua Ward reflect a distinct local community of interest being a balance between a number of still smaller areas with which people identify, including two with their own local schools, and services provided to these areas from Reefton.
75. There are some functional connections between parts of Inangahua Ward and Greymouth (in neighbouring Grey District) as distinct from Westport, such as in shopping, which need to be acknowledged. However, the strength of these connections is not sufficient to warrant consideration of the transfer of all Inangahua Ward to Grey District which would be necessary given the distinct nature of the community of interest reflected by this ward.
76. Other local communities in the district have a degree of commonality, being more coastal in nature with varying degrees of connection with Westport. As with all communities of interest, the strength of this particular community of interest reduces the further one travels from Westport, and the closer one gets to its periphery/boundaries with neighbouring districts.
77. One reasonably distinct local community of interest exists in the northern part of the coastal area based on Karamea. This is an area with which residents identify and which is able to meet a number of the needs of residents for day-to-day services. While Westport is the nearest and most accessible town to meet the additional needs of residents, the Karamea/Little Wanganui area appears to have a degree of self-sufficiency including local water and wastewater schemes.
78. In the south of the coastal area, Punakaiki clearly has connections with Westport but its location close to the boundary with Grey District does raise some questions about the appropriate location of the district boundary. However, no evidence supporting a change or formal application for change has, to date, been presented to the Commission.
79. In terms of clause 11(5)(c) of Schedule 3 of the LGA, Buller District, as presently constituted, is seen to contain one or more distinct communities of interest. At the district level this can be seen as a balance between an area with which people clearly identify and over which a reasonable range of local government and other public services are provided. This balance is recognised in the jurisdiction of Buller District Council i.e. the political dimension of communities of interest. The political dimension is reinforced by a reasonable coincidence between the local government structure and the area of interest of a range of Buller special interest groups. This report has also identified two more local groupings of communities of interest with one based around Westport and the other around Reefton.

## GREY DISTRICT

### Evolution of district governance

80. Greymouth Borough was constituted in 1868 when the southern West Coast area became semi-autonomous from Canterbury Province. The adjacent Grey County was constituted soon after, on the abolition of the provinces, in 1876.
81. Grey County was subsequently divided with the constitution of Brunner Borough in 1887 and Runanga Borough in 1912. Cobden Town District was constituted in 1920, declared not to form part of Grey County in 1926, and later combined with Greymouth Borough in 1934. Brunner Borough was combined again with Grey County in 1970.
82. The local government structure which evolved in the area, ultimately comprising two boroughs and one county, remained in place until the nationwide local government reforms in 1989. The three local authorities were combined as part of these reforms to form the current Grey District (see map below). Greymouth Borough, Runanga Borough and Grey County were abolished as a result.
83. As previously noted, the Local Government Commission in 1988, in proposing the constitution of a Grey district, considered there were three distinctive communities of interest on the West Coast with one of these being the community, based largely on the Grey River Basin, that identified most strongly with Greymouth.
84. Within the new Grey District, the Commission considered there were four distinct groupings of more local communities of interest. It established five wards to reflect these as follows:
  - a. the rural areas in the northern parts of the Grey River Basin (Ahaura Ward)
  - b. the rural areas in the southern parts of the Grey River Basin extending eastward to include the Moana and Lake Brunner area (Moana Ward)
  - c. the coal mining area of Runanga (Runanga Ward)
  - d. the essentially urban areas comprising the townships of Cobden and Greymouth (divided into separate Cobden and Karoro wards).
85. While the Commission identified a district-wide community of interest based on Greymouth, it also “recognised the local needs of Runanga and its environs together with its physical separation from the Greymouth area”.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly the Commission’s final reorganisation scheme provided for a Runanga community board and service centre.
86. Grey District Council reduced the number of wards from five to four in 1998 and these groupings of communities of interest remain in place today (see below for details). The Runanga Community Board (later called Northern Ward Community Board) was abolished in 2007 although the Runanga service centre remains in place.

### Perceived Grey District community of interest

87. Like the other two West Coast districts, perceptions of a distinct Grey community of interest reflect firstly the geography and physical features of the area, as largely defined by coastline and mountain ranges and in this case by the Grey River Basin.

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<sup>10</sup> Local Government Commission, December 1988, *Draft reorganisation schemes for the West Coast Region*, Section D p. 9



88. Grey District is the smallest of the three West Coast districts by area, but it has the highest population (see *Appendix 2*). This relative compactness and population density is likely to further support perceptions of a distinct Grey District community of interest.
89. As noted, the Commission in 1988 considered that an appropriate local government structure for this area was one based on identification with the town of Greymouth. Today Greymouth remains the main centre of the district with all other townships being less than 1,000 people. However, the strength of the identification with Greymouth, as the basis of a perceived district community of interest, can be seen to reduce the further one travels from the town and the nearer one comes to the boundaries with neighbouring districts.
90. While there is a perceived degree of distinction and separateness of Buller District in the north from the remainder of the West Coast i.e. Grey and Westland districts (see above under 'Buller District'), there is not the same perceived degree of distinction and separateness between Grey District and Westland District to the south. This is likely to reflect, among other things, the significantly shorter distance and associated travel time between Greymouth and Hokitika (the main centre of Westland District) compared to between Greymouth and Westport. There are also historical links between the two areas dating back to provincial government in New Zealand in the late nineteenth century.
91. As noted below, there are also functional connections between Grey and Westland districts which are likely to mean a weaker sense of distinction and separateness held by the residents of these two districts. This may be reflected in fewer Grey District respondents in the Local Government Commission's 2016 questionnaire, attaching high importance to the retention of their own district council (51 per cent compared to 70 per cent of Buller respondents).
92. Grey has similar socio-demographic characteristics to Westland District (also in common with Buller District) in terms of projected population growth, age profiles and ethnicity.
93. There are similar characteristics across all three districts in terms of the large area in public ownership, being largely conservation estate including national parks, with the result that only a relatively small area in each district is able to be rated for local government purposes. Consequently there are issues in common across the three districts about the ongoing affordability for ratepayers of local government services and the sustainability of current local government structures.
94. The above factors help reinforce perceptions of a distinct and unique West Coast-wide community of interest. This includes perceptions about unfairness for West Coast residents given significant national interests in the area, imposed restrictions on activities like logging of native timber, and pressures on councils arising from the growth in visitor numbers.

## **Functional dimensions of a Grey District community of interest**

### ***Local economy***

95. Greymouth is the largest town on the West Coast, with a population around 6,000 people, and it is the commercial and administrative centre for the region. The 2015 regional economic activity report notes that Grey District has seen employment growth in administrative and support services (mainly employment services) and construction. It also notes that the district has a large share of employment in mining (5.1 per cent).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 'Regional Economic Activity Report 2015', pp 66 to 69.

96. In relation to place of work, *Appendix 4* shows that Grey District is relatively self-contained with 81 per cent of workers in the 2013 census identifying their place of work as being in Grey District. Very similar numbers, approximately 2.5 per cent, identified their place of work as being in either Buller or Westland districts, the next highest work locations.
97. In relation to location of shopping, *Appendix 5* shows that in the year ending July 2016, nearly 76 per cent of Grey residents' shopping by amount spent and 77 per cent by transactions, took place in Grey District. These are the highest proportions across the three districts of residents shopping in their home district, with the next highest location for Grey residents being Christchurch City.

#### **Local services**

98. As noted later under 'West Coast Region', the governmental services provided on the West Coast generally are based in Greymouth. These include health services (particularly hospital and aged care services) and a range of social welfare and community development services. In addition there is a police station in Greymouth and volunteer fire brigades in Greymouth as well as Blackball, Brunner, Cobden, Ngahere and Runanga.
99. In relation to education, Tai Poutini Polytechnic has its head office in Greymouth. The district has two high schools (years 9-15), one composite school (years 1 to 15) and eleven full primary schools (years 1 to 8). Given the important role schools play in parents' sense of belonging to a community, noted in *Appendix 1*, the location of these schools can be seen as indicators of distinct local communities of interest in Grey District. The two high schools are both in central Greymouth which is also the location of three of the full primary schools. Three further full primary schools are in the suburban areas of Greymouth: Blaketown, Cobden and Paroa. The other full primary schools are in Barrytown, Ahaura, Runanga, Dobson and Moana. The composite school is located at Lake Haupiri.
100. In relation to health services, West Coast DHB identifies a Grey 'region' which encompasses an area of Westland District including Hokitika as distinct from a South Westland 'region'. Grey Base Hospital is located in Greymouth and provides secondary level care for the district and the West Coast as a whole. Grey 'region' also includes a Rural Academic General Practice aiming to give effect to the DHB's vision of the West Coast becoming a centre of excellence for rural health. Greymouth Medical Centre/Grey Health, also located in Greymouth, is a large GP clinic (patient base close to 5,750 according to West Coast DHB website). In addition there is a Moana/Otira Health Clinic.
101. Greymouth is the base for a number of sports governing bodies covering both Grey and Westland districts i.e. excluding Buller District. These include the West Coast Rugby Union, West Coast Cricket Association, West Coast Hockey Association, West Coast Basketball Association. Some sports have a base in both Greymouth and Hokitika including netball.

#### **Local government services**

102. Despite covering a smaller area, Grey District Council, like the other two West Coast district councils, provides services to the community as a mix of both district-wide and local services reflecting efficiency and effectiveness considerations. The mix reflects the scattered nature of the population outside the wider Greymouth area. In common with the other West Coast districts, the scattered population and limited rating base (9,096 rateable properties) given the amount of land in public ownership, raise ongoing sustainability issues for the council.
103. The services provided on a district-wide basis are:

- a. roading and transport (roads, footpaths, bridges, culverts, bus shelters, road safety promotion, parking, aerodrome and port)
  - b. solid waste (collection, recycling, transfer, disposal including one landfill)
  - c. emergency management/civil defence
  - d. environmental services (district planning, building control, other regulation, health regulation, dog/stock control)
  - e. economic development.
104. The following services are provided on a scale appropriate to particular communities:
- a. water supply (separate schemes for the wider Greymouth area, Runanga/Dunollie/Rapahoe, Blackball, Taylorville/Dobson, Stillwater)
  - b. wastewater/sewerage (separate schemes for the wider Greymouth area, Karoro/South Beach/Paroa, Runanga/Dunollie, Moana, Blackball, Iveagh Bay)
  - c. stormwater (mostly in urban residential areas) and flood prevention
  - d. property and housing (118 housing units, residential and commercial leases, leased buildings, community services buildings, managing leases with Mawhera Inc)
  - e. community facilities (libraries in Greymouth and Runanga; swimming pools in Greymouth and Runanga; heritage, arts and culture; Westland Recreation Centre; civic centre; cemeteries; parks, playgrounds, tracks and open spaces; public toilets).
105. Reflecting the functional connections between the two districts, the Westland District council-controlled organisation Westroads, a general infrastructure services contractor, has a base in Greymouth.

#### **Political dimensions of a Grey District community of interest**

106. As noted in *Part A*, the political dimension of communities of interest can be seen to represent a balance between the other two dimensions i.e. perceptual and functional. The district level also reflects a particular grouping of more local communities of interest with clear commonalities.
107. The balance of the perceptual and functional dimensions achieved in Grey District is assessed below by considering representation arrangements for communities of interest, council decision-making structures including any subsidiary bodies like community boards, hapū/iwi/Māori interests and the range of special interest groups in the district.
108. To the extent local government arrangements and structures are aligned with those of other organisations and interests in the district, including at the more local community level, cooperation and collaboration across agencies and interests is easier. This in turn helps strengthen communities and builds social cohesion with further benefits such as assisting the promotion of community resilience.<sup>12</sup> Resilience is important in all three West Coast districts given the impact of climate change and such risks as flooding and coastal erosion. There are also risks from earthquakes given the alpine fault runs through the region with Grey District also having some other active faults (as identified in GNS Science active fault database).

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<sup>12</sup> 'Resilience' is defined by Dr Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, as "the capacity of any entity – an individual, a community, an organisation, or a natural system – to prepare for disruptions, to recover from shocks and stresses, and to adapt and grow from a disruptive experience". See Rodin, Judith (2015) *The Resilience Dividend: Being Strong in a World Where things Go Wrong*, amazon.com, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, <http://resiliencedividend.org/>

### Representation arrangements for communities of interest

109. As noted, Grey District initially had five groupings of local communities of interest for electoral purposes (Ahaura, Moana, Runanga, Cobden and Karoro wards). These ward arrangements remained in place until the 1998 elections.
110. In 1998 the Grey District Council reduced the number of wards from five to four by combining the Karoro and Cobden wards into a single urban-focussed Central Ward covering the wider Greymouth area. It also rearranged the rural wards by combining a large area of the Moana Ward with the Ahaura Ward (renamed Eastern Ward) and creating a new Southern Ward. At the same time it renamed the Runanga Ward the Northern Ward.
111. With one exception in 2007, at least one ward in Grey District has not had a contest at each of the elections held since the constitution of the district in 1989. *Appendix 2* shows that voter turnout at recent elections in Grey District has often been the lowest of the three West Coast districts and in two elections turnout was lower than the average for New Zealand districts.
112. While factors affecting voter turnout are inherently complex, these statistics suggest the council needs to consider carefully the effectiveness of current representation arrangements for communities of interest within the district with a view to encouraging higher levels of participation at local elections. An important element in this are arrangements that electors are able to identify with as reflecting their own perceived communities of interest thereby assisting effective representation for these communities, a requirement of the Local Electoral Act 2001.
113. Current ward arrangements using Statistics NZ 2016 population estimates are as follows.

Ward	Population	No. of councillors per ward	Population per councillor	Deviation from district average population per councillor	% deviation from district average population per councillor
Northern	1,630	1	1,630	-65	-3.83
Central	6,440	4	1,610	-85	-5.01
Eastern	3,370	2	1,685	-10	-0.59
Southern	2,120	1	2,120	+425	+25.07
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13,560</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1,695</b>		

114. As can be seen, the Southern Ward now has significantly more population per councillor than the average for Grey District as a whole i.e. is under represented beyond the +/-10 per cent fair representation requirement set out in the Local Electoral Act.<sup>13</sup> The Grey District Council will have to consider this as part of its next review of the district's representation arrangements, prior to the 2019 local authority elections, so as to achieve fair representation of electors as well as effective representation for communities of interest as required by the Local Electoral Act.

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<sup>13</sup> Section 19V(2) of the Local Electoral Act 2001 requires the population of each ward divided by the number of councillors for that ward to be no more than 10 per cent greater or smaller than the population of the district as a whole divided by the total number of councillors. However an amendment in 2013 now provides more flexibility in the application of this requirement on the basis that communities of interest should not be split between wards and communities of interest with few commonalities of interest should not be united within a ward.



115. The current four wards were established to reflect communities of interest in the urban area of the district i.e. Greymouth and surrounding suburban areas (Central Ward) and in the rural area by three groupings of rural communities of interest (Northern, Eastern and Southern wards). The extent these remain appropriate groupings of communities of interest, including the balance between the urban and rural areas, now needs to be considered further.
116. The Northern Ward, first established as Runanga Ward in 1989, is reasonably well defined by geographical features. The ward is bounded in the west, north and east by the coastline, Punakaiki River and by the Paparoa Range, while in the south it is bounded by the Grey River. Local settlements within the ward are linked by State Highway 6 which runs north to south through the ward, linking directly to Greymouth. The settlements of Runanga and Barrytown have full primary schools around which local communities of interest are based.
117. While geographical features may help reinforce perceptions of the ward as reflecting a distinct community of interest, there are, as the Local Government Commission noted in 2006, strong functional connections between Runanga and Greymouth in the neighbouring urban ward.<sup>14</sup> These connections reflect the fact that Runanga is only 8 kilometres from Greymouth and residents have to travel to Greymouth for most essential and other day-to-day services and for the use of community facilities.
118. Like the Northern Ward, the Eastern Ward is reasonably well defined, at least in the northern and eastern areas, by geographical features and particularly by the Grey River Basin including tributary rivers and lake catchment areas. State Highway 7 runs through the northern part of the ward, following a similar path to the Grey River, providing the main access route to Greymouth for settlements like Omoto, Kaiata, Dobson, Stillwater, Moana, Ngahere and Ahaura. Dobson, Ahaura and Moana have full primary schools while Moana also has a health clinic suggesting local communities of interest based around these facilities and services.
119. Again some settlements in this ward are relatively close to Greymouth, including Taylorville, Dobson and Kaiata which are an approximate 10-minute drive, or less, from Greymouth. Reflecting this proximity and close functional connections, the council is encouraging property owners in these settlements to connect to the Greymouth wastewater scheme.
120. Given its geographical features and access routes, residents in the more distant northern and eastern parts of the ward are likely to have a reasonably strong perceived community or communities of interest in the Eastern Ward. However in the south the boundary between this ward and the Southern Ward is defined in a number of areas by a line down the middle of a road serving as an access route for both wards. This will not assist residents to have a sense of identity with their ward in the areas concerned.
121. The Southern Ward is less distinct geographically than the other wards. The southern boundary of this ward is also the district boundary between Grey and Westland districts and is formed largely by the Taramakau River the course of which has changed somewhat since the two districts were constituted in 1989.
122. The Southern Ward combines a hilly rural inland area which has similar features to the Eastern Ward, with a flat coastal area with close functional connections to nearby Greymouth. The coastal area has the majority of the ward's population and comprises a number of settlements which the Grey District Council website refers to as "suburbs" of Greymouth namely Camerons, Gladstone and Paroa.

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<sup>14</sup> See Local Government Commission 'Determination of representation arrangements to apply for the election of the Grey District Council to be held on 13 October 2007', dated 2 May 2006.

123. The boundary between the Southern Ward and the primarily urban Central Ward now appears quite arbitrary in the vicinity of Karoro. This is reflected in the fact the wider Greymouth water supply scheme includes Karoro which is split between the two wards, and also South Beach and Paroa fully in the Southern Ward. The coastal area of the Southern Ward has the same very low level of deprivation as Karoro largely in the Central Ward.<sup>15</sup>
124. Functionally connected to the Greymouth area, the coastal area does not have a strong commonality with the inland rural part of the ward. The Karoro/South Beach/Paroro area, for example, has its own wastewater scheme distinct from the rest of the Southern Ward. Paroa has a full primary school around which a local community of interest is based.
125. The number of settlements in all three rural wards relatively close to Greymouth, but particularly those in the Southern Ward, does raise questions about the extent the rural wards may still be seen as groupings of distinct local communities of interest from both the perceptual and functional perspectives.
126. In this regard it is noted that the relationship between the rural and urban areas of Grey District was considered by the Local Government Commission in 2006 when the Grey District Council proposed the abolition of the Northern Ward Community Board (originally Runanga Community Board). The proposal was appealed to the Commission.
127. The Commission found in favour of the council that the board should be abolished. This was on the basis of the proximity of Runanga to Greymouth and associated functional connections between the two areas. This was seen to be a similar situation for residents of other townships in the district. In short, the need for further representation in the Northern Ward was no different or greater than the other rural wards with all townships generally well connected to Greymouth by the roading network and most within one hour's drive.
128. A key issue in considering appropriate groupings of communities of interest is the degree of connection between different communities and particularly with what is identified as the centre or hub of that area. In this case the hub of the district as a whole is clearly Greymouth, comprising just under half the total district population, with all other settlements in the district considerably smaller i.e. less than 1,000 people.
129. As expected, however, the strength of the connection with Greymouth does reduce the further one travels from the town. It follows that at the periphery of the district/boundaries with neighbouring districts competing connections can arise. This in turn leads to questions as to whether a particular area may be better located in the neighbouring district and vice versa with regard to areas in the neighbouring district.
130. In the case of the southern boundary of Grey District and the northern boundary of Westland District, formed largely by the Taramakau River, the Commission has not received or is aware of evidence suggesting a need for changes to this boundary. However in respect of the northern boundary of Grey District and the southern boundary of Buller District, there have been suggestions that the area understood to comprise Punakaiki is now split between the two districts and the location of the boundary may require some consideration. However, no proposal for change has been made to the Commission.

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<sup>15</sup> See Atkinson, Salmond and Crampton (2014), NZDep 2013 Index of Deprivation which gives weighted scores, based on nine deprivation indicators, of '1' for both the Karoro and South Beach-Camersons census area units (CAUs) compared to '3' for Marsden Hohonu CAU covering the rest of Southern Ward and part Eastern Ward.

### ***Council decision-making structures***

131. The current Grey District Council has adopted “an informal portfolio system” as an alternative to a committee system to assist the council to carry out its responsibilities. The council does, however, also have some specific purpose subcommittees. Under the portfolio system individual councillors, as portfolio holders, may make recommendations to the full council and act as spokespeople in their designated area of responsibility. As noted, the only community board in the district was abolished in 2007.
132. The council has no Grey District council-controlled organisations although it participates in West Coast-wide council organisations such as Tourism West Coast (jointly owned with other West Coast councils). Grey District Council has established a West Coast Recreation Centre Trust as a vehicle to secure funding for the new Westland Recreation Centre with the objective of the centre being fully funded by external grants, donations and sponsorship.

### ***Hapū/iwi/Māori interests***

133. As described later under ‘West Coast Region’, there are two Ngāi Tahu rūnanga on the West Coast. The interests of one of these, Te Rūnanga O Ngāti Waewae, cover all of Grey District. In light of this, Grey District Council notes in its current local governance statement that it is in the process of developing a memorandum of understanding with this rūnanga that “will put its interaction with the rūnanga on a formal footing”.

### ***Special interest groups***

134. There are a number of special interest groups in Grey reinforcing the political dimension of a distinct district community of interest. These groups include: the West Coast Federation of Women’s Institute (six individual institutes in Arorangi, Blackball, Blaketown, Kaiata, Paroa, Runanga), Greymouth Rotary Club, two Lions clubs (Greymouth and Riverside), Greymouth Grey Power, Greymouth RSA, Greymouth Senior Citizens & Beneficiaries Association, four Workingmen’s clubs (Blackball, Brunner, Greymouth, Runanga), Runanga Area Association.

### ***Conclusion***

135. Like the other two West Coast districts, Grey has a long established identity dating back to the nineteenth century. This is largely the result of geography and physical features particularly the coastline, mountain ranges and the Grey River Basin.
136. Today Grey District is the smallest of the three West Coast districts by area but with the largest population, suggesting this relative compactness and population density may translate into reasonably strong perceptions of a distinct district community of interest held by residents of the area.
137. This identity, however, has traditionally been and remains today more connected to its southern neighbour Westland than to Buller in the north. The combined Grey-Westland area south of the Grey River was initially part of Canterbury Province and then became semi-autonomous for a short time before the abolition of the provinces in 1876. The Buller area on the other hand was at this time part of the Nelson Province. Today different anniversary days, reflecting the two different historical provinces, are commemorated.
138. Today, there are a number of functional connections between Grey and Westland helping to reinforce a degree of ‘West Coast identity’ distinct from Buller. Given the length of Westland District, some 400 kilometres from north to south, these functional connections are stronger with the northern part of Westland District including its main town of Hokitika.

139. As the largest town on the West Coast, Greymouth is the commercial and administrative centre for both the district and the region as a whole, providing a range of services for residents of the district and those outside the district. Accordingly Grey District is relatively self-contained in terms of location of work and shopping. At the same time a comparatively high proportion of shopping by Westland residents takes place in Greymouth, and relatively more Westland residents work in Greymouth compared to Buller residents. While Buller has its own commercial airport, Grey relies on the service provided out of Hokitika in Westland District.
140. Other functional connections between Grey and Westland districts include special interest groups and sporting organisations covering both districts and in many cases named as 'West Coast' organisations and groups. These include West Coast Rugby Union, West Coast Cricket Association, West Coast Hockey Association and West Coast Basketball Association. The West Coast DHB identifies a Grey 'region' including Hokitika and the northern part of Westland District, distinct from a South Westland 'region'. In addition, the operation of the Westland District Council's council-controlled organisation Westroads also covers Grey District.
141. As with all communities of interest, the strength of the Grey District community of interest reduces the further one travels from Greymouth, and the closer one gets to its periphery/ boundaries with neighbouring districts. Accordingly while there is a distinct Grey District community of interest, the clarity of this distinction does diminish somewhat at its periphery in the north and the south.
142. The location of the northern boundary with Buller District, formed by the course of the Punakaiki River as it was in 1989, has been questioned by some although no formal proposals for changing the district boundary have been received by the Commission. While in the south, the boundary between Grey and Westland districts is also largely formed by the course of a river, the Taramakau River, as it was in 1989 which today provides more of a visual separation than a real physical one.
143. Grey District also reflects a particular grouping of more local communities of interest *within* the district. Some of these communities, currently grouped into four wards, can be seen to be more distinct than others, particularly in terms of geography and their proximity to and degree of connection with Greymouth.
144. The Central Ward can be seen to reflect a distinct community of interest based on urban Greymouth although the location of its boundaries needs further consideration. This should include the extent of commonalities in community of interest between this area and certain small communities in relatively close proximity to Greymouth but currently located in adjacent predominantly rural wards. In relation to the three rural wards, the boundary between the Eastern and Southern wards is the least distinct dividing inland rural areas in some cases down the middle of roads.
145. In terms of clause 11(5)(c) of Schedule 3 of the LGA, Grey District as presently constituted, is seen to contain one or more distinct communities of interest. At the district level this can be seen to be a balance between an area with which people identify and over which a reasonable range of local government and other public services are provided. This balance is recognised in the jurisdiction of Grey District Council i.e. the political dimension of communities of interest. Connections to Westland District and particularly its northern area, however, mean the degree of distinction of a Grey District community of interest is not as high as that in relation to Buller District.

## WESTLAND DISTRICT

### Evolution of district governance

146. The town of Hokitika was first declared to be a municipal district in 1866, while part of Canterbury Province, was formally constituted with defined boundaries in 1867, and was then incorporated in 1868. The adjacent Westland County was constituted, on the abolition of the provinces, in 1876.
147. Soon after its constitution, Westland County was divided with the constitution of Kumara Borough in 1877 and Ross Borough in 1878. The county and boroughs were subsequently reunited (Kumara in 1969 and Ross in 1972).
148. The local government structure which evolved in the area, ultimately comprising one borough and one county, remained in place until the nationwide local government reforms in 1989. The two local authorities were combined as part of these reforms to form the current Westland District Council subject to a small boundary adjustment in the south to make the district boundaries coterminous with regional boundaries in the area (see map below). Hokitika Borough and Westland County were consequently abolished.
149. As previously noted, the Local Government Commission in 1988, in proposing the constitution of a Westland district, considered there were three distinctive communities of interest on the West Coast with one of these being the community that identified most strongly with Hokitika.
150. Within the new Westland District, the Commission considered there were four distinct groupings of more local communities of interest. It established four wards to reflect these as follows:
  - a. the area lying between the Taramakau and Arahura rivers (Northern Ward)
  - b. the area comprising the existing Hokitika Borough and environs (Hokitika Ward)
  - c. the area comprising Kaniere, the more closely settled rural areas of Kowhitirangi and Kokatahi extending south to include the township of Ross (Central Ward)
  - d. the area lying between Mikonui River and Jacksons Bay in the far south (Southern Ward).
151. Westland District Council reduced the number of wards from four to three 1992 (see below for details) and these remain in place today.

### Perceived Westland District community of interest

152. Like the other two West Coast districts, perceptions of a distinct Westland community of interest reflect firstly the geography and physical features of the area, as largely defined by the coastline and mountain ranges and, also in this case, identification with particular features that have become notable tourist attractions such as two renowned glaciers in the more remote southern part of the district. Perceptions have also traditionally reflected what the Commission in 1988 saw as a strong community of interest between the very small communities to the south and Hokitika which provided most of their servicing needs.
153. As shown in *Appendix 2*, Westland District is the largest of the three West Coast districts by area, and the second largest district in the country, stretching some 400 kilometres from north to south. But with the smallest population of the three districts, it is also the most sparsely populated. This is likely to reinforce a degree of distinction and separateness in the district and particularly in the southern area.



154. The main centre of population for the district (Hokitika) is relatively close to the district's northern boundary with Grey District and only 38.9 km and 32 minutes travel time from Greymouth the main centre of Grey District.
155. As with the boundary between Grey and Buller districts further to the north, the boundary between Westland and Grey districts is broadly defined by a river i.e. Taramakau River. The topography of the surrounding area, however, means the river provides more of a visual separation than a physical one. As a result of these factors and also historical connections between Westland and Grey, there are likely to be weaker perceptions of distinction and separateness between the two districts compared to those between Grey and Buller districts.
156. Westland District does share similar socio-demographic characteristics with both the other two West Coast districts in terms of population projections, age and ethnicity profiles compared to national averages.
157. In addition, Westland District shares the common characteristic of a large proportion of its area being in public ownership, being largely conservation estate and national parks. This results in only 12 per cent of the district being able to be rated for local government purposes leading in turn to questions about ongoing affordability for ratepayers of local government services and the sustainability of current local government structures.
158. The above factors help reinforce perceptions of a distinct and unique West Coast-wide community of interest. This includes perceptions about unfairness for West Coast residents given significant national interests in the area, imposed restrictions on activities like logging of native timber, and pressures on councils arising from the growth in visitor numbers.

### **Functional dimensions of a Westland District community of interest**

#### ***Local economy***

159. As noted below under 'West Coast Region', there are distinctions between the respective district economies. The Westland economy has a strong dairy farming sector with Westland Milk Products, based in Hokitika, being the district's largest employer with in excess of 350 suppliers throughout the region. Tourism is also a large contributor to the local economy with attractions including Fox and Franz Josef glaciers and events such as the Hokitika Wildfoods Festival. Mining and forestry/logging are also significant activities in Westland.
160. Today Hokitika remains the main commercial and administrative centre of the district with a population of 3,447, with all other townships much smaller (Kumara 309, Ross 297, Hari Hari 330, Whataroa 285, Franz Josef Glacier Waiau 441, Fox Glacier 306 and Haast 240).
161. In relation to place of work, *Appendix 4* shows that 77 per cent of Westland residents in the 2013 census identified their place of work as being in their home district of Westland. This is the lowest proportion across the three West Coast districts. At the same time, 10 per cent of Westland residents identified their place of work as being in Grey District, significantly higher than the less than two per cent of Buller residents who worked in Grey District.
162. Likewise in relation to location of shopping, Westland District is more connected to Grey District than is Buller District. *Appendix 5* shows in the year ending July 2016, 57 per cent of Westland residents' shopping in terms of amount spent and 65 per cent of transactions, took place in Westland District. The next highest location of shopping by Westland residents' in terms of amount spent took place in Grey District (18 per cent). This is compared to approximately 12 per cent of Buller residents. In terms of transactions, approximately 14 per cent of Westland residents' shopping took place both in Grey District and in Christchurch.

163. Haast is the district's southernmost settlement on State Highway 6 and is closer to the towns of Wanaka and Queenstown in neighbouring Queenstown Lakes District than it is to Hokitika. However, both *Appendix 4* and *Appendix 5* show that very few people in Westland District either work (0.13 per cent) or shop (3.89 percent by amount spent and 3.49 per cent by transactions) across the district boundary. This may reflect in part the geography of the area and associated strength of distinct local community of interest with Hokitika remaining the main servicing centre for the district including for the more remote southern area.

### *Local services*

164. As noted below under 'West Coast Region', the governmental services provided on the West Coast generally have an office in Greymouth. However a few governmental and community services do have a presence in Hokitika such as a 'Heartland Services' service centre and Westland REAP (rural education activities programme). In addition, there are police stations in Hokitika, Ross and Haast; and volunteer fire brigades in Hokitika as well as Kumara, Harihari, Franz Josef Glacier (auxiliary) and Fox Glacier.

165. In relation to education, there are twelve schools across the district. Given the important role schools play in parents' sense of belonging to a community, noted in *Appendix 1*, the location of these schools can be seen as indicators of particular local communities of interest in Westland District. In central Hokitika there is one full primary school (years 1 to 8), one contributing school (years 1 to 6) and one high school (years 9 to 15), while in relatively close proximity there are two further contributing schools (Kaniere, Kokatahi-Kowhitirangi). Elsewhere across the district there are five full primary schools (Kumara, Whateroa, Franz Josef Glacier, Fox Glacier, Haast), one contributing school (Ross) and South Westland Area School (years 1 to 15, in Hari Hari).

166. In relation to health services, West Coast DHB divides Westland District in two. It identifies a Grey 'region' including Hokitika and the northern part of the district, and a South Westland 'region' which covers clinics in Hari Hari, Whateroa, Franz Josef Glacier, Fox Glacier and Haast.

167. Hokitika Airport which also serves Grey District, has up to two flights a day to and from Christchurch.

168. As noted under 'Grey District', Greymouth is the location of a number of 'West Coast' sports governing bodies covering both Grey and Westland districts (rugby, cricket, hockey and basketball). However a few sports, such as netball, do also have a base in Hokitika.

### *Local government services*

169. Like the other two West Coast district councils, Westland District Council provides services to the community as a mix of both district-wide and local services reflecting efficiency and effectiveness considerations. The mix reflects the size of the district and scattered nature of the population. In common with the other two districts, the scattered population and limited rating base (7,298 rateable properties) given the amount of land in public ownership, raise ongoing sustainability issues for the council.

170. The services provided on a district-wide basis are:

- a. planning and regulatory services (inspections and compliance in relation to building, environmental health, liquor, noise, onsite effluent disposal; resource management; emergency management/civil defence/rural fire; animal control)



- b. transportation (roading network including culverts, signs, barriers, bridges, footpaths, streetlighting)
  - c. solid waste (collection, transfer and disposal including 2 operating landfills).
171. The following services are provided on a scale appropriate to particular communities:
- a. water supply (7 separate treated supply systems in Hokitika, Ross, Franz Josef, Fox Glacier, Hari Hari, Whateoa, Haast and 2 untreated supply systems in Kumara and Arahura)
  - b. wastewater (4 separate systems in Hokitika, Fox Glacier, Franz Josef, Haast)
  - c. stormwater (Hokitika reticulated system, roadside drainage to rest of townships)
  - d. community services (community development; community halls; townships development fund and improvement projects)
  - e. leisure services and facilities (cemeteries; elderly housing with 42 units in Hokitika and 4 in Ross; Hokitika Museum; Hokitika wildfoods festival; i-site; land and buildings; parks and reserves; public toilets; swimming pools in Hokitika and Ross; West Coast wilderness trail; public library including 8 voluntary run libraries).
172. Reflecting the functional connections between the two districts, the Westland District council-controlled organisation Westroads, a general infrastructure services contractor, also has a base in Greymouth.

#### **Political dimensions of a Westland District community of interest**

173. As noted in *Part A*, the political dimension of communities of interest can be seen to represent a balance between the other two dimensions i.e. perceptual and functional. The district level also reflects a particular grouping of more local communities of interest with clear commonalities.
174. The balance of the perceptual and functional dimensions achieved in Westland District is assessed below by considering representation arrangements for communities of interest, council decision-making structures including any subsidiary bodies like community boards, hapū/iwi/Māori interests and the range of special interest groups in the district.
175. To the extent local government arrangements and structures are aligned with those of other organisations and interests in the district, including at the more local community level, cooperation and collaboration across agencies and interests is easier. This in turn helps strengthen communities and builds social cohesion with further benefits such as assisting the promotion of community resilience.<sup>16</sup> Resilience is important in all three West Coast districts given the impact of climate change and such risks as flooding and coastal erosion. There are also risks from earthquakes given the alpine fault runs through the region with Westland District also having other active faults (as identified in GNS Science active fault database).

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<sup>16</sup> 'Resilience' is defined by Dr Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, as "the capacity of any entity – an individual, a community, an organisation, or a natural system – to prepare for disruptions, to recover from shocks and stresses, and to adapt and grow from a disruptive experience". See Rodin, Judith (2015) *The Resilience Dividend: Being Strong in a World Where things Go Wrong*, amazon.com, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, <http://resiliencedividend.org/>

### *Representation arrangements for communities of interest*

176. Westland District initially had four groupings of local communities of interest for electoral purposes (Northern, Hokitika, Central and Southern wards). These ward arrangements were changed in 1992.
177. In 1992 the Westland District Council reduced the number of wards from four to three, by combining the former Northern and Central wards. The revised wards comprised a new combined Northern Ward covering the rural area of the district north of the Mikonui River; Hokitika Ward covering the urban area of Hokitika and some adjacent areas; and Southern Ward covering the large area south of the Mikonui River including the more remote tourism dominated areas. These ward arrangements remain in place today.
178. With two exceptions, when one ward was uncontested each time, there have been contests in each ward at all elections held since the constitution of Westland District in 1989. *Appendix 2* shows that voter turnout in Westland District has been higher than the New Zealand average for districts in each election since 1989 and close to that achieved by Buller District, the best performing of the three West Coast districts, particularly in more recent elections.
179. These statistics suggest that generally representation arrangements, to date, have facilitated participation in electoral processes or at least have not created particular barriers to participation. An important element in this are arrangements that electors are able to identify with as reflecting their own perceived communities of interest thereby assisting effective representation for these communities, a requirement of the Local Electoral Act 2001.
180. Current ward arrangements Statistics NZ 2016 population estimates are as follows.

Ward	Population	No. of councillors per ward	Population per councillor	Deviation from district average population per councillor	% deviation from district average population per councillor
Northern	2,840	3	947	-148	-13.52
Hokitika	3,870	3	1,290	+195	+17.81
Southern	2,050	2	1,025	-70	-6.39
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,760</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1,095</b>		

181. As can be seen, Hokitika Ward now has more population per councillor, and Northern Ward less population per councillor, than the average for Westland District as a whole. In other words, Hokitika Ward is under-represented and Northern Ward over-represented beyond the +/-10 per cent fair representation requirement set out in the Local Electoral Act.<sup>17</sup> The Westland District Council will have to consider this as part of its next review of the district's representation arrangements, prior to the next local authority elections in 2019, so as to achieve both fair representation of electors and effective representation for communities of interest as required by the Local Electoral Act.

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<sup>17</sup> Section 19V(2) of the Local Electoral Act 2001 requires the population of each ward divided by the number of councillors for that ward to be no more than 10 per cent greater or smaller than the population of the district as a whole divided by the total number of councillors. However an amendment in 2013 now provides more flexibility in the application of this requirement on the basis that communities of interest should not be split between wards and communities of interest with few commonalities of interest should not be united within a ward.

182. The council established the current three wards in 1992 to reflect, firstly, the size of the district from north to south with its increasing degree of remoteness the further south one travels. The wards were also to reflect a distinction between the one main urban area (Hokitika) and the large rural area.
183. In addition to the size of the rural area and increasing remoteness towards the south, its division in two can be seen to reflect some demographic differences and differing economic interests in the two areas. The Mikonui River provides a clear visual boundary between the two rural wards.
184. The northern area, including the Hokitika Ward, has reasonably high functional connections with Grey District particularly in terms of location of work, shopping and sporting connections. On the other hand, the southern area has particular interests centred on the promotion of local tourist features and activities. In addition the tourist dominated areas, particularly the Franz Josef Glacier and Fox Glacier census area units (as defined by Statistics New Zealand), have slightly different demographic profiles than other areas including significantly fewer people over the age of 65 and more residents born overseas.
185. As a result of these economic and demographic characteristics, coupled with the geography and physical features of the rural area, a number of distinct local communities of interest can be identified in the two rural wards. In the Northern Ward, distinct communities of interest include those where schools are located in Kumara, Kokatahi-Kowhitirangi and Ross. In the large Southern Ward distinct communities of interest include Hari Hari, Whateroa, Franz Josef Glacier, Fox Glacier and Haast where schools and health clinics are also located.
186. In contrast to the two rural wards, the Hokitika Ward is primarily urban in nature although it does include some adjoining rural areas. The core urban area, defined by the Hokitika Urban census area unit (CAU), comprises the vast bulk of the ward's population and has a significantly higher deprivation level than the adjoining areas and higher than other CAUs across the district.<sup>18</sup> The Hokitika Urban CAU also has the highest percentage of the population over the age of 65 across in the district.
187. A key issue in considering appropriate groupings of communities of interest is the degree of connection between different communities of interest and particularly with what is identified as the centre or hub of the area. In this case the hub of the district clearly remains Hokitika with all other settlements considerably smaller i.e. less than 500 people.
188. As expected, the strength of the connection with Hokitika reduces the further one travels from the town. It follows that at the periphery of the district/boundaries with neighbouring districts, competing connections can arise. This can lead to questions as to whether a particular area may be better located in the neighbouring district and vice versa with particular areas in the neighbouring district.
189. In respect of the southern boundary of Westland District, while Wanaka is closer than Hokitika for many residents of the southern area of Westland there are no strong functional connections across the district boundary. This reflects the strength of the local community of interest and particularly the nature of the southern district/regional boundary which runs through mountainous areas including Mount Aspiring National Park. The only cross-boundary connection is via State Highway 6 to neighbouring Queenstown-Lakes District.

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<sup>18</sup> See Atkinson, Salmond and Crampton (2014), NZDep 2013 Index of Deprivation which gives weighted scores, based on nine deprivation indicators, of '7' for the Hokitika Urban census area units (CAUs) compared to '3' for the Kaniere CAU and '4' for the Hokitika Rural CAU part of which is in Hokitika Ward.

190. The northern boundary with Grey District is formed largely by the Taramakau River. While there are functional connections across this boundary, also generally via State Highway 6, the Commission has not received or is aware of evidence relating to the actual location of the boundary.

#### ***Council decision-making structures***

191. Westland District Council currently has one committee, the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, comprising all elected members, to assist the council to carry out its responsibilities. Westland District does not have any community boards.
192. The council has a number of council-controlled organisations and interests in other organisations which further reflect the political dimension of communities of interest in Westland District. The council-controlled organisations are: Westland Holdings which provides the governance link between the council and its trading entities; Westland Properties; Westroads (also with a base in Grey District); Hokitika Airport and Tourism West Coast (jointly owned with other West Coast councils).<sup>19</sup> Organisations that the council has an interest in include: Westland Wilderness Trust and the Safer Community Coalition.

#### ***Hapū/iwi/Māori interests***

193. As described below under 'West Coast Region', there are two Ngāi Tahu rūnanga on the West Coast. The interests of one of these, Makaawhio, cover all of Westland District with these interests also overlapping with those of Ngāti Waewae in the area between Hokitika and Hari Hari. Westland District Council recognises these interests and notes in its 2015-25 long term plan (p. 37) its commitment to consultation and engagement with Māori and particularly mana whenua (Poutini Ngāi Tahu – Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae).

#### ***Special interest groups***

194. There are a number of special interest groups in Westland District reinforcing the political dimension of communities of interest in Westland District. These groups include: Enterprise Hokitika, Haast Promotions Group, Westland Ratepayers and Residents Association, the South Westland Federation of the Women's Institute (three individual institutes in Harihari, Kokatahi/ Kowhitirangi and Three Mile/Arahura Pa), Hokitika Rotary, two Lions Clubs (Hokitika and Harihari South Westland), Hokitika Grey Power, two RSAs (Hokitika Westland and Harihari South Westland).
195. In addition, Westland District has a network of community associations covering local communities within the district: Kumara Residents Trust, Kokatahi Kowhitirangi Community Committee, Ross Community Association, Hari Hari Community Association, Whateroa Community Association, Okarito Community Association, Franz Josef Community Forum, and Fox Glacier Community Development Society.

#### **Conclusion**

196. Like the other two West Coast districts, Westland has a long established identity dating back to the nineteenth century. This is largely the result of geography and physical features particularly the coastline and mountain ranges which clearly define much of the district.

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<sup>19</sup> These were the council-controlled organisations identified in Westland District Council's 2015/16 annual report. Since that time the council has reviewed the structure of some of these organisations and made several changes.

197. The Westland identity, however, has traditionally been and remains today somewhat connected to Grey District in the north. This commenced when the combined Grey-Westland area south of the Grey River was initially part of Canterbury Province and then became semi-autonomous for a short time before the abolition of the provinces in 1876.
198. Today there are a number of functional connections, particularly in the northern area, with Grey District including location of work and shopping, common 'West Coast' organisations (excluding Buller) for a number of sports bodies and other interest groups, and also one airport in Hokitika serving both districts. In addition, Westland District Council's council-controlled organisation, 'Westroads', has a base in Grey District.
199. Together the historical ties and current functional connections between Westland and Grey can be seen as reinforcing a 'West Coast identity' i.e. Westland and Grey, distinct from the Buller area.
200. As with all communities of interest, the strength of the Westland District community of interest reduces the further one travels from its hub of Hokitika. A more local sense of belonging and identity is particularly likely in parts of Westland District given its size and increasing remoteness the further south one travels.
201. A more local sense of identity and belonging in relation to the southern area also reflects differing economic interests and in particular the local focus on tourism. In addition there are a number of organisational structures dividing the district and identifying the southern part of the district separately i.e. as 'South Westland' including West Coast DHB, the Women's Institute, Lions clubs and RSAs.
202. Given the nature of the district, Westland District can clearly be seen to reflect groupings of local communities of interest *within* the district. These communities, currently grouped into three wards, are all reasonably distinct reflecting the size and geography of the district, economic interests and the settlement patterns of the district's small scattered population.
203. The Hokitika Ward reflects a distinct community of interest based on urban Hokitika and its environs, although its current boundaries reflecting the balance between urban and rural interests do require some consideration. The degree of distinction includes a higher deprivation level and slightly different demographic profile compared to the two rural wards.
204. Both the Northern and Southern wards have a rural focus with the latter also including areas with a strong tourism interests. As such both can be seen to reflect groupings of reasonably distinct local communities of interest.
205. In terms of clause 11(5)(c) of Schedule 3 of the LGA, Westland District as presently constituted is seen to contain one or more distinct communities of interest. At the district level this can be seen to be a balance between an area with which people identify and over which a reasonable range of local government and other public services are provided. This balance is recognised by the jurisdiction of the Westland District Council i.e. the political dimension of communities of interest. However given its size, increasing degree of remoteness in the south and connections to Grey District, Westland District also has groupings of distinct local communities of interest based in the north and the south of the district.

## WEST COAST REGION

### Evolution of regional governance

#### *Short-lived provincial government and its replacement*

206. From 1853 to 1876 New Zealand was divided firstly into six and subsequently ten provinces, with each province having its own legislature (a directly elected provincial council) and also a directly elected superintendent. Initially the area of the West Coast was divided between the Canterbury and Nelson provinces.
207. To begin with the Westland area was part of the Canterbury Province, with Hokitika declared a municipal district in 1866. As noted in the Hocken Bulletin, the discovery of gold, however, soon provided the impetus towards Westland's independence from Canterbury.<sup>20</sup> In 1868 the area between Grey River in the north and Awarua River in the south became semi-autonomous with the Governor, advised by the council, exercising the powers of a provincial government. The area then became autonomous as Westland Province, from 1873 to 1876.
208. The northern area (Buller and the area north of Grey River) was included in Nelson Province, which initially covered all the top of the South Island, and remained part of this province until the provinces were abolished in 1876.
209. On their abolition, the provinces were replaced by a raft of boroughs and counties the number of which quickly multiplied. On the West Coast, in addition to the boroughs of Westport, Greymouth and Hokitika all previously constituted, the counties of Buller, Grey, Inangahua and Westland were constituted at this time. Subsequently the following further boroughs and town districts were separated from their surrounding county areas: Brunner Borough (1887), Cobden Town District (1920), Kumara Borough (1877), Ross Borough (1878) and Runanga Borough (1912).
210. Given the small scale of the local authorities (boroughs and counties) and their limited functions, special purpose authorities were necessary to carry out other functions and these also grew significantly across New Zealand over the course of the twentieth century. These authorities initially included local roads boards, retained alongside the new local authorities following the abolition of the provinces, which were responsible for most road construction and maintenance.<sup>21</sup> In addition, harbour boards were established around the same time on the West Coast at Westport, Greymouth and Hokitika. In the twentieth century, catchment boards were set up under the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941 including a Westland Catchment Board in 1945. The primary purpose of these boards was to control flooding through the management of rivers and soil erosion.<sup>22</sup>
211. At the time of the establishment of West Coast Regional Council in 1989, the number of local authorities, including special purpose authorities, had grown to the extent that a total of 41 authorities needed to be abolished on the coast. In addition to eight territorial authorities and a united council, these included a catchment/regional water board, a harbour board, four noxious plants authorities, a pest destruction board and 25 reserves boards.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Friends of the Hocken Collections, Bulletin Number 31: March 2000

<sup>21</sup> Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, Story: Roads p. 5

<sup>22</sup> <https://envirohistorynz.com/2010/04/17/a-short-history-of-regional-government-in-nz>

<sup>23</sup> Local Government Commission, June 1989, *Final reorganisation scheme for the West Coast Region*, Section B p. 29, Wellington

### *The need for regional coordination*

212. Given the small scale and disparate nature of the local government structures, the need for regional coordination of functions became apparent as the twentieth century wore on. This finally resulted, in the late 1970s, in the establishment of united councils in most parts of the country comprising appointees from each of the territorial authorities in the region concerned.<sup>24</sup> These councils were responsible primarily for regional planning and civil defence on a more coordinated regional basis.
213. A West Coast united council was established in November 1978 covering the areas of Buller County, Westport Borough, Inangahua County, Grey County, Runanga Borough, Greymouth Borough, Westland County and Hokitika Borough. The council comprised a total of 14 members appointed from the constituent county and borough councils. Grey County Council was designated the administering authority for the council.

### *Constitution of West Coast Regional Council*

214. As bodies comprising members appointed from and representing the different parts of the combined area, united councils proved not to be an effective means of addressing issues of growing regional concern such as environmental management and land transport planning. Accordingly, as part of the nationwide local government reforms of the late 1980s, united councils were replaced with directly elected regional councils in 13 areas across the country including the West Coast.
215. In considering local government structural options for the West Coast at this time, the Local Government Commission initially identified decisions relating to the Buller River catchment as very important given the catchment was a major geographic and economic resource needing to be managed comprehensively. This resulted in the consideration of a range of possible regional options covering not just the West Coast but also the Nelson and Marlborough areas as well as Canterbury.<sup>25</sup>
216. While the Commission was concerned that regional councils had the necessary resources and technical capacity to carry out regional functions efficiently, it was also concerned there was sufficient public support for, and identification with, the finally identified regional areas. On this basis the Commission determined there would be a separate West Coast region covering the new districts of Buller, Grey and Westland. In order to provide effective management of the Buller River catchment, the region also included the Murchison area though this was part of a new Tasman District in a separate Nelson-Marlborough region.
217. Of all the neighbouring areas in the top of the South Island, the Commission saw the West Coast as having the strongest case to stand alone as a separate region. This was firstly on the basis of it not having a strong shared community of interest with Nelson. The Commission's conclusion reflected factors including the length of any such combined West Coast-Nelson region creating real communication and administrative problems; and markedly different physical environments demanding different approaches to the management of key resources such as soil and water, and the coastline.

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<sup>24</sup> In two areas, Auckland and Wellington, a directly elected regional authority/council was established rather than a united council.

<sup>25</sup> Local Government Commission, December 1988, *Draft reorganisation schemes for the West Coast Region*, Section D pp. 3-7, Wellington

218. The Commission also acknowledged suggestions that, with the possible exception of the Buller area, the West Coast had more in common with Canterbury than with Nelson. However it considered that the standalone strength of a Canterbury region and the strength of the community of interest on the West Coast indicated that agreement on the formation of a combined West Coast/Canterbury region would be unlikely.
219. In conclusion, the Commission found “the West Coast presents a somewhat special case with its geographic isolation, the extent of the area in public or quasi-public ownership, its distinctive physical environment and strongly held sense of regional identity”.<sup>26</sup>
220. On its constitution in 1989, the representation arrangements for the West Coast Regional Council consisted of four constituencies. These comprised one each for the new Grey and Westland districts, one for a large part of the new Buller District and one for the remaining area of Buller District together with the area of Tasman District included at that time in the West Coast Region. The four constituencies elected a total of ten councillors.
221. In 1992 a boundary alteration occurred between West Coast Region and Tasman District. This followed the abolition of the Nelson-Marlborough Regional Council with three territorial authorities in that region, including Tasman District, becoming unitary authorities. As a result the Tasman District Council became responsible for management of the upper Buller River in its district.
222. From 1992, the West Coast Region became confined solely to Buller, Grey and Westland districts with a regional council constituency for each district electing two councillors each. Membership of the Grey constituency was increased to three in 2007 to comply with statutory fair representation requirements and these arrangements remain in place today.

## **Perceived West Coast Region community of interest**

### ***Strong sense of identity and belonging***

223. Apart from the boundary alteration in 1992, the West Coast Region, comprising the three districts of Buller, Grey and Westland, has remained intact since 1989 giving support to the Local Government Commission’s conclusion at the time that the West Coast can be seen as “a somewhat special case” with a strong regional identity reinforced by its physical isolation and distinctive physical environment. A report from the Commission to the Minister of Local Government in 1995 on West Coast funding issues further highlighted the strong regional identity saying “the people of the West Coast generally have a strong identity as ‘West Coasters’, and other New Zealanders recognise the West Coast’s identity”.<sup>27</sup>
224. While there is a strong West Coast identity which remains today, some in the Buller area, as noted earlier in this report, perceive a degree of connection with the Nelson/Tasman area. This can be traced back to the period in the 1800s when the Buller area (also northern parts of Grey District) was part of the old Nelson Province reflecting the fact that Nelson City was then and remains today significantly closer than Christchurch City.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid* p.7

<sup>27</sup> Local Government Commission, ‘*Inquiry into West Coast Regional Council Funding*’ – Report to Minister of Local Government, 29 September 1995, p.3

<sup>28</sup> In the 1800s coastal shipping would have been the main form of transport between the two areas. Today, according to the Automobile Association website, travel time and distance from Westport to Nelson are approximately three hours and 222 kilometres, compared to four hours and 330 kilometres to Christchurch.



225. The distinguishing of Buller from the rest of the West Coast continues today with this area observing the Nelson provincial anniversary day, different from the Canterbury anniversary day observed by the remainder of the West Coast. In addition, a distinction between Buller and the rest of the West Coast is reflected in the jurisdictions of a number of separate sport and special interest governing bodies as noted previously under the respective districts.

### *Distinctive physical characteristics*

226. Notwithstanding some perceived connections between Buller and Nelson, the isolation and distinctive physical environment of the West Coast as a whole, as identified by the Local Government Commission in 1988, remain today to define the West Coast as different and separate from neighbouring areas. This difference and separateness reinforce a strong perceived sense of identity with and belonging to the West Coast Region.
227. The region runs for a distance of 600 kilometres from Kahurangi Point in the north to Awarua Point in the south. This is a similar distance to that between Auckland and Wellington. The total land area of 23,244 square kilometres makes the West Coast the fifth largest of the sixteen regions in New Zealand. Travel times from the main towns on the West Coast (Greymouth, Hokitika and Westport) to centres outside the region are at least three hours.
228. The region has distinctive physical boundaries provided by the Tasman Sea in the west running for the length of the region, and by the Southern Alps for much of its eastern boundary. In addition to the ruggedness of its coastline, the region is characterised by being largely mountainous or forested<sup>29</sup>, with the area containing many lakes and fast flowing rivers<sup>30</sup>. The alpine fault runs the length of the region.
229. As noted by the Local Government Commission in 1988 and described further below (see under 'Role of Department of Conservation'), a further feature of the West Coast is the high proportion of the area in public or quasi-public ownership, including five national parks and part of a world heritage area.
230. The combination of its distinctive physical environment and its unique natural features (e.g. glaciers, Punakaiki rocks, limestone arches and internationally significant wetlands) provides opportunities to promote the West Coast as a quite different and iconic area. All these features serve to reinforce the special identity of the West Coast for both West Coasters and those visiting the area from outside the region.

### *Distinctive socio-demographic characteristics*

231. The strong sense of regional identity and belonging, reinforced by the physical environment and natural features, is further reinforced by distinctive socio-demographic characteristics of the West Coast which are also reasonably similar across the three districts.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The West Coast Regional Council's website states some three quarters of the region is in indigenous forests.

<sup>30</sup> While the Land, Air, Water Aotearoa website identifies 15 monitored river catchments on the West Coast, approximately 50 significant rivers and associated catchments can be identified in the region.

<sup>31</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the statistics in this report are from 2013 census and can be viewed at [http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-a-place.aspx?request\\_value=14641&tabname](http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-a-place.aspx?request_value=14641&tabname)

232. The region has the smallest population of the sixteen regions being 32,148 at the 2013 census and it comprises less than one per cent of the national population. Given the region comprises 8.5 per cent of New Zealand's land area, the West Coast has the sparsest population in the country at just 1.4 people per square kilometre, located on a long narrow coastal strip and in a few inland valleys.
233. The population has been stable with an average annual population increase of just 0.4 per cent for the period 2006-13. However, a small population decline is projected over the period to 2043 based on Statistics NZ's medium projection, compared to 0.8 per cent growth for New Zealand.<sup>32</sup>
234. The population is older, on average, than for the rest of New Zealand. The median age is 42.8 years compared to 38.0 years for the whole of New Zealand, and 16.1 per cent of people on the West Coast are over 65 years compared to 14.3 per cent of the total New Zealand population.
235. The population is very predominantly European (91.2 per cent) compared to the national proportion of 74 per cent. The West Coast has the smallest Māori population of the 16 regions. The usually resident Māori population was 3,171 at the 2013 census, being 10.5 per cent of the population compared to the national proportion of 14.9 per cent. Just 2.2 per cent of the population was Asian and 1.0 per cent Pasifika, compared to 11.8 per cent and 7.4 per cent respectively nationally.
236. The median income is lower on the West Coast being, at the time of the 2013 census, \$26,900 for people over the age of 15 years compared to \$28,500 for all of New Zealand. However the unemployment level is lower on the West Coast being 4.7 per cent of those over 15 years at the 2013 census compared to 7.1 per cent nationally.
237. Finally, the West Coast population is less well connected than New Zealanders generally, with 69.6 per cent of West Coast households having access to the internet in 2013 compared to 76.8 per cent of New Zealand households, while 73.2 per cent of West Coast households had access to a cellphone compared to 83.7 per cent of New Zealand households.

## **Functional dimensions of a West Coast Region community of interest**

### ***Distinctive regional economy***

238. The West Coast Regional Council's proposed West Coast regional policy statement (2015) notes that the state and availability of natural resources is relatively more important for the West Coast's economy than for many other regions in New Zealand, with 20 per cent of the coast's GDP derived from the primary sector compared to the national average of 7 per cent. As a result, the West Coast as a region is heavily reliant on its natural and physical resources for its economic, social and community wellbeing.
239. Reflecting the importance of natural and physical resources to the region, the policy statement identifies the three mainstays of the regional economy as: mining (coal and gold), farming particularly dairying, and tourism. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's 2015 regional economic activity report in profiling the West Coast regional economy, confirms the importance of these activities noting that:

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<sup>32</sup> [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/population/estimates\\_and\\_projections/SubnationalPopulationProjections\\_HOTP2013base.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/estimates_and_projections/SubnationalPopulationProjections_HOTP2013base.aspx)

*“Traditionally, the West Coast’s rich natural asset base has underpinned its main industries. The region’s main comparative advantage is mining, which accounts for 5.8 per cent of total employment, compared to 0.3 per cent for the rest of New Zealand...*

*Buller District has the strongest reliance on mining, accounting for 10 per cent of the district’s employment...*

*Grey District also has a large share of employment in mining (5.1 per cent)...*

*Farther down the coast, Westland District has a strong dairy farming and tourism sector in addition to relative strengths in mining and forestry and logging...*

*The region’s natural assets and conservation lands provide a strong basis for tourism, with the region an internationally-known eco-tourism destination.”<sup>33</sup>*

240. The Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Study also confirms these three sectors as key drivers of the West Coast regional economy along with ‘construction and related services’ and ‘health services and aged care’.<sup>34</sup> While some activities are stronger in different parts of the region, e.g. mining in Buller and dairying and tourism in Westland, together the resource-based industries contribute significantly to the regional economy and are therefore important for community wellbeing for the West Coast as a whole.
241. A number of businesses operate over the West Coast as a whole, and also beyond the region, as individual districts do not provide a sufficient market by themselves. An example of this is Westland Milk Products which is New Zealand’s second largest dairy cooperative. The electricity distribution company Westpower, while not covering all of the West Coast, does operate over parts of all three West Coast districts.
242. One of the key messages in the Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Study is that “tourism is the major immediate opportunity to grow jobs on the West Coast”. To help achieve this, the study identifies as a top priority the development of a tourism strategy and action plan to improve marketing, enhance and develop tourism products, and invest in visitor infrastructure and amenities at key locations across the West Coast. It sees this work as building off existing work by Tourism West Coast, a jointly owned council-controlled organisation of the three West Coast district councils, established in recognition of the need for coordinated promotion of the region’s tourist attractions.

### ***Reliance on links into, through and out of the region***

243. Given the importance of natural and physical resources to the West Coast economy coupled with the geographic characteristics of the region, the social and economic wellbeing of the region as a whole depends heavily on ability to transport produce out of the area. Transport links into and through the region are also important for the growing tourism sector. The Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Study recognises this fact in one of its key messages, being: “effective roading and telecommunications networks are absolutely critical to address the West Coast’s isolation, size and distance from markets”.

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<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, ‘Regional Economic Activity Report 2015’, pp 66 to 69

<sup>34</sup> See Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Study – Summary and Main Reports, September 2016, jointly led by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Ministry for Primary Industries. The reports identify: ‘minerals and related processing’ as producing \$418 million in GDP or 22% of the value of the regional economy in 2015 and supporting 1,180 jobs or 7 percent of employment; ‘dairying and related processing’ as contributing \$282 million in GDP or 15 per cent of the regional economy in 2015, supporting 1,640 jobs or 10 per cent of employment; and ‘tourism’ as producing \$95 million in GDP in 2015 supporting 2,000 jobs and as increasing with 2.2 per cent annual growth between 2010 and 2015.

244. The main transport links are a major rail link through the Southern Alps to the east and four main road links: State Highway 6 which runs the length of the West Coast and links to Nelson in the north and Wanaka (via Haast Pass) to the south; State Highway 7 to Christchurch (via Lewis Pass); and State Highway 73 to Christchurch (via Arthurs Pass). In addition, there are limited air services out of Hokitika and Westport, and also two river ports in Westport and Greymouth neither of which is a deep water port.

#### ***Strong contribution by Māori to the regional economy***

245. The 2015 regional economic activity report says that while Māori make up less than the national average proportion of the population, Māori are important contributors to the West Coast's economy. Mawhera Incorporation is an important land owner in the region, and Ngāi Tahu, the dominant iwi in the region, has customary ownership of the region's valuable pounamu resource. Ngāi Tahu also own and operate a number of tourism businesses on the West Coast as well as having interests in forestry and fishing.

246. The important contribution of Māori to the West Coast economy is recognised in the Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Study's key messages which include: "through its two rūnanga on the West Coast, Ngāti Waewae and Makaawhio, Ngāi Tahu can play an important partner role in supporting growth opportunities in key sectors". (Further details of Māori and iwi interests and structures including the Ngāi Tahu West Coast rūnanga, are provided below.)

#### ***Important role of the Department of Conservation on the West Coast***

247. The West Coast is one of eight operations regions for the Department of Conservation (DoC) and is based in Hokitika. DoC also has offices in Greymouth and the Haast Visitor Centre.

248. The 2015 regional economic activity report states that 85 per cent of the land on the West Coast is managed by DoC as national parks and reserves which is the highest proportion of all New Zealand's regions.<sup>35</sup> In addition, DoC is a road controlling authority with responsibility for a number of roads on the West Coast. These interests make DoC a significant stakeholder and key player in the promotion of economic, social and community wellbeing across the West Coast Region.

249. On the other hand, it is noted that the very high proportion of land in Crown ownership limits the amount of land on which other economic activity may be carried out and/or income can be raised by way of rates by local authorities i.e. an amount somewhat less than 15 per cent of the region. This further highlights distinctive characteristics of the West Coast Region and supports the argument that it be treated as "a somewhat special case".

#### ***West Coast economic development fund***

250. Arising out of a government imposed moratorium on indigenous forestry on the West Coast and the privatisation of certain infrastructure, a fund of \$92 million was received from the government in the late 1990s to promote sustainable employment opportunities and to generate sustainable economic benefits for the West Coast. A charitable trust was established (called Development West Coast) to manage, invest and distribute income from the fund. The board of Development West Coast comprises a mix of both council-appointed and independent members. The trust is another key player reflecting the interests of West Coast Region as a whole and in the promotion of regional wellbeing.

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<sup>35</sup> A 2004 study estimated the operation of DoC and the use of conservation land generated over 1800 jobs in the region and close to \$120 million in value added.

### *Place of work in the region*

251. Analysis of place of work has been provided earlier in this report on a district by district basis. On a combined regional basis, the West Coast is reasonably self-contained for employment purposes with limited commuting out of the region (based on those who identified their place of work in the 2013 census). There is a limited amount of commuting to Nelson and Tasman by workers in Buller and Grey districts, and to Christchurch and several other Canterbury districts by workers from all three West Coast districts (see *Appendix 4*). In addition, a very small number of Westland District workers commute to either Queenstown-Lakes or Central Otago districts. The great majority of workers, however, work in their home district or neighbouring West Coast district.

### *Location of shopping in the region*

252. Analysis of the location of shopping is also provided earlier in this report on a district by district basis. Again, on a combined regional basis, the West Coast is reasonably self-contained in relation to shopping with Greymouth playing an important regional role. However, residents in all three districts also do a certain level of shopping in Christchurch (see *Appendix 5*). This is particularly evident in terms of the amount spent, compared to number of transactions, which is not surprising on the basis that larger purchases are likely to be made in Christchurch given the size of its retail sector compared to that of Greymouth the largest town on the West Coast.

### *Government and other services at the regional level*

253. Areas for the delivery of the following central governmental services coincide to varying degrees with local government boundaries on the West Coast. To the degree they do coincide with the West Coast Region as a whole, they help to reinforce the regional identity of the West Coast.

### *Health services*

254. The West Coast District Health Board (WCDHB) covers the combined area of the three districts of Buller, Grey and Westland.
255. The Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Study notes that there is a strong concentration of hospital and aged care services in the region, primarily in Grey, and that the Government is investing in a new hospital and integrated family health centre in Greymouth. The report also states that the WCDHB is developing the region into an exemplar of rural health care including increased use of ICT with a view to reducing the number of people requiring health or aged care services at facilities.

### *Social welfare and community development*

256. Under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Development, the following social welfare/ community development services are provided across the West Coast:
- a. *Work and Income*: the West Coast is part of a greater region also including Nelson and Marlborough, and has two service centres in Greymouth and Westport
  - b. *Child, Youth and Family*: the West Coast is part of a southern region covering all the South Island and has an office in Greymouth
  - c. *Strengthening Families*: the West Coast is part of an upper South Island structure with the chair of the local management group and a coordinator based in Greymouth

- d. *Heartland Services (including links to other government agencies):* the West Coast has two service centres in Hokitika and Westport.

#### *Education*

257. There is a reasonable coverage of schools, both primary and secondary, across the region as described previously under each district.
258. There is one tertiary education institution in the region, Tai Poutini Polytechnic, which has its head office in Greymouth but also has campuses in Hokitika, Reefton and Westport as well as in Auckland and Christchurch. It offers a variety of courses and qualifications relevant to key West Coast industries including civil construction, mining, outdoor education and hospitality.
259. The West Coast has two rural education activities programmes (REAP) provided by local incorporated societies. The programmes, resources and services are aimed at filling gaps in community learning and cover Buller (based in Westport) and Westland (based in Hokitika and Greymouth).

#### *Police*

260. The West Coast is one of three areas making up the Tasman police district with each area reflecting regional local government boundaries. The West Coast area, covering Buller, Grey and Westland districts, has an area commander based in Greymouth. There are eight police stations across the coast: Karamea, Granity, Reefton, Westport, Greymouth, Hokitika, Ross and Haast.

#### *Fire services*

261. The West Coast is part of region 4 of the New Zealand Fire Service, comprising all of the South Island apart from Otago and Southland, based in Christchurch. There is a network of volunteer fire brigades across the coast as identified previously under each district.

#### ***Local government services at the regional level***

262. The West Coast Regional Council itself, or in collaboration with the three district councils, provides what may be described as a basic level of required regional services on the West Coast as outlined below. The nature of these services is such that, for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness, they need to be provided on a regional basis given the services cross district boundaries. They are also often of a specialist nature requiring particular expertise needing to be funded over as wide an area as possible. To the extent they are provided region-wide, they reinforce the West Coast as a functional community of interest separate from and different to neighbouring areas.

#### *Environmental management*

263. The West Coast Regional Council has a number of statutory responsibilities in relation to environmental management on the West Coast under the Resource Management Act 1991 and other legislation. These responsibilities are seen as needing to be undertaken at the regional level given they relate to physical and geographical features and resources, such as rivers and the coastline, which generally cover the area of more than one district council.

264. With the exception of the upper reaches of the Buller River, all West Coast river catchments are presently contained within the region.<sup>36</sup> This enables effective catchment-based flooding and water management on the West Coast.

#### *Land transport planning*

265. In accordance with its statutory obligations, the West Coast Regional Council coordinates regional land transport planning on the West Coast. This enables the West Coast councils to access central government transport funding (from the New Zealand Transport Agency – NZTA) for transport work. A regional transport committee, involving all the West Coast councils and NZTA, is responsible for preparing a regional land transport plan. This plan sets out all transport priorities for the West Coast and an agreed work programme.

#### *Emergency management/civil defence*

266. As required by legislation, the three West Coast mayors and regional council chair comprise a West Coast civil defence emergency management (CDEM) group. The group, supported by an executive coordinating group of council chief executives and emergency services and health representatives, coordinates civil defence emergency management planning and carries out related programmes and activities across the region.
267. The four West Coast councils have now gone a step further by agreeing to coordinate the delivery of civil defence emergency management across the region. This has involved the employment by the regional council of a civil defence emergency management manager and the district councils seconding staff part-time to support this manager.

#### *Economic development*

268. The West Coast Regional Council's 2015-25 long-term plan notes that as a result of feedback received from the community, the council, in collaboration with the other West Coast councils and Development West Coast, is now taking a greater role in developing the regional economy. This includes an economic development agency co-funded by the four councils and Development West Coast, for a three-year trial period. An economic development manager position has also been created, funded by the regional council and Development West Coast, with an appointment made in February 2016.
269. Several years ago the three West Coast district councils recognised the importance of tourism to the region by establishing a joint organisation, Tourism West Coast, funded equally by them and Development West Coast. The board comprises representatives of these four organisations along with a sector representative.
270. While acknowledging actions taken, the Tai Poutini West Coast Growth Study concluded that economic development functions on the West Coast were fragmented and a new approach to regional economic development governance and delivery was required. The recently released Growth Study Action Plan now proposes a unit be established in Development West Coast to undertake the delivery function for a new regional economic strategy.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> As previously noted, as a result of a boundary alteration with Tasman District in 1992 following the abolition of the Nelson-Marlborough Regional Council, the upper reaches of the Buller River and catchment area is within Tasman District and coordination with Tasman District Council is required for effective management of the entire river and its catchment.

<sup>37</sup> See 'Tai Poutini West Coast Economic Development Action Plan 2017'

### ***Other regional community, cultural and recreational facilities and services***

271. There are a limited number of ‘regional’ community, cultural and recreational facilities and services on the West Coast. Some district-based facilities, however, are promoted to the wider regional community such as the newly opened Westland Recreation Centre located in Greymouth aimed at serving both Grey District and the wider region, and History House Museum which specialises in West Coast collections.
272. As noted earlier, the West Coast is split between two regional sports trusts with Buller being part of Sport Tasman while Grey and Westland come under Sport Canterbury. This split is also reflected in many individual sports including: rugby with separate Buller and West Coast unions; cricket, hockey and basketball with separate Buller and West Coast associations; and netball with separate Westport, West Coast (Greymouth) and Hokitika centres.
273. A few sports organisations do cover the whole West Coast or at least have a presence in both Grey and Westland districts. These include rugby league, soccer and wood chopping.

### ***Political dimensions of a West Coast Region community of interest***

274. As noted in *Part A*, the political dimension of communities of interest can be seen to represent a balance between the other two dimensions i.e. perceptual and functional. At the regional level, it also reflects a particular grouping of district communities of interest with particular commonalities.
275. The balance of the perceptual and functional dimensions achieved in West Coast Region is addressed below by considering representation arrangements for communities of interest, council decision-making structures along with other region-wide local government structures, hapū/iwi/Māori interests and the range of special interest groups in the region.
276. To the extent different regional arrangements and structures are aligned, cooperation and collaboration across agencies and interests is easier within that region. This in turn helps strengthen the regional community and builds social cohesion with further benefits such as assisting the promotion of community resilience in relation to sudden change or shock that has a wider impact than the district level.<sup>38</sup> This is important on the West Coast given the impact of climate change and the significance of risks such as flooding and coastal erosion, along with risks of earthquakes (in addition to the alpine fault, the GNS Science active fault database identifies a number of other active faults in the region).

### ***Representation arrangements for communities of interest***

277. With the removal in 1992 of the area of Tasman District previously in West Coast Region, an amended Buller Constituency was established covering all Buller District. The resulting three constituencies, now mirroring the three districts on the West Coast, remain in place today reflecting what are seen to be distinct communities of interest at the district level.

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<sup>38</sup> ‘Resilience’ is defined by Dr Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, as “the capacity of any entity – an individual, a community, an organisation, or a natural system – to prepare for disruptions, to recover from shocks and stresses, and to adapt and grow from a disruptive experience”. See Rodin, Judith (2015) *The Resilience Dividend: Being Strong in a World Where things Go Wrong*, amazon.com, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, <http://resiliencedividend.org/>



278. The three constituencies, mirroring the three districts, are well established and recognised by the community. Voter turnout for the council has been above the average for all regional council elections in New Zealand since 1989 and, with two exceptions, the highest nationally at each election. This suggests that generally the representation arrangements may be seen, to date, as having facilitated participation in electoral processes or at least have not created barriers to participation. An important element in this are arrangements that electors are able to identify with as reflecting their own perceived communities of interest thereby assisting effective representation for these communities of interest, a requirement of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

279. Current constituency arrangements using Statistics NZ 2016 population estimates are as follows.

Constituency	Population	No. of councillors per constituency	Population per councillor	Deviation from region average population per councillor	% deviation from region average population per councillor
Buller	10,200	2	5,100	+456	+9.82
Grey	13,550	3	4,517	-127	-2.74
Westland	8,760	2	4,380	-264	-5.69
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32,510</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4,644</b>		

280. Based on these population estimates, the three regional council constituencies comply with the +/-10 per cent fair representation requirement set out in the Local Electoral Act.<sup>39</sup> The West Coast Regional Council will, nevertheless, still need to undertake a review of the region's representation arrangements, prior to the 2019 local authority elections, with a view to ensuring they achieve both fair representation of electors and also effective representation of communities of interest.

### *Council decision-making structures and other region-wide structures*

281. As a relatively small body, the full elected council plays a pivotal governance role setting policy, directing operations and overseeing council performance. It does have a resource management committee comprising all councillors and two tangata whenua representatives.

282. There are also joint committees to meet other statutory obligations. These include a regional transport committee comprising two regional council members and representatives of the three district councils and NZTA; and the West Coast Civil Defence Emergency Management Group comprising representatives of both the regional council and the three district councils.

283. The council has an interest in the West Coast Development Trust, along with the three district councils, jointly appointing one of the trustees. Other region-wide local government structures established to promote the interests of the West Coast Region as a whole include the West Coast Mayoral and Chair Forum.

### *Hapū/iwi/Māori interests on the West Coast*

284. Ngāi Tahu is the iwi with mana whenua status on the West Coast. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Act 1996 gave legal identity to the iwi and established it as the 'iwi authority' for the purposes of the Resource Management Act 1991.

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<sup>39</sup> Section 19V(2) of the Local Electoral Act 2001 requires the population of each constituency divided by the number of councillors for that constituency to be no more than 10 per cent greater or smaller than the population of the region as a whole divided by the total number of councillors.

285. Ngāi Tahu has a papatipu rūnanga structure with 18 rūnanga across Te Waipounamu (South Island) each appointing a member to represent its interests at Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (governing council). Two of these rūnanga, Makaawhio and Ngāti Waewae, are based on the West Coast. Ngāti Waewae interests are in the northern area of the West Coast and Makaawhio's in the southern area with the two having overlapping interests in the area between Hokitika and Harihari.
286. Ngāi Tahu states that no rūnanga is the same, and each has opportunities and challenges shaped by the land, the environment, the towns and the people that make the region home. Each exercise rangatiratanga to determine their own destiny so they can build and sustain their communities as they have done successfully for generations. Each rūnanga has its own governance structure and it is through this mechanism that the collective Ngāi Tahu voice is represented and heard at local government and community level.
287. Both rūnanga are represented on the West Coast Regional Council's resource management committee. At the district level, the interests of Te Rūnanga O Ngāti Waewae cover both Buller and Grey districts as well as part of Westland District. This is likely to cause some issues for this rūnanga in terms of timely and meaningful responses to three councils on particular issues.
288. The matter of the ability of lessees to freehold leased native reserve land in Tai Poutini was the subject of prolonged debate in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Eventually much of this land was incorporated in Mawhera Incorporation as was the bed of the Arahura River. Today the Mawhera Incorporation remains a significant and influential player in Tai Poutini given its land holdings, alongside the two rūnanga.

#### ***Parliamentary electorates***

289. The West Coast is presently fully included in one parliamentary electorate that being the Tasman-West Coast electorate. This can facilitate the representation of regional West Coast interests to central government.

#### ***West Coast interest groups***

290. Given the length of the West Coast, there are only a limited number of other organisations and bodies representing particular interests that cover all of the West Coast. These include the following:
- a. West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board
  - b. West Coast Fish and Game Council
  - c. West Coast Branch of Forest and Bird
  - d. West Coast Province of Federated Farmers
  - e. Top of the South Branch of Rural Women (includes all the West Coast).
291. Given the nature and size of the region, other national interest groups have structures covering part of the West Coast. For example, the Women's Institute has three federations covering: Buller, West Coast and South Westland with separate institutes in each area.

#### **Conclusion**

292. In considering appropriate local government arrangements for the top of the South Island in 1989, the Local Government Commission identified the West Coast as being "a somewhat special case". This was based on its geographic isolation, extent of area in public ownership, distinctive physical environment and strongly held sense of regional identity.

293. As a result, it considered combining all or part of the West Coast with another region would not be a viable option. Accordingly it proceeded to constitute the West Coast as a standalone region comprising the three new districts of Buller, Grey and Westland and a small part of Tasman District (subsequently removed in 1992).
294. This report has found that the “somewhat special case” factors still exist today reinforcing perceptions of a distinct West Coast regional community of interest. While some perceptions of links with the Nelson/Tasman area do exist, this report has concluded these are not backed by strong functional connections (see the ‘Buller District’ section for details). Similarly there are no strong functional connections with neighbouring areas in Canterbury or Otago.
295. Functional dimensions of a distinct West Coast community of interest are reflected in a distinctive regional economy heavily reliant on natural and physical resources. In terms of both place of work and location of shopping, West Coast Region is reasonably self-contained with limited commuting or shopping occurring out of the region.
296. A number of businesses operate over the West Coast as a whole and also beyond the region, as individual districts do not provide a sufficient market by themselves. An example of this is Westland Milk Products which is New Zealand’s second largest dairy cooperative.
297. The West Coast Regional Council itself, or in conjunction with the district councils, generally provides a basic level of required regional services for the West Coast. These services are provided over a well-defined area given the geography and distinctive physical features of the region.
298. Functional dimensions of a West Coast regional community of interest are further reinforced by the distinctive roles played in the region by the Department of Conservation and Development West Coast. There is also a limited range of other governmental and public services provided for the region.
299. West Coast Region also reflects a particular grouping of local communities of interest *within* the region (described in detail in the previous district sections of this report). Given the size of the region and its physical and other challenges, these communities are, and under current arrangements will remain, important considerations for the achievement of effective overall governance for the West Coast. Whether the present groupings of these local communities of interest into three separate districts, as constituted in 1989, remain the most appropriate groupings does require consideration.
300. Factors to consider, as outlined in this report, include: particular district boundaries such as in the Punakaiki area; the strength of functional connections between the northern area of Westland District and Grey District; appropriate recognition of the more local communities of interest within each district; and the relationship of the rohe of the two rūnanga on the West Coast with district council boundaries.
301. In terms of clause 11(5)(c) of Schedule 3 of the LGA, West Coast Region, as presently constituted, is seen to contain one or more distinct communities of interest. At the regional level this can be seen to be a balance between an area with which people clearly identify and over which a reasonable range of local government and other public services are provided. This balance is recognised in the jurisdiction of West Coast Regional Council i.e. the political dimension of communities of interest. There is also a reasonable coincidence between local government structures and other special interest groups and structures in the region. The region also has groupings of distinct communities of interest at the district and local level.

## CONCLUSION

302. This report identifies current communities of interest existing at regional, district and local levels on the West Coast. Generally these communities of interest are as identified by the Local Government Commission in 1988 and continue to be the basis of the local government arrangements as established at that time.
303. The change options for the West Coast, identified as potentially reasonably practicable options, generally involve combining two or more existing districts. Accordingly they can be seen to comprise groupings of current communities of interest or, in terms of clause 11(5)(c) of Schedule 3 of the LGA, contain “one or more distinct communities of interest”.

# APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX 1: Identifying communities of interest**

### **Introduction**

The approach taken in this study is based on the working definition of communities of interest developed by Helen Fulcher as applying to a particular locality and having one or more of the following three dimensions:

- a) Perceptual: a sense of belonging to an area or locality which can be clearly defined.
- b) Functional: the ability to meet with reasonable economy the community's requirements for comprehensive physical and human services.
- c) Political: the ability of the elected body to represent the interests and reconcile the conflicts of all its members.<sup>40</sup>

Firstly, it is acknowledged that since Fulcher prepared her paper 28 years ago, there has been significant societal change and this will continue. This change includes technological developments that have impacted dramatically on how people, particularly younger people, interact with virtual and other non-geographically defined 'communities of interest'. While such changes need to be taken into account, local government is, and will for the foreseeable future remain, geographically defined and therefore this approach also based on the identification of geographical localities remains relevant.

It should also be noted that communities of interest are not constant over time. Some, in areas of high population growth for example, may be subject to constant change. While account should be taken of projected population and other social and economic changes, a degree of stability must be assumed so as to gain an understanding of current communities of interest.

Fulcher describes the concept of community of interest as being multi-layered in nature and the layers having varying geographical scales. Accordingly the concept and Fulcher's three dimensions in particular are applied in this study at both the district level also encompassing the local/neighbourhood level, and at the regional level. A particular level of community of interest can be seen as 'nested' within another level, such as the local/neighbourhood level within the district level, the district level within the regional level, and the regional level within the national level.

While the three dimensions of community of interest are important individually at a particular level, they do overlap and may be interwoven. Consideration of one dimension may, therefore, also involve to some degree another dimension. For example, the perceptual dimension of community of interest is important in the sense that if people feel a sense of belonging to an area they are more likely to engage in local community affairs often involving interaction with their local council, and to participate in activities like local elections. The perceptual dimension is then related to appropriate representation and decision-making structures needing to be identified under the political dimension of communities of interest.

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<sup>40</sup> Fulcher, H., (1989), South Australian Department of Local Government, *A Discussion Paper Which Explores The Concept of Community Of Interest As It Applies To Local Government Boundaries*

## Identifying perceptual communities of interest: areas where people have ‘a sense of belonging and identity’

Fulcher notes that “communities show considerable diversity in the nature and strength of the networks which operate, both overtly and covertly, between local residents. In perceptual terms, community of interest may range from virtually non-existent, to transient, to a proud local tradition ... in some localities, the physical proximity and daily interaction of residents in activities such as shopping, recreation, and worship may create only loose-knit networks ... in other areas, people’s interactions may be more neighbourly ... in other localities (for example long-established rural communities), there may be a strong network of people, who are proudly self-sufficient and actively demonstrate their compatibility and common outlook.”

In relation to sense of identity with an area, Terlouw in a study of amalgamations in the Netherlands points out local identities “are not fixed facts”.<sup>41</sup> His case studies on the role of local identity in two Dutch municipalities during amalgamation processes showed that those who felt threatened by amalgamation tended to use identity to resist such a proposal and to focus on the differences with their neighbours. But in other situations, neighbours were seen as allies with different though similar identities. In these circumstances identity was used to focus on a need for cooperation and the promotion of their shared interests to the outside world to stimulate local economic development. Terlouw characterises the different nature of these local identities as respectively having either “traditional thick” elements, or having “forward-looking thin” identity elements. He shows also how the strength of these may change over time with the prospect and then the reality of amalgamation.

While existing at both the regional and the district levels, a perceived sense of identity and belonging is likely to be strongest at a more local community level. In support of this, Fulcher cites a study undertaken in South Australia on the attitudes of people to their “home area” or the area where they felt they belonged and with which they identified. This found for people living in council areas fewer than 20,000 people, most identified the “area” in which they felt “at home” as the local government area. Above 20,000, perceived communities were smaller than the actual population of the local government area. Commission officers are not aware of any similar survey on perceptions of size of “home areas” being undertaken in New Zealand, but consider the above study is likely to have relevance in this country.

Fulcher concludes that perceived community of interest “is not a particularly useful dimension for determining the appropriate size of local government units”. This is because evidence suggests “people’s sense of belonging tends to be limited to a size known as the neighbourhood” and this focus “will tend to remain fixed, despite changes in functional patterns”. She goes on, “it is hard to dispute the conclusion of the South Australian Royal Commission First Report (1974) that it would be uneconomical and impractical to base a local government authority on the first level of community of interest, relating to the sense of local identity. The base needs to be broader, involving a clustering of local neighbourhoods which may be alike or complementary, but are interdependent communities of interest in functional terms.”

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<sup>41</sup> Terlouw, Kees (2016), Territorial changes and changing identities: how spatial identities are used in up-scaling of local government in the Netherlands, *Local Government Studies*, DOI: [10.1080/03003930.2016.1186652](https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2016.1186652)

### **Identifying functional communities of interest: areas where people's need for services are met**

Fulcher describes the functional dimension of community of interest as referring to “the interactions of the community, the sense of common activities such as trade, sport and schooling, and common needs for area-based facilities and amenities”. In short, these interactions may be described as relating to where people live, work and play. Fulcher notes these interactions occur on a much larger scale than the perceptual dimension and that “most studies have concluded that municipal boundaries should follow the spatial patterns of human activity”.

Fulcher identifies factors relating to measurement of the functional dimension including the distance factor and the importance of telecommunications in reducing the impact of distance, and the extent of local government's role as a provider of services. She goes on to identify four specific conditions relating to this dimension of community of interest which overlap the other two dimensions: the physical (and perceptual) distance from the administrative centre; communities of interest not being divided by municipal boundaries; recognising the interdependence of service centres and the surrounding countryside in rural areas; boundaries being easily identifiable and having regard to boundaries defined and used by other government and statutory bodies.

Fulcher also notes, in addition to measuring current use of services and facilities, the importance of assessing future demand through analysis of census data: “accurate demographic profiles of factors such as age, occupation, incomes, housing and family types, home ownership rate and recipients of welfare benefits, will indicate how homogeneous or stable the community is and the likely direction of changing needs relevant to council planning and policy”.

Fulcher summarises the functional dimension of community of interest by saying it “tends to extend in concentric circles, and vary in diameter and strength, depending on the function being measured. In applying this criterion to boundary reform, a council needs to understand how far these circles extend. Do they extend significantly past its municipal boundaries? Where do they intersect or overlap with the spheres of influence of adjoining councils? At those points of interdependence, are they complementary or in conflict?”

The functional interactions of individuals can have a significant influence on perceptions of local communities of interest. This is shown in an Auckland study on the role of schools in parents' sense of belonging to a community.<sup>42</sup> In this study Māori and Pākehā parents indicated that schools and preschools were the most significant sites to their community belonging. For Pacific and Asian parents, the church was more important.

A study of communities of interest in the former Banks Peninsula District also confirmed the importance of schools in local communities.<sup>43</sup> It noted “schools play a vital role which extends well beyond their educational function in most communities, particularly in smaller communities” and that “the value of a rural school ... (comes) ... from the nature of the relationship between the school and its community and the other community-orientated functions provided by the school and the social networks it fosters ... the community functions and the physical infrastructure of rural schools embody a very substantial element of the social capital of rural communities.” Just one of the ‘community-oriented functions’ schools have in New Zealand communities is as local civil defence coordination centres activated following emergencies in the local area.

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<sup>42</sup> Witten, K., McCreanor, T. and Kearns, R., (2007), *The place of schools in parents' community belonging*, New Zealand Geographer Vol 63, pp 141 – 148

<sup>43</sup> Taylor Bains & Associates (2005), *Communities of interest on Banks Peninsula*, prepared for the Local Government Commission



## **Identifying political communities of interest: areas suitable for representing people's interests and reconciling conflicts**

Fulcher notes the political dimension of community of interest “relates to the ability of local government to represent the interests of all its members”. She says while there is a “need for local government to define and represent an area that is a coherent social and economic unit”, there are still “likely to be diverse identities, needs and priorities clustered together within that unit”.

Fulcher goes on: “(t)he political dimension of community of interest needs to acknowledge the existence of such diversity, be able to reconcile conflicts of interest and differing priorities, and bring policies to fruition. To do so effectively, there must be public confidence in local political leaders and in the ability of local activity to influence decision making processes. Resident interest and involvement in local politics will in turn foster the perceptual dimension of community and enhance the workings of local government as community government”.

As Fulcher notes, effective ‘community’ government will depend in large part on the area concerned being a “coherent social and economic unit”. Part of this coherence needs to be physical or geographical coherence. Such coherence will not only facilitate effective service delivery for example, but also reinforce residents’ identification with the area and as a result encourage their participation in community-related activities including local government decision-making and electoral processes.

There may, however, still be a tension between a “coherent social and economic unit” and an area with which residents identify. This tension is demonstrated by analysis of local authority election results in New Zealand which shows smaller local authorities, i.e. with a population less than 20,000 (in line with Fulcher’s cited South Australian study), have tended to have distinctly higher levels of voter turnout than larger authorities. This fact may be seen to reflect a stronger sense of identity with, and belonging to, smaller communities translating into higher levels of engagement and participation. While acknowledging that factors affecting voter turnout are inherently complex, this finding relating to the perceptual dimension of community of interest needs to be considered against the functional dimension which may suggest larger areas, on grounds of efficiency, are more appropriate.

## **Balancing the three dimensions of community of interest**

As noted, assessment of the three different dimensions of community of interest is likely to result in different scale communities being identified. Given the statutory purpose of local government in New Zealand includes the enabling of democratic local decision-making, further assessment of the political dimension is seen as an appropriate means to achieve the necessary balance in identifying communities of interest as a basis for achieving efficient, effective and democratically accountable local government.

This assessment of the political dimension of communities of interest should take account of existing local authority representation arrangements and decision-making structures, as well factors such as hapū/iwi/Māori interests and the range of particular special interests and structures. It will also need to take account of the degree of change that has occurred since the current local government structures were put in place and is likely to occur at least in the foreseeable future.

**APPENDIX 2: West Coast local authority profiles**

	<b>Buller District</b>	<b>Grey District</b>	<b>Westland District</b>	<b>West Coast Region</b>
<b>Land area (km2)</b>	7,942	3,475	11,828	23,245
<b>Population (2016 estimate)</b>	10,200	13,550	8,760	32,500
<b>Persons per km2</b>	1.3	3.9	0.7	1.4
<b>Number of councillors</b>	10	8	8	7
<b>Population per councillor</b>	1,020	1,694	1,095	4,643
<b>Wards/constituencies</b>	3	4	3	3
<b>Community boards</b>	1	-	-	n.a.
<b>Voter turnout (NZ districts/regions):</b>				
<b>2016</b>	49% (47%)	49% (47%)	59% (47%)	49% (44%)
<b>2013</b>	62% (48%)	45% (48%)	54% (48%)	53% (43%)
<b>2010</b>	62% (50%)	48% (50%)	62% (50%)	53% (47%)
<b>2007</b>	61% (49%)	56% (49%)	53% (49%)	57% (43%)
<b>2004</b>	70% (51%)	67% (51%)	72% (51%)	68% (45%)
<b>2001</b>	72% (57%)	63% (57%)	75% (57%)	79% (49%)
<b>1998</b>	74% (61%)	71% (61%)	72% (61%)	72% (53%)
<b>1995</b>	72% (59%)	69% (59%)	70% (59%)	70% (48%)
<b>1992</b>	77% (61%)	74% (61%)	64% (61%)	70% (52%)
<b>1989</b>	74% (65%)	75% (65%)	71% (65%)	74% (56%)

**APPENDIX 3: West Coast district demographic profiles**

	<b>Buller District</b>	<b>Grey District</b>	<b>Westland District</b>
<b>Population (2016 estimate)</b>	10,200	13,550	8,760
<b>Population projections (medium) as at December 2016 (2013 base estimate)</b>	<i>2013:</i> 10,650 <i>2018:</i> 10,100 <i>2023:</i> 10,000 <i>2028:</i> 9,910 <i>2033:</i> 9,800 <i>2038:</i> 9,670 <i>2043:</i> 9,500 <i>Change:</i> -1,150	<i>2013:</i> 13,700 <i>2018:</i> 13,600 <i>2023:</i> 13,550 <i>2028:</i> 13,450 <i>2033:</i> 13,250 <i>2038:</i> 12,950 <i>2043:</i> 12,600 <i>Change:</i> -1,100	<i>2013:</i> 8,570 <i>2018:</i> 8,850 <i>2023:</i> 8,910 <i>2028:</i> 8,910 <i>2033:</i> 8,820 <i>2038:</i> 8,680 <i>2043:</i> 8,500 <i>Change:</i> -70
<b>Age of population</b>  - NZ median age 38.0	<i>0-14:</i> 18.7% <i>15-39:</i> 25.6% <i>40-64:</i> 39.0% <i>65+:</i> 16.7% <i>Median age:</i> 44.1	<i>0-14:</i> 19.9% <i>15-39:</i> 27.1% <i>40-64:</i> 37.0% <i>65+:</i> 16.0% <i>Median age:</i> 41.9	<i>0-14:</i> 18.4% <i>15-39:</i> 28.0% <i>40-64:</i> 38.0% <i>65+:</i> 15.5% <i>Median age:</i> 42.7
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<i>European:</i> 91.6% <i>Māori:</i> 9.8% <i>Pacifica:</i> 0.9% <i>Asian:</i> 2.3% <i>Other:</i> 3.1%	<i>European:</i> 92.6% <i>Māori:</i> 9.3% <i>Pacifica:</i> 1.1% <i>Asian:</i> 1.8% <i>Other:</i> 2.8%	<i>European:</i> 88.4% <i>Māori:</i> 13.5% <i>Pacifica:</i> 1.2% <i>Asian:</i> 2.8% <i>Other:</i> 3.8%
<b>Unemployment rate</b> - NZ: 7.1%	4.9%	5.3%	3.7%
<b>Median income</b> - NZ: \$28,500	\$25,200	\$26,600	\$29,000

**APPENDIX 4: Place of work of West Coast residents (based on 2013 census)**

Place of work	Place of residence					
	Buller	%	Grey	%	Westland	%
Tasman	15	0.30	15	0.23	-	-
Nelson	18	0.36	15	0.23	-	-
Marlborough	9	0.18	9	0.14	-	-
Buller	4,257	85.43	174	2.68	27	0.61
Grey	93	1.87	5,292	81.48	456	10.33
Westland	9	0.18	168	2.59	3,414	77.31
West Coast	30	0.60	27	0.42	21	0.48
Waimakariri	9	0.18	-	-	-	-
Selwyn	-	-	12	0.18	-	-
Christchurch	21	0.42	78	1.20	24	0.54
Timaru	-	-	6	0.09	-	-
Central Otago	-	-	-	-	6	0.13
Queenstown	-	-	-	-	6	0.13
North Island districts	48	0.97	99	1.52	48	1.09
New Zealand (not further defined)	465	9.33	576	8.87	396	8.97
No fixed work address	9	0.18	24	0.37	18	0.41
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,983</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>6,495</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>4,416</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## APPENDIX 5: West Coast electronic card retail transactions

The following hybrid data provided by Marketview represents the total value of electronic card transactions (eftpos, credit and debit card transactions) by West Coast cardholders for the year ending July 2016 by merchant locality. The data is derived from two primary data sets: the BNZ cardholder base and the Paymark merchant database.<sup>44</sup>

### (a) \$ spending

Merchant location	Place of residence of cardholder					
	Buller	%	Grey	%	Westland	%
Buller	\$55,039,563	59.73	\$2,645,473	1.91	\$355,719	0.40
Grey	\$10,674,651	11.59	\$105,128,161	75.81	\$16,258,342	18.16
Westland	\$954,050	1.04	\$4,527,888	3.27	\$51,421,870	57.45
Nelson/Tasman	\$10,264,019	11.14	\$5,682,297	4.10	\$3,417,860	3.82
Christchurch	\$14,412,590	15.64	\$18,624,712	13.43	\$14,582,647	16.29
Queenstown-Lakes	\$795,256	0.86	\$2,062,717	1.49	\$3,478,110	3.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$92,140,129</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>\$138,671,248</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>\$89,514,548</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>West Coast Region</b>	<b>\$66,668,264</b>	<b>72.36</b>	<b>\$112,301,522</b>	<b>80.98</b>	<b>\$68,035,931</b>	<b>76.01</b>
<b>Outside region</b>	<b>\$25,471,865</b>	<b>27.64</b>	<b>\$26,369,726</b>	<b>19.02</b>	<b>\$21,478,617</b>	<b>23.99</b>

Merchant location	Particular places of residence of cardholder			
	Reefton	%	Hokitika	%
Buller	\$5,244,793	45.31	\$29,738	0.37
Grey	\$3,176,283	27.44	\$1,174,519	14.44
Westland	\$121,090	1.05	\$4,939,401	60.74
Nelson/Tasman	\$1,300,646	11.23	\$143,664	1.77
Christchurch	\$1,693,170	14.63	\$1,772,919	21.80
Queenstown-Lakes	\$39,622	0.34	\$71,767	0.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,575,604</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>\$8,132,008</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>West Coast Region</b>	<b>\$8,542,166</b>	<b>73.79</b>	<b>\$6,143,658</b>	<b>75.55</b>
<b>Outside region</b>	<b>\$3,033,438</b>	<b>26.21</b>	<b>\$1,988,350</b>	<b>24.45</b>

### (b) Transactions

Merchant location	Place of residence of cardholder					
	Buller	%	Grey	%	Westland	%
Buller	1,255,962	65.36	66,094	2.45	8,637	0.49
Grey	156,673	8.15	2,095,185	77.60	245,009	13.91
Westland	21,579	1.12	118,830	4.40	1,148,494	65.22
Nelson/Tasman	211,059	10.98	109,157	4.04	48,432	2.75
Christchurch	249,804	13.00	285,550	10.58	249,028	14.14
Queenstown-Lakes	26,559	1.38	25,131	0.93	61,403	3.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,921,636</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>2,699,947</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1,761,003</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>West Coast Region</b>	<b>1,434,214</b>	<b>74.64</b>	<b>2,280,109</b>	<b>84.45</b>	<b>1,402,140</b>	<b>79.62</b>
<b>Outside region</b>	<b>487,422</b>	<b>25.36</b>	<b>419,838</b>	<b>15.55</b>	<b>358,863</b>	<b>20.38</b>

<sup>44</sup> Marketview advises that Statistics NZ has reported that just under 70% of total retail activity is paid with an electronic card. It also notes that BNZ has around a 15-20% share of the card market and that approximately 75% of New Zealand retailers use the Paymark network.

**Particular places of residence of cardholder**

<b>Merchant location</b>	<b>Reefton</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Hokitika</b>	<b>%</b>
Buller	144,189	53.65	700	0.42
Grey	46,772	17.40	20,635	12.34
Westland	4,158	1.55	100,571	60.12
Nelson/Tasman	35,569	13.24	2,869	1.71
Christchurch	37,099	13.81	40,946	24.48
Queenstown-Lakes	937	0.35	1,561	0.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>268,724</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>167,282</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>West Coast Region</b>	<b>195,119</b>	<b>72.61</b>	<b>121,906</b>	<b>72.87</b>
<b>Outside region</b>	<b>73,605</b>	<b>27.39</b>	<b>45,376</b>	<b>27.13</b>